

South Norfolk Council
Cygnet Court
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Norwich
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Parish Clerks, via e-mail

12 August 2016

Dear Parish Clerk,

Local Government Boundary Commission review of District Ward Boundaries

I hope many of you have had chance to assess the Boundary Commission's consultation on future District Ward boundaries within South Norfolk. Whilst I appreciate timeframes are now somewhat limited for responding, following several queries raised (most notably in the recent Parish Clerk consultation meeting) I felt it helpful, as Chairman of the South Norfolk Council Electoral Arrangements Review Committee, to write to you with my views on some of the points raised.

The first point to make is that this review is being carried out on the directions of the Local Government Boundary Commission who have set the timetable to which the District Council must work. Their interest was triggered because we have several Wards which, on current boundaries, are well outside the permitted tolerance of 10% from the norm. One of our Wards, for example, is more than 50% from that norm. The principle that each vote should be of equal value is clearly not followed when such variances exist.

In simple terms, the current review will look at the District Ward boundaries. The Commission agree South Norfolk will still have 46 Councillors in the future – but as some of the wards are forecast to be far bigger, in electorate terms, than others in future, we need to re-draw the lines for our wards.

At the moment, we would very much wish to avoid making changes to Parish boundaries as this will come later in a separate process (and obviously in full consultation with you). However, there is a very basic factor that may impact on Parishes - the Parish and District boundaries have to line up. A Parish cannot sit in two different District wards, unless it is also warded.

This means if you are thinking of working with another Parish more closely in future, to the extent that you may wish to join together, it would be worth highlighting this and making clear it would be helpful if both were in the same District ward. Similarly,

it might also be helpful if you could let us know of any small anomalies that may exist right now that we may wish to consider.

All feedback should be provided to the Boundary Commission. However, it is very helpful if you could contact us (myself and Julia Tovee-Galey) with any feedback as it means that we can draw it to the attention of our Electoral Arrangements Review Committee when they are providing the Council's views.

Once the current consultation period has closed, the Commission will then determine how the lines should be drawn up, taking into account the feedback, and what names should be given to the proposed wards. A second round of consultation will take place on their draft proposals – however it would be helpful to feedback now as it may be more difficult to make further changes at that stage.

I hope this makes sense to you, but we are happy to answer any further questions you have.

Yours sincerely



Dr C J Kemp
Chairman, South Norfolk Council Electoral Arrangements Review Committee