

## Further clarification: electoral division boundaries in West Sussex

This paper has been sent to:

- West Sussex County Council
- Arun District Council
- Horsham District Council
- Parish and town councils affected by the Boundary Committee's proposed electoral arrangements for divisions in Littlehampton, and for Billingshurst, Storrington and Warnham & Rusper electoral divisions.
- Local MPs and MEPs
- Local political groups
- Any local residents who have made submissions to us

Copies of this paper can also be downloaded from our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk)

### What is the Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Its main role is to conduct electoral reviews of local authorities in England with the aim of ensuring the number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same. Other duties include reviewing local authority boundaries and advising the Government on local authority bids for unitary status.

### Background

#### Single-member division review in West Sussex

This electoral review was requested by West Sussex County Council with a presumption in favour of single-member divisions. The review began on 26 February 2008 with the changes to electoral divisions intended to be implemented in time for elections in May 2009. The first consultation stage ended on 21 April 2008 and the Committee published its Draft Recommendations on 1 June 2008 recommending a council size of 71 members and a uniform pattern of single member divisions. The Committee received 93 submissions during the second stage of consultation, which finished on 25 August 2008.

The submissions and the draft recommendations are available for viewing on the Committee's website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). A leaflet is enclosed explaining what we have to consider when making our recommendations.

## Areas on which we would like views

In response to the Committee's draft recommendations, we received a number of alternative electoral arrangements that were supported by good evidence. However, because these proposals have not been formally consulted upon and to help us put forward the most appropriate recommendations for these areas, the Committee would like to hear views from local stakeholders on electoral arrangements for Littlehampton and in the Ashington, Itchingfield and Billingshurst areas. In this document we explain the options. Please tell us which option you prefer, taking care to explain your reasons.

## Littlehampton

### Our consideration of submissions received and the need for further views

Under the current arrangements Littlehampton East division would contain 10% more electors than the county average by 2012, while Littlehampton Town division would contain 13% fewer electors. In our draft recommendations we adopted the County Council's proposals for Littlehampton as no other proposals were submitted. These proposals would improve the electoral equality of Littlehampton East division to 2% more and of Littlehampton Town division to 2% fewer electors than the average for the county by 2012.

In response to these draft recommendations, we received two submissions regarding Littlehampton. Arun District Council supported the Committee's draft recommendations, although with reservations about the consequential changes to parish warding arrangements.

A submission from Littlehampton Town Council opposed the draft recommendations in Littlehampton, arguing that the proposal "splits a long standing historic community". They also pointed out the poor electoral equality of the nearby Arundel and Wick division, which under the draft recommendations would provide an electoral variance of -12% from the average for the county by 2012.

Littlehampton Town Council submitted a different proposal which transfers electors to both Littlehampton Town division and Arundel and Wick division. As a result, the electoral equality in 2012 in Littlehampton East, Littlehampton Town and Arundel & Wick divisions would be 4% more, and -7% and -9% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2012.

We recognise that this division pattern provides for good electoral equality and note that it is supported by Arun District Council, but are concerned that it was not proposed during the first stage of the review and has therefore not had the benefit of being considered by interested parties locally. .

## Proposals on which we would like views

We are therefore seeking views on two proposals for divisions in Littlehampton.

### Option one: draft recommendations by the Boundary Committee

Under this proposal 856 electors would be transferred from Littlehampton East to Littlehampton Town divisions. The area to be transferred is a thin triangle of land from the coast bordered by substantial residential roads. This area is shown on the attached map. No other divisions in Littlehampton would be affected.

<b>Division Name</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2007</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2007</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2012</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2012</b>
Littlehampton Town	8,603	1%	8,733	-2%
Littlehampton East	8,972	5%	9,084	2%
Arundel & Wick	7,337	-14%	7,870	-12%

A consequence of this proposal would be a change in the electoral arrangements of Littlehampton Town Council. Under Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 we are obliged, so far as is practicable, to create parish wards if a parish lies in more than one division. Under this proposal a new parish ward would be created to represent the 856 electors. We propose that it return one councillor and be called Central parish ward. We further propose that the Beach parish ward, from which 856 electors have been removed, return two parish councillors instead of three.

### Option two: proposal from Littlehampton Town Council.

Under this proposal 384 electors would be transferred from Littlehampton East division to Littlehampton Town division. The area is in the north-west corner of the existing Littlehampton East division. It is bordered to the west by Arundel and Wick division, to the north by a school and playing fields, and to the south by Littlehampton Town division.

A further 241 electors would be transferred from Littlehampton East division to Arundel and Wick division. This area is directly north of the area mentioned in the paragraph above, and is bordered to the north and the west by Arundel and Wick division and to the south by school playing fields. The homes in this area are mainly accessed from the north. The areas affected are shown on the attached map at the back of this paper. This proposal would not result in any necessary change to parish electoral arrangements in Littlehampton.

<b>Division Name</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2007</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2007</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2012</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2012</b>
Littlehampton Town	8,134	-5%	8,264	-7%
Littlehampton East	9,203	8%	9,312	4%
Arundel & Wick	7,578	-11%	8,111	-9%

# Ashington, Itchingfield and Billingshurst

## Our consideration of submissions received and the need for further views

Due to the increase in population in Horsham district, an additional division has been proposed in the town of Horsham. The knock-on effect was reflected in our draft recommendations, in which adopted many of the proposals of the County Council. We recommended that Broadbridge Heath cease to be part of the Warnham & Rusper division, and that Rudgwick be transferred from Billingshurst to Warnham & Rusper division.

As a consequence of these changes, we proposed in our draft recommendations that Ashington be transferred from Storrington division to Billingshurst division. This would improve electoral equality to 6% more and 9% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2012.

At Stage Three we received 59 submissions regarding the transfer of Ashington parish from Storrington division to Billingshurst division, all of which were opposed to this change. We consider that these submissions provided a substantial body of evidence that Ashington had few community or geographical links with Billingshurst. The arguments provided by the 59 submissions include:

- the geographical distance from Billingshurst and the lack of good roads;
- doctors and dentists being based in Storrington and Steyning;
- lack of public transport to Billingshurst (but not to Storrington);
- inclusion in a different County Local Committee from Billingshurst;
- different youth groups due to a different school system as school children from Ashington go first to Rydon school (Storrington) and then Steyning;
- community projects between Ashington, Washington, Thakeham and Wiston.

The County Council's submission during Stage Three suggested that if we concluded that "the community identity arguments for retaining Ashington parish in the Storrington ED should prevail, [we] might also wish to consider the merits of Itchingfield parish becoming part of the Billingshurst ED". We have received a submission from Billingshurst Parish Council stating that they would prefer to be joined with Itchingfield parish than with Ashington parish. Itchingfield is currently part of Warnham & Rusper division.

During Stage Three we contacted Itchingfield Parish Council and the district councillor who represents Itchingfield. We have not received a representation from either. Nor did we receive specific views on Itchingfield from the county councillors currently representing Billingshurst and Warnham & Rusper divisions.

While we recognise that electoral equality would be improved by transferring Itchingfield to Billingshurst division, we are concerned that this proposal was not raised during the first stage of consultation and that Itchingfield parish council and county and district councillors in Itchingfield and Billingshurst did not make representations.

## Proposals on which we would like views

We are therefore seeking views on two proposals for divisions in the Ashington, Itchingfield and Billingshurst areas.

### Option one: draft recommendations by the Boundary Committee

Under this proposal Ashington parish would cease to be part of Storrington division and become part of Billingshurst division. This was proposed by West Sussex County Council during Stage One. This proposal would provide for acceptable electoral equality as detailed in the table below.

<b>Division Name</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2007</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2007</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2012</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2012</b>
Billingshurst	8,836	3%	9,456	6%
Storrington	7,791	-9%	8,137	-9%
Warnham & Rusper	8,512	0%	9,163	3%

### Option two: Billingshurst, Shipley and Itchingfield.

This proposal retains Ashington in Storrington division and transfers the parish of Itchingfield from Warnham & Rusper division to Billingshurst division. This was suggested as a possibility by the County Council during Stage Three, and is supported by Billingshurst Parish Council.

The parish of Itchingfield lies to the north east of Billingshurst. It contains the hamlet of Itchingfield and the village of Barns Green. The parish contains 1,198 electors. Barns Green is linked by small roads to Slinfold and Broadbridge Heath in the north and to Billingshurst and Coolham in the south. While a great deal smaller than Billingshurst village, Barns Green and Itchingfield appear similar in size and nature to the villages of Coolham, Shipley and Dragon's Green which are contained in Shipley parish.

Under this proposal Billingshurst division would consist of Billingshurst, Shipley and Itchingfield parishes. The proposal would provide electoral variances of 14% more electors in Storrington division and 3% fewer electors in Billingshurst division than the county average by 2012. Warnham & Rusper division would worsen to 11% fewer electors than the county average by 2012.

<b>Division Name</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2007</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2007</b>	<b>Number of Electors 2012</b>	<b>Variance from the average 2012</b>
Billingshurst	8,178	-4%	8,665	-3%
Storrington	9,647	13%	10,150	14%
Warnham & Rusper	7,314	-14%	7,941	-11%

Maps detailing all of the potential options are enclosed with this paper.

# Making a representation

Please send submissions to the Boundary Committee for England by **24 October 2008**. We are unable to consider responses received after this date. Tell us clearly:

- Which area you are writing about
- Which option you prefer
- Why this option is better than the other options

Please feel free to refer to evidence you may already have provided to us. However, additional evidence and further comments would strengthen the case for your chosen option. We welcome responses in writing by post, email or fax.

Please send your response to the questions raised in this consultation to:

The Review Manager  
West Sussex Electoral Review  
The Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
30 Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW  
Tel: 020 7271 0500  
Fax: 020 7271 0505  
Email: [reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk](mailto:reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk)

# Further clarification: electoral division boundaries in West Sussex

## Feedback form

The deadline for responses to this consultation is **24 October 2008**. We will be unable to consider responses received after this date.

**Name** .....

**Organisation** .....

If you are responding about Littlehampton, please tick the option you prefer and would like to see implemented.

Option one.  
Draft recommendations by the Boundary Committee.

Option two.  
Proposal from Littlehampton Town Council.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

If you are responding about Ashington, Itchingfield and Billingshurst, please tick the option you prefer and would like to see implemented.

Option one.  
Draft recommendations by the Boundary Committee.

Option two.  
Billingshurst, Shipley and Itchingfield.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Please attach further evidence or additional information to this form.

**Please send this form to:**

The Review Manager  
West Sussex Electoral Review  
The Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
30 Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW

Tel: 020 7271 0500  
Fax: 020 7271 0505  
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