

Summary

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for West Sussex County Council

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. Following a request from West Sussex County Council, the Electoral Commission has directed that this review be undertaken with the presumption of single-member electoral divisions being recommended.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 19 divisions currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the county average with one division varying by more than 20%.

This review has been conducted in four stages, as shown in the table below.

Submissions received

We received 100 representations overall during Stage Three, including a response to our draft recommendations from the County Council. The representations were generally of a localised nature, many from parish and town councils, district or borough councils,

or individual county councillors. Of the 100 representations, 60 opposed the proposal to transfer Ashington (Horsham district) to Billingshurst division. Some submissions opposed the County Council's proposal to move to single-member divisions, particularly in Crawley. In considering our final recommendations we sought further views and information in the areas of Littlehampton and Billingshurst.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The County Council projected an increase in the electorate of 4.3% from 606,979 to 633,182 over the five-year period between 2007 and 2012.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	26 February 2008	Submission of proposals to us
Two	22 April 2008	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	1 July 2008	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	26 August 2008	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

The Boundary Committee for England: [summary](#)

We did not receive any specific comments in relation to those electorate figures and have used them as the basis for developing our recommendations.

[Council size](#)

During Stage One we received a proposal for a council size of 71 from the County Council, and a proposal for a council size of 76 from a local resident. Having considered the information received we adopted a council size of 71 members in our draft recommendations. At Stage Three we received no proposals for a different council size.

[General analysis](#)

On 1 July 2008 we published our draft recommendations for a uniform pattern of 71 single-member divisions based on the County Council's proposals, with some modifications to improve the level of electoral equality and to strengthen boundaries.

We carefully considered the submissions received during Stage Three, particularly where a new division pattern had been proposed, and have sought further views in some areas. We have modified our draft recommendations in the areas of Littlehampton; Bewbush, Ifield and Gossops Green; Billingshurst, Ashington and Itchingfield. We have made minor modifications in central Crawley and altered the names

of three electoral divisions. With the exception of parish electoral arrangements, we are confirming the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

In terms of electoral equality, 17 of the 71 divisions in our final recommendations would vary by more than 10% from the county-wide average, and this is forecast to improve to only 11 divisions varying by more than 10% from the average by 2012.

[What happens next?](#)

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission. Contact details are provided in the opposite correspondence box. The Commission cannot make an Order to implement them before 26 December 2008. However, to reflect the Christmas period, this will be extended to [9 January 2009](#). Any representations received by that date will be made publicly available once the Order has been made.

[Further information](#)

The full report is available to download at:
www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

[Correspondence](#)

Any further correspondence should be sent to the following address:

Legal & Implementation Team
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
Fax: 020 7271 0505

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

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Committee**
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