

**COUNCIL
23 JULY 2003**

**THE CYCLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN ENGLAND
(Acting Director of Corporate Services – Legal)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Electoral Commission published a consultation paper on the cycle of local government elections in England on 11 July. Responses are requested by 3 October 2003.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Parliamentary Boundaries Review Committee be reconstituted as the Electoral Review Committee to enable it to consider The Electoral Commission's consultation document on election cycles in England and to formulate a response on behalf of the Council.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The White Paper, *Strong local leadership – quality public services*, published in December 2001, noted that:

“The current cycle of local government elections is confusing....It is too easy for electors to lose track of when elections are to be held or how many votes they have on any particular day. And this arrangement can lessen the immediate impact of voters' behaviour on council control.”

- 3.2 In January 2003, the Government invited the Electoral Commission to review the cycle of local elections in England and identify options for change that would simplify the current cycle.
- 3.3 The consultation paper now published considers elections to principal local authorities (including mayoral elections), the Greater London Authority and parish councils.
- 3.4 In recommending any options for change, the Commission may consider changes to councillors' terms of office, the number of councillors for local authority areas and the number of and boundaries of local authority wards and divisions.
- 3.5 The consultation period extends until 3 October 2003. The Commission will consider all responses before formulating options for change to the current cycle of local government elections and will submit its final report to the Deputy Prime Minister by the end of January 2004. The Commission will publish its report at that time and make it available on its website.

- 3.6 The Parliamentary Boundaries Review Committee was established in June to consider the Boundary Commission's proposals for the review of parliamentary boundaries in Berkshire. It is now proposed that this Committee's terms of reference should be widened to include this latest consultation, together with a change of name to reflect a broader remit.

4 ADVICE OF STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 4.1 Will be reported orally

Section 151 Officer

- 4.2 Will be reported orally

Access Implications

- 4.3 None

Background Papers

The cycle of local government elections in England – consultation paper published by The Electoral Commission – July 2003

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