

Agenda Item No: 18 **Report No:** 65/16
Report Title: Electoral Review: Consultation Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England on new Electoral Arrangements
Report To: Council **Date:** 11 May 2016
Cabinet Member: Councillor Andy Smith, Leader of the Council
Ward(s) Affected: All
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Purpose of Report:

To recommend approval of the proposals of the Electoral Review Working Group in respect of the consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lewes District Council.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To approve the consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lewes District Council, as set out in Appendix A to the Report.
- 2 To authorise the Head of Democratic Services to submit the consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 To achieve the outcomes of the Electoral Review and to ensure the LGBCE timetable is met.

Information

2 Background

- 2.1 The background to the Electoral Review taking place in Lewes District is detailed in reports to Cabinet on 12 February and 6 July 2015, and full Council on 25 February, 23 April, 16 July and 9 November 2015. Members are reminded that the Electoral Review being undertaken by the LGBCE is a joint review covering the County Council and all the Districts and Boroughs across East Sussex.

- 2.2** On 6 April 2016, the Electoral Review Working Group reconvened to consider the draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lewes District Council which were published by the LGBCE for consultation on 15 March 2016. An email link and paper copy of the LGBCE's draft recommendations were sent to all councillors at that time. An informal drop-in session was also held to provide an opportunity for all members to view the LGBCE proposal maps and share their views.
- 2.3** All councillors were asked to feed in any comments or observations on the LGBCE's recommendations. Those comments were taken into account by the Working Group during their considerations. The draft proposals developed by the Working Group were also circulated to all councillors for information.

3 Analysis

- 3.1** The considerations of the Working Group are incorporated into the draft response appended to this Report. In the main, the LGBCE draft recommendations reflect the proposals submitted by the Council in November 2015. The Working Group concentrated on the areas where the Council's recommendations had not been adopted and whether further representations were appropriate, as summarised below:

- 3.2 Newhaven South ward** - the LGBCE is recommending that the majority of the new boundary line that was proposed by the Council be followed, but with the exception of the majority of the pedestrian area within the one way system and the residential area north of the A259 including Evelyn Avenue, Lawes Avenue and Harpers Road.

Members discussed this proposal and were accepting of the LGBCE's inclusion of the residential areas of Evelyn Avenue and Harpers Road, but queried why the small area of Essex Place and a few properties on Lewes Road were included in the Newhaven North ward. Officers have checked the electoral roll and this small area accounts for only 42 electors. The LGBCE was contacted to enquire as to why this small area change has been proposed but a response was not received.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Council requests that the LGBCE follow the natural line of the A259 between Lewes Road and Lower Place, and that the small area within the one way system be included in Newhaven South and not Newhaven North ward as currently proposed.

- 3.3 Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward** - in addition to the proposed change to the boundaries of North and South Newhaven, the LGBCE is proposing a large change to the ward boundary of the Ouse Valley & Ringmer and Newhaven North wards. The LGBCE considered that the Council's submission proposal did not adequately deal with the large electoral variance of the Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward. The LGBCE proposes that the parishes of Firlie and Beddingham be moved to join the draft ward of Newhaven North, leaving this draft ward to contain the parishes of Glynde and Ringmer only.

Concern was raised by various members who felt strongly that the parishes of Firle and Beddingham should not be moved into the draft Newhaven North ward for the following reasons:

- The residents of rural Firle and Beddingham do not closely identify with the residents of Newhaven town and are geographically too far apart.
- The majority of Beddingham is just across the railway line from Glynde and they are driven through as one village so it is not logical to divide them.
- The villages of Firle and Beddingham share a community identity with the villages of Ringmer and Glynde and so should be kept together.
- Electoral equality should not be at the expense of community cohesion.

As such, it is recommended that the LGBCE be requested to reconsider its proposed changes to this ward on the basis of these concerns.

However, if the LGBCE decides to adhere to its proposal, it is recommended that the LGBCE consider renaming this ward to **Ringmer & Glynde** in order to better reflect the different nature of the draft ward.

- 3.4 Newhaven North ward** - the LGBCE is proposing a significant change to this ward which has been outlined within the descriptions of both the Ouse Valley & Ringmer and Newhaven South wards, as summarised above.

In the absence of a viable alternative, members were accepting of the LGBCE's recommended change for this ward, subject to the change outlined in the response to the Newhaven South ward.

Also, it is recommended that the LGBCE consider changing the proposed ward name to **Ouse Valley & Newhaven North** in order to reflect the wider reach of the proposed ward.

- 3.5 Peacehaven East ward** - this ward is only affected in so far as the changes to the Peacehaven North and Peacehaven West wards have an impact on the ward boundary of Peacehaven East, as outlined below.

- 3.6 Peacehaven North ward** - members queried why the LGBCE is moving the eastern boundary line to follow a track down the middle of a field, rather than a track to the east of a field. It was established that the area to the east of the draft boundary line was part of the recently opened Peacehaven Big Park and that the area to the west of the new boundary was a potential area for development. Members therefore felt that this change made sense and so were content to recommend agreement with the LGBCE proposed change.

- 3.7 Peacehaven West ward** – the LGBCE is proposing a slight diversion of the boundary line at a point on the junction of Bolney Avenue and South Coast Road in order to divert around what appears to be a new building

that was not shown on our maps at the time of the previous submission. The Working Group was accepting of this and did not see that it would adversely affect the wards of Peacehaven.

- 3.8 Kingston ward** – it is recommended that the LGBCE consider renaming the current Kingston ward to ***Kingston & Ouse Valley West*** in order to better reflect the nature of the ward and define the area more effectively.

4 Timescales

4.1 The timescale for the remainder of the review process is as follows:

- 16 June 2016 - LGBCE consultation on its draft recommendations ends
- 20 September 2016 - publication of LGBCE final recommendations
- October 2016 - order laid before Parliament
- May 2017 - arrangements effective for East Sussex County Council
- May 2019 - arrangements effective for Lewes District Council.

5 Conclusion

5.1 That the response to the LGBCE draft recommendations on new electoral arrangements for Lewes District Council, as set out at Appendix A, be recommended to full Council for approval.

Financial Appraisal

- 6** None arising from this Report save the officer time inherent in assessing current polling district boundaries and analysing the location of polling stations as a result of the changes. This is important in order to ensure that all electors retain reasonable accessibility to suitably located and designed polling stations. There will also be work in updating a number of our systems including IDOX Strand (Electoral Registration), IDOX Uniform (Planning, Building Control, Gazetteer, Street Naming and Numbering), ESRI ArcGIS (GIS) and Open Text (Website).

Legal Implications

- 7** None over and above those set out in the body of this Report.

Risk Management Implications

- 8** If the recommendations are not implemented, the main risk will be that the Council fails to meet its legal duties and the requirements of the Electoral Review are not met. Failure to engage in the Electoral Review and make a considered, evidence-based response on the Council's preferred warding pattern to the LGBCE by the deadline could result in the LGBCE imposing a warding pattern which may not reflect the needs and aspirations of the Council and the communities it serves.

Equality Screening

- 9** An Equality Analysis report was previously completed and appended to the Cabinet report on 6 July 2015 at [Equality Analysis - Electoral Review](#). Positive impacts are expected from the Electoral Review as its purpose is to provide electoral equality and to ensure fair representation at local government elections.

Background Papers

- 10** Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance documents: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/east-sussex/lewes>

Appendices

- 11** Appendix A - Lewes District Council response to LGBCE draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements
- 12** Appendix B – GIS maps showing LGBCE proposed:
- Lewes District ward boundaries.
 - Ouse Valley and Ringmer, Newhaven North and Newhaven South ward boundaries.
 - Peacehaven East, Peacehaven North and Peacehaven West ward boundaries.