

Community Governance Review - Final Recommendations for East Grinstead Town Council (EGTC)

REPORT OF: Head of Regulatory Services
Contact Officer: Terry Stanley, Head of Democratic Services & Elections
Email: terry.stanley@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477415
Wards Affected: All East Grinstead Wards
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council
12 October 2022

Purpose of Report

1. Following completion of two public consultations, and two examinations by the Scrutiny Committee for Community Leisure & Parking (and its predecessor), to present to Council the Final Recommendations of the principal electoral authority.

Recommendations

2. **Council is recommended to:**
 - (i) **To approve the principal electoral authority's final recommendations for East Grinstead Town Council as set out at paragraphs 16 – 20 of this report.**
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Background

3. This Community Governance Review (CGR) was initiated following a request from East Grinstead Town Council (EGTC), pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
4. The request was that this Council consider the extent of the electoral wards of the EGTC following the Local Government Boundary Commission's (LGBCE) creation of new parish wards, and to align as far as possible the town council wards with the district council wards, and to achieve a reduction in Councillor numbers from 19 to 16 Councillors.
5. At its meeting of 23 March 2022, the Committee advised upon and accepted the Terms of Reference and Guidance for Respondents relating to the CGR. The first public consultation opened on 25 April 2022 and closed on 3 June 2022.
6. Our Guidance for Respondents required consultees to make qualitative submissions that should address the themes explained within the Terms of Reference and/or other matters that we are able consider. We did not consider unduly brief submissions which gave no explanation for their support or their opposition for a particular proposition, or that provided nothing for us to consider.
7. The scrutiny committee considered the public responses to the first consultation and the resulting draft recommendations at its meeting of 22 June 2022. The second public consultation opened on 1st July 2022 and closed on 12th August 2022.
8. The second public consultation was specifically regarding our draft recommendations that resulted from the first public consultation, and submissions were mostly confined to those, unless suggesting an entirely different proposition.

Public Engagement

9. At both stages of the Review each eligible elector was sent a letter or an email explaining the considerations of the CGR, and signposting to the consultation material published at the Council's website. This explained how to contribute to the Review. The communication also provided electors with their unique Elector Number, to be quoted with their submission to enable our electoral services team to verify that all individual responses came from registered local government electors of the of the EGTC area.

Timetable

10. Key stages of the Review were as follows:

Action	Date	Outline of Action
Public Consultation 1 Publication of the Review Terms of Reference	25 April 2022	First six-week public & stakeholder consultation
Public Consultation ends	3 June 2022	All representations are examined & considered
Draft proposals considered by Scrutiny Committee (Customer Services & Service Delivery)	22 June 2022	Any additional recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee are recorded and added to the draft proposals
Public Consultation 2	1 July 2022	Second six-week public & stakeholder consultation
Public Consultation ends	12 August 2022	All representations are examined & considered
Final recommendations considered by Scrutiny Committee (Community, Leisure & Parking)	28 September 2022	Scrutiny Committee will consider the CGR final recommendations and make recommendations to Full Council
Final recommendations (as amended, if applicable) are recommended to Full Council for adoption.	12 October 2022	Council is recommended to approve.

Conclusions

11. Following the first stage consultation, EGTC supported the draft recommendations.
12. Taking the first and second public consultations into account there is clear support among residents, elected representatives, and other stakeholders for a reduced Council size and for aligning parish warding as closely as possible to the new district wards.
13. Unfortunately, we cannot replicate the new district wards precisely as part of this Review because we must have regard to County division boundaries. Parish wards must lay wholly within a single County division and cannot cross such a boundary.

14. Three alternative proposals from electors were interesting but in one case did not consider the constraints of the county division boundaries, another sought a better electorate to Councillor ratio but recognised this could not be achieved given the request from the EGTC to reduce from 19 to 16 and other constraints, and the third proposed cutting the number of Town Councillors in each Ward to provide a council size of 9.
15. This Review has evaluated and carefully considered all valid submissions received. Having regard to these the final recommendations of the principal electoral authority are as follows:

Final Recommendations for East Grinstead Town Council

16. The new parish ward created by the LGBCE of Ashplats North should be retained as it is divided from Ashplats South by a County electoral division boundary.
17. The new parish ward of Ashplats South should be joined with Herontye to form a new parish ward named Herontye & Ashplats South.
18. The new parish ward of Sackville should be incorporated into Baldwins ward. We can do this because these two areas lay wholly within a County division. The merger also compensates for the loss of the parts of Baldwins ward south of the London Road (the current BD2 polling district), which following the LGBCE's Electoral Review of Mid Sussex District Council are now situated within Imberhorne ward.
19. The Town North and Town South parish wards should be retained as these too are divided by a County electoral division boundary.
20. The East Grinstead Town Council should be comprised of 7 Wards represented by 16 Councillors.

The Town Council Ward names and Councillor numbers should be as follows:

Town Ward	Electorate June 2022	Forecast Electorate 2027	2023 Town Councillor No.
Ashplats North	4086	4305	3
Baldwins	3276	3479	2
Herontye & Ashplats South	5054	5764	3
Imberhorne	4304	5157	3
East Grinstead South	1152	1238	1
Town North	1013	1048	1
Town South	3541	3748	3
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Policy Context

21. The CGR process allows for local views to be considered when considering community representation at Parish level.

Other Options Considered

22. None

Financial Implications

23. The reduction in Council Size will derive cost savings.

Risk Management Implications

24. Legal precedent establishes that where a principal electoral authority declines or fails to implement the findings of CGR public consultations, the risk of an adverse outcome at any Judicial Review is considerably increased. Your Officers advise that the findings of the public consultation should be the basis for our final recommendations.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

25. All stakeholders and registered electors were consulted in two public consultations.

Other Material Implications

26. At the conclusion of any CGR and subject to adoption by Council, the Council's Legal Services Division would be required to make Community Governance Orders, if there is to be a change. Therefore, a Community Governance Order will be required.

Sustainability Implications

27. A key aim of any CGR is to alight upon suitable Governance and Electoral arrangements that are capable of enduring. There is little or no environmental impact.

Background Papers

[CGR webpage where all reference documents, scrutiny committee reports and the complete set of submissions for both public consultation stages are published.](#)

[Government & Local Government Boundary Commission Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.](#)

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Appendix 1 - CGR Final Recommendations – EGTC Ward Map