

**Local Government Boundary Review – 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage  
Consultation Response**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Council
<b>Lead Director</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Ryan O’Connell, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

This report asks the committee to decide what should be included in the Council’s response to the LGBCE’s consultation on their specific ward proposals for Maidstone Borough as part of the Local Government Boundary Review, and to recommend the response to that consultation to Council.

**Purpose of Report**

Decision - recommendation to Council

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

That

1. The response elements set out in Appendix A be considered for inclusion in the Council’s Consultation response;
2. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager be given delegated authority to finalise the format of the response for presentation to Council, including any corrections and/or minor alterations that are in line with the response(s) identified by the Committee;
3. That Council be recommended to approve the consultation response for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the Local Government Boundary Review.

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<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	21 September 2022
Council	28 September 2022

# Local Government Boundary Review – 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Consultation Response

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>Having appropriate boundaries in place will impact on all Strategic Objectives indirectly by ensuring electoral equality across the borough, fair representation of community identities and allowing convenient and effective local government.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>Having appropriate boundaries in place will impact on all Strategic Objectives indirectly by ensuring electoral equality across the borough, fair representation of community identities and allowing convenient and effective local government.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

<b>Financial</b>	There are no financial implications associated with the recommended consultation response.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Legal</b>	The review is being conducted by the LGBCE under its powers in The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	No impacts.	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	Achieving electoral equality is one of the statutory objectives of the Local Government Boundary Review.	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	No impacts.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	No impacts.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	No impacts.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	No impacts.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking the second consultation phase of Maidstone's Local Government Boundary Review (LGBR). This consultation is on the LGBCE's specific proposals for Maidstone and has been published on their website with an interactive map (<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/32722>), alongside guidance on responding. The Council can respond to this consultation as a

consultee, and other groups, bodies and individuals are also encouraged to respond.

- 2.2 It is recommended that the Council responds, Appendix A sets out a table containing recommended elements for the Council's response. The optional elements are for the Committee to determine whether they should be included or not. This report also seeks a delegation to the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager to finalise the response following the Committee's feedback in order to ensure a high-quality document is presented to Council for approval.
- 2.3 In drafting Appendix A officers have reviewed the LGBCE's proposals, consulted Councillors individually and as political groups, held drop-in sessions and had face to face meetings. The LGBCE have also been contacted for clarity on a number of proposals and impacts of this review on the Council's Community Governance Review (Parishes) that is the subject of a report elsewhere on the agenda.
- 2.4 The proposed boundaries retain a lot of the Council's own proposals, but also increase the number of proposed Councillors from 48 to 49 in order to achieve a better electoral balance across the Borough. There is one proposed Ward where electoral balance is not achieved with a 13% variance; Headcorn with Sutton Valence. Alternatives to this Ward have been considered and were considered as part of the Council's original submission. There are no sound alternative proposals that do not create an electoral imbalance elsewhere. An alternative has therefore not been proposed as part of the response.

#### Boundary Issues

- 2.5 Feedback from Councillors has raised a few issues, but in general the view is that the proposed boundaries are sound, subject to a few issues identified in the Appendix. There are two types of issues set out in Appendix A – Boundary Issues and Naming Issues.
- 2.6 Of the boundary issues only one is recommended to go forward to Council, that the boundary through the Coombe Farm estate in Tovil is redrawn to capture the whole estate, and the boundary in northern Central Maidstone is redrawn slightly further North in order to balance the electoral impact. The impact of a weaker northern boundary in Central Maidstone is felt to be less significant than splitting the estate in Tovil.
- 2.7 There are three other issues in Appendix A that have been raised by Ward Councillors and/or the relevant parish. These are presented to the Committee to determine if they wish to support them. However, two of them introduce a greater than 10% variance to electoral equality and the small change in Boughton Monchelsea is not technically deliverable at this stage of the process.

#### Naming Issues

- 2.8 Appendix A also sets out the naming issues for response to the LGBCE. There are only three issues, one of which (changing Headcorn with Sutton Valence to Headcorn and Sutton Valence) is minor. A survey of Councillors

is underway for alternative names to the other two and a set list of those choices will be presented to Committee to determine.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1 – Not submit a response
  - 3.2 **Option 2** – Submit a response based on Appendix A - The Committee are asked to consider the elements they wish to include in the Council's response. The only element that is recommended is that of redrawing the proposed Tovil boundary and the northern Central Maidstone boundary.
  - 3.3 Option 3 – Submit a response based on Appendix A, considering the elements included but not include the Tovil/Central Maidstone change.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is option 2, along with an appropriate delegation to the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager to formulate the Committee's choices into a response for Council to approve.
  - 4.2 This is recommended as it recognises that there are only a few issues with the LGBCE's proposals, and gives the Committee flexibility in whether to take the other issues raised forwards.
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### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 Significant work was carried out on the Council's original response to the LGBCE, which forms a significant part of the LGBCE's proposals.
  - 6.2 Councillors have been given the opportunity to raise issues directly with the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, drop-in sessions have been held and Group Leaders provided feedback on behalf of their Groups.
  - 6.3 Communications have also been held with Parish Councils who have contributed to the issues in Appendix A.
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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 Following the choices of the Committee the consultation response will be written up and presented to full council for approval on 28 September 2022 and then submission to the LGBCE.
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Council response recommendations and options
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

LGBCE Consultation - <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/32722>

(Please note this is an external link and may be archived or moved following completion of the LGBR).