

Summary

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

Draft recommendations

We recommended that South Lakeland should be represented by 51 members,

one fewer than at present. The warding pattern that we recommended was based on the Stage One submission from the District Council with some modifications to provide an improved level of electoral equality.

Responses to consultation

During the consultation period on our draft recommendations we received support from the District Council, on whose proposals our recommendations were based. We also received opposition to our recommendations from a number of parish councils, local councillors and residents in relation to their respective areas. In particular, we received some strong opposition to our proposals in the Crake Valley and Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale areas.

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 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

During Stage One, the District Council predicted growth of 6% over the five-year period 2004 to 2009 and we used these figures when considering the warding pattern in South Lakeland. We received no further representations regarding the electorate figures during Stage Three and are satisfied to use them as the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

We received no further representations during Stage Three in relation to our recommendation to reduce the number of councillors in South Lakeland from 52 to 51 and are confirming this recommendation as final.

General analysis

We have broadly proposed confirming our draft recommendations as final. We note the opposition to our proposals in a number of areas on the grounds that they do not reflect community identities. We looked especially closely at the Crake Valley and Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale areas. However, we did not consider that we had received sufficient evidence to justify the resultant poor levels of electoral equality that the alternative proposals that we received would create. We have

proposed two minor amendments to improve the boundaries in Kendal and Grange and have also recommended 7 district ward name changes from those proposed in our draft recommendations.

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 18 September 2007. 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