

Chichester District Council

COUNCIL

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Chichester Electoral Review: Draft Recommendations

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation of the Boundary Review Panel

That the Council informs the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that it supports the Commission's draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Chichester District Council, with the following exceptions:

- (1) Its proposal to include the parish of Elsted & Treyford in Midhurst Ward. Instead this parish should be included in Harting Ward, as in the Council's original submission, on the grounds that in this case the criteria of community identity and effective and convenient local government should outweigh the fairly marginal electoral inequality.
- (2) Its proposals for the proposed Bosham & Donnington and North Mundham & Tangmere wards are accepted, but the wards should be named respectively Harbour and Tangmere Wards.
- (3) Its proposal to transfer Velyn Avenue from Chichester South Ward to Chichester Central Ward; the flats on the western side of Velyn Avenue, with Peter Weston Close should be so transferred but the eastern and southern sides of Velyn Avenue should remain with the rest of Whyke in Chichester South Ward with which it has more community identity.
- (4) Its proposal to transfer the Pound Farm area from Chichester South Ward to Chichester East Ward, thus creating a very small and unviable city council ward. Under the Commission's proposal, electors in this area will be in Chichester South for County Council elections, Chichester East for District Council elections, and Chichester Pound Farm for City Council elections. This will be confusing for electors, and is not conducive to convenient and effective local government.
- (5) The name of its proposed Chichester Portfield Ward; Chichester Arundel Park Ward is preferred.

3. Background

- 3.1. On 16 August 2016, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published for consultation its draft recommendations for ward names and boundaries for Chichester District Council to take effect for the council elections in May 2019. The consultation document is attached as Appendix 1. The consultation period runs until 10 October 2016.

3.2. This is the third and penultimate stage in the electoral review. Previous stages have been:

- (1) Review of Council size, leading to a proposal to reduce the size of the Council from 48 to 36 members.
- (2) Invitation to the Council (and other interested parties) to propose a pattern of wards, leading to approval of a submission to the LGBCE by the Council at a special meeting on 31 March 2016.

3.3. Also on 16 August, the LGBCE published its final recommendations for its review of electoral divisions of West Sussex County Council. This has particular relevance for ward patterns within Chichester City.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

4.1. The outcome is to achieve a pattern of wards which meets the Commission's three statutory criteria: electoral equality; community interests and identities; and effective and convenient local government.

4.2. **Electoral Equality:** This means that each councillor should represent roughly the same number of voters. The projected number of voters in the District is 98,781. (This is based on projections to 2021, as required by the LGBCE to help future-proof the new arrangements) This means that, on average, each councillor should represent about **2,744** voters. The LGBCE works on the principle that a ward has electoral equality if the number of electors per councillor is within 10% of the average.

4.3. **Interests and identities of local communities:** This means respecting local ties and setting easily identifiable boundaries. The patterns of community life, represented by transport links, community groups, facilities such as shops, health services and community halls, and shared interests should be taken into account. In many cases parishes can be used as building blocks.

4.4. **Effective and convenient local government:** This means ensuring that the wards can be represented effectively by their elected councillor(s) – that wards are neither too big nor too small in extent and all parts of the wards are linked together. Wards may have more than one councillor, but not more than three.

5. Proposals

5.1. In its consultation document, the LGBCE accepts the electorate forecasts for 2021 provided by the Council as “the best available at the present time” and uses them to produce its draft recommendations.

5.2. The LGBCE had already reached a provisional view in support of the Council's recommendation for a reduction in the number of councillors to 36, believing that the Council would still be able to carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively. In the course of its consultation on ward patterns, other parties put forward arguments in favour of 35 or 34 members. The LGBCE examined these options, but does not accept them, and expresses concern that a reduction to 34 would impact on the running of the council.

- 5.3. The LGBCE's draft recommendations are based on the submission put forward by the Council in March. Although stating the Council's recommendations, that submission also drew the LGBCE's attention to matters of controversy, such as the inclusion of Sidlesham in a ward with part of Selsey, and the inclusion of Lurgashall in Fernhurst ward. These and other matters were also raised in the submissions by other parties direct to the LGBCE.
- 5.4. The LGBCE has considered, and comments upon, these matters, but with three exceptions (described in paragraph 6 below) its draft recommendations follow the Council's own proposals.
- 5.5. The Panel believes that, in responding to the LGBCE's draft recommendations, the Council should comment only on the LGBCE proposals that differ from Council's. There seems no point in re-opening issues where the LGBCE has adopted the Council's proposals.
- 5.6. A summary of the LGBCE's draft recommendations, setting out how they affect parishes is set out in Appendix 2.

6. Issues

- 6.1. The LGBCE's draft recommendations differ from the Council's proposals, where the latter involve the creation of wards with a variance of + or – 10% from the average. There are also some variations within the City of Chichester.

Harting Ward.

- 6.2. The Council proposed a single-member Harting Ward with a projected electorate of 3,054, a variance of +11%, comprising the four parishes of Harting, Rogate, Trotton with Chithurst and Elsted & Treyford. Although acknowledging that this was above the 10% threshold, both Trotton with Chithurst and Elsted & Treyford had stated that they had more affinity with this ward and with each other than with parishes to the east and north.
- 6.3. The LGBCE proposes detaching Elsted & Treyford parish and including this in the two-member Midhurst Ward. Its report states (paras 30-31):-

*“30 We received two submissions relating to **Harting** ward. It was acknowledged that this ward had over 10% more electors than the average for the district. It was suggested that either Elsted & Treyford parish or Trotton with Chithurst parish could be transferred to Midhurst or Linchmere wards, respectively. However, this was rejected on the basis of community identity. We also received good evidence for the community links between Trotton with Chithurst and the parishes within the proposed Harting ward.*

“31 We have carefully considered the evidence received, but consider the electoral variance for this proposed ward to be somewhat high. We have examined the proposal to transfer Elsted & Treyford parish to Midhurst ward. Our tour of the area confirmed that while Elsted & Treyford parish clearly has links to the parishes in Harting ward, it also has reasonable road links to Midhurst. Transferring Elsted & Treyford to Midhurst would improve electoral equality. We

are therefore transferring Elsted & Treyford parish to Midhurst as part of our draft recommendations.”

- 6.4. Both Elsted and Treyford and Trotton with Chithurst parish councils are understood to be strongly against the LGBCE’s draft recommendation. The former provides a detailed argument on community identity grounds for remaining in Harting Ward (set out in full in Appendix 3) and the latter states that councillors “intend to reiterate and reinforce the objections they sent last time regarding separating us from Elsted & Treyhurst parish council”. Those objections emphasised the closeness of relations between the two parishes, involving significant working together and the possibility of a common council (ie one parish council for two parishes). Representations supporting the Council’s original proposal and opposing the transfer of Elsted & Treyford Parish to Midhurst Ward have also been received from Midhurst Town Council, which points to the fact that significant additional development may be expected in Midhurst but not in Harting Ward and to the difficulties in managing such a mix of rural and urban communities, and from Cllr Andrew Shaxson.
- 6.5. **The Panel considers that, in this case, considerations of community identity and convenient and effective local government should outweigh those of electoral equality and that Elsted & Treyford should be included in Harting Ward.**

Bosham to Tangmere area

- 6.6. The Council proposed:
- A two-member Bosham Ward, with a projected electorate of 3,132, a variance of +14%, comprising the parishes of Chidham & Hambrook, Bosham, and Fishbourne (except Appledram Lane South).
 - A single-member Donnington Ward, with a projected electorate of 3,012, a variance of +10%, comprising the parishes of Donnington, Appledram (with Appledram Lane South), and Hunston.
 - A single member Oving Ward, with a projected electorate of 2,341, a variance of -15%, comprising the parishes of North Mundham and Oving.
 - A single member Tangmere Ward, with a projected electorate of 2,472, a variance of -10%, comprising Tangmere Parish.
- 6.7. The LGBCE comments that the proposals for Bosham, Oving and Tangmere Wards have poor electoral equality. They also do not support the creation of a parish ward in Fishbourne for Appledram Lane South consisting of about 60 electors. The LGBCE, therefore, proposes:
- a three-member Bosham & Donnington ward, comprising the parishes of Chidham & Hambrook, Bosham, Fishbourne, Appeldram and Donnington, with a projected electorate of 8,355, a variance of +1%,
 - a two-member North Mundham and Tangmere Ward, comprising the parishes of Hunston, North Mundham, Oving and Tangmere, with a projected electorate of 5,734, a variance of +4%,
- 6.8. Its report states (paras 38-41, 43-44):-

“...the Bosham ward had poor electoral equality, with 14% more electors than the district average. In addition, it was proposed that an area of Fishbourne

parish be transferred to Donnington ward. This would require the creation of a parish ward of Fishbourne with only 62 electors. We do not consider this provides for effective and convenient local government and do not propose adopting it. However, retaining the whole of Fishbourne parish in Bosham ward worsens electoral equality from 14% to 15% more electors than the district average.

*“We have therefore examined options to improve this. We note that there is no option to transfer any area to the north as the A27 forms a strong boundary. We have considered transferring part of the proposed Bosham ward around Nutbourne in Chidham & Hambrook parish to Southbourne ward. However, we note that part of the Nutbourne area has only recently been transferred to Chidham & Hambrook parish as part of a Community Governance Review. While moving this area for warding purposes would improve electoral equality we do not believe it would reflect communities or ensure effective and convenient local government. We are therefore adopting the proposed **Southbourne** ward without amendment.*

“We note that there were strong objections to the transfer of any area of Fishbourne parish into a Chichester city ward. However, our tour of the area confirmed that the north-east area of Fishbourne, around Mosse Gardens, does have road links into Chichester city via Clay Lane, albeit while crossing under the A27. We also explored the links between the southern area of Fishbourne and Appledram and Donnington parishes. Transferring part of Fishbourne would improve electoral equality in Bosham ward and also improve electoral equality in the Chichester wards. However, we acknowledge that this would not reflect community links.

*“Therefore, to address the variance in Bosham ward we propose transferring Donnington and Appledram parishes to Bosham ward to create a three-member **Donnington & Bosham** ward. We acknowledge that this creates a somewhat large ward, but it is no larger than others in the district and would be served by three councillors. In addition, while it contains a number of communities, there are good internal road links between them and our recommendations avoid the need to divide any parish between wards...”*

*“...We note that the proposals for Oving and Tangmere wards would have poor electoral equality, with Oving ward having 15% fewer electors than the district average. It was argued that this would enable the areas to accommodate predicted growth beyond the five-year forecast period. However, we are unable to consider the electorate forecasts beyond the date five years from the end of the review. We have therefore sought to improve these proposals. We propose transferring the remainder of Donnington ward into a two-councillor ward combining Oving and Tangmere wards. We propose calling this ward **North Mundham & Tangmere**. This ward would have good electoral equality, but still enable a certain amount of growth to be accommodated beyond the forecast period. Our tour of the area confirmed that there are good road links within the ward.”*

- 6.9.** The scale of the variances in the Council’s original proposals are unlikely to be acceptable to the LGBCE, unless compelling evidence can be provided on the criteria of community identity or convenient and effective local government.

There is some uncertainty about the pace of development, and hence the accuracy of the projected electorates in Oving and Tangmere parishes, both of which contain strategic development locations. In particular, because the electoral review has slipped a few months, an additional 45 houses at Shopwyke (equivalent to 76 electors) should be added to the projections for Oving Parish. The Council's projections are based on a cautious view and there are already possible signs that they may be exceeded. However, as explained in the final paragraph of the above extract from the LGBCE report, there is some headroom to enable a certain amount of additional growth to be accommodated. The proposed addition of Hunston to this Ward makes it impracticable to separate Tangmere from the rest of the Ward.

- 6.10. The Panel believes that the LGBCE's recommendations for ward boundaries are acceptable, but that the names of the Wards should be "Harbour" (for the LGBCE's proposed Bosham and Donnington Ward) and "Tangmere" (for the LGBCE's proposed North Mundham and Tangmere Ward), in order to achieve consistency with the Council's approach to naming wards.**

Chichester City

- 6.11. The Council's submission kept Chichester City as a single entity, with no district wards crossing the city boundary. It proposed division of the City into five wards, with a single-member central ward and four two-member wards named after compass points. Only Chichester South Ward had a positive variance; all other wards had negative variances, rising to as much as -10% in Chichester East. Co-terminosity with proposals for county electoral divisions was sought where possible, but these had not been settled at that time, with WSCC putting forward counter-proposals to the LGBCE's draft recommendations. This Council's submission, therefore, encouraged the LGBCE to seek co-terminosity as far as possible in producing final recommendations for WSCC and draft recommendations for Chichester District Council, acknowledging that this would not always be possible and there would be divergences in places, notably East Broyle, Arundel Park and the north-east quadrant of the City Centre.
- 6.12. The LGBCE's proposals for warding Chichester City are broadly similar to the Council's submission. The LGBCE accepts the community identity arguments for not crossing the City boundary. However, it does propose some minor variations to ward boundaries:-
- a. Transfer the south side of Westgate, including Tannery Close, Mount Lane and Marriott House/Lodge from Chichester Central to Chichester West. This appears to be a consequence of representations from the Westgate Residents Association. A similar change has been made to the WSCC Electoral Division boundary. Since the last electoral review in 2002, Westgate Street has been traffic calmed and is less of a main road. The road is more of a unifying feature than a dividing feature in the community, and this proposal appears reasonable.
 - b. Transfer Cawley Road, Laburnam Grove, Velyn Avenue, Peter Weston Close and the South side of The Hornet from Chichester South to Chichester Central. This appears to be a re-balancing of Chichester Central as a

consequence of the previous proposal. This proposal appears reasonable, in part at least. However, Chichester City Councillors have argued that Velyn Avenue belongs with Whyke in Chichester South rather than the Central Ward. In fact, the western side of Velyn Avenue and the whole of Peter Weston Close comprise blocks of flats constructed recently and linked to flats in The Hornet, whereas the eastern side of Velyn Avenue, and its southern end comprise older development that is more related to the Whyke area in Chichester South.

- c. Transfer Pound Farm Road and the north sides of parts of Whyke Road and Bognor Road from Chichester South to Chichester East. This appears to be intended to reduce the negative variance on Chichester East ward. As mentioned in the next paragraph, this creates a very small city council ward. The Council's submission had already proposed that the south side of Oving Road should be transferred from Chichester South to Chichester East, so that both sides of Oving Road fell in the same ward. A similar proposal was put forward for WSCC's electoral division boundary, and that has been adopted by the LGBCE. The combined effect of the LGBCE's proposals is that the proposed Pound Farm City Ward will be in Chichester South for county council elections but in Chichester East for district council elections. This may be confusing for the electorate and contrary to effective and convenient local government.

Impact on parish electoral arrangements

6.13. These proposals have knock-on effects for Chichester City Council. Where the district ward boundaries diverge from the county ED boundaries a single-member city ward is created. (See para 52 of Appendix 2). This results in four single-member city council wards within the retained council size of 20. These are:-

- East Broyle. This is an inevitable consequence of the Council's proposals and is a reasonable size.
- Portfield. The Panel believes this would be better named "Arundel Park". This is an inevitable consequence of the Council's proposals and is a reasonable size.
- Priory. This is an inevitable consequence of the Council's proposals. It is rather on the small side and in strict equality terms would be entitled to only 0.44 of a city councillor.
- Pound Farm. This is the area referred to in paragraph 6.12 (c) above. It is very small (about 240 electors) and would be entitled to only 0.21 of a city councillor.

6.14. The LGBCE has provided the following figures of projected electorates for its proposed City Council wards:

Proposed City Ward	2021 electorate	'Entitlement' to councillors	Proposed number of councillors
Chichester Central	2,086	1.79	2
Chichester East	4,948	4.25	4
Chichester East Broyle	955	0.82	1
Chichester North	5,113	4.39	4

Chichester Portfield	1,400	1.20	1
Chichester Pound Farm	241	0.21	1
Chichester Priory	511	0.44	1
Chichester South	3,691	3.17	3
Chichester West	4,331	3.72	3

- 6.15. In paragraph 53 of their draft recommendations report (Appendix 2 hereto) the LGBCE explains that Chichester District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements. In conducting such a review, the Council would not be bound by the same limitations as the LGBCE and could, for example, vary the size of the City Council and change ward boundaries so that they regain co-terminosity with the District ward boundaries. However, electoral arrangements put in place by the LGBCE are protected for five years and, if the Council wishes to alter them as part of a community governance review, the consent of the LGBCE is required.
- 6.16. **The Panel recommends the elimination of the proposed Pound Farm Ward, by adhering to the rear of the properties on the south side of Oving Road as the boundary between Chichester East and Chichester South wards. It also agrees that the flats on the western side of Velyn Avenue, with Peter Weston Close, should be transferred to Chichester Central Ward, but recommends that the eastern and southern sides of Velyn Avenue should remain with the rest of Whyke in Chichester South Ward.**
- 6.17. The LGBCE also provides revised parish electoral arrangements for Selsey Town Council, the only other parish not wholly within one district ward. The Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Selsey North (six councillors) and Selsey South (eight councillors).

7. Consultation

- 7.1. On 16 August 2016, the same day as it was received, the LGBCE's consultation document was sent to all members, all parish councils and chairmen of parish meetings, West Sussex County Council, South Downs National Park Authority, the local Police commander, political parties in the Chichester and Arundel and South Downs constituencies, and other interested parties who had responded to the Council's earlier consultation on creating a pattern of wards. The consultation document was also put on the Council's website.
- 7.2. At the time of preparing this report, relatively few responses have been received. Those that have been received are set out in Appendix 3, and have been taken into account in Section 6 above.

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix 1 – LGBCE draft recommendations report for Chichester District Council
Appendix 2 – Summary showing arrangement of parishes
Appendix 3 – Representations received to date