



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A MEETING OF THE HART DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HARLINGTON WAY, FLEET ON THURSDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER 2010 AT 7.00 PM

Geoff Bonner
Chief Executive

CIVIC OFFICES, HARLINGTON WAY
FLEET, HAMPSHIRE GU51 4AE

AGENDA

**COPIES OF THIS AGENDA ARE AVAILABLE
IN LARGE PRINT AND BRAILLE ON REQUEST**

- 1. PRAYERS**
- 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
- 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL)**
- 5. PRESENTATION BY GROUP CAPTAIN SHELL OF RAF ODIHAM**
- 6. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 – QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

To receive any question from members of the public submitted pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12.

*Note: The text of any question under Council Procedure Rule 12 must be given to the **Chief Executive** not later than **Noon on Friday, 19th November 2010.***

7. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

To receive any questions from Members submitted pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 14.

Note: The text of any question under Council Procedure Rule 14.3 must be given to the Chief Executive not later than 5.00 pm on Monday, 22nd November 2010.

The text of any question under Council Procedure Rule 14.4 must be submitted to the Chief Executive before 10.00 am on Thursday, 25th November 2010.

8. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

9. CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

11. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The Minutes of the following Committees, which met on the dates shown, are submitted.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.1, Members are allowed to put questions at Council without Notice in respect of any matters in the Minutes to the Leader of the Council or any Chairman of the relevant meeting at the time those Minutes are received by Council.

Meeting	Date	Minute Numbers	For Decision
Planning Committee	20 th October 2010	36 - 40	
Standards Committee	21 st October 2010	9 - 16	
Cabinet	4 th November 2010	76 - 87	81 – Democratic Structures Working Group (Size of Audit Committee)
Planning Committee	10 th November 2010	41 - 45	

Recommendations from the following meetings ONLY if required -

Licensing Committee	15 th November 2010
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16 th November 2010

12. DRAFT RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION

A report from the Chief Executive is attached, the purpose of which is to recommend a draft response from the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission, expressing views on the future number of council seats following the current boundary review.

RECOMMENDATION

That the draft response set out in Appendix A be agreed.

Date of Despatch: 16th November 2010

HART DISTRICT COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 25 NOVEMBER 2010

**TITLE OF REPORT: DRAFT RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BOUNDARY COMMISSION**

Report of: Chief Executive

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ken Crookes, Leader of the Council

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend a draft response from the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission, expressing views on the future number of council seats following the current boundary review.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the draft response set out in Appendix A be agreed.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission is currently undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements for the District Council. The first part of that review is to determine how many councillors should sit on the District Council following implementation of the review. The Commission have asked for responses from the Council and other interested parties by 26 November.
- 3.2 Over recent weeks discussions have been held between the three party group leaders on the Council and officers about this issue.
- 3.3 Although it has not been possible to reach full agreement between the party groups, those discussions have nevertheless proved useful.
- 3.4 The attached appendix sets out a draft response based on officer views following those discussions.
- 3.5 Council is asked to approve or amend the response as it sees fit.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

CONTACT:
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Geoff Bonner – Chief Executive
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DRAFT RECOMMENDATION TO BOUNDARY COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE SIZE OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. Consideration of this issue has been based on three principles, which have been applied successively to produce the recommended result

Principle 1: A presumption in favour of 3-member wards

2. The Commission have indicated that they have a presumption in favour of 3-member wards in Councils such as Hart, where a third of the seats are up for election each year. This means that the total number of seats therefore needs to be divisible by three.

Principle 2: Creating a council of a size which can function effectively

3. The Council appears to function reasonably well at member level at present with 35 members.

4. Decreasing the number of members significantly would make it more difficult to allocate the various member positions (“offices”) satisfactorily, such as Cabinet portfolios, committee chairmanships etc. Historically local elections in Hart have produced Councils that tend to be evenly balanced between the two main party groups, with only small majorities one way or the other. This means that the controlling group typically only has just over half the total number of members from whom to select office holders. Given that a proportion of members are inevitably not able to put additional time into their Council roles, reducing the overall number of members might make it difficult for an administration to fill member offices and thus perform effectively.

5. Increasing the number of members might lessen this risk. However, even at present it is not always easy for the political groups to find enough candidates with the time to make a meaningful contribution to the Council. Increasing the number of seats might, therefore, increase the number of uncontested elections, or bring onto the council members who have difficulty finding the time to discharge their duties. Both these situations would be undesirable.

6. For these reasons it is recommended that the overall size of the Council should remain broadly the same as at present. Applying this conclusion to the outcome of Principle 1, that would suggest that in future the Council should consist of either 33 or 36 members.

Principle 3: Taking account of the main urban and rural communities in the district

7. It is considered desirable that, so far as possible, the new warding arrangements should produce wards that do not cross the boundaries between the main urban and rural communities in the district. This implies that there should be urban wards and rural wards, rather than wards which are partly urban and partly rural.

8. The district consists of two main urban areas:

- The contiguous urban area of Fleet, Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath (Area 1)
- The contiguous urban area of Yateley, Frogmore, Darby Green, Blackwater and Hawley (Area 2)

9. Wrapped around these are the remaining, mainly rural, parts of the district (Area 3)

10. The projected populations of these three areas in five years time are:

Area 1	31,626
Area 2	19,117
Area 3	19,368

Total	70,111

11. Conveniently, these figures equate almost exactly to a ratio of 5:3:3 (respectively) to each other. This implies that a total number of members divisible by 11 would allow the new ward boundaries to respect the different nature of these three areas – in other words, it would not be necessary to have any wards covering both an urban and rural area.

12. As already noted, Principles 1 & 2 taken together imply that the future council should have either 33 or 36 members. Principle 3 would suggest that 33, being divisible by 11, would give the best fit to the pattern of urban and rural communities within the district. Choosing a total of 36 members, on the other hand, would mean that some wards would have to cross the urban/rural boundaries.

13. On that basis, it is recommended that the number of Councillors in future should be 33, made up of eleven 3-member wards, of which five would be in the urban area around Fleet, three in the urban north east of the district, and three in the rural rest of the district.

Geoff Bonner
10 November 2010

COUNCIL

Date and Time: Thursday, 25th November 2010 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet

Present:

COUNCILLORS –

Ive - (Chairman)

Ambler	Glen	Murr
Appleton	Gorys	Neighbour
Axam	Haffey	Parker
Billings	Harward	Radley J E
Blewett	Healey	Radley J R
Butler C	Henderson	Simmons
Cockarill	Hunt	Singh
Crookes	Kennett	Street
Davies	Kinnell	Wheale

Officers Present:

Geoff Bonner	-	Chief Executive
Rod Hursthouse	-	Monitoring Officer
Andrew Tiffin	-	Electoral & Registration Services Manager
Tricia Jackson	-	Senior Committee Services Officer

46. PRAYERS

Councillor Jenny Radley led a short prayer.

Note: Councillor Street entered the meeting at 7.02 pm.

47. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th October 2010 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bailey, Barrell, Butler G, Evans, Maughan, Simpson and Southern.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL)

There were no declarations of interest made.

50. PRESENTATION BY GROUP CAPTAIN SHELL OF RAF ODIHAM

Group Captain Shell, Chinook Force Commander, gave a presentation on all aspects of the activities undertaken by the men and women of RAF Odiham especially the areas in which they had been deployed all over the world and more particularly in Afghanistan.

They were on call at short notice 365 days a year by the Ministry of Defence or the Home Office.

One of the main challenges was to manage the stress of those serving in Afghanistan. They served there for two months and returned home for ten. Group Captain Shell confirmed that they were fortunate to have good equipment and the Chinooks were being modified to cope with the dust in Afghanistan which was more like talcum powder and created great difficulties when landing and taking off.

Group Captain Shell thanked all those in Hart who supported RAF Odiham which was a very important aspect of helping families to cope.

The Chairman thanked Group Captain Shell for one of the most interesting presentations given to the Council and thanked all the staff at Odiham for the work they did which often put them in harms way. He felt the district was fortunate to have such men and women in our community and wished them all well and a safe and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Note: Councillors Harward, Blewett, Appleton, Glen, Henderson and Hunt entered the meeting at 7.05, 7.06, 7.08, 7.10 and 7.42pm respectively.

51. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 – QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received.

52. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions had been received.

53. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had attended the following events on behalf of the Council.

Friday, 29 th October	Berkeley Homes Launch of Edenbrook, Hitches Lane, Fleet
Thursday, 11 th November	Attendance at Gurkha Square Memorial
Sunday, 14 th November	Remembrance Sunday, St Swithun's Church, Yateley
Thursday, 18 th November	Inspire Business Awards, Basingstoke
Friday, 19 th November	Surrey Heath Mayor's Civic Dinner
Saturday, 20 th November	Tudor Rose Dance Festival, Harlington Centre, Fleet

The Vice-Chairman had attended All Saints Church, Fleet on Sunday, 14th November for Remembrance Sunday.

The Chairman drew the attention of Members to some forthcoming events, which he hoped they would support:

8th January – Fashion Show at The Elvetham in aid of Help for Heroes.

5th March – Civic Dinner

7th April – Volunteers' Recognition Day

54. **CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader of the Council, **Councillor Crookes**, announced:

“1. Fresh Start, Hart Neighbourhood’s catering project took part in People’s Millions bidding for £50,000 to extend and enhance their service. I am delighted to report they were successful in their bid. Congratulations to Cheryl Edwards and her team at Hart Neighbourhood Centre on this great achievement.

2. At the invitation of the Chair of Governors, I visited Connaught School in Aldershot, accompanied by Councillor Jenny Radley and Councillor Wheale. As members may know, there have been a few cases where parents in Fleet and Church Crookham have not been able to get places for their children at local secondary schools and have been offered a place at Connaught. We met the recently appointed Headteacher and toured the school, dropping in on several lessons. As a result I believe we would be perfectly happy to reassure parents that The Connaught School is a very positive and much improved and improving school. The Headteacher and Chair of School Governors are clearly motivated, dedicated and determined to make the necessary changes to make sure that their pupils achieve as much as possible. I shall however continue working with and pressing the County Council to address the local school capacity issues and have recently written to County Councillor Perry, the new Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, setting out our concerns prior to a planned meeting with him.

3. Yesterday I attended a reception at 10 Downing Street hosted by the Prime Minister and ministers from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Following a discussion with Grant Shapps, Housing Minister, I believe that in the medium term Hart will derive significant benefit from the recently announced New Homes Bonus. This topic is on the agenda at next week’s meeting of Cabinet. I had a further discussion with Bob Neill, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, and it is clear that over time the Government intend to restructure local government finance which optimistically may be to our advantage.

4. Members may have heard that the NHS is withdrawing some elements of support from Odiham Cottage Hospital. The situation is not yet clear, but I met trustees of the hospital together with James Arbuthnot MP and have arranged to meet with senior managers from the NHS in the next couple of weeks.”

The Cabinet Member for Planning, **Councillor Appleton**, had no announcements other than to record his thanks to the Head of Planning for all the hard work he had put in to the issue of Planning Obligations (Section 106 Agreements).

The Cabinet Member for Housing & Health, **Councillor Butler**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Recreation, **Councillor Kinnell**, announced:

“Many of you will be aware of the commitment that this Council has made to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Over the last three years we have placed priority on positively managing our environment in a variety of ways - from energy reduction to increased recycling of waste to the felling of trees for use as bio fuel. We have placed great emphasis on the management of our nature reserves and sites of special scientific interest and to date we have adopted formal management plans for three of those sites those being Odiham Common, Hazeley Heath and Elvetham Heath.

Today I am pleased to announce that on the 21st of October we signed an agreement with Natural England to draw down capital funds of £175K plus annual revenue funding of £3.5K towards a ten year management plan for Fleet Pond Nature Reserve. From the 1st November this Site of Special Scientific Interest, which also contains the largest natural lake in Hampshire, will finally have its own long term management plan. This will complete the first stage of our plan to ensure that our heritage, wildlife and environment is protected for the next decade.

As with the recently endorsed Odiham Common Management Plan the role of Natural England and the Environment Agency cannot be underestimated. Their work with our officers and other agencies to complete this plan before the impending spending cuts take effect is an example of how a number of different bodies can come together under the umbrella of this Council to achieve something worthwhile and lasting.”

The Cabinet Member for Environment, **Councillor Parker**, announced:

“The Joint Waste project is continuing. Scrutiny Committee last week considered the matter of the administering authority and is recommending that Hart be appointed. Basingstoke and Deane’s equivalent is considering the same matter as I speak, and both cabinets will decide the matter on 2nd December. Members will be aware that we are currently out to tender, and returns are due back on 17th December. Members have been advised that they can if they wish attend a workshop on 6th January 2011 to review tenders and raise questions. Details are in my email of 28th October and Sarah Incher’s of 10th November.

Yesterday I attended an event in London deputising for the Leader who was attending a much more exalted event. My event was in Marylebone where Grant Shapps, the housing minister, addressed a number of local authority leaders. I will circulate a link to members, but in addition to the new homes bonus mentioned by the Leader, there were three points that I have taken away and will share with members.

1. The “General Power of Competence” introduced in the Localism Bill will provide the opportunity for local councils to introduce any initiative so long as it is legal and what the residents want
2. Arising from the questions afterwards, the Localism Bill will abolish the LDF and replace it with an innovation called ‘The Local Plan’.
3. Government ministers do seem to be getting younger.”

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, **Councillor Singh**, had no announcements.

55. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT

The Chief Executive’s report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

56. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

Meeting	Date
Planning Committee	20th October 2010
No questions asked.	
Standards Committee	21st October 2010
No questions asked.	
Cabinet	4th November 2010

Minute No 81 – Democratic Structures Working Party

RESOLVED

That the membership of Audit Committee be increased to seven Members.

Planning Committee	10th November 2010
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No questions asked.

57. DRAFT RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The Council received a report from the Chief Executive in which he explained that the Local Government Boundary Commission was currently undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements for the District Council. The first part of that review was to determine how many councillors should sit on the District Council following implementation of the review.

The recommendation set out in the Appendix to the report was that the number of Councillors in future should be 33, made up of eleven 3-member wards, of which five would be in the urban area around Fleet, three in the urban north east of the district, and three in the rural rest of the district.

Councillor J E Radley moved an amendment which recommended that there should be 27 councillors.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was LOST.

Councillor Crookes moved the recommendation –

“That the number of Councillors in future should be 33, made up of eleven 3-member wards, of which five would be in the urban area around Fleet, three in the urban north east of the district, and three in the rural rest of the district.”

On being put to the vote, the motion was CARRIED.

Note:

1. Councillor J E Radley wished it recorded that he had voted for the amendment.
2. Councillors Aham, Blewett and J E Radley wished it recorded that they had voted against the motion.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- 1 There will be a **Special Meeting of the Council** immediately before the normal December meeting. This is to meet a statutory requirement for the Council to reform its current 'Executive Arrangements' The special meeting will start at 7pm pm Thursday 16 December, and the normal full Council meeting that evening will start immediately afterwards.
- 2 Work on preparing next year's **Budget** is continuing, although the major outstanding issue – the level of government grant the Council will receive next year - remains unknown. It is anticipated that the government will announce grant levels early in December. A meeting was held with Parish Councils in the district earlier this month to inform them of the District Council's financial position.
- 3 The proposed 'Enterprise M3' **Local Enterprise Partnership** submission, to create an LEP in North Hampshire, has been welcomed but not yet approved by the government. Ministers commended the submission that was made, but suggested that discussions should take place with authorities in Berkshire and Surrey to consider whether the bid could be strengthened by having a broader geographic base. These discussions are currently taking place and a revised submission is likely to be made in the new year.
- 4 As usual the Council's offices will be closed over the **Christmas/New Year** period, re-opening on Tuesday, 4th January 2011. The leisure centres will be closed on 25 & 26 December and 1 January, but will otherwise remain open, although on slightly reduced hours over the holiday period. The pools at Hart leisure centre will however be closed for maintenance purposes. The refuse service will operate in accordance with the advertised Christmas/New Year schedule.

Geoff Bonner
Chief Executive