

Summary

Draft recommendations on the
new electoral arrangements for
Cheshire East Council

The Boundary Committee for England is an independent statutory body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Cheshire East to ensure that the new unitary authority has appropriate electoral arrangements that reflect its functions and political management structure.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed us to undertake this review.

This review is being conducted in six stages, as shown in the table below.

Council size

We received 44 representations during our initial consultation on council size. Of these, we received 22 specific proposals for council size ranging from 34 to 135 members. Cheshire East Council proposed a council size of 82 members, while Cheshire

East Liberal Democrats and the Cheshire East Labour Local Government Committee proposed 90 members. On balance, we were minded to adopt the Council's proposals. Therefore during Stage Three we invited representations on warding arrangements based on a council size of 82.

Submissions received

We received 60 submissions during Stage Three, including four authority-wide schemes from Cheshire East Council, Cheshire East Labour Local Government Committee, Cheshire East Liberal

| Stage | Stage starts | Description |
|-------|------------------|---|
| One | 24 February 2009 | Submission of proposals to us on council size |
| Two | 6 April 2009 | Our analysis and deliberation on council size |
| Three | 12 May 2009 | Submission of proposals to us |
| Four | 3 August 2009 | Our analysis and deliberation |
| Five | 10 November 2009 | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them |
| Six | 2 February 2010 | Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations |

Democrats, along with a local resident. We also received warding proposals relating to the north of the authority from two former independent Macclesfield district councillors, as well as the Cheshire East Green Party. There were also more localised comments and proposals from parish and town councils in the area, along with local residents. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2013, a period five years on from the December 2008 electoral roll which is the basis for this review. The electorate forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 1.5% over this period. A majority of this growth is expected in urban areas, such as Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Sandbach.

We received several comments during Stage Three querying the electorate projections provided by Cheshire East Council. These queries referred to possible residential developments in the Alsager, Poynton and Holmes Chapel areas. This has been discussed with the Council, and on the basis of the information provided, we are content to accept the Council's electorate

projections as the best estimate that can be made at this time. These have formed the basis of the draft recommendations.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on the four authority-wide schemes. We note the absence of consensus between different political groups, which has resulted in them submitting very different warding proposals. We have sought to base our draft recommendations on locally generated proposals where possible. Where we have moved away from local proposals, we have sought to ensure electoral fairness, as well as reflect community identities and provide for strong, identifiable boundaries.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment upon our draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Cheshire East Council contained in the report. We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals. We will take into account all submissions

received by 1 February 2010. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the representations submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing to us:

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Cheshire East Review
The Boundary Committee for England
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Further information

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