

Democracy and Standards Committee

North Northamptonshire Council

Monday 26th July 2021

At 7:00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby.

Members in Attendance:

Councillor Lora Lawman (Chair), Councillor Michael Tye, Councillor Lyn Buckingham, Councillor Gill Mercer and Councillor Emily Fedorowycz.

Officers in Attendance:

Adele Wylie (Monitoring Officer), Paul Goult (Democratic Services Manager) and Martin Hammond (Executive Director).

08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Kirk Harrison and Councillor Macaulay Nichol.

09 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2021 had been circulated.

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2021 be agreed.

10 Notifications of requests to address the meeting

There were no requests to address the Committee on this occasion.

11 Parliamentary Boundary Review

The report before Committee outlined the proposals being made by The Boundary Commission for England as they effected North Northamptonshire residents, and examined the changes that may be made to improve the proposals. The proposals were currently subject to a consultation ending on 2nd August 2021; the Committee were being requested to formulate a draft response on behalf of the Council to the consultation. Any draft response agreed by the Committee would be forwarded to Full Council on 28th July 2021 for ratification.

It was noted that currently North Northamptonshire was covered by three parliamentary constituencies which sat wholly within and aligned to its external boundary, except for the southern part of the Earls Barton ward where 4 parishes were currently included in the Daventry constituency.

North Northamptonshire councillors had been made aware of the Commission's proposals and invited to submit comment for consideration by the Committee. The representations received had been circulated to Committee members.

Martin Hammond (Executive Director) had collated responses received and had suggested some options available to the Council for inclusion in any final consultation response. These were detailed within the report.

The report detailed the criteria and parameters that the Commission were working within, as set by Government, in undertaking the Review. In relation to North Northamptonshire to meet the upper electorate limit/constituency (77,062) it would be necessary for both the existing Corby and the existing Wellingborough constituencies to reduce their electorate, with the existing Kettering constituency needing to increase its electorate.

The report further detailed the Commission's initial proposals.

Concerns were raised regarding several the proposals, including transferring Raunds from the Corby Constituency into Wellingborough, transferring the parish of Finedon into Kettering, and the whole of East Barton ward and the southern half of Irchester ward into constituencies predominantly within West Northamptonshire.

The Committee appreciated the difficulties faced in drawing-up proposals to ensure equality across the constituencies. Given the size of Wellingborough but particularly Corby constituency, there was a need for significant changes. Committee members whilst noting that some change was required felt that the Council should try to ensure community identity was protected as much as possible. In addition, the Committee were keen to minimise the potential disruption for electors, particularly in relation to any transfer of electorate out of the North Northamptonshire area.

The report included options for the Committee to consider and use as a "starting point" for developing recommendations to forward to Full Council. The Committee noted that the data used by the Commission in formulating its proposals was obtained in 2020, and whilst some growth forecasting had been factored in, it was recognised by the Committee that all three constituencies included significant future development and expansion proposals. It was likely that any proposals eventually agreed by Government would be out-of-date in a short period of time.

Councillor Mercer recognised the difficulties faced by the Commission; a Review was never an easy exercise and there would always be perceived to be "winners and losers". Councillor Mercer agreed that the Council should lobby the Commission to retain greater community identity than that currently indicated in the proposals as circulated.

Some concern was raised that several town and parish councils in the area were unaware of the Commission's proposals and consultation period. Councillor Fedorowycz stressed the importance of ensuring local residents understood the impact of any Review, and that the Council assisted in ensuring that those residents directly impacted by the Review's final outcomes were informed, so it was clear where they fell in relation to the three constituencies.

In relation to the names of the constituencies it was agreed that Corby change to *Corby and East Northamptonshire*, that Kettering remained unaltered, and that Wellingborough change to *Wellingborough and Rushden*.

Following detailed discussion and consideration of representations made, Councillor Gill Mercer MOVED, and Councillor Emily Fedorowycz SECONDED the recommendations to go forward to Full Council.

RESOLVED that: -

The Committee recommend to Full Council the following alternative proposals –

- (i) That the ward of Raunds be moved back into the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency;
- (ii) That the town of Irthlingborough (polling districts SD and SF) be transferred to the Wellingborough constituency but the remainder of the ward be retained within the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency;
- (iii) That the whole of the Finedon ward be retained within the Wellingborough constituency and not split between constituencies;
- (iv) That the polling districts of Stanion, Little Stanion, Cottingham, Middleton and East Carlton be transferred from the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency to the Kettering constituency, but the remainder of the Corby Rural ward be retained within the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency;
- (v) That the boundary between the Wellingborough and Daventry constituencies should follow the line of the parish boundary of Wellingborough rather than the ward boundary, to include the urban extensions of Redhill Grange and Glenvale Park within the Wellingborough constituency (polling districts WMA and WGB); and
- (vi) That the constituency names should be – Corby and East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden.

12 Items to Note

There were no items to note.

13 Exempt Items

There were no exempt items.

14 Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

CHAIR

DATE

