

Maidstone Borough Council

13 April 2022

Briefing Note – Petition – Keep Lenham Together We Are Not Headcorn

1. The Council has received a petition concerning the recommended submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consideration of wards for the borough.

"We the undersigned residents of Harrietsham & Lenham ward of Maidstone Borough, call upon this Council to stop its proposal to divide the Lenham parish area for future Borough elections. We strongly believe that Lenham Heath, Platts Heath, Sandway, Liverton Hill and all the isolated homes in the Lenham South area (South of the railway line), are strongly attached to Lenham, and reflect community interests and identity so should remain part of Harrietsham and Lenham Borough ward. We do not wish those areas to be forced by Maidstone Borough Council in its Boundary Commission response to be joined to Headcorn ward. We call upon Maidstone Borough Council to offer an impartial view to the Boundary Commission for electoral integrity and not one that cuts a community directly in half".

2. Democracy and General Purposes Committee (D&GP) considered the Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) consultation on its Local Government Boundary review at its meeting on 9 March 2022. The recommendation from that meeting is on the agenda for Council to approve.
3. The Council's submission setting out a proposed ward scheme has been put together with extensive consultation of Members and a significant amount of work by officers to produce a scheme that meets the objectives set by the LGBCE. This results in a scheme that has been recommended by D&GP to Council with only two of the proposed wards slightly outside of the target electoral variance (+/-10% of the average electorate per councillor).
4. The Local Government Boundary Review is not the Council's and the Council are a consultee to the review. Given the complexities in calculating the proposed ward scheme and meeting the LGBCE's objectives making amendments to the proposed scheme, even on one boundary, would significantly impact on the overall scheme.
5. Recommended options for Council tonight are therefore to consider the petition alongside the report on the boundary scheme from D&GP and:
 - I. Submit the ward scheme as recommended by D&GP to the LGBCE; or
 - II. Submit the ward scheme as recommended by D&GP and the petition to the LGBCE as part of one submission for the LGBCE to consider
6. There will be a second round of consultation on the LGBCE's draft ward proposals in the summer (July to September). This will provide the Council, Councillors, Parishes, Communities, and the public a further opportunity to influence the boundary review outcome based on what the LGBCE are proposing.