

Report to Governance Committee

November 2022

Parliamentary Boundary Review Consultation 2022

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

The Boundary Commission for England has launched the final phase of its Parliamentary Boundary Review and is consulting on a revised scheme for constituencies in England. The County Council is responding to the consultation.

Recommendations

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

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 sets the criteria for 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's first phases of consultation took place in 2021 and the County Council issued a response to the draft scheme for West Sussex. The Commission has produced a revised draft scheme following responses to the first phases, including a revised scheme for Sussex, which continues to propose 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 5 December 2022. Comments will be considered by the Commission, which expects to conclude its review in July 2023. Changes to existing constituencies would then take effect at the next General Election.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 Under the new requirements 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 unchanged from its original proposals for the north of the County – Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex constituencies. East Grinstead & Uckfield constituency is unchanged in West Sussex, but Hartfield has been moved out of the constituency in East Sussex. For the south of the county, significant changes are proposed from the Commission's original scheme. The Commission has tried to address concerns about mixing coastal and rural areas and has created a scheme that is much closer to the existing constituencies of Arundel & South Downs, Bognor Regis & Littlehampton, Chichester, East Worthing & Shoreham and Worthing West.
- 2.3 The County Council's Electoral Review Panel met on 22 November 2022 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. Maps showing the recommended options are attached at Appendices B, C and D.

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 show other options that were considered.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 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 set by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act.

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

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Appendices

- A. West Sussex County Council's Response to the Parliamentary Boundary Review's Consultation.
- B. Map of Option 1 of West Sussex County Council's proposed amendments to the Commission's draft scheme.
- C. Map of Option 2 of West Sussex County Council's proposed amendments to the Commission's draft scheme.
- D. Map of Option 3 of West Sussex County Council's proposed amendments to the Commission's draft scheme.

Background papers

- 1. Notes of [Electoral Review Panel](#) (PDF, 103KB) held 22 November 2022

Agreed:

Name: Cllr Pete Bradbury

Title: Chairman of the Governance Committee

Date: 1 December 2022

Signature: P. Bradbury

Action authorised:

Signature: T. Kershaw

Name: Tony Kershaw

Title: Director of Law and Assurance

Date: 2.12.22