

THE SPECIAL MEETING OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Guildhall
Wednesday 25 March 2015

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor (Cllr Prowse)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Cllr Newby)
Councillors Baldwin, Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Brock, Bull, Clark, Crew, Denham, Donovan, Edwards, Foggin, Fullam, George, Hannaford, Henson, Holland, Laws, Leadbetter (part meeting), Lyons, Mitchell, Morris, Mottram, Owen, Pearson, Raybould, Robson, Sheldon, Spackman, Sutton, Williams and Winterbottom

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowkett, Choules, Shiel, Tippins and Wardle.

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ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EXETER

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support introduced the report detailing the Council's proposed submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on the new ward boundaries for the City. The Council had resolved on 20 January 2015 that the City Council should comprise of 39 Councillors with elections to continue by thirds. The cross party Electoral Review Working Group had met to discuss the proposed ward boundaries and had put forward proposals for 13 wards, each ward to be represented by three councillors, thus ensuring equality in voting across the city. The proposal had also taken into account the LGBCE's criteria which included reflecting the interests and identities of local communities.

The Leader stated that the cross party working group had met on two occasions to put together a submission that could be agreeable to the political groups on the Council. In response to comments received on the Council's proposed submission, he proposed an amendment to the recommendation with regards to the proposed Duryard, Magdalen and Priory and Topsham wards. The reasons for the amendments were:-

- Duryard – to be split into two wards, St James to be a two Member ward and Duryard to be a one Member ward. This gives recognition to the fact that the existing ward of St James is unique in having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan
- Magdalen – the ward to be named 'Newtown and St Leonards' to reflect the two major communities
- Priory and Topsham – retention of the existing boundaries along Topsham Road meaning reduced change to this community.

The Leader stated that anyone with an interest in the Boundary Review could put forward their submission to the LGBCE for consideration, the closing date for submissions were 30 March.

The Leader moved the recommendation with the amendments; this was seconded by Councillor Owen.

A Member stated his party did not support the Council's submission and would be submitting their own Party's proposals to the LGBCE.

Councillor Brock moved an amendment that the proposed Riverside ward should be named St David's and Riverside. The reason for the amendment was that she had received a formal request from the St David's Neighbourhood Partnership to retain the identity of St David's.

The Leader confirmed that this amendment was acceptable.

Councillor Lyons proposed an amendment that the proposed ward of Stoke Hill should be named St Katherine's after the priory which is on the edge of the proposed ward.

The Leader stated that this amendment was not acceptable.

The majority of Members supported the submission with the proposed amendments as the ward boundaries reflected the interests and identities of the local communities. The three Member wards would not be too large to affect representation even if they were politically split, as experience showed. The ward names were for electoral purposes only and would not require a change to the names of historic sites or areas of the city.

Some Members did not support the proposal as they had concerns regarding the formation of large, three member wards and that the loss of historic ward names would cause confusion with the electorate.

Members thanked all officers involved in putting this submission together.

In response to Members, the Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support stated that the report and submission had been published on the City Council's website in accordance with the Access to Information Regulations. The LGBCE had written to all community associations within the City and the consultation had been publicized in the Express and Echo. He outlined to Members the implications of the proposed changes put forward for the Duryard ward which would result in the one Member ward voting only once every four years and the two Member ward voting every two years.

RESOLVED that that the proposed ward boundaries, as indicated on the map and narrative attached to the report, form the Council's official submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, in response to its current consultation on the electoral review of Exeter together with the following amendments:-

- (1) Duryard - to be a St James – two member ward and Duryard - one member ward;
- (2) Magdalen – to be named 'Newtown and St Leonards';
- (3) Priory and Topsham – the boundaries revert back to the existing boundaries along Topsham Road; and
- (4) Riverside - be named St David's and Riverside.

In accordance with Standing Order 27(1), a named vote on the recommendation was called for, as follows:

Voting for:

Councillors Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Bull, Clark, Crew, Denham, Edwards, Foggin, Fullam, George, Hannaford, Laws, Lyons, Mitchell, Morris, Owen, Pearson, Raybould, Robson, Sheldon, Spackman, Sutton and Williams.

(24 Members)

Voting against:

Councillors Baldwin, Donovan, Henson, Holland, Mottram, the Deputy Lord Mayor and Winterbottom,

(7 Members)

Abstain:

Councillor Brock and the Lord Mayor.

(2 Members)

Absent:

Bowkett, Choules, Dawson, Leadbetter (left before the vote), Shiel, Tippins and Wardle.

(7 Members)

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.50 pm)

Chair