

Executive summary

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Lakeland in Cumbria

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of South Lakeland 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 arrangements, 16 wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average.

Development forecast during the last review, for the five-year period between 1996 and 2001, was largely not realised. However, in Burton & Holme ward, more development took place than expected, which has resulted in it having a particularly high variance, with 42% more electors than the district average.

This review will be conducted in four stages, shown in the table below.

Submissions received

We received 14 submissions at Stage One, including two district-wide submissions from South Lakeland District Council and the Liberal Democrats. We

received submissions from eight parish councils, three district councillors and one local resident.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The District Council has predicted growth of 6% over the five-year period 2004 to 2009. We are satisfied that the Council's forecasts are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council size

The District Council proposed a council size of 51, one less than present. It stated the current council size was appropriate. However, it proposed a reduction, stating that 51 members would achieve better electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the status quo of 52 members.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 November 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	27 February 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

General analysis

We propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals which were supported, in part, by the Liberal Democrats. We propose amendments in three of the proposed wards, to improve the level of electoral equality.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for South Lakeland 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 **26 February 2007**. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for South Lakeland and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward in Windermere Applethwaite ward to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. Additionally, we found our decision regarding the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward to be a difficult judgement between the strands of our statutory criteria. We would particularly welcome

local views on these issues, backed up by good 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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The Boundary Committee for
England
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Further information

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

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

**The
Boundary
Committee**
for England