

Executive summary

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Newark & Sherwood in Nottingham

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of Newark & Sherwood 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 10 February 2005.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, nine wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average. Development forecast for the five-year period that occurred between 1999 and 2004 during the last review was largely not realised. In Balderton North ward more development was undertaken than expected, which has resulted in it having a particularly poor variance, with 16% more electors than the district average.

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

Submissions received

During Stage One we received 34 submissions which were

relevant to this review. The District Council proposed a district-wide scheme based on the existing council size. However, we could not officially consider the District Council's submission as it was received after the official deadline. Therefore we could only consider it as information to assist us in making our draft recommendations.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The electorate of Newark & Sherwood is forecast to increase by approximately 4% by 2009. The main area of growth is expected to be in Farnon ward. Additionally, significant growth is anticipated in the wards of Beacon, Castle,

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	17 May 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	9 August 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	6 December 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	7 March 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Clipstone and Ollerton. General growth is expected across the remainder of the district. During Stage One the Council amended its figures twice. During Stage Two the Council provided updated forecast figures for six wards. We are content that the Council's revised figures represent the best estimates currently available.

Council size

During Stage One we received one submission relating to council size from the District Council, which was to retain the existing council size of 46 members. We received two submissions supporting this proposal. As part of our recommendations we propose to retain the council size of 46 members.

General analysis

We are proposing recommendations largely based on the District Council's information. In the rural areas surrounding the urban settlements of Newark town and Balderton, and in the north of the district, we have proposed wards that the Council had considered when forming proposals but which it did not formally submit to us. In the west of the district we have made some amendments to the Council's proposals to improve the level of electoral equality in the area.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Newark & Sherwood contained in the 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 6 March 2006. Any received **after** this date will not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Newark & Sherwood and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding Southwell town to be a difficult judgement 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:

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Further information

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