

Subject:	Local Government Boundary Review at Saltdean		
Date of Meeting:	13 October 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Resources		
Lead Member:	Cabinet Member for Finance & Central Services		
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Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	Rottingdean Coastal		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Cabinet is invited to approve the recommendations made by Governance Committee in July 2011 relating to a potential review of the local government boundary at Saltdean.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the recommendations of Governance Committee in relation to agenda item 10 of their meeting on 26 July 2011 set out in the extract of minutes at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Cabinet requests officers to submit a further report to Cabinet once the conditions required by Governance Committee are met.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 At their meeting on 26 July 2011, Governance Committee considered a report on the latest situation regarding the possibility of a review of the boundary separating Brighton & Hove City Council from Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council. Part of this boundary runs north-south through the middle of Saltdean along Longridge Avenue, as illustrated in Appendix 2.
- 3.2 For many years Saltdean Residents Association have been campaigning for a review to address a number of difficulties they say exist in Saltdean as a result of the boundary bisecting their community.

- 3.3 Governance Committee and Cabinet have considered the issue on previous occasions, and the reason for bringing a fresh report now is that the body with responsibility for carrying out administrative reviews, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission'), has recently published technical guidance on the criteria that local authorities would need to meet before the Commission will consider a review.
- 3.4 The criteria are summarised in the report to Governance of 26 July. Two of the most important elements are that (i) each local authority affected supports a potential review, and (ii) the business case accompanying a request for a review must include evidence of support from the local community.
- 3.5 Having considered the Commission's guidance, Governance Committee supported the principle of a review but would be willing to recommend a formal request to the Commission only if:
- (i) Lewes DC and East Sussex CC also agree to request a review; and
 - (ii) all three authorities share the cost of surveying the residents of Saltdean to ascertain their views and preferences.
- 3.6 Due to lobbying by Saltdean Residents Association, Lewes DC are aware of the issue but are unlikely to agree to support a review in the short-term. At present there is no indication when their Cabinet will consider the matter formally.
- 3.7 In 2010 East Sussex CC resolved to request a review but made no commitment to contribute to the cost of survey of residents, pending further guidance from the Commission.
- 3.8 In view of the current position at Lewes DC, there is nothing to be gained by undertaking a survey of local residents at this stage. The exercise would be purely academic, and may create false expectations, as the Commission will not entertain a request for a review without Lewes DC's support.
- 3.9 In the event that Lewes DC were to support a review, they and the other two authorities concerned would need to agree to share the cost of a survey. For illustrative purposes, officers at Brighton & Hove have calculated the approximate cost of conducting a survey among the 6700 residents of Saltdean on the electoral register. Including the cost of printing, postage and data input and analysis, the total would be approximately £8,500.
- 3.10 It is suggested that one authority should manage the exercise, with the other two each contributing a third of the cost. Hence the cost to each authority would be approximately £2830. A proposal along these lines would be submitted to Lewes DC and East Sussex CC at the relevant time.
- 3.11 Again for illustrative purposes only, the approximate cost of preparing a business case, assuming a survey indicated clear community support, would be £1000. This could not be shared, as the Commission requires each authority to submit its own business case.

- 3.12 Officers have liaised closely with the two other authorities over a possible boundary review and will continue to do so. As and when there is any material change to the position at Lewes DC, officers will file a report to Governance Committee and/or Cabinet as appropriate.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Saltdean Residents Association have been very active in campaigning for a boundary review. Whenever Governance Committee have met to consider the matter, the Association has been invited to attend and speak. Their input to the debate has been informative and helpful.
- 4.2 Officers continue to keep the Association informed of major developments and any council meetings where the matter is due for debate.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The estimated costs to the council of undertaking a survey of local residents and preparing a business case are in the region of £4,000

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley Date: 16/09/11

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The council must have regard to the guidance issued by the Commission in (a) deciding whether to request a boundary review; and (b) if a request were to be made, ensuring the accompanying business case is properly formulated.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon Date: 16/09/11

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 None

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The recommendations in the report are intended to ensure that the council does not incur costs until all three authorities declare their support for a review, enabling the Commission to process their submission. Proceeding any earlier would risk the council incurring costs for no gain.

Public Health Implications:

5.7 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.8 The council is continuing to liaise with Lewes DC and East Sussex CC over this issue to ensure a shared and consistent approach.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 There is nothing to prevent the council from requesting the Commission to carry out a review immediately but, as indicated in the report, the Commission is likely to refuse the request until such time as all three authorities (BHCC, Lewes DC and East Sussex CC) are together supportive of a review. For this reason, submitting a request unilaterally from Brighton & Hove would serve no purpose and is therefore not recommended.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Guidance from the Commission makes clear that all local authorities affected by a potential boundary change must support a review before the Commission will begin the process.

7.2 Any request for a review must include evidence of community support. As and when a survey of local people is carried out, it should be administered and paid for collectively by all three authorities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Extract from minutes of Governance Committee, 26 July 2011
2. Map illustrating the existing local government boundary at Saltdean

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. 'Principal Area Boundary Reviews: technical guidance' (*Local Government Boundary Commission, May 2011*)