

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNTY REVIEW PROCESS IN HAMPSHIRE 1929–1932

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ABSTRACT

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1929, Hampshire County Council along with other administrative counties was required to review the boundaries of the second and third tier authorities within its borders. As well as being a time-consuming process, it could also be a particularly contentious one. In the event, Hampshire used the opportunity to reduce significantly the number of relatively small second tier authorities, particularly rural district councils, and to adjust boundaries which sometimes gave rise to spirited local opposition. The arguments used by the County Council to justify changes and those resisting them, many of which were aired at an Inquiry conducted by a Ministry of Health Inspector at Winchester in late 1931, are considered.

INTRODUCTION

In a similar manner to other administrative county councils, between 1929 and 1932 Hampshire County Council (HCC) expended a considerable amount of time and effort in rearranging the boundaries of the second and third tier authorities within its borders. The process, known as county review, was triggered by the *Second Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government* issued in 1928 and the subsequent passing of the Local Government Act 1929. In preparation for the legislation which came into force on the due date of 1 April 1930, at its meeting on 25 February 1929, HCC appointed a Local Government Reform Committee (LGRC) ‘to consider and report to the Council at an early date as to the method in

which the additional duties with regard to Local Government to be transferred to the County Council can best be carried out’ (ACSPCC 1929/30, 57).

As explained in an earlier article, in which the county review process in the neighbouring administrative county of Surrey was examined, since ‘many people have an acute sense of place’ proposing and implementing changes to boundaries can often be a ‘source of conflict’ (Ottewill 2004). However rational proposed alterations might seem, emotional and political considerations frequently take precedence. In the sections which follow attention is given to the reasons for county review from a Hampshire perspective; the review process within the county; those proposals which proved to be the most controversial; and the resultant changes to the local government map. These involved:

- a) alterations to the boundaries of urban and rural districts (UDs and RDs) and civil parishes (CPs).
- b) mergers of RDs and CPs.
- c) the conversion of RDs, in whole or in part, into UDs and of UDs into RDs.
- d) the formation of new UDs, RDs and CPs.

In the case of municipal boroughs (MBs), boundaries could be altered but the authority could not be abolished since it had been established by royal charter unlike UDs which depended, for their existence, on statute law.

Source material has been derived from official records and newspaper reports. Not surprisingly, perhaps, it is the latter which tended to highlight the most problematic aspects of the county review process.

Table 1 Changes to local government areas in Hampshire 1919–1929

| <i>Authority for change</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Area reduced in whole^w or part^p</i> | <i>Area enlarged^e or created^f</i> | <i>Acres</i> | <i>Pop</i> |
|---|-------------|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ministry of Health Provisional Order Confirmation (Southampton Extension) Act, 1920 | 9 Nov 1920 | Itchen UD ^w South Stoneham RD:- Bitterne CP ^p North Stoneham CP ^p South Stoneham CP ^w | Southampton CB ^c | 2089 615 1314 1324 | 23147 3882 1902 2527 |
| The County of Southampton (Milton Urban District) Confirmation Order, 1926 | 1 Oct 1926 | Lymington RD:- Milton CP ^w | Milton UD ^c | 4730 | 3118 |
| The County of Southampton (Boldre) Confirmation Order, 1929 | 1 Apr 1929 | Lymington RD:- Boldre CP ^p | East Boldre CP ^c | 4285 | 691 |
| The County of Southampton (Whitehill) Confirmation Order, 1929 | 1 Apr 1929 | Petersfield RD:- Greatham CP ^p Headley CP ^p Kingsley CP ^p Selborne CP ^p | Alton RD:- Whitehill CP ^c | 749 1415 261 3084 | 567 3118 - 976 |
| The County of Southampton (Gosport Extension) Confirmation Order, 1929 | 1 Apr 1930 | Fareham RD:- Crofton CP ^p Rowner CP ^p | Gosport MB:- Lee on Solent CP ^c | 1064 724 | 1656 289 |

Key:

CB = county borough

RD = rural district

MB = municipal borough

CP = civil parish

UD = urban district

REASONS FOR THE REVIEW

In Hampshire, as elsewhere, the review was undertaken for a variety of reasons. The first was to replace the somewhat disjointed approach that had previously characterised boundary alterations at local level with a more comprehensive one. For example, in the ten years prior to 1929 there had been five significant changes in Hampshire (shown in Table 1).

As Pearce explains, such ad hoc arrangements were deemed to be inefficient and were 'not suitable for anything save a piecemeal approach to individual boundaries and authorities' (1980, 51). Furthermore, a substantial number of boundaries had been 'determined many years ago and ... [had] never been subject to any general review and the creation of new centres of population ... [had] in many cases rendered the existing boundaries inconvenient' (ACSPCC

Table 2 Non-county boroughs and urban districts – 1921 populations. Source: *Census Reports* (1921)

| <i>Non-county borough</i> | <i>Pop</i> | <i>Urban district</i> | <i>Pop</i> |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Aldershot | 28,764 | Alton | 5,581 |
| Andover | 8,572 | Eastleigh and Bishopstoke | 15,613 |
| Basingstoke | 12,723 | Fareham | 10,063 |
| Christchurch | 6,993 | Farnborough | 12,636 |
| Gosport | 35,560 | Fleet | 3,707 |
| Lymington | 4,600 | Havant | 4,402 |
| Romsey | 4,825 | Milton | 3,118 |
| Winchester | 23,791 | Petersfield | 3,934 |
| | | Warblington | 4,083 |

Table 3 Rural districts – 1921 areas and populations. Source: *Census Reports* (1921)

| <i>Rural District</i> | <i>Acres</i> | <i>Pop</i> | <i>Rural District</i> | <i>Acres</i> | <i>Pop</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
| Alresford | 42,315 | 7,351 | Hursley | 16,756 | 4,494 |
| Alton | 58,581 | 16,334 | Kingsclere | 45,985 | 8,493 |
| Andover | 65,554 | 11,842 | Lymington | 32,940 | 9,772 |
| Basingstoke | 72,759 | 12,639 | New Forest | 69,507 | 18,660 |
| Catherington | 13,144 | 4,757 | Petersfield | 43,515 | 11,144 |
| Christchurch | 20,205 | 4,753 | Ringwood | 36,447 | 7,387 |
| Droxford | 48,647 | 12,977 | Romsey | 31,496 | 7,070 |
| Fareham | 26,535 | 12,687 | South Stoneham | 16,960 | 12,348 |
| Fordingbridge | 36,184 | 6,217 | Stockbridge | 44,314 | 6,287 |
| Hartley Wintney | 53,448 | 20,454 | Whitchurch | 31,358 | 6,411 |
| Havant | 10,385 | 6,944 | Winchester | 60,634 | 12,266 |

1929/30, 63). Hence it was felt desirable to adopt a more systematic and thorough approach. At the time it was intended to undertake reviews every ten years. However, the Second World War prevented the second from being undertaken and in the post-War period plans were put in place for a far more radical overhaul of local government. Outside of Greater London, this did not actually occur until 1974.

A second reason for the review was the substantial variation in the populations of second tier authorities which are shown in Tables 2 and 3 for Hampshire’s urban and rural authorities respectively. As can be seen, for urban authorities these ranged from 3,118 (Milton UD) to 35,560 (Gosport MB) and for rural from 4,757 (Catherington RD) to 20,454 (Hartley Wintney RD). There were also substantial variations in the geographical spread of RDs, ranging from 10,385 acres (Havant RD) to 72,759 acres (Basingstoke RD). Similarly, the number of parishes constituting a RD varied from four (Christchurch) to 37 (Basingstoke).

Of particular concern were the very small authorities. As it was put in a report of the LGRC:

... districts vary materially in size, some of them are so small and have so small a rateable value as to make it difficult for them to bear the burden of works of any magnitude or to be able to afford to maintain a skilled staff to advise them in matters falling within their province ... (ACSPCC 1929/30, 63)

A third reason was the great diversity in the composition of RDs particularly with regard to the number and population size of their constituent parishes (see Table 4). There was also concern that many CPs had populations of less than 300, which meant that they were not obliged to have a parish council, although a few with populations of between 100 and 299 opted to do so, as the legislation permitted. In some RDs, such as Alresford and Kingsclere, a large majority of parishes were below the 300 threshold.

Table 4 Civil parishes – 1921 populations. Source: *Census Reports* (1921)

| <i>Rural District</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>300+</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>100-299</i> | <i>100-</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|----------------|-------------|
| Alresford | 19 | 6 | 31.6 | 11 | 2 |
| Alton | 23 | 13 | 56.5 | 7 | 3 |
| Andover | 27 | 16 | 59.3 | 9 | 2 |
| Basingstoke | 37 | 19 | 51.4 | 10 | 8 |
| Catherington | 6 | 4 | 66.7 | 2 | 0 |
| Christchurch | 4 | 4 | 100.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Droxford | 14 | 11 | 78.6 | 3 | 0 |
| Fareham | 10 | 8 | 80.0 | 1 | 1 |
| Fordingbridge | 12 | 5 | 41.7 | 4 | 3 |
| Hartley Wintney | 18 | 14 | 77.8 | 4 | 0 |
| Havant | 5 | 5 | 100.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hursley | 6 | 5 | 83.3 | 1 | 0 |
| Kingsclere | 16 | 6 | 37.5 | 6 | 4 |
| Lymington | 8 | 7 | 87.5 | 0 | 1 |
| New Forest | 14 | 13 | 92.9 | 1 | 0 |
| Petersfield | 14 | 10 | 71.4 | 3 | 1 |
| Ringwood | 6 | 2 | 33.3 | 4 | 0 |
| Romsey | 14 | 9 | 64.3 | 3 | 2 |
| South Stoneham | 9 | 8 | 88.9 | 1 | 0 |
| Stockbridge | 16 | 9 | 56.3 | 1 | 6 |
| Whitchurch | 8 | 4 | 50.0 | 4 | 0 |
| Winchester | 24 | 13 | 54.2 | 7 | 4 |
| Totals | 310 | 191 | 61.6 | 82 | 37 |

Lastly, with roads becoming a county responsibility and ‘the maintenance of unclassified roads ... [being] carried out by delegation to District Councils,’ it was acknowledged that some ‘were too small to form effective units of highway administration.’ Thus, again, there was a need for larger authorities ‘which would enable delegation to be put into operation’ throughout the county (ACSPCC 1930/31, 122).

Clearly in a county as extensive and diverse as Hampshire, the review constituted a far-reaching and challenging undertaking. There were many issues to be addressed and the review process needed to be sufficiently robust for them to be tackled effectively.

REVIEW PROCESS

The legislation required administrative counties to complete their reviews and submit a report to the Minister of Health, who was responsible for local government at that time, before 1 April 1932. However, in Hampshire, at least, it was felt prudent to expedite the review

because of a requirement arising from the transfer of responsibility, under the Act, for the administration of the Poor Law from the Boards of Guardians to the County Council on 1 April 1930. This involved HCC in establishing Local Sub-Committees known as Guardians Committees for each area, consisting of one or more district councils, into which the county was to be divided for the purpose of carrying out its new responsibilities ‘with regard to the relief of the poor’ and submitting their proposals to the Minister. In the view of the LGRC, it would be unfortunate if, having established Guardians Committees, changes had to be made as a result of revisions to the boundaries of urban and rural districts (ACSPCC 1929/30, 64). As the LGRC pointed out at a later meeting ‘it is desirable in future to avoid setting for one local government purpose, areas with boundaries running across those of areas for other purposes of local government’ (ACSPCC 1929/30, 125). Thus it was intended to proceed rapidly in consulting with the districts and adjoining CBs as prescribed by the legislation.

Table 5 Members of Local Government Review Sub-Committee

| <i>Name</i> | |
|------------------------|--|
| Lord Malmesbury | Chairman of Council. Alderman |
| Sir Thomas Taylor | Vice-Chairman of Council. Alderman, previously Cllr for Droxford |
| Mr C.L. Chute | Cllr for Monk Sherbourne |
| Sir Montague Foster | Alderman, previously Cllr for Titchfield |
| Captain P.C. Pearson | Cllr for Millbrook |
| Captain P.W. Seward | Alderman, previously Cllr for Petersfield |
| Mr W. Ingram Whittaker | Alderman previously Cllr for Lymington Rural East |

Table 6 Proposals for Guardians Committees. Source: ACSPCC 1929/30, 138

| <i>No</i> | <i>Name of area</i> | <i>Existing county districts comprised in the area</i> |
|-----------|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Aldershot | Aldershot MB Farnborough UD Fleet UD Hartley Wintney RD |
| 2 | Alton | Alresford RD Alton UD Alton RD |
| 3 | Basingstoke | Basingstoke MB Basingstoke RD |
| 4 | Christchurch | Christchurch MB Christchurch RD Fordingbridge RD Ringwood RD |
| 5 | Gosport | Gosport MB Fareham UD Fareham RD Havant UD Havant RD Warblington UD |
| 6 | Kingsclere | Kingsclere RD Whitchurch RD |
| 7 | Lymington | Lymington MB Lymington RD Milton UD New Forest RD |
| 8 | Petersfield | Catherington RD Droxford RD Petersfield UD Petersfield RD |
| 9 | Stockbridge | Andover MB Andover RD Romsey MB Romsey RD Stockbridge RD |
| 10 | Winchester | Eastleigh and Bishopstoke UD Hursley RD South Stoneham RD Winchester MB |

A letter, dated 15 May 1929, was duly sent to district councils inviting them to put forward suggestions, with the proviso that it would:

... not be possible in the limited time available to undertake any detailed review of the area of individual parishes. There are, however, a number of anomalies in parish boundaries; a number of parishes are too small to constitute practical units of local government; and there are a number of cases where movements of population or the growth of new centres of population indicate the need, in the interests of public health and other services, of an alteration of boundary or the amalgamation of two or more parishes (ACSPCC 1929/30, 140).

In July it was reported that a majority of district councils had responded with suggestions and a sub-committee of the LGRC had been set up to consider them. The membership of the sub-committee is shown in Table 5. As can be seen it comprised leading members of HCC, thereby signifying both the importance and sensitivity of their task.

In the meantime, proposals for Guardians Committees based on existing local authority areas had been made (see Table 6). Between July and November 1929 the sub-committee held 'a series of informal conferences in various parts of the County with representatives of District Councils.' On the basis of these discussions 'tentative proposals' were prepared. In so doing, the aim was to have authorities of sufficient size to be 'economically administered and with adequate financial resources.' It was also hoped to discontinue the practice whereby 'a number of appointments, only remotely related to each other' had been grouped 'in the hands of one officer.' In order to ensure that the 'tentative proposals' had been 'examined from every point of view' they were widely publicised (ACSPCC 1929/30, 224).

Under the legislation, before making any proposals, as previously mentioned, administrative counties were also required to consult with the councils of any adjoining CBs. For Hampshire this meant Bournemouth, Portsmouth and Southampton. In the case of Bournemouth, it was agreed that parts of the parish of Holdenhurst should be included in the borough. By contrast, Southampton did 'not desire to put forward any proposals for the

alteration of the boundaries of the Borough.' At this stage, Portsmouth was not mentioned (ACSPCC 1929/30, 337).

In the LGRC's report to the County Council, which was considered at its meeting held in July 1930, the following comments were made regarding the challenges the sub-committee had faced:

... the proposals ... [are presented] with a very large measure of general acquiescence, a far larger measure than at one time seemed possible; but they cannot ... [be presented] as a wholly agreed scheme for the reason that included in the Proposals are of necessity one or two recommendations on which the most divergent views are held and on which it was not possible at the conferences to arrive at either agreement or a compromise (ACSPCC 1930/31, 123).

It was explained that in these circumstances the sub-committee had adopted the alternative which appeared to members to 'meet the needs of the case.' The hope was also expressed that neither the LGRC nor HCC would 'endeavour to recast the individual proposals' since it was felt that 'the proper course' was to leave any disputes to 'the impartial arbitration of the Minister of Health.'

The proposed changes as presented in the LGRC's report are summarised in Tables 7 and 8. Notwithstanding the LGRC's recommendation that any changes be left to the Ministry of Health's inspector an attempt was made to amend two of them at a meeting of HCC held on 28 July 1930, thereby highlighting their controversial nature.

CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS

The first amendment was moved by Sir George Jeffreys, Councillor for the Dummer Division, and seconded by the Earl of Selborne, an Alderman, and was contained in following resolution:

That the proposals of the Committee be modified by the omission of the proposed transfer of the villages of Basing and Worting to the Borough of Basingstoke and that these villages remain in the Rural District.

Table 7 Proposed changes to boundaries of municipal boroughs and urban districts. Source: ACSPCC 1930/31, 125/6

| <i>Authority</i> | <i>Principal changes</i> |
|------------------------------|---|
| Aldershot MB | None |
| Alton UD | '... reduced by the exclusion of the Northern part and areas forming excrescences to the South-East of the district.' Extended by the addition of parts of the parishes of Chawton (excluding the village), Holybourne and Neatham. |
| Andover MB | '... reduced by the exclusion of the Northern rural parts, including Hatherden, Wildhern and Smannell'. Extended by the addition of the parish of Knights Enham and parts of the parishes Abbots Ann and Encott. |
| Basingstoke MB | Extended by the addition of the villages of Basing and Worting and parts of the parishes of Dummer with Kempshott, Cliddesden and Monk Sherbourne. |
| Christchurch MB | Extended by the addition of the parish of Highcliff and part of the parish of Hurn |
| Eastleigh and Bishopstoke UD | Extended by the addition of the parish of Chandlers Ford and parts of the parishes of Otterbourne, North Stoneham and Fair Oak. |
| Fareham UD | Extended by the addition of the parishes of Crofton and Hook with Warsash and parts of the parishes of Sarisbury, Titchfield and Portchester |
| Farnborough UD | Extended by the addition of parts of the parishes of Cove and Hawley |
| Fleet UD | Extended by the addition of parts of the parishes of Crookham and Elvetham and Hawley |
| Gosport UD | Extended by the addition of the parish of Rowner |
| Havant UD | Combined with most of Warblington UD and extended by addition of parishes constituting Havant RD and Waterloo and parts of the parishes of Blendworth and Catherington and Southwick and Widley |
| Lymington UD | Extended by addition of Milton UD, the parishes of Pennington, Milford-on-sea and Hordle and part of the parish of Sway |
| Milton UD | See Lymington UD |
| Petersfield UD | Extended by the addition of parts of the parishes of Sheet, Buriton, Langrish and Steep |
| Romsey MB | Reduced by the exclusion 'of a small part of Broadlands Park and a small area on the north transferred to the Rural Distict.' Extended by the addition of part of the parish of Romsey Infra. |
| Warblington UD | See Havant UD |
| Winchester MB | Extended by the addition of part of the parishes of Abbots Barton, Chilcombe (Without), Compton, Hursley and Weeke (Without) and a 'slight rectification of the boundaries with the Parishes of Sparsholt and Littleton'. |

This was defeated by 34 votes to 11.

Mr G A Beattie, Councillor for the Hursley Division, then moved and Mr H W Cobb, Councillor for the Winchester (St Bartholomew and St Maurice Division), seconded a second resolution:

That the Rural Parish of Chandlers Ford be added to the Winchester Rural District in place of being added to Eastleigh Urban.

Here the voting was 32 votes against and seven for (ACSPCC 1930/31, xx).

Table 8 Proposed changes to rural districts. Source: ACSPCC 1930/31, 126/7

| <i>Rural district</i> | <i>Principal changes</i> |
|-----------------------|--|
| Alresford | Abolished with parishes transferred to Alton RD, Basingstoke RD and Winchester RD. |
| Alton | Extended to include parishes from Alresford RD |
| Andover | Adjustments to boundary with Andover MB |
| Basingstoke | Adjustments to the boundaries with Basingstoke MB and Hartley Wintney RD and inclusion of parishes from Alresford RD |
| Catherington | Abolished with parishes divided between Havant UD, Droxford RD and Petersfield RD. |
| Christchurch | Abolished with parishes transferred to Christchurch MB and Ringwood and Fordingbridge RD |
| Droxford | Enlarged to include parishes from Catherington RD and Fareham RD |
| Fareham | Abolished with parishes divided between Fareham UD and Droxford RD |
| Fordingbridge | Combined with Ringwood RD and extended to include parishes from Christchurch RD |
| Hartley Wintney | Adjustments to boundaries with Fleet and Farnborough UDs and Basingstoke RD. |
| Havant | Abolished with parishes divided between Portsmouth CB, Havant and Waterlooville UD and Petersfield RD |
| Hursley | Abolished with parishes divided between Eastleigh UD, Romsey and Stockbridge RD and Winchester RD |
| Kingsclere | Combined with Whitchurch RD |
| Lymington | Abolished with parishes divided between Lymington MB and New Forest RD |
| New Forest | Extended to include parishes from Lymington RD |
| Petersfield | Extended to include parishes from Catherington RD and Havant RD |
| Ringwood | Combined with Fordingbridge RD and extended to include parishes from Christchurch RD |
| Romsey | Combined with Stockbridge RD and extended to include parishes from Hursley RD and South Stoneham RD |
| South Stoneham | Abolished with parishes divided between Eastleigh UD, Romsey and Stockbridge RD and Winchester RD |
| Stockbridge | Combined with Romsey and extended to include parishes from Hursley RD and South Stoneham RD |
| Whitchurch | Combined with Kingsclere RD |
| Winchester | Extended to include parishes from Alresford RD, Hursley RD and South Stoneham RD |

In Hampshire, as 'in nearly all counties', in response to objections 'public inquiries (held by engineering inspectors) were arranged' (Pearce 1980, 55). Not surprisingly, both of the previously mentioned proposals were the subject of considerable attention when the Ministry of Health's Inspector, Mr J R Taylor, conducted his Inquiry at the Castle in Winchester in March

1931. At the opening of the Inquiry, Mr F V Barber, the Clerk to the County Council, made it clear that he appeared primarily 'in order to supply the Inspector with such information as ... (he) could regard regarding the areas' concerned and 'considerations which had been brought to the notice of the County Council when ... [its] proposals were framed.' Moreover, 'he did

not propose to enter into the arena of conflict over ... [the] proposals' (HC 21.3.1931). This, however, in no way lessened the intensity of feeling surrounding a number of the issues with which the Inspector had to deal.

An indication of the animosity aroused by the proposals concerning the enlargement of the area of Basingstoke MB was reflected in the *Hants and Berks* headline, 'The Fight for Basing'. Although the inclusion of the parish of Worting in the borough was generally accepted, Basing was a different matter.

At the Inquiry powerful arguments were heard both for and against the transfer of Basing. One of those in support of the proposal and characterised as 'community interest', was presented by Councillor Falwell, Chairman of Basingstoke MB's Rating and Valuation Committee. Having reviewed the substantial numbers travelling by bus from Basing to Basingstoke, he went on to argue that:

Basing was really a dormitory of the town and was very close to it, being actually half a mile nearer to the Town Hall than the village of Worting. Basingstoke was the shopping, market and amusement centre for the people of Basing (HBG 27.3.1931).

On the other side, the most persuasive argument would appear to have been public opinion. In giving his evidence, the Clerk of Basingstoke RDC pointed out that 'Capt Llewellyn had presented a petition signed by 701 inhabitants of Basing, protesting against the inclusion of the village in the borough.' Moreover, W R. Hoare the RD councillor for Basing and chairman of Basing PC had explained the proposals at a specially convened parish meeting which 'about 250 parishioners' had attended and at which a resolution had been passed 'asking the Rural District Council to offer the most strenuous opposition to the inclusion of Basing village in the borough.' Moreover, 'to his great surprise' it had been 'carried without a dissentient voice' and if possible since the meeting the feeling of the villagers 'had become very much stronger.' However, as Pearce observes 'the weight given to the wishes of the inhabitants ... [was] always a problem', and quoting from the official guidance, while it was necessary to ensure that

local electors fully appreciated the case of the alterations, 'in the last resort ... consideration of public advantage ... [had to] prevail' (1980, 54). That said, in the case of Basing the villagers 'won the fight' and remained within the RD. However, 310 acres of Basing parish were transferred to Basingstoke MB.

Turning to the contention that the parish of Chandlers Ford, which was at that time within Hursley RD, should not be incorporated in Eastleigh UD, Mr Hiscock presented the case for it retaining its separate identity as a parish within the area of the newly constituted Winchester RD. First, it was mentioned that in October 1929 a referendum of electors had been held 'of whom 625 were against the present proposal, 13 in favour, and 18 remained neutral' (HC 21.3.1931). Second, there was an implicit assumption that Eastleigh desired the area for housing purposes and this was felt to be undesirable since:

... the whole of the parish of Chandler's Ford north of the railway was entirely rural; going towards the west it was a very beautiful district, and there was no necessity for it to be urbanised, and there was no demand for urbanisation.

Another witness, Mr Carpenter made the point that 'people came out [to Chandlers Ford] to get away from the urban atmosphere [of Eastleigh]' (HT 20.3.1931). Third, Mr Hiscock 'stressed the hardship which would be caused [by] Chandler's Ford people having to pay the higher rates of Eastleigh ... which they did not want and argued that the area could be efficiently administered by Winchester Rural District Council.' Another witness had mentioned that Eastleigh's rates were 15s 2d in the £ while those for Chandler's Ford were 9s 8½d (HT 20.3.1931).

Amongst the arguments of those in favour of including Chandlers Ford in Eastleigh was again that of 'community interest'. As it was put by Mr Tristram Eve, 'Chandlers Ford was destined to become the "West End" of Eastleigh ... [and] there was a material community of interest [between them].' From a practical point of view, Eastleigh's Engineer and Surveyor 'stated that the new sewerage scheme was designed for a population of 40,000 and would be capable

of coping with the whole added area' (HT 20.3.1931). Such arguments were sufficient to win the case for most of the parish of Chandlers Ford becoming part of Eastleigh UD, with 1,770 out of 1,836 acres being transferred, and the remainder being added to North Baddesley CP.

Returning to the north-east of the County another issue, which was considered at the Inquiry, concerned the RD to which the new Hook CP, formed out of parts of the parishes of Newnham (908 acres), Odiham (741), Nateley Scures (207) and Up Natley (5), should be allocated. Described as a 'tug-of-war between Basingstoke and Hartley Wintney', Basingstoke's case rested on the fact that most of Hook had been in Basingstoke RD and the residents were in favour of maintaining the status quo. Moreover, Basingstoke was more accessible than Hartley Wintney by public transport. However, the view of the HCC, as expressed by the Clerk, was that:

... prima facie on the map the new parish should be included in the Hartley Wintney district. The County Council regarded the services given by the Hartley Wintney Rural District Council as more efficient and up to date than those given by Basingstoke Rural District ... Hartley Wintney was going to lose a substantial part of its area [to Fleet and Farnborough UDs], whereas Basingstoke rural district was getting something added from an adjoining district in the south [the Candovers] ... (HBG 27.3.1931).

The Inspector was persuaded by this argument and Hartley Wintney RD won the day.

Elsewhere, the south-east of the county was described as a 'difficult problem.' A particularly contentious issue concerned the aspirations of Portsmouth CB as it sought to extend its boundaries by incorporating neighbouring parishes to which some of its inhabitants had moved.

One example of this was the southern part of the parish of Farlington, which it was proposed 'to fuse' with Portsmouth CB. When this had been advocated in 1920, as the Town Clerk of Portsmouth explained, 'the great point against fusion of South Farlington with Portsmouth was that the inhabitants did not desire it, now there was overwhelming evidence of the desire to join Portsmouth' (HT 27.3.1931). At the Inquiry,

however, opposition came from both Havant UD and RD and Warblington UD, with them all claiming compensation should the merger go ahead. Farlington CP's fate was to be divided between Portsmouth CB, which acquired 1,100 acres and the major share of the population, 2,824, and the newly constituted Havant and Waterloo UD, 1,290 acres and 1,359 persons respectively.

Another bone of contention at the Inquiry was the position of the parish of Widley. The case for its inclusion in Portsmouth was based on the following arguments:

... there was no common interests between this parish and Havant and Warblington. The parish had its water, gas and electricity supplies from Portsmouth, and there was also an agreement with Portsmouth Fire Brigade. Portsmouth too was the centre for shopping, amusement and industry. Fifty per cent of the parishioners had their occupations in the city, and 67 per cent of them had been ratepayers in Portsmouth. Sixty per cent were contributors to the Royal Portsmouth Voluntary Hospital. The wishes of the parishioners were shown by a recent ballot. Two hundred and seventy were distributed (one for each family) and 222 were returned. There were 217 in favour of fusion with Portsmouth, four were against, and one was undecided.

The Inspector, however, was not persuaded by these arguments and Widley CP was merged with the parish of Southwick thereby becoming part of Droxford RD.

Interestingly, in the case of Millbrook CP, which bordered Southampton CB, the situation was somewhat different. As explained under the somewhat plaintive headline "Millbrook not Wanted", the PC wanted the area to be included in the CB of Southampton. The principal reason for this request was that 'the parish was already essentially urban, and that, with the erection of new docks in the river opposite, it was more than ever likely to become so' (HC 28.3.1931). However, for reasons which were not explained, Southampton did not wish to take on the additional burden of administering and providing services for the parish of Millbrook. A second best proposal was to create a new urban authority covering Millbrook, Totton and Eling. This was rejected and Millbrook was

incorporated in the combined RD of Romsey and Stockbridge. Ironically, the Clerk to the Romsey and Stockbridge RDC ‘described the proposal to include Millbrook in their area as thoroughly bad’ (HC 28.3.1931). It was not until 1 April 1954 that Millbrook CP was eventually incorporated into the CB of Southampton under the provisions of The Southampton (Alteration of Boundaries) Order 1954.

A further area of controversy related to what can best be described as the proposal for a ‘greater Lymington.’ Although the parishes of Pennington, Milford-on-Sea and Hordle were in favour of being incorporated into Lymington MB, unsurprisingly, perhaps, Milton UD was opposed. At the Inquiry, during a whole day devoted ‘to matters affecting the Borough of Lymington, the Milton U.D.C. and the Lymington and New Forest R.D.C.s’, Major A E Y Trestrail, Clerk to Milton UDC:

... spoke at considerable length, quoting statistics covering the whole period of Milton U.D.C.s administration and claimed that they had fully justified their grant of urban powers. In the interests of efficient and economic administration the obvious thing to do was to allow them to remain an independent local government entity (LC 27.3.1931).

He also argued that if the proposal went ahead, ‘New Milton would be a suitable place for the seat of government’ (HC 21.3.1931).

The New Forest RDC argued in favour of maintaining the status quo ‘without any additions or subtractions’ (LC 27.3.1931) to their area. Lymington RDC, however, ‘accepted the proposals of the County Council’ (LC 27.3.1931) even though they would mean its abolition. With respect to Milton, it was reported that having visited the area the inspector ‘had a great deal of sympathy with their views’ (LC 7.5.1931) and even suggested dividing Hordle CP between an enlarged Milton UD and Lymington MB. Unsurprisingly, this was opposed by the residents of Hordle and in the event HCC’s proposals prevailed and Milton UD lost its separate identity as a unit of local government.

Even in cases where the underlying principle of a proposal was accepted, disagreements could still arise over points of detail. Thus, both

Kingsclere and Whitchurch RDCs accepted that they should be amalgamated, but the former was opposed to what the Kingsclere RDC’s Clerk ‘described as a drastic reduction in their representation from 30 to 20 which ... would result in the exclusion from public service of District Councillors whose knowledge could ill be spared’ (HC 28.3.1931). However, HCC’s Clerk maintained that if the number of Kingsclere councillors remained at 30 it would be necessary to increase Whitchurch by seven or eight, thereby resulting in an unwieldy council.

Another relatively minor issue was a change of name from the proposed Havant and Warblington UD to Havant and Waterloo UD. The reasons for this are unclear but presumably it reflected an anticipated shift in focus from the eastern to the western end of the new UD as far as future urbanisation was concerned.

Notwithstanding the passions aroused at the Inquiry it would seem to have been conducted in a very business-like fashion, with every effort being made to ensure that all those with a legitimate interest in the proposals, controversial or otherwise, were able to express their point of view. Indeed, HCC’s Clerk, on behalf of all who had attended the Inquiry, expressed ‘their appreciation, of the care and attention ... [the Inspector] had given to all views put forward.’ As reported, this resulted in ‘the rare spectacle of a public official receiving an “ovation” in the literal sense’ (HT 3.4.31).

CHANGES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAP

What was the overall outcome of county review with respect to the various second and third tier authorities that constituted the Administrative County of Hampshire? The contrast between the pre- and post-review boundaries of second tier authorities can be seen in the two maps that constitute Figures 1 and 2 respectively. The total number of urban authorities was reduced from 16 to 14, with Milton UD and Warblington UD losing their separate identity. As the data in Table 9 illustrate, apart from Aldershot, all the newly constituted urban authorities were larger than their predecessors in terms of both their areas and populations. Indeed, the

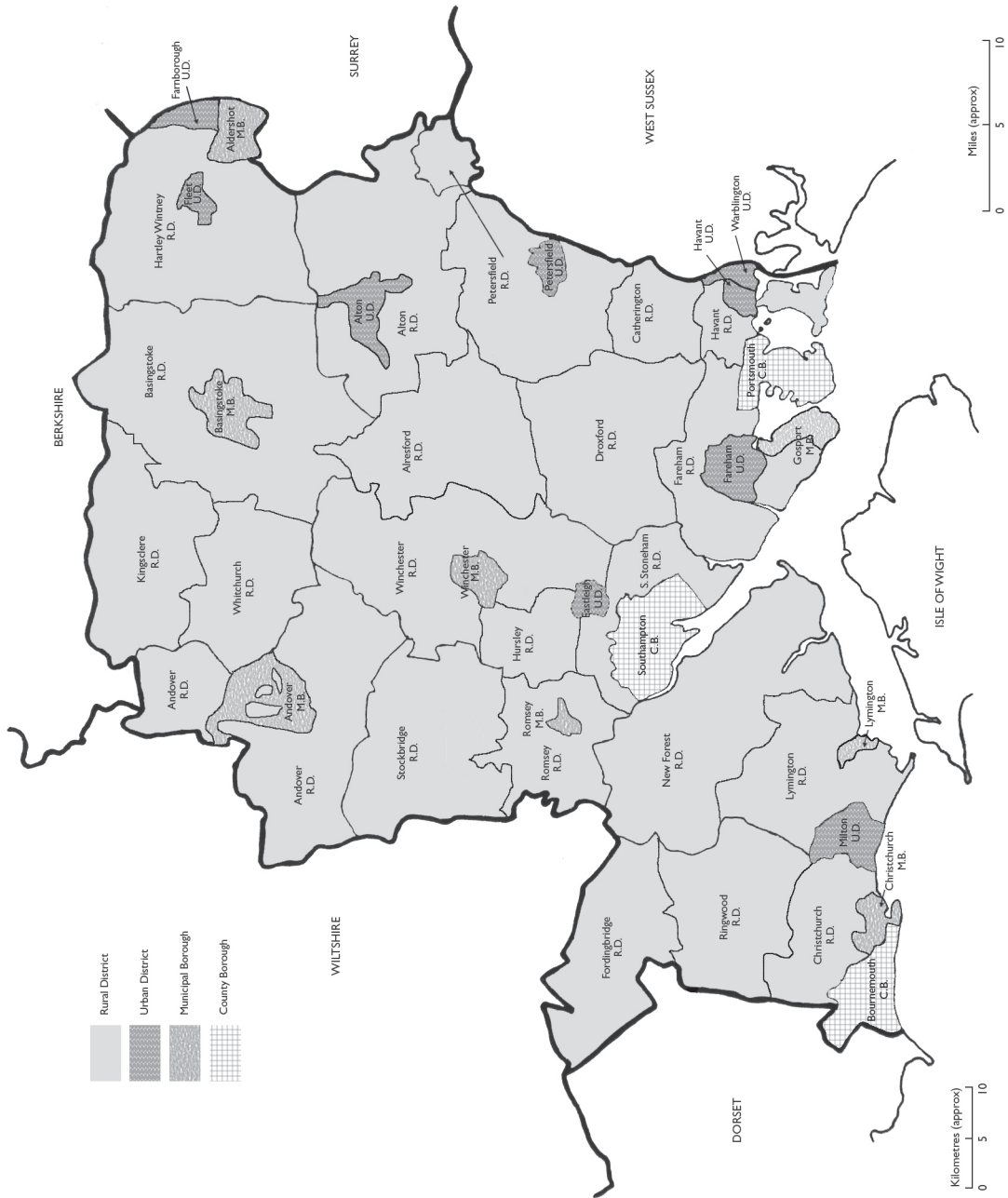


Fig. 1 Hampshire: Pre-review second tier local authority boundaries

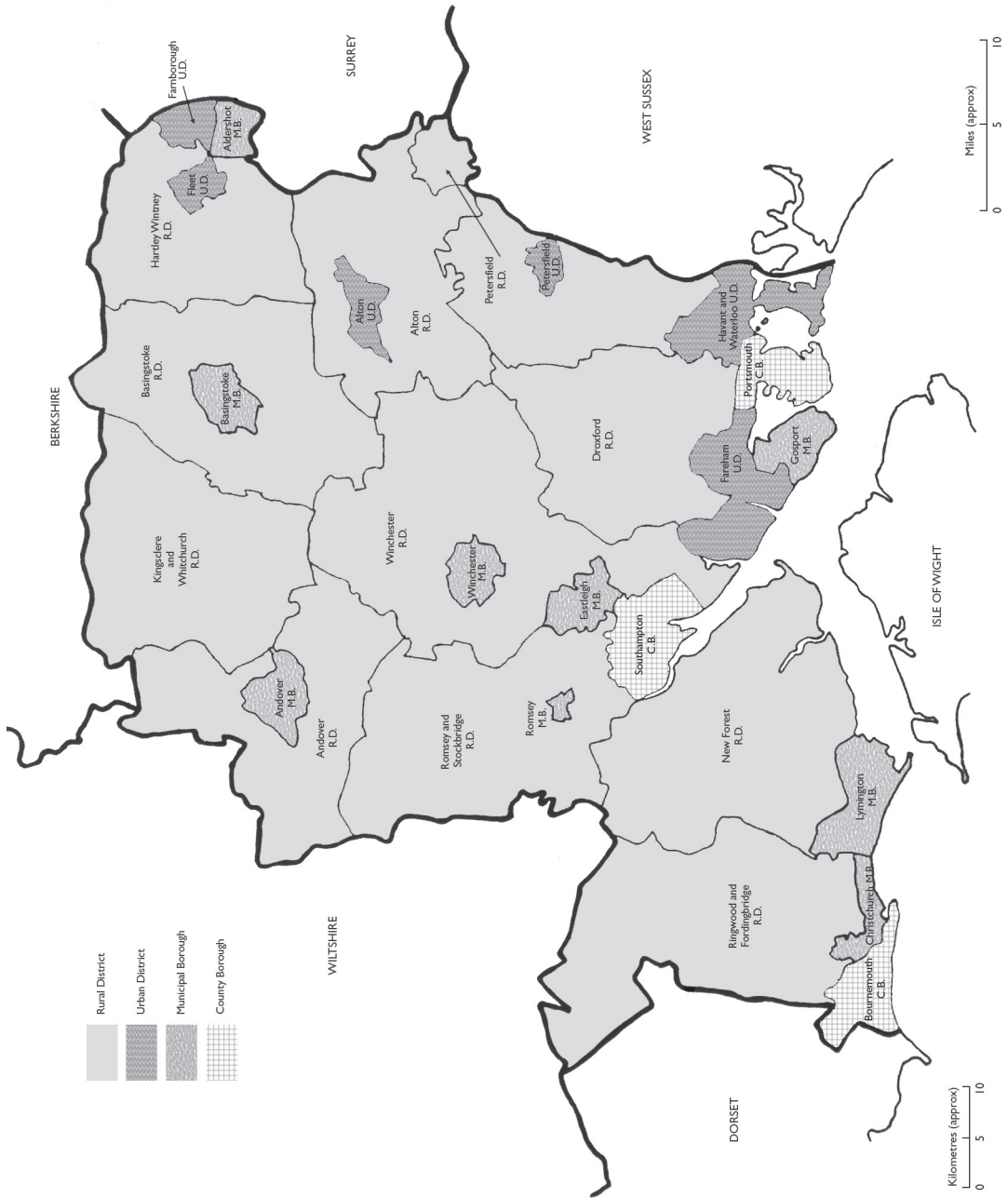


Fig. 2 Hampshire: Post-review second tier local authority boundaries

Table 9 Changes to urban authorities as recorded in the census. Source: *Census Reports* (1931)

| <i>Authority</i> | <i>Acreage</i> | | <i>1931 Population</i> | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| | <i>pre</i> | <i>post</i> | <i>pre</i> | <i>post</i> |
| Aldershot MB | 4,176 | 4,176 | 34,280 | 34,280 |
| Andover MB | 4,968 | 6,386 | 9,163 | 10,076 |
| Basingstoke MB | 4,139 | 5,182 | 13,857 | 14,217 |
| Christchurch MB | 2,117 | 4,813 | 9,184 | 11,444 |
| Eastleigh UD | 2,029 | 6,269 | 18,335 | 23,434 |
| Fareham UD | 5,995 | 18,352 | 10,201 | 21,817 |
| Farnborough UD | 2,331 | 4,322 | 16,356 | 19,532 |
| Fleet UD | 1,709 | 3,693 | 4,516 | 7,810 |
| Gosport MB | 5,705 | 6,178 | 38,338 | 38,443 |
| Havant and Waterloo UD ¹ | 1,391 | 12,074 | 4,350 | 20,991 |
| Lymington MB ² | 1,510 | 13,730 | 5,177 | 15,430 |
| Petersfield UD | 1,631 | 2,771 | 4,387 | 5,424 |
| Romsey MB | 449 | 1,212 | 4,836 | 5,778 |
| Winchester MB | 1,930 | 3,888 | 22,970 | 23,523 |

Notes:

1. The pre-reorganisation figures for Warblington UD which was merged with Havant and Waterloo UD were acreage, 1841, and population, 4211.
2. The pre-reorganisation figures for Milton UD which was merged with Lymington MB were acreage, 4730, and population, 5293.

Table 10 New rural districts. Source: *Census Reports* (1931)

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Parishes</i> | <i>Acreage</i> | <i>Population</i> |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Alton | 21 | 65,526 | 20,455 |
| Andover | 26 | 67,808 | 13,916 |
| Basingstoke | 34 | 74,790 | 14,469 |
| Droxford | 18 | 62,772 | 17,861 |
| Hartley Wintney | 16 | 50,715 | 16,430 |
| Kingsclere and Whitchurch | 15 | 77,394 | 14,910 |
| New Forest | 18 | 94,957 | 31,074 |
| Petersfield | 13 | 56,389 | 14,417 |
| Ringwood and Fordingbridge | 16 | 90,140 | 18,217 |
| Romsey and Stockbridge | 28 | 83,673 | 17,179 |
| Winchester | 34 | 110,432 | 30,733 |

acres of some authorities, namely Havant and Waterloo UD and Lymington MB increased by approximately 800 per cent, due in part to their incorporation of Warblington and Milton respectively within their boundaries. By contrast, Gosport MB's area increased by just eight per cent. Although the population increases were not as great, Havant and Waterloo UD's still grew by nearly 400 per cent.

For the second tier rural authorities the impact of the reorganisation was much greater. The number of RDs was halved from 22 to 11

(see Table 10), while for England and Wales as a whole the reduction was only about 27 per cent from 652 to 475 (Lipman 1949, 207). Thus, not surprisingly, the average area of a RD more than doubled from 36,570 acres to 75,872 acres and the average population from just over 10,000 to just over 19,000. There were now no RDs with a population of less than 10,000, which was generally regarded as an appropriate minimum.

Turning to the parishes, the revised pattern is shown in Table 11. With respect to their

Table 11 Post-county review parishes. Source: *Census Reports* (1931)

| <i>Rural district</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Existing Parishes no change</i> | <i>change</i> | <i>New parishes</i> | <i>Parish council</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alton | 21 | 8 | 12 | 1 | 18 |
| Andover | 26 | 22 | 3 | 1 | 16 |
| Basingstoke | 34 | 15 | 19 | 0 | 22 |
| Droxford | 18 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 16 |
| Hartley Wintney | 16 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| Kingsclere and Whitchurch | 15 | 2 | 13 | 0 | 14 |
| New Forest | 18 | 12 | 6 | 0 | 17 |
| Petersfield | 13 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| Ringwood and Fordingbridge | 16 | 5 | 10 | 1 | 15 |
| Romsey and Stockbridge | 28 | 19 | 9 | 0 | 21 |
| Winchester | 34 | 10 | 22 | 2 | 29 |
| Totals | 239 | 106 | 123 | 10 | 193 |

Table 12 Populations of post-county review parishes. Source: *Census Reports* (1931)

| <i>Rural district</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>300+</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>100-299</i> | <i>100-</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|----------------|-------------|
| Alton | 21 | 15 | 71.4 | 6 | 0 |
| Andover | 26 | 16 | 61.5 | 9 | 1 |
| Basingstoke | 34 | 17 | 50.0 | 12 | 5 |
| Droxford | 18 | 16 | 88.9 | 2 | 0 |
| Hartley Wintney | 16 | 13 | 81.3 | 3 | 0 |
| Kingsclere and Whitchurch | 15 | 12 | 80.0 | 3 | 0 |
| New Forest | 18 | 17 | 94.4 | 1 | 0 |
| Petersfield | 13 | 11 | 84.6 | 2 | 0 |
| Ringwood and Fordingbridge | 16 | 13 | 81.3 | 3 | 0 |
| Romsey and Stockbridge | 28 | 19 | 67.9 | 4 | 5 |
| Winchester | 34 | 27 | 79.4 | 6 | 1 |
| Totals | 239 | 176 | 73.6 | 51 | 12 |

population size, there was a marked increase in the percentage of parishes with populations of 300 or more, from 61.6 per cent (see Table 4) to 73.6 per cent (see Table 12) and therefore required to have a parish council, although a few micro-parishes, with populations of less than a 100, remained.

Thus, it could be argued that an important outcome of the county review in Hampshire was the extension of the principle of representative democracy at parish level.

CONCLUSION

Adopting a somewhat self-congratulatory tone

the LGRC summarised the changes arising from county review in the following terms:

With small exceptions the recommendations of the County Council for the Rearrangement of Districts and Parishes have been adopted and whereas prior to the alteration the Administrative County comprised 8 Municipal Boroughs, 9 Urban Districts (other than Boroughs), 22 Rural Districts, 20 parishes in Urban Districts and 310 parishes in Rural Districts, of which 193 had Parish Councils and 117 Parish Meetings only, the Administrative County now comprises 8 Municipal Boroughs, 7 Urban Districts (other than Boroughs), 11 Rural Districts, with 15 parishes in Urban Districts and 239 parishes in Rural Districts, of which 194 have Parish

Councils and 45 Parish Meetings only (ACSPCC 1932/33, 62).

Not surprisingly, given the predominantly rural character of the county, the impact of county review was felt most acutely in the country areas. Here there was a substantial reduction in the number, and consequent enlargement in the size, of RDs. In certain cases, this was reflected in the names of the new districts, Kingsclere *and* Whitchurch, Ringwood *and* Fordingbridge and Romsey *and* Stockbridge [emphasis added]. Elsewhere the changes can best be described as modest. Naturally where previous authorities were abolished there was a feeling that something of importance had been lost, in other words, 'small can be beautiful.' However, the clear distinction between urban and rural remained, with what Lipman describes as 'urban islands' (1949, 203), such as Alton and Petersfield, remaining prominent features of the local government map (see Figure 2). Moreover, many parishes retained their identity and consequently

their institutions of self-government in the form of parish councils and parish meetings. Having said that, it is debatable how far this revitalised the local electorate and stimulated their active engagement in, as opposed to, passive observance of parish affairs. Similarly, the consequent redrawing of electoral division boundaries for county election purposes did not initially result in an increase in the number of contests (Ottewill 2019, 14). Overall, however, the outcome of the county review was a streamlining of local government at second and third tiers within Hampshire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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