

Report to: **Governance Committee**

Date: **3 June 2016**

By: **Assistant Chief Executive**

Title of report: **New electoral arrangements for East Sussex County Council**

Purpose of report: **To consider the County Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of the review of East Sussex County Council electoral boundaries.**

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**RECOMMENDATION: The Governance Committee is recommended to approve the County Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's proposals for East Sussex County Council electoral divisions as set out in the appendix to this report.**

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## **1. Supporting Information**

1.1 Further to the County Council's submission agreed by Council on 1 December 2015, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has published a set of draft proposals for consultation. The thirteen-week consultation period ends on 16 June 2016.

1.2 The draft proposals are for new county electoral division (CED) boundaries and new ward boundaries for each of East Sussex's five district and borough councils. The Commission is proposing that East Sussex County Council has 50 councillors in the future, one more than the current arrangements.

1.3 The full LGBCE recommendations and interactive maps are available on the Commission's website at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk) and [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk). The website also includes: a table of electoral figures on which the proposals are based; technical guidance on the review process and details of the supporting legislation.

1.4 The LGBCE has stated that the aims of the boundary review are to:

- deliver *electoral equality* for local voters so that each councillor represents a similar number of electors;
- ensure that our proposals reflect the *interests and identities of local communities* across East Sussex; and
- ensure that the pattern of wards or divisions helps the Council to deliver *effective local government* to local people.

1.5 Hard copies of the Commission's report and maps were distributed to Council buildings and libraries, and were made available in the Member and Cabinet rooms.

1.6 On 10 May 2016, County Council agreed to delegate authority to the Governance Committee to consider all proposed amendments from County Councillors and the Boundary Review Reference Group and agree the Council's final submission to the LGBCE.

1.7 The Reference Group has met and made the following comments which have been incorporated into the proposed County Council response at Appendix 1:

- Eastbourne: Old Town / Ratton CEDs boundary: The Reference Group reemphasised the critical importance of coterminosity between ward and divisions in Eastbourne. It supported the pattern that provides for best electoral equality which equates to the proposed changes by Eastbourne Borough Council (and endorsed by ESCC in its previous submission).

- Eastbourne: Sovereign / St Anthony's CEDs boundary: The Reference Group agreed with the proposal by Eastbourne Borough Council to retain the current boundary and not to support the changes proposed by the Commission.
- Lewes: Seaford North, Seaford South and Newhaven & Bishopstone proposed CEDs: Although there were only very minor differences between the ESCC submission and the LGBCE proposals, the Commission specifically invited comments on its proposed Newhaven & Bishopstone proposed division. In making a suggested boundary change affecting the proposed Seaford North and Seaford South divisions, the Reference Group sought to address the 13% variance in this division and suggested an outline pattern of CEDs that appears to be more acceptable locally and has more similarities to the current pattern.
- Wealden: Hooe: The Group unanimously supported WDC's proposal to retain Hooe parish within the proposed Horam & Eastern Villages CED and not in the Pevensey & Stone Cross CED as proposed by the Commission.
- Name changes: The reference Group proposed name changes for the following CEDs:
  - Hartfield to Wealden North
  - Horam and Eastern Villages to Wealden East
  - Wadhurst to Wealden North East

1.8 Appendix 1 to this report comprises the proposed submission from the County Council to the LGBCE's consultation for East Sussex.

1.9 The Commission aims to publish its final recommendations in September – October 2016. Assuming that Parliament is satisfied with the recommendations, the new boundaries will come into effect at the next local elections: 2017 for East Sussex County Council, 2018 for Hastings Borough Council and 2019 for Eastbourne Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council.

## **2. Conclusion and decision**

2.1 The Governance Committee is recommended to consider the draft submission in the appendix to this report and approve the County Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of East Sussex County Council boundaries.

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Local Member: All

Background Documents: None