

## Executive summary

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Gloucestershire

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of South Gloucestershire is being undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the district. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake this review on 2 June 2004.

### Current electoral arrangements

The Council presently has 70 members who are elected from 35 wards. The district contains 46 parishes, but the Kingswood area is unparished. The electorate of the district is 194,952 (December 2003).

Due to underestimations in the forecast of electorate growth during the last electoral review, the number of electors per councillor in five of the 35 wards varies by more than 10% from the district average, in two wards by more than 20% and in one ward by more than 40%.

Every review is conducted in four stages, as outlined in the table below.

### Draft recommendations

We broadly based our draft recommendations on the

Council and the Conservative Group's proposals. However, we moved away from these in a number of areas, to adopt a mixture of our own proposals and those put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group for the Yate area.

### Responses to consultation

We received 110 responses during Stage Three. There was significant support and objections to our proposals for the Bradley Stoke and Stoke Gifford area. We received significant support and objections to our proposals for a two-member Bitton & Oldland Common ward. We also received objections to our proposals for a two-member Charfield & Ladden Brook ward. Across the remainder of the area we received general support and a few objections to our proposals.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	3 August 2004	Submission of proposals to us
Two	30 November 2004	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 June 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	13 September 2005	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Analysis and final recommendations

### Electorate figures

During the last review South Gloucestershire Council predicted a 4.6% growth in electorate, from 183,260 in 1997 to 192,084 in 2002. By 2003, the electorate had actually grown by 6% from the 1997 figure to 194,952. The Council continues to predict substantial growth, chiefly in the urban 'north fringe' area to the south of the district. It is predicting almost 5% growth in electorate over the next five years, from 194,952 in 2003 to 204,751 by 2008.

### Council size

We received no further comments on council size and are therefore confirming the existing council size of 70 as final.

### General analysis

We note the support and objections to our proposals in the Bradley Stoke and Stoke Gifford area. Given the evidence received we propose confirming our Stoke Gifford ward as final. However, we do propose moving away from a three-member Bradley Stoke North ward, to create a single-member Bradley Stoke North and two-member Bradley Stoke Central & Stoke Lodge ward. We propose moving away from our two-member Charfield & Ladden Brook ward to create two single-member Charfield and Ladden Brook wards. Although the balance of

evidence was close, we propose moving away from our three-member Bitton & Oldland Common ward, to create a single-member Bitton and two-member Oldland Common ward. In the remainder of the area we propose a number of minor amendments, but are broadly confirming our draft recommendations as final.

### What happens next?

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in the full report should be addressed to the Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before **27 June 2006**. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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The contact details above should only be used for implementation purposes.

### Further information

The full report is available to download at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).