

## **Report to Governance Committee**

**August 2022**

### **Mid Sussex District Council Consultation on Burgess Hill Community Governance Review 2022**

#### **Report by Director of Law and Assurance**

**Electoral divisions: Burgess Hill North and Cuckfield & Lucastes**

---

#### **Summary**

Mid Sussex District Council is consulting on a proposed change to the boundary of Burgess Hill Town Council. It has indicated that, if the change is made, it could seek a consequential change to the County Council division boundary between Burgess Hill North and Cuckfield & Lucastes. The County Council is able to respond to the consultation.

#### **Recommendation**

That the proposed response to the Mid Sussex District Council consultation, as outlined in Appendix 1, be approved as the County Council's response to the consultation.

---

#### **Proposal**

##### **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 Mid Sussex District Council has undertaken a Community Governance Review of several areas of Mid Sussex. This is in response to petitions from local electors around certain town and parish council boundary arrangements.
- 1.2 The County Council does not usually comment on Community Governance Reviews on the basis that it is best to leave local parish reviews to district and local councils. However, the Community Governance Review of Burgess Hill contains a recommendation from the District Council that the County Council electoral division boundaries be amended between Burgess Hill North division and Cuckfield & Lucastes division. It proposes that the area of development known as the Northern Arc should be moved from Cuckfield & Lucastes division to Burgess Hill North, in line with district and proposed town council boundaries. A map of the proposed Burgess Hill town arrangements is attached as Appendix 2, to show the location of the Northern Arc area.
- 1.3 The Electoral Review Panel was asked to come to a view on whether or not the County Council should support the District Council's proposal on the county electoral division boundaries. Mid Sussex District Council's current consultation

on the matter ends on 12 August, so a response will be agreed by a Governance Committee urgent action to reflect the conclusion of the Panel.

### **Boundary Commission Review Criteria - How Electoral Reviews Work**

- 1.4 The Panel was asked to consider the proposal bearing in mind the criteria set by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review criteria, namely that there are three legal factors the Commission uses to draw new boundaries:
- New wards/divisions should leave each councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other councillors elsewhere in the authority.
  - New wards/divisions should – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities, and boundaries should be identifiable. Consider transport links, community groups and facilities, natural or physical boundaries, parishes and shared interests.
  - New wards/divisions should promote effective and convenient local government. Consider the number of councillors for, the geographic size of, and the links between parts of the ward
- 1.5 The balance of electorate was a key consideration for the Panel. The Commission last undertook a full review of West Sussex County Council in 2015. The 70 member scheme provides a good level of electoral equality throughout West Sussex and in 2021. Only 4 electoral divisions were above the +10% or below -10% thresholds that can lead to a further review.
- 1.6 The Commission's criteria for undertaking a full review are:
1. At the request of the local authority; or
  2. If the local authority meets the Commission's intervention criteria:
    - If one ward has an electorate of +/-30% from the average electorate for the authority
    - If 30% of all wards have an electorate of +/-10% from the average electorate for the authority.

### **Average Electorate for West Sussex County Council**

- 1.7 West Sussex County Council's Planning Team provided some figures to align with the District's Council's report, which includes population projections to 2027. While forecasting is always difficult, the Planning Team has found the following:
- Total electorate population across West Sussex in 2027 is projected to be **732,068** - data from [Office for National Statistics Population Projections](#)
  - Total population for 2027 across West Sussex is projected to be **910,301**. So the electorate population makes up **80.4%** of the population.
  - With 70 electoral divisions across the county this would give an average of **10,458** electors per division.

## **Likely impact of Mid Sussex District Council Proposal on West Sussex County Council electoral division boundaries**

- 1.8 Using the average electorate of 10,458, coupled with the Mid Sussex District Council detailed projections for Burgess Hill North electoral division and Cuckfield & Lucastes electoral division, the following are projected for 2027:

<b>Electoral Division with or without Northern Arc</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>% +/- Average</b>
Cuckfield & Lucastes with Northern Arc	11979	15%
Burgess Hill North without Northern Arc	10136	-3%
Cuckfield & Lucastes without Northern Arc	8919	-15%
Burgess Hill North with Northern Arc	13196	26%

- 1.9 If the change proposed by Mid Sussex District Council were to take effect, it could lead to one division being very close to the 30% trigger point for a full review of West Sussex County Council's arrangements.
- 1.10 Many of the towns across West Sussex have several split electoral divisions. While Burgess Hill North and Burgess Hill East are both wholly within the Burgess Hill Town area, the Hurstpierpoint & Bolney electoral division and the Hassocks & Burgess Hill South electoral division both include parts of the town.

## **2 Proposal details**

- 2.1 The County Council's Electoral Review Panel met on 27 July 2022 to consider the proposals and discussed the information above. A response to the consultation was agreed by majority and is attached at Appendix 1. Cllr Cherry asked for it to be recorded that he did not support the response and in particular did not support the notion that it is premature to consider moving the Northern Arc development into Burgess Hill town for electoral purposes.

## **3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)**

- 3.1 The County Council does not have to respond to the consultation, but this is not recommended as this is the opportunity for the County Council to express its opinion on this potential change to its electoral division boundaries.

## **4 Consultation, engagement and advice**

- 4.1 The members of the two electoral divisions made submissions to the Panel. The submission from Cllr Bradbury is attached as Appendix 3 and the submission from Cllr Condie is attached as Appendix 4.

## **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 None.

Tony Kershaw

**Director of Law and Assurance**

**Contact Officer:** Charles Gauntlett, Senior Advisor, Democratic Services, 033 022 22524 and [charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk)

### **Appendices**

1. West Sussex County Council's Response to the Community Governance Review Consultation.
2. Map of Burgess Hill Community Governance Review Area
3. Submission from Cllr Bradbury
4. Submission from Cllr Condie

### **Background papers**

None

### **Agreed:**

Name: Cllr Sujan Wickremaratchi

Title: Vice-Chairman of the Governance Committee

Date: 08.08.20

Signature:

Sujan Wickremaratchi

### **Action authorised:**

Signature:



Name: Tony Kershaw

Title: Director of Law and Assurance

Date: 08.08.20