

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Cllr Andrew J Eade
Leader of the Council
Telford and Wrekin Council
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Crudgington
TELFORD
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14 December 2010

Dear Councillor Eade

Local Government Boundary Commission for England: future review programme

As you maybe aware, the new Local Government Boundary Commission for England was established in April 2010. Our key roles are to conduct electoral and structural reviews of local government in England, as well as reviewing the external boundaries of local authorities (known as principal area boundary reviews or PABRs).

As a new organisation, we have taken the opportunity to undertake a review of our policies and procedures and are currently consulting on our general approaches to both electoral reviews and PABRs. You may already have heard of our consultation or seen the consultation papers, but the documents maybe accessed via the following web link:

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/major-consultation-of-english-local-authorities>

My reason for writing to you at this time is twofold. First, to invite you to respond to the consultations. It is important that we receive the views of the local government community on our intended approach to reviews. Secondly, we would like to gauge your authority's interest in the Commission undertaking an electoral review or PABR of your authority. Given the nature of our work, we need to plan our work programme for the coming years very carefully. We need to balance both the need to review authorities where electoral inequality between wards is high, against any requests from authorities that we commence reviews for other reasons.

Generally, we conduct electoral reviews where electoral imbalances across wards have grown since the last periodic electoral review process took place across England between 1996 and 2004. I understand from the May 2010 electoral figures that you may have high levels of electoral inequality, with either 30% of wards more than 10% from the average or one ward over 30% from the average.

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Many local authorities are considering innovative ways of maintaining high quality services at a time of reduced funding. The LGBCE has unique powers to assist councils in achieving some of those aims such as correcting minor boundary anomalies that can hinder effective service delivery to whole council mergers and altering the number of councillors representing the council. Clearly, this approach will not be right for every authority, but the Commission would be interested to hear from authorities who are considering these kinds of options. Further to this, it is important that we have an early indication of the likely demand for reviews in order that we can balance our work priorities accordingly.

I appreciate that the current economic situation in local government is difficult and that your Council's immediate priorities may lie elsewhere. However, it is clear that a number of councils across England are of the view that an electoral review or principal area boundary review can help, in the medium to long term, to make the necessary savings that councils up and down the country will be required to make over the coming years.

Furthermore, the Commission remains committed to reviewing those authorities where electoral imbalances have grown significantly in recent years. While potentially diversifying the types of reviews we may undertake, the need to provide fair and democratic electoral arrangements remains our priority. We would therefore welcome the information requested at your earliest opportunity in order that we can prioritise review areas effectively.

Any correspondence should be sent to the following address:

Consultation Response
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Tummill Street
London
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Should you have any questions on this or the wider work of the Commission please do not hesitate to contact Archie Gall (Director of Reviews) at archiegall@lgbce.org.uk (Tel: 020 7664 8509)

Yours sincerely,



Max Caller CBE

Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Copied to: Mr Victor Brownlees, Chief Executive & Director of Children's Services