

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 16 November 2015

Report Title: **Second Phase of the Boundary Review**

Report By: Jane Hartnell
Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

To make recommendations to Full Council in respect of the proposed changes to warding patterns of the Borough ward boundaries in accordance with the requirements of Part 2 of the 2015 boundary review being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That Cabinet recommend to Full Council to approve the proposed changes to the ward boundaries to achieve greater electoral equality across the borough**
- 2. To consider the alternative options presented for Hollington & Wishing Tree Wards and West St Leonards & Maze Hill Wards and for Cabinet to agree and make recommendations to Full Council about which option(s) to put forward to the LGBCE**
- 3. The Director of Corporate Services and Governance be given delegated authority to finalise and submit the Councils response to the LGBCE consultation on warding patterns.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Of the boroughs sixteen wards, seven have an electorate inequality of -16% to +24%; the proposed changes to ward boundaries will help to ensure that we have greater electorate equality throughout the borough.

Introduction

1. Members will recall that on the 24th March 2015, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) presented to the Council information about the electoral review that has been instigated for East Sussex County Council and the boroughs and districts, within the County; this has occurred due to there being an electoral imbalance in the wards and districts across the County.
2. The review has been undertaken in 2 parts - Part 1 considered each local authority in East Sussex 'Council Size', and the number of members required to undertake the governance and community representation requirements of each Council.
3. On the 22nd September 2015, the LGBCE announced the 'number of councillors it is minded to recommend for each authority in East Sussex'. This confirmed that the LGBCE have agreed to the proposed Council size as previously recommended by WAG, of 32 councillors for Hastings and 8 county councillors.
4. Part 2 - considers ward numbers, boundaries and names. The LGBCE has invited proposals from the Council, interested parties and members of the public to submit their thoughts on warding patterns to accommodate 32 councillors. The consultation began on the 22 September 2015 and closes on the 30th November 2015.
5. Once the Commission has considered the proposal received during this phase of consultation, it will publish draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for all 6 councils in March 2016. Public consultation on these draft recommendations are scheduled to take place between March 2016 and June 2016, and final recommendations will be published in September 2016.

Review Part 2 - Wards and Boundaries

6. The current wards were established at the last boundary review in 2000. At the time extensive changes were made, and it was possible to achieve coterminous boundaries with the County Divisions.
7. Map 1 show the current ward boundaries and highlights the electoral variance spatially across each ward. Appendix 1 - details the electoral data for Hastings, showing the current and 2021 forecast electorate figures and percentage variances
8. Using the population & housing growth projections, member's suggestions following the drop-in on the 8th & 19th October 2015 and officers knowledge of the borough, a number of options to move some of the ward boundaries have been tested and considered. In addition, the Working Arrangements Group (WAG) has met on several occasions to consider the options and refine these where possible; WAG Members were asked to fully discuss the draft proposals with their respective party groups. For each suggested amendment, the impact on the electoral number for each affected ward was recalculated to ensure that the suggested changes would achieve the right outcome. This was undertaken using the Councils ARC-GIS system.

9. Due regard was given to the 3 statutory requirements of the review, namely to ensure we achieved:

Equality of representation

Reflected community interests and identities

Provided for convenient and effective local government

Proposed Changes to Ward Boundaries

10. Based on the 2021 forecast, the average electorate per ward in Hastings will be 4130. However, the LGBCE acknowledges, that in practice boundary reviews do not result in wards of mathematically equal size. This is because the approach to electoral equality must be tempered with other considerations which generally reflect the particular characteristics of an area under review, and its communities. This recognises that council members represent individual electors and collective communities.
11. Therefore, in trying to achieve electoral equality across all of the boroughs wards, a variance within 10% of the average is allowable - such that wards could have between 3713 and 4543 electorate per ward.
12. A great deal of detailed analysis has been undertaken in analysing potential options for change by both members of the Working Arrangements Group (WAG) and officers working on the review. In addition all members have been invited to present their views at two member consultation drop-ins. Over 90 options have been considered in detail.
13. In arriving at the recommendations for change, due regard has been given to the key overarching objectives of achieving greater electoral equality, reflecting communities of interest and identity and effective local governance.

Ward Areas

14. Appendix 2 and Map 2 detail the suggested amendments to be made to each ward.
15. Each ward has been considered in turn, in terms of the losses or gains it ideally needs to achieve, but also ensuring communities of interest are not divided or altered dramatically by the proposals and that any anomalies on boundaries can be ironed out. In some cases, this means that some wards have both gained and lost areas to help achieve electoral equality.
16. In developing these proposals, due regard has been given to the LGBCE Electoral Review Technical Guidance (April 2014)
17. Some of the biggest challenges were to try and reduce the large variances on the western side of the borough, for example where almost 1000 electorate need to be moved out of Ashdown Ward and over 600 from Hollington, its neighbouring ward. The opposite is true in the more central parts of the borough where Silverhill and Central St Leonards ward needed to gain over 1000 electorate.

Proposed Ward Area Changes

Ashdown to Silverhill Ward - Options 32, 84 & 90

The combination of these 3 options moves an area in the south-east part of Ashdown Ward into Silverhill Ward reducing the variance in Ashdown ward by 17%, to 7%.

32 - Lower Glen Road, Bellingham Close, Shirley Drive, Battle Crescent

84 – Bower Close, Clarendon Close, Hollinghurst Road

90 - Towerscroft Avenue, Twyford Crescent, Harrow Lane

Castle to Tressell - Option 77

This option moves an area in the north-east part of the ward into Tressell Ward

77- Whitefriars Road, Scholars Mews / Croft Hall

Conquest to Silverhill Ward - Options 26 & 86

These options move two discrete areas in the western part of Conquest Ward into Silverhill Ward

26 – Silverhill Avenue

86 - Senlac Way

Gensing to Braybrooke- Option 95 & 99

This option moves the properties in Upper Park Road into Braybrooke Ward

95 - Upper Park Road

99 - a single property moved to link to option 95 & tidy up the ward boundary

Gensing to Maze Hill - Option 64

This option moves 2 properties to tidy up the ward boundary

64 - 36 & 36a The Green

Hollington to Wishing Tree Ward - 3 alternatives have been suggested for these ward

Alternative 1- Options 49 & 50 - see Maps 3.1, 3.3 and 4.1

These two options move an area in the south-eastern part of Hollington Ward into Wishing Tree Ward reducing Hollington's variance to 5% compared to 16%

49 – The Slides, Wishing Tree Road

50 – Quebec Road, Jameson Crescent, Beauchamp Road, Marline Avenue

Alternative 2- Options 22 & 23 - see Maps 3.2, 3.4 and 4.2

These two options move two distinct areas of Hollington Ward into Wishing Tree Ward; 22 is located in the south part Hollington ward and 23 is located in the eastern part of the ward - reducing Hollington's variance to 5% compared to 16%

22 - Robsack Avenue and associated roads and closes leading from Robsack Avenue

23 - Hollington Old Lane and part of the south side of Battle Road

Alternative 3 Options 23 & 49 - see maps 3.5, 3.6 and 4.3

These two options move two distinct areas of Hollington Ward into Wishing Tree Ward

23 - Hollington Old Lane and part of the south side of Battle Road

49 – The Slides, Wishing Tree Road

Consideration has also been given to only moving Option 22 but this does not reduce the electoral inequality enough as it would leave Hollington Ward with an electoral variance of +10%

Maze Hill to Central St Leonards - Options 70 & 92, & 93

These options move an area in the southern part of Maze Hill into Central St Leonards
70 – West Hill Road

92 – Kenilworth Road (moving the only properties in Kenilworth Road currently not in Central St Leonards ward)

93 – West Hill Road (Beginning of West Hill Road)

Old Hastings to Ore - Option 96

This is a minor amendment

96 - Harold Road 2 Properties (north of Athelstan Road)

Old Hastings to Tressell- Options 82 & 88

These options move an area in the north-west part of Old Hastings Ward into Tressell Ward

82 – High Bank (Old London Road)

88 – Old London Road

Ore to Baird - Option 78

This is a minor amendment and has no impact on the electorate numbers, and simply moves the boundary by the industrial estate in the north west corner of Ore Ward.

78 - industrial estate only

Silverhill to Gensing - Option 60

This option moves an area in the south-west corner of Silverhill Ward into Gensing Ward

60 - Springfield Road, Buchanan Gardens

St Helen's to Braybrooke - Option 94 & 44

This option moves an area in the south-east corner of St Helens ward into Braybrooke ward

94 - Woodbrook Road, Keppel Road, Blacklands Drive

44 - Fearon Road (1 Property)

Tressell to Ore- Option 89

This option moves an area of north Tressell ward into Ore ward

89 - Victoria Avenue, Leeds Close

West St Leonards to Maze Hill- 2 alternatives have been suggested

Alternative 1 - Option 66 - see maps 3.1, 3.2, 3.5 and 5.1

This option moves an area in the north east of West St Leonards into Maze Hill

66 - Fernside Avenue, Springside Way Gillsmans Park, Albourne Close, Georgian Walk

Alternative 2 - Option 39 - see maps 3.3 , 3.4, 3.6 and 5.2

This option moves an area in the south-east of West St Leonards into Maze Hill

39 - St Saviours Road, St Vincents Road, Blackwell Close, south-side of Filsham Road south of the railway bridge and Railway Cottages

Wishing Tree to Silverhill - Option 48

This option moves an area in the south east of Wishing Tree ward into Silverhill Ward 48 - Sedlescombe Road South

Proposed Ward Boundary Changes

18. These proposals were widely discussed and agreed by WAG on the 22nd October 2015; in the case of Hollington and Wishing Tree Wards and West St Leonards and Maze Hill Wards alternative options have been provided where agreement could not be reached.
19. The outcome of the proposed changes has resulted in a more equitable electoral distribution across the Borough, such that the projected electoral variance for 2021 ranged from +24% to - 16%; following the proposed changes it ranges from -7% to +7%, within the + or - 10% threshold.
20. There are no proposals to change the ward names

Policy Implications

21. 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.
22. Local People's Views - Part 2 of the review process includes 2 stages of public consultation where local people's and organisations views will be sought - this is undertaken by the LGBCE.
23. 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

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

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	No
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

Map 1 Existing Ward Variances
Appendix 1 electoral data for Hastings
Map 2 Options & alternatives for the boundary revisions
Appendix 2 Variance calculations tables
Map 3.1 Proposed Revised Ward Boundaries Alternative 1 for Hollington to Wishing Tree and Alternative 1 for West St Leonards to Maze Hill
Map 3.2 Proposed Revised Ward Boundaries Alternative 2 for Hollington to Wishing Tree and Alternative 1 for West St Leonards to Maze Hill
Map 3.3 Proposed Revised Ward Boundaries Alternative 1 for Hollington to Wishing Tree and Alternative 2 for West St Leonards to Maze Hill
Map 3.4 Proposed Revised Ward Boundaries Alternative 2 for Hollington to Wishing Tree and Alternative 2 for West St Leonards to Maze Hill
Map 3.5 Proposed Revised Ward Boundaries Alternative 3 for Hollington to Wishing Tree and Alternative 1 for West St Leonards to Maze Hill
Map 3.6 Proposed Revised Ward Boundaries Alternative 3 for Hollington to Wishing Tree and Alternative 2 for West St Leonards to Maze Hill
Map 4.1 Hollington To Wishing Tree Alternative 1
Map 4.2 Hollington to Wishing Tree Alternative 2
Map 4.3 Hollington to Wishing Tree Alternative 3
Map 5.1 West St Leonards to Maze Hill Alternative 1
Map 5.2 West St Leonards to Maze Hill Alternative 2

Officer to Contact

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