

Executive summary

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Newark & Sherwood in Nottinghamshire

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 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. Overall, the development forecast for the five-year period between 1999 and 2004 produced during the last review was largely not realised. By contrast, in Balderton North ward more development was undertaken than expected resulting in its having a particularly poor variance, with 16% more electors than the district average.

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

Draft recommendations

We proposed recommendations largely based on the information provided by the District Council.

In the rural areas surrounding the urban settlements of Newark town and Balderton, and in the north of the district, we 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.

Responses to consultation

At Stage Three we received 32 submissions including objections to our proposal to include Oxtun parish within the proposed Blidworth ward. We also received conflicting arguments as to the appropriate warding arrangements for Southwell town.

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

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The electorate of Newark & Sherwood is forecast to increase by approximately 5% by 2009. The main area of growth is expected to be in Farndon ward. Additionally, significant growth is anticipated in the wards of Beacon, Castle, 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 received no further comment at Stage Three. Therefore we are content that the Council's revised figures represent the best estimates currently available.

Council size

During Stage One we received a submission 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 draft recommendations we proposed to retain the council size of 46 members. At Stage Three the District Council and Liberal Democrat Group supported our proposal for a council size of 46 members.

General analysis

We propose endorsing the majority of our draft recommendations as final.

However, we have been persuaded by the evidence received to include Oxtun parish within our proposed Farnsfield & Bilsthorpe ward. We note the conflicting arguments received regarding the appropriate warding arrangements for Southwell town but on balance are of the view that the town should be represented by three single-member wards.

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 **22 August 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

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.