

Summary

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Shropshire 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 an electoral review of Shropshire to ensure that the new unitary authority, which takes on all local government functions for the county in 2009, has new and appropriate electoral arrangements.

Review aims

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each unitary authority councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission, which is the body responsible for implementing our recommendations, directed us to undertake this review.

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

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 74 comprising a pattern of two three-member divisions, 11 two-member divisions and 46 single-member divisions. Our draft recommendations would provide good levels of electoral equality.

However, in certain areas, we were of the view that the evidence received in relation to the geography of the county, community identities and interests and the need to secure effective and convenient local government justified somewhat higher electoral variances.

Submissions received

During Stage Three, we received approximately 300 representations. In particular, we received comments in relation to our proposed divisions in the areas of Albrighton, Shifnal and Sheriffhales, Bayston Hill, Broseley, Church Stretton and Craven Arms. When considering our final recommendations, we were of the view that we required further evidence in three of these areas and

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

therefore conducted a period of further limited consultation between 26 September – 24 October 2008. The evidence received during this period has enabled us to formulate recommendations which we consider provide the most effective balance between reflecting community identities and interests and the need to secure good electoral equality.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The County Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2012. The forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 6% from 230,935 to 245,730 over this period. During Stage Three, the electorate figures were not challenged further and we are satisfied that they are the most accurate that can be provided at this time.

Council size

In our draft recommendations, we proposed a council size of 74. During Stage Three, several respondents opposed our proposed council size and supported one of 75. Their argument was based broadly on a view that there should be an equal allocation of 25 members between the northern, central and southern regions of Shropshire. We did not receive evidence in the context of the new Council's political

management structure to explain why a council size of 75 would be required. We have therefore confirmed our draft recommendations for a council size of 74 members as final.

General analysis

Having considered the representations received during Stage Three and the period of further consultation, we are proposing modifications to divisions in the areas of Albrighton, Shifnal and Sheriffhales, Broseley and Ellesmere. We are confirming the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

We looked especially closely at representations with regard to the Bayston Hill area where a large number of respondents supported a single-member division coterminous with Bayston Hill parish. We acknowledge the strong evidence of community identities in support of this proposal. However, when formulating our recommendations, we must consider community identity in the context of the need to secure good electoral equality.

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 correspondence box below. 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 and submitted representations are available to download at:

www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

Correspondence

Any further correspondence should be sent to the following address:

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These contact details should only be used for implementation purposes.