

News release

17 March 2009 for immediate use

Have your say on what your council looks like

The Boundary Committee for England has begun the second part of its consultation on electoral arrangements for the new County Durham unitary authority.

Following consultation last year, the Committee has concluded that the new authority should be made up of 126 elected members. The Committee now needs information from people and groups in County Durham to enable it to map out electoral divisions – what area each of the 126 councillors will represent.

Max Caller, Chair of the Boundary Committee, said: “In order for us to reach conclusions on new electoral arrangements that will give the new unitary authority the best possible start, we need information and evidence from people across County Durham. We want to know what you think of as your local area so we can make recommendations on where the new electoral boundaries should be.

“Your views can make a difference. We encourage anyone who is interested in what the new council for the county looks like to submit evidence-based proposals for new electoral boundaries within County Durham to the Committee. The Committee will consider carefully all evidence that is provided during the next stage of the process.”

This stage of consultation will last until 8 June 2009. Further information on electoral reviews and guidance on what sort of information the Committee is looking for should be available at local authorities and in your local library. Alternatively, visit the Boundary Committee website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk and click on “about electoral reviews”.

To take part in the consultation, write or e-mail to:

The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW
reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

All comments we receive will be available for you to see on our website, in our offices or at your council office (by appointment)

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For further information contact:

Gareth Nicholson on 020 7271 0638

press@boundarycommittee.org.uk

outside office hours: 07789 920414

Notes to editors:

1. The Boundary Committee for England is responsible for reviewing local authority electoral arrangements, e.g. defining boundaries for local elections and the number of councillors to be elected, and for conducting reviews of local government external boundaries and structure.
2. In 2006, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government approved a bid from Durham County Council for a new unitary authority covering the whole of the county. This means that the County Council and the six district councils in the county will be replaced by a new single unitary council covering the whole of the county.
3. As the structure of local government in the area will be changing, the independent Boundary Committee is reviewing electoral arrangements in County Durham to ensure they reflect the way in which the new council will operate in the future, and how it will engage with local communities, including parish and town councils.
4. The main aim of an electoral review is to provide for 'electoral equality'. That means each councillor representing approximately the same number of electors. The Boundary Committee must also have regard to community identity and interests.
5. Further guidance on responding to a Boundary Committee consultation is available on the website <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/boundary-reviews>