

Porter, Johanna

From: Fuller, Heather
Sent: 27 November 2015 13:30
To: Porter, Johanna; Ward, Lucy
Subject: FW: consultation on warding arrangements - Rother District Council
Attachments: Rother District Council - Response to warding arrangements consultation.docx

From: Lisa Anderson [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 November 2015 13:26
To: reviews
Subject: consultation on warding arrangements - Rother District Council

Dear Sir / Madam

Please find attached Rother District Council's response to the consultation on warding arrangements.

Regards

Lisa

*Ms L J Anderson
Democratic Services Manager
& Deputy Monitoring Officer*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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BOUNDARY REVIEW OF ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL
SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED WARDING PATTERN
TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR
ENGLAND
NOVEMBER 2015

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This submission was compiled on behalf of the Council by:-

Malcolm Johnston, Executive Director of Resources
Rother District Council



1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2014, Rother District Council agreed to take part in a county-wide electoral review to be undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) within each of the East Sussex District and Borough Councils as well as East Sussex County Council (ESCC) itself.
- 1.2 At its meeting of 29 June 2015, the Council agreed a submission to the LGBCE recommending a Council size of 38 elected Councillors be maintained. On the 22 September, the LGBCE launched its consultation on warding patterns on the basis of Rother District Council retaining its current size of 38 Members.
- 1.3 This report puts forward this Council's response to the consultation on warding patterns. In coming up with the proposals contained within this report, the Council has had regard to the LGBCE's criteria set out in law which it must follow when it produces a new pattern of wards or electoral divisions.
- 1.4 The criteria are:
 - The new pattern of wards should result in each councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as elected members elsewhere in the authority – in Rother this means 2,027 electors per Member based on the 2021 projected electorate and on a council size of 38 Members.
 - Ward patterns should – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities and boundaries should be identifiable.
 - The electoral arrangements should promote effective and convenient local government and reflect the electoral cycle of the council.
- 1.5 This submission is the culmination of initial work carried out by a cross-party Steering Group, the consideration and identification of the preferred options by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (see link <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/11586/Monday-19-October-2015>) and subsequent recommendation by Cabinet (see link <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/11621/Monday-2-November-2015>) and approval by full Council on 16 November 2015 (see link <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/11632/Monday-16-November>).
- 1.6 One significant factor emerging from the consultation with Members was that the existing electoral arrangements are, in the main, generally supported and work well.
- 1.7 When determining how electoral arrangements could be changed to improve the equality of representation, where practicable the existing arrangements have been taken into consideration; however, due to the nature of the district and the variance in electorate sizes across the area, this has not always been possible. Where it has been necessary to make changes, local connections have been taken into account to ensure that these are disrupted as little as possible.

2. **Developing warding patterns**

- 2.1 In developing a new warding pattern for 38 Councillors, all Members were canvassed for their initial views and officers undertook an initial review which fed into three meetings of the cross-party Steering Group who worked up the initial proposals. All Members have had the opportunity to participate fully in the review which will shape the district electoral landscape for the next 3 to 4 election cycles.
- 2.2 The Steering Group first looked at where there were currently inequalities in the district, such as Battle (15%) and Marsham (-11%) in the rural area and Sackville (-9%) in Bexhill, and then proceeded to look at each area individually. Throughout the process, the Council has used Town and Parish boundaries as building blocks and reflected communities in the district.
- 2.3 Overall, the Council has developed a scheme which creates 12 rural wards and retains the existing 9 wards in Bexhill as follows:

Rural

8 – 2 Member Wards

4 – 1 Member Wards

Bexhill

9 – 2 Member Wards

- 2.4 The wards are considered in detail at Appendices A and B.

3. **Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 3.1 Having considered all the various options for warding patterns, Rother District Council believes the schemes set out within the appendices achieves electoral fairness, reflects community identity and provides effective and convenient local governance.

PROPOSED WARDS

APPENDIX A - RURAL WARDS

These proposals see the creation of 12 rural wards, comprising eight, two Member wards and four, single Member wards. The variance ranges from -7.77% at Burwash and the Weald to +8.39 at Hurst Green and Ticehurst. The Council has sought to achieve electoral equality first and foremost, and to some extent, the suggested changes are purely to address the number of electors within each ward rather than relying on the other criteria. Where each parish area has its own website, a link has been provided for further, local, community information, rather than providing the detail within this report.

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
Battle and Telham ➤ Battle Town – Marley ➤ Battle Town – Telham http://www.hugofox.com/community/battle-town-council-7838/about-us	1	1998	1.43%	The predicted growth in Battle has necessitated the current ward to be split into two, the first of which, Battle and Telham is to be a single Member ward and covers the southern part of the town and surrounding area. Battle Town Telham ward has been added to the ward from the current Crowhurst ward to make this a viable 1 Member ward. Battle is served well by both mainline rail network to London and Hastings and road networks (A2100 and A271).
Battle, Netherfield and Whatlington (less North Trade Rd & Adj. & Netherfield Rd) ➤ Battle Town – Marley ➤ Battle Town – Netherfield ➤ Battle Town – Watch Oak ➤ Whatlington http://www.hugofox.com/community/battle-town-council-7838/about-us	2	4026	-0.7%	<p>The second ward, Battle, Netherfield and Whatlington has been created by the addition of Whatlington and Netherfield from the former Darwell ward.</p> <p>Whatlington and Netherfield are much more closely aligned with Battle and the communities look to Battle for many services and facilities. This has enabled the creation of a 2 Member ward that covers the central and northern edges of the town and outlying villages.</p>
Brede & Udimore ➤ Brede http://www.bredeparishcouncil.org.uk/index.html ➤ Udimore http://www.udimore.org/5873	1	1983	-2.17%	A revised single Member ward encompassing the villages of Brede and Udimore which previously formed part of Brede Valley 2 Member ward. The ward is served by the B2089 which runs horizontally through the ward.

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Burwash and the Weald</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burwash – Burwash Weald ➤ Burwash http://www.burwash.org/parish-council/burwash-parish-council.html ➤ Brightling http://www.brightling.org.uk/parish-council ➤ Etchingham http://www.etchinghamvillage.co.uk/parish-council/ ➤ Mountfield http://mountfield.org.uk/ 	2	3739	7.77%	<p>This revised ward is essentially the current Darwell ward with the removal of Dallington into Crowhurst and Catsfield ward and Battle Town Netherfield ward into Battle, Netherfield and Whatlington ward and the addition of Etchingham into the ward at the northern boundary.</p> <p>These changes provide for improved community cohesion as well as helping to address the equality criteria.</p> <p>Geographically it is a large ward, served by the A265 running through the centre.</p>
<p>Catsfield & Crowhurst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ashburnham & Penhurst – Ashburnham ➤ Ashburnham & Penhurst – Penhurst http://ashburnham-penhurst.net/parish-council/ ➤ Catsfield http://www.catsfieldpc.co.uk/ ➤ Crowhurst http://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/ ➤ Dallington https://dallington.wordpress.com/parish-council/ 	1	2037	0.49%	<p>This revised ward encompasses the majority of the former Crowhurst ward with the addition of Dallington from the former Darwell ward and the removal of Battle Town Telham ward which now forms part of Battle and Telham ward (see above).</p> <p>There are minor road links between the villages with the main A271 running through the centre. Crowhurst sits on the main Hastings to London train line.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Eastern Rother</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Camber ➤ East Guldeford (parish meeting) ➤ Icklesham – Rye Harbour ➤ Icklesham – Winchelsea Beach http://www.ickleshampc.org/ ➤ Iden https://idenvillage.wordpress.com/147-2/ ➤ Peasmarsch http://www.peasmarsch.org.uk/9906 ➤ Playden http://www.playden.info/index.php ➤ Rye Foreign 	2	4044	-0.25%	<p>This existing ward encompasses the eastern end of the District and has been amended by the addition of Peasmarsch and Rye Foreign to the north west and the removal of Icklesham parish ward and Winchelsea parish ward to the south west. The ward is so named due to its geographical location within the district. It is sparsely populated at the very eastern edge of the ward which is mostly made up of agricultural land.</p> <p>The ward surrounds the town of Rye on three sides with all main road networks leading into and out of Rye (A259 and A268) with the exception of Winchelsea Beach which can also be accessed via the coast road.</p> <p>All other parishes and parish wards remain as before.</p>
<p>Hurst Green and Ticehurst (add Salehurst Village & north of said Village)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hurst Green http://www.hurstgreen-pc.org.uk/ ➤ Salehurst ➤ Ticehurst – Flimwell ➤ Ticehurst – Ticehurst ➤ Ticehurst – Stonegate 	2	4394	8.39%	<p>This new ward encompasses the villages of Hurst Green, Flimwell, Salehurst and Ticehurst and forms the northern part of the district boundary with Kent.</p> <p>The ward has good road links with the A21, B2087 and B2099 which provides links between the villages.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Northern Rother</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beckley http://www.beckleyparishcouncil.co.uk/ ➤ Bodiam http://www.bodiamparishcouncil.org.uk/ ➤ Ewhurst http://ewhurst.info/index.htm ➤ Northiam http://www.northiamvillage.co.uk/ ➤ Staplecross http://ewhurst.info/ 	2	4225	4.22%	<p>This revised ward encompasses the villages of Ewhurst and Staplecross from the former Ewhurst and Sedlescombe Ward, Bodiam, from the former Salehurst ward and retains Northiam and Beckley from existing Rother Levels ward.</p> <p>There are good road links both north to south (A28 and A268), as well as well as the B2089 running east to west.</p>
<p>Robertsbridge (including the hamlet of Salehurst)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Robertsbridge http://www.salehurst-pc.org.uk/ 	1	2184	7.75%	<p>Salehurst and Robertsbridge Ward was until relatively recently named Salehurst Ward. Historically this reflects the importance of Salehurst Hamlet as constituting a significant 'community interest and identity' linked to the village of Robertsbridge - indeed from medieval times. The village church is there; the cemetery is there; residents use the services of the village of Robertsbridge and would regard the District Councillor of Robertsbridge and Salehurst as their first port of call over District matters.</p> <p>The local ward Member has confirmed that in discussion with Parish Councillors, it is clear they strongly, even vehemently, oppose the removal of Salehurst from the ward.</p> <p>The village sits on the A21 and is on the mainline railway to London and Hastings.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
Rye & Winchelsea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Icklesham – Winchelsea http://www.ickleshampc.org/ ➤ Rye http://www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/ ➤ Rye 	2	4020	-0.84%	<p>A new ward created from the existing Rye ward together with the ancient town of Winchelsea, a parish ward of Icklesham Parish Council. The towns share historical heritage and character.</p> <p>The main A259 links the two towns.</p>
Sedlescombe & Westfield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sedlescombe http://sedlescombe.org.uk/ ➤ Three Oaks - Guestling http://www.guestling.org.uk/ ➤ Westfield – Westfield http://www.westfieldvillage.co.uk/ ➤ Westfield – Kent Street ➤ Westfield – Westfield Lane 	2	4269	5.30%	<p>This new ward encompasses the parish wards of Westfield, Westfield Lane and Kent Street, Sedlescombe and Guestling - Three Oaks.</p> <p>The villages are linked by minor B roads with the main A21 running to the west of both villages, through the length of the ward. The A28 also provides good transport links through the north western edge of the ward.</p>
Southern Rother <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fairlight http://www.fairlight.org.uk/index.php ➤ Guestling ➤ Icklesham – Icklesham http://www.ickleshampc.org/ ➤ Pett http://www.pettnet.co.uk/parish-council 	2	3792	-6.46%	<p>This new ward encompasses the villages of Guestling, Pett, Fairlight and Icklesham. This ward is bordered by Hastings Borough Council to the west, the sea to the south and the Eastern Rother ward to the east.</p> <p>The main A259 runs through the ward providing access to both Rye and Hastings.</p>

APPENDIX B - BEXHILL WARDS

In the urban area of Bexhill it is proposed that the wards essentially remain the same as current, with only minor adjustments to boundaries to provide improved electoral equality.

The present warding scheme provides for 9, 2 Member wards and these have worked well since being introduced following the Periodic Electoral Review in 2001/02 which came into effect from May 2003. The current serving Bexhill Members are keen to retain the existing warding pattern which enables the sharing of ward work, builds capacity and resilience and provides residents with a choice of representation. The variance between wards ranges from -5.5% at Bexhill Central to 10.03% at Bexhill Sidley. The wards are briefly described below.

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Bexhill Central (less 187 electors from BC002, 24-36 St Leonards Rd, 23-45 Eversley Rd, Marina Court, 22-52 Wilton Rd)</p>	2	3829	-5.55%	<p>A ward with a strong commercial focus, incorporating the defined central retail areas of Western Road, Sackville Road, Devonshire Road, St. Leonards Road and eastern side of the Beeching Road Industrial Estate. Key leisure and community facilities include the Bexhill Library, main Post Office, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill Rowing Club, Colonnade, Central and half of West Parade, beach and foreshore and Egerton Park. The mainline Bexhill railway station is also situated at the eastern boundary. There is one primary school located within the ward.</p> <p>It is proposed that this ward is amended by the removal of 187 electors at the eastern border into Sackville ward to create improved electoral equality between the two neighbouring wards and across the Bexhill wards in general.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Bexhill Collington (add 185 electors from BG002 - Cooden Sea Rd 191-209, Elstead Rd, The Gorses, Jevington Close, Withyham Rd 2-44)</p>	2	4058	0.10%	<p>A mostly residential ward; key leisure and community facilities include the Polegrove Recreation Ground, Collington and Gillam Woods, the Cooden Beach Sports and Social Club, the western end of West Parade, beach and foreshore to the west as far as Cooden Sea Road. There is a small retail offer at Collington Mansions and the south western end of the Beeching Road Industrial Estate. The largest employer Hastings Direct is also situated within the ward as well as Collington Railway station.</p> <p>It is proposed that this ward is amended by the addition of 185 electors at the western border with St. Marks ward to create improved electoral equality between the two neighbouring wards and across the Bexhill wards in general.</p>
<p>Bexhill Kewhurst</p>	2	3967	-2.15%	<p>A mostly residential ward; community facilities include part of Little Common village to the western boundary of the ward, commercial sites at the northern end of Beeching Road Industrial Estate at the eastern boundary of the ward, and part of Broad Oak Park.</p> <p>The main A259 runs through the centre of the ward providing good connectivity to both Bexhill Town Centre and Little Common.</p> <p>There are no proposed changes to this ward or its boundaries.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
Bexhill Old Town and Worsham	2	3857	-4.86%	<p>A mostly residential ward encompassing part of the Bexhill Old Town High Street and the historic St Peter's Church. Key leisure and community facilities include Barrack Hall Recreation Ground, Bexhill Hospital, Chantry Community primary school and St Mary's Special School; there is currently no significant retail provision.</p> <p>It also includes the land in the Council's Local Plan (2006) earmarked for the major extension North East of Bexhill. Some 1,100 dwellings and associated facilities are being developed on this site with planning permission already granted for 1,158 dwellings. The imminent development will see an estimated increase in electors of 875 bringing the current -20% variance to -5%. In view of the development, it is proposed that this ward is renamed to reflect the new community being developed to Bexhill Old Town and Worsham ward.</p>
Bexhill Pebsham and St. Michaels	2	4050	-0.10%	<p>A ward that encompasses north of the De La Warr Road from Glynne Gap roundabout and extends to the west to Dorset Road and includes the whole of the distinct community of Pebsham. The ward is mostly residential with some commercial sites, including Hastings Household Waste Recycling Site and a small retail offer on the Pebsham estate. There are 2 primary schools located within the ward together with Bexhill 6th Form College.</p> <p>Whilst there are no proposed changes to this ward's boundaries, it is proposed that this ward is renamed from Bexhill St. Michaels to Pebsham and St. Michaels to better reflect the distinct community of Pebsham.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Bexhill Sackville (add 187 from BC002 as above)</p>	2	3895	-3.92%	<p>A mixed ward of both residential communities, leisure and retail outlets; key leisure and community facilities include the Bexhill Ravenside Retail Park, Manor Gardens and Barn, Penland Wood, Galley Hill, St. Richards Catholic Community College and the whole of East Parade, beach and foreshore extending up to and including Bexhill Sailing Club.</p> <p>It is proposed that this ward is amended by the addition of 187 electors at the western border from Central ward to create improved electoral equality between the two neighbouring wards and across the Bexhill wards in general.</p>
<p>Bexhill St. Marks (less 185 as above)</p>	2	4047	-0.17%	<p>A ward that includes the majority of the distinct communities of Little Common and Cooden; key leisure and community facilities include Little Common Recreation Ground, Cooden Beech Golf Club, Cooden Beach Hotel, Cooden Beach Railway station and the High Woods to the northern boundary. The ward is divided by the main A259 Barnhorn Road. It is the largest ward by area within Bexhill.</p> <p>It is proposed that this ward is amended by the removal of 185 electors at the eastern border to Collington ward to create improved electoral equality between the two neighbouring wards and across the Bexhill wards in general.</p> <p>Whilst Members considered a change of name for this ward to better reflect the communities within it, further consultation with residents will inform whether or not the Council proposes a change as part of the next consultation phase on the Commission's draft proposals.</p>

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Projected Electorate 2021	Variance for 2021	Evidence and Rationale that the proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Bexhill St. Stephens (add 157 electors from BJ001, Turkey Rd)</p>	2	4156	2.51%	<p>A mixed ward of both residential communities and leisure facilities; key leisure and community facilities include the Bexhill Downs, the current Bexhill Leisure Centre, Bexhill High Academy and a number of primary schools.</p> <p>It is proposed that this ward is amended by the addition of 157 electors at the northern border from Sidley ward to create improved electoral equality between the two neighbouring wards and across the Bexhill wards in general.</p>
<p>Bexhill Sidley (less 157 as above from BJ001)</p>	2	4461	10.03%	<p>A mixed ward of residential communities, retail, commercial and leisure facilities; whilst the majority of the residents live within the defined settlement of Sidley, the ward also has a large rural back drop and borders the Council's Crowhurst and Catsfield rural ward.</p> <p>Whilst it is recognised that the variance is the greatest of all Bexhill wards the residents of Sidley ward have a strong sense of community, with many shared facilities; there are on-going initiatives for the future which will improve and regenerate Sidley village and so there has been a wish to retain as much as possible of the current ward.</p> <p>It is proposed that this ward is amended by the removal of 157 electors at the southern border to St. Stephens ward to create improved electoral equality between the two neighbouring wards.</p>