

**2015 BOUNDARY REVIEW OF THE BOROUGH OF  
EASTBOURNE**

**WORKING GROUP PROPOSALS TO FULL COUNCIL**

**18 NOVEMBER 2015**

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**APPENDICES:**

- (a) GIS map showing existing wards and polling districts**
- (b) Spreadsheet showing electorate numbers and variances, current and 2021 forecast based on existing wards**
- (c) GIS map showing proposed boundary change zones to Hampden Park, Old Town and Ratton wards (option B)**
- (d) Spreadsheet showing electorate numbers and variances, current and 2021 forecast as a consequence of the option B proposal**

## **1. Key Objectives**

The first objective of the Electoral Review is to achieve electoral equality. In terms of population variation between wards, the desirable ideal tolerance is that each ward's electorate figure is within 10% of the average ward electorate across the Borough.

In measuring population, only electorate is taken into account, not overall population. Also, it is based on the total electorate forecast for 2021 taking into account new residential developments that we are confident will be in place within that time period.

The second objective is that of preserving community identities as much as possible within ward boundaries but within the constraints of electoral equality. The goal here is to try and enclose strongly identifiable communities within the boundaries of a single ward.

A third objective is to have strong and clear boundaries using, wherever possible, main roads and arterial routes.

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## **2. Governance**

Council delegation to finalise proposals is with the Senior Head of Corporate Development and Governance in liaison with a cross-party working group comprising Councillors Jenkins, Tester and Ungar.

It is important that the proposals focus on the key objectives above, and takes no account of other objectives. Therefore, to preserve this integrity, only those proposals for significant change to current boundaries that meet the criteria and are unanimously supported by the working group will normally be supported by the authorised officer. In the case of a difference of view, all viable proposals will be put to the Council as options without officer steer. Any proposals that do not meet the criteria of the Boundary Commission will be ruled out by the authorised officer.

Full Council will be asked to approve a proposal (and/or any amendments) at its 18 November 2015 meeting prior to its submission to the Boundary Commission, who will also be considering any proposals by other individuals, groups, political parties, etc. and will then consult the public accordingly. All submissions must be finalised by the end of November 2015.

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### **3. The Current Wards**

The current wards were established at the last boundary review in 2000. At that time, very extensive changes were made. 3 previous wards (Downside, Ocklynge and Roselands) were deleted altogether and 2 new wards (Old Town and Sovereign) were created, with every other ward also having significant boundary changes. This resulted in a reduction from 10 to 9 wards and the achievement of coterminous boundaries with the County Divisions. Because of this, extensive public consultation was undertaken on the proposals.

Maps showing the current wards and polling districts are appended to this document together with a spreadsheet showing the current and 2021 forecast electorate figures and percentage variances. A summary of the current wards' key characteristics is as follows:

#### **Devonshire (Polling Districts DVA, DVB, DVC, DVD)**

##### **Boundaries:-**

These are the railway line, then from Waterworks Road and along the middle of Whitley Road and Seaside as the northern boundary. In the south it is the seafront, in the west it is the middle of Terminus Road and in the east it is Lottbridge Drove south to the Sovereign Centre.

##### **Description:-**

A ward with a strong commercial and leisure focus, incorporating the defined central area of the Borough with an historic high level of deprivation. Key retail areas include the main shopping centre as well as other highly commercial areas such as Langney/Pevensey Road, Seaside Road and most of Seaside. Key leisure sites include the Pier, the Redoubt Fortress, Treasure Island, Fort Fun, The Oval, Princes Park and the Sovereign Centre.

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#### **Hampden Park (Polling Districts HPA, HPB, HPC)**

##### **Boundaries:-**

These are the Borough boundary with Wealden in the north, Eastbourne Park open land in the south, and the A22 link road in the east. The western boundary runs along the railway line, a small section of Cross Levels Way, then west of the actual Hampden Park before running along the middle of Decoy Drive, Roffrey Avenue, Lindfield Road and Brodrick Road. Finally, it runs through Willingdon Trees down the middle of Sumach Close and the upper part of Rowan Avenue before running east along the middle of Hazelwood Avenue to the Borough boundary.

### **Description:-**

Although the current boundary splits Willingdon Trees between this ward and Ratton, this was a conscious move in 2000 as it is considered that the part of Willingdon Trees included in this ward is compatible in identity and character with Hampden Park. It contains all the key identifiable elements of Hampden Park, namely the park itself, the school, the main shopping area and the railway station.

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## **Langney (Polling Districts LGA, LGB, LGC)**

### **Boundaries:-**

These are the Borough boundary with Wealden to the east and north, the A22 link road to the west and a line through the middle of Pembury Road, Langney Rise, The Rising and Priory Lane in the south.

### **Description:-**

This ward contains within its boundaries key sites such as Langney Shopping Centre, Langney Crematorium and the Shinewater Estate to create a clearly identifiable Langney Ward.

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## **Meads (Polling Districts MDA, MDB, MDC)**

### **Boundaries:-**

In the north the boundary runs from the A259 Seaford Road across open land and then along the middle of Paradise Drive, Compton Place, Meads Road and Grove Road. The southern boundary is the seafront, with the Borough boundary with Wealden in the west and the middle of Terminus Road in the east.

**Description:-**

This ward effectively preserves the existing Meads community in its entirety, including key areas such as the Royal Eastbourne Golf Course and Meads Village.

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**Old Town (Polling Districts OTA, OTB, OTC, OTD)****Boundaries:-**

In the north, the boundary runs along the middle of Victoria Drive, then north of Downs Avenue before running across open land to the south of Willingdon Golf Club. In the south the boundary runs from the A259 Seaford Road across open land and then along the middle of Paradise Drive. In the east, the boundary runs from Love Lane along the middle of Vicarage Road then east along the middle of Church Street, then along the middle of Borough Lane, Ocklynge Road and Willingdon Road. The Borough boundary with Wealden in the west completes the ward.

**Description:-**

This ward brings together, as much as possible, that part of the Borough commonly identified as the Old Town. It contains much of the old (pre 2000) Downside and Ocklynge wards, both of which were considered to be very similar in identity.

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**Ratton (Polling Districts RNA, RNB, RNC, RND)****Boundaries:-**

This is the Borough boundary with Wealden in the north. In the south, the boundary runs along open land via Cross Levels Way, east of Kings Drive then along a line north of Kings Avenue and south of Rodmill Road. In the west, the boundary runs along the middle of Willingdon Road and Victoria Drive, then north of Downs Avenue before running across open land to the south of Willingdon Golf Club. In the east, the boundary runs along the railway line, a small section of Cross Levels Way, then west of the Hampden Park before running along the middle of Roffrey Avenue, Lindfield Road and Brodrick Road. Finally, it runs through Willingdon Trees down the middle of Sumach Close and the upper part of Rowan Avenue

before running east along the middle of Hazelwood Avenue to the Borough boundary.

**Description:-**

This ward includes key sites such as the District General Hospital and neighbouring college in the south, Ratton Village in the north with Ratton School centrally located in the ward.

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**St Anthony's (Polling Districts SAA, SAB, SAC, SAD)**

**Boundaries:-**

The northern boundary runs across Eastbourne Park and the middle of Pembury Road, Langney Rise, The Rising and Priory Lane. In the south, the boundary runs from Waterworks Road, then along the middle of Whitley Road, Seaside, St Anthony's Avenue, and Pevensey Bay Road. West and east boundaries are the railway line and the Borough boundary with Wealden respectively.

**Description:-**

This is an elongated inland ward with a strong focus on Eastbourne Park. It combines two key identifiable areas, namely the Bridgemere Estate in the west and South Langney in the east. The geographically large size of this ward is necessary to allow for the large areas of uninhabited open land and industrial areas within its boundaries.

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**Sovereign (Polling Districts SVA, SVB, SVC, SVD)**

**Boundaries:-**

These are the middle of St Anthony's Avenue and Pevensey Bay Road in the north, the seafront in the south, the Borough boundary with Wealden in the east and the middle of Lottbridge Drove to the west.

**Description:-**

This ward was newly created in 2000 and encompasses three significant communities, Langney Point, Sovereign Harbour and the Kingsmere Estate.

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## **Upperton (Polling Districts UPA, UPB, UPC, UPD, UPE)**

### **Boundaries:-**

In the north, the boundary runs along open land via Cross Levels Way then east of Kings Drive, north of Kings Avenue and south of Rodmill Road. The southern boundary runs along the middle of Compton Place, Grove Road and the railway line which continues to form the eastern boundary. In the west, the boundary runs from Love Lane then north along the middle of Vicarage Road and east along the middle of Church Street. It then runs along the middle of Borough Lane, Ocklynge Road and Willingdon Road.

### **Description:-**

This is a ward with all internal boundaries and effectively acts as a demarcation between the old town with the town centre. Primarily a residential ward with a significant elderly population.

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## **4. Issues and Changes**

Based on the forecast, the average electorate per ward in Eastbourne will be 8,566 in 2012.

As a result, the percentage variation in electorate from the average for each ward as currently drawn will be:

Ward	2021 Electorate Forecast	Variance From Average
Devonshire	9006	+5%
Hampden Park	7574	-11%
Langney	8197	-4%
Meads	8566	0
Old Town	8793	+3%
Ratton	8045	-6%
St Anthony's	8715	+2%
Sovereign	9517	+11%
Upperton	8420	-1%

Considering these variances are predicted 21 years on from the last boundary review, it is testament to the quality of the work and predictions achieved in 2000.

In 2000, a great deal of care was taken in adhering to strong boundaries and enclosing, wherever possible, readily identifiable communities wholly within a single ward. Therefore, it would seem logical to work on the principle of maintaining existing wards and boundaries where variances are forecast to be under 10% unless there are issues where current boundaries can be seen to significantly divide communities or where compensatory changes are required to offset necessary changes in adjacent wards.

Having regard to the above, the Council working group came to an early agreement that the presumption would be for no change unless there were obvious issue to address, so the focus became polarised on three key areas.

**Hampden Park Ward Variance** – This ward is currently forecast as being under-populated by an 11% variance. However, the problem here is that the only realistic way of addressing this is to adjust the boundary with Ratton. With that ward already in a 6% minus variance, it would unacceptably worsen that ward's figures unless compensatory numbers could be taken from Old Town ward.

**Ratton/Old Town Community Boundary Issue** – The only key area identified by some members where a current boundary is felt to disrupt a defined residential community is where there is a boundary between Ratton (RNC) and Old Town (OTB), the view being that the current boundary divides an estate which should wholly sit in Old Town. However, in order to address this current perceived boundary anomaly, we would need to create a further transfer of electorate numbers from Ratton to Old Town with compensatory movement in the other direction.

The working group spent considerable time in looking at potential options to address both the above areas and this is discussed further in section 5 below.

**Sovereign Ward Variance** – This ward is currently forecast as being over-populated by an 11% variance. However, the working group did not favour adjusting the current boundaries which are particularly strong giving this ward a very well defined identity and fully enclosing the communities of Sovereign Harbour, Langney Point estate, and the Kingsmere estate. The only realistic way of reducing the ward's numbers and maintaining strong boundaries would be to move the western boundary from Lottbridge Drove to Princes Road. However, this would create a boundary that cuts through the middle of the Langney Point estate and is not recommended.



It should also be noted that many of the Sovereign Harbour residences are second homes with occasional occupation thus putting less strain on representational numbers. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that no change be made to this ward and that, having regard to community preservation and strong boundaries, the 11% variance is deemed acceptable. This was supported **unanimously** by the cross-party working group.

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## **5. Potential Changes Considered**

Whilst variances within 10% of the average are the desired objective, boundary reviews are only automatically triggered in circumstances where there is a ward variance exceeding 30% or three or more wards with variances exceeding 10%. Thus, Eastbourne's electorate figures, both current and forecast, are within tolerance and, indeed, appear to be the most equitable and best balanced across all the East Sussex Authorities. They are also fully coterminous with County Council divisions.

With only two wards being outside the 10% ideal figure, and in both cases by only a 1% margin, it is important to retain a sense of proportionality when considering potential changes.

As previously stated, the working group unanimously agreed to maintain the existing Sovereign ward boundaries despite the 11% variance. Thus, the main areas of attention for potential change were the Hampden Park ward variance and the Ratton/Old Town community issue referred to in section 4 above. Because, these wards are all connected, the Working Group looked at them in the round when analysing potential changes.

Four different scenarios involving the potential movement of significant electorate areas across the three wards were initially explored by the working group with the primary purpose of improving the electorate equality of Hampden Park and addressing the community split issue in Ratton/Old town. Full details of how the numbers and calculations panned out in respect of these analyses were submitted to the Working Group by the lead officer.

Only one of the four initial scenarios resulted in an electorate equality improvement on the current situation but created a weak boundary line between Ratton and Hampden Park and a disproportionate knock-on effect. The remaining scenarios all produced worsened electorate variances. As a consequence, none of those initial options could be recommended as viable or proportionate.

However, it was still felt that there was merit in trying to equalise the electorate between Hampden Park and Ratton and addressing the community boundary issue in the south of the Ratton ward. Thus, a fifth scenario was plotted and found to meet Boundary Commission criteria and be numerically viable. This is set out in detail in section 6 below as one of the options to be proposed.

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## **6. Options to be Proposed**

Having analysed and unanimously rejected earlier options, the working group was divided on the final option to be proposed to the Council for acceptance. Consequently, two options from the Working Group have materialised for proposal to the Council for consideration and decision.

### **Option A:**

This is the preferred option that has been conveyed to the lead officer by the opposition Conservative group. That no change is proposed to any of the existing ward boundaries on the basis that the degree of change required involving the large number of electorate to be moved is disproportionate to the scale of the current variance in the wards which is deemed to be acceptable.

### **Option B:**

This is the preferred option that has been conveyed to the lead officer by the controlling Liberal Democrat group. That the following changes be proposed on the basis that it improves the electorate percentage variance in Hampden Park and encloses the residential estate currently split between Ratton RNC and Old Town OTB into a single ward. The calculations for this proposal are as follows:

Areas to be moved:

**Zone 1** – Moving the north/eastern strip of Ratton RNA from the borough boundary in the east to Seven Sisters Road in the west into Hampden Park HPC. This is an electorate total of 292

**Reasoning** – This would eliminate the somewhat unusual looking narrow strip at the north-eastern end of Ratton and take Hampden Park out to the borough boundary. This residential area is thought to have no significant characteristic attachment to either one of the wards above the other.

**Zone 2** – Moving the northern half of the Avard/Rockhurst Estate currently at the southern end of Ratton District RNC into Old Town OTB. This results in the movement of an electorate total of 672.

**Reasoning** – This is proposed because the view is that the existing boundary line goes through the middle of an established community estate which should be fully enclosed in one ward. The view was also that the estate has more connection with Old Town than Ratton.

**Zone 3** – The northern half of Old Town district OTC (from the Ratton RNC/RND boundary south to Eldon Road) to be moved into Ratton RNC to compensate for the loss of Ratton electorate in Hampden Park. This is an electorate total of 971.

**Reasoning** – This is identified as a suitable and non-controversial area to move from Old Town into Ratton as a compensatory measure for the loss of Ratton electorate in the other two areas.

**NOTE:** The above proposed areas for movement are highlighted on the map attached to this document together with a spreadsheet showing a full breakdown of the 2021 forecast electorate figures and percentage variances as a consequence of this proposal.

Specifically, the headline electorate variance consequences on the three wards affected by this proposal for 2021 would be as follows:

Ward	2021 Electorate Forecast	Variance From Average
Hampden Park	7865	-8%
Old Town	8494	-1%
Ratton	8052	-6%

In recognition of the fact that there was political division at the Working Group on the above two options, it was also felt that the Council should be given a third option to consider.

### **Option 3:**

That the Council choose not to make a formal submission and leave it to the political groups to submit their own on the basis that full cross-party consensus could not be achieved.

It should be noted, despite the fact that the Working Group were not in accord, there was a consensus that the Council should make a formal submission to the Commission and this view is also strongly recommended by the lead officer.

### **Coterminosity:**

The Working Group noted that, as part of the County-wide nature of this boundary review, East Sussex County Council would be assessing its representation across all the East Sussex Districts. However, in the case of Eastbourne, it is the firm intent that, as part of the overall calculation, we are likely to retain a representation of nine County Councillors and, thus by retaining nine wards, we should hopefully be able to maintain coterminous boundaries with County divisions.

### **Other Matters:**

The Working Group considered two further matters.

### **Ward Names**

It was the unanimous view of the Working Group that there was no reason to change any of the existing ward names as all the existing ward names are very familiar to the electorate and were chosen by public vote as part of the consultation process in 2000.

### **Borough Boundary**

Whilst acknowledging that the borough boundary was outside the scope of this review, it was felt that the Council should formally relay the view that, at the earliest possible opportunity, the borough boundary should be redrawn, in particular to enclose existing residential developments along the northern boundary from Langney in the east to Ratton in the west that are clearly identifiable as part of the Eastbourne residential community.

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## **7. Consultation**

The Boundary Review is owned by the Boundary Commission who, as part of the process, will invite submissions and proposals from any group or individual, and consult on proposals received. However, in addition to providing a link to the Boundary Commission's web page on the Council's website, and in order to encourage participation and awareness, the Working Group's draft proposals for Council consideration have been posted on the Council's website for information and this information and the boundary review process was promoted via a press release.

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## **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

## **9.**

Having taken into account all the investigative work undertaken, the Working Group concluded and presents to the Council at its meeting on 18 November 2015, the following options for consideration:

**Either:**

1. Option A – No change to existing ward boundaries on the basis that the degree of electorate variance forecast for existing wards is acceptable and does not warrant disproportionate change.

**Or:**

2. Option B – Changes as set out in section 6 above as it provides an opportunity to improve one of the two current wards outside the existing 10% electorate variance whilst correcting a current boundary issue where a residential estate is split between two wards.

**Or:**

3. Option C – That the Council declines to make a formal submission on the basis that it has been unable to achieve political consensus on a proposal and that it be left to the political parties to submit individual proposals.

**And, in addition to any one of the above options:**

4. That existing ward names remain unchanged (unanimously supported by the working group)
5. That a formal request to address the current ward boundary be placed on record and conveyed to the Boundary Commission (unanimously supported by the working group)

**Peter Finnis, Senior Head of Community Development and Governance**

**Councillor Gordon Jenkins, on behalf of the Conservative Group**

**Councillors Troy Tester and John Ungar, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group**

