

## Summary

# Draft 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 is being conducted in four stages, as shown in the table below.

## Submissions received

We received 34 representations overall during Stage One, including a county-wide scheme from the County Council whose proposals were based on a council size of 71. We also received a county-wide scheme from a former county councillor who is a local resident of Arun. The other

representations were generally of a localised nature, many from parish and town councils, district or borough councils, or from individual county councillors. Some submissions opposed the County Council's proposal to move to single-member divisions, particularly in Crawley.

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

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

## Council size

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 have adopted a council size of 71 members.

## General analysis

We are proposing an entire 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. In terms of electoral equality, only 15 of the 71 divisions would vary by more than 10% from the county-wide average, forecast to improve to only nine divisions varying by more than 10% from the average by 2012.

## What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for West Sussex County Council contained in this report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft recommendations.** We believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final

recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by **25 August 2008**. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

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## Further information

The full report is available to download at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).