

Summary

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough 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 Northampton Borough Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the borough.

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 and is now conducting the review. It therefore falls to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

This review is being conducted in the stages shown in the table below.

Submissions received

The Boundary Committee received seven representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from Northampton Borough Council and the Northampton Borough Council Independent Group. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

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 received and formulation of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Northampton Borough 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 approximately 7% over this period. Although we had some concern that this level of growth appeared somewhat high, the Council provided a robust methodology to support this increase. We are therefore content to accept the Council's electorate forecasts as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

Northampton currently has 47 councillors. During Stage One the Boundary Committee received proposals for a council size of 45 from Northampton Borough Council. This was supported 'in principle' by the Independent Group. The Council took an evidenced-based approach in its consideration and detailed its governance structure in addition to providing information on the

roles, responsibilities and workload of its members. Given the evidence provided, we have decided to adopt a council size of 45 members as part of our draft recommendations.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we have developed proposals which are based broadly on those of the Council. The Council's proposals would provide good electoral equality and a clear warding pattern using man-made and natural boundaries. The Council's proposals were also supported by evidence of community identity. Where we have moved away from the Council's proposals, we have sought to use clearer ward boundaries that will result in good communication links across each ward.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough 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 **19 July 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 evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Officer
Northampton Review
The Local Government
Boundary Commission for
England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Further information

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

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.

The
Local Government
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for England