

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for South Lakeland District Council

Electoral review

October 2016

Translations and other formats

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Summary

Who we are and what we do

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions should there be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

Why South Lakeland District Council?

We are conducting a review of South Lakeland District Council as the value of each vote in council elections varies depending on where you live in South Lakeland. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

Our proposals for South Lakeland District Council

- South Lakeland should be represented by 51 councillors, the same number as there are now
- South Lakeland should have 18 wards, 27 fewer than at present
- The boundaries of almost all wards should change; one ward (Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale) will remain the same.

We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for South Lakeland.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors (Chair)
- Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL
- Alison Lowton
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Sir Tony Redmond
- Professor Paul Wiles CB

- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

1 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in South Lakeland are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

What is an electoral review?

2 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

3 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

4 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for South Lakeland. We then held two periods of consultation on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation informed our draft and final recommendations.

5 This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
20 October 2015	Number of councillors decided
27 October 2015	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
11 January 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
10 May 2016	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
18 July 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
18 October 2016	Publication of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

7 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

8 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

9 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2015	2021
Electorate of South Lakeland	83,221	90,927
Number of councillors	51	51
Average number of electors per councillor	1,632	1,783

10 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having ‘good electoral equality’. All of our proposed wards for South Lakeland will have an improved electoral variance by 2021.

11 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of South Lakeland or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

12 See Appendix C for details of submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

13 As prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2021, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2016. These forecasts were broken down to polling district levels and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 9% to 2021. The growth will largely be driven by new housing planned for Grange, Kendal and Ulverston.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

14 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

15 Prior to consultation, South Lakeland District Council submitted a proposal to retain the existing council size of 51 members. During the preliminary period we received one other proposal with regard to council size. This proposal was from the Conservative Group on South Lakeland District Council who proposed that the council size for South Lakeland be reduced from 51 to 45 members.

16 We carefully considered the representations from the Council and political group. We considered that the Council's submission proposing a council of 51 was supported by adequate evidence to justify the maintenance of the existing council size. We are content that the Council has sufficiently demonstrated that the authority can operate efficiently and effectively under this council size and ensure effective representation of local residents.

17 Those respondents who proposed a reduction did not, in our view, adequately justify their preferred number in the context of the size and geographical nature of South Lakeland, or give full consideration to the effective governance and decision-making responsibilities for the authority. We therefore consulted on electoral arrangements for South Lakeland based on a council size of 51 members. We have based our draft and final recommendations on a council size of 51 elected members.

18 We received a small number of submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. The respondents commented that 51 councillors were too many, but did not propose an alternative size. We have therefore maintained 51 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

19 During consultation on ward boundaries, we received 28 submissions, including one district-wide proposal and one partial district proposal. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for the warding arrangements of the district with a particular focus on the three-councillor wards.

20 Legislation (Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c)) states that the Commission must have regard to the desirability of recommending ward patterns that reflect the electoral cycle of the authority under review. As such, we start with a presumption that, for example, local authorities that elect by thirds will have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards, so that every elector has the same opportunity to vote whenever local elections take place.

21 This presumption was made clear to the Council during its initial briefings with the Commission at the commencement of the review. The Council considered

whether to change its electoral cycle to whole-council elections once every four years. In those circumstances, there would be no presumption about the number of members elected from each ward.

22 However, a resolution was passed by South Lakeland District Council in July 2015 to retain its existing electoral cycle and continue to elect by thirds. This means that we started this Electoral review with the presumption that the district will have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. However, if it could be clearly evidenced during the consultation that such a pattern would not meet our statutory criteria, we were prepared to depart from that presumption.

23 We have carefully considered the details of the two warding pattern schemes received during consultation. We are of the opinion that, in this instance, not enough evidence had been received to justify departing from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. Therefore, we developed a warding pattern that incorporates elements of both schemes received whilst providing for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

24 The district-wide scheme provided a mixed-pattern warding arrangement of one single-member, seven two-member and 12 three-member wards for the district. The partial district scheme also provided a mixed-pattern warding arrangement with one single-member, one two-member and 11 three-member wards. The latter did not provide any electoral arrangements for the areas of Kendal and Levens other than to specify that five three-member wards should be created.

25 On careful consideration of the proposals received, we were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards in the district-wide scheme neither resulted in good levels of electoral equality across several areas of the district nor generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. The partial district scheme provided for better levels of electoral equality and used more clearly identifiable boundaries.

26 Our draft recommendations were for 17 three-member wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during the consultation period.

Draft recommendations consultation

27 We received 53 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included detailed district-wide proposals from the Council and the Council's Conservative Group. The majority of the other submissions focussed on specific areas, particularly our proposals for Windermere and Kendal town. Some submissions opposed the concept of three-councillor wards for rural areas.

28 Our final recommendations are based on a combination of the schemes received from South Lakeland District Council and the Conservative Group on the

Council, with some modifications to provide for better electoral equality. As a result of the local evidence we received we have made alterations to several wards, mainly in Windermere and Kendal. We have moved away from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards, providing two-councillor wards for Ambleside & Grasmere, Cartmel and Kendal North. We did not consider adequate rationale was provided to move away from three-councillor wards in the entirety of the rural area.

Final recommendations

29 Pages 10 - 16 detail our final recommendations for each area of South Lakeland. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

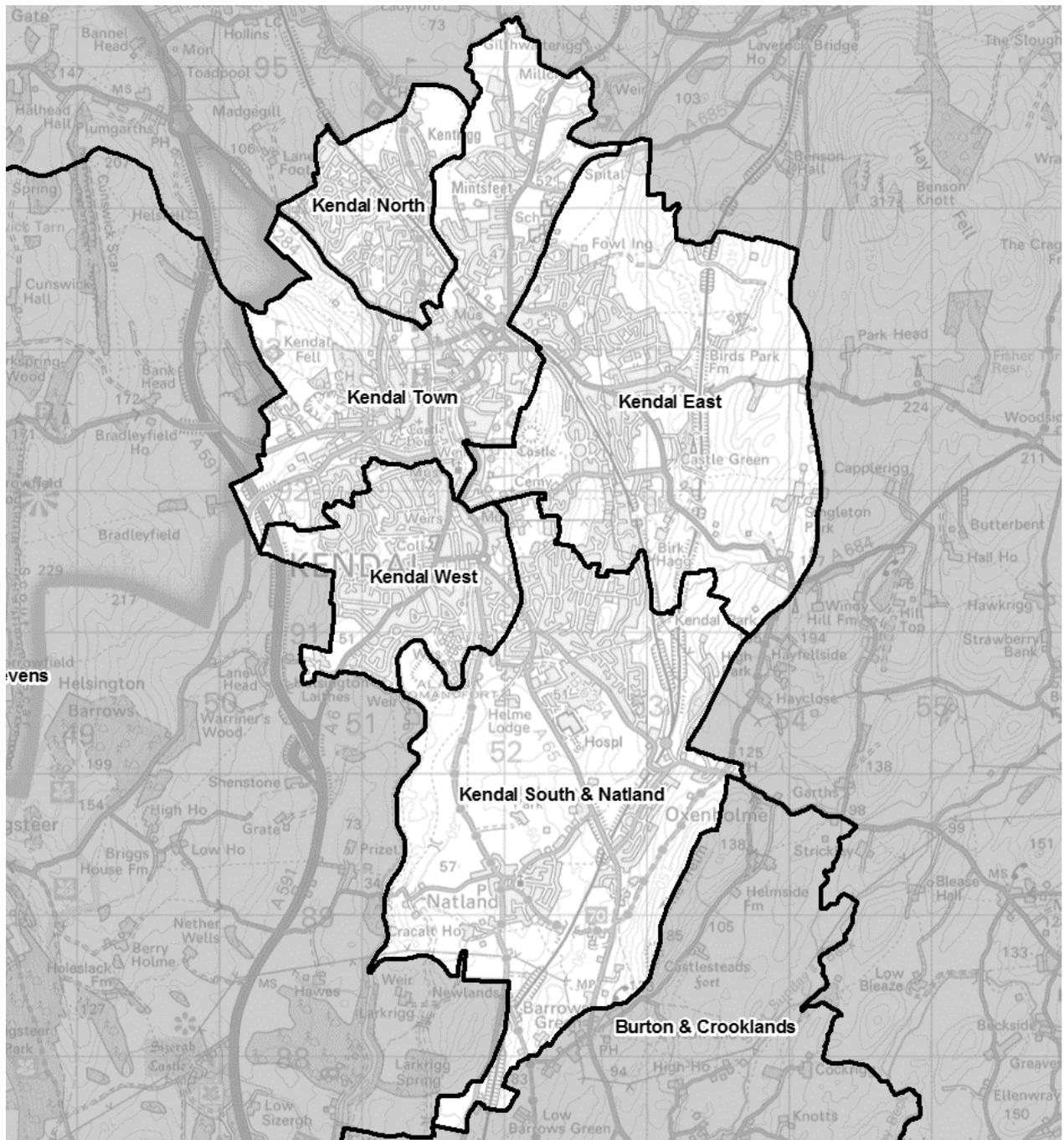
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

30 Our final recommendations are for 15 three-councillor wards and three two-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

31 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in Table 1 (on page 21) and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Kendal



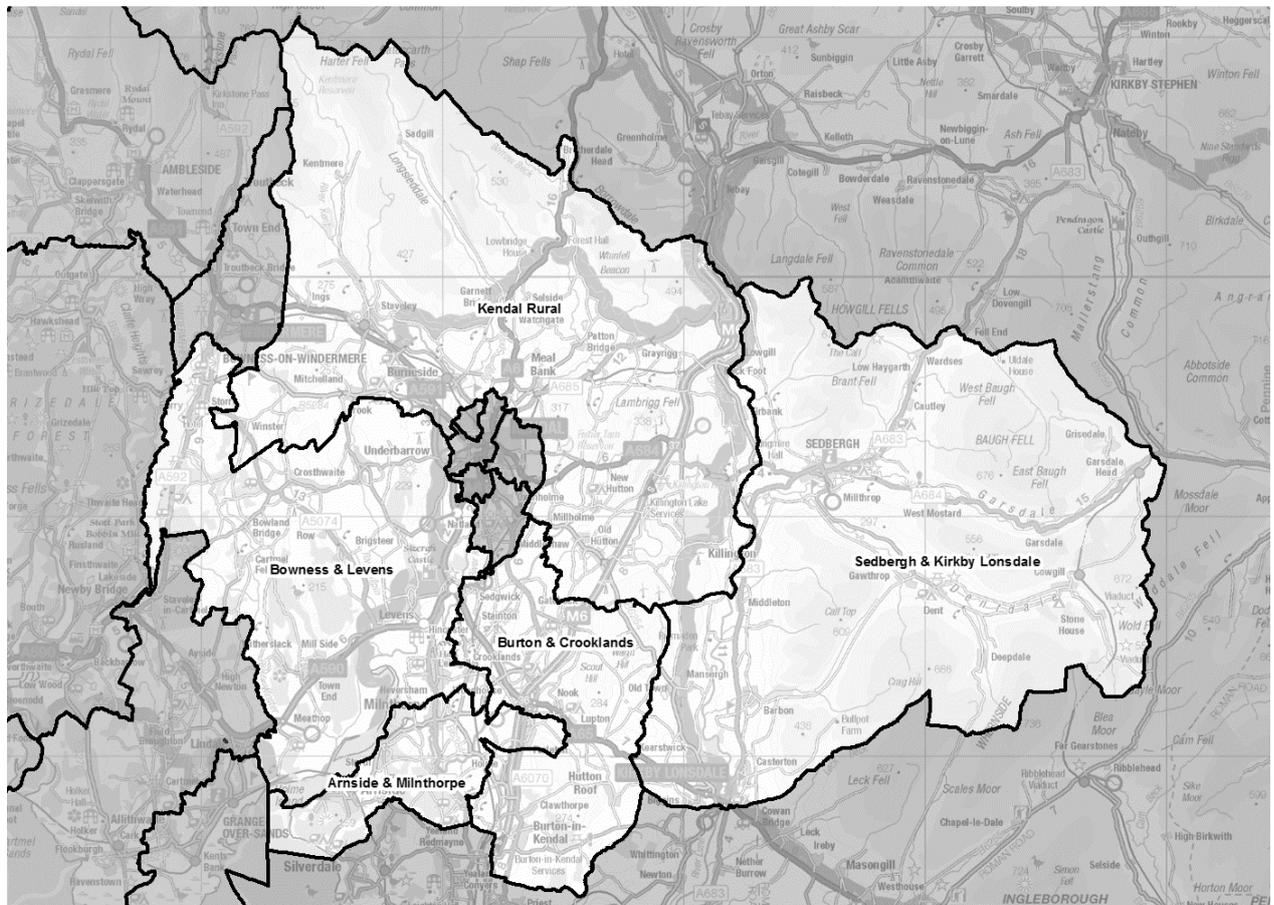
Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Kendal East	3	-1%
Kendal North	2	-7%
Kendal South & Natland	3	9%
Kendal Town	3	5%
Kendal West	3	5%

Kendal

32 We received some support from the Conservative Group for our proposals in Kendal. However, we received strong opposition to our proposals particularly from South Lakeland District Council and Kendal Town Council, who proposed alternative ward boundaries. We have therefore amended our proposals to reflect the Council's proposed Kendal North, Kendal Town and Kendal West wards.

33 We have also largely adopted the Council's Kendal East and Kendal South & Natland wards, with a minor modification to the boundary between the two, to allow for better electoral equality.

The eastern parishes



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Arnside & Milnthorpe	3	5%
Bowness & Levens	3	-8%
Burton & Crooklands	3	4%
Kendal Rural	3	-3%
Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale	3	-1%

Arnside & Milnthorpe

34 We received no submissions on our Arnside & Milnthorpe ward apart from comments made in the two whole-district proposals. South Lakeland District Council supported our Arnside & Milnthorpe ward. The Conservative Group also supported the ward, stating that the communities have close links and should be together in a single three-member ward. We therefore confirm our draft Arnside & Milnthorpe ward as final.

Burton & Crooklands

35 We received no submissions regarding Burton & Crooklands ward, apart from comments made in the two whole-district proposals. The Conservative Group supported our Burton & Crooklands ward. The South Lakeland District Council proposal suggested merging Burton and Holme with Whinfell to include more populated areas within the ward. However, we consider that our Burton & Crooklands ward better reflects all three of the Commission's statutory criteria. We therefore confirm our draft Burton & Crooklands ward as final.

Kendal Rural

36 We received three submissions that commented on Kendal Rural ward. The ward was supported by the Conservative Group, New Hutton Parish Council and Old Hutton & Holmescales Parish Council. We therefore confirm our draft Kendal Rural ward as final.

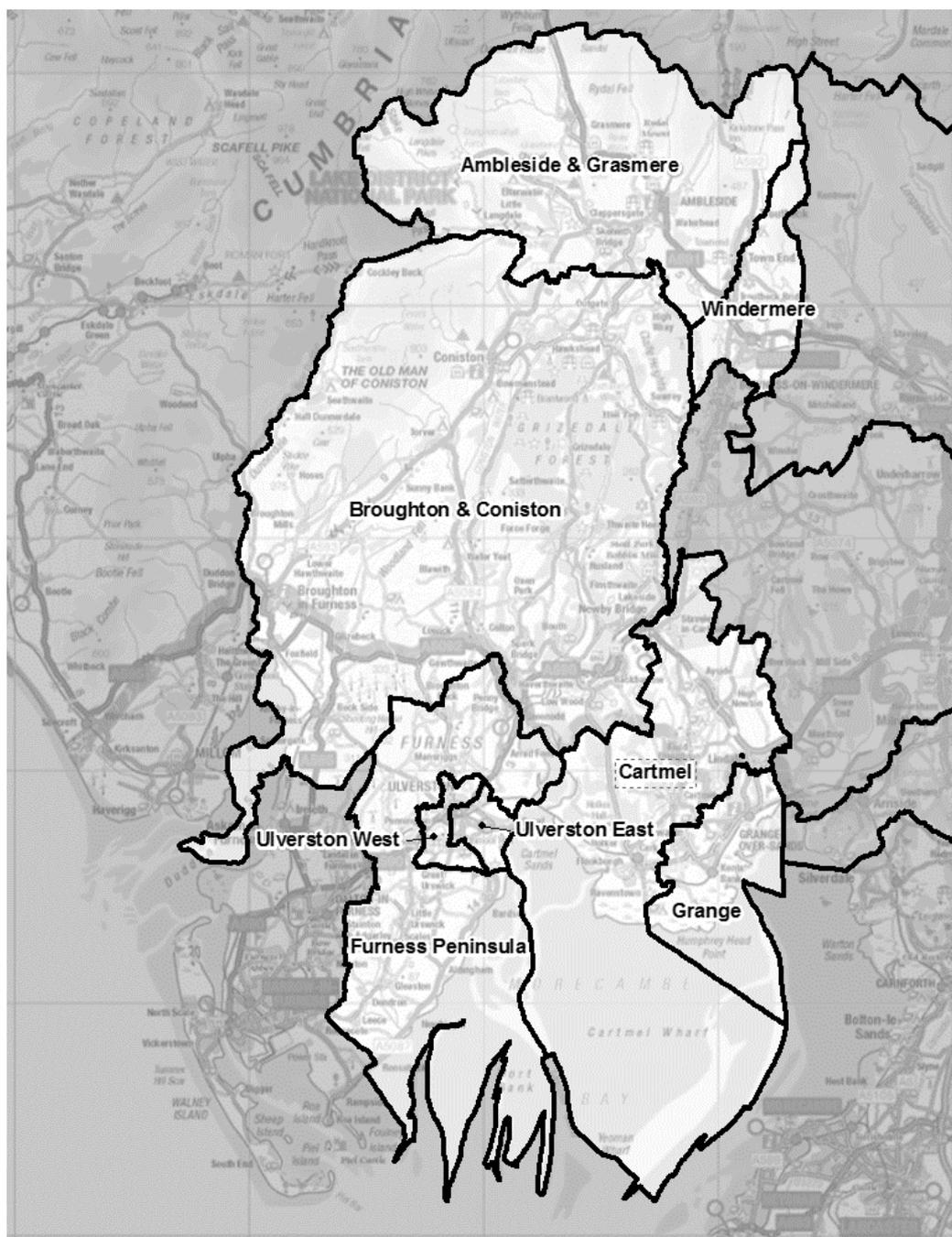
Bowness & Levens

37 We received two submissions regarding our draft Levens & Stonecross ward, proposing a number of changes to the ward. South Lakeland District Council and the Conservative Group submissions also proposed new ward boundaries for this area. Having looked at the evidence, we have included Bowness with the Lyth Valley and created a Bowness & Levens ward which better reflects the three statutory criteria.

Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale

38 We received no submissions on our Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward, apart from comments made in the two whole-district proposals. The South Lakeland District Council and Conservative Group supported our Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. We therefore confirm our draft ward as final.

Ulverston, Windermere and the western parishes



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Ambleside & Grasmere	2	-1%
Broughton & Coniston	3	0%
Cartmel	2	-2%
Furness Peninsula	3	-4%
Grange	3	3%
Ulverston East	3	-2%
Ulverston West	3	1%
Windermere	3	-6%

Ambleside & Grasmere and Windermere

39 There was significant opposition to our Ambleside & Grasmere ward, with most submissions not supportive of moving part of Windermere into Ambleside & Grasmere. We have therefore created a two-member Ambleside & Grasmere ward with an amended boundary to reflect the existing boundary of Lakes parish. This was suggested as part of South Lakeland's district-wide proposal and we consider this to be an appropriate boundary for the ward. There was support from both district-wide proposals submitted for including Skelwith within the Ambleside & Grasmere ward.

40 We received significant opposition to our proposals in Windermere, including a petition submitted by the Conservative Group with over 600 signatories. The majority of the submissions did not support including part of Windermere in an Ambleside & Grasmere ward and we received alternative ward boundary proposals from both the Conservative Group and South Lakeland District Council. We have therefore amended the boundary to use the existing boundary of Lakes parish, as suggested by South Lakeland District Council's proposal and supported at an earlier stage of consultation.

Broughton & Coniston, Cartmel and Furness Peninsula

41 Our draft Broughton & Coniston ward was supported by the Conservative Group proposal, with one minor proposed amendment to the southern boundary. South Lakeland District Council proposed the ward boundary be altered to include the parishes of Colton and Haverthwaite in a Cartmel Peninsula ward, and the parish of Lowick in our Furness Peninsula ward. We have not adopted this proposal as it would leave Broughton & Coniston ward with a high level of electoral inequality. We therefore confirm our draft Broughton & Coniston and Furness Peninsula wards as final.

42 We received one submission from a local resident that was not supportive of our proposed Holker & Lyth Valley ward. As a result of modifications in other areas, we have altered our proposed Holker & Lyth Valley ward to make up a two-member ward which we have named Cartmel. This ward includes the parish of Upper Allithwaite, which the Conservative Group had proposed to be included in a Bowness & Lyth Valley ward. However, we consider that our Cartmel ward better reflects our statutory criteria.

Grange

43 We received one submission from a South Lakeland District councillor supporting the revised boundaries for the Grange ward. The South Lakeland District Council proposed a slight amendment to the ward boundary, to include better access to Grange-over-Sands; however, we feel that our proposed Grange ward more effectively demonstrates the statutory criteria. The Conservative Group supported our Grange ward in their respective district-wide proposals. We therefore confirm our draft Grange ward as final.

Ulverston

44 We received no submissions on our Ulverston East and Ulverston West wards, apart from comments made in the two whole-district proposals. The South Lakeland District Council and Conservative Group supported our Ulverston wards. We therefore confirm our draft Ulverston East and Ulverston West wards as final.

Conclusions

45 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2015 and 2021 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2015	2021
Number of councillors	51	51
Number of electoral wards	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	1, 632	1, 783
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

The South Lakeland District Council should be made up of 51 councillors serving 18 wards representing three two-councillor wards and 15 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Table A1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for South Lakeland District Council. You can also view our final recommendations for South Lakeland on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

46 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

47 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, South Lakeland District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

48 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kendal and Windermere parishes.

49 As result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kendal Town Council.

Final recommendation

Kendal Town Council should comprise 28 councillors, as at present, representing 10 wards: Kendal Castle (returning two members), Kendal Fell (returning two members), Kendal Heron Hill (returning four members), Kendal Highgate (returning two members), Kendal Kirkland (returning four members), Kendal Mintsfeet (returning two members), Kendal Nether (returning four members), Kendal Oxenholme (returning one member), Kendal Stonecross (returning three members) and Kendal Strickland (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

50 As result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Windermere Town Council.

Final recommendation

Windermere Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Applethwaite (returning four members), Bowness North (returning six members), Bowness South (returning four members) and Windermere Town (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

51 We have now completed our review of South Lakeland District Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2018.

Equalities

52 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

Appendices

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for South Lakeland District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ambleside & Grasmere	2	3,442	1,721	5%	3,523	1,762	-1%
2	Arnside & Milnthorpe	3	5,241	1,747	7%	5,624	1,875	5%
3	Bowness & Levens	3	4,720	1,573	-4%	4,935	1,645	-8%
4	Broughton & Coniston	3	5,169	1,723	6%	5,361	1,787	0%
5	Burton & Crooklands	3	4,872	1,624	0%	5,548	1,849	4%
6	Cartmel	2	3,249	1,625	0%	3,492	1,746	-2%
7	Furness Peninsula	3	4,684	1,561	-4%	5,136	1,712	-4%
8	Grange	3	4,624	1,541	-6%	5,507	1,836	3%
9	Kendal East	3	4,934	1,645	1%	5,273	1,758	-1%
10	Kendal North	2	3,199	1,600	-2%	3,307	1,654	-7%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Kendal Rural	3	5,008	1,669	2%	5,209	1,736	-3%
12 Kendal South & Natland	3	4,892	1,631	0%	5,855	1,952	9%
13 Kendal Town	3	5,051	1,684	3%	5,607	1,869	5%
14 Kendal West	3	5,093	1,698	4%	5,602	1,867	5%
15 Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale	3	4,930	1,643	1%	5,307	1,769	-1%
16 Ulverston East	3	4,626	1,542	-6%	5,231	1,744	-2%
17 Ulverston West	3	4,593	1,531	-6%	5,390	1,797	1%
18 Windermere	3	4,894	1,631	0%	5,020	1,673	-6%
Totals	51	83,221	-	-	90,927	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,632	-	-	1,783	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Lakeland District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/north-west/cumbria/south-lakeland>

Local authority

- South Lakeland District Council

Political groups

- South Lakeland Conservative Group
- Kendal Liberal Democrats

Parish and town councils

- Allithwaite Upper Parish Council
- Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council
- Colton Parish Council
- Crook & Winster Parish Council
- Crosthwaite & Lyth Parish Council
- Helsington Parish Council
- Heversham Parish Council
- Holme Parish Council
- Kendal Town Council
- Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council
- Lower Holker Parish Council
- Natland Parish Council
- New Hutton Parish Council
- Old Hutton & Holmescales Parish Council
- Windermere Town Council

Councillors

- Councillor B. Berry (South Lakeland District Council)
- Councillor B. Gray (South Lakeland District Council)
- Councillor T. Harvey (Grange-over-Sands Town Council, South Lakeland District Council)
- Councillor J. Holmes (South Lakeland District Council)

Local organisations

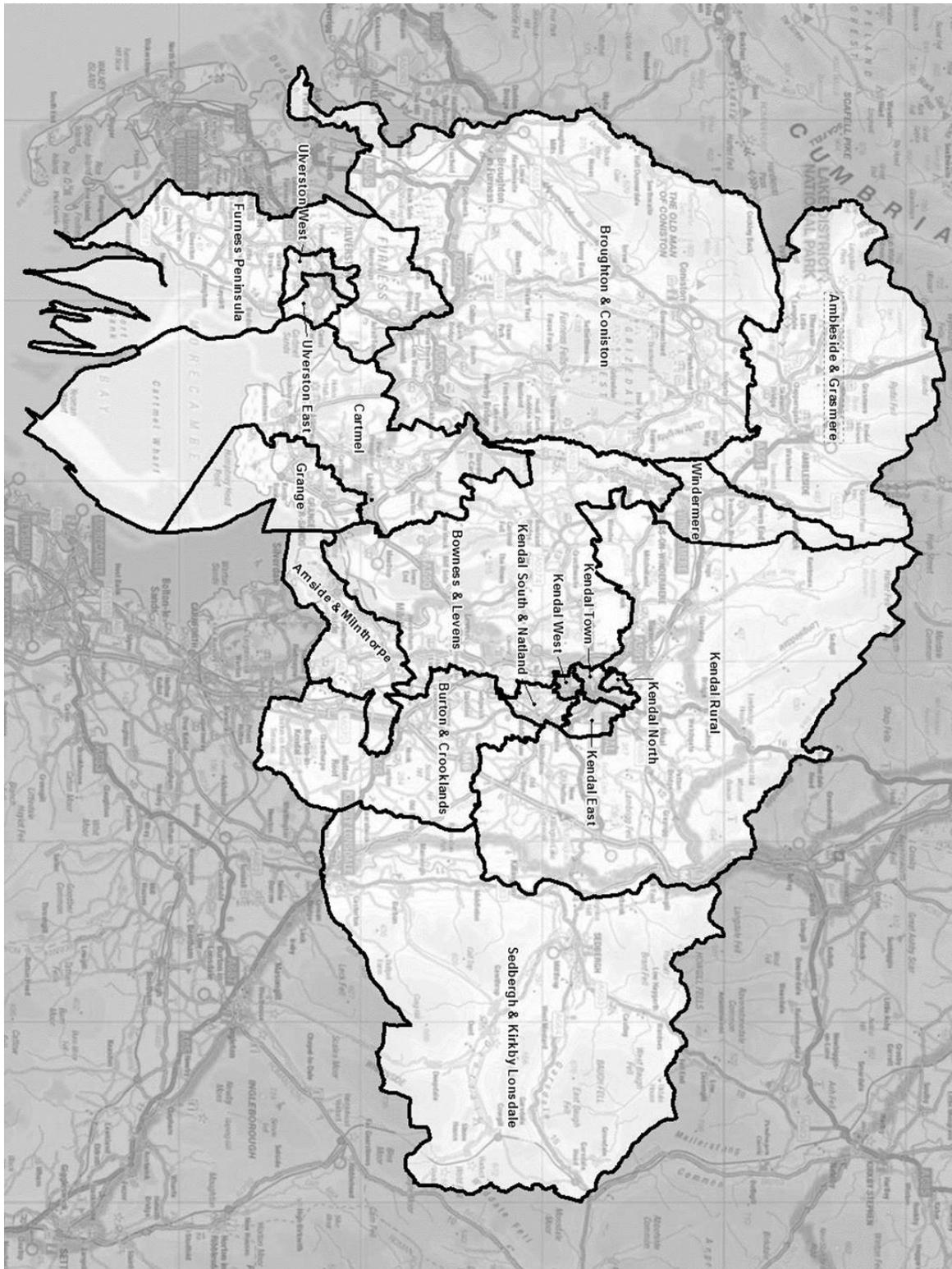
- Hallgarth Community Centre
- Westmoreland & Lonsdale CLP
- Windermere & Bowness Civic Society

Residents

- 28 local residents

Appendix C

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the A1 sheet accompanying this report, or on our website <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/north-west/cumbria/south-lakeland>

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward

A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council