

News Release

Embargoed until 00:01, 9 December 2014

Have your say on county council boundaries across Kent

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England is asking local people for their help to draw up a new pattern of electoral divisions for Kent County Council.

The consultation is the first part of an electoral review which will re-draw division boundaries across the whole county.

The Commission has also announced that it is minded to recommend that the county council should have 81 county councillors in the future: three fewer than the current arrangement.

The Commission now needs information from people and groups across Kent to help it to produce a new pattern of electoral divisions to accommodate 81 county councillors.

In drawing up new boundaries, the Commission aims to deliver electoral equality for voters in council elections so that each county councillor represents roughly the same number of voters. The review also aims to ensure that the new council divisions reflect, as far as possible, the interests and identities of communities across Kent.

Max Caller, Chair of the Commission, said: "We are asking local people and organisations to help us draw up new electoral divisions for Kent. As we develop the recommendations, we will take into account local community identities as well as ensuring electoral equality for voters.

"If you have a view about which communities, parishes or neighbourhoods should be part of the same county division, then we want to hear from you. And if you think a road, river or railway makes for a strong boundary between communities in your part of Kent, then this consultation is for you. Alternatively, if you're simply interested in the way the county is run, just log on to our website to explore our interactive maps and have your say.

"Your views will make a difference.

"We will carefully consider all evidence that is provided during this phase of the review whoever it is from and whether it applies to the whole of Kent or just a small part of the county.

"Residents will then have a further chance to have their say after we publish our draft recommendations in May 2015."

Local people have until **2 March 2015** to submit their views. Further information on the review and interactive maps of the existing divisions can be found at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk and www.lgbce.org.uk.

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Notes to editors:

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for reviewing local authority electoral arrangements, defining boundaries for local elections and the number of councillors to be elected, as well as conducting reviews of local government external boundaries and structures.
2. The aim of an electoral review is to provide for 'electoral equality'; that means each county councillor representing approximately the same number of electors. The Commission must also have regard to community identity and interests and providing effective and convenient local government.
3. The types of questions the Commission is asking residents at this stage are:
 - Do you have suggestions about where your electoral division boundaries should be?
 - Which areas do you identify as your local community?
 - Where do people in your area go to access local facilities such as shops and leisure activities?
4. Residents have from 9 December 2014 to 2 March 2015 to have their say about where division boundaries for Kent's 81 county councillors should be drawn. The Commission will then publish its draft recommendations in May 2015 and open a further phase of consultation with local people. New electoral divisions are scheduled to come into effect at the 2017 county elections.
5. The Commission has announced that it is 'minded' to recommend 81 county councillors for Kent but is not legally bound by that number in its final recommendations if a different number of county councillors would deliver a better pattern of divisions.
6. The electoral review will only consider the electoral division boundaries of Kent County Council. It will not make any changes to district council wards or the external boundaries of districts in the county.
7. Members of the public can have their say on the new electoral arrangements by writing to:
The Review Officer (Kent)
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk
Follow the Commission on Twitter: [@LGBCE](https://twitter.com/LGBCE)
Go directly to the Commission's consultation portal at: www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk
Find out more on our website at: www.lgbce.org.uk
For further information contact the Commission's press office on: 0207 664 8530/8534 or email: press@lgbce.org.uk