

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

27 October 2009

Dear Mr Carr,

Electoral review of Central Bedfordshire

Further to my letter to Edwina Grant of 2 October and the meeting between representatives of your Council and the Committee on 8 October, I am writing to inform you of the Committee's conclusions on the council size for Central Bedfordshire Council and the next stages of the electoral review.

The Committee was very grateful for the opportunity to meet with your members and officers to discuss its concerns over your Council's initial submission on council size. The Committee's Chair, Max Caller, and Professor Colin Mellors both found the discussion very helpful and the Committee would like to extend its appreciation for the meaningful and productive dialogue with your Council.

The Committee considered the appropriate council size for Central Bedfordshire at its meeting on 20 October. On the basis of the information provided by your Council, the Committee is minded to adopt a council size of 59 members.

The Committee noted your Council's proposal for a council size of 60 members. However, it was of the view that the rationale set out in the Council's original submission and subsequently in Councillor Peter Rawcliffe's letter of 14 October pointed towards a council size of 59. The Committee is therefore of the view that this number of elected members will enable the authority to discharge its functions and therefore provide for effective and convenient local government for Central Bedfordshire.

The Boundary Committee
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I should stress that the Committee's conclusions may be subject to change depending on the evidence received during the next consultation period. The decision, at this stage, provides a context within which local stakeholders can submit their views on the wider electoral arrangements for the authority. During the review, the Committee may consider that the council size requires slight adjustment to provide for warding patterns that better reflect electoral equality and community identity.

Next steps

The procedures which the Committee will be following in conducting the review are set out in its guidance, *Electoral reviews: what they are and how you can get involved*, copies of which were sent to your Council at the start of the review. I would ask you to make copies of the guidance available for inspection at your main offices. Further copies of the guidance are available on request.

A more detailed technical guidance document *Electoral reviews: technical guidance* is available on our website, at (http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/48546/Tech-Guidance-final_28191-20728__E__.pdf). This document contains all the statutory information about the review process. Please note that this document is not available in hard copy.

Your Council is invited to submit representations on the new ward arrangements no later than **11 January 2010**.

Advertising the review

A copy of the Committee's press release is enclosed and posters about the review have also been sent to your Council. We will also be sending posters to parish and town councils and the MPs with constituencies in the area. It would be much appreciated if you could publicise the start of consultation by placing copies of the poster on display, and by taking such other steps you consider appropriate to bring the review to the attention of the public and other interested parties.

Review timetable

During this consultation period, the Committee is inviting representations on

warding arrangements, before preparing draft recommendations. It is intended that the draft recommendations will be published in the Spring of 2010. The draft recommendations will be made available on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk, with hard copies of the report and CD-ROMs available on request. There will be a ten-week period of consultation on the draft recommendations before the Committee considers all representations received and formulates its final recommendations. We expect to publish the final recommendations in the autumn of 2010.

The Boundary Committee takes the consultation periods in the review very seriously; because the Committee may move away from its draft recommendations as a result of consultation, it is particularly important that everyone is encouraged to express their views on the draft recommendations, whether or not they agree with what has been proposed.

The Boundary Committee makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, representations will be made available on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A copy of all representations will also be placed on deposit at the Committee's London office. We will also supply your Council with copies of all representations. Please make these available for public inspection together with any representations your Council might make.

Creating a warding pattern

The Committee 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.

Proposals 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 Committee than those which merely assert a point of view.

Correspondence and enquiries

All correspondence relating to this review should be addressed to:

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The Review Officer (Central Bedfordshire)
The Boundary Committee for England
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or direct to your main contacts at the Committee who will be:

- Arion Lawrence, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review.
email: alawrence@boundarycommittee.org.uk; Tel: 020 7271 0674;
- Richard Buck, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews
email: rbuck@boundarycommittee.org.uk; Tel: 020 7271 0695.

I am writing on similar terms to the organisations and individuals listed below, and all those who submitted representations on council size during the first stage of the review.

Yours sincerely



Archie Gall
Director

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cc MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in Central Bedfordshire
 Headquarters of the main political parties
 Bedfordshire Police Authority
 Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service
 Bedfordshire PCT
 Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
 Parish and town councils in Central Bedfordshire