

Draft recommendations



New electoral arrangements for Stoke-on-Trent City Council

March 2010

Translations and other formats

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Tel: 020 7271 0500

Email: publications@boundarycommittee.org.uk

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Summary

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 – for a specific local authority.

This electoral review is being conducted following a direction from the Electoral Commission. The Commission considered it necessary to undertake a review of Stoke-on-Trent City Council in the interests of providing for effective and convenient local government.

This review is being conducted in four main stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	20 October 2009	Submission of proposals to us
Two	12 January 2010	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	26 March 2010	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	14 June 2010	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Council size

Prior to October 2009, we undertook a consultation of the appropriate council size for Stoke-on-Trent City Council. In response we received 23 representations for 13 different council sizes. These ranged from 20 to 80 members and included several proposals for the retention of the current council size of 60 councillors. Stoke-on-Trent City Council proposed a council size of 52–56 members; the Leader of the City Council concluded that the Council's justification actually pointed to a council size of between 46 and 49. We also received a submission from the Stoke-on-Trent Governance and Transition Board. The Governance and Transition Board did not propose a particular council size for the City Council but detailed the advantages and disadvantages for council sizes of 36, mid-40s and 50. On balance, and in light of the evidence received, we were minded to adopt a council size of around 45 members. Therefore, during Stage One, we invited representations on warding arrangements based on a 45-member council. We later refined this to 44 councillors, in order to achieve better levels of electoral equality across the city.

Submissions received

During Stage One we received 127 representations. We did not receive a proposal from the City Council; indeed, we only received one city-wide proposal. Having conducted a consultation exercise on a city-wide scheme, at a full council meeting the City Council could not reach agreement on a proposal to submit to us. However, it did submit the draft of the scheme on which it had consulted locally, together with copies of all representations it had received in response. We have taken those representations into account in reaching conclusions on our draft recommendations. We also received warding proposals relating to specific parts of the City Council from

city councillors, residents associations and local residents. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The City Council submitted electoral forecasts for December 2013, a period five years on from the December 2008 electoral register, on which this review is based. The electorate forecasts projected an increase of approximately 1% over this period. While we received some correspondence during Stage One regarding the levels of electoral registration in the city, we are satisfied that the City Council's projections are the best estimate at this time. These have formed the basis of our draft recommendations.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we are proposing a pattern of 33 single-member wards, four two-member wards and one three-member ward. Our proposals are based on the representations we received and our tour of the area, and seek to reflect the geography of the city, communication linkages and barriers to movement. We have sought to base our recommendations on the warding patterns developed by the City Council and other locally generated proposals where possible. Where we have moved away from local proposals, we have sought to ensure electoral fairness, as well as reflect community identities and provide for strong and identifiable boundaries.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment upon our draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Stoke-on-Trent City Council 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 **11 June 2010**. 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 representations submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing to us:

Review Officer
Stoke-on-Trent Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW
reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

1 Introduction

1 On 10 June 2009 the Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements of Stoke-on-Trent City Council. The review commenced on 4 August 2009. We wrote to Stoke-on-Trent City Council together with other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals to us on the most appropriate council size for the new council. Following our conclusions on council size, on 20 October 2009 we invited the submission of proposals to us on the warding arrangements for Stoke-on-Trent. The submissions we received during these stages of the review have informed the draft recommendations in this report. We are now conducting a full public consultation on those recommendations.

What is an electoral review?

2 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure ‘electoral equality’, which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will achieve good electoral equality, while also reflecting communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

3 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations.¹

4 Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Why are we conducting a review in Stoke-on-Trent?

5 In October 2007, the Stoke-on-Trent Governance Commission was established by the Government to “review the governance of Stoke-on-Trent and to inform public debate which will be taking place on the future pattern of the city’s governance”. In its final report to the Government and City Council in May 2008, the Commission made 14 recommendations. It recommended, among other matters, that:

- The City Council should move to all-out elections, i.e. hold elections once every four years (the council currently elects by thirds, with elections in three years out of four).
- There should be a uniform pattern of single-member wards (the council currently has a uniform pattern of three-member wards).
- Work should be commenced on building a case for an appropriate council size at an early date (the Council currently comprises 60 councillors).

6 The Commission’s recommendations in relation to electoral arrangements were initially accepted by the City Council. However, following consultation on a move to

¹ Section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Chapter 2, Section 56.

whole council elections, the City Council failed to pass a resolution to move to such a cycle by the necessary two-thirds majority. The Government was informed of this decision.

7 On 8 May 2009, the then Minister for Local Government announced in the House of Commons that the Government were minded to intervene to make an order under Section 86 of the Local Government Act 2000 specifying a scheme of whole council elections for Stoke-on-Trent City Council from 2011.

8 The then Minister for Local Government also announced that he would ask the Electoral Commission to respond to the Governance Commission's recommendations referred to in the second and third bullet point above and to direct the Boundary Committee to undertake an electoral review with a view to any new electoral arrangements being implemented in May 2011.

9 The Electoral Commission concluded that it would be in the interests of effective and convenient local government for the Boundary Committee to conduct an electoral review of Stoke-on-Trent. However, the legislation under which the review is being carried out (referred to above) makes clear that, when conducting such a review, the Boundary Committee must continue to have regard to all the statutory criteria that governs all electoral reviews, as outlined in paragraph 3.

How will our recommendations affect you?

10 Our recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which electoral ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your electoral ward's name may also change.

11 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on our draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with our draft recommendations or not. Our recommendations are evidence based and we would therefore like to stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 11 June 2010. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in autumn 2010. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 23 of this report, as well as on our website (along with additional information and guidance), www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

What is the Boundary Committee for England?

12 The Boundary Committee for England is a statutory 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, as well as those it undertakes on its own initiative.

13 On 1 April 2010, the Boundary Committee will be replaced by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), which will be entirely separate from the Electoral Commission. It will be an independent body, accountable to Parliament. The approach to, and remainder of, the review of Stoke-on-Trent will not be affected by this change.

Members of the Committee are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)

Jane Earl

Joan Jones CBE

Dr Peter Knight CBE DL

Professor Colin Mellors

Director: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

14 In conducting this review and recommending new electoral arrangements for Stoke-on-Trent we must have regard to the Local Government Act 1992, and the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in Paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972

15 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

16 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that, in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

17 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that our recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

18 Prior to and during the initial stages of the review, members and officers of the Committee visited Stoke-on-Trent and met with members and officers of the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 23 submissions during our initial consultation on council size, and a further 127 representations during Stage One, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of Stoke-on-Trent City Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Electorate figures

19 Stoke-on-Trent currently has 188,014 electors (December 2008). In its initial electoral forecasts Stoke-on-Trent City Council predicted that the electorate would grow by approximately 1%. We considered the City Council's forecast figures and noted that it was predicting the growth to be spread evenly across the city.

20 While we received some correspondence during Stage One regarding the levels of electoral registration in the city, we are satisfied that the estimates provided by the

City Council are the best available at this time. These have formed the basis of the draft recommendations.

Council size

21 Stoke-on-Trent City Council currently has 60 councillors. During our initial consultation, we received a number of proposals for council size, ranging from 20 to 80. The City Council proposed a range of 52–56 members, while the Stoke-on-Trent Governance and Transition Board weighed up the options for 36, mid-40s and 50 councillors. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ross Irving, responded to our consultation informing the Committee that, while he voted for the report in order for a broad council view to be presented, he considered that the conclusions of the City Council's report better reflect a council size between 46 and 49.

22 Rob Ffello MP considered that the City Council requires 80 councillors in order for the authority to operate effectively. The representations we received advocating a council size of 60 and above were argued on the basis of addressing concerns over under-representation. Those respondents were particularly concerned that a reduction in council size would have an impact on the amount of ward work councillors would be able to undertake.

23 We considered carefully the issue of the appropriate number of councillors for Stoke-on-Trent. We noted the wide range of proposals that were put to us, and the variety of arguments for reducing, increasing and indeed keeping the same council size. On balance, we considered the argument for a council size in the region of mid-40s as having the most evidence to justify it, given the functions and political management structure of the council, and the roles and responsibilities of councillors. Prior to the start of our first consultation on ward boundaries, we announced that we were minded to recommend a council size of 45, and we invited proposals for ward patterns based on this number of councillors.

24 We explained to all parties from the outset of the review that the council size figure adopted at this stage of the review provided context for local stakeholders to submit their views on the wider electoral arrangements and that this council size figure could be slightly adjusted in order to provide for warding patterns that better reflected electoral equality and community identity.

25 In the development of the draft recommendations we considered carefully the local geography of the city, noting that some areas have a high proportion of the electorate, some a low proportion of the electorate, some with good transportation links within areas and others without. We initially looked at the development of warding patterns for 45 councillors. We also looked to see whether 44 or 46 councillors would provide for better levels of electoral equality across the entire city.

26 However, having analysed the proposals put to us, and considered the strong natural and man-made boundaries and distribution of electorate across the city, we have concluded that 44 councillors allows for a better fit across the city, and therefore provides for better levels of electoral equality across the city. Our draft recommendations are based on 44 councillors for Stoke-on-Trent.

Electoral fairness

27 Electoral fairness is a fundamental democratic principle, by which each elector in a local authority has a vote of equal weight. Our aim is to make recommendations that provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

28 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The authority average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (188,014 in December 2008 and 189,729 by December 2013) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council – 44 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 4,273 in 2008 and 4,312 by 2013.

29 Under our draft recommendations, there will only be five wards in which the number of electors per councillor will vary by more than 10% from the average across the city by 2013. We lay out the reasons why we consider these imbalances to be justified later in the report. In the remainder of the city, the number of electors per councillor in each ward will vary by less than 10% from the average across the city. Overall, we are satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our draft recommendations for Stoke-on-Trent.

General analysis

30 We received 127 representations during Stage One. We did not receive a formal city-wide proposal from the City Council; indeed, we only received one city-wide proposal, from a local resident. Having conducted a thorough consultation exercise on a city-wide scheme, the City Council could not reach agreement on it at a full council meeting. However, it did submit the draft of the scheme, together with copies of all representations it had received in response to its consultation proposals.

31 While the City Council's draft scheme was not formally agreed nor put to the Committee, we have nevertheless examined the proposals on which it consulted. We have also examined the responses received by the City Council to its local consultation. In some areas our draft recommendations reflect, to some extent, the City Council's draft scheme, while in others they have been developed on the basis of the community evidence put to us, the transportation and communication links within the city, barriers to movement and geographical factors that we identified in touring the area.

32 We have also taken into account, so far as possible, the city-wide scheme proposed by a local resident; however, this scheme provided little detail or argument outside the Trentham area. Additionally, no specific boundaries were provided for polling districts which had been split. Across the city, we have taken into account the views of those who have submitted representations to us, and tried to accommodate their proposals, where supported by evidence, as part of our draft recommendations.

33 Our view is that there are a number of clear dividing barriers within the city, both natural and man-made. In order to create a warding pattern that reflected these barriers, we identified five distinct areas of the city. These areas are:

- the Trentham, Blurton, Longton and Meir Park areas, south of the A50/A500

- the east of the city, stretching from the A50 in the south, to Ball Green in the north, east of the Caldon Canal and the disused North Staffordshire railway line
- Stoke and Penkhull, west of the West Coast Main Line and north of the A500
- Hanley and Northwood; north of the A50, east of the West Coast Main Line, and south of Festival Park and Central Forest Park
- the Burslem, Tunstall and Chell areas in the north-west of the city, west of the disused North Staffordshire railway line and north of Festival Park and Central Forest Park

34 While we have sought in principle to build wards within these distinct areas, and use the strong barriers between them, we have breached them in two areas, in order to improve levels of electoral equality and access within the proposed wards. These are at Ford Green and the Edenhurst Avenue area north of the A50, and are discussed later in this report. In a number of the estate-based residential areas within the five discrete areas, we have tried to avoid using arbitrary boundaries to divide estates, while recognising that if areas must be split for electoral equality, it was important to reflect communities and access within wards.

Single- and multi-member ward proposals

35 We received a variety of comments on the issue of single- or multi-member wards. The Stoke-on-Trent Governance and Transition Board commented only on this issue, reiterating the preference of the Governance Commission for single-member wards, on the basis of accountability and simplicity. This was echoed by the Leader of the Council and a number of other respondents. The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) group of local government mentors in the city argued against single-member wards, on the basis of the risk of single-interest members being elected. Further comments were received from across the electorate arguing for a multi-member pattern of wards on the basis of a number of arguments, for example to ensure cover for councillors during illness. A number of local residents argued that as near to the existing pattern of (multi-member) wards should be achieved, showing some support for multi-member wards. Others expressed the view that there should be a uniform pattern of wards, whether single- or multi-member, on the grounds that this would be less confusing for the electorate.

36 We have noted that there is clearly no consensus on this issue, and our draft recommendations are based on the criteria to which we are required to have regard, outlined at the start of this chapter. We understand that there are often strongly held views on the relative merits of single- and multi-member wards, and on the desirability or otherwise of a wholly uniform pattern of such wards. We hold no such fixed views. Our proposals include one-, two- and three-member wards throughout the city, on the grounds that, in our view, they best fit our statutory criteria, in particular the criteria relating to community identity and electoral fairness. However, we have considered, and we detail in the relevant sections, some alternative options in some areas.

Ward names

37 As our draft recommendations do not mirror the proposals consulted on by the City Council, we have had some difficulty in identifying appropriate names for the wards we propose. We have sought to reflect the significant residential areas within each of the wards but believe that local residents will be best placed to propose the most suitable names for their areas. Accordingly, we particularly welcome views on the names of the wards during the consultation stage.

38 Our proposals would result in 33 single-member wards, four two-member wards and one three-member ward. By 2013 only five wards would have a variance of over 10% from the city average. We consider that our proposals provide for good electoral equality and strong identifiable boundaries. A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table C1 on pages 32–35 and Map 1.

Electoral arrangements

39 This section of the report details the representations we have received, our consideration on them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Stoke-on-Trent. As detailed earlier, we have divided the city into five areas and the following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Burslem, Tunstall and Chell
- Hanley and Northwood
- Stoke and Penkhull
- South of the A50/A500
- East of the city

Burslem, Tunstall and Chell

40 Under our draft recommendations for 44 councillors, this area is entitled to 11 members. During the City Council's consultation on warding arrangements, it also proposed 11 councillors for this area. The scheme consulted on by the City Council included a Tunstall ward that did not have a reasonable level of electoral equality. We therefore developed a warding pattern that improves the electoral equality for the Tunstall area. In light of this, our draft recommendations are loosely based on the Council's consultation scheme. We have also taken account of the representations we received about that scheme.

Goldenhill and Sandyford

41 We received two submissions that specifically commented on the Goldenhill, Sandyford and Hollywall area. One, from a member of the public, was supportive of the City Council's proposed boundary but suggested the ward be called 'Goldenhill and Sandyford' or 'Goldenhill, Hollywall and Sandyford'. The other, also from a member of the public, suggested that the southern boundary of this ward be moved further north, in order that the areas around the Summerbank School are in the Tunstall ward.

42 During a tour of the area we examined the southern boundary of this ward, as consulted on by the Council. We recognised that this boundary would have to change in order to improve the levels of electoral equality in the neighbouring Tunstall ward (discussed later in the report). We have therefore moved this boundary from behind the odd-numbered homes on Bond Street to behind the odd-numbered homes on St Aidan's Street in order to improve electoral equality in other wards in this area.

43 We have given careful consideration to the suggested boundary change around Summerbank School. However, such a change would worsen electoral equality in the Tunstall area to an unacceptable level. We therefore cannot adopt it as part of our recommendations. Our single-member Goldenhill & Sandyford ward will have 5% more electors per councillor than the city average by 2013.

Brindley Ford and Packmoor

44 We received representations from a city councillor and residents associations supporting the retention of the existing three-member ward for this area. We consider that the arguments provided in the representations were more focused on considerations of single-member and multi-member wards rather than providing evidence relating to our criteria. In any event, under a council size of 44, it is not possible to have this ward represented by three members, even if its existing boundaries were to be retained.

45 We consider that the two settlements of Packmoor and Turnhurst are geographically separate from the surrounding settlements, and note that they can only be accessed via Turnhurst Road to the A527, or from the edge of the city in the north, via Brindley Ford. Having looked carefully at the area, we consider that there is no scope for moving electors into this ward whilst still ensuring good access within the ward and achieving good boundaries.

46 In light of the evidence received, and having visited the area, we recommend a single-member Brindley Ford & Packmoor ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have the highest variance in this area of 10% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2013.

Chell

47 In formulating our draft recommendations for the Chell area we have tried, where possible, to ensure that complete housing estates are kept within whole wards. We note that the Council also consulted on a similar warding scheme. In order to improve electoral equality in Tunstall (discussed below) we have modified the boundaries between that ward and neighbouring wards which has improved electoral equality and ensured that appropriate access within the ward is secured.

48 The representations received on the Brindley Ford and Packmoor areas also referred to the Chell area. Therefore, we having taken the same consideration on the arguments these representations made when applying them to the Chell area. We recommend three single-member wards for the Chell area: Great Chell; Bradeley & Chell Heath; and Little Chell & Stanfield. These wards will have 2% more, 6% fewer and 2% more electors per councillors than the authority average by 2013, respectively.

Tunstall

49 As indicated in paragraphs above, the draft warding scheme consulted on by the Council proposed a Tunstall ward with a high level of electoral inequality of 15% above the city average. We have detailed above the implications of this warding pattern for the surrounding area. In order to address the electoral inequality in the Tunstall ward consulted on by the Council, we have altered the proposed boundaries. In doing so we have carefully considered our criteria of community identity and identifiable boundaries.

50 We received three representations relating to the Tunstall area. Queensland Residents' Association indicated that the area they represent should be part of the Tunstall ward. We have considered whether this change could be adopted. However, it would result in Tunstall ward having a variance of 17% by 2013. It would also mean that the Little Chell & Stanfield ward would worsen to -11% by 2013. We are not persuaded by the evidence we have received that such large variances are justified

and therefore cannot recommend such a change. On balance, we consider that our proposed boundary of a single-member Tunstall ward provides for good electoral equality, 5% above the 2013 average for the city and identifiable boundaries.

Burslem and Cobridge

51 We propose three single-member wards for the Burslem and Cobridge area: Burslem Central, Burslem Park and Cobridge. We consider that this pattern would provide strong ward boundaries and keep similar areas of housing together.

52 We received six representations commenting on the Burslem area of the city. The majority of respondents supported the retention of a three-member Burslem South ward. We also received a proposal for a two-member ward from a current city councillor representing Burslem South. We consider that those representations arguing for multi-member wards and the existing warding arrangements focused more on considerations of single-member and multi-member wards than providing evidence relating to our criteria.

53 We also carefully considered the merits of combining Burslem Central and Cobridge to create a two-member ward. This would have a variance of -6%. However, on balance, we concluded that a two-member ward would not provide a better balance between our criteria than two single-member wards. Nevertheless, we particularly welcome views during the consultation period on the relative merits of a two-member Burslem Central and Cobridge ward as opposed to our draft recommendation.

54 In light of the evidence received so far we recommend three single-member wards for the Burslem and Cobridge area: Burslem Central, Burslem Park, and Cobridge which have 2% fewer, 4% fewer and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2013, respectively. We welcome further evidence on our draft recommendations for this area. In addition we welcome evidence for any different proposals for this area.

Smallthorne, Ford Green and Sneyd Green

55 As mentioned earlier in this report, in two areas we have breached our general divisions of the city into five areas. Our Ford Green & Smallthorne ward breaches the disused North Staffordshire railway line and valley running north to south in the east of the city. This ward will contain the new development around Ford Green, to the east of the disused railway line, in order to improve electoral equality in both the east of the city, and the Smallthorne/Burslem/Cobridge area to its west.

56 We have chosen this area of new development around Ford Green as it has a direct link into Smallthorne. There are no communication links across the disused railway line to the north, and very few further south. Those that are further south would also result in the linking of more geographically remote communities. We also note that this area of new development and Smallthorne are linked under both the existing warding arrangements and the City Council's consultation proposals.

57 We received two representations commenting on this area. Newford Residents' Association provided us with a proposed boundary for a Ford Green ward, with details of areas that should and should not be included in the ward. Our proposed single-member Ford Green & Smallthorne ward incorporates part of the ward proposed by Newford Residents' Association. However, we have not extended the eastern boundary beyond Bellerton Lane due to the adverse impact this would have

on electoral equality. Our rationale for including the new development around Ford Green in the ward is discussed above. Our proposed single-member Ford Green & Smallthorne ward would have 6% more electors than the council average by 2013.

58 We received very little evidence regarding ward boundaries and community identity in the Sneyd Green area. Our single-member Sneyd Green ward seeks to ensure that communities are not arbitrarily split, and provide for good access within the ward. This ward would have 10% fewer electors than the city average by 2013.

59 Our draft recommendations for the wards in this area of the city are outlined in Table C1 on pages 32–35 of the report, and are displayed on the large maps accompanying the report.

Hanley and Northwood

60 Under our draft recommendations for 44 councillors, this area is entitled to six councillors. Our recommendations for this area are based on the representations put to us during Stage One, and the transportation links in the area.

Etruria and Hanley

61 Our Etruria & Hanley ward is a geographically large area that has a lower density of electorate because it is made up of town centre (commercial) and industrial buildings. We received no evidenced representations relating to ward boundaries and community identity in this area. Accordingly, we have sought to ensure that natural communities are not split and that the ward has good internal access. We recommend a single-member Etruria & Hanley ward which would have 4% more electors than the council average by 2013.

Birches Head and Central Forest Park

62 As with our Etruria & Hanley ward, we received few representations relating to the Birches Head and Central Forest Park area. We recommend a two-member ward for this area which will have 3% more electors than the council average by 2013. We have looked closely at whether we could recommend two single-member wards for this area. However, we consider that reasonable electoral quality could only be achieved through the arbitrary splitting of communities between wards.

Joiner's Square and Shelton

63 The scheme consulted on by the Council proposed that Joiner's Square be joined in a ward with Berry Hill. We have used that proposal as the basis of our draft recommendation for this area. Our proposed single-member Joiner's Square ward seeks to keep similar communities together and provide for easy access within the ward. Joiner's Square ward would have 3% fewer electors than the council average by 2013.

64 We received no evidenced representations in regards to the Shelton area. Again, our proposed single-member Hanley Park & Shelton ward would have 9% more electors than the council average by 2013. It seeks to keep communities together and provide easy access within the ward. We acknowledge that this level of electoral equality could be improved by moving the ward's southern boundary further to the north. However, we felt the resulting split of the university campus would be undesirable. We also noted defining features, such as the clay pit to the immediate

north of the A5007, that appear to divide Hanley Park & Shelton ward from Fenton Park & Mount Pleasant ward.

Fenton Park and Mount Pleasant

65 As with the other wards in this area, we received few evidenced representations in relation to the Fenton Park and Mount Pleasant areas. We note that the scheme consulted on by the Council proposed that the Mount Pleasant and Heron Cross communities should be joined in a ward spanning of the A50/A500. We disagree with that approach. As mentioned earlier in the report, we consider that the A50/A500 provides for a strong and identifiable barrier in this area and that these two communities could be included in wards that did not require breaching the A50/A500.

66 We note that our proposed Fenton Park & Mount Pleasant ward appears geographically unusual. The large spur to the north is a result of the industrial estate south of Berry Hill being accessed from the south. We would particularly welcome views on our proposed eastern boundary of this ward, with our Fenton ward to the east (discussed later in the report). While the Fenton ward is under-represented (having 10% more electors per councillor than the average), we have sought to keep communities and housing areas together in drawing this boundary. Therefore, we recommend a single-member Fenton Park & Mount Pleasant ward which would have 3% more electors than the city average by 2013.

67 Our draft recommendations for the wards in this area of the city are outlined in Table C1 on pages 32–35 of the report, and are displayed on the large maps accompanying the report.

Stoke and Penkhull

68 Under our draft recommendation for 44 councillors, this area is entitled to four councillors. However, in precise terms, it is entitled to 4.3 councillors, meaning the area will be under-represented as a whole, leading to higher electoral variances. Our recommendations for this area are based on the representations received during stage one, representations received by the Council during its consultation, and the transportation links in the area.

69 The area is bordered by the strong barriers of the West Coast Main Line to the east and north; the A500 dual carriageway to the south; and the edge of the city to the west. We do not consider that it would be a good reflection of the criteria to breach these boundaries, despite the higher numbers of electors per councillor that result in the four wards that cover this area. We note that the warding pattern consulted on by the City Council also sought to reflect these easily identifiable boundaries.

Cliff Vale and Stoke

70 We have sought to keep the area of Cliff Vale separate and located within one ward, Cliff Vale & Stoke. In doing so we have used, in part, the backs of houses on the A52 as a boundary. Having visited the area, we consider that this ward, which rises on a hill to the west, feels distinct from the area due south.

71 We received no representations about alternative ward boundaries for the Cliff Vale area. We therefore recommend a single-member Cliff Vale & Stoke ward that

provides for good internal access, identifiable boundaries and would have 10% more electors per councillor than the city average by 2013.

Penkhull and Stoke

72 We received one representation specifically regarding the Penkhull area. We were also sent a number of representations received by the City Council during its consultation regarding the Penkhull Garden Village area. Those representations argued that the Penkhull Garden Village area (a conservation area) should be included in the Penkhull ward in its entirety. The Council's consultation proposals appeared to include Trent Valley Road, The Croft and Bromley Hough in a ward to the south, with the Oak Hill area. Many of the representations received by the Council referred to the residents in those roads having links to Penkhull in the north, rather than to Oak Hill in the south.

73 Having visited the area, we consider that these roads link more to Penkhull ward to the north. This is reflected in our draft recommendations for this area. Our draft recommendation is for single-member Penkhull & Stoke ward, which, by 2013, would have 8% more electors per councillor than the city average.

Springfields and Trent Vale, and Boothern and Oak Hill

74 We received no representations regarding these wards. Our draft recommendations are for two single-member wards. They each provide for good internal access to the wards, avoid splitting communities and, given the general under-representation resulting in this area of the city, good levels of electoral equality. Springfields & Trent Vale and Boothern & Oak Hill wards would both have 8% more electors per councillor than the city average by 2013.

75 We have looked closely at whether the boundary between these two wards could be moved further east into the Boothern & Oak Hill ward in order to further improve electoral equality in this ward. However, to do so would risk arbitrarily splitting the Oak Hill community. Nevertheless, we would welcome evidenced views during the consultation on alternative boundaries for these wards that could provide for improved levels of electoral equality whilst still maintaining community identity.

76 Our draft recommendations for the wards in this area of the city are outlined in Table C1 on pages 32-35 of the report, and are displayed on the large maps accompanying the report.

South of the A50/A500

77 Under our draft recommendation for 44 councillors, this area is entitled to nine councillors. As indicated earlier in the report, we take the view that the A50/A500 road provides for a strong and identifiable barrier in this area of the city. However, we have in one ward (discussed below) breached this barrier to ensure that a community is not isolated from the rest of its ward. Our recommendations for this area are based on the representations put to us during Stage One, the constraints of the significant natural and man-made barriers across the south of the city, and the transportation links in the area.

Hanford and Trentham

78 The majority of representations received to our Stage One consultation were from the Trentham area, particularly the Meadow Lane estate, and focused on one

issue. The Meadow Lane estate is immediately west of the West Coast Main Line and north of the Trentham Road/Blurton Road – the one railway crossing point for this area. Under the draft scheme consulted on by the City Council, the Meadow Lane estate was separated from the Trentham area and joined in a ward with the Hem Heath and Newstead areas and parts of Blurton stretching to the east. The City Council proposed this on the grounds of electoral equality but acknowledged the strength of opposition its proposal generated.

79 The representations we received argued strongly for the Meadow Lane estate to be included in a ward with the Trentham area, and informed us of historical, geographical and community factors in support of respondents' views. We received evidence informing us that the West Coast Main Line was the historical boundary for the Trentham ward, and that children in the Meadow Lane estate attend the Ash Green primary school and Trentham High secondary school. We also received evidence indicating that residents of the Meadow Lane estate use local amenities in the Trentham area including doctors' surgeries and the library. Some respondents also argued that the Trent and Mersey canal – used as a boundary under the City Council's consultation proposals, was actually a focal point for the Trentham area.

80 Having visited the area, we consider that the railway line forms a stronger and more identifiable boundary than the canal. Taken together with the evidence received from local residents about their community identities and interests, we believe that the Meadow Lane estate should remain linked with the rest of Trentham in a two-member Hanford & Trentham ward. Such a ward would have a high electoral variance of 14% more electors than the average. However, exceptionally in an urban area, we believe such a variance is justified at this time by the geographic factors and the level of evidence provided by local people. Nevertheless, given that our recommendations may change between the draft and final recommendations, it is important that we hear from local people either in support of or opposition to our proposals for this area.

Hem Heath and Newstead, Longton and Hollybush, and Blurton

81 Our recommendations for this area have provided for good levels of electoral equality and have sought to keep natural communities together. We received two representations discussing these areas.

82 We received one representation from a local resident who argued that if we were to use the West Coast Main Line as a boundary between Trentham and Hanford and Hem Heath and Newstead then this needed to be consistently used between the A50/A500 and the southern edge of the city. The resident considered it could not be argued that the railway line was a strong eastern boundary for the Hanford & Trentham ward if it were breached by including the Wedgewood factory in the Hanford & Trentham ward. We note that the scheme consulted on by the City Council proposed that the Wedgewood factory be included in the Trentham area.

83 Our draft recommendation for single-member Blurton West & Newstead ward would not breach the barrier created by the railway line. This ward would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2013.

84 We received no evidence on precise ward boundaries for this area. We recommend a single-member Hollybush & Longton West ward, which would have 5% more electors per councillor than the city average by 2013. As mentioned earlier,

unlike the City Council's consultation proposals, our proposed ward does not cross the A50/A500 road in the Mount Pleasant/Heron Cross area.

85 We received no evidence on precise ward boundaries for the east of the Blurton area. Accordingly we have sought to create a boundary for Blurton East that keeps similar communities together, provides for easy access within the ward and a good level of electoral equality.

86 We recommend that the western area of Blurton be in a ward with Newstead and Hem Heath. This is inevitable if we are to achieve good levels of electoral equality, given the number of electors in the area. We did consider a further option of a two-member ward covering Blurton West & Newstead and Blurton East; however, we judged at this time that the boundary between these two areas was distinct enough to recommend two single-member wards. On balance, therefore, we recommend a single-member Blurton East ward which would have 6% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2013. However, we would welcome views on these wards in particular, and the on the option of a two-member ward covering Newstead, Blurton West and Blurton East.

Dresden, Florence, Normacot and Lightwood

87 We recognise that these wards and the neighbouring ward, Meir Park (discussed below), will be over-represented given the distribution of electors across the city. When creating wards for this area we have, where possible, sought to keep natural communities together and provide for good internal access within wards.

88 We received five representations discussing the warding arrangements for this area. Dresden Residents' Association wrote to us indicating what they considered the boundaries for the Dresden and Florence ward should be. The Council changed its proposed boundary for this area after its consultation and recommended a two-member ward to full Council. Dresden Residents' Association and two serving city councillors wrote to us explaining why they considered two particular roads – Sutherland Avenue and Southland Avenue – should be included with any Dresden & Florence ward.

89 Having visited the area, we agree that Sutherland Avenue and Southland Avenue should be included within a single-member Dresden & Florence ward. However, the southern boundary of this ward is not the same as that proposed by Dresden Residents' Association; the association's proposed boundary would have an adverse impact on electoral equality in neighbouring wards. Nor does the Dresden and Florence area contain enough electors to justify a two-member ward. Our Dresden & Florence ward would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2013.

90 The scheme consulted on by the City Council proposed single-member wards in the Normacot and Lightwood areas. We note, however, that following this consultation exercise, the proposal that went to the full Council for agreement was for a two-member ward for this area. As stated towards the beginning of this report, the council failed to reach an agreement on its recommended warding pattern.

91 We received few submissions on the Normacot and Lightwood areas, apart from those mentioned above that indirectly commented on these areas. In light of the evidence we have received to date, we recommend a single-member Normacot ward and a single-member Lightwood ward, which would have 8% and 9% fewer electors

per councillor than the city average by 2013, respectively. We particularly welcome further evidence on the extent to which our draft recommendations reflect community identity in this area.

Meir Park

92 As mentioned previously, our proposed Meir Park ward is one of the two wards that breach the significant barriers that divide the city; in this case the A50. We have carefully looked at the access routes of the residential area immediately north of the A50, linked by Caverswall Lane and centred on Edenhurst Avenue to ensure that it is not isolated from the rest of its ward. The access to and from this residential area appears to be south to the A50 and Meir Park area. Its only access north and to the rest of Meir appears to be outside the city boundaries.

93 We received no representations about this area. Accordingly, we have sought to propose a ward that does not arbitrarily split communities and provides good access within the ward. We propose a single-member Meir Park ward which would, by 2013, have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the city average.

94 Our draft recommendations for the wards in this area of the city are outlined in Table C1 on pages 32–35 of the report, and are displayed on the large maps accompanying the report.

East of the city

95 Under our draft recommendations for 44 councillors, this area is entitled to 14 councillors. As discussed earlier in the report, we have breached the western and southern allocation boundaries at Ford Green and in the Meir area in order to achieve better levels of electoral equality (in the former) and improve access (in the latter).

96 Our approach to this more geographically diverse and less dense part of the city has been to divide it into three areas which are clearly separate on the ground: the Meir/Meir Hay/Sandford Hill area, north of the A50 and south of the Adderley Green area the Ubbertley/Bentilee/Berry Hill/Townsend/Abbey Hulton area in the centre of the eastern area, south of Woodhead Road; and the remainder north of Woodhead road, covering Milton/Baddeley Green/Norton/Ball Green.

97 This split of the eastern area results in over-representation in the central part of this area. However, we consider that in order to provide for wards which combine any of these areas would not reflect the communities or transportation links in the area.

Meir, Meir Hay, Weston Coyney, Longton East, Sandford Hill and Fenton

98 We recommend six single-member wards covering this area. We received no evidenced representations on these areas. Therefore our proposed wards have sought to keep similar communities together, provide for easy access within the ward and have identifiable boundaries. We recommend single-member wards for Meir, Weston Coyney, Meir Hey and Longton East. These wards will have a level of electoral equality of -1%, -7%, -6% and -3%, respectively by 2013. We welcome evidenced representations on the extent to which these wards reflect community identity in these areas during the consultation.

99 We also recommend a single-member Sandford Hill ward and single-member Fenton ward, which will have 12% more and 9% more electors than the city average respectively by 2013. Due to this under-representation we have looked carefully to see if these levels of electoral equality could be improved, either by moving the boundary dividing the two wards or moving the Fenton ward western boundary further west. We consider the former would arbitrarily split communities and the latter would impact on access within the Fenton Park & Mount Pleasant ward. We are therefore satisfied that these wards strike the best balance between our criteria. However, we welcome evidenced representations that particularly address how the high levels of electoral equality could be addressed without arbitrarily splitting communities.

Bentilee and Ubbberley

100 The scheme consulted on by the council split the areas of Bentilee and Ubbberley into separate single-member wards. From our visit to the area, we concluded that these two settlements are very similar in nature and could not be easily be divided into separate wards.

101 We therefore recommend a two-member Bentilee & Ubbberley ward which would have 11% fewer electors than the city average by 2013.

Berry Hill and Abbey Hulton

102 As discussed previously in the report, we noted that the scheme consulted on by the council joined Berry Hill in a ward with Joiner's Square. We considered that Berry Hill should not be in this ward due to the limited access points to the Berry Hill community. It appears that the Berry Hill area has only a single access point, which is north on to the Dividy Road. In light of this we consider that the Berry Hill community should be included in a ward with those settlements directly to its north.

103 We have looked carefully at how the Berry Hill area could be included in a ward with the areas to the north, including Bucknall and Abbey Hulton in a three-member ward. We consider a benefit of a three-member ward covering this area would be that it would provide for easily identifiable boundaries and good access within the ward.

104 However, we recommend a single-member Berry Hill ward which would have 11% fewer electors than the city average by 2013. We also recommend a two-member Abbey Hulton ward, which would have 11% fewer electors than the city average. We carefully considered whether the variance of the two-member Abbey Hulton ward could be improved by extending its northern boundary past Woodhead Road. However, at this time we consider that this boundary alteration would not provide for an effective local government ward and would arbitrarily split the communities of Milton and Baddeley in the north.

105 We consider that the pattern of wards for the Berry Hill and Abbey Hulton area would provide reasonable defined boundaries between the single-member Berry Hill and a two-member Abbey Hulton ward, without significantly affecting electoral equality. We consider these wards keep similar communities together and provide for good access within the ward. We welcome representations from those who consider that this area would or would not be better represented by being included in a three-member ward.

Baddeley, Milton and Norton

106 The scheme consulted on by the Council breached Woodhead Road to the south. However, as discussed above, we have taken a decision not to breach that road, as we do not consider this would provide for an effective local government ward. As discussed previously, we consider it is necessary to link the new developments around Ford Green to the west of the disused North Staffordshire railway line with Smallthorne.

107 We note that the Ball Green, Norton and Milton area is more sparsely populated compared with some other areas of the city and has a number of similar communities. We have carefully considered whether single-member wards could be proposed to cover these areas but consider that Norton-in-the-Moors and Milton would have to be arbitrarily divided between wards in order to achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality.

108 We therefore recommend a three-member Baddeley, Milton & Norton ward which would have 6% more electors than the city average by 2013. We welcome evidenced representations during the consultation period from those who consider that a different warding arrangement for the area would be more appropriate.

109 Our draft recommendations for the wards in this area of the city are outlined in Table C1 on pages 32–35 of the report, and are displayed on the large maps accompanying the report.

Conclusions

110 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 32–35 and illustrated on a number of large maps we have produced. The outline map which accompanies this report shows our draft recommendations for the whole authority. It also shows a number of boxes for which we have produced more detailed maps. These maps are available to be viewed on our website. If you require a copy of any large-scale detailed maps from our website, please contact us using the details found in Chapter 3 of this report.

111 Table 1 (overleaf) shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements based on 2008 and 2013 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2008	2013
Number of councillors	44	44
Number of electoral wards	38	38
Average number of electors per councillor	4,273	4,312
Number of electoral wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	5
Number of electoral wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendation

Stoke-on-Trent City Council should comprise 44 councillors serving 38 wards, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

3 What happens next?

112 There will now be a consultation period of 11 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Stoke-on-Trent City Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 11 June 2010. Any submissions received after this date may not be taken into account.

113 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Stoke-on-Trent and welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors in each ward and ward names. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

114 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer
Stoke-on-Trent Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk or by emailing reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk.

115 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Committee takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, at our offices in Trevelyan House (London) and on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

116 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. In the autumn of 2010, we intend to publish our final recommendations. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft recommendations.

4 Mapping

Draft recommendations for Stoke-on-Trent

117 The following maps illustrate our proposed electoral ward boundaries for Stoke-on-Trent City Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Stoke-on-Trent City Council.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed wards in Stoke-on-Trent – North.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed wards in Stoke-on-Trent – Central.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed wards in Stoke-on-Trent – South.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Boundary Committee's functions will be assumed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's

Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England will assume the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010. It will be responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town Council'

Parish (or Town) Council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town Council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or ward than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council
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Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (November 2000) (http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/_consultation.pdf) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.

We comply with this requirement.

Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.

We comply with this requirement.

Appendix C

Table C1: Draft recommendations for Stoke-on-Trent

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Burslem, Tunstall and Chell							
1 Goldenhill & Sandyford	1	4,170	4,170	-2	4,531	4,531	5
2 Brindley Ford & Packmoor	1	3,812	3,812	-11	3,875	3,875	-10
3 Great Chell	1	4,349	4,349	2	4,399	4,399	2
4 Tunstall	1	4,269	4,269	0	4,525	4,525	5
5 Little Chell & Stanfield	1	4,353	4,353	2	4,405	4,405	2
6 Bradeley & Chell Heath	1	4,052	4,052	-5	4,069	4,069	-6
7 Burslem Park	1	4,140	4,140	-3	4,138	4,138	-4
8 Ford Green & Smallthorne	1	4,325	4,325	1	4,551	4,551	6
9 Burslem Central	1	4,149	4,149	-3	4,214	4,214	-2
10 Cobridge	1	4,041	4,041	-5	4,015	4,015	-7
11 Sneyd Green	1	3,983	3,983	-7	3,873	3,873	-10

Table C1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Stoke-on-Trent

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Hanley and Northwood							
12 Etruria & Hanley	1	4,167	4,167	-2	4,481	4,481	4
13 Birches Head & Central Forest Park	2	8,839	4,420	3	8,903	4,452	3
14 Joiner's Square	1	3,651	3,651	-15	4,197	4,197	-3
15 Hanley Park & Shelton	1	4,709	4,709	10	4,681	4,681	9
16 Fenton Park & Mount Pleasant	1	4,576	4,576	7	4,425	4,425	3
Stoke and Penkhull							
17 Cliff Vale & Stoke	1	4,835	4,835	13	4,728	4,728	10
18 Penkhull & Stoke	1	4,705	4,705	10	4,643	4,643	8
19 Springfields & Trent Vale	1	4,747	4,747	11	4,636	4,636	8
20 Boothen & Oak Hill	1	4,465	4,465	4	4,663	4,663	8
South of the A50/A500							
21 Hanford & Trentham	2	9,855	4,928	15	9,792	4,896	14
22 Blurton West & Newstead	1	4,027	4,027	-6	4,047	4,047	-6

Table C1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Stoke-on-Trent

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Hollybush & Longton West	1	4,528	4,528	6	4,529	4,529	5
24 Blurton East	1	4,546	4,546	6	4,573	4,573	6
25 Dresden & Florence	1	4,012	4,012	-6	4,082	4,082	-5
26 Normacot	1	3,859	3,859	-10	3,980	3,980	-8
27 Lightwood	1	3,917	3,917	-8	3,943	3,943	-9
28 Meir Park	1	3,979	3,979	-7	3,963	3,963	-8
East of the City							
29 Meir	1	4,245	4,245	-1	4,263	4,263	-1
30 Weston Coyney	1	3,808	3,808	-11	4,019	4,019	-7
31 Longton East	1	4,191	4,191	-2	4,165	4,165	-3
32 Meir Hay	1	4,080	4,080	-5	4,054	4,054	-6
33 Sandford Hill	1	4,657	4,657	9	4,815	4,815	12
34 Fenton	1	4,812	4,812	13	4,717	4,717	9

Table C1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Stoke-on-Trent

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
35 Bentilee & Ubberley	2	7,657	3,829	-10	7,654	3,827	-11
36 Berry Hill	1	3,902	3,902	-9	3,836	3,836	-11
37 Abbey Hulton	2	7,658	3,829	-10	7,642	3,821	-11
38 Baddeley, Milton & Norton	3	13,944	4,648	9	13,703	4,568	6
Totals	44	188,014	–	–	189,729	–	–
Averages	–	–	4,273	–	–	4,312	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix D

Additional legislation to which we have had regard

Equal opportunities

In preparing this report we have had regard to the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

We have also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by Section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

Tel 020 7271 0500
Fax 020 7271 0505
reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk
www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. The Committee's main role is to conduct electoral reviews of local authorities in England with the aim of ensuring the number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same. Other duties include reviewing local authority boundaries and advising the Government on local authority bids for unitary status.

The
**Local Government
Boundary Commission**
for England

On 1 April 2010, the Boundary Committee will be replaced by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), which will be entirely separate from the Electoral Commission. The approach to the review of Stoke-on-Trent will not be affected by this change.