



Boundary Commission Briefing.

1. On 6th February, I attended the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's briefing for town & parish councillors. A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
2. Key points which emerged were:-
 - It is a review of district council ward boundaries in Suffolk Coastal and does not affect parish boundaries or county council electoral divisions.
 - The Boundary Commission aims to review ward boundaries every 10-15 years, the last in Suffolk Coastal was in 2002.
 - The trigger for this review is the pre-review finding that two wards (Kesgrave East and Rendlesham) have 40% more electors than the SCDC average, whilst there are others with significantly fewer - *see slide 6*.
 - There will be several stages of consultation, starting in spring.
 - The first round of consultation will be on the number of councillors. Likely to start in April 2013 and last 10-12 weeks.
 - The second round will be on the size & shape of wards. Likely to start in July 2013 and last 10-12 weeks.
 - The third round will be to invite comments on the Boundary Commission's *draft* proposals. Likely to start in January 2014 and last 10-12 weeks.
 - The Boundary Commission's *final proposals* will go to parliament for approval in summer 2014, with the new arrangements in place for the May 2015 district elections.The following day, I produced briefing note, which was eMailed to members of the council.
3. At a full council meeting on 28th February, Suffolk Coastal District Council agreed to submit a recommendation to the Boundary Commission proposing a reduction in the number of district councillors from 55 to 43, in a move that could save the Council close to £100,000 - *see www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/news/council-votes-to-cut-its-size-by-12-councillors*. However, the district council will be just one of a number of organisations and individuals putting forward a view on this, and will be treated no differently from any other resposdee.
4. Councillors and residents can keep in touch with the Boundary Commission's Review either by visiting www.lgbce.org.uk or www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/wardreview, where relevant information will be added when available.
5. It is **recommended that**:-
 - a) the contents of this report, and the implications for local democracy, be noted, and
 - b) the parish council put in place measures to ensure that the first and second rounds of consultation can be given full consideration and an appropriate response made.

Cllr. Geof Butterwick, Chairman of Planning & Transport Committee
11th March 2013

Suffolk Coastal District Council

Electoral review briefing

Parish briefing

6 February 2013

Introductions • Tim Bowden – Review Manager

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About us

- We are independent of Government and political parties, and directly accountable to Parliament through the Speaker's Committee
- We are responsible for reviewing local authority electoral arrangements, administrative boundaries and structure
- Our recommendations for this review will be implemented by Parliament

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Purpose of Presentation

- Explain the Review Process
 - Our statutory criteria
 - How we develop our recommendations
 - Consultation – involvement
- What you can expect from us and how we can assist you

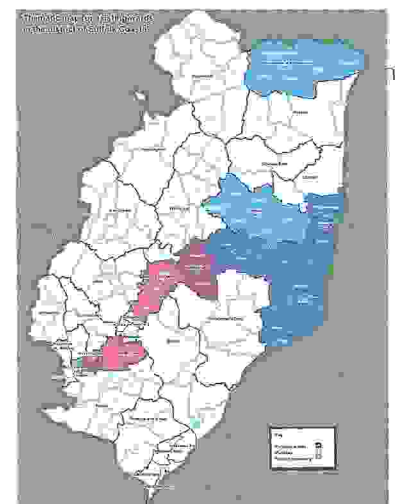
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Why are we conducting an electoral review of Suffolk Coastal?

- Our aim is to try to ensure that each councillor represents approximately the same number of electors
- Suffolk Coastal has two wards (Kesgrave East and Rendisham) with electoral variances greater than 40%. The Council also requested this review.

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Suffolk Coastal thematic map – ward variances



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Scope of the review

- Review will decide the pattern of wards for the entire district – not just wards where there are levels of electoral inequality
- We will decide:
 - Total number of councillors
 - Number of wards
 - Names of wards
 - Boundaries of wards

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Statutory criteria

- Electoral equality
 - optimum number of electors per councillor
 - Five year forecast
 - In time for next election
- Community identity
 - parishes as building blocks
 - strong boundaries
 - Public facilities
 - Focus on community interaction
- Effective and convenient local government
 - coherent wards with good internal transport links
 - Council size/councillor workload

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What we cannot consider

- Parliamentary constituency boundaries, which are drawn by the Boundary Commission for England
- Current district wards
- Local political implications of recommendations
- School catchment areas
- Postcodes or addresses
- Polling districts

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Rules relating to parishes

- we cannot create or abolish parishes, or amend their boundaries
- if we divide a parish between district wards, we must create parish wards
- we can change parish electoral arrangements only as a direct consequence of our district ward proposals

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Council size: The Commission's approach

- Starting point of review – councillors divided by electorate – optimum cll:ratio – enables everyone proposals for warding patterns
- Commission will make final decision on council size

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Review process

- Pre Review Stage
- Preliminary stage
 - council size discussion
 - Do you have the right council size?
 - What are the demands of time on elected members? Could the council operate more effectively with a different number?
 - Opportunity for council to consider political management and governance
 - Consideration of members representative role
 - Effective representation of constituents
- Council size submission by March
- Council size consultation

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Review process

- Consultation on warding patterns (10 weeks)
 - Invite warding patterns from council, public, parish councils, everybody who takes an interest
 - Welcome proposals for whole district or just a few parishes
 - Commission tours area
- Commission publishes draft recommendations
 - Posters provided to parish councils to publicise review
 - Submissions published on website
- Open consultation on draft recommendations
- Commission publishes final recommendations
- Final recommendations will be implemented by order in the Houses of Parliament

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Parish councils' input

- Tell us what you think
 - Explain how the proposed ward pattern reflects community identity
 - Consider ward names and patterns
 - Give evidence of how recommendations would impact your communities
 - We don't expect a district-wide scheme but remember there may be knock-on effects to proposals
- Talk to residents and publicise the review
 - We will provide all parishes with posters

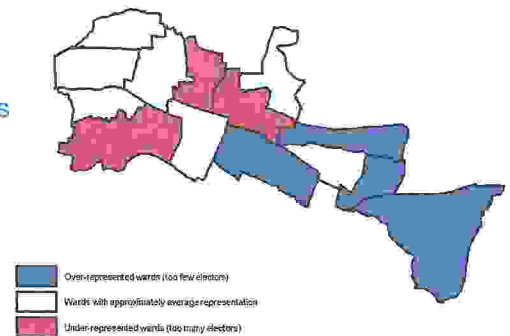
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Effective Representations

- Representations which support are as important as those which oppose
- Representations will be judged on the quality of argument and evidence presented
- Effective representations will:
 - Suggest an alternative as well as setting out an objection
 - Take account of statutory requirements
 - Consider consequences of alternative across widest possible area

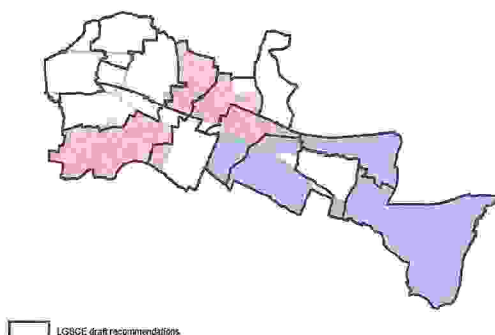
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How wards may change: original wards



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How wards may change: new wards



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What characterises a good review

- Detailed rationale for council size.
- Accurate electorate figures and robust methodology when forecasting expected growth
- Scheme coming forward which gives good electoral equality while balancing other statutory criteria, has cross-party support, has been consulted on locally
- Highly important to involve as many groups/individuals as possible at as early a stage as possible
- Where cannot secure consensus across a scheme, tell us where there is agreement
- Representations based on evidence, not just assertion

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