

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Ian Thompson
Chief Executive
Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Riverside
Stafford
ST16 3AQ

22 October 2013

Dear Mr Thompson

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF STAFFORD

Following my letter of 23 July 2013, I am writing to formally announce the next stage of the electoral review of Stafford Borough Council.

Following a public consultation on council size, the Commission considered representations for a council size of 40 members at its meeting on 8 October 2013. No substantial arguments were received in opposition to the proposal for 40 members during the public consultation. The Commission has therefore adopted a council size of 40 for Stafford Borough 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 Stafford. Proposals should be based on a council size of 40 councillors. This stage of the review will run from 22 October 2013 to 7 January 2014

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 April 2014.

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 September 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.

Understanding Stafford'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 Stafford. 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.

Creating a warding pattern

All proposals for warding patterns 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 Stafford, electoral figures and guidance on how to propose a pattern of wards are available in the consultation area <http://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

All correspondence relating to this review should be addressed to:

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

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

- Mark Pascoe, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review
email: mark.pascoe@lgbce.org.uk; tel: 020 7644 8531;
- Tim Bowden, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews
email: tim.bowden@lgbce.org.uk; tel: 020 7644 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 Staffordshire County Council
 MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in Stafford
 Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire
 Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
 Stafford & Surrounds Clinical Commissioning Group
 Parish and town councils in Stafford

