

## Executive summary

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for East Northamptonshire

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of East Northamptonshire 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 12 May 2005.

### Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 10 of the 20 wards have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average. This is not expected to improve by 2009.

This review was conducted in four stages, as shown in the table below.

### Draft recommendations

We proposed adopting a mixture of one-, two- and three-member wards based on the District Council's proposals. We proposed a number of amendments in the Rushden and Higham Ferrers area to improve electoral equality and ensure that each area is represented by the correct number of councillors. We proposed creating a three-member Higham Ferrers Wharf ward taking in an area of

Rushden parish. This was necessary to ensure that Rushden parish received its correct allocation of councillors. In the remainder of the district we proposed adopting the Council's proposals without amendment.

### Responses to consultation

We received 18 submissions at Stage Three, including comments from the District Council, six town and parish councils, local political parties, local associations and residents. The majority of submissions received objected to the proposed changes in Higham Ferrers and Rushden. The District Council put forward a detailed submission highlighting the separate identities and communities of Higham Ferrers and Rushden towns.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	12 July 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	4 October 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 February 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	23 May 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Analysis and final recommendations

### Electorate figures

The Council is predicting electorate growth of 9% over the next five years. This will be spread across the district. We note that this figure is high but, on the evidence received, we consider it is the best estimate currently available. At Stage Three we received no further comments on electorate growth and are confirming these figures as final.

### Council size

At Stage Three East Northamptonshire Council reiterated its support for a council size of 40 and we received no other comments on council size. We are therefore confirming the council size of 40 as final.

### General analysis

Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we are broadly confirming our draft recommendations as final. However, we propose a significant amendment to our proposals in the towns of Higham Ferrers and Rushden. We received strong community identity evidence from East Northamptonshire Council in support of maintaining the existing boundary between Higham Ferrers and Rushden. We therefore propose reverting to the Council's original proposal of five wards in

Rushden and two wards in Higham Ferrers, subject to some modification to improve access and boundaries. In light of the very limited comments received on the rest of the district and the good electoral equality, we propose confirming our draft recommendations outside Higham Ferrers and Rushden as final.

### What happens next?

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission through the contact details below. The Commission will not make an Order implementing them before **24 October 2006**. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

**The Secretary  
The Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

**Fax: 020 7271 0667  
Email: [implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk)**

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)