

October 2010

## Summary

The  
Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
for England

### Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Sedgemoor District Council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. 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 are conducting an electoral review of Sedgemoor to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the district. The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same.

The Boundary Committee for England commenced the review in 2009. However, on 1 April 2010 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee. It therefore fell to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

The review was conducted in four stages:

#### Draft recommendations

In our draft recommendations, we proposed a council size of 48 members and a pattern of single, two- and three-member wards. After considering the submissions received during Stage One, we developed proposals which focussed on achieving good electoral equality and delivered strong boundaries that would provide for effective and convenient local government. Where respondents provided evidence of community identity, we sought to reflect this in the draft recommendations.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	27 October 2009	Submission of proposals to the Boundary Committee
Two	19 January 2010	Boundary Committee's analysis and deliberation
Three	25 May 2010	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	20 July 2010	Analysis of submissions and formulation of final recommendations

## Submissions received

During Stage Three, we received 35 responses. The District Council asked that its Stage One proposal be reconsidered. A number of the other submissions made comments both in support and opposition of our draft recommendations across the district. All submissions can be viewed on our website, at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## Analysis and final recommendations

### Electorate figures

Sedgemoor District Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2013, a period five years on from the December 2008 electoral roll which is the basis for this review. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of 4.7% over this period. Although we had some concern that this level of growth appeared somewhat high, we noted that during the five-year period 2003-2008, the electorate in Sedgemoor increased by 5.6%. On balance, we were satisfied that the Council's revised electorate figures were the most accurate at the time.

Following recent changes in legislation, we also need to have regard to a five-year forecast from the date of the publication of our final recommendations. We therefore requested that the Council provide a forecast for 2015. Having noted that the projected electorate forecasts would not alter significantly the initial forecasts on which the draft recommendations were based, we remain satisfied that they provide the best estimate that can be made at this time.

### General analysis

We have given careful consideration to all the submissions received in response to the draft recommendation and are confirming them as final, subject to renaming a number of wards, making a boundary amendment in Bridgwater and transferring Goathurst parish from North Petherton to Quantocks ward. The final recommendations take account of the submissions received throughout the review.

## What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Sedgemoor District Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements for the council to be implemented at the local elections in 2011.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament in April 2010. It is independent of government and political parties, and is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas.

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