Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
13 July 2015 at 6.00 pm

At the above stated meeting the attached documents were tabled for the following items:

6.	**KCC Boundary Review - Response to Consultation**	(Pages 1 - 2)
		Christine Nuttall
7.	**Work Plan**	(Pages 3 - 4)

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Robyn Wilson

From:	Christine Nuttall
Sent:	03 July 2015 16:55
To:	'mark.cooper@lgbce.org.uk'
Cc:	Cllr Firth, Anna; Doug Williamson; Christian Everett; Pav Ramewal
Subject:	FW: KCC Division Boundaries Review
Attachments:	06 Alternative 3 Map (A4).pdf; Figures to support Alternative 3.pdf
Importance:	High

TO:
Mark Cooper
Review Officer
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Dear Mark Cooper,

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has given the Chief Executive for Sevenoaks District Council an extension to the 22nd July to submit our final consultation response to the proposed changes to the Kent County Council electoral division arrangements. This extension to the 22nd July was given on the basis that a draft of what will be considered by Council will be sent to yourself by the 6th July and that you are notified on 22nd July of any changes agreed at Council.

The Legal and Democratic Advisory Committee met last night and considered the recommended option made by the Boundary Commission along with three alternative options. The Committee agreed, which was carried by way of a vote, to choose the third alternative option.

I enclose a copy of the third alternative option together with the figures supporting the alternative proposal. As you will see the alternative option that was favoured is within the permitted variances from average and so would work.

The Committee also looked at the proposed division name changes and came up with some changes to these which were also voted upon at the meeting. The changes are as follows:

Proposed Division by B.C.	**Changes Proposed by the Legal and Democratic Advisory Committee**
Darent Valley	Sevenoaks Darent Valley
Sevenoaks Central (would not exist in the B.C.'s Proposals)	Sevenoaks Town
Sevenoaks East	For Option 3 this would not exist
Sevenoaks West	Sevenoaks West
Sevenoaks North East	Sevenoaks Rural North East
Sevenoaks Rural	Sevenoaks Rural South
Swanley	Swanley

The proposed changes are shown on the map for alternative option 3 attached.

Reasons given by Members who attended the Committee yesterday, in relation to option 3 and the proposed name changes are as follows:

- The central concern was that Sevenoaks Town should remain as one County Council division and that Westerham should remain within Sevenoaks West division. Option 3 represented the best arrangement to keep these communities together and to achieve electoral equality. It is unfortunate that Seal joins Sevenoaks Rural South but ultimately the Committee felt Seal had more in common with the South of the District then Westerham. Whilst creating a large geographic South division this configuration avoids the difficulty of one County Council member having to service 2 town councils, namely, Edenbridge and Westerham.
  Regarding the name changes the guiding principle was to retain Sevenoaks as a generic name for all divisions bar Swanley and to distinguish between the divisions close to the Town and those which are purely rural. Sevenoaks West remains the same as it abuts the Town and being located all along the A25 up to and including Westerham town is not strictly rural.

- I support Option 3
  My reason for retaining Westerham and Crockham Hill in Sevenoaks West is to preserve the community identity. There is no synergy between this town and Edenbridge and the road links are very poor. Westerham looks naturally to the villages to the east along the A25.
  Retaining Knockholt and Badgers Mount makes sense because they are not in the valley of the Darent and sit more naturally in Sevenoaks West.
  It is vitally important to keep the Town of Sevenoaks as a single Division thus keeping the community identity - one of the aims of the review.
  Seal and Weald are more rural in nature and would fit with the Division of Sevenoaks Rural South.

- Further to the meeting yesterday, my main reasons for our preferred option are :-
  it will not split any parish in to different wards
  it will get to within the tolerance % of the desired number.

If any further reasons come in from Members of the Committee concerned by the 6th July 2015 I will forward these on to you. I will also forward any other comments I receive from Members who never attended the Committee. However, I anticipate these will be few in number, if at all. This matter will next be looked at by our Governance Committee on the 13th July 2015 and then by Council on the 21st July 2015. I will keep you fully informed of any changes that transpire.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Christine Nuttall
Chief Officer Legal & Governance
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Tel: 01732 227245
Email: christine.nuttall@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Online: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Committee system best for everyone

Cllr Fran Wilson (Lib Dem) is Group Leader and Leader of Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone Borough Council has returned to a committee system of governance.

We have made the change because many of our back benchers felt disenfranchised under Cabinet with most decisions made by just six of our 55 councillors. Most decisions will now be taken by four service committees.

Under our new constitution the leader of the council is elected at full council and automatically becomes the chairman of the lead policy and resources committee. Other chairmen and vice chairmen are appointed by the committees but the constitution demands that the chairman and vice-chairman of each committee have to be from different political groups.

We were reluctant to change from the committee system to cabinet and scrutiny but, when the change was forced upon us, were one of the first to do so. Determined to get the best out of the system, we gained a reputation for excellent scrutiny work, producing influential reports about motorway noise and abandoned vehicles, amongst other subjects. This, however, has not outweighed the disadvantages of cabinet governance which became apparent over the years.

With buy-in from all political groups we believe our new committee system of governance can retain the benefit of timely decision making but with the added advantage that all councillors will now have the opportunity to be fully involved in policy formulation and decision making. This will build experience and expertise across the council chamber, leading to smoother succession when frontbenchers leave the council or there is a shift in the political balance of power.

The partnership between officers and councillors will also benefit more councillors receiving advice first hand from officers and more councillors contributing knowledge about local matters.

The new system involves all our councillors in our decision making. It will be more democratic, inclusive and transparent, and that has got to be better for our residents.

The cost of radioactive waste disposal

Cllr James Abbott (Green) is a member of the Development and Regulation Committee on Essex County Council

It's an intriguing pitch that there are major economic "opportunities" for a community that accepts the proposed high level radioactive waste disposal facility.

But in his article for **first** (Issue 588) Cllr

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