

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Mr Richard Sheard
Chief Executive
South Hams District Council
Follaton House
Plymouth Road
Totnes
Devon
TQ9 5NE



26 March 2013

Dear Mr Sheard,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SOUTH HAMS

Following my letter of 8 January 2013, I am writing to formally announce the next stage of the electoral review of South Hams District Council.

Following a public consultation, the Commission considered the representations received on its proposal for a council size of 30 members at its meeting on 12 March 2013. The Commission did not consider the arguments against such a council size to be persuasive and decided that sufficient evidence had been received from the Council at the preliminary stage to support a council size of 30. The Commission has therefore adopted a council size of 30 for South Hams District Council for the purpose of the 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 warding arrangements for South Hams District Council. Proposals should be based on a council size of 30 councillors. This stage of the review will run from 26 March 2013 to 4 June 2013.

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 this stage 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 August 2013.

The draft recommendations will be available on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk, be sent to your Council, to those organisations and

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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 February 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. Hard copies are also being sent to your council.

Understanding South Hams' 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 South Hams. 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. For example –

- Economic/demographic data and mapping
- Community village usage mapping
- Local place surveys
- Partner/stakeholder details

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 such as 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 South Hams, electoral figures and guidance on how to propose a pattern of wards are available in the consultation area 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 (South Hams)
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:

- Simon Keal, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review
email: simon.keal@lgbce.org.uk; tel: 020 7644 8529;
- Danny Edwards, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews
email: daniel.edwards@lgbce.org.uk; tel: 020 7644 8536.

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

Yours sincerely

Archie Gall
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020 7664 8509

cc MPs and MEPs with constituency interests in South Hams
Headquarters of the main political parties

Devon Police and Crime Commissioner
Devon Strategic Health Authority
Devon Fire and Rescue Service
Parish councils, town councils and other local organisations in South
Hams