

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 6 June 2016

Report Title: The Boundary Review

Report By: Jane Hartnell

Director of Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of Report

To consider the draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Hastings Borough Council.

This report informs Members that the Council has received the Draft Recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Hastings Borough Council from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The recommendations are out for consultation until 16th June 2016.

Recommendation(s)

That Council recommend that the following response be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on the new electoral arrangements "Hastings Borough Council (HBC) welcomes the publication of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations in respect of Hastings Borough Councils' (HBC) electoral arrangements which, in the main reflect the submitted HBC proposals and accepts the suggested amendments to the warding pattern proposals in respect of the Borough"

Reasons for Recommendations

The LGBCE draft recommendations largely reflect the proposals that the Council submitted to the LGBCE in November 2015.

Introduction

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has published its draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and East Sussex County Council (and all the other Districts and Borough within East Sussex). The consultation began on 15th March 2016 and ends on the 16th June 2016, and is open to anyone who wishes to comment on the proposals.
2. The Council and all other interested stakeholders now have the opportunity to respond to the draft recommendations. Appended to this report are the recommendations made in respect of HBC (Appendix 1), as well as those made in relation to ESCC (for HBC divisions – Appendix 2). Maps detailing the proposed new boundaries will be available at the meeting.

Analysis

Electorate figures

3. As required by the LGBCE and associated legislation, working in partnership with ESCC, the Council produced electorate forecasts for the 5 year period between 2016 -2021. These forecasts were broken down by ward level and projected an increase in the electorate in Hastings of 11.4% to 2021. The projected growth is particularly being driven by planned new developments in West St Leonards, Ashdown and Conquest and the Hollington and Maze Hill Areas. The Commission in its report states, "having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time". The figures have formed the basis of the LGBCE draft recommendations.

Council Size

4. In November 2015, the Council submitted a proposal to maintain the current council size of 32 Members. The Commission, in its report states that "we considered that the Councils submission was supported by evidence to justify maintaining the current Council size. We are content that the council has sufficiently demonstrated that the authority can operate efficiently and effectively under this council size and ensure effective representation of local residents".

Warding Patterns

5. As part of the Council's submission in November 2015 a warding pattern of 16, two member wards was proposed. The proposal was for wards that would be largely the same as the present wards, but with minor modifications on all wards, to achieve greater electoral equality across the borough.
6. The Commission, in its report, states "that the proposed patterns of wards put forward by the Council resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the district and generally uses clearly identifiable boundaries. Our draft recommendations are based on the Council's borough-wide proposals."

7. The tables on pages 8 -12 of the Commission's report detail the draft recommendations for each area of the borough taking account of all submissions received by the Commission, and includes their justification for selecting a certain ward pattern (see specifically Baird, St Helens, Hollington and Wishing Tree Wards)

Coterminosity

8. Coterminosity occurs when district ward boundaries align with county division boundaries. This is also a consideration of achieving convenient and effective local government. The Council welcomes the achievement of coterminosity with ESCC between our proposed wards and the proposed county divisions.

Electoral Equality

9. Table A1 of the Commission's report 'Draft recommendations for Hastings Borough Council' presents the electoral data for the borough both 2015 and 2021, based on the new proposed ward boundaries. This shows that electoral equality will be achieved across all of the boroughs wards.

Policy Implications

10. Equalities and Community Cohesiveness - the electoral boundary review has been instigated due to there being electoral inequality across 7 of our wards; meaning that some members represent far fewer or far more electorate. The revised ward boundaries will help to reduce this inequality.
11. Organisational Consequences - once the new electoral arrangements have been finalised by the end of the year, the new warding patterns will be taken into account in the electoral role and borough elections in 2018, and considered with regards to impacts on the shape of Super Output Areas and associated deprivation statistics.
12. Local People's Views - as part of this part of the review process the LG BCE is undertaking widespread public consultation where local people's and organisations views will be sought.
13. Anti-Poverty - the boundary review has no direct impact on increasing poverty in the Borough, but will help to ensure that there is fair and equitable electorate to member ratio across all of the wards, and thus that some of the towns most deprived communities will continue to be well represented.

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) website link to current reviews <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews>

Appendix 1 Report - LGBCE - Draft recommendations - New electoral arrangements for Hastings Borough Council, March 2016

Appendix 2 – LGBCE – draft recommendations for ward boundaries – map

Appendix 3 Report - LGBCE - Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for East Sussex County Council, March 2016.

Officer to Contact

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