

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which the Chairman or relevant Cabinet Member may speak in response. The deputation will be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

(i) Deputation concerning retail development in Portland Road, Hove.

Mr Laurence O'Connor (Spokesperson)

The Unification of Saltdean

The Saltdean Residents Association welcomes the support expressed thus far by members on the Governance committee for the campaign to unify Saltdean under one local authority. It is hoped that Cabinet will agree to strongly support the request to the Boundary Committee for England to conduct an administrative boundary review of the Saltdean area.

Background

Saltdean is split right down the main shopping street between Brighton & Hove and Lewes District Councils. To sort out the most straightforward matter such as a pothole in the road or grass cutting can require the cooperation of up to four separate councils, Brighton & Hove, Lewes District, East Sussex and Telscombe Town.

This matter has been outstanding ever since Saltdean was created over 80 years ago. Saltdean should be treated as a community in its own right. The adjoining towns of Telscombe Cliffs and Rottingean are able to enjoy a sense of completeness whilst Saltdean is not. Saltdean is one community with one postcode but split right down the middle of the main shopping area.

Boundary Committee for England

The matter should be looked into by the Boundary Committee to consider the practical implications for example the issues in adjoining towns in respect of electoral wards and sizes of those wards.

Survey of Saltdean Residents

The SRA feels that a survey is needed of all Saltdean residents to see whether they agree to unification and if so which Local Authority they would prefer. If after a survey is completed the residents of Saltdean do not want unification then at least the matter will have been finally resolved but at the moment it is unfinished business since Saltdean was built. The pros and cons should be drawn up and presented to all residents. The association feels that the principle should be agreed now that a survey will be undertaken but that the timing of a survey should be considered in September 2010 by the Governance Committee. Between now and then further consultation with the Boundary Committee can take place to clarify their likely criteria for any such review. The timing of that review would also need to be determined beforehand in order to help decide when a survey should be completed. In addition Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council should be contacted with the aim of undertaking the

survey in partnership. The SRA believes that not to proceed with a local survey will mean that unification of Saltdean will not be taken seriously by the Boundary Committee; the first thing that they will look for is whether the idea is supported by local residents.

The SRA's own survey in 2001

Our basic concern is that in 2001 when the SRA itself did a survey itself, it was submitted to the Boundary Commission who did not give the matter proper consideration. That survey was delivered to 3854 households by Royal Mail and received 1522 responses. 80% of respondents wanted a united Saltdean under one authority. Despite this degree of unanimity the matter was not followed through by the Boundary Commission and residents feel badly let down by this episode. We cannot allow this to happen again, hence our resolve to pursue this as vigorously as possible this time.

Response to objections raised to a survey

Objections to the idea of holding a survey have been expressed in the officers report to the Governance Committee from paragraph 3.20 onwards.

- The cost of a survey is cited as up to £21,800 but if consultation took place with Lewes District Council as well as East Sussex County Council it may well be possible to share costs.
- The report says that the composition of Saltdean would change as would people's views between now and 2011. This is true and we would therefore suggest that a survey nearer to 2011 should start to be looked into now to give sufficient time for it to be organised.
- Such a survey may be seen as raising peoples expectations but if handled correctly this could be overcome by making it clear during any pre-publicity the reasons for the survey.
- The report talks about the Boundary Committee doing their own consultation in any case when considering the unification of Saltdean but the reason for asking for a survey beforehand is to a) ensure that the people of Saltdean truly want unification and b) the Boundary Committee realise the priority of this matter. If one has been done already there is less chance that they would push it into the long grass as was done previously.
- With regards to the danger of Brighton & Hove doing a survey which goes into the part of Saltdean which is covered by other Local Authorities it is possible that discussions with those authorities could take place to agree how to handle this. Furthermore the SRA would suggest that it asks Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council to look at the question of a survey again before 2011.
- The last point of objection in the report that we'd like to address is the fact that the Boundary Committee is undergoing its own reorganisation and their priorities and criteria are not known. The SRA has received assurance in writing that this matter is in their "In Tray". If this is to actually mean anything then surely it means they will consider this matter whatever their organisation is in one or two years time.

Conclusion

The Saltdean Residents Association therefore asks that Cabinet agrees;

- to strongly support the request for an administrative boundary review, in principle the need for a survey which would be brought before the Governance Committee **again** not later than September 2010, in time for a survey to be completed before the Boundary Committee review in 2011/12.