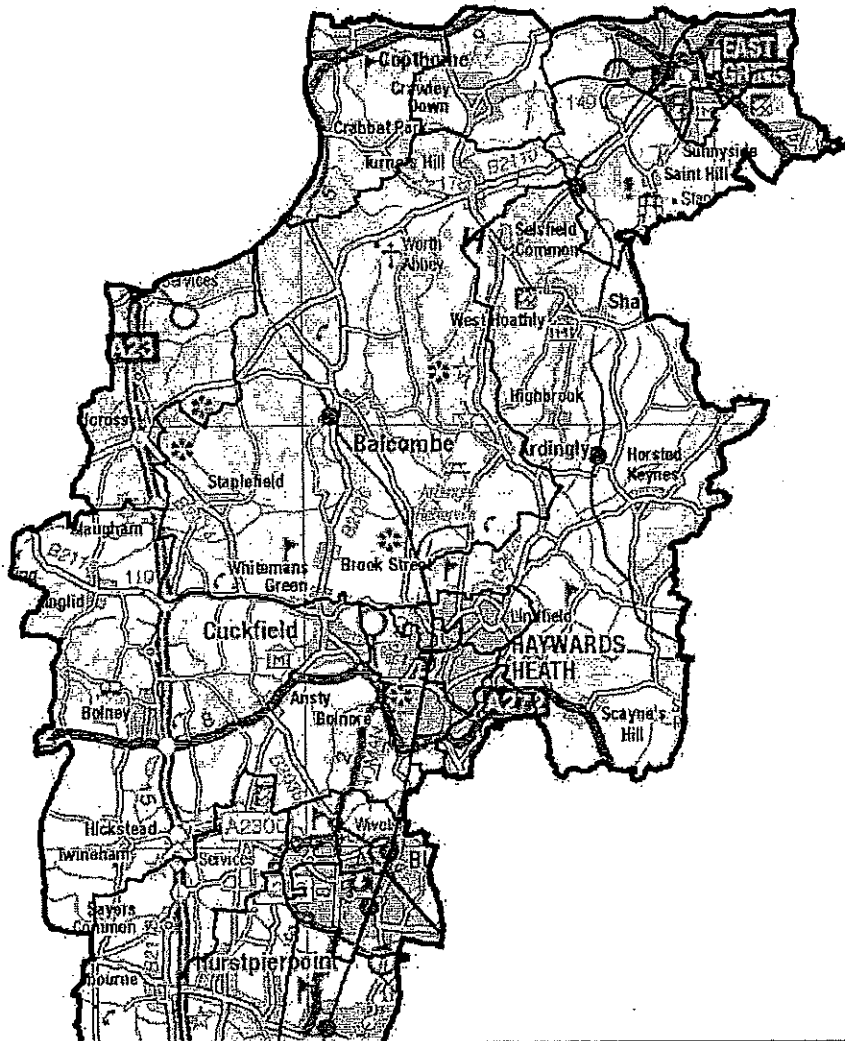


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

EXTRACT FROM REPORT



**New electoral arrangements for
Mid Sussex District Council
Draft Recommendations**

August 2021

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 31 August 2021 to 8 November 2021. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 8 November 2021 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 37 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Mid Sussex. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
16 March 2021	Number of councillors decided
23 March 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
31 May 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
31 August 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
8 November 2021	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
1 February 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 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.

20 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.

21 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.

	2021	2027
Electorate of Mid Sussex	114,521	129,567
Number of councillors	48	48
Average number of electors per councillor	2,386	2,699

22 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 'good electoral equality'. All but two of our proposed wards for Mid Sussex are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2027. We believe that the wards we are recommending with forecast variances greater than 10% from the average are justified because they provide a better reflection of community identity.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2027, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 13% by 2027.

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.

25 We received a number of queries about the Council's forecast. Councillors Gibson and Phillips and Worth Parish Council queried the Council's forecast for two existing wards: Copthorne & Worth and Crawley Down & Turners Hill. However, we have analysed the forecast and are satisfied that the development growth is included by 2027.

26 One resident wanted to be sure that the substantial Northern Arc development had been included in the forecast.

27 In the Council's original forecast, the Northern Arc development was allocated to polling districts KC and KEE in Burgess Hill despite being mostly geographically located in polling district IB in Ansty & Staplefield parish. The revised forecast includes the additional electors in the correct polling districts.

28 We are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

29 Mid Sussex District Council currently has 54 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that decreasing the total number of councillors by six will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

30 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 48 councillors: for example, 48 one-councillor wards, 16 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

31 We received six submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. The Mid Sussex Constituency Labour Party ('Labour Party') objected to the reduced council size on the grounds that the electorate is forecast to increase. It argued that a significant increase in the elector-councillor ratio would increase workload and discourage a wider range of people from becoming councillors. It, therefore, proposed retaining the existing council size.

32 Hassocks Parish Council also objected to the reduction because of the increase in electors per councillor.

33 Councillors Gibson and Phillips expressed support for a reduction in councillor numbers but did not support the Council's submission to the Commission which proposed a council size of 48. In particular, they considered that 'the numerical relationship with the scrutiny function of the Council was weak'.

34 Three residents supported a reduction in council size, with one expressing support for a council size of 48 while the other two suggested that 48 councillors was still too many.

35 We have considered the objections to the proposed council size but in the absence of strong evidence to support a different council size, we have based our draft recommendations on a 48-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

36 We received 40 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included district-wide proposals and comments from the Mid Sussex Conservative Party ('the Conservatives') and the Mid Sussex Liberal Democrats ('Liberal Democrats') and a joint submission from Councillor Gibson and Councillor Phillips. The Labour Party also submitted comments.

37 The Conservatives expressed a preference for single-councillor wards where possible on the grounds that it led to better accountability. They submitted proposed boundaries for Haywards Heath's Town and the rural parishes. They requested that we create 10 single-councillor wards for Burgess Hill and the Northern Arc development area and 10 single councillor wards for Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead.

38 The Liberal Democrats' scheme provided a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Mid Sussex. They expressed the view that boundaries in the larger towns should be based on main roads and railway lines and not on side roads, and that wards should include communities with shared characteristics.

39 The Labour Party did not submit any specific proposals but provided some comments on a few areas. It also raised issues relating to county council and parish boundaries as well as polling stations, which are all out of the scope of this electoral review. Parish boundaries and the setting up of polling stations are the responsibility of the Council and outside our remit.

40 Councillors Gibson and Phillips proposed a mixed pattern of 23 wards for Mid Sussex, with Burgess Hill having five wards and East Grinstead and Haywards Heath each having four wards. They did not submit any boundaries for the three towns. Their submission did not include any detailed descriptions of the wards.

41 A number of respondents pointed out that in Mid Sussex, the urban areas (Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath) had more representation. By law, we have to have regard to the number of electors. This means that size of a ward and number of councillors per ward are determined by the number of electors.

42 The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for ward arrangements in particular areas of the district.

43 We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority.

44 We noted that although the Conservatives' proposals included some description of the communities included in their proposed wards, in a number of instances we would be required to create parish wards with very few electors. We only do this in special circumstances, such as when it is clear that the electorate will grow, for instance with regards to the Northern Arc development. Where a district ward or county division boundary crosses a parish boundary, we have to create a parish ward for that area.

45 In the more densely populated Haywards Heath Town, we were not persuaded by the evidence submitted that communities would not be split by creating single-member wards as proposed by the Conservatives. This was also the case in the Hassocks/Keymer area.

46 For these reasons and in the absence of specific warding proposals for two of the three urban areas in Mid Sussex, we have based our draft recommendations on the scheme locally generated and proposed by the Liberal Democrats. We consider that this provides for good electoral equality, has identifiable boundaries and in our view will reflect communities. In doing this, we have made some amendments to reflect what others have said, including the Conservatives.

47 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas, we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria, and so we identified alternative boundaries.

48 Given the social distancing requirements arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a detailed virtual tour of Mid Sussex. This helped clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the proposed boundary recommendations.

Draft recommendations

49 Our draft recommendations are for three three-councillor wards, 17 two-councillor wards and five one-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

APPENDIX 6 (7.0(16))

50 The tables and maps on pages 10–31 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Mid Sussex. 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.

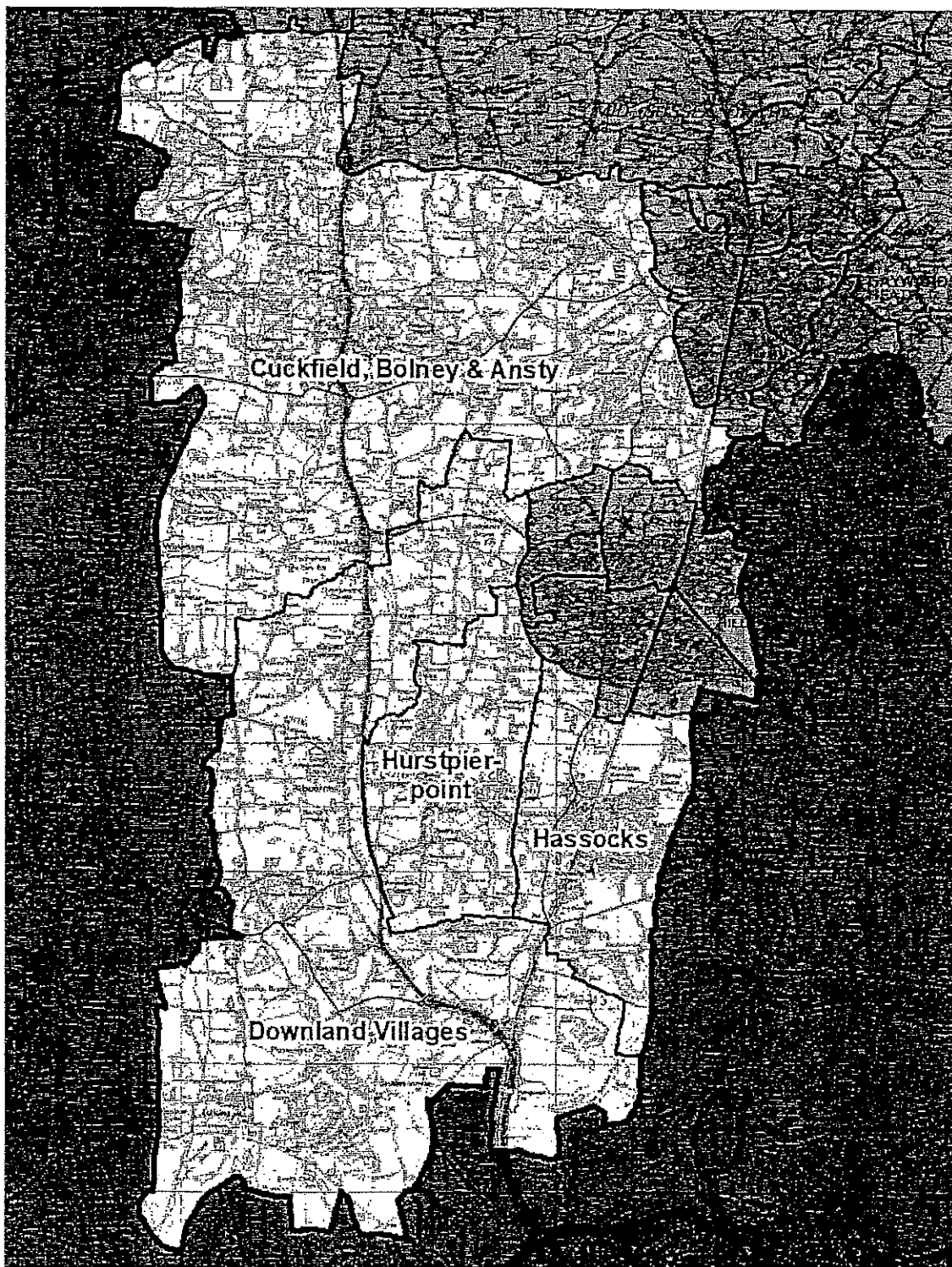
51 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 43 and on the large map accompanying this report.

52 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

APPENDIX 6 (80216)

Cuckfield, Bolney & Ansty, Downland Villages, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Cuckfield, Bolney & Ansty	2	7%
Downland Villages	1	-4%
Hassocks	3	-5%
Hurstpierpoint	2	-8%

Hassocks

74 In addition to the district-wide comments, we received three additional submissions from Hassocks Parish Council and two residents.

75 The Conservatives proposed a two-councillor Hassocks ward and a Keymer & South Downs ward to the south, which would include Fulking, Newtimber, Poynings and Pyecombe parishes in a ward with part of Hassocks parish, specifically the area east of the railway line, south of Keymer Road and also the roads around Newlands Close. Their view was that the proposed Hassocks ward should include Hassocks Village but exclude the community of Keymer, which has connections with the Downland Villages to the south.

76 The Liberal Democrats proposed a ward based on the existing ward boundaries, which is made up of Hassocks parish in its entirety. Councillors Gibson and Phillips also proposed an identical three-councillor Hassocks ward.

77 Hassocks Parish Council objected to any proposal that reduced the number of councillors from the current three to two or included it in a ward with other communities. It stressed that Hassocks is a self-contained village and parish with a full range of facilities and was of the view that the existing ward reflected the interests and identity of the community very well. It mentioned that it is separated from the adjoining settlements of Ditchling, Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill.

78 One resident appeared to support the existing boundaries while another resident proposed that the ward have two councillors 'so each councillor is better able to support their area ...'.

79 As a result of our virtual tour of the area and the boundary proposed by the Conservatives along Keymer Road and Ockley Lane, we were not persuaded that the communities on both sides of Ockley Lane are likely to identify as being in different communities. We are of a similar view about a stretch of Keymer Road, east of Hassocks station.

80 We note that there may well be a community connection between Clayton Village, to the south of this area, and the Downland Villages. Including Clayton Village in a ward to the south would produce a Hassocks ward with 7% fewer electors than the district average, which we consider to be an acceptable level of

electoral equality. Therefore, we welcome comments and community evidence about whether to do this. However, in the absence of further evidence specifically relating to the Keymer area, we have not adopted the Conservatives' proposals. Instead, as part of our draft recommendations, we have adopted the proposal put forward by the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Gibson and Phillips. This is also in line with comments received from Hassocks Parish Council.

81 Our draft recommendations' Hassocks ward is a three-councillor ward, forecast to have 5% fewer electors than the district average by 2027.

Downland Villages and Hurstpierpoint

82 We received three submissions specifically relating to this area of the district in addition to the district-wide comments. These were from Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council, Sayers Common Village Society and a resident.

83 The Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Gibson and Phillips all proposed including the South Downs area, i.e. Fulking, Newtimber, Poyning and Pyecombe parishes, in a single ward. But while Councillors Gibson and Phillips included the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common communities within a ward with South Downs, as is the current arrangement, the Liberal Democrats' and the Conservatives' schemes proposed including Sayers Common Village in a different ward from Hurstpierpoint Village.

84 The Conservatives' proposed Keymer & South Downs ward (see paragraph 75) results in a poor electoral variance of 15%. In addition to the reason outlined in paragraph 79, this is another reason for not adopting it as part of our draft recommendations.

85 The Liberal Democrats stated that their proposed Downland Villages ward brings together a number of small villages that look towards Hurstpierpoint as well as Hassocks for transport and education while recognising their distinct characteristics as small to medium-sized villages (as defined in the Mid Sussex District Plan). Their scheme included a two-councillor Hurstpierpoint ward centred around Hurstpierpoint Village.

86 Councillors Gibson and Phillips did not provide any detailed community evidence for their warding pattern, but Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council advocated for the inclusion of both Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common villages in a single district ward. The parish council explained that the parish is a self-sufficient vibrant community with a mutually supportive infrastructure where the residents of Sayers Common and Goddards Green (in the north of the parish) look to the larger village of Hurstpierpoint for some of their educational, health and social activities.

87 Sayers Common Village Society, on the other hand, was of the view that its village was separated from Hurstpierpoint by Albourne village and stated that it was 'no more dependent upon facilities provided by our larger neighbour (Hurstpierpoint) than other villages within the "Hurstpierpoint & Downs" ward or nearby villages' outside the ward. It argued that Sayers Common had grown and changed over time and that the existing parish arrangements were outdated.

88 It is important to note that the parish arrangements within Mid Sussex District Council are the responsibility of the Council and not ours. Nevertheless, we note that Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common parish is already warded along community lines and that neither the Conservatives nor the Liberal Democrats included these two communities in a single district ward.

89 Therefore, while we agree that Sayers Common has some community with Hurstpierpoint, we also note that it has some shared characteristics and connections with other villages in the area, which is reflected in the proposals that we received from both political groups.

90 Having not adopted the Conservatives' Keymer & South Downs ward, we were unable to adopt their proposed Hurstpierpoint & Albourne ward. Therefore, we are adopting the Liberal Democrats' wards in this area of the district as part of our draft recommendations: a single-councillor Downland Villages ward and a two-councillor Hurstpierpoint ward. Both wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2027.

91 We are content that Downland Villages ward has good transport links along the length of the ward by way of the A23. As well as comments on the boundaries, we welcome comments on the name of the ward.

Cuckfield, Bolney & Ansty

92 The district-wide schemes were the only submissions we received for this area.

93 The Conservatives' proposals were for a two-councillor Cuckfield ward based on the existing ward, modified to exclude the Northern Arc development area and residents south of Rocky Lane on community identity grounds. They also proposed a Bolney & Sayers Common ward comprising Bolney and Twineham parishes and Sayers Common and Warninglid villages. They were of the view that the communities of Cuckfield, Ansty and Staplefield shared community interests and noted the school catchment area. Although they did not provide specific boundaries, they proposed the inclusion of a number of rural lanes from other parishes in this ward to increase the numbers and improve electoral equality. These included Brantridge Lane (Balcombe parish), Cuckfield Road (Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common parish) and Stanbridge (Slaugham parish). However, under these

proposals, the district ward boundary would cross parish boundaries; therefore, we would be required to create parish wards in each instance.

94 We note that each of these parish wards will have very few electors and will therefore not be viable (it would take only a handful of electors to elect a parish councillor) more so as there are no planned developments (population growth) around the rural lanes in question. Furthermore, the proposed district ward produced a variance of around -13%. Therefore, we did not adopt this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

95 The Liberal Democrats' proposed single-councillor Cuckfield ward was made up of Cuckfield parish with the rural part of the existing ward split across other wards. This was in line with their stated objective to include communities with similar characteristics together in a single ward. They also proposed a Bolney & Ansty district ward made up of Bolney and Twineham parishes and Ansty Village. They pointed to the A272 as linking Bolney parish and Ansty Village and argued that it was a key transport route into Haywards Heath. While this proposed ward would have good electoral equality, their proposed Cuckfield ward is forecast to have 14% more electors than the district average. We consider this too high without more detailed community evidence supporting why Cuckfield parish cannot form part of a larger ward, and did not adopt this proposal.

96 Councillors Gibson and Phillips did not specify any boundaries but appeared to propose the retention of the existing three-councillor ward. However, in the absence of any supporting evidence, and because of decisions made elsewhere, we are not basing our draft recommendations on their proposal.

97 After considering the submissions we received, we have created a three-councillor ward combining the two wards proposed by the Liberal Democrats for this area. We consider it preferable to combine separate communities in the same ward rather than dividing them between wards in order to balance our criteria. The ward has good electoral equality and transport links which will support effective and convenient local government. We therefore consider that it is the best balance of our statutory criteria. We note that although it is a larger ward than proposed by the Conservatives, it includes Bolney, Slaugham and Twineham parishes in a single ward in line with their proposals.

98 We have been persuaded that the community around Rocky Lane will identify as being part of Haywards Heath and have therefore excluded it from our recommendations for this area.

99 Our draft recommendations' Cuckfield, Bolney & Ansty ward is forecast to have 7% more electors than the district average by 2027.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Mid Sussex District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ardingly & Balcombe	2	4,587	2,294	-4%	4,930	2,465	-9%
2	Ashurst Wood & Rural	1	2,019	2,019	-15%	2,591	2,591	-4%
3	Burgess Hill Dunstall	2	4,131	2,066	-13%	5,512	2,756	2%
4	Burgess Hill Franklands	2	4,200	2,100	-12%	4,831	2,416	-11%
5	Burgess Hill Leylands	2	3,692	1,846	-23%	5,574	2,787	3%
6	Burgess Hill Meeds & Victoria	3	7,942	2,647	11%	8,284	2,761	2%
7	Burgess Hill St Andrews	2	4,764	2,382	0%	5,682	2,841	5%
8	Copthorne & Worth	2	3,940	1,970	-17%	4,808	2,404	-11%
9	Crawley Down	2	4,549	2,275	-5%	4,888	2,444	-9%
10	Cuckfield, Bolney & Ansty	2	5,200	2,600	9%	5,781	2,891	7%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Downland Villages	1	2,196	2,196	-8%	2,580	2,580	-4%
12	East Grinstead Ashpiats	2	5,286	2,643	11%	5,788	2,894	7%
13	East Grinstead Baldwins & Imberhorne	3	7,637	2,546	7%	8,672	2,891	7%
14	East Grinstead Herontye	1	2,757	2,757	16%	2,938	2,938	9%
15	East Grinstead Town	2	4,779	2,390	0%	5,091	2,546	-6%
16	Handcross & Pease Pottage	1	2,135	2,135	-11%	2,936	2,936	9%
17	Hassocks	3	6,483	2,161	-9%	7,669	2,556	-5%
18	Haywards Heath Ashenground	2	5,023	2,512	5%	5,516	2,758	2%
19	Haywards Heath Bentswood & Town	2	5,560	2,780	17%	5,933	2,967	10%
20	Haywards Heath Franklands	2	4,543	2,272	-5%	5,136	2,568	-5%
21	Haywards Heath Lucastes & Bolnore	2	5,380	2,690	13%	5,529	2,765	2%

APPENDIX 6 (15 of 16)

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22	Haywards Heath North	1	2,583	2,583	8%	2,892	2,892	7%
23	Hurstpierpoint	2	4,882	2,441	2%	4,980	2,490	-8%
24	Lindfield	2	5,083	2,542	7%	5,193	2,597	-4%
25	Lindfield Rural & High Weald	2	5,170	2,585	8%	5,833	2,917	8%
	Totals	48	114,521	-	-	129,567	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,386	-	-	2,699	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Mid Sussex 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

Outline map

