

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lewes District Council

Electoral review

September 2016

Translations and other formats

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Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	6
Draft recommendations consultation	6
Final recommendations	7
Rural north Lewes	8
Lewes town	10
Rural south Lewes	12
Newhaven and Peacehaven	14
Seaford	16
Conclusions	17
Parish electoral arrangements	18
3 What happens next?	20

Appendices

A Table A1: Final recommendations for Lewes District Council	21
B Submissions received	23
C Outline map	24
D Glossary and abbreviations	25

Summary

Who we are and what we do

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

Why Lewes?

We are conducting a review of the county of East Sussex and all its districts as the value of each vote in council elections varies depending on where you live in East Sussex. Some councillors, particularly in the districts of Hastings and Wealden, currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal. While Lewes does not currently have the level of electoral inequality that would usually trigger a review, it is being reviewed as part of the wider review of the whole county.

Our proposals for Lewes

- Lewes should be represented by 41 councillors, the same number as there are now
- Lewes should have 21 wards, the same number as now
- The boundaries of nine wards should change; 12 will stay the same

We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Lewes.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

The members of the Commission are:

Professor Colin Mellors (Chair)

Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL

Alison Lowton

Peter Maddison QPM

Sir Tony Redmond

Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

1 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Lewes district are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

What is an electoral review?

2 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

3 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

4 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Lewes. We then held two periods of consultation on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation informed our draft and final recommendations.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
8 September 2015	Number of councillors decided
22 September 2015	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
30 November 2015	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
15 March 2016	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
16 June 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
27 September 2016	Publication of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

5 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

6 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

7 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

8 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2015	2021
Electorate of Lewes	74,480	81,723
Number of councillors	41	41
Average number of electors per councillor	1,817	1,993

9 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'electoral equality'. All of our new wards for Lewes with the exception of one, Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey ward, will have electoral equality by 2021.

10 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Lewes district or result in changes to postcodes or local taxes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. We have seen no evidence to suggest that our recommendations will have an effect on house prices or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

11 See Appendix B for details of submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

12 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2021, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2016. These forecasts were broken down to polling district levels and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 9.7% to 2021. This growth is being driven by new developments, particularly in the Peacehaven, Newhaven, Seaford and Lewes areas.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

13 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We used these figures to produce our draft and final recommendations.

Number of councillors

14 Lewes District Council currently has 41 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will make sure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

15 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 41 councillors.

16 We received no submissions about the number of councillors in response to either our consultation on ward patterns or on our draft recommendations. We have therefore based our final recommendations on a 41-member council.

Ward boundaries consultation

17 We received 23 submissions during our consultation on ward boundaries. These included one detailed district-wide scheme from the Council which was based on a pattern of wards to be represented by 41 elected members.

18 The district-wide scheme received from Lewes District Council provided a warding arrangement of 21 wards, made up of five single-member, 12 two-member, and four three-member wards for the district. Having carefully considered the proposals received, we were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality across much of the district and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. However, there were areas in which we recommended changes to improve electoral equality and better reflect the statutory criteria.

Draft recommendations consultation

19 We received 23 submissions during the consultation during our draft recommendations. These included district-wide comments from Lewes District Council, and comments from nine parish councils, three district councillors, one political group and eight local residents. As a result of information received we propose to alter the boundaries of three wards – Newhaven North, Newhaven South, and Ouse Valley & Ringmer – as part of our final recommendations.

Final recommendations

20 Pages 8–16 detail our final recommendations for each area of Lewes. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

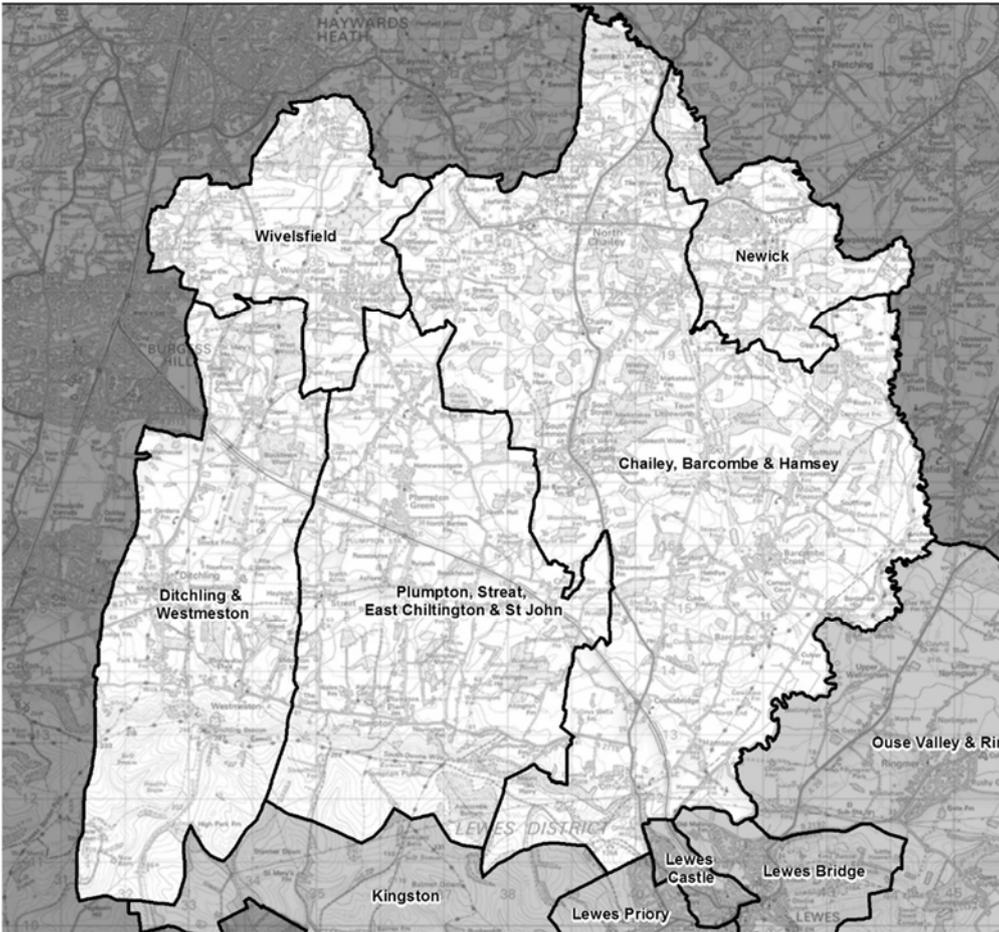
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

21 Our final recommendations are for 21 wards – five one-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and four three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence.

22 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in Table 1 (on page 17) and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Rural north Lewes



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey	2	13%
Ditchling & Westmeston	1	9%
Newick	1	7%
Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St John	1	2%
Wivelsfield	1	2%

Ward boundaries in rural north Lewes

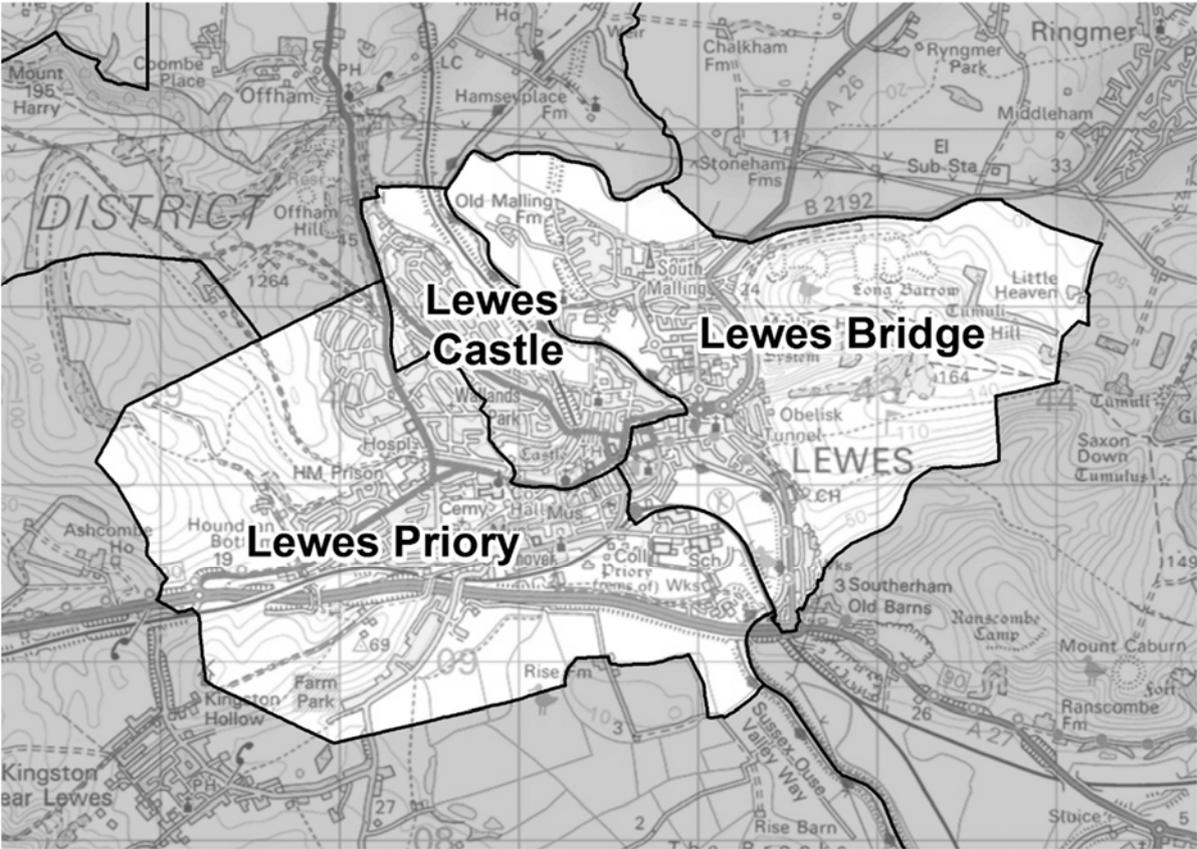
Ditchling & Westmeston; Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St John; and Newick
 23 We did not receive any submissions during the consultation on our draft recommendations for this area. We consider that the draft boundaries for these wards provide for a good balance of the statutory criteria. Our final recommendations are therefore identical to our draft recommendations in these three wards.

Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey and Wivelsfield
 24 We received six submissions referring to this area during the consultation on our draft recommendations, from four parish councils, a councillor, and a member of the public. The respondents expressed a desire for the current wards in the area to be maintained, and for the parishes of Barcombe and Hamsey to be separate from the parish of Chailey.

25 It is not possible for the current ward pattern in the area to be retained, as the existing Barcombe & Hamsey ward would have a variance of -12% in 2021 and, more significantly, the existing Chailey & Wivelsfield ward would have a variance of 20% in 2021, which is higher than we consider acceptable. One submission raised a concern regarding the electorate figures provided by the local authority for this area; however, no additional information was provided and the Commission consider that the Council's figures are acceptable.

26 Whilst we note that the variance proposed is 13%, we consider that no appropriate alternative has been suggested, and that the ward proposed provides for the best balance of the statutory criteria – a maintenance of the existing ward pattern would not provide this. We did investigate alternative warding patterns but considered these would not provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming these wards, as proposed during the draft stage, as part of our final recommendations.

Lewes town



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Lewes Bridge	2	-1%
Lewes Castle	2	1%
Lewes Priory	3	2%

Ward boundaries in Lewes town

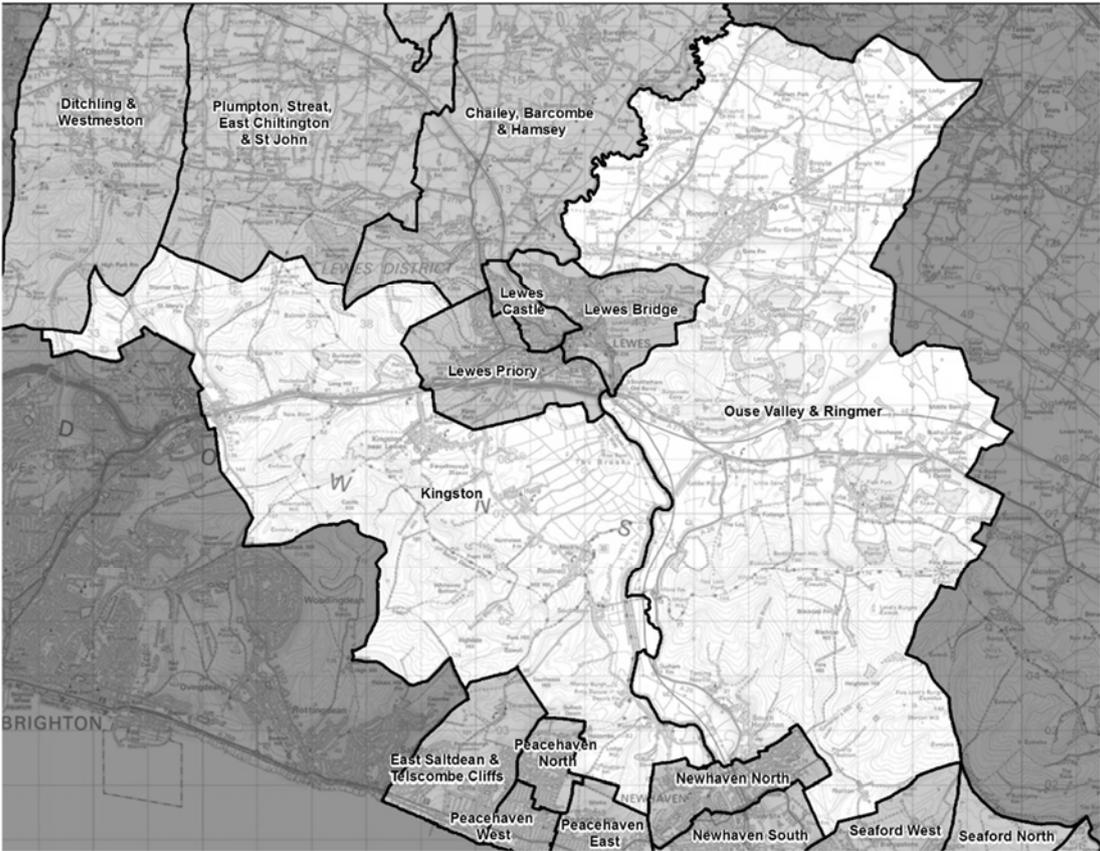
27 We received three submissions during the consultation on our draft recommendations regarding the town of Lewes. These were from a political group and two local residents.

28 One respondent requested the town be split into single-member wards. However, we do not feel that appropriate evidence was provided to support such a significant change. Similarly, we do not feel that sufficient evidence was provided to justify enlarging the proposed Lewes Castle ward, as suggested by one respondent.

29 We also received a submission requesting alterations to the parish warding arrangements; however, we are not in a position to create new parish wards unless they are required as a consequence of the warding and county division arrangements.

30 We consider that our draft boundaries provide a good balance of our statutory criteria. Our final recommendations in the town of Lewes are therefore identical to our draft recommendations.

Rural south Lewes



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Kingston	1	-9%
Ouse Valley & Ringmer	3	-8%

Ward boundaries in rural south Lewes

Kingston

31 We did not receive any submissions regarding this ward during consultation. We consider that the boundaries for this ward as suggested as part of the draft recommendations adhere well to the statutory criteria and are therefore confirming the Kingston ward as part of our final recommendations.

Ouse Valley & Ringmer

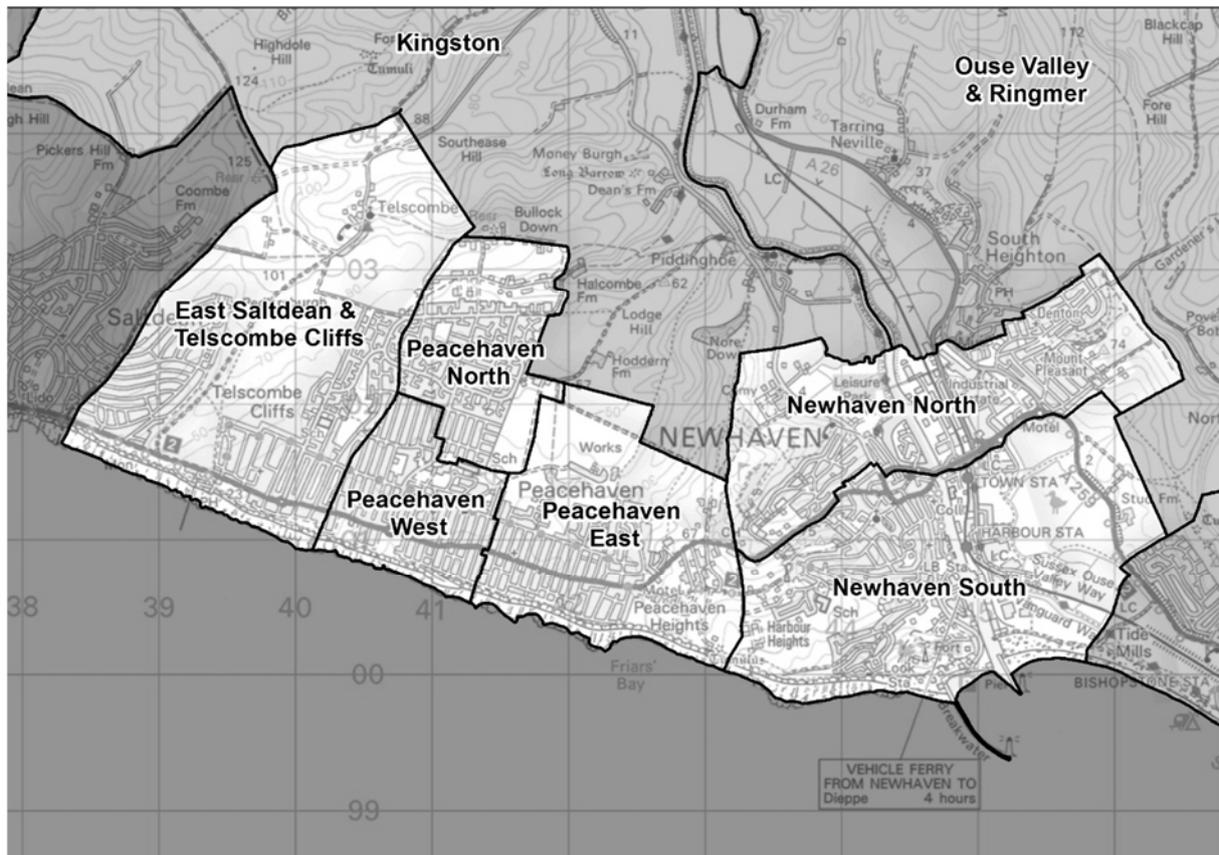
32 We received eight submissions that referred to this ward, either entirely or in part. These submissions objected to the inclusion of the rural parishes of Beddingham, Firle, Tarring Neville and South Heighton in the Newhaven North ward.

33 The submissions received objected to the draft recommendations on the basis that the rural parishes are strongly connected to each other but not to the urban area of Newhaven. Evidence was provided by a number of parish councils as to the strengths of the links between the parishes, and the submissions regarding Newhaven also stated that the rural areas should not be joined with the more urban town areas.

34 As a result of the strong evidence received during the consultation period, we propose to alter the draft recommendations in this area. The proposed three-councillor Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward will comprise the parishes of Beddingham, Firle, Glynde, Ringmer, South Heighton and Tarring Neville, and will have a variance of -8%. The proposed boundaries mirror exactly the existing ward boundaries in this area, and we consider that this altered ward adheres well to the statutory criteria.

35 We also received one submission requesting that Ringmer become a ward by itself. However, this would result in an Ouse Valley ward with a variance of -24%, which is too high. We are therefore not including this as part of the final proposals.

Newhaven and Peacehaven



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs	3	-2%
Newhaven North	2	10%
Newhaven South	3	-4%
Peacehaven East	2	1%
Peacehaven North	2	-6%
Peacehaven West	2	-4%

Ward boundaries in Newhaven and Peacehaven

East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven

36 We did not receive any submissions regarding this area during consultation on the draft recommendations. We consider that the proposals here provide for a good balance of our statutory criteria, and are therefore confirming these wards as part of our final recommendations.

Newhaven

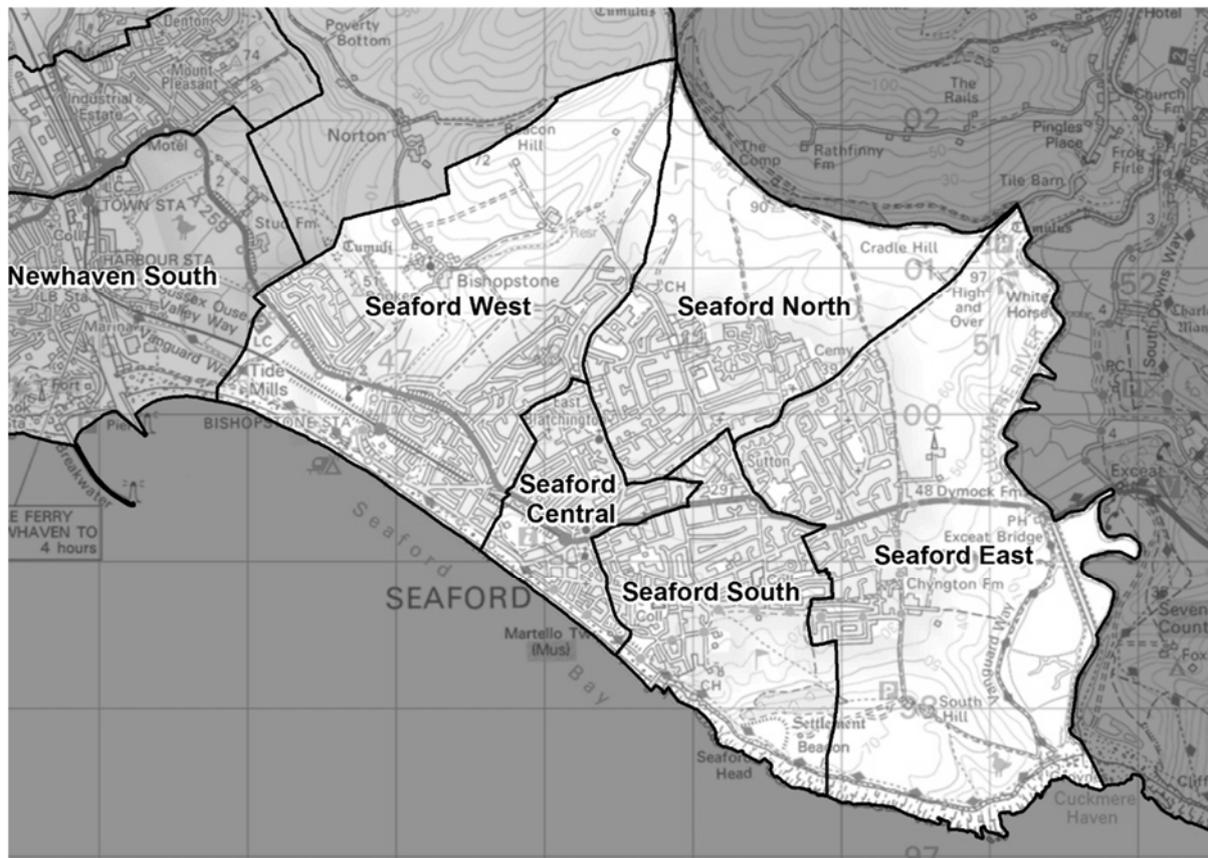
37 We received eight submissions that referred to this ward, either entirely or in part. The majority of these submissions objected to the inclusion of the rural parishes of Beddingham, Firle, Tarring Neville and South Heighton in the Newhaven North ward. On the basis of evidence received, we are proposing to remove the parishes of Beddingham, Firle, South Heighton and Tarring Neville from the Newhaven North ward and therefore are changing the northern boundary of our proposed Newhaven North ward to run along the Newhaven parish boundary.

38 We received a submission suggesting that the town of Newhaven should be divided along the river. However, this would result in a variance of -31% for the ward to the east of the river and a variance of 23% for the ward to the west of the river, which is too high. We are therefore not considering this as an alternative option for the Newhaven wards.

39 On the basis of evidence received from a local resident and the Council, we propose to alter the boundary between Newhaven North and Newhaven South to include the Essex Place area in the proposed Newhaven South ward.

40 Subject to the above amendments, we are proposing these wards as part of our final recommendations.

Seaford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Seaford Central	2	2%
Seaford East	2	1%
Seaford North	2	4%
Seaford South	2	-6%
Seaford West	2	-2%

Ward boundaries in Seaford

41 We received two submissions regarding this area during the consultation on our draft recommendations. These were from a local councillor and a member of the public. Both submissions referred to the Bishopstone area and were largely concerned with the relationship with Seaford. However, no alternative warding patterns were proposed.

42 We consider that our draft boundaries provide a good balance of our statutory criteria. Our final recommendations in Seaford are therefore identical to our draft recommendations.

Conclusions

43 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2015 and 2021 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2015	2021
Number of councillors	41	41
Number of electoral wards	21	21
Average number of electors per councillor	1,817	1,993
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	4	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Lewes District Council should be made up of 41 councillors serving 21 wards – five one-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and four three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Table A1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Lewes District Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Lewes on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

44 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

45 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Lewes District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

46 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford parishes.

47 As result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Lewes parish.

Final recommendation

Lewes Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Lewes Bridge (returning five members), Lewes Castle (returning four members), Lewes Central (returning one member) and Lewes Priory (returning eight members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

48 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Newhaven parish.

Final recommendation

Newhaven Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Newhaven Central (returning two members), Newhaven Denton (returning five members), Newhaven North (returning three members) and Newhaven South (returning eight members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

49 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Peacehaven parish.

Final recommendation

Peacehaven Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Peacehaven Central (returning one member), Peacehaven East (returning five members), Peacehaven North (returning five members) and Peacehaven West (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

50 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Seaford parish.

Final recommendation

Seaford Parish Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards: Seaford Bay (returning one member), Seaford Bishopstone (returning two members), Seaford Central (returning two members), Seaford East Blatchington (returning one member), Seaford East (returning four members), Seaford Esplanade (returning one member), Seaford North (returning five members), Seaford South (returning three members) and Seaford Sutton (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

51 We have now completed our review of Lewes District Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2019.

Equalities

45 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Lewes District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey	2	3,878	1,939	7%	4,508	2,254	13%
2	Ditchling & Westmeston	1	2,029	2,029	12%	2,174	2,174	9%
3	East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs	3	5,555	1,852	2%	5,840	1,947	-2%
4	Kingston	1	1,649	1,649	-9%	1,822	1,822	-9%
5	Lewes Bridge	2	3,484	1,742	-4%	3,939	1,970	-1%
6	Lewes Castle	2	3,014	1,507	-17%	4,024	2,012	1%
7	Lewes Priory	3	5,756	1,919	6%	6,112	2,037	2%
8	Newhaven North	2	3,774	1,887	4%	4,378	2,189	10%
9	Newhaven South	3	4,844	1,615	-11%	5,742	1,914	-4%
10	Newick	1	1,983	1,983	9%	2,142	2,142	7%
11	Ouse Valley & Ringmer	3	5,120	1,707	-6%	5,487	1,829	-8%
12	Peacehaven East	2	3,421	1,711	-6%	4,016	2,008	1%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Peacehaven North	2	3,451	1,726	-5%	3,755	1,87	-6%
14 Peacehaven West	2	3,736	1,868	3%	3,838	1,919	-4%
15 Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St John	1	1,757	1,757	-3%	2,030	2,030	2%
16 Seaford Central	2	3,774	1,887	4%	4,075	2,037	2%
17 Seaford East	2	3,938	1,969	8%	4,019	2,010	1%
18 Seaford North	2	4,087	2,044	12%	4,150	2,075	4%
19 Seaford South	2	3,626	1,813	0%	3,735	1,867	-6%
20 Seaford West	2	3,910	1,955	8%	3,903	1,951	-2%
21 Wivelsfield	1	1,694	1,694	-7%	2,037	2,037	2%
Totals	41	74,480	-	-	81,723	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,817	-	-	1,993	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lewes District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/east-sussex/lewes>

District council

- Lewes District Council

Political groups

- Lewes Constituency Labour Party

Councillors

- Councillor V. Ient (Lewes District Council)
- Councillor I. Linington (Lewes District Council)
- Councillor L. Wallraven (Lewes District Council)

Parish and town councils

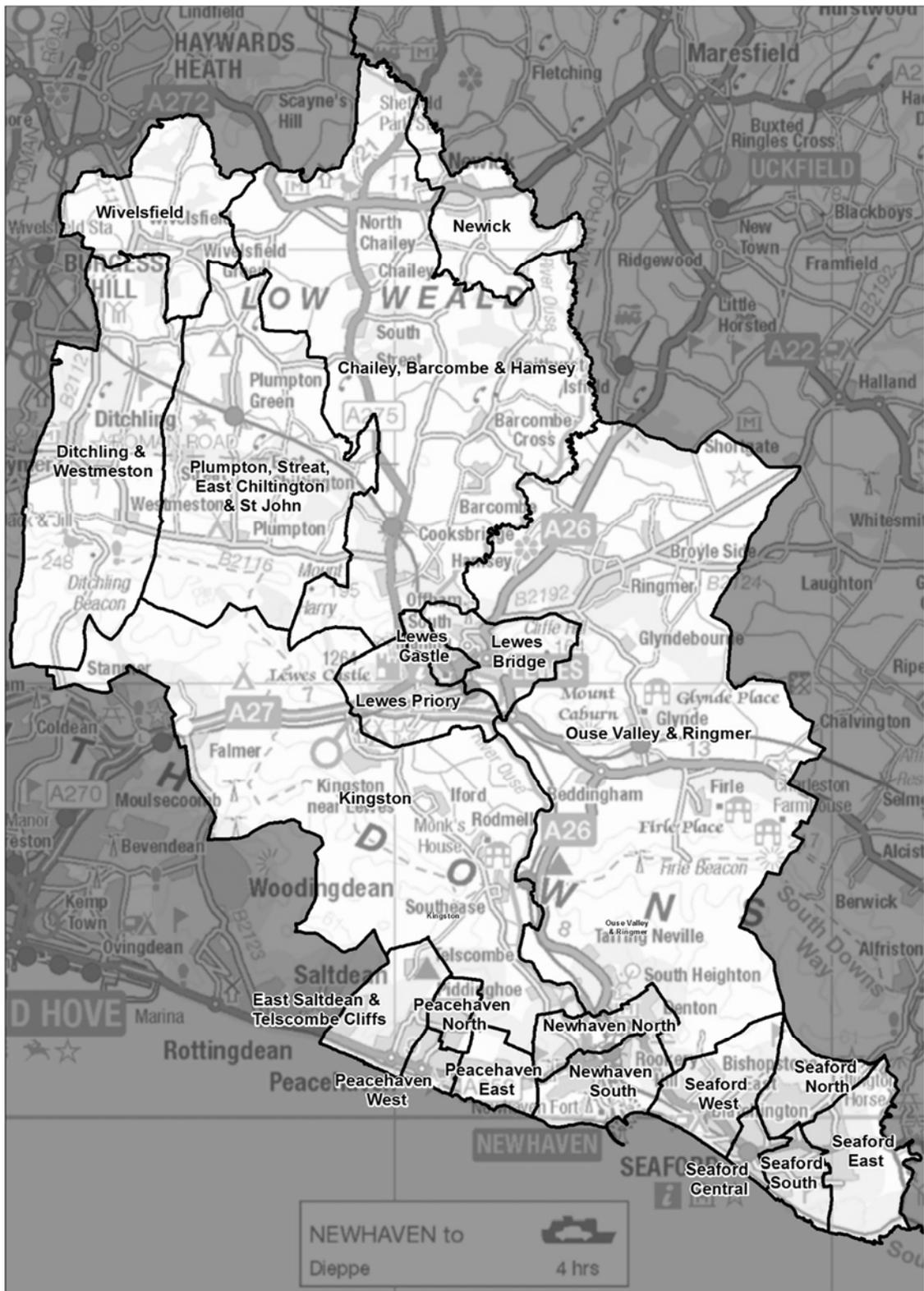
- Barcombe Parish Council
- Chailey Parish Council
- Firle Parish Council
- Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council
- Hamsey Parish Council
- Newhaven Town Council
- Ringmer Parish Council
- South Highton Parish Council
- Wivelsfield Parish Council

Residents

- 9 local residents

Appendix C

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the A1 sheet accompanying this report, or on our website <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/east-sussex/lewes>

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward	A specific area of a district or borough defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council
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