

Chichester District Council

CABINET

7 July 2015

Boundary Review of West Sussex County Council

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Council be recommended that the Boundary Review Panel be authorised to respond to West Sussex County Council's proposed scheme of county electoral divisions for Chichester District, to West Sussex County Council and/or to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by the end of August 2015.**

3. Background

- 3.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is conducting a review of West Sussex County Council's electoral divisions. The primary purpose of the review is to correct electoral imbalance, ie one electoral division being larger than another.
- 3.2. The County Council's Electoral Review Panel, chaired by Mr Bill Acraman, will be meeting in late June and throughout July to work on detailed proposals for the pattern of divisions across each district area. The meeting covering Chichester and Arun districts is on 3 July 2015 from 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.
- 3.3. The Panel would welcome the views of local stakeholders on possible patterns of divisions. Stakeholders may propose a scheme or give views on how effective divisions are currently in advance of the Panel meetings. As soon as possible after the Panel meetings, WSCC will send out their proposed schemes by district. Comment on the proposed schemes will be welcome. Comments must be submitted to james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk by 12 August to be included in the WSCC Governance Committee's considerations on 24 August, when it will agree the formal West Sussex County Council proposed electoral divisions scheme.
- 3.4. Alternatively contact may be made to the Boundary Commission direct with any proposals up to the end of August.
- 3.5. These are the key factors that the Panel will take into consideration:

- All divisions should have a broadly equal electorate. The LGBCE will not normally agree to a division with an electorate above or below a 10% variance from the average.
- No electoral division can cross from one district to another.
- Divisions should seek to represent natural communities, respecting obvious physical divides (such as rivers, major roads and railways) and seeking to respect parish boundaries. Polling districts will be adhered to in urban areas as far as possible.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1. A scheme that achieves, as near as practically possible, county electoral divisions of the same size in terms of electorate and represent natural communities, respecting obvious physical divides (such as rivers, major roads and railways) and seeking to respect parish boundaries.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. The timetable set by the LGBCE, and being followed by WSCC does not practically allow this Council to follow what would be its normal process of consideration by the Boundary Review Panel, and recommendation via the Cabinet to full Council.
- 5.2. WSCC has indicated that each stakeholder organisation may send one representative to the Panel meeting on 3 July. It is proposed that this Council should be represented by the Head of Finance & Governance Services.
- 5.3. All members have been asked to let the Head of Finance & Governance Services have any comments they wish to make, either before the Panel meeting or after publication of the proposed scheme (which will be copied to them when available).
- 5.4. It is proposed that a meeting of the Boundary Review Panel should be convened at the end of July or early August, with delegated powers to respond to the WSCC's proposed scheme for the district, either to WSCC by 12 August in time for consideration by its Governance Committee or (if appropriate) direct to the LGBCE.
- 5.5. Having considered WSCC's proposals and any other submissions, the LGBCE is likely to publish its recommended scheme on 17 November 2015, which will be followed by a consultation period expiring on 11 January 2016. Even though that does not fit well with the Council's timetable of meetings (the Council meetings being scheduled for 15 December 2015 and 26 January 2016), it should be possible at that stage to involve members through the Council's formal decision making process. By that time the District Council's own electoral review may be about to start, possibly making it easier to assess the implications of changes to county electoral divisions for district ward boundaries.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1. As explained above there seems little alternative to the use of delegated powers at this stage of the boundary review, unless special meetings of the Cabinet and

Council are to be convened.

7. Resource and legal implications

7.1. There are no resource implications at this stage of the process.

8. Consultation

8.1. WSCC is consulting a wide range of stakeholders, including parish councils and political associations, besides the borough and district councils within the county.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

9.1. For Chichester District, WSCC propose that there should be 10 county councillors – the same as at present. However, some divisions vary from the average. The LGBCE has decided that its 'minded to' Council size will be 70 members, as compared with the County Council's proposed 69. The figures below therefore vary slightly from those notified to members by email on 16 June:-

Electoral Division	Electorate 2015	Variance from WSCC average (8,897)		Forecast Electorate 2021	Variance from WSCC average (9,481)	
		Number	%		Number	%
Bourne	9,427	+530	+5.96	9,716	+235	+2.48
Chichester East	9,959	+1,062	+11.94	11,403	+1,922	+20.27
Chichester North	9,070	+173	+1.94	10,489	+1,008	+10.63
Chichester South	8,943	+46	+0.52	9,532	+51	+0.90
Chichester West	9,372	+475	+5.33	9,575	+94	+0.99
Fernhurst	8,742	-155	-1.74	9,550	+69	+0.72
Midhurst	8,522	-375	-4.21	8,985	-496	-5.23
Petworth	9,545	+648	+7.28	9,783	+302	+3.19
Selsey	8,567	-330	-3.71	8,757	-724	-7.64
The Witterings	7,985	-912	-10.25	8,340	-1,141	-12.03

9.2. From this it can be seen that the Chichester East and North Electoral Divisions are too big and The Witterings Electoral Division is too small – beyond the 10% tolerance. The Selsey and Midhurst Electoral Divisions are somewhat under the average.

9.3. Therefore, although it is proposed that the District keeps the same number of county councillors, some re-drawing of electoral division boundaries can be expected, certainly in the east side of Chichester and The Manhood Peninsula. This may in due course have a knock-on effect on our own electoral review

10. Other Implications

Crime & Disorder:	None
Climate Change:	None

Human Rights and Equality Impact: The review is designed to achieve electoral balance, ie electoral divisions of equal size as far as reasonably practical, thus ensuring that each elector's vote is of equal value.	
Safeguarding:	None

11. Appendices

None

12. Background Papers

12.1. Email letter from charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk to the Chief Executive dated 23 June 2015.