

CIVIC AFFAIRS

28 January 2015

6.30pm - 8.05 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Benstead (Vice-Chair), Cantrill, Pitt, Hart and Robertson

Officers present:

Chief Executive: Antoinette Jackson

Director of Resources: Ray Ward

Head of Legal Services: Simon Pugh

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Head of Planning Services: Patsy Dell

Democratic Services Manager: Gary Clift

Electoral Services Manager: Vicky Breeding

Benefits Manager: Naomi Armstrong

Committee Manager: Glenn Burgess

Others present:

Director of Ernst & Young: Mark Hodgson

Independent Person: Sean Brady

Deputy Independent Person: Rob Bennett

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

15/1/CIV Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

15/2/CIV Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15/3/CIV Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

15/4/CIV Public Questions

County Councillor Walsh and Mr Colin Rosenstiel requested to speak prior to consideration of agenda item 5.

Re-ordering of the agenda.

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Chair used his discretion to alter the order of the agenda items to take item 5 last. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the agenda.

15/5/CIV Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire

The committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager regarding the Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire.

The Liberal Democrat Group tabled a proposed amendment to the Labour Group's submission as included in the officer's report:

<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/b8570/Electoral%20Review%20-%20Liberal%20Democrat%20amendment%2028th-Jan-2015%2018.30%20Civic%20Affairs.pdf?T=9>

In response the Labour Group tabled a further composite amendment to their submission:

<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/b8571/Electoral%20Review%20-%20Labour%20composite%20amendment%2028th-Jan-2015%2018.30%20Civic%20Affairs.pdf?T=9>

County Councillor Walsh addressed the committee and made the following points:

- i. Equality of representation and effective community representation were key factors to be considered.
- ii. Whilst the location of schools in relation to proposed boundaries was an important factor it should not be the only consideration.
- iii. Dividing the City Centre would ensure equality of representation.

- iv. Urged the City Council to submit a response and to convey to the Boundary Commission the updated estimates regarding number of electors in the City.

Mr Colin Rosenstiel addressed the committee and made the following points:

- i. The figures used by the County Council in their submission failed to take into account new student accommodation projected to house 2410 students, and therefore understated the number of electors in the City.
- ii. 63 County Council Divisions and 12 City Wards would mean that the City Council was under represented.
- iii. Based on the correct figures the County Council would be able to retain their 69 Divisions.
- iv. Never before had an Electoral Review been undertaken at a time of such growth in the City.

After discussion on the proposed amendments the committee adjourned for 10 minutes for a combined version to be drafted by officers. Members requested that each point be voted on separately (see below):

On a show of hands the following proposal was agreed unanimously:

- i) To convey to the County Council and the Boundary Commission the updated estimates about the numbers of electors in the City in the paragraphs below:

REVISED ESTIMATES ON CAMBRIDGE ELECTORS

The County Council's submission to the Boundary Commission was based on numbers taken from the Electoral Register of February 2014 and the projections for new housing made in December 2013.

These numbers understate the figures for the City in two principle ways:

- i) *They overlooked new student accommodation projected to house 2,410 students. As University records show that approximately 16% of students are not citizens of the UK, EU or a Commonwealth country, it is reasonable to assume that 84% (ie 2,025) are expected to be eligible to vote in UK elections.*

ii) The most recent projections for new housing in the City, published in December 2014, updates information about housing that should be considered as part of the review period. Some sites should be included as they will be brought forward quicker than previously expected eg. in Queen Edith's Division. It also shows that some new build has been wrongly allocated to the present wards. Much of the new build on the Darwin Green site will not be in the present Castle Ward as previously expected, but in Arbury and the new build on the CB1 site will be in the present Trumpington Ward rather than Petersfield. These errors of placement have now been accepted by the Boundary Commission which reissued its data last week.

iii) The December 2014 projections for housing, and the consequent calculations for numbers of electors, are not yet available for the other Districts. The overall numbers for the County are therefore uncertain.

On a show of hands the following proposal was agreed unanimously:

ii) To convey to the Boundary Commission that projected numbers in the rest of the County are uncertain and these might make the City under-represented if they retain the proposed 63 Divisions, in that Divisions in the City could be significantly larger than those in the rest of the County.

On a show of hands the following proposal was agreed by 4 votes to 2:

iii) Recognising that this data may not affect the Boundary Commission's proposals for City Ward numbers, to support the County Labour Group's submission in case Cambridge District will be allocated twelve County Councillors, while continuing to investigate the accuracy of the elector numbers and the potential impact on the number of County Councillors allocated to each District and the City's total share of overall County Councillors.

On a show of hands the following proposal was agreed unanimously:

iv) To agree that co-terminosity between County Council Divisions and City Council Wards is very desirable for good governance and any period when this is not the case should be as short as possible.

On a show of hands the following proposal was lost by 3 votes to 3 (and on the Chair's casting vote):

v) To note the position of the Liberal Democrat Group below:

As the Labour submission was based on numbers now shown to be flawed, it should not go forward.

Also the Labour submission pays little regard to the principle set out by the Commission that schemes need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities;

a) As primary schools tend to be the focus of their community, keeping boundaries some way from them is good practice. In the Labour scheme, Mayfield School, Park Street School and St Philip's School are all divided from a sizeable section of their immediate catchment area.

b) Dividing the dense community in the Park Street area into two Wards does not respect that local community

c) Taking the northern part of Romsey to put it with Barnwell (Abbey) was suggested by Labour at the last review and provoked an unusually large negative response from the residents as people in that area consider that they live in Romsey which has a very clear community identity.

d) Taking account of long standing boundaries is also considered to be good practice.

There is a very long established boundary between the North and West of the city and the South and East, along the river and the line of Elizabeth Way, East Road, Gonville Place, Lensfield Road and Fen Causeway to the river again. This, with minor flexibility around, for example, Lensfield Road, is very well established for nearly 50 years and separates the city into two equal halves. The Labour submission ignores this boundary.

On a show of hands the following proposal was agreed unanimously:

vi) To agree to respond to the next phase of the Boundary Commission's consultation after consideration by the Civic Affairs Committee.

On a show of hands the following proposal was lost by 3 votes to 3 (and on the Chair's casting vote):

vii) To forward the minutes of the Civic Affairs Committee to the Boundary Commission as part of the City Council's submission.

Resolved:

i) To convey to the County Council and the Boundary Commission the updated estimates about the numbers of electors in the City in the paragraphs below:

REVISED ESTIMATES ON CAMBRIDGE ELECTORS

The County Council's submission to the Boundary Commission was based on numbers taken from the Electoral Register of February 2014 and the projections for new housing made in December 2013.

These numbers understate the figures for the City in two principle ways:

i) They overlooked new student accommodation projected to house 2,410 students. As University records show that approximately 16% of students are not citizens of the UK, EU or a Commonwealth country, it is reasonable to assume that 84% (ie 2,025) are expected to be eligible to vote in UK elections.

ii) The most recent projections for new housing in the City, published in December 2014, updates information about housing that should be considered as part of the review period. Some sites should be included as they will be brought forward quicker than previously expected eg. in Queen Edith's division. It also shows that some new build has been wrongly allocated to the present wards. Much of the new build on the Darwin Green site will not be in the present Castle ward as previously expected, but in Arbury and the new build on the CB1 site will be in the present Trumpington Ward rather than Petersfield. These errors of placement have now been accepted by the Boundary Commission which reissued its data last week.

iii) The December 2014 projections for housing, and the consequent calculations for numbers of electors, are not yet available for the other Districts. The overall numbers for the County are therefore uncertain.

ii) To convey to the Boundary Commission that projected numbers in the rest of the County are uncertain and these might make the City under-represented if they retain the proposed 63 Divisions, in that Divisions in the City could be significantly larger than those in the rest of the County.

iii) Recognising that this data may not affect the Boundary Commission's proposals for city ward numbers, to support the County Labour Group's submission in case Cambridge District will be allocated twelve County

Councillors, while continuing to investigate the accuracy of the elector numbers and the potential impact on the number of County Councillors allocated to each District and the city's total share of overall county councillors.

iv) To agree that co-terminosity between County Council Divisions and City Council Wards is very desirable for good governance and any period when this is not the case should be as short as possible.

v) To agree to respond to the next phase of the Boundary Commission's consultation after consideration by the Civic Affairs Committee.

15/6/CIV Ernst & Young Report on Audit of Grant Claims

The committee received a report from the Head of Finance and the Director of Ernst and Young regarding audit of grant claims.

In response to members' questions the Benefits Manager and the Director of Ernst and Young said the following:

- i. The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) look at a small sample in order to devise the correct methodology.
- ii. A net increase in subsidy to the Local Authority of £14,017 was expected.
- iii. The small error identified did not point to a fundamental flaw in the system.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Note the contents of the Ernst and Young report, attached at appendix 1 to the officer's covering report.
- ii. Note the impact of information received after the submission of the Ernst and Young report.

15/7/CIV 2013/14 Audit Scale Fee Variation

The committee received a report from the Head of Finance regarding the 2013/14 Audit Scale Fee Variation.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Note the report

15/8/CIV Council Tax Base and Business Rates Calculations

The committee received a report from Head of Finance regarding Council Tax Base and Business Rates Calculations.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Recommend Council to formally confirm the delegation to the Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance) of approval of the Council Tax Base and submission of the National Non-Domestic Rates Forecast Form (NNDR1) for each financial year.

15/9/CIV Planning Code of Good Practice

The committee received a report from the Head of Planning Services regarding the Planning Code of Good Practice.

In response to members' questions the Head of Planning Services said the following:

- i. Changes made to the Code under Section 4 enabled Councillors to take a more active role in applications in their Wards without the fear of bias or predetermination. However there was a need to approach all planning applications with an open mind and be able to weigh up all arguments up until the point a decision is made.

The committee thanked for the officer for a detailed report.

The Deputy Independent Person proposed, and the committee supported, the following additional recommendations:

- i. That the Code be circulated to all Councillors, not just those on the Planning Committee.
- ii. That the Code be reviewed every 3 years.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Endorse the approval of the updated Planning Code of Good Practice.
- ii. Recommend circulation of the final Code to all Councillors, not just those on the Planning Committee.
- iii. Recommend that the Code be reviewed every 3 years.

15/10/CIV Pay Policy Statement 2015/16

The committee received a report from the Head of Human Resources regarding the Pay Policy Statement 2015/16.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Recommend to Council the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report.
- ii. Delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources to amend the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 should there be agreement on a pay offer for Chief Executives and/or Chief Officers.

15/11/CIV Calendar of Meetings 2015/16

The committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager regarding the Calendar of Meetings 2015/16.

In response to members' questions the Democratic Services Manager said the following:

- i. Planning Committee had been scheduled for 4 May 2016 (prior to the elections on 5 May 2016) to ensure that the committee would be quorate. Agreed to discuss this further with the Head of Planning Services.
- ii. Agreed that the Joint Staff Employer Forum (JSEF) would be moved from 28 July 2015 to the 21 July 2015 to avoid the school holidays.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Agree the 2015/16 meetings calendar subject to:
 - Joint Staff Employer Forum (JSEF) being moved from 28 July 2015 to the 21 July 2015.
 - Further discussions taking place with the Head of Planning Services regarding the Planning Committee on 4 May 2016.

15/12/CIV Membership of Chief Officer Performance Review

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Amend membership of the Chief Officer Performance Review Working Group as follows:

Councillor Price to replace Councillor O'Reilly

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm

CHAIR