

George Garlick  
Chief Executive  
County Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UL

17 March 2009

Dear Mr Garlick,

### **Electoral review for the new County Durham Unitary Authority**

The purpose of this letter is to formally announce the start of the first consultation stage for division patterns of the electoral review of the new County Durham Unitary Authority.

As stated in my letter to you dated 4 March 2009, the Committee has consulted on the proposed council size for the new council and is minded that it should have 126 elected members. Consequently, proposals for division arrangements should be based on this council size.

The procedures which the Boundary Committee will be following in conducting the review are set out in Committee's 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 the Boundary Committee's website ([http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/48546/Tech-Guidance-final\\_28191-20728\\_\\_E\\_\\_.pdf](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 and various templates and spreadsheets. Please note that this document is not available in hard copy.

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Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW

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Your council is invited to submit representations, which should have regard to the appropriate paragraphs of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992. The Committee requests that any views the council may have on the new division arrangements should be submitted no later than **8 June 2009**.

### **Advertising the review**

An advance copy of the Committee's press release is enclosed and posters about the review will be sent to your Council. We will also be sending posters to all parish and town councils in the county. It would be much appreciated if you could publicise the start of the review 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**

As mentioned above, the Committee has already consulted on council size prior to the four-stage process set out in section 15 of the Local Government Act 1992, and which is outlined in *Electoral reviews: what they are and how you can get involved* (A copy of which is enclosed with this letter). Council size is the starting point of the review as it is the basis of the councillor:elector ratio which determines the appropriate level of electoral equality. In addition to your council, we are now writing to the district and borough councils in County Durham, to those organisations and individuals listed at the end of this letter, and to all those who submitted representations during consultation on council size, to announce the Committee's decision on council size and ask for representations on electoral arrangements.

During this consultation period, the Committee will invite representations on division arrangements and consequently prepare its draft recommendations. It is intended that the draft recommendations will be published in towards the end of summer. The draft recommendations will be made available on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk) with hard copies of the report and CD ROMs available on request. There will be a **twelve-week** period of consultation on the draft recommendations before the Boundary Committee considers all representations received, formulates its final recommendations and submits them to the Electoral Commission. We expect to submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission in early 2010

Attention is drawn to the provisions of section 15(3)(a) of the 1992 Act, under which the Committee is required to take into account only those representations received during consultation periods. The Boundary Committee takes the consultation periods in its reviews very seriously; because it may move away from its draft recommendations as a result of consultation, it is particularly important that all local interests are encouraged to express their views on the Committee's draft recommendations, whether or not they agree with what the Committee has 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 the Committee's website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). A copy of all representations will also be placed on deposit at the Committee's London office and the Electoral Commission's North of England office. The Committee will supply your Council with copies of all representations. Please make these available for public inspection together with your Council's own representations.

### **Correspondence and Enquiries**

All correspondence relating to this review should be addressed to:

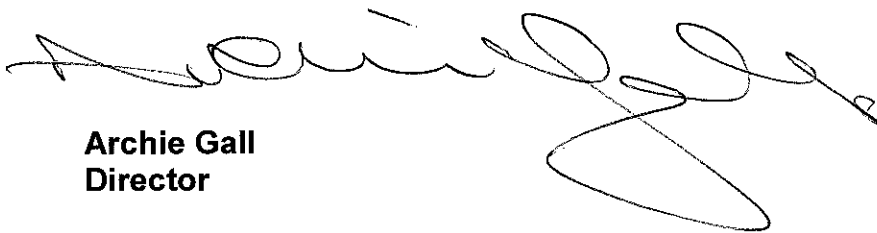
The Review Officer (County Durham)  
Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London  
SW1P 2HW

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

- Jessica Metheringham, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review.  
Email: [jmetheringham@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:jmetheringham@electoralcommission.org.uk); Tel: 020 7271 0722;
- Richard Buck, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews.  
Email: [rbuck@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:rbuck@electoralcommission.org.uk); Tel: 020 7271 0695.

I am writing on similar terms to the organisations and individuals listed below.

Yours sincerely



**Archie Gall**  
**Director**

Copies:

District and Borough councils in County Durham  
MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in the area of the proposed new Unitary Authority  
Headquarters of the main political parties  
Local Government Association  
National Association of Local Councils  
County Durham Association of Local Councils  
Parish councils in County Durham

