

Special Full Council

Thursday 4th August 2005

At 7.00pm in The Willow Room, The Willows Complex, George Street, Corby

Present: Councillor R Beeby (Mayor)
Councillors O'Neill, Boyd, Bromhall, Fawcett, Ferns, Gordon, Harley, Heggs, Hogston, Howard, Jackson, Kane, Massie, McEwan, Noble, Rodden, Scott, Smith, Torrie, Wade and Woolmer

26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Addison, Beattie, Forshaw, Latta, Pengelly, Rutt and Stanbra.

27. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests they may have in the business to be discussed and/or indicate whether this was prejudicial or non-prejudicial, the nature of the interest and whether they intended participating in the relevant agenda item.

No declarations were made.

28. Boundary Review

Full Council at its meeting on 14th July 2005, had agreed to the creation of a new Working Group to discuss the Council's response to the Boundary Committee's recommendations for electoral arrangements within Corby Borough. Full Council had been concerned that some of the recommendations did not adequately reflect the community identity issue within the Borough.

There had been particular concern at the proposal to mix urban and rural areas within the proposed Stanion and Old Village Ward. Members had felt they would like to explore the possibility of keeping the urban and rural areas separate.

The Working Group (comprising of Councillors Noble, Pengelly, McEwan, Stanbra, Jackson and Heggs) had met on Friday 22nd July 2005 to discuss their initial views. Officers from the Committee and Electoral Services Section had also been in attendance. Following the Working Group meeting, Officers had been directed to investigate options for resolving the following objectives:-

1. to re-integrate Corby Old Village area back into the urban area;
2. draw up options in relation to the Rural area of the Borough.

The respective recognised political groups had been reminded that they were able to submit their own respective representations directly to the Boundary Committee. These did not necessarily need to compliment the Council's official response. It had further been agreed that a special meeting of Full Council would be convened to confirm the Council's official response to the Boundary Committee's recommendations.

The deadline for responses back to the Boundary Committee was 8th August 2005.

The report before Members had been prepared by Officers and was based on comments made by the Working Group at its meeting on 22nd July 2005.

Proposal 1

The first proposal considered by Full Council was to re-unite Corby Old Village with East Ward, whilst ensuring that the variance for East Ward did not become excessive. It would therefore be necessary if this proposal was progressed to consider transferring part of East Ward into another ward. The report indicated that this could be achieved by transferring part of the proposed East Ward around the Clydesdale Road area into Lloyds Ward. Details of the subsequent electoral arrangements and variances were indicated within the report.

Proposal 2

The proposal involved the transfer of Corby Old Village into the proposed Central Ward. If Corby Old Village (total 1,072 electors) was transferred into Central Ward, there would be a need to increase the number of Councillors representing Central from two to three. The new amended Central Ward would therefore have three Councillors, a total electorate of 4,338 voters and a variance of -8.9%.

Members of Full Council thanked Officers for these proposals. Whilst they saw merit in both proposals, there was a general feeling that it would be preferable to transfer Corby Old Village into the Central Ward and this proposal was therefore duly MOVED and SECONDED.

RESOLVED that:-

In response to the Boundary Committee's recommendations it be proposed that Corby Old Village be transferred into Central Ward which would result in a total number of Councillors for Central Ward being three, with a total electorate of 4,338 and a variance of -8.9.

Having resolved that Corby Old Village be integrated into Central Ward, Members then considered how to address issues relating to electoral representation in the rural area of the Borough.

Members considered two options available to them, the first would see the creation of two wards, covering the rural area. One would be titled Rural East (Gretton, Stanion and Weldon), to be represented by three Councillors with a total electorate of 5,307 and a variance figure of 11.3%.

The second ward would be Rural West (Cottingham, Middleton, Rockingham and East Carlton) which would elect one Member, have a total electorate of 1,438 and a variance of -10.0%.

The second option considered by Members would see three Wards created. Stanion would be created as a single Member ward with an electorate of 1,768 and a variance figure of 11.2%. A second ward would be Rural West (Cottingham, Middleton, Rockingham and East Carlton) which would also be a single Member Ward with an electorate of 1,438 and a variance figure of -10.0%. The third ward would consist of Weldon and Gretton. This would return two Members, with a total electorate of 3,539 and a variance figure of 11.0%.

Either of the options would see the number of elected Members representing the Rural area as remaining at four. Some Members questioned the desirability of linking Weldon and Gretton. Whilst it was recognised that the two Parished areas had distinct community identities, unfortunately, due to the proposed pattern of development and regeneration within the rural area, to achieve the electoral equality criteria, it was necessary to include Weldon and Gretton within the same ward.

After discussion, it was formally MOVED and SECONDED that the proposed Wards of Stanion, Rural West and Weldon & Gretton be forwarded to the Boundary Committee for consideration as part of the Council's submission

RESOLVED that:-

In its submission to the Boundary Committee the Council recommend the creation of three wards to cover the rural area. These to be titled Stanion, Rural West and Weldon & Gretton (as indicated within the report).

Other Issues

Full Council briefly discussed the issue of ward names. The Boundary Committee in its recommendations had proposed a series of ward names and Members were invited to submit any comments that they wished included in the Council's submission to the Boundary Committee on this issue.

Members decided not to submit any comments on this issue to the Boundary Committee.

29. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 7.24pm.