

Subject:	Local Government Boundary Review at Saltdean		
Date of Meeting:	26 July 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Resources		
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Wards Affected:	Rottingdean Coastal		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report summarises the latest situation regarding a potential review of the local government boundary at Saltdean.
- 1.2 Previous updates and recommendations on this topic have been brought to Governance Committee, as matters regarding the geographical extent of the council and consequential electoral arrangements fall within its terms of reference.
- 1.3 The Committee is asked to recommend to Cabinet next actions in light of a recent meeting with and guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee:
 - (a) Notes the latest advice and guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the policy and procedures for principal area boundary reviews in general, and for Saltdean in particular.
 - (b) Considers whether to support a boundary review at Saltdean and, if so, whether to recommend a survey of the residents of Saltdean to gauge local support.
 - (c) Refers the matter to Cabinet with recommendations.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') is the body responsible for conducting reviews of administrative boundaries such as

those between Brighton & Hove City Council and its neighbouring local authorities.

- 3.2 The question of a potential boundary review at Saltdean was last brought to Governance Committee in September 2010 where Members were briefed on the capability and capacity of the Commission to carry out a review at Saltdean in the short to medium term.
- 3.3 At the time, the Commission was unable to offer a definite timeframe for contemplating a review here, as they were still preparing draft technical guidance on the policies and procedures for conducting reviews of that type.
- 3.4 At the meeting, a representative of Saltdean Residents Association (SRA) requested the council to host an informal on-line survey of Saltdean residents to ascertain their views on a potential review, as a way of keeping the matter current, pending the publication of guidance by the Commission. Members agreed to consider the request.
- 3.5 However, within two months the Commission issued consultation on its draft policies and procedures for boundary reviews, and, by agreement with SRA, it was decided not to pursue an on-line survey during this period of policy development.
- 3.6 In December 2010 the council submitted a response to the consultation.
- 3.7 Also that month the Chair of the Commission wrote to the Leader, seeking confirmation that Brighton & Hove City Council still wished the Commission to conduct a review of its boundary with Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The Leader replied in the affirmative, re-confirming the Cabinet decision of 9 December 2009.
- 3.8 This led to a meeting between the Commission and the Council on 7 April 2011, attended also by officers from Lewes DC and ESCC, to outline the criteria against which the Commission would decide whether to proceed with a review. These factors were subsequently confirmed in technical guidance issued by the Commission in May, following the consultation exercise.
- 3.9 The Commission will only consider a boundary review request if all the local authorities affected support the proposed change. Since the last time the matter was considered by Governance Committee (Sept 2010) there has been a change of administration in Brighton & Hove and in Lewes. The Cabinets at both authorities need to consider whether they wish to support a boundary review at Saltdean. The position of ESCC is unchanged, having declared their support in principle.
- 3.10 Brighton & Hove's Cabinet will be invited to make a decision in light of recommendations from the Governance Committee. The Lewes administration are aware of the issues but have yet to consider the matter formally.

- 3.11 If all three councils wish there to be a review, each would be required to submit a business case for the proposed change to the Commission, demonstrating:
- (i) how the proposal represents value for money;
 - (ii) how the change would result in effective and convenient local government, reflects community identities and interest, and which therefore has local support; and
 - (iii) how the transfer of electors following the change might be addressed by new electoral arrangements in their area
- 3.12 The Commission has made clear they would only undertake a review on one option for change. This means that, assuming all three councils are behind a review, the councils could survey Saltdean residents on a range of options, but would submit to the Commission a single proposition for change based on the survey outcome.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 If all three authorities support a review, the business case submitted to the Commission must demonstrate local support. This would necessitate a consultation exercise to canvass the views of Saltdean residents.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 If the decision is taken to ascertain the views of Saltdean residents on a potential boundary change, the survey should be conducted jointly by the three local authorities affected. On that basis, the costs of implementing the survey and analysing the results should be split equally between all three bodies. Budgetary provision to cover the costs of the survey will need to be identified.
- 5.2 Following consideration of such a survey, the business case for a boundary review would need to demonstrate how the review would provide value for money, taking into account transitional and on-going costs.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 12/07/11

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 This report comes before the Governance Committee as the council body responsible for considering local governance issues, and for reasons of continuity, having twice previously considered the Saltdean issue. It is for Cabinet to decide whether to support a boundary review and a survey of residents, having regard to any recommendation the Governance Committee may make.

Lawyer Consulted:

Oliver Dixon

Date: 12/07/11

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 None arising directly from this report

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 None arising directly from this report

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 As indicated in the report, the Commission will not proceed with a boundary review unless all the affected local authorities agree to the proposed change. Moving the proposal forward therefore depends on the position adopted not just by the Executive at Brighton & Hove, but that of their counterparts at Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The council will need to continue to liaise closely with Lewes DC and ESCC on this issue, in order to maintain a consistent and shared approach.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. 'Principal Area Boundary Reviews: technical guidance', issued in May 2011 by the Local Government Boundary Commission