

Have your say on how your local community is represented

Residents in Central Bedfordshire are being given the opportunity to have a say on how local communities are represented by parish or town councils. As part of its first ever Local Governance Review, the Central Bedfordshire Council is asking the public what changes, if any, they would like to see to the 78 parish areas within Central Bedfordshire.

Parish or town councils are typically responsible for looking after certain local facilities such as allotments, bus shelters, parks, playgrounds, public seats, public toilets, public clocks, village or town halls, maintenance of footpaths, cemeteries, village greens and various leisure and recreation facilities but this can vary between councils.

This review is an opportunity to look at parish boundaries. Although most boundary areas make geographical sense, as Central Bedfordshire's population has grown, there are now some areas where the parish boundaries might seem strange. This review presents an opportunity to change this.

The Council wants to hear residents' views on whether they think their town or parish council is properly reflecting the needs of their local community.

Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources said: "This consultation is a valuable opportunity for people living in Central Bedfordshire to have their say, as part of the democratic process, on the local representation. We hope that people respond to the questionnaire to let us know if they think there should be changes to their parish or town council.

"This will be the first time in a number of years that residents will have had the chance to affect change in the way they are represented on a local level. It may be a boundary change, the number of councillors in their parish, creating a new parish, merging parishes or sub-dividing a parish into smaller wards. Although it may sound like quite an obscure thing to ask people to consider, it is something that will impact on the many communities within Central Bedfordshire."

The consultation runs from 1 November 2017 until 1 February 2018 and is available at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

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