

Mr Nick Carter
Chief Executive
West Berkshire Council
Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

13 June 2017

Dear Mr Carter,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WEST BERKSHIRE: FURTHER WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

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

As you know, in response to correspondence received at the previous stage of consultation, we decided to re-examine the electorate forecast figures provided by the Council. The Commission relies on 5 year forecasts so that our proposals reflect future development and not just the existing electorate. It is important that we are satisfied with these figures. The Commission has worked alongside West Berkshire Council to produce revised forecast figures for 2023. We are grateful to your officers for their efforts in providing the revised figures. We believe that these updated figures are more likely to reflect the electorate 2023. Because these figures are, in some areas, significantly different to those we originally published in January 2017, we are now conducting an additional month-long consultation on warding patterns.

We are writing to everybody who we wrote to previously as well as those who submitted proposals to, offering the opportunity to submit new or amended proposals for future ward boundaries based on the new figures. When drawing up our draft recommendations we will consider all the submissions we received at the previous stage of consultation and those received in this new consultation.

The Commission continues to recommend that 42 councillors should be elected to West Berkshire 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.

The consultation begins today and will end on 10 July 2017.

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 **10 July 2017**.

Once the Commission has considered all the proposals received during this and the previous phase of the consultation, it plans to publish draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements in August 2017. Public consultation on the draft recommendations is scheduled to take place between August 2017 and November 2017. Once the Commission has considered the representations and evidence as part of that consultation, it intends to publish final recommendations in January 2018.

New electoral arrangements for the West Berkshire are scheduled to come into effect at the council elections in 2019.

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 West Berkshire.
- 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 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://www.lgbce.org.uk/policy-and-publications/guidance>. We also publish a practical guide for putting forward submissions called *How to propose a pattern of wards* which is available at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/25694/Proposing-new-wards-guidance-2015-08-04.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 (West Berkshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower,
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

or direct to your main contacts at the Commission who are:

- Mishka Mayers, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review
- Alison Evison, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews

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

Yours sincerely



Jolyon Jackson CBE

Chief Executive

Reviews@lgbce.org.uk

0330 500 1525

- cc
- MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in West Berkshire
 - Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley
 - North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group, South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group, Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group and Newbury & District Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Parish and Town Councils in West Berkshire
 - Local Organisations in West Berkshire