

COUNCIL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

Present: Councillor K Hastrick (Chair)
Councillors S Counter, A Lovejoy, H Lynch, N Shah, I Sharpe
and D Walford

Officers: Head of Legal and Property
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

There was a change of Committee membership for this meeting: Councillor Sharpe replaced Councillor Hines-Randall.

6 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

There were no disclosures of interest.

7 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2011 were submitted and signed.

8 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Committee received a report of the Head of Legal and Property Services detailing the proposed changes to the Parliamentary Constituencies in the Eastern Region and the Council's proposed response to the changes.

The Head of Legal and Property introduced the report. She informed the Committee that the Government wanted to reduce the number of MPs from 533 to 502 before the end of this Parliament. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission had been tasked with redrawing the constituency boundaries to ensure there was an electorate within five percent of the ideal of 76,641 electors. The criteria that the Parliamentary Boundary Commission had to have regard to were: geographical considerations including size and accessibility, local government boundaries as at 6 May 2010, boundaries of existing constituencies and local ties that would be broken. The proposal was to retain a Watford Constituency but to change some of the wards taken from neighbouring local authorities that were currently included in the constituency.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Legal & Property reported that the main issue was the need to have regard to existing constituency boundaries. He

acknowledged the difficult job faced by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission but the aim was to make every vote equal.

He said that the proposed response was a straight swap of wards which would avoid there being a knock on effect on other constituencies. He said that as part of a continuous conurbation, Abbots Langley and Langleybury had a more natural link with Watford than Moor Park. There were Watford Community Housing Trust properties in these areas and the Council retained nomination rights for these properties.

He added that he understood that the current constituency was too large and it made sense to move Carpenders Park into Hertsmere. Three Rivers District were also of the view that Abbots Langley and Langleybury should be in the Watford Constituency.

In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Legal & Property, said that there was not an overall South West Herts view. Official bodies like the Council, individuals and community groups and political parties could all express their views.

A Member said that the proposed response seemed very sensible and she hoped the Parliamentary Boundary Commission would listen. Other Members concurred and affirmed the links with Abbots Langley and Langleybury

RESOLVED –

that the response as set out in the report be agreed.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.30 pm
and finished at 7.40 pm