

Mr David Kennedy  
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14 September 2009

### Electoral review of Northampton Borough Council

I wrote to you earlier in the year to let you know that the Electoral Commission had directed the Boundary Committee for England to undertake an electoral review of Northampton Borough Council. The review will formally start on 27 October 2009. This letter is to advise you that the preliminary period of the review, during which we are asking for certain information (outlined below), begins today.

The procedures that we will be following in conducting the review are set out in the Boundary Committee's *Electoral reviews: what they are and how you can get involved* pamphlet, copies of which are enclosed. I also enclose a number of leaflets explaining what the Committee is, and its functions. I would ask you to make copies of the guidance and leaflet available at your main offices, along with copies of this letter. Further copies of these publications are available on request.

A more detailed technical guidance document is available on the Boundary Committee's website at on the 'about electoral reviews' page of the boundary review section of the website, at:

[http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/48546/Tech-Guidance-final\\_28191-20728\\_\\_E\\_\\_.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/48546/Tech-Guidance-final_28191-20728__E__.pdf).

This document contains all the statutory information about the review process. Please note that this document is not available in hard copy.

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## **Advertising the review**

We will provide news releases to the local press announcing the start of the review. This release, and posters to publicise the review will also be sent to your Council. It would be appreciated if you could publicise the start of the review by placing copies on display in your information points, and by taking such other steps as you consider appropriate to bring the review to the attention of the public and other interested parties. We will also send posters to the County Council, and ask that these are displayed in the libraries in your Council's area.

## **Preliminary information sought**

We would be grateful if you would provide our officers with the following preliminary information as soon as possible and in any case before the review formally starts on 27 October:

- contact names, telephone numbers and email addresses of your colleagues you expect to be working on the electoral review;
- names and addresses of all residents' associations and active community groups in Northampton; in particular we would appreciate your Council's assistance in engaging hard-to-reach groups throughout this review;
- an electronic copy of the full electoral register;
- a completed electorate spreadsheet – you will see that the *Technical Guidance* contains pro-forma spreadsheets for your officers to complete with electorate figures. We have recently updated these spreadsheets but have yet to replace them in the *Technical Guidance*. Our officers will provide the new spreadsheet directly to your Council. We would prefer to receive all information from only one contact within your Council;
- an explanation of the rationale for the electorate forecasts;
- a map of polling districts, and topographical maps for the area of Northampton

Borough Council showing existing district ward, parish and parish ward boundaries. **It would be most helpful in expediting the Committee's work if these could also be submitted in a GIS format that is compatible with MapInfo. It would also be helpful if the mapping to support any proposed warding arrangements could be received in this format.**

- copies of any statutory instruments or resolutions that have been made (either by your council or any other organisations) since your most recent electoral review that alter the boundaries, electoral arrangements or names of any parish, parish ward, district, district ward or county electoral division.

It is important that the electorate spreadsheets and mapping is made available locally so that all interested parties can use this information when submitting proposals to us. We will also make this information available on our website.

### **Review Timetable**

We have arranged to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss the review in more detail and, in particular, the information we are requesting below, on 21 September 2009. We will also be briefing your group leaders, the full council and representatives from your parish and town councils on the same day. If you have any queries regarding the meetings, please contact my colleagues whose contact details can be found below.

Once we have formally begun the review, the Committee will follow a four-stage process, as indicated in our guidance, *Electoral reviews: what they are and how you can get involved*.

Stage One of the review will start on 27 October 2009 when the Boundary Committee will write formally to your Council and other interested parties, including parish councils, residents' associations and the community groups referred to above. We will invite proposals to be made to us on what the electoral arrangements for the authority should be, and highlight the date when people must submit representations to us (the end of Stage One).

The Committee will then prepare its draft recommendations for the electoral

arrangements of Northampton Borough Council. It is intended that these recommendations will be published in March 2010 on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). The draft recommendations will be sent to your Council and to those organisations and individuals listed at the end of this letter. We will also inform all those who submit representations during Stage One of the draft recommendations being published. There will then be a period of consultation on these draft recommendations prior to the Committee formulating its final recommendations. We expect to complete the review in Autumn 2010.

As you would expect, the Boundary Committee takes the consultation periods very seriously. As we may move away from the draft recommendations as a result of consultation, it is particularly important that everyone is encouraged to express their views on the draft recommendations, whether or not they agree with what has been proposed.

We will make available for public inspection full copies of all representations we receive. These will be made available both in our London office (by appointment) and on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). We will also send your Council a copy of all the representations and we request that you make them available for public inspection together with any representations your Council makes.

### **Correspondence and Enquiries**

All correspondence relating to this review should be addressed to:

Northampton Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London  
SW1P 2HW

or direct to your main contacts at the Committee who will be:

- Arion Lawrence, Review Officer, with specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review.

email: [alawrence@boundarycommittee.org.uk](mailto:alawrence@boundarycommittee.org.uk); Tel: 020 7271 0674;

- Richard Buck, Review Manager, who leads the team dealing with this and other reviews  
email: [rbuck@boundarycommittee.org.uk](mailto:rbuck@boundarycommittee.org.uk); Tel: 020 7271 0695.

Yours sincerely

**Archie Gall**

Director

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cc Northamptonshire County Council  
MPs with constituency interests in Northampton