

Halstead Town Council Ward Representation

Agenda Item 7

Portfolio Area: Leader of the Council
Report Presented by: Allan Reid

Background Papers:

Corporate Implications: Please refer to table at end of report

- Options:**
1. To maintain the existing representation of the St Andrews Wards
 2. To reverse the existing representation to provide 4 town Councillors for St Andrews (South) and 3 town Councillors for St Andrews (North)
 3. To increase the representation of St Andrews (South) from 3 to 4 town Councillors

Risks: None

Executive Summary

At the Boundary review in 2001 the Halstead Town Council Ward of St Andrews was divided, with the North ward being allocated 4 town Councillors and South ward being allocated 3 town Councillors.

This town Councillor allocation currently results in the 4 St Andrews North Councillors representing an average of 591 electors with the 3 St Andrews South Councillors representing an average of 949 electors. Halstead Town Council considers the allocation to be disproportional and has therefore made representation to the Returning Officer for this imbalance to be reviewed.

As the principal authority it is for the full Braintree District Council to consider this matter and determine the future allocation of Town Councillors.

Decision

To reverse the existing representation on the Halstead Town Council to provide 4 town Councillors for the ward of St Andrews (South) and 3 town Councillors for the ward of St Andrews (North)

Background

The Town of Halstead is divided into 4 Town council wards, St Andrews (North), St Andrews (South), Holy Trinity (North) and Holy Trinity (South). The current electorate of 8,793 is represented by 12 Town Councillors and the following table sets out further details of the electorate and representation of the St Andrews Ward currently under review:-

Ward	Households	Electorate	Number of Town Councillors	Average per Town Councillor	
				Households	Electors
St Andrews (North)	1,368	2,363	4	342	591
St Andrews (South)	1,845	2,846	3	615	949

On the face of it representation for St Andrews (South) would appear to be significantly “out of step” with St Andrews (North) and it is on this issue that the review was conducted.

There are no specific guidelines as to an ideal representation formula as every area is different in electorate, number of households and topography. It may therefore be a combination of factors which are more relevant in one area and less so in another.

Consultation

Over the years the number of Councillors representing the St Andrews ward of the Halstead Town Council has been challenged and as a consequence a formal review commenced in September 2009. In total there were 4 formal representations submitted and these are summarised below:-

Representation 1

Halstead Town Council

No official comment on representation arrangements.

Representation 2

Residents – Mr & Mrs Metcalf

“Any imbalance in representation should be corrected”

Representation 3

Braintree and Witham Labour Parties

To correct the imbalance by reversing the representation between St Andrews (South) and St Andrews (North)

Representation 4

Halstead Residents Association (on behalf of ward Town Councillors)

No change to existing arrangements

Returning Officer Comment

The Returning Officer has considered all representations and concluded that, on balance there is a strong case for the apparent imbalance to be addressed by reversing representation of the 2 wards.

Halstead Town Council have been given a further opportunity to comment on the Returning Officers recommendation and have indicated their acceptance of proposals as drafted.

This report concludes the review process and Members are asked to consider the various proposals submitted by consultees.

Corporate Implications				
Financial:	There are no financial implications			
Legal:	The review process has been conducted in accordance within Community Governance review framework			
Equalities & Diversity:	There are no issues			
Customer Impact:	None			
Environment & Climate Change:	None			
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Local Committees		Partners	Yes
	Public	Yes	Staff	
Key Decision:	Yes/No			
Public/Private Report:	Public			
Officer Contact:	Steve Daynes			
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