

# CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Report:** Special Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Polling District Boundaries

**Subject:** Polling District Boundaries

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission  
City Council

**Date:** 29th August, 2002  
30<sup>th</sup> September, 2002

**Ref:** 5/SP/PD/NK

**Part:** I

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## **Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to submit recommendations, through the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, to the Executive and the City Council following meetings of the Special Overview and Scrutiny Panel established to review the polling district boundaries.

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## **Corporate Strategy:**

The establishment of Overview and Scrutiny Panels forms part of the corporate strategy for implementation of that part of the modernisation agenda relative to new democratic arrangements.

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## **Financial Implications:**

None.

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## **Recommendations**

- (1) the recommendations detailed in the schedule overleaf and shown on the plans attached be approved;
- (2) the Chairman be requested to write to the Boundary Commission expressing concern at the split of the Freedom Fields development into different Wards;
- (3) the thanks of the Chairman be extended to Members and Officers for their participation during the meetings;

- (4) a copy of this report be circulated to all Members of the Council following it's consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

(Councillors Camp and Lemin recorded their abstentions in respect of recommendation (2) above)

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**Background papers:**

Report of the Electoral Registration Officer to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Schedule detailing the outcome of discussions between Councillors Stark and Wheeler on behalf of the Conservative and Labour Parties on the outstanding issues.

New proposals detailed on maps submitted relating to the Budshead and Ham Wards.

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# **REPORT OF THE SPECIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – POLLING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In accordance with Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act, 1983, the City Council must give effect to polling district boundary alterations following the Periodic Electoral Review.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission, at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2002, agreed that a Special Overview and Scrutiny Panel be formed specifically to look at the polling district boundaries and appointments were made to the Panel by the City Council on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2002.
- 1.3 The Special Overview and Scrutiny Panel: Polling District Boundaries met on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2002, to consider –
- (i) the report of the Electoral Registration Officer on proposals for polling district boundaries as shown on the plans submitted;
  - (ii) the comments of the Conservative and Labour Parties on the proposals of the Electoral Registration Officer together with amended proposals as shown on the plans submitted;
  - (iii) a schedule detailing the outcome of further discussions between representatives of the Conservative and Labour Parties on the amended proposals by the Parties;
  - (iv) new proposals detailed on maps submitted relating to the Budshead and Ham Wards.

## **2.0 Panel Structure**

### Councillors

Councillor Fry, in the Chair.

Councillors Camp, Miss Gillard, Lemin, Dr Mahony, P.J. Nicholson and Rowe.

### Officers In Attendance

Nigel Spilsbury  
Nicola Kirby

Senior Electoral Assistant  
Scrutiny Support Officer

## **3.0 Objectives**

- 3.1 The Panel had been asked to comment on and provide an indication of polling district boundaries to be implemented in the 2002/03 Register of Electors.

3.2 The Panel's findings and recommendations would then be submitted for consideration to the Scrutiny Commission prior to submission to the Executive and the City Council. A decision was required by the City Council on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2002, to enable the publication of the new Register on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2002.

#### **4.0 The Detail**

4.1 In assessing boundaries and polling stations regard was had to convenience of the electors in voting, accessibility for disabled voters, as far as practicable polling stations to be situated within the polling district and the geography and topography of an area.

4.2 There was an additional purchase cost of £7,000 per mobile polling unit together with possible on-going election costs of £500 per unit. The units were also unable to comply fully with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

#### **5.0 Comments**

5.1 From the comments that were made during the course of the Panel's investigations, a number of important issues were identified which the Panel felt should be taken into consideration. These were -

- (i) the geography and topography of the Budshead Ward particularly within polling districts ED and EC and the need to assist electors at Badger's Wood and Holly Park;
- (ii) the possible inclusion of electors from the Castleton Close and Ashford Hill area within polling district LD (Compton Ward) and the unsuitability of Hillsborough NSU Church as a polling station resulting in a proposal to merge S27(LE) with voters from the former Drake Ward;
- (iii) the difficulty of identifying suitable central polling stations in the event of polling districts PA and PB and PE and PF being merged in the Efford and Lipson Ward;
- (iv) the proposed merger of polling districts KE and KF in the Ham Ward with a new central polling station, together with a proposal to enlarge polling district BDA;
- (v) the need for separate polling districts BC and KA (Ham Ward) in view of the parliamentary constituency boundary;
- (vi) the small number of electors in polling district D39-2(GEA) (Moorview Ward);
- (vii) the need for fewer polling districts within the Peverell Ward;
- (viii) the possibility of using the Hillcrest Family Centre as a polling station for SW7(SA) (Plympton Chaddlewood Ward);
- (ix) the possibility of using the Chaddlewood Community Centre at Westfield as a polling station for SW6(RF) (Plympton St Mary Ward);

- (x) the need to split polling district D13(CA) (St Budeaux Ward) having regard to the representations made to Officers by the governors of Barne Barton Primary School concerning traffic issues and the convenience of the electorate at Saltash Passage. There were also alternative premises located in the area which could be used as polling stations if available and deemed suitable by the Officers;
- (xi) the proposed merger of polling districts CC and BF (St Budeaux Ward);
- (xii) the need for fewer polling districts in the St Peter and the Waterfront Ward;
- (xiii) the possibility of using College Road Primary School as an alternative to the Mobile Unit at St Levan Road;
- (xiv) the division of the electorate within polling district S11 JC (Stoke Ward) into other polling districts;
- (xv) the possibility of using Prince Rock Primary School as a polling station within polling district S39 (NF) (Sutton and Mount Gould Ward);
- (xvi) the proposed merger of polling districts S40(NG) and S41(NH) (Sutton and Mount Gould Ward);
- (xvii) the division of the Freedom Fields development by Ward boundaries;
- (xviii) the use of schools and special schools as polling stations and at the request of the Panel and for information purposes only, a list of polling stations was circulated together with a list of pupil numbers at each school;
- (xix) the availability of postal votes.

5.2 Following discussions on the new proposals for the Budshead and Ham Wards, the Panel discussed the merits of referring the new proposals back to political parties for comment or deferring further consideration pending the attendance of Councillors Stark and Wheeler at the Panel. These options were rejected largely because of the timescales involved and the Panel's earlier decision not to call witnesses.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 The proposals of the Officers were accepted for the following Wards –

Drake  
 Efford and Lipson  
 Eggbuckland  
 Honicknowle  
 Moorview  
 Plympton Erle  
 Plymstock Dunstone  
 Plymstock Radford  
 Southway

6.2 The proposals of the Officers were accepted for the following Wards except for an alternative polling station in each Ward –

Plympton Chaddlewood  
Plympton St Mary

6.3 The proposals of Officers as amended by proposals of the political parties were accepted for the following Wards –

Compton  
Devonport  
Peverell  
St Budeaux  
St Peter and the Waterfront  
Stoke  
Sutton and Mount Gould

6.4 New proposals were submitted and accepted by the Panel in respect of the following Wards –

Budshead  
Ham

6.5 The Panel acknowledged a number of anomalies during their investigations which required further consideration in a future review.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

The Panel Recommends that –

- (1) the recommendations detailed in the schedule overleaf and shown on the plans attached be approved;
- (2) the Chairman be requested to write to the Boundary Commission expressing concern at the split of the Freedom Fields development into different Wards;
- (3) the thanks of the Chairman be extended to Members and Officers for their participation during the meeting;
- (4) a copy of this report be circulated to all Members of the Council following it's consideration by the Scrutiny Commission.

(Councillors Camp and Lemin recorded their abstentions in respect of recommendation (2) above)