

# **Proposed Community Governance Reviews for the Administrative and Electoral Arrangements of Town and Parish Councils affected by the outcome of the LGBCE's Electoral Review of Mid Sussex District Council.**

REPORT OF: Head of Regulatory Services  
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Wards Affected: Burgess Hill Dunstall, Burgess Hill Leylands, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath Heath, Haywards Heath Franklands, Haywards Heath Ashenground, High Weald, Lindfield, and all East Grinstead Wards  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services & Service Delivery  
23 March 2022

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## **Purpose of Report**

1. Owing to the outcomes of the Electoral Review of Mid Sussex District Council conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission (England) [LGBCE] which were published 1 February 2022 following two rounds of public consultation, to propose that this Council should now conduct Community Governance Reviews (CGRs) of the affected Town and Parish Councils to consider aligning administrative and electoral arrangements ahead of the May 2023 local government elections.
2. To consult the Committee regarding the content of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for these Community Governance Reviews.

## **Recommendations**

3. **The Committee is recommended to:**
  - (i) **Agree the proposed CGRs to consider administrative and electoral arrangements for Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath Town Councils and consequential considerations for the parish councils of Ansty & Staplefield, Lindfield and Lindfield Rural.**
  - (ii) **Agree the proposed CGR to consider Councillor numbers and ward boundaries for East Grinstead Town Council.**
  - (iii) **Agree each of the draft Terms of Reference and Guidance for Respondents which have been the subject of consultation with affected town and parish councils.**
  - (iv) **Authorise the Head of Regulatory Services to make amendments to Terms of Reference if additional matters arise, and as otherwise may prove necessary during the period of the CGRs.**
  - (v) **And to note that further reports would be provided as this Council's draft and final recommendations are available at later stages of the Reviews.**

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## **Background**

4. As part of an electoral review, the LGBCE must have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. The LGBCE cannot make changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

5. Under the 2009 Act the LGBCE only has the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of their recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Mid Sussex 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.
6. As a result of the LGBCE's final recommendations for MSDC ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, they are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ansty & Staplefield, Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, and Lindfield Rural.

## Revised parish electoral arrangements

7. The LGBCE has provided revised parish electoral arrangements for Ansty & Staplefield parish. The allocation of parish councillors for this parish is based on the existing electorate. This is because the development to the north of Burgess Hill Town, as well as the development south of the county division boundary in the Rocky Lane area within Ansty & Staplefield parish, will not be fully populated by the time of the first election in 2023. It would be unreasonable for more than one parish councillor to represent so few electors.
8. They can do this for parish council electoral arrangements as they did not have to consider the five-year electoral forecast. The LGBCE has used the forecast electorate for allocating parish councillors in each of the other parishes as growth in these areas is not as significant.
9. The LGBCE has concluded that Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council shall comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Ansty	2
Brook Street & Borde Hill	1 (CGR would consider increasing to 2)
Northern Arc East *	1 <b>(in MSDC Ward: BH Leylands)</b>
Northern Arc West *	1 <b>(in MSDC Ward: BH Dunstall)</b>
Rocky Lane North *	2 <b>(in MSDC Ward: HH Ashenground)</b>
Rocky Lane South *	1 <b>(in MSDC Ward: HH Ashenground)</b>
Staplefield	1

10. It is proposed that a CGR considers aligning the administrative and electoral arrangements for the asterisked parish wards to be coincident with the new district wards. If we do not undertake this now, electoral arrangements in May 2023 would be misaligned. This would result in voters electing district councillors for Haywards Heath wards whilst at same time electing parish councillors for Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council – a situation that can be confusing and disagreeable to electors.
11. As the CGR would consider increasing representation for Brook Street and Borde Hill to take account of permitted developments there, the Review proposals if resolved, would see a net decrease of 4 Councillors, resulting in a new total of 5.

12. The Parish Council is concerned that it has made plans for parish projects and has taken out a Public Works Loan based on the current tax base and feels that the pace of the proposed change is inappropriate. They also wondered why the proposed changes for the Burgess Hill Northern Arc boundary are to be implemented before any significant housing will be built.
13. The Planning Policy team believes that the Northern Arc will build out at around 250 dwellings per year. On this basis there would be 500 new dwellings by the end of 2023 and by the end of 2027, almost all the forecast 1,550 dwellings will be built.
14. Such development as does exist by 2023, is likely to look to Burgess Hill for community identity, interests, amenity, and services.
15. Rocky Lane developments do exist, and these almost certainly look to Haywards Heath for community identity, interests, amenity, and services.
16. We would carefully evaluate and consider all submissions received during the two public consultation periods. Our resulting draft and final recommendations would be scrutinised by this committee.
17. The LGBCE concluded that Burgess Hill Town Council shall comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing 11 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Burgess Hill Dunstall	1
Burgess Hill Franklands	3
Burgess Hill Gatehouse	1
Burgess Hill Hammonds North	1
Burgess Hill Leylands	2
Burgess Hill Meeds & Hammonds	2
Burgess Hill Norman	1
Burgess Hill St Andrews	3
Burgess Hill St Johns	1
Burgess Hill Victoria East	2
Burgess Hill Victoria West	1

18. If the CGR resolves to align the new parish wards of Northern Arc East and Northern Arc West with Burgess Hill Leylands and Dunstall wards respectively, the total number of town councillors should in the first electoral cycle remain the same, to reflect that the build rate in the Northern Arc strategic development sites is expected to be 250 p.a. and the electorate would therefore rise steadily, rather than rapidly.
19. If we do not undertake this CGR now, electoral arrangements in May 2023 would be misaligned. This would result in voters electing district councillors for Burgess Hill wards whilst at same time electing parish councillors for Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council – a situation that can be confusing and disagreeable to electors.
20. Burgess Hill Town Council supports the proposal to conduct a CGR to consider these matters.

21. The LGBCE has concluded that Haywards Heath Town Council shall comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors	
HH Ashenground	2	
HH Bentswood & Heath East	3	
HH Bentswood & Heath West	1	
HH Franklands	3	
Haywards Heath Lucastes & Bolnore	3	
Haywards Heath Lucastes Boltro	1	
Haywards Heath North Central	1	
Haywards Heath North East *	1	<b>(in MSDC Ward: Lindfield)</b>
Haywards Heath West	1	

22. The LGBCE was persuaded that electors on the northern side of College Road shared community interests with those on the northern side of Gander Hill. They also noted the strength of the railway line as a boundary. They therefore adopted the proposals to include the area east of the railway line around Wickham Way in Lindfield ward. They noted that the railway line and College Road are strong boundaries, the use of which is facilitated by the additional changes proposed to the west.
23. It is proposed that the CGR considers aligning the administrative and electoral arrangements for the asterisked parish ward to be coincident with the district ward. If we do not undertake this CGR now, electoral arrangements in May 2023 would be misaligned. This would result in voters electing district councillors for Lindfield ward whilst at same time electing town councillors for Haywards Heath Town Council – a situation that can be confusing and disagreeable to electors
24. The Review proposal if resolved would see a decrease of 1 Councillor for Haywards Heath Town Council and a consequential increase of 1 Councillor for Lindfield Parish Council.
25. The LGBCE concluded that Lindfield Rural Parish Council shall comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors	
Scayne's Hill & Rural	4	
The Hollow *	1	<b>(in MSDC Ward: HH Franklands)</b>
Walstead	4	

26. It is proposed that the CGR considers aligning the administrative and electoral arrangements for the asterisked parish ward to be coincident with the district ward. If we do not undertake this CGR now, electoral arrangements in May 2023 would be misaligned. This would result in voters electing district councillors for Haywards Heath Franklands ward whilst at same time electing parish councillors for Lindfield Rural Parish Council – a situation that can be confusing and disagreeable to electors
27. The Review proposal if resolved would see a decrease of 1 Councillor for Lindfield Rural Parish Council.

28. Officers have engaged fully with resident's concerns regarding postal addresses, property valuations and future school catchment areas. There is no impact for postal addresses which are determined entirely by Royal Mail and the National & Local Land & Property Gazetteer. The official addresses of the indicated cul-de-sacs are currently 3<sup>rd</sup> Line: Lindfield and 4<sup>th</sup> Line: Haywards Heath, and this will not change as result of a CGR. There is also no evidence that administrative and electoral arrangements for parishes have any impact at all on property valuations or school catchment areas. WSCC has confirmed the latter and we continue to engage with residents.
29. Lindfield Rural Parish Council is concerned about potential loss of precept, which if resolved by this CGR, is estimated to be c.£7,342. At the invitation of the parish council we attended a council meeting to answer questions from elected representatives and members of the public and we now await LRPC's formal response to the draft Terms of Reference.
30. We would carefully evaluate and consider all submissions received during the two public consultation periods. Our resulting draft and final recommendations would be scrutinised by this committee.
31. The LGBCE concluded that East Grinstead Town Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East Grinstead Ashplats North	4
East Grinstead Ashplats South	1
East Grinstead Baldwins	2
East Grinstead Herontye	2
East Grinstead Imberhorne	4
East Grinstead Sackville	1
East Grinstead South	1
East Grinstead Town North	1
East Grinstead Town South	3

32. It is requested by East Grinstead Town Council that a CGR is undertaken to consider a reduction in the number of Councillors to 16, representing six wards.
33. This Council has no reason to decline this request. Accordingly, your officers recommend that we undertake the CGR to consider the proposed reduction in Councillor numbers, and future town ward boundaries.

### Policy Context

34. When boundary changes occur, for example as result of an Electoral Review, it is advisable for a principal authority to review all or part of its administrative area to ensure that parish and town council boundaries are coincident with district ward boundaries for the effective and efficient administration of elections at all tiers of local government.

## **Other Options Considered**

35. Do nothing regarding BHTC, HHTC, Lindfield, Lindfield Rural Parish Council and Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council - This is possible for one electoral cycle but would mean accepting the administrative and electoral complexities and risks identified elsewhere in this report. It is not however sustainable in the long term and would need to be considered again in 2025, to occur sufficiently ahead of the 2027 local government elections. Your officers do not recommend this approach.

## **Financial Implications**

36. The costs involved with conducting Community Governance Reviews fall to the Principal Authority and are within existing Democratic Services budgetary provision.

## **Risk Management Implications**

37. As the conduct of Community Governance Reviews is a statutory duty for this Authority, the Reviews will be conducted according to government guidance, so the risk level is assessed to be low.
38. The do-nothing option does present a raised level of risk for the efficient and effective administration of combined district and parish local government elections.

## **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

39. The Reviews incorporate two substantial public consultation periods, so that all local government electors have opportunities to contribute.
40. The Terms of Reference describe how we will publicise and conduct the Reviews. The Review timetable is also included.

## **Other Material Implications**

41. At the conclusion of any CGR and following adoption in Council, the Council's Legal Services Division would be required to make Community Governance Orders.

## **Sustainability Implications**

42. A key aim of any Community Governance Review is to alight upon suitable Governance and Electoral arrangements that are capable of enduring. There is little or no environmental impact.

## **Background Papers**

[Government & Local Government Boundary Commission Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.](#)

[LGBCE Draft Recommendations for Mid Sussex District Council.](#)

[LGBCE Final Recommendations for Mid Sussex District Council](#)

## **Enc.**

- Appendix A - Draft ToR for CGR of HHTC (Electoral & Administrative Boundaries)
- Appendix B - Draft ToR for CGR of BHTC (Electoral & Administrative Boundaries)
- Appendix C - Draft ToR for CGR of EGTC (Councillor Numbers & Wards)