



4 February 2016

Review Officer (West Sussex)
The Local Government Boundary
Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
London SW1P 4QP



Dear Sir or Madam

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED ELECTORIAL ARRANGEMENTS; BURGESS HILL

We, the undersigned, are the current County Councillors for the two existing divisions covering the majority of the town of Burgess Hill – Burgess Hill Town and Burgess Hill East. We wish to register our strong objection to the Boundary Commission's draft proposal for the four division of south Mid Sussex which includes the Burgess Hill divisions.

Our objection relates to the proposal which we believe fails to meet two of the three criteria which the commission has used and to the process used by West Sussex County Council to arrive at their input to the Boundary Commission which formed the basis of the Commission's draft proposal.

WSSCC's process involved the establishment of a panel of County Councillors which reviewed various options for the county's divisional arrangements put forward by the officers. The decisions of this panel were then meant to be discussed and agreed with the other County Councillors. This process initially worked well and we were able to comment on various options, none of which involved the radically restructuring of the four south Mid Sussex divisions. However towards the end of the process when the radical proposal for our area was developed we were not consulted at all. Neither of us were aware of the input to the Commission until we received your document towards the end of December. WE had been excluded from the democratic process. If we had been consulted prior to their input being sent to the Commission we would have had the time to come up with a proposal which meet the Commission's criteria and did not adversely affect our residents.

Our objection to your proposal is based on the radical dismantling of the existing "town" divisions and moving significant numbers of the electorate from the existing divisions to the two divisions centred on the large villages of Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint to the south of Burgess Hill. This, we believe will result in a loss of "Community identity/interest" and a significant reduction in "Effective and convenient local government" for the residents of Burgess Hill.

Our conclusions are based on the following:

- 1) With the existing arrangement the two Burgess Hill divisions are coterminous with five of the six District/Town wards. This arrangement has been in place at least since 1997 and has created a cohesive community with good interest and identity. Indeed this coterminosity enabled the "1990s" development on the west side of town (most of Dunstall ward) to be effectively assimilated into the Town. The draft proposal destroys this coterminosity.
- 2) 7000 electors of Burgess Hill will have their representation at divisional level changed causing considerable confusion. This is over 30% of the total electorate of Burgess Hill
- 3) Nearly half of Dunstall ward and over half of Meeds ward will transfer from "town"

focussed divisions to “village” focussed divisions where they will be in a minority. Ease of local government representation will become more difficult for them.

- 4) The Town Centre will be split between three divisions. This at a time of major redevelopment of the Town Centre could result in a loss of focus by the County Council which could harm or delay the development.
 - 5) Important Town facilities and establishments such as Oakmeeds Community College, London Meeds primary school, the Triangle leisure centre and the railway station will be transferred to the “village” divisions. This could give rise to conflicts of interest, particularly for the Hassocks & Victoria councillor with regards to the secondary school.
 - 6) With major housing development planned for Burgess Hill between now and 2031 with over 6000+ houses to be delivered another boundary review is likely in 2024 which would make any significant change now redundant.
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We believe that an arrangement for the four divisions of south Mid Sussex required to overcome the inequality of representation in the “village” divisions should not adversely impact on the divisions of Burgess Hill and should be kept to a minimum. The Town Council have proposed an arrangement which does this and has our full support. This proposal satisfies the Commission's criteria with the minimum amount of change.

We therefore request that you adopt the Town Council's proposal.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Anne Jones MBE
Burgess Hill East


Councillor ~~Andrew~~ Barrett-Miles
Burgess Hill Town


