



14.2.2022 **Tunbridge Wells Electoral Review - Consultation**

Dear Town Forum members and guests,

Tunbridge Wells is currently subject to an electoral review in which the internal ward boundaries are likely to change. This could have implications on who represents you at the borough council so we strongly encourage you to consider your circumstances and take part in the consultation.

Background

The Town Forum hosted a presentation by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England which explains what is happening and why.

You can watch this presentation on YouTube here:

<https://youtu.be/Ho-YaHlK-vk>

There are two major considerations that will influence the Boundary Commission's proposals:

- The Boundary Commission has determined that the total number of councillors for Tunbridge Wells Borough should be 39 (currently 48).
- The Borough Council recently voted to retain elections by thirds (meaning one third of the council is elected each year except in the fourth year when county elections take place). As a result of this, the Boundary Commission is required to ensure, so far as is possible, that every ward in the borough has an equal number of three councillors.

This means that when the changes take effect, Tunbridge Wells Borough will likely reduce from 20 wards of various sizes to 13 wards each with 3 councillors. Each ward will have approximately 7,000 electors (residents registered to vote).

In the unparished area of Royal Tunbridge Wells there are currently 7 wards of various sizes. There are expected to be approximately 31,500 electors by 2027 so if each ward will have 7,000 electors in future this means there will be 4 ½ wards. This is clearly not possible so wards will either have to spill outside the traditional boundaries of the unparished area or exceptions will have to be made.

Please see the attached spreadsheet which shows the current ward size and the projected ward size in 2027. A negative number indicates that more electors are needed to satisfy the requirement of 3 councillors per ward. It is clear from this that significant changes will have to be made.

Consultation

The Boundary Commission is now consulting on where the new boundaries should go. The commission have said they will start with a blank sheet and build new wards based on natural communities. Before lines are drawn on maps they want to hear from residents where their communities are to avoid splitting them up.

Please review the video linked above. Further information on the consultation process, including details how to respond to the consultation are available from the Boundary Commission. A copy of their guide "How to propose a pattern of ward or electoral divisions" is attached and further reading is available here:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/tunbridge-wells>

The deadline for responding to the consultation is 21 March 2022.

At the end of this consultation the Boundary Commission will draw up their proposals and there will be a second consultation on the plans.

Regards,
Mark

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