

Duncan Sharkey
duncan.sharkey@somerset.gov.uk

25 November 2025

Dear Duncan Sharkey

Electoral Review of Somerset Council: Draft Recommendations

In October last year, the Commission agreed that the Somerset electoral review should be carried out on the basis of providing for a uniform pattern of single-member divisions. This decision was based on our incorrect interpretation of Somerset Council's stated preference for predominantly single-member divisions, which we understood to be a formal request for a uniform pattern of single-member divisions under the legislation that guides our review process. However, during consultation, it was clarified that no formal request had been made by the Council.

A formal request carries greater weight in our considerations than a general preference for single-member divisions. It requires us to deliver a uniform pattern, except where persuasive evidence demonstrates it would be incompatible with our three statutory criteria. As a result, stakeholders may have been discouraged from proposing multi-member divisions, believing such proposals would not be given due consideration.

It is important that anyone wishing to make a submission understands the basis on which the review is being conducted. Therefore, to ensure all stakeholders have a fair opportunity to contribute, the Commission has decided to reopen the consultation on the draft recommendations. Any submissions previously made will still be considered and do not need to be re-submitted.

This consultation will run from 25 November 2025 to 14 January 2026. We will write to all those who we contacted at the start of the consultation, as well as all those who have made submissions to us during the review. Once we have considered all responses to the consultation, we aim to publish final recommendations in March 2026.

Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements are scheduled to come into effect at the authority's elections in **May 2027**.

Our proposals aim to balance the statutory criteria we must follow:

- Ensuring each councillor represents a similar number of electors
- Creating boundaries that reflect community identities and ties
- Delivering reviews informed by local needs and views

You can explore the draft recommendations and submit comments via our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>. The interactive pages allow users to view maps in detail and provide feedback.

Comments can also be submitted:

- **By email:** reviews@lgbce.org.uk
- **By post:** Review Officer (Somerset), LGBCE, 7th Floor, 3 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8YZ

Further information about the review process is available at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk>.

We will write to you again when we publish our final recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ailsa Irvine', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Ailsa Irvine

Chief Executive

ailsa.irvine@lgbce.org.uk

0330 500 1291