

Executive summary

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Holland in Lincolnshire

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of South Holland 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 district councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake this review on 2 June 2004.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing electoral arrangements seven of the 22 wards have variances of more than 10% from the district average. This is expected to worsen by 2009, with nine wards having variances of more than 10% from the district average.

The review has been conducted in four stages, as outlined in the table below.

Draft recommendations

We adopted a mixture of 18 one-, two- and three-member wards. In Spalding town we adopted the Council's proposals subject to a number of amendments to improve electoral equality. In the east of the district we proposed a minor amendment to the Council's

proposals to improve electoral equality in its Long Sutton and Sutton Bridge wards. In the rural west area, in the light of poor levels of electoral equality and limited community identity evidence, we moved away from the Council's proposals and created three-member Crowland & Deeping St Nicholas, Donington, Quadring & Gosberton, and Pinchbeck & Surfleet wards.

Responses to consultation

We received eight submissions at Stage Three, including comments from the Council, five parish councils, a local councillor and a resident. The Council put forward comments about the west of the district, Little Sutton parish and the Spalding town area.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	17 May 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	9 August 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	29 November 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	7 March 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council is predicting electorate growth of 5% over the next five years. This will be spread across the district, but with significant developments in Spalding and Holbeach towns. The Committee consider these the best estimates available.

Council size

We received no further comments on council size and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for a council size of 37 members as final.

General analysis

We propose broadly confirming our draft recommendations as final, subject to two amendments. In the east of the district, in light of the community identity evidence received, we propose transferring Little Sutton parish back to Long Sutton ward. In the Spalding town area, we propose a very minor amendment to transfer two properties to Spalding St John's ward to address issues of access.

We propose no change in the remainder of the district. In the west of the district, we note the objections to our proposals for Crowland & Deeping St Nicholas, Pinchbeck & Surfleet and Donington, Quadring & Gosberton wards. However, the alternative proposal would significantly worsen electoral equality and we do not consider

that any respondents put forward sufficient evidence of community links to persuade us to move away from our draft recommendations.

We received no comments about our Fleet, Gedney, Holbeach Hurn, Holbeach Town and Moulton, Weston & Cowbit wards, and Whaplode & Holbeach St Johns. In light of this and the good levels of electoral equality that they secure, we propose confirming them as final.

What happens next?

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before **22 August 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