

Submission from Cllr Bradbury, Member for Cuckfield & Lucastes Electoral Division

I would like to add some further evidence to the Northern Arc boundary review. As previously stated, the review being conducted now prejudices against any meaningful consultation with residents of the Northern Arc and is therefore prejudicial against future residents. This alone should be sufficient grounds for maintaining the status quo until 2025, when a meaningful consultation can take place. The petition commits the sin of assumption that such future residents would want to come under the governance of Burgess Hill Town Council and assume the council tax liabilities contingent on that. There is currently no evidence to support that assumption.

Further, the proposed increase in the number of councillors is contrary to the current direction of travel for fewer rather than more councillors. There is no evidence that such an increase in town councillors would lead to better governance and it's unfortunate that this proposal was an addendum to the main thrust of the petition since it is almost impossible to imagine that a separate petition to increase the number of councillors in Burgess Hill by 22% would receive widespread public support. Mid Sussex District Councillors is reducing its numbers by 11% and I note East Grinstead Town Council have requested a Community Governance Review to reduce their number of Councillors from 18 to 16. I would therefore propose that Burgess Hill Town Council should also have 16 Councillors, in line with East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. This would result in a saving for taxpayers and better local democracy by being able to make more efficient decisions.

I also note the precedence set by the recent Community Governance Reviews for Sayers Common and Worth, which have both concluded that there is not strong enough evidence for change and that the matters should be considered further in 2025. Maintaining the Northern Arc status quo for now and holding a review in 2025 would be concomitant with these decisions, especially as there are much better established communities in those two areas which would have produced a more satisfactory evidence base yet still was not deemed strong enough for change at the current time.

I also question why not all of the Northern Arc is being considered. The part of the Northern Arc which is in Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish (the properties to be built south of the A2300) are not being considered as part of the review. It would make for a much better, more rounded and democratic review for a full review in 2025, as detailed above to consider the whole of the Northern Arc.

It is clear from the above that moving the boundaries now would fail to meet the most important criteria of improved community engagement and community cohesion and I strongly reiterate that the status quo should remain until a full review in 2025 when the local communities can make their own decision for themselves.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pete Bradbury', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pete Bradbury
Chairman, West Sussex County Council
County Councillor, Cuckfield & Lucastes