

SPECIAL CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 29 October 2003
6.45pm – 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors C Rosenstiel (Chair), Boyce, Durrant, Hart, R Smith, Stebbings and Ward; also present Councillors Bagnall and Dryden.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

03/CIV/54 PROPOSALS FOR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IN THE COUNTIES OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

The Committee considered proposals from the Boundary Commission to alter the Parliamentary Constituency boundaries. The proposals, set out in the papers circulated with the agenda, had been discussed at an earlier informal meeting at which local Political Party Agents and the Ward Councillors present had been invited to comment. A petition from residents of Cherry Hinton objecting to the exclusion of the village from the City had also been discussed at that meeting (note attached). The only proposed change affecting the City was for Trumpington (using the new Ward boundary which would come into effect in 2004) to be moved from the South Cambridgeshire Constituency to the Cambridge Borough Constituency.

The Chair proposed that the City Council support the Boundary Commission's provisional proposals and that the officers be instructed to represent this position at any Inquiry. The proposal was put to the vote and, on a show of hands, 4 Members voting in favour and 3 against, the proposal was carried.

Resolved

1. That the Boundary Commission's provisional proposals for the Parliamentary Constituencies of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough of 18th September be supported; and
2. That the officers be instructed to support the proposals relating to the Cambridge Borough Constituency at any ensuing Inquiry.

03/CIV/55 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL ELECTIONS 2004: ELECTORAL PILOTS

The Chief Executive introduced two consultation documents that had been circulated with the agenda, on which comments had been invited in November. Each paper set out proposals for pilots for the combined elections in 2004 with a view to modernizing the electoral system and making it more straightforward, efficient and secure, while increasing opportunities that people had to vote. The document from the Electoral Commission concerned the location of local pilot schemes. The paper from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department of Constitutional Affairs concerned the

form which the pilot schemes might take, including all-postal and electronic voting. The subject had been considered at a recent meeting of Returning Officers for the Eastern Region where strong reasons had been given for not putting the region forward as a pilot. During a brief discussion, Members made the following points for any future pilots:

- An issue would be how to deal with the colleges and other multi-occupied premises;
- While different voting methods might be required, it was important to maintain the integrity of the election ballot;
- There was some evidence to suggest that all-postal ballots increase the participation of the electorate.

Councillor Bagnall, authorized to speak as a casual observer, declared an interest as a potential European election candidate next year.

Resolved by 4 votes to 3

1. Not to support a pilot taking place in the Eastern Regional Constituency, of which Cambridge is a part, on the basis that the City Council, along with other district councils in the region, would be holding all-up elections next year which, together with European elections, would make the combined election complex logistically.
2. That the Committee re-iterate its general concern that all-postal ballots increase the potential for fraud and undue influence being brought to bear on voters.

03/CIV/56 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Committee agreed to rearrange the next Committee meeting, scheduled for 19th November, to Wednesday 26th November in view of an Extra Ordinary meeting of the Council being called to meet on the 19th.