

Report to Governance Committee

July 2021

Parliamentary Boundary Review Consultation 2021

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

The Boundary Commission for England has launched a Parliamentary Boundary Review and is consulting on a proposed scheme for constituencies in England. The County Council is able to respond to the consultation, as may any other individuals, organisations and councils.

Recommendations

- (1) That the proposed response to the Boundary Commission's consultation as outlined in Appendix A be approved as the County Council's response to the consultation.
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Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Parliament agreed the Parliamentary Constituencies Act in December 2020. The Act sets out the criteria for future Parliamentary boundary reviews, based on retaining the current 650 members of parliament (MPs), but reallocating seats to ensure that all constituencies have broadly equal electorates, within 10% of the average across the 650 constituencies.
- 1.2 New constituencies to take effect from the 2025 election must have electorates of between 69,724 to 77,062, based on March 2020 electorates. There are several exceptions set out in the Act, such as for certain islands
- 1.3 The Boundary Commission for England is undertaking a consultation on a scheme covering England, which is entitled to 543 constituencies. Within the South East Region, an increase of seven constituencies to 91 in total is proposed.
- 1.4 The Commission has produced a draft scheme within sub regions, including a scheme for Sussex, increasing the number of MPs from 16 to 17 in total. Any person or organisation is able to respond to the public consultation.

- 1.5 The consultation closes on 2 August 2021, but further consultation will be undertaken later in the review, which should be concluded in 2023.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 Under the new requirements of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act it is evident that six of the eight current West Sussex constituencies are too large and significant change is therefore necessary within West Sussex.
- 2.2 The Commission's proposals are to leave the Crawley constituency unchanged, but the rest of the county sees significant change. Because of the need for Sussex to gain an additional MP, the Commission proposes a crossing of the East and West Sussex boundary for a constituency of East Grinstead & Uckfield. The other proposed constituencies are Arundel & Littlehampton, Bognor Regis, Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex, Shoreham and Worthing.
- 2.3 The County Council's Electoral Review Panel met on 30 June 2021 to consider the Commission's proposals and discussed a number of alternative options. A response to the consultation was agreed by majority and is attached at Appendix A. A map showing the recommendations is attached at Appendix B.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 The Electoral Review Panel considered supporting the Commission's scheme and also considered other variations to the proposals in the Commission's scheme proposed by members of the Panel but, by majority the Panel considered that the particular proposals in the Panel's report would provide the optimum balance for improvements for the benefit of local communities given the constraints set out above.
- 3.2 The Panel's notes are included as a background paper to demonstrate other options that were considered, such as whether the Selsey area could be retained in Chichester constituency, but the Panel did not believe that this could be done without splitting the town of Littlehampton, so could not be supported.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 Not applicable – the County Council is a consultee in this matter, although the Electoral Review Panel has members from each district area in the county to ensure a good spread of local knowledge.

5 Finance

- 5.1 There are no Revenue or Capital finance implications.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 The County Council has a long-established informal policy that Parliamentary constituencies should be wholly based within the county boundary. It has sought to adhere to this informal policy as far as possible, although the Panel accepted that a crossover to East Sussex was inevitable because of the electorate figures in the new Parliamentary Constituencies Act.

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Appendices

- A. West Sussex County Council's Response to the Parliamentary Boundary Review's Consultation.
- B. Map of West Sussex County Council's proposed amendments to the Commission's draft scheme.

Background papers

1. [Notes of Electoral Review Panel Meeting](#) (PDF, 69KB) held 30 June 2021

Agreed:

Name: Cllr Pete Bradbury

Title: Chairman of the Governance Committee

Date: 26.7.21

Signature: P. Bradbury

Action authorised:

Signature:

AJ Kershaw

Name: Tony Kershaw

Title: Director of Law and Assurance

Date: 27.7.21