

Wiltshire Council

Council

13 November 2012

Electoral Arrangements – 2013 elections

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update members with the results of consultation relating to anomalies within the electoral arrangements for 2013, to recommend the making of an Order to correct them and to make changes at Warminster and Royal Wootton Bassett.

2. Background

- 2.1. The 2009 County of Wiltshire (Electoral Changes) Order set up the electoral arrangements for the new unitary council and a number of parish and town councils. The unitary arrangements took effect from 2009, but the town arrangements will not take effect until the 2013 elections. The 2009 Order contained inaccuracies in respect of Corsham and Calne Town Councils, and also introduced an elector-to-seats ratio on Warminster Town Council which is unbalanced.
- 2.2. Details of these errors and anomalies were presented to Council in July, and it was resolved to undertake further consultation as the first part of making an order under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 2.3. In July, Members resolved to consult on to altering the electoral names of the unitary divisions and town wards in Royal Wootton Bassett to adopt the “Royal” prefix. Any change of electoral name would also require the making of an Order, but this could be included in the same order as for Calne, Corsham and Warminster.
- 2.4. Responses to the consultation are set out below.

3. Calne Town Council

Final recommendations of BCE review (with seats)	2009 Order (with seats)
Calne Town Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Calne Chilvester & Abberd (4), Calne North (5) Calne Central (5) Calne South (5).	The parish is divided into four wards named respectively <u>Calne Chilvester and Abberd (3)</u> , Calne North (5) Calne Central (5) Calne South (5)

- 3.1. Anomaly – The Order did not reflect the findings of the review. There should be 19 seats in total, with four representing Calne Chilvester and Abberd town ward, not three.
- 3.2. The Council’s preferred option, as set out in the July Council report, was for Calne Town Council to consist of 19 councillors, representing four wards: Calne Chilvester & Abberd (4) Calne North (5), Calne Central (5) and Calne South (5).
- 3.3. The only response was received from the town council, who support the council’s preferred option.

4. Corsham Town Council seats

Final recommendations of BCE review (with seats)	2009 Order (with seats)
Corsham Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing <u>three</u> wards: Corsham Town (7), Corsham Pickwick (7), Corsham Gastard (2), Corsham Neston (3) Corsham Rudloe (1).	The parish shall be divided into <u>five</u> wards which shall be named: Corsham Town (7) Corsham Pickwick (7) <u>Corsham Gastard (3)</u> and Corsham Rudloe (1)

- 4.1. Anomaly – The review correctly identified the names of the town wards described in the review report, but the recommendation refers to three wards, not the five listed. The 2009 Order correctly refers to five wards, but omits all reference to the three proposed seats at Corsham Neston. It also shows Corsham Gastard with three seats, not two.
- 4.2. The Council’s preferred option, as set out in the July Council report, was for Corsham Town Council to consist of 20 councillors representing five wards: Corsham Town (7), Corsham Pickwick (7), Corsham Gastard (2), Corsham Neston (3) and Corsham Rudloe (1).
- 4.3. The only response was received from the town council, who support the council’s preferred option.

5. Warminster Town Council seats

Final recommendations of BCE review (with seats)	2009 Order
Warminster Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Warminster Broadway (returning three members), Warminster East (returning three members), Warminster West (returning three members) and Warminster Copheap & Wylde (returning three members).	The Order correctly reflected the Final Recommendations of the review

- 5.1. Anomaly – the Warminster town wards are co-terminous with the unitary divisions, but the Warminster Copheap and Wylde division extends beyond the town boundary. By allocating the same number of seats to each of the town wards, the smaller Copheap town ward receives an over-allocation of town seats.
- 5.2. The Council's preferred option, as set out in the July Council report, was to increase the number of seats in Warminster Broadway, Warminster East and Warminster West from 3 to 4, and reduce the number of town council seats in Warminster Copheap from 3 to 1, making thirteen seats on the town council in total.
- 5.3. The proposal to increase the seats to 13 originated with the Town Council and has been re-iterated by them on numerous occasions. A further response was received from a Warminster unitary and town councilor during the consultation, in total agreement with the "4-4-4-1" solution.

6. Electoral names in Royal Wootton Bassett parish

- 6.1. From May 2013, the names of the town wards and Unitary divisions within the parish of (Royal Wootton Bassett) are Wootton Bassett North, Wootton Bassett South and Wootton Bassett East (although the East ward also takes in the parishes of Lydiard Millicent, Broad Town and Lydiard Tregoz).
- 6.2. With the conferring of the "Royal" prefix on the town and parish, it was felt this would be an appropriate time to consider altering the unitary division and town ward names to reflect this.
- 6.3. The Town Council supports the council's preferred option, and the only other response suggested that the name of the (Royal) Wootton Bassett East division should be amended to reflect the other parishes included in that division, whose combined electorate exceeds the number of Wootton Bassett electors in the division.

7. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 7.1. There are no significant equality issues arising from these proposals. At Warminster, the proposals will ensure better electoral equality.

8. Risk Assessment

- 8.1. The solution all of these anomalies lies within the powers of the council to resolve and need to be addressed in time for the 2013 town council election process.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. There are no significant financial consequences arising from this review.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolved power to local authorities to undertake governance

reviews. Paragraph 1.12 of Part 3 of the Constitution of the Council reserves this decision to full Council.

11. Proposals

- 11.1. As the town wards were established by a review which was completed by the Boundary Committee for England within the last five years, the council is obliged to obtain the consent of their successor body, the Local Government Boundary Committee for England (LGBCE) before an Order can be made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 11.2. The LGBCE has been consulted throughout the whole process, but their formal approval is still awaited. Subject to there being no objection from the LGBCE, it is recommended the provisions of the Statutory Instrument 2009 No. 531 The County of Wiltshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2009 be amended as follows:
 - 11.2.1. The Calne Town Council to consist of 19 councillors, representing four wards: Calne Chilvester & Abberd (4 members) Calne North (5 members), Calne Central (5 members) and Calne South (5 members), with no alteration to the areas shown on the 2009 Order maps.
 - 11.2.2. The Corsham Town Council to consist of 20 councillors representing five wards: Corsham Town (7 members), Corsham Pickwick (7 members), Corsham Gastard (2 members), Corsham Neston (3 members) and Corsham Rudloe (1 members) with no alteration to the areas shown on the 2009 Order maps.
 - 11.2.3. Warminster Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, representing four wards: Warminster Broadway (4 members), Warminster East (4 members), Warminster West (4 members) and Warminster Copheap & Wylve (1 member) with no alteration to the areas shown on the 2009 Order maps.
 - 11.2.4. The names of the Unitary Divisions of Wootton Bassett North, Wootton Bassett South and Wootton Bassett East and the town wards of Wootton Bassett North, Wootton Bassett South and Wootton Bassett East be amended by the inclusion of the prefix "Royal" in their titles with no alteration to the areas shown on the 2009 Order maps.
- 11.3. It is further recommended:
 - 11.3.1. The effective date for the commencement of the Order be set to provide for the effective conduct of the 2013 parish and town council elections in May 2013.
 - 11.3.2. Power be delegated to the Head of Legal Services to complete the Order in accordance with the contents of this report.

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Background Papers None