

News Release

Embargoed until 00:01, 26 August 2014

Have your say on new council ward boundaries for Winchester

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England is asking local people for their help to draw up a new pattern of council wards for Winchester City Council.

The consultation is the first part of an electoral review which will re-draw ward boundaries across the Winchester.

The Commission has also announced that it is minded to recommend that the council should have 45 councillors in the future: twelve fewer than the current arrangements.

The Commission now needs information from people and groups across Winchester to help it to produce a new pattern of wards to accommodate 45 councillors.

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

Max Caller, Chair of the Commission, said: "We are asking local people and organisations to help us draw up new wards for Winchester. 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 or neighbourhoods should be part of the same council ward, 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 Winchester, this consultation is for you. Alternatively, if you're simply interested in the way your council 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 Winchester or just a small part of the city.

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

Local people have until 3 November 2014 to submit their views. Further information on the review and interactive maps of the existing wards 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 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 ward 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 26 August to 3 November 2014 to have their say about where ward boundaries for Winchester's 45 councillors should be drawn. The Commission will then publish its draft recommendations in February 2015 and open a further phase of consultation with local people. New wards are scheduled to come into effect at the 2016 council elections.
5. The Commission has announced that it is 'minded' to recommend 45 councillors for Winchester but is not legally bound by that number in its final recommendations if a different number of councillors would deliver a better pattern of wards.
6. For councils, like Winchester, that hold elections in three years out of every four, the Commission has a responsibility, set out in legislation, to devise a pattern of three-member wards across the whole authority. Such a ward pattern means that every elector would have the same opportunity to vote in local elections each time they are held. However, the Commission is able to move away from a uniform pattern of three-member wards – on a ward by ward basis - if it believes an alternative arrangement would better meet its other statutory criteria: to deliver electoral equality for voters, to reflect the interests and identities of local communities and to promote effective and convenient local government.
7. Members of the public can have their say on the new electoral arrangements by writing to:
The Review Officer (Winchester)
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