



Taking part in the

Electoral review of West Suffolk Council

A guide for councillors



A message from Professor Colin Mellors: Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

This briefing tells you all you need to know about the electoral review of your council. It tells you what an electoral review is, why we are conducting it and how you can influence the outcome.

The electoral review is an opportunity for you to shape your council for the future. When we come to consider boundaries, we will aim to build electoral wards that reflect communities and lock in electoral fairness for future elections.

The outcome of the review is not pre-determined. The Commission will only take decisions after giving careful consideration to the evidence provided by you, your council and local communities throughout the process.

Your local knowledge will be valuable in helping us come to our conclusions. The best electoral reviews are those where councillors engage with the process. The Commission will take decisions on the strength of evidence provided during the review after we have assessed all submissions against our statutory criteria. It doesn't matter whether evidence comes from the council, council groups or individual councillors, we have an open mind about which proposals we will put forward as formal recommendations.

The electoral arrangements of your council will change. Our experience of electoral reviews clearly shows that changing boundaries in one part of your area will inevitably have an impact on other areas. Most wards are likely to experience a change to one or more of their boundaries, name or number of councillors representing them. We will look to you to influence the nature of those changes.

We will make it as easy as possible for you to influence the process. We will hold a public consultation before we finalise the recommendations of the review. We encourage you to engage with your communities about the review so we can get the broadest possible spread of evidence.

I hope you find this briefing helpful.

Professor Colin Mellors

Electoral review timetable

The timetable for your electoral review is set out below. Timescales occasionally change during the review but you can keep up to date with developments by looking at the dedicated page for your review on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

| Stage of review | Date/duration | Description | Note | Outputs |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|--|
| Preliminary stage | January – May 2018 | <p>Commission gathers information about the council e.g. electorate forecasts and briefs group leaders, the full council and parishes/community groups on the process.</p> <p>Council size submitted to MHCLG, and to the Commission for comment</p> <p>Order made to confirm the creation of the new West Suffolk authority</p> | <p>This is the council's opportunity to put forward its view on future council size: the total number of councillors to be elected to the council.</p> <p>We will also work with council staff to build electorate forecasts for the next 5/6 years as required by law.</p> | The Commission will be made aware of the authority's proposed council size. |
| Formulation of draft recommendations | May – June 2018 | Commission puts together a set of draft wards for the new authority area | <p>The Commission will invite ward proposals from the Council based on the agreed council size for the new authority</p> <p>The council size will provide us with an optimum councillor: elector ratio to build wards which deliver electoral fairness.</p> | The Commission receives a council scheme for proposed new wards across the local authority. We use that evidence to help us draw up our draft recommendations. |

| Stage of review | Date/duration | Description | Note | Outputs |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| Draft recommendations consultation | 03 July – 27 August 2018 | Publication of draft recommendations on new wards for the local authority and a public consultation on them. | The Commission will publish full draft proposals for new electoral arrangements: new wards, ward boundaries and ward names for public comment. | <p>We will gather views on our draft proposals where they support the recommendations or whether they propose alternative ward patterns.</p> <p>The Commission will then finalise its recommendations after considering all the evidence received at each stage of the review.</p> |
| Publication of final recommendations | 23 October 2018 | Once the consultation on draft recommendations has concluded, the Commission will consider all the evidence before drawing up its final recommendations for new electoral arrangements. | This stage marks the end of the Commission's direct involvement with your authority on the review. Once we have published final recommendations, we are unable to amend them. | We will produce a draft order – the legal document which will bring into force the final recommendations – in preparation for laying in Parliament. |
| Parliamentary scrutiny | November 2018 | A draft order seeking the implementation of the final recommendation will be laid in both Houses of Parliament under the negative resolution procedure | <p>The draft order will be placed in both Houses of Parliament for 40 days (with possible gaps depending on recesses) for the consideration of members.</p> <p>Parliament can accept or reject the recommendations. It cannot modify them.</p> | Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the Commission will 'make' the order at the end of the 40 days and inform the council that order is now complete so that you can prepare for elections on the new arrangements. |
| Implementation | 2019 | New electoral arrangements: council size, ward boundaries and ward names come into effect at the elections. | Council staff will have prepared electoral registers and other arrangements on the basis of the order e.g. polling districts and polling stations. | New electoral arrangements for your area come into effect. |

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body established by Parliament in April 2010. We are not part of government and are accountable to Parliament through the Speaker's Committee.

Our organisation consists of the Chair of the Commission and five Commissioners who are supported by approximately 22 members of staff.

What is an electoral review?

An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for the whole local authority. These are:

- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council: council size.
- The names, number and boundaries of wards.
- The number of councillors to be elected from each ward.

The review is likely to have implications for the whole local authority not just areas with high levels of electoral inequality.

Why West Suffolk?

Electoral reviews look at whether the boundaries of wards or divisions within a local authority need to be altered. We might conduct these reviews either to ensure fairer representation at local government elections after any significant changes in the distribution of electors, or at the request of a local authority for other reasons.

The creation of the new West Suffolk authority necessitates the creation of a new pattern of wards.

The Commission will also seek to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections.

A full table of current wards and their variances is appended to this briefing.

Warding patterns – draft recommendations

Key dates:

Draft recommendations - public consultation

03 July 2018 – 27 August 2018

We will use the Council's proposed warding pattern to help us draw up draft recommendations for new boundaries across your area and we will hold a phase of public consultation on them.

The Commission will draw up new electoral arrangements that provide the best balance of our statutory criteria. The criteria include three main elements:

Statutory criteria

- **Delivering electoral equality for local voters** – this means ensuring that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters so that the value of your vote is the same regardless of where you live in the local authority area.
- **Interests and identities of local communities** – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, avoid splitting local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.
- **Effective and convenient local government** – this means ensuring that the wards can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole, including both the council size decision and warding arrangements, allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively.

You should ensure that any proposal you make to the Commission takes into account the statutory criteria. The most persuasive cases are those that are also supported by evidence. Over the next five pages, you will find further explanation about the types of evidence the Commission usually receives under each of the criteria. This might help you build your own submission.

Delivering electoral equality for local voters

The Commission aims to deliver a pattern of wards where each councillor represents approximately the same number of electors.

We base decisions on the number of electors in a ward and not the total population. The Commission's obligation, set out in law, is to deliver electoral equality where councillors represent a similar number of electors. This could not be achieved if we considered population statistics rather than electoral register totals.

Once the Commission has taken a view on council size, it gives us, and anyone interested in submitting proposals to the review, a clear idea of the target for achieving electoral equality for future patterns of wards.

Although we strive for perfect electoral equality for all wards, we recognise that this is unlikely to be exactly achieved. If you propose a boundary that would lead to an electoral variance for the ward (see exhibit 1), the Commission will need to see evidence that such electoral inequality is justified on the grounds of the Commission's other statutory criteria. The higher the level of electoral variance you are proposing for a ward, the more persuasive your evidence will need to be.

The Commission has an obligation, set out in law, to consider electorate forecasts five years after the completion of the review. The purpose of the forecasts is to try and ensure that the review delivers electoral equality for voters in the longer term. We will work with council officers to draw up realistic forecasts for your authority.

Exhibit 1, over the page, shows how the Commission calculates and presents electoral variances in its reports.

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2017) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2023) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Awre | 2 | 3,917 | 1,959 | 11% | 4,125 | 2,062 | 7% |
| 2 Berry Hill | 2 | 3,749 | 1,875 | 6% | 3,898 | 1,949 | 1% |
| 3 Bream | 2 | 3,711 | 1,856 | 5% | 3,935 | 1,967 | 2% |
| 4 Cinderford East | 2 | 3,462 | 1,731 | -2% | 3,548 | 1,774 | -8% |
| 5 Cinderford West | 2 | 3,192 | 1,596 | -9% | 3,667 | 1,834 | -5% |
| 6 Coleford | 3 | 5,772 | 1,924 | 9% | 6,219 | 2,073 | 7% |
| 7 Dymock | 1 | 1,650 | 1,650 | -6% | 1,736 | 1,736 | -10% |
| 8 Hartpury & Redmarley | 2 | 3,507 | 1,754 | 0% | 3,658 | 1,829 | -5% |
| 9 Longhope & Huntley | 2 | 3,226 | 1,613 | -8% | 3,476 | 1,738 | -10% |
| 10 Lydbrook | 1 | 1,778 | 1,778 | 1% | 1,898 | 1,898 | -2% |
| 11 Lydney East | 3 | 4,003 | 1,334 | -24% | 6,099 | 2,033 | 5% |
| 12 Lydney North | 1 | 1,732 | 1,732 | -2% | 1,789 | 1,789 | -8% |

Exhibit 1: shows an extract from our draft recommendations report for new electoral arrangements for Forest of Dean District Council.

You can see from the table how the Commission calculates electoral variances for each proposed ward based on the current electorate and forecast electorate.

You can read the full report, which includes the complete table of wards at: http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/34607/Forest-of-Dean-Draft-Recommendations.pdf

Interests and identities of local communities

Unlike electoral equality, it isn't possible to measure levels of community identity so we will be looking for evidence on a range of issues to support your reasoning. The best evidence for community identity is normally a combination of factual information such as the existence of communication links, facilities and organisations along with an explanation of how local people use those facilities.

Below are some issues that we often use to assess community interests and identity. You may wish to use some of these examples to tell us why you are putting forward your view:

Transport links – Are there good communication links within the proposed ward? Is there any form of public transport? If you are proposing that two areas (e.g. streets, estates or parishes) should be included in the same ward together, how easily can you travel between them?

Shared interests – Are there particular issues that affect your community which aren't necessarily relevant to neighbouring areas that might help us determine where a ward boundary should be drawn? For example, many local authorities contain areas which have urban, suburban and rural characteristics. Each of those areas may have different needs and interests though they could be located next to each other. One area might be more affected by urban issues such as the local economy while an adjacent area might be more concerned with local transport matters. We would like to hear evidence about what those issues are and how they mean boundaries should combine or separate the areas in question.

Community groups – Is there a residents' group or any other local organisation that represents the area? What area does that group cover? What kind of activities do they undertake and are there any joint-working relationships between organisations that could indicate shared community interests between different geographical areas?

Facilities – Where do local people in your area go for shopping, medical services, leisure facilities etc? The location of public facilities can represent the centre or focal point of a community as do some service arrangements such as NHS commissioning groups. We would like to hear evidence from local people about how they interact with those facilities so that we can understand the shape of local communities and the movement and behaviours of their residents.

Identifiable boundaries – Natural features such as rivers can often provide strong and recognisable boundaries. Similarly, constructions such as major roads, railway lines or commercial developments can also form well known and effective barriers between communities.

Parishes - In areas where parishes exist, the parish boundaries often represent the extent of a community. In fact, the Commission often uses

parishes as the building blocks of wards. Parishes which share a secretariat or other arrangements often fit together well in the same ward.

These are issues you may wish to consider when proposing a pattern of wards or if you are commenting on the Commission's proposals. It is not – and is not intended to be – an exhaustive list of matters the Commission will consider when coming to a conclusion on wards and their boundaries. Similarly, the Commission attaches no specific weighting to any of the issues above when taking decisions. This guide simply intends to provide some prompts for you to be able to have your say.

There are also a number of things the Commission does **not** consider to be strong evidence when it takes decisions. For example, an area's history and tradition may be the basis of a sense of community identity. However, communities change over time and perceptions can vary between individuals as to the nature of those ties. The Commission would need to hear how and why those traditional arrangements reflect communities **now**.

In addition, whilst social and economic data (e.g. from the census or other statistical sources) can tell you a lot about individuals living in an area, it doesn't necessarily explain the nature of communities and is often a poor guide to their interests and identities. The Commission considers that this kind of evidence can provide useful background information for an area but we will treat it with caution when proposing new wards.

Effective and convenient local government

We also consider whether a ward pattern would help deliver effective and convenient local government to people. If you are providing evidence to the Commission, there are a number of issues you might want to consider so that our recommendations can help us meet this obligation.

Size of ward – we will look at the geographic size of the ward and try to ensure that it is not so large that it would be difficult for a councillor to represent. Similarly, in urban areas, a ward might be so small in area that its councillor might not be able to contribute effectively to the wider business of the council.

Ward names - councils and their communities are usually able to suggest appropriate names for wards that reflect community identities and mean something to local people. In determining names for wards, we aim to avoid causing confusion amongst local electors and ensure that names are distinct and easily identifiable. For example, our preference is for names that are short rather than those which attempt to describe an area exhaustively.

Internal access – recommendations for ward boundaries will normally provide for people to move between all parts of the ward without having to venture outside of the ward. This normally means vehicular access by road. However, there may be occasions when parts of a community are linked not by vehicular routes but by footpaths, footways, pedestrianised streets etc. These will be more likely to be acceptable in densely populated residential areas of towns or cities.

Barriers – transport links such as roads and railway lines can unite communities or serve to divide them. For example, a parade of shops can act as the focal point for an area but a main road can signify the ward between communities. The Commission will aim to reflect these differences in its recommendations.

‘Doughnut’ wards – we occasionally receive proposals for a pattern of wards which propose an ‘inner’ ward and an ‘outer’ ward for a settlement. We will not normally recommend this kind of pattern because the communication links between the north and south of the outer ward are usually poor and we also often find that people in the northern part of the outer ward share higher levels of community identity with residents in the north of the inner ward than with residents in the south of the outer ward. Where we need to divide a settlement or an estate to achieve electoral equality, we will usually seek an alternative to this pattern.

Detached wards – the Commission is sometimes presented with proposals to include two geographically separate areas in the same ward. We will not usually accept a proposal of this kind, except in extraordinary geographical circumstances such as for offshore islands, as it is unlikely to meet our criteria for promoting community identity and interests or delivering effective and convenient local government.

Number of councillors for each ward

There is no limit, in law, to the number of councillors that can be elected to represent a ward. However, as a matter of policy, the Commission will not accept a proposal for more than three councillors to represent a ward as we do not think such an arrangement would promote effective and convenient local government or local accountability.

For councils that hold whole-council elections every four years, the Commission is able to propose any pattern of wards that it believes best meets its statutory criteria. This is usually a mixture of single-, two- and three-member wards.

Councils that elect by whole-council election are able formally to request a single-member ward review. Such a request must be made to the Commission before the start of the Stage One consultation (see page 3). In a single-member ward review, the Commission will have a presumption in favour of a uniform pattern of single-member wards for the whole local authority.

How to have your say

An electoral review is a consultative process. You, and your community, can influence the outcome. We have an open mind about adopting proposals from groups or individuals that are supported by evidence and complement the statutory criteria.

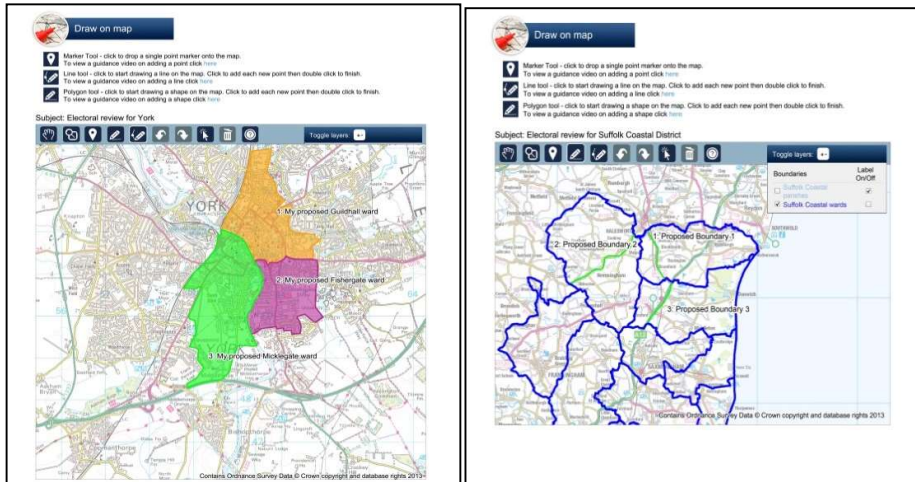
We encourage councillors to take part in the consultation on the draft recommendations, as individuals or as groups, and we hope that elected members can also encourage communities to take part in consultation.

We are only able to consider evidence that is made to us in writing as all decisions are taken by formal meetings of the whole Commission. The best evidence includes the reasons why you agree with our proposals or why you disagree with them. If you do not think our proposals are right for your area, we would welcome alternative suggestions for boundaries that meet our criteria.

There are several ways in which you can keep up to date with the progress of the review and to have your say:

Website: you can keep track of the electoral review for your area through our website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/>. We set up a dedicated web page for each review where you will find details of its timetable, our reports, maps, proposals and guidance. You can comment on our proposals directly through our website or by emailing: reviews@lgbce.org.uk. And you can write to us at the address shown on the contacts page (see page 25). We also publish all the submissions we receive so you can see what kind of evidence we relied on to make our decisions.

Interactive consultation portal: the portal allows you to view and interact with our maps as well as comment on our proposals directly. By logging on to consultation.lgbce.org.uk you will be able to view our proposals down to street level, draw your own pattern of wards or annotate the maps to tell us about the nature of community interests and identities in your area. Over the page, you can see what the site looks like and how you might be able to put forward your views.



Log on to consultation.lgbce.org.uk to find out how you can interact with our mapping

Parishes and/or residents groups: if your area has parish councils, we will offer to hold a briefing meeting locally at the start of an electoral review with representatives of the parishes.

Members of Parliament: the Commission offers to brief all local MPs at each phase of consultation and will keep them updated on the progress of the review.

Lead commissioner: one of our commissioners will be appointed as lead commissioner for the review and will represent the Commission in meetings with the council though all decisions are taken by the Commission collectively. The lead commissioner and key staff will also conduct at least one tour of the local authority area to assess the issues 'on the ground' and areas of contention as we draw up recommendations.

Publicity: we will issue a press release at every stage of an electoral review to local press and media to encourage engagement in the process by local people. We will also ask the council to publicise the review. We will produce posters at each stage to be displayed in council offices, libraries and by local organisations and we will ensure that we produce hard copies of all our reports and maps for display in council buildings and libraries for those who do not have internet access.

Follow us on Twitter [@LGBCE](https://twitter.com/LGBCE).
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/LGBCE/
 Instagram: lgbce

Community groups: at the start of a review, we will ask your local authority for information and contact details for local community groups and organisations that might be interested in the review and who might also wish to contribute to it. We will write to all those groups with information about the review at each stage and invite evidence from them. We will also ensure that we make contact with local organisations that represent minority groups that

might otherwise have been excluded from the consultation process. We will provide translations and accessible versions of our material on request.

Making an effective representation

A persuasive representation to the Commission will usually:

- **Be submitted at the right time.** If you have a view on division boundaries, don't just wait until we have published draft recommendations. Make a submission during the Stage One consultation to ensure we can build in your proposal at the earliest possible stage.
- **Take account of our statutory criteria** (see page 9). The Commission will judge all submissions, and make recommendations, based on those criteria.
- **Consider the consequences of the proposal across the wider area.** Most proposals will have a knock on effect elsewhere in the borough.
- **Be based on evidence.** Tell us *why* your view should be accepted and *how* your suggestion meets the criteria.
- **Suggest an alternative.** If you are objecting to a proposal, tell us where we should draw the boundaries.

Finally, the Commission welcomes submissions that support its recommendations as much as those that propose alternatives. It is very likely that people who oppose our draft recommendations will get in touch with the Commission to put forward their alternative proposals. So, if you support our recommendations, you should make sure you tell us so that we can balance the evidence.

Recent reviews

The Commission's rolling programme of reviews means that many other local authorities have been through the process in recent years. You may find their experiences useful for a number of reasons:

- Find out how councils put their ward patterns together and which proposals the Commission found persuasive.
- Look at the submissions we received from groups and individuals during consultation.

Our website includes dedicated web pages for all previous electoral reviews and you can read all the evidence we received as well as our draft and final recommendations reports.

Some specific examples of previous reviews include:

Redbridge

The Commission carried out a ward review of Redbridge to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections following a request from the council. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 allows local authorities to request the Commission to carry out an electoral review.

Our review aimed to ensure that each Redbridge councillor represented roughly the same number of voters and that ward boundaries reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

You can find all the submissions, reports and maps associated with the review at:

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/greater-london/redbridge>

East Devon

The Commission carried out an electoral review of East Devon to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections. The district had relatively high levels of electoral inequality where some councillors represent significantly more, or fewer, than other member of the council. The situation meant that the value of a person's vote varied depending on where they live in East Devon

Our review aimed to ensure that each East Devon councillor represented roughly the same number of voters and that ward boundaries reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

Read all the papers here:

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-west/devon/east-devon>

Frequently asked questions

What characterises a good electoral review?

The best electoral reviews are those where the council and councillors have engaged with the process at an early stage.

On council size, authorities that have thought seriously about how they want to manage the business of the council and represent local people for the long term, usually put forward strong submissions.

Where local authorities and/or members have put together a ward pattern that meets our statutory criteria and where the proposals are supported by evidence, we tend to be able to draw up recommendations that are largely built on consensus.

Councils that have been able to gain input from local groups and individuals on their proposals usually put forward a strong submission especially where it is supported by evidence.

What don't you consider in an electoral review?

Polling districts, school catchment areas, addresses and postcodes are not matters the Commission will take into account when drawing new ward boundaries. Although some existing wards may have strong boundaries and reflect local communities, we start with a clean sheet of paper when drawing up recommendations.

We take no account of parliamentary constituency boundaries (see below for more details).

Similarly, we do not take into account possible political implications of our recommendations.

Why can't you consider boundaries at the same time as the number of councillors?

The Commission will make a judgment on council size before we consider ward boundaries. This means that everybody who wishes to take part in the consultation will know the optimum number of electors per councillor which we need to achieve to deliver electoral equality in our pattern of wards. If you do not know the total number of councillors who will be elected to the council, it makes it very difficult to come up with a proposal for a ward pattern that will deliver this crucial statutory criterion.

On some occasions, the Commission will alter its view on council size in its draft or final recommendations by one councillor if that number provides for a scheme of wards which better reflects our statutory criteria.

How much will the review cost?

The Commission does not charge local authorities to undertake an electoral review and our funding is agreed by the Speaker's Committee in the House of Commons.

Every review is different and some are more resource intensive than others. For example, a county will require more resources than a small district in terms of the quantity of maps, time spent drawing up recommendations and consultation materials.

Like most other public sector organisations, the Commission is under an obligation to reduce costs. Since 2010, the Commission has reduced its budget in real terms and will make further savings in the coming years.

My ward has the right number of electors already. Will it change?

Changes to wards are usually extensive in every review we conduct. For example, if we propose to change council size in a significant way, it is unlikely that your ward will then contain the optimum councillor: elector ratio. In addition, the knock on effects of changing boundaries in one part of the local authority can have an impact elsewhere which usually leads to substantial changes.

If you wish to retain an existing boundary, you should tell us why such an arrangement complements the statutory criteria.

Will you look at the external boundaries of the council?

No. The electoral review will only consider internal ward boundaries. External boundaries can only be changed through a different type of review: a Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR).

More details on PABRs can be found on our website at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/24930/PABR-Guidance-06052015.pdf

Will parliamentary constituency boundaries be affected?

Reviews of constituency boundaries are the responsibility of the Boundary Commission for England which is a separate body and operates under different legislation. You can find out more about their work on their website at: boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/.

The Commission has no obligation to consider constituency boundaries as we draw up recommendations. As such, there is a possibility that new wards could cross constituency boundaries.

Will parishes be affected?

We have no powers to alter the external boundaries of local parishes. However, if our recommendations propose to divide parishes between wards, we will alter the electoral arrangements of that parish to create parish wards. We can also make changes to the years in which parish council elections take place so that they do so in the same years as borough elections in their associated wards.

More information about possible implications for parishes are set out in our technical guidance:

http://www.lgbce.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/10410/technical-guidance-2014.pdf

Can the council veto your recommendations?

No. We will work consultatively with you throughout the review and seek to build consensus. However, the final recommendations of the review are those of the Commission. After we publish our final recommendations, we will lay a draft order – the legal document that seeks to implement the recommendations – in both Houses of Parliament. It is up to Parliament to approve or reject that draft order before it is implemented.

Will you hold public meetings and/or meet with political groups during the process?

We will always brief a meeting of the full council in the early stages of the review. We will also offer a briefing meeting with local parishes.

During the rest of the review, we will not usually offer to meet any groups or individuals. We try to ensure that everyone has an equal chance of influencing the Commission during consultation and, as such, we do not want to be seen to favour any group by holding meetings to which other interested parties do not have access.

Why don't you consider the population of wards and not just the electorate?

The Commission has a statutory obligation under the *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009* 'to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the council to be elected is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the council'. This means that we can only consider the number of local government electors when we draw up boundaries which will deliver electoral equality.

In what forms do you accept submissions?

The Commission only accepts submissions which are made in writing by hard copy, email or through our website. The Commission takes decisions collectively and will consider every submission received before coming to a conclusion.

You can also use our consultation portal to draw your own boundaries and submit them directly to the Commission. You are strongly advised to include an explanation of why the boundaries you are putting forward are appropriate and complement our statutory criteria.

Submissions to the Commission are rarely persuasive if they are not supported by an explanation of how the proposal meets the Commission's statutory criteria. As such, petitions which simply object to a proposal do not usually constitute strong evidence on which the Commission can base alternative recommendations. In the same way, resolutions of council which do not provide for alternative arrangements that are supported by a rationale will not normally prove to be persuasive.

To what extent do you change your recommendations during the process and as a result of consultation?

Since the establishment of the Commission as a stand-alone body in April 2010, the Commission has made amendments to its draft recommendations in most cases as a result of submission received during consultation. We consider every submission and believe the electoral review process is strongest where local authorities have engaged in it.

How will you involve local people in the review?

We will engage with local press and media at every stage of consultation through press releases and social media. We also publish all relevant information on our website, including every submission we receive. Our online consultation portal allows users of the site to draw their own boundaries and engage in the process in a detailed way.

If your area has parishes, we will engage directly with them through a briefing meeting and via correspondence to alert them to each phase of consultation. Similarly, we have asked the council for their help in identifying local residents groups and organisations so we can write to them with advice and guidance on the review.

We have also asked the council to help us publicise the review by using its own communication channels with residents and local groups and we will provide posters to display in council buildings. We hope elected members can also use their networks to engage communities in the process.

Contacts

The key contacts for the electoral review of West Suffolk Council are:

Emily Starkie – Review Officer
Emily.starkie@lgbce.org.uk
Tel: 0330 500 1280

Alison Evison – Review Manager
alison.evison@lgbce.org.uk
Tel: 0330 500 1270

If you want to send in a submission on the review:

Address:
Review Officer (West Suffolk)
LGBCE
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
London
SW1P 4QP

Send us views directly through the
online consultation portal:
consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Website:
www.lgbce.org.uk

Email:
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Twitter:
[@LGBCE](https://twitter.com/LGBCE)

Further reading:

Our website: www.lgbce.org.uk – here you will be able to find the dedicated web page for your review which will tell you the timetable, representations received and all reports, maps and other information on the review.

Our consultation portal: consultation.lgbce.org.uk – here you can have your say directly at each stage of public consultation. Interactive maps will be available as we prepare new boundaries where you can draw your own wards and send them to us.

Technical guidance:
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/10410/technical-guidance-2014.pdf - is our formal guidance on electoral reviews.