



Review Officer (East Sussex)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
Millbank
LONDON SW1P 4QP

27 November 2015

Dear Sir

Electoral Review of East Sussex County and Districts

As the Chairman of Willingdon Residents' Association I write to support the response from Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council who you wrote to on 22 September 2015 inviting comments before you draw up your draft recommendations.

Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council currently have two County Councillors and three District Councillors representing the area of this Parish. The current two Member Willingdon County Division also includes a number of rural parishes mostly in the South Downs National Park with little similarity to the now mostly urban area of Willingdon and Polegate.

We support a reduction in size of the District Council and are surprised that there has not been a proposal to reduce the size of the County Council especially as we only ever seem to see one of our County Councillors and receive very little direct feedback.

We are of the view that Willingdon and Jevington would be best served by one County Councillor and two District Councillors. We also are of the opinion that these councillors should represent the whole of the Parish of Willingdon and Jevington with the District Councillors being warded within the Parish. It is our understanding that both the County and District Councils have reviewed the boundaries of their Divisions/Wards and are submitting proposals to you.

The Council has not been consulted on the detail of those proposals by any of the County or District Councillors or the County or District Councils. However, if our understanding is correct we wish to record that Willingdon Residents' Association do NOT agree with those recommendations in so far as they affect Willingdon and Jevington regarding the removal of 882 residents from the Watermill Ward of the Parish Council to a Polegate District Ward and a separate Polegate County Division.

These residents live in an area which was formerly moved from Willingdon to Polegate in the 1970's. Although most, but not all, have Polegate postal address some have Willingdon on their Deeds showing they were within the Willingdon boundary at the time their properties were built. There are many other residents in other parts of the non administrative area of Wannock who also have postal addresses in Polegate. We do not feel the postal address should have any bearing on electoral boundaries.

In February 2001 when this boundary was reviewed, in their report the Local Government Commission for England recorded (Paragraph 57) in relation to the Watermill Ward:

"Having visited the area, we consider that the District Council's proposals for good electoral equality, while providing identifiable boundaries and reflecting the interest of local communities." and then "...we note that while the properties in the area of Polegate parish to be transferred to Willingdon ward

are separated from the remainder of the parish by social housing, they are of a similar profile to those in the north of Willingdon and Jevington parish. We consider that this provides a n identifiable ward boundary and that electors on either side of the parish boundary would share a community of interest.”

The change which transferred the Ward to Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council enjoyed widespread support from residents at the time. Since then our Parish Council has worked hard to represent these residents with feedback indicating they are proud and pleased to be a part of our Parish. The boundary is clearly identifiable unlike so much of our boundary with Eastbourne.

It should also be noted that the current boundary between Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council Watermill Ward and Polegate South District Ward is currently co-terminus with the Parliamentary boundary between the Eastbourne and Lewes Parliamentary Constituencies, the District Ward boundary and the Parish/Town boundary. The current County Division is a two person Division representing Polegate, Willingdon and East Dean which when formed was because of the difficulty of equally dividing the Division into two.

If Watermill Ward remains part of the Willingdon District Wards, the consequent effect on the new Polegate District Wards again would allow Wards to be formed of the tolerances permitted and proposed elsewhere by the District Council.

It is our view that the benefits of the co-terminosity of the boundaries as they currently exist reflect the identities and interests of the local community and secure effective and convenient local government. We therefore ask that the proposal from Wealden District Council be rejected in so far as Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council Watermill Ward is concerned.

It is understood that the County Council is proposing to form one Division from every three District Wards. From their website the Division relating to Willingdon is by no means clear but appears to be formed of the two Willingdon District Wards plus a large mostly rural Ward of East Dean and Friston Parish Council; Littleington, Lullington and Westdean of Cuckmere Valley Parish Council; Alfriston Parish Council; and Milton Street, Wilmington and Folkington of Long Man Parish Council. Except for part of Wilmington the rest of this Ward lies entirely in the South Downs National Park.

The total projected electorate as at 2021 for this Division is given as 8,463 and -2.2% of the average of 8,673. If Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council Watermill Ward remains in a Willingdon District Ward that will increase the projected electorate by 882 to 9345 and +7.7% which is within the tolerance. The decrease in the Polegate (P1, P2 and P4) Division would result in a lower difference and again well within the tolerance. Whilst Willingdon has little in common nowadays with a rural Ward of this size we would accept this proposal subject to Watermill Ward being part of the Division.

Willingdon Residents' Association trust that you will give full consideration to the se points and that your draft proposals will include this change from the District and County Council proposals.

Yours faithfully



Cllr John Pritchett
Chairman of Willingdon Residents' Association