

## Summary

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Wiltshire 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. We have conducted a review to ensure that the new Wiltshire unitary authority, which takes on all local government functions for the county in April 2009, has appropriate electoral arrangements.

### Further information

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

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

### Draft recommendations

We proposed 98 single-member electoral divisions for the new Wiltshire unitary authority. These proposals provided for good levels of electoral equality in the county. In those areas with relatively high electoral imbalances, we considered that the evidence received in relation to community identity and interests and the need to secure effective and convenient local government justified such electoral variances.

### Submissions received

We received 109 submissions during Stage Three including county-wide schemes and comments from the County Council along with a local resident. We also received

submissions from councillors, parish and town councils across Wiltshire, as well as residents and other stakeholders. In considering our final recommendations we sought further views for a number of areas in the County. This was because we considered the arguments to be finely balanced in certain areas. Furthermore, there were some inconsistencies in the maps provided with our draft recommendations and we considered it necessary to ensure we had a full range of local views on our proposals before we published our final recommendations.

### Analysis and final recommendations

#### Electorate figures

Wiltshire County Council submitted electoral forecasts for December 2012. The County

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 is predicting growth over a five-year period (December 2007 to December 2012) of around 4.9%. In 2007 Wiltshire had an electorate of 345,436. It is forecast that by 2012 this would increase to 362,128. Some respondents have objected to these figures. These centre on the ongoing construction of a 'super-garrison' in East Wiltshire, as well as expectations of house building in the Salisbury area. The Council provided additional representations indicating that it has taken account of all of those portions of either the super-garrison developments, or wider house building proposals that are reasonably likely to be completed by 2012. Having received this further evidence from Wiltshire County Council, we continue to view their projection as the most accurate that can be provided at this time.

### [Council size](#)

During Stage Three, we received an alternative proposal for a council size of approximately 150 members. This was not supported by substantive evidence and due to the near consensus in submissions in support of 98 single-member divisions for the new council, we have retained this council size in our final recommendations.

### [General analysis](#)

Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three and the period of limited further consultation, we are proposing amendments to

several electoral division names and modifications to division boundaries in Amesbury, Chippenham, Erlestoke, Warminster and Wootton Bassett. There are also minor modifications proposed in Bradford-on-Avon and Westbury. These alterations have necessitated modifications to parish electoral arrangements which are specified in the final recommendations. We are confirming the rest of our draft recommendations as final.

Late in our consideration of our final recommendations, a mapping and data error in relation to the Warminster Broadway and Warminster East divisions was noted, which, if left unchanged, would result in a 45% imbalance. We would normally consult further on such a change before reporting to the Electoral Commission. However, this would mean it would not be possible to implement our recommendations in time for elections next year. We concluded it was preferable that the new Council be established with new electoral arrangements next year than to undertake further consultation. Those who wish to comment on this specific area may do so by writing to the Electoral Commission at the address below.

In our draft recommendations, we proposed the new single-member divisions of Devizes & Roundway South, Melksham Without North, Melksham Without South, and Roundway. These recommendations would result in division boundaries that would no longer reflect parish ward boundaries for Melksham

Without and Roundway parish councils. In our draft recommendations report, we inadvertently failed to make consequential recommendations with regard to parish electoral arrangements for these parishes. When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to ensure that, as far as possible, parish ward boundaries are amended to reflect our proposed division boundaries. In the circumstances, we consider it would be more appropriate for the new Wiltshire unitary authority to consider conducting a community governance review, to ensure compatibility between parish electoral arrangements and division boundaries.

### [What happens next?](#)

All further correspondence on the recommendations should be sent to the Electoral Commission which cannot make an Order implementing them before 26 December 2008. To reflect the public holiday period, this will be extended to 9 January 2009. Representations received by that date will be made publicly available once the Order has been made.

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](mailto:implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
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