

Executive summary

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for East Northamptonshire in 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 for England to undertake this review on 12 May 2005.

Current electoral arrangements

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

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

Submissions received

We received two submissions during Stage One. East Northamptonshire Council put forward proposals for the whole district. Rushden Town Council put forward names for district wards and proposed a redistribution of town councillors.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council is predicting electorate growth of 9% over the next five years. This will be spread across the district. The Boundary Committee note that this figure is high. However, on the evidence received, it considers that this is the best estimate currently available.

Council size

We received one proposal on council size. East Northamptonshire Council proposed an increase of four councillors to 40. The Council put forward strong arguments for this increase, and as a result we have been persuaded to adopt the Council's proposal for this increase.

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

General analysis

We propose adopting a mixture of one-, two- and three-member wards based on the Council's proposals. We propose a number of amendments in Rushden and Higham Ferrers areas to improve electoral equality and ensure that each area is represented by the correct number of councillors. We propose creating a two-member Higham Ferrers Wharf ward taking in an area of Rushden parish. This has been necessary to ensure that Rushden parish receives its correct allocation of councillors. In the remainder of the district we propose adopting the Council's proposals without amendment.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for East Northamptonshire contained in this report. We welcome views from all parts of the community and believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 22 May 2006. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for East Northamptonshire and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding Higham Ferrers and Rushden areas required making difficult judgements between our statutory criteria. We would particularly welcome local views, 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.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
East Northamptonshire Review
The Boundary Committee
for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Further information

This report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk