

Councillor Briefing Note No. 366

Service: Legal and Democratic
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Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council – Update **Consultation on New Division Boundaries**

Background

1. This briefing note is a follow up to [Briefing Note No. 337](#), and [Briefing Note No. 348](#).
2. As detailed in those notes the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (‘the Commission’) is undertaking an electoral review of Wiltshire Council. The review is to consider the total number of councillors on the council, and then the numbers and boundaries of electoral divisions within the council, for implementation at the next elections in May 2021. The decision on the number of councillors, and pattern of divisions, is taken by Parliament following the recommendation of the Commission.
3. Wiltshire Council made a submission for the preliminary phase of the review, regarding overall council size, in April 2018. That submission argued that the most appropriate council size moving forward would be 99, an increase of 1 from the current position. In particular, the fundamental role of community area boards was highlighted. The final version, as submitted to the Commission, can be found at [this link](#)
4. Briefing Note 348 had explained that the Commission was due to make its decision on council size by the end of April 2018, with a public consultation on the next phase, a pattern of division boundaries, to run from 1 May – 9 July 2018. Between 26 April 2018 and 7 June 2018 Area Boards received presentations and updates on how to respond to that consultation.
5. However, the Commission informed the council that it was not in a position to make a decision and proceed to the next stage, and sought additional information from the Council. That further information was sent to the Commission in July and can be found at [this link](#).
6. **The Council has now been informed by the Commission that after consideration of the submissions and further evidence it has received, it is minded to approve a council size of 98 councillors from May 2021.**
7. **This would mean an average elector to councillor ratio of 4291 per councillor, using projected figures for 2024 as required by the review.**

Next Phase

8. The next phase of the Electoral Review, which is officially the first stage of the formal review process, is for the Commission to seek representations on new electoral division boundaries for Wiltshire Council, based on the total number of councillors being proposed.
9. As part of this process there will be public consultation on the new division boundaries for the Council. This will be to allow the Council, other organisations and members of the public, to make representations and provide evidence on the most appropriate pattern of divisions moving forward. The Commission will use that evidence to assist in drawing up their draft recommendations for electoral divisions, on which they will consult early in 2019.
10. The Commission have created a consultation portal for the Wiltshire Council review on [their website](#), on which they will include all relevant materials and instructions for organisations and the public to construct a suitable submission. This will include detailed figures, provided by the Council, on the projected electorate for each polling district and parish within the council's area. This calculation includes projected population increases and predicted housing development.
- 11. Any submissions to the Commission will be required to seek to create divisions as close as possible to the figure of electors per division (not total population per division) identified by the Commission's 'minded to' decision as detailed in paragraph 7, whilst also seeking to reflect community identities and provision of convenient and effective local government. Local submissions from organisations and communities may justify a certain level of variance from the figure of 4291, but they will need to provide evidenced justification for any such variance.**
- 12. The consultation for the next phase will begin on 28 August 2018 and run until 5 November 2018. Any parties interested in making a submission on division boundary patterns should submit this directly to the Commission using their consultation portal.**

Wiltshire Council Submission

13. Although any interested parties should submit any representations directly to the Commission, the Committee would also welcome any views from organisations, communities or the public, as it prepares a submission on behalf of the Council. **Any representations to the council should be sent to committee@wiltshire.gov.uk in September 2018.**
14. The Council has also prepared a webpage at [this link](#) showing all the information it has provided for the Electoral Review. Other information is found on the [Wiltshire](#) page of the LGBCE site.

Additional Stages

15. From 5 February 2019 to 15 April 2019 the Commission will consult upon its draft recommendations on new divisions, published after consideration of the submissions provided in the preceding stage.
16. In July 2019 the final recommendations of the Commission will be published. At this stage they will no longer be able to be amended – a draft order will be prepared for laying in Parliament, where the recommendations may be accepted or rejected, but not amended.

17. Should the recommendations be accepted, they will then be implemented for elections in May 2021.

Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has decided up on a future council size for Wiltshire Council of 98.

A consultation on a pattern of electoral divisions for that council size will run from 28 August 2019 to 5 November 2019. Any person or organisation can access the consultation portal at [this link](#).

Any proposals must align as closely as possible to an electorate size of 4291 per division, reflect community identity, and provide convenient and effective local government.

Wiltshire Council will be making a submission on a pattern of divisions, and welcomes any representations from any person or organization to assist it in preparing that submission. Any representations should be sent to committee@wiltshire.gov.uk