

Mr Richard Carr
Chief Executive
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire
SG17 5TQ

22 October 2019

Dear Mr Carr,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE: WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

I am writing to inform you that the Commission has, today, opened its consultation inviting proposals for a new pattern of electoral wards for Central Bedfordshire.

The Commission is minded to recommend that 63 councillors should be elected to Central Bedfordshire Council in future. The Commission now invites proposals from the council, interested parties and members of the public on a pattern of electoral wards to accommodate those councillors.

Publicising the review

I would be grateful if you could bring the consultation to the attention of elected members. Furthermore, a copy of the Commission's press release and posters advertising this stage of the review are being sent to your Council. It would be much appreciated if you could publicise the consultation by arranging for copies to be placed 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. We would appreciate it if you could promote the consultation online, via social media and any other channels you would normally use to engage residents.

Further details about the review are available on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk, where there is information about how to get involved and the kind of evidence the Commission is seeking in support of any proposed ward patterns.

In addition, the Commission's consultation portal allows visitors to interact with online maps of the current electoral wards, draw their own boundaries and feed views into the consultation process directly. The portal is available at <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>.

Submissions can also be made by email to reviews@lgbce.org.uk and by post to the address at the end of this letter.

Review timetable

This phase of consultation closes on **13 January 2020**.

Once the Commission has considered all the proposals received during this phase of consultation, it plans to publish draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements in March 2020. Public consultation on the draft recommendations is scheduled to take place between March 2020 and June 2020. Once the Commission has considered the representations and evidence as part of that consultation, it intends to publish final recommendations in August 2020.

New electoral arrangements for the council are scheduled to come into effect at the 'all out' council elections in 2023.

Creating a pattern of wards

In drawing up a pattern of electoral wards, the Commission must balance its three statutory criteria, 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 test proposals against the criteria before drawing up draft recommendations. Accordingly, all proposals should demonstrate how they meet the three requirements. The Commission will take decisions based on the strength of the evidence presented to it and not merely on assertion. For example, details of community interests such as the location and use made of local facilities, services and local organisations demonstrating how a community manifests itself, will carry greater weight than submissions that simply assert that an area has a community identity.

The Commission will consider all submissions on their merit. A well-evidenced submission from an individual which addresses the three statutory criteria will be more persuasive than one which does not, even if the latter is from an elected individual or body.

Further information on drawing up a pattern of electoral wards 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-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 of councils, where you can see how the Commission came to its conclusions and how other counties, districts and parishes built their own pattern of wards.

Please feel free to contact us at any time should you have any questions. Officers at the Commission will be happy to assist with technical aspects of your ward scheme either in person or via email or telephone.

Correspondence and enquiries

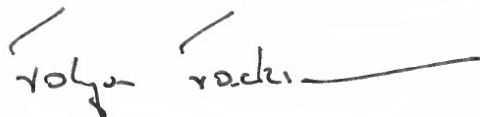
Correspondence relating to this review should be addressed to:

Review Officer (Central Bedfordshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
1st Floor, Windsor House,
50 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0TL

or direct to your main contacts at the Commission who will be:

- Jonathan Ashby, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review
- Richard Buck, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews

Yours sincerely



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