

23 September 2014

Dear Parish or Town Clerk,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF DORSET

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has formally commenced an electoral review of Dorset County Council. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the review and seek your views on future division boundaries for the council.

The Commission is carrying out a review to deliver electoral equality for voters across the county. At present, some county councillors represent many more, or many fewer, electors than their colleagues elsewhere in the county. The review aims to correct those imbalances.

What is an electoral review?

The electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Dorset County Council. In particular, it will propose:

- The total number of councillors elected to the council in the future.
- The number of divisions.
- The number of councillors representing each division.
- Division boundaries.
- Names of divisions.

For parishes, the review can recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils i.e. the number, names and boundaries of parish wards and the number of parish councillors for each parish ward. However, this is only in circumstances where the parished area is to be divided between divisions. Even in these circumstances, the Commission will not normally recommend any change to the number of councillors to be elected to a parish or town council. The Commission has no power to consider changes to the external boundaries of a parish or the creation of new parishes.

When?

Today 23 September 2014 is the start of a ten week public consultation during which the Commission is inviting proposals for new warding arrangements. The consultation will close on 1 December 2014. After considering all representations made during this consultation, the Commission intends to publish draft recommendations in May 2015. There will then be a further period of consultation on the draft recommendations. Final recommendations are expected to be published in September 2015. The new electoral arrangements will come into effect at the local elections in 2017.

How to get involved?

This is a public consultation and we welcome views from individuals and organisations across the county on where they think new division patterns should be drawn.

The Commission is minded to recommend that 46 councillors should be elected to Dorset County Council in the future. It is now inviting proposals to help it draw up a pattern of divisions to accommodate 46 county councillors.

In drawing up a pattern of electoral divisions, the Commission must balance three criteria, which are set out in law, namely:

- To deliver electoral equality where each county councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county.
- That the pattern of divisions should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
- That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

We are asking local people and organisations for their views as to the best pattern of divisions for the county which meet the requirements set out above.

The Commission will treat all submissions equally and will judge each case on its merits and against the statutory criteria. If you wish to put forward a view, we would also urge you to ensure that your submission is supported by evidence. For example, if you wish to argue that two parishes should be included in the same electoral division, make sure you tell the Commission why they should be together, providing evidence about community facilities, ties, organisations and amenities, rather than simply asserting that they belong together.

There is plenty more advice on our website about how you can get involved in the consultation and put your views forward. Log on to www.lgbce.org.uk to find out more. The website includes the technical guidance that explains the process and our policies as well as guidance on how to take part in each part of the process. We have set up a page on our site which is dedicated to the review of Dorset where you can find all the relevant information.

You can also access interactive maps of the current division boundaries across the county on our specialist consultation portal. The portal also allows you to draw your own boundaries, mark areas of interest on the map and upload documents directly to the site. Log on to www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk to access the portal or find it via our main website.

Get in touch

We encourage as many people and organisations as possible to get involved with the consultation and we encourage local organisations and parish councils to engage their local networks and communities in the review.

View interactive maps of the county, draw your own boundaries and have your say at our specialist consultation portal at: www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk.

Find out more about the review at: www.lgbce.org.uk.

Email your views to: reviews@lgbce.org.uk.

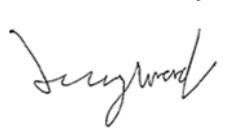
Follow us on Twitter at: [@lgbce](https://twitter.com/lgbce).

Write to: Review Officer (Dorset)
 Local Government Boundary Commission for England
 Layden House
 76-86 Turnmill Street
 London
 EC1M 5LG

This phase of consultation closes on 1 December 2014. We will write to you again when we open our consultation on draft recommendations.

Please note that the interests of transparency, copies of the all representations we receive during this review will be placed on our website. We remove any personal identifying information such as signatures and private residential addresses prior to placing any submissions in the public domain.

Yours sincerely



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