

For the attention of Romsey Forum

24 January 2017

Dear Sir or Madam,

## ELECTORAL REVIEW OF TEST VALLEY: WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has formally commenced an electoral review of Test Valley. The purpose of this email is to inform you of the review and seek your views on future ward boundaries for the council.

The Commission is carrying out a review to deliver electoral equality for voters across the borough. At present, some borough councillors represent many more, or many fewer, electors than their colleagues elsewhere in the borough. The review aims to correct those imbalances.

### What is an electoral review?

The electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Test Valley Borough Council. It will propose:

- The total number of councillors elected to the council in the future.
- The number of wards.
- The number of councillors representing each ward.
- Ward boundaries.
- Names of wards.

For parishes, the review can recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils i.e. 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. Even in these circumstances, the Commission will not normally recommend any change to the number of councillors to be elected to a parish or town council. The Commission has no power to consider changes to the external boundaries of a parish or the creation of new parishes.

### When?

Today is the start of a ten-week public consultation during which the Commission is inviting proposals for new warding arrangements. The consultation will close on **3 April 2017**. After considering all representations made during this consultation, the Commission intends to publish draft recommendations in June 2017. There will then be a further period of consultation on the draft recommendations. Final recommendations are expected to be published in October 2017. The new electoral arrangements will come into effect at the local elections in 2019.

### How to get involved?

This is a public consultation and we welcome views from individuals and organisations across the borough on where they think new ward patterns should be drawn.

The Commission is minded to recommend that 43 councillors should be elected to Test Valley Borough Council in the future. It is now inviting proposals to help it draw up a pattern of wards to accommodate 43 borough councillors.

In drawing up a pattern of electoral wards, the Commission must balance three criteria, which are set out in law, namely:

- To deliver electoral equality where each borough councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the borough.
- That the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
- That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

We are asking local people and organisations for their views as to the best pattern of wards for the borough which meet the requirements set out above.

The Commission will treat all submissions equally and will judge each case on its merits and against the statutory criteria. If you wish to put forward a view, we would also urge you to ensure that evidence supports your submission. For example, if you wish to argue that two parishes should be included in the same electoral ward, make sure you tell the Commission why they should be together, providing evidence about community facilities, ties, organisations, and amenities, rather than simply asserting that they belong together.

There is plenty more advice on our website about how you can get involved in the consultation and put your views forward. Log on to [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) to find out more. The website includes the technical guidance that explains the process and our policies as well as guidance on how to take part in each part of the process. We have set up a page on our site which is dedicated to the review of Test Valley where you can find all the relevant information.

You can also access interactive maps of the current ward boundaries across the borough on our specialist consultation portal. The portal also allows you to draw your own boundaries, mark areas of interest on the map and upload documents directly to the site. Log on to [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk) to access the portal or find it via our main website.

### Get in touch

We encourage as many people and organisations as possible to get involved with the consultation and we encourage local organisations and parish councils to engage their local networks and communities in the review.

View interactive maps of the borough, draw your own boundaries, and have your say at our specialist consultation portal at: [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk).

Find out more about the review at: [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

Email your views to: [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk).

Follow us on Twitter at: [@lgbce](https://twitter.com/lgbce).

Write to: Review Officer (Test Valley)

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

14<sup>th</sup> Floor Millbank Tower

Millbank

**London**

**SW1P 4QP**

**This phase of consultation closes on 3 April 2017. We will write to you again when we open our consultation on draft recommendations.**

**Please note that the interests of transparency, copies of the all representations we receive during this review will be placed on our website. We remove any personal identifying information such as signatures and private residential addresses prior to placing any submissions in the public domain.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Dan Carlsson-Hyslop  
Review Officer  
reviews@lgbce.org.uk  
0330 500 1525**