

Summary

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Cheshire East Council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent 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 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 Boundary Committee for England commenced the review in 2009. However, on 1 April 2010 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee and is now conducting the review. It therefore falls to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

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

Draft recommendations

The Boundary Committee proposed a council size of 82 comprising a pattern of six three-member wards, 18 two-member wards and 28 single-member wards. The proposals were based on the four authority-wide schemes with some modification. Broadly speaking, the draft recommendations would provide good levels of electoral equality.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
Council size	24 February 2009	Submission of proposals to us and our analysis and deliberation on council size
One	12 May 2009	Submission of proposals to us on wider electoral arrangements
Two	3 August 2009	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	10 November 2009	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	15 February 2010	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

During Stage Three the Boundary Committee received 201 submissions, including submissions from the Council, the Congleton and Macclesfield Conservative Associations, the Cheshire East Labour Local Government Committee and the Crewe & Nantwich Liberal Democrats. The remainder of the submissions received were localised comments, predominantly from parish councils and local residents. In particular, alternative proposals were put forward for the Crewe and Nantwich area, Poynton and the rural east of the authority and Handforth. Furthermore, several more minor proposed changes to the draft recommendations were submitted. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk.

Analysis and final 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. The majority of this growth is expected in urban areas, such as Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Sandbach. The Council

advised the Boundary Committee of development that they considered likely to be completed by 2013 which has been included in their estimates. Following recent changes in legislation, we also need to have regard to a five-year forecast from the date of the publication of our final recommendations. We therefore requested that the Council provide a forecast for 2015. Having considered these projected electoral forecasts, we are content that they provide the best estimate that can be made at this time.

General analysis

Throughout the review process, the primary consideration has been to achieve good electoral equality, while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, we have sought to reflect community identities and improve the levels of electoral fairness. The Boundary Committee's draft recommendations were based on elements of a number of warding proposals submitted. Our final recommendations take account of submissions received during Stage Three, and several minor changes have been made to reflect the evidence received.

Our final recommendations for Cheshire East are that the Council should have 82 members, with 28 single-member wards, 18 two-member wards and six three-member wards.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Cheshire East Council. The changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Cheshire East Council, in 2011.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice.

Further information

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

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament in April 2010. It is independent of Government and political parties, and is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas

The
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for England