

Summary

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Shropshire Council

The Boundary Committee for England is an independent statutory 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 Shropshire to ensure that the new unitary authority, which takes on all local government functions for the county in May 2009, has new and appropriate electoral arrangements.

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

Submissions received

We received 72 representations overall during Stage One, including county-wide schemes from the County Council and Bridgnorth District Councillor Murray (Albrighton South) both of whose recommendations were based on a council size of 75. We also received evidence of community identity from parish

and town councils in the county. However, broadly speaking, these comments were restricted to their own immediate area. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The County Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2012, a period five years on from the December 2007 electoral roll which is the basis for this review. The electorate forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 6% from 230,935 to 245,730 over this period. We received some comments regarding the electorate figures in relation to RAF Cosford in the Albrighton area. The

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

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comments raised the concern that not all the service personnel and their families may be registered to vote in Shropshire. However, the figures were not specifically challenged and we are satisfied that they are the most accurate that can be provided at this time.

[Council size](#)

We received two proposals in relation to council size. The County Council proposed a council size of 75 and Wem Town Council and County Councillor Mellings (Wem) proposed a council size of 96. Wem Town Council and Councillor Mellings did not provide any evidence to support a council size of 96. The Council's proposal was broadly endorsed by respondents commenting on council size and took an evidence-based approach in its rationale for a council size of 75. However, we noted that this analysis suggested a council size of 74 rather than 75. Given the analysis provided by the County Council, we therefore propose a council size of 74.

[General analysis](#)

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on those of the County Council. Where we have moved away from the County Council's proposals, we have sought to improve the levels of

electoral fairness and where practicable, reflect evidence of community identity received during Stage One.

Where our proposals have levels of electoral equality that we would not normally be inclined to adopt, we have sought to reflect community identities and communication links that we consider justify these imbalances.

[What happens next?](#)

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for the prospective Shropshire unitary authority contained in the 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 proposals.** 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.

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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