

meeting Administration Committee: Urgency Sub-Committee

date 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010 agenda item number **8**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE MANAGER (MEMBER SUPPORT)**

### **MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To consider draft proposals from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on the district electoral boundaries in Mansfield and consider whether to respond to the consultation.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 The Administration Committee received a report on the review being undertaken by the then Boundary Committee for England (which has recently been replaced by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England). There were no direct implications on the County Council of proposals on the electoral arrangements in Mansfield, therefore the Administration Committee agreed to keep a watching brief and to consider whether to respond when the draft recommendations were published.
- 2.2 The Commission's prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector's vote being worth the same as another's. In doing so it must have regard to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1992 to:
- a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities
  - b) secure effective and convenient local government, and
  - c) secure equality of representation

#### **3. Commission Proposals**

- 3.1 The review was requested by Mansfield DC to consider the introduction of single-member wards and an overall reduction in the number of members. The LGBCE considered representation on the size of the Council and determined that it would recommend a reduction from 46 members to 36.
- 3.2 Consequently, proposals were invited on ward boundaries. Mansfield District Council produced a district-wide scheme which took the five

county electoral divisions as the starting point. These divisions (Warsop, Mansfield North and Mansfield Woodhouse, South Mansfield, West Mansfield, and East Mansfield) also form the basis for Mansfield DC's community engagement with local residents, partners and businesses which is conducted through four area assemblies and the pilot area partnership in Mansfield North and Mansfield Woodhouse

- 3.3 The Council considered that using these five areas as the foundations for the review not only provided the mechanism for allocating the thirty six members across the district but also provided for convenient and effective local government as it was consistent with existing arrangements and therefore would be understood by the electorate.
- 3.4 County Council officers were aware that Mansfield DC's proposals were based on coterminosity with the county electoral divisions. In the light of the views expressed at the Administration Committee this principle was supported.
- 3.5 The draft proposals published by the LGBCE which are summarised in the Appendix broadly follow the district council's proposed scheme.
- 3.6 However, there are two areas where the LGBCE's proposals involve moving areas between county electoral divisions and therefore breach the principle of coterminosity:
  - a) Moving the Carlton Street cul-de-sac from South Mansfield (Carr Bank ward) into North Mansfield (Yeoman Hill ward) and moving the College Street cul-de-sac from North Mansfield (Yeoman Hill ward) into South Mansfield (Carr Bank ward). The LGBCE considers that since there are no direct road links into the wards in which the Council proposed that they be located its proposals better reflect the identities and interests of local communities.
  - b) Moving properties to the north side of Chester Road North, including Oxclose Lane and Crammer Grove) from West Mansfield (Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill) to North Mansfield (Sherwood ward). The LGBCE was concerned about the size of the Bull Farm and Pleasley ward. It notes that Chester Road North separates the properties from the rest of the ward and that there are good road links into Sherwood ward. Consequently its proposals are designed to increase electoral equality.
- 3.7 Although the LGBCE acknowledges the Mansfield DC's preference for coterminosity it considers that it is outweighed in these two areas by other statutory criteria.
- 3.8 The LGBCE's guidance on electoral reviews notes that  
  
"When we are conducting a review of a county council, we will also be seeking to provide for 'coterminosity' between district wards and county divisions..."

Coterminosity occurs when district ward boundaries are used for county division boundaries; this is also a consideration of convenient and effective local government.

This improves the provision of convenient and effective local government by ensuring that electors in any district ward are clear who their county councillors are. However, it is necessary sometimes to divide district wards between county divisions in order to either minimise the levels of electoral inequality or better reflect communities”

#### **4. Comment**

- 4.1 As the Commission’s guidance recognises coterminosity between district and county council representation helps make two-tier local government more comprehensible for constituents both as electors and when seeking assistance from their local members.
- 4.2 Similarly, for elected members coterminosity makes communication between the tiers more straightforward.
- 4.3 Subject to any comments made by the sub-committee it is proposed to respond to the consultation to reinforce the argument that coterminosity is an important principle.

#### **5. RECOMMENDED**

It is recommended that

- I. A response to the consultation on electoral arrangements for Mansfield District Council be made along the lines set out in the report

**David Ellis**  
**Service Manager (Member Support)**

#### **Service Director (Finance) Comments (MB 17/05/10)**

There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

#### **Legal Services Comments (SLB 17/05/2010)**

By virtue of paragraph 10.7 of the delegation to Administration Committee set out in the Council’s Constitution, the Committee has responsibility for advising on electoral issues including revision of boundaries of and within the Council’s administrative area. It is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

**Background Papers Available for Inspection**

None

**Electoral Divisions Affected**

East Mansfield, North Mansfield and Woodhouse, South Mansfield, Warsop, and West Mansfield

## Summary of Proposals

Division	Proposed Wards	Current Wards
Warsop	Netherfield Warsop Carrs Meden Market Warsop	Meden Birkland
Mansfield North and Woodhouse	Manor Hornby Peafields Yeoman Hill Woodlands Sherwood Woodhouse Park Hall	Leeming Priory Robin Hood Sherwood
South Mansfield	Carr Bank Portland Newgate Racecourse Oakham Eakring Berry Hill Sandhurst Kings Walk	Berry Hill Eakring Portland Ravensdale
East Mansfield	Ransom Wood Lindhurst Ling Forest Oak Tree Kingsway Maun Valley Holly Newlands	Forest Town East Forest Town West Oak Tree Lindhurst
West Mansfield	Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill Abbott Ladybrook Grange Farm Brick Kiln Penniment Broomhill	Broomhill Cumberland Grange Farm Ladybrook Pleasley Hill