

Summary

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Welwyn Hatfield in Hertfordshire

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of Welwyn Hatfield was undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the district. It aimed 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, seven wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average. Due to development in Hatfield North ward it currently has 23% more electors than the district average; by 2009 this is expected to rise to 59% more electors than the district average if the existing arrangements remain in place.

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

Draft recommendations

During Stage One we proposed to retain the council size of 48. We made amendments to 13 of the districts ward boundaries in order to improve electoral

equality based on the District Council's proposals with amendments from the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats as well as some of our own. We received limited community identity argument at Stage One and therefore made amendments to the existing warding arrangements in order to improve electoral equality.

Responses to consultation

During Stage Three we received five submissions. The District Council agreed in principle with our draft recommendations. The Labour Party and Councillor O'Brien put forward alternative proposals for Hatfield town. The Labour Party and Councillor Jones also proposed alternative Peartree and Hollybush wards in Welwyn Garden City. Hatfield Town Council stated that it had no comments.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	7 November 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	13 February 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The District Council has forecast an increase in electorate of approximately 7% between 2004 and 2009, most of which is anticipated in Hatfield North ward. We have discussed these figures with the council officers and noted the development which is currently underway. We also received details of how the District Council calculated these figures and are satisfied that they currently provide the best estimation of the 2009 electorate of Welwyn Hatfield that can reasonably be made at this time. We have therefore used them when making our final recommendations.

Council size

During Stage One we received proposals from the District Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats for council sizes of 48, 48 and 49 members respectively. After further investigation we were satisfied that the District Council's proposed council size of 48 would provide for the best representation for the district. We did not receive any comments regarding council size at Stage Three. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendation of 48 members as final.

General analysis

We are confirming our draft recommendations as final in all but two areas in the district. We are recommending small changes in Hatfield town and Welwyn Garden City.

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 7 August 2007. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

**The Secretary
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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