

Mr Alistair Stewart
Chief Executive
Shepway District Council
Civic Centre
Castle Hill Avenue
Folkestone CT20 2QY

29 January 2013

Dear Mr Stewart,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SHEPWAY

Following my letter of 23 October 2012, I am writing to formally announce the next stage of the electoral review of Shepway District Council.

Following a public consultation on council size, the Commission considered representations for a council size of 30 members at its meeting on 15 January 2013. The Commission was not persuaded to change the proposal for 30 members during the public consultation, and received support for the proposed reduction. The Commission has therefore adopted a council size of 30 for Shepway District Council for the purpose of the next stage of the review – consultation on warding arrangements.

Review timetable

This stage of the review begins today with a general invitation to all interested parties to propose a new pattern of ward arrangements for Shepway. Proposals should be based on a council size of 30 councillors. This stage of the review will run from today to 8 April 2013.

A copy of the Commission's press release and posters advertising the start of this stage of the review are being sent to your Council. It would be much appreciated if you could publicise the start of the review by placing copies on display at local information points, and by taking such other steps as you consider appropriate to bring the review to the attention of the public and other interested parties. Once the Commission has considered all the proposals received, it will take a provisional decision on warding arrangements. It is intended that the draft recommendations will be published in June 2013.

The draft recommendations will be available on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk, be sent to your Council, to those organisations and individuals listed at the end of this letter, and to all those who submit proposals during this stage. There will be a twelve week period of consultation on the draft recommendations before the Commission considers all

representations received and formulates its final recommendations. The final recommendations are expected to be published in January 2014.

A detailed technical guidance document, *Electoral reviews: technical guidance* is available on our website, at www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance. This document contains all the statutory information about the review process and information regarding the warding patterns. Hard copies are also being sent to your council.

Understanding Shepway's communities

The Commission aims to recommend a pattern of wards that achieves good electoral equality, reflects community identities and interests and provides for effective and convenient local government. It will also seek to use strong, easily-identifiable boundaries.

To further these aims, the Commission needs a good understanding of community identity in Shepway. In particular, it is interested in developing an understanding as to which areas communities identify with and how and why, and would welcome all local information which enhances this understanding. For example –

- Economic/demographic data and mapping
- Community village usage mapping
- Local place surveys
- Partner/stakeholder details

Creating a warding pattern

All proposals for warding pattern should demonstrate how any pattern of wards aids the provision of effective and convenient local government and why any deterioration in equality of representation or community identity should be accepted. Representations that are supported by evidence and argument will carry more weight with the Commission than those which merely assert a point of view.

The Commission will make recommendations on the number of councillors, the number and boundaries of wards, and the names of wards. It can also 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 wards. The Commission cannot, as part of this review, consider changes to the external boundaries of a parish, or create new parishes. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, changes to external parish boundaries are the responsibility of local authorities.

An interactive map of existing wards in Shepway, electoral figures and guidance on how to propose a pattern of wards are available in the consultation area consultation.lgbce.org.uk.

Please feel free to contact us at any time (details below) should you have any questions. Officers at the Commission will be happy to assist with technical aspects of your warding scheme if you require, either in person or via email or telephone. This is an open offer, which can be utilised at any point during the information gathering period.

Correspondence and Enquiries

Your Council's main contacts at the Commission will be:

- William Morrison, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review.
Email: william.morrison@lgbce.org.uk; Tel: 020 7664 8516;
- Tim Bowden, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews
Email: tim.bowden@lgbce.org.uk; Tel: 020 7664 8514.

I am copying this letter to the organisations and individuals listed below.

Yours sincerely



Archie Gall
Director of Reviews
archie.gall@lgbce.org.uk
020 7664 8509

cc Kent County Council
MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in Shepway
Headquarters of the main political parties
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
Kent Fire and Rescue Service
NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent
Kent Association of Local Councils
Parish and town councils in Shepway