

Summary

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council

Who we are:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas.

Electoral reviews:

The purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of electoral divisions – for a local authority.

Why Buckinghamshire?

We are conducting an electoral review of Buckinghamshire County Council to deliver improved levels of electoral equality for local voters.

Buckinghamshire currently has high levels of electoral inequality so that the value of your vote - in county council elections - varies depending on where you live in Buckinghamshire.

Draft recommendations

The Commission proposed a council size of 49: a reduction of eight county councillors. Our draft recommendations proposed that those county councillors should represent 49 single-member divisions across the county.

The Commission's proposals were broadly based on Buckinghamshire County Council's authority-wide scheme with some modifications to reflect the Commission's statutory criteria.

In our final recommendations, we confirm a pattern of 49 single-member divisions for Buckinghamshire.

Submissions received

During the consultation on the draft recommendations, we received 35 representations.

The majority of submissions to the Commission focused on specific parts of the county and, in particular, on Chesham town in Chiltern District and on the northern part of Aylesbury Vale District.

We received a small number of submissions for other areas.

All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

| Stage | Stage starts | Description |
|--------------|--------------|---|
| Council Size | 12 Oct 2010 | Submission of proposals for council size to the LGBCE |
| One | 11 Jan 2011 | Submission of proposals of division arrangements to the LGBCE |
| Two | 4 April 2011 | LGBCE's analysis and deliberation |
| Three | 19 July 2011 | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them |
| Four | 10 Oct 2011 | Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations |

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

As part of this review, Buckinghamshire County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2017, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 4% over the period from 2010 to 2017.

In developing its electorate forecasts the County Council had taken into account committed development in the county and Office for National Statistics (ONS) projected population growth. On balance, we are satisfied that the Council's estimated increase in electorate by 2017 represents the best possible estimate available at this time. We are therefore content to accept the Council's electorate figures for Buckinghamshire as the basis of our final recommendations.

General analysis

The Commission's final recommendations for Buckinghamshire are for 49 single-member divisions. Only two divisions would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2017. We consider our proposals will ensure good electoral equality while providing an accurate reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during Stages One and Three.

In response to submissions made to the Commission during consultation, we have decided to alter our draft recommendations in some parts of the county.

In Aylesbury Vale District, for example, the Commission has opted to include the parish of Thornborough in Buckingham East division rather than Winslow division as suggested in the draft recommendations.

The consultation process also alerted the Commission to the fact that our draft recommendations meant that there was no public access from the south of our proposed Stone & Waddesdon division to the north and across the River Thame. The Commission has sought to rectify that situation by ensuring that the parishes of Ashendon, Cuddington and Nether Winchendon are included in the Stone & Waddesdon division which provides public access over the river.

In Wycombe District, the Commission received comments on its draft recommendations for the Marlow division from the County Council, Marlow Town Council and The Marlow Society.

The Marlow Society argued that the town should be contained within one division and not split as proposed by

the draft recommendations. However, the town of Marlow contains too many electors to be included in a single division without causing very high levels of electoral inequality. Instead, the Commission has accepted Marlow Town Council's proposed amendment to the boundary between Marlow division and our proposed Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East division so that both sides of Glade Road between Little Marlow Road and Claremont Road are included in the Marlow division.

The Commission considered all the evidence presented to it and further details about its recommendations for every part of the county are available in the full report on its website.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council. The changes we have proposed must now be approved by Parliament. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Buckinghamshire County Council in 2013.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review. The full report and maps are available to view and 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
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England