

Ms Penny James
West Somerset House,
Killick Way,
Williton,
Taunton,
TA4 4QA

3 July 2018

Dear Ms James,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has opened a public consultation on its draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Somerset West and Taunton Council.

The consultation opens today (**3 July 2018**) and closes on **27 August 2018**.

The draft recommendations propose that 59 councillors should be elected to Somerset West and Taunton Council. The recommendations also propose new electoral ward boundaries across the council area.

Once the Commission has considered all the responses to the consultation, we aim to publish final recommendations in October 2018. We will then lay a draft order in both Houses of Parliament under the negative resolution procedure. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements are scheduled to come into effect at the authority's first election in May 2019.

All information relating to the draft recommendations is available on our website. The Commission's report on its draft recommendations can also be found at: www.lgbce.org.uk. In addition, hard copies of the report and accompanying map will be dispatched to your council shortly.

Interactive maps of the proposals are also posted on the Commission's consultation portal at: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>. The portal also allows visitors to submit comments and alternative proposals.

Publicising the consultation

The Commission will shortly dispatch hard copies of the recommendations to all existing councils for distribution to local information points. In the meantime, I would

be grateful if you could bring the consultation to the attention of elected members.

We have also provided information on the draft recommendations directly to local parish councils and community organisations as well as notifying local press and media.

I would be grateful if you could also take steps to bring the consultation to the attention of the public and interested parties. Please include details of the consultation:

- On your website;
- Promote the consultation through social media and;
- Use any other channels you would normally employ to engage residents in local consultations (newsletters, press releases, publications etc.)

The Commission would be happy to provide resources to help you promote the consultation locally.

Draft recommendations

Before drawing up the draft recommendations, the Commission considered evidence it received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Ministry had gathered information from all the councils involved about potential ward boundaries for the new authority.

We have sought to balance the criteria we must follow when drawing up recommendations, namely:

- To deliver electoral equality, where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the council.
- That the pattern of wards 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.

The Commission will consider all representations made on the draft recommendations and has an open mind about amending the scheme if an alternative pattern of wards would better meet the statutory criteria above. It is also important for respondents to the consultation to indicate where and why they support the draft recommendations.

Further information on drawing up a pattern of electoral wards and putting forward alternative proposals is available in our guidance document: *Electoral reviews: technical guidance*, which can be found at:

[http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Corporate%20Documents/technical-guidance-2014%20\(reduced\).pdf](http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Corporate%20Documents/technical-guidance-2014%20(reduced).pdf).

We also publish a practical guide for putting forward submissions called *How to propose a pattern of wards* which is available at:

[http://s3-eu-west-](http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Corporate%20Documents/Guidance/How%20to%20propose%20a%20pattern%20of%20wards%20(2018).pdf)

[2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Corporate%20Documents/Guidance/How%20to%20propose%20a%20pattern%20of%20wards%20\(2018\).pdf](http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Corporate%20Documents/Guidance/How%20to%20propose%20a%20pattern%20of%20wards%20(2018).pdf).

Our website includes information about previous electoral reviews, where you can see how the Commission came to its conclusions and how other counties, cities and parishes responded to consultations on draft recommendations.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the consultation.

Correspondence and enquiries

Correspondence relating to the review – and consultation responses - should be addressed to:

Review Officer (Somerset West and Taunton)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
1st Floor, Windsor House,
50 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0TL

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

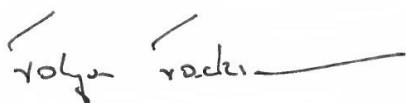
Responses to the consultation can also be made directly through our specialist consultation portal: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>.

Further information on electoral reviews can also be found at our main website at: www.lgbce.org.uk.

Your direct contacts for the review:

- Mark Cooper, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review.
- Richard Buck, Review Manager, leads the team dealing with this and other electoral reviews.

Yours sincerely



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