

Electoral review July 2011

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Summary

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire 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 Oxfordshire?

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

Oxfordshire 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 the county.

Council size

Oxfordshire County Council currently has a council size of 74 county councillors. During the council size consultation the Commission received proposals for council sizes ranging from 50 to 74 members.

Having considered all the evidence received, we have decided to propose a council size of 63 as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that a council

size of 63 members would ensure the council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively and will provide for a pattern of divisions that reflects community identities in Oxfordshire.

Electoral arrangements

Our draft recommendations propose that Oxfordshire's 63 county councillors should represent 59 single-member electoral divisions and two two-member divisions across the county.

| 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 Apr 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 |

Submissions received

The Commission received 31 submissions during its initial consultation on council size. During Stage One, we received a total of 49 submissions including the County Council's scheme for the whole county and a number of district-wide schemes.

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

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on a combination of the County Council's proposals, the Labour Group's proposals and locally suggested patterns.

Where we have proposed modifications to schemes submitted to us, these are to improve electoral equality, reflect communication and

transport links within divisions and to avoid creating unviable parish wards.

Electorate figures

As part of this review, Oxfordshire County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2016, projecting an increase in electorate of just over 6% over the period from 2011 to 2016.

We are satisfied that the methodology used was rigorous and so are content to accept these forecast electorate figures as the basis for our draft recommendations.

What happens next?

There will now be a 12-week consultation period on the draft recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 10 October 2011.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for

Oxfordshire and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed division boundaries, number of councillors and division names. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Officer
Oxfordshire Review
The Local Government
Boundary Commission for
England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Or email:
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The full report and accompanying maps are 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.

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