

Summary

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Vale of White Horse District 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 wards – for a local authority.

Why Vale of White Horse?

The Commission carries out some electoral reviews at the request of local authorities.

Vale of White Horse District Council approached the Commission to conduct a review to consider the total number of councillors elected to the council.

Council size

The Commission recommends that Vale of White Horse District Council should be represented by 38 councillors in future: 13 fewer than under the current arrangements.

We consider that a council size of 38 members will ensure the council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively and will provide for a pattern of wards that reflects community identities across Vale of White Horse.

Submissions received

The Commission received 97 submissions during its consultation on draft recommendations.

All representations received can be viewed at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Electoral arrangements

Our draft recommendations propose that Vale of White Horse District Council's 38 councillors should represent ten single-member and fourteen two-member wards.

The Commission believes its draft recommendations meet its obligations - which are set out in law - to:

- Deliver electoral equality for voters.
- Reflect local community interests and identities.
- Promote effective and convenient local government.

To view the proposals in detail, visit: consultation.lgbce.org.uk
You can view the full report and maps at: www.lgbce.org.uk

| Stage starts | Description |
|------------------|---|
| 27 March 2012 | Public consultation on council size |
| 20 June 2012 | Invitation to submit proposals for new warding arrangements |
| 29 August 2012 | Commission's analysis of responses and formulation of draft recommendations |
| 13 November 2012 | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them |
| 8 January 2013 | Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations |

General analysis

North and west of the district

In its draft recommendations, the Commission proposed a single-member Shrivenham ward and a three-member Watchfield and Faringdon ward.

The Commission was persuaded by evidence presented to it that the parishes of Watchfield and Shrivenham share close community ties. As such, we propose to change the draft recommendations to include both parishes in a two-member ward alongside a two-member Faringdon ward where the boundaries are coterminous with the parish of Great Faringdon.

Elsewhere in this part of the district, the Commission confirms its draft recommendation for a single-member Thames ward as final.

Central and south of the district

The Commission considered alternative proposals in the Grove and Wantage areas of the district. Due to the size of the electorate in Wantage, it is necessary to combine part of Wantage with part of Grove in a two-member ward. As such, the Commission confirms its draft recommendations for this area as final with one minor modification. We propose to alter the draft recommendations so that the Crab Hill development is included in Wantage Charlton ward.

Apart from the alteration described above, the Commission confirms its draft recommendations for single-member Stanford, Kingston Bagpuize, Steventon & the Hanneys and Ridgeway wards as final. We also propose that this part of the district should include

two-member Grove North, Wantage & Grove Brook and Wantage Charlton wards.

South east of the district

The Commission considered possible warding patterns which avoided including part of Harwell parish in the proposed Hendreds ward. However, an alternative pattern of wards in this area would lead to high levels of electoral inequality for local voters. We therefore confirm the draft recommendations for a two-member Blewbury & Harwell ward and single-member Hendreds ward as final.

East of the district

The Commission received submissions objecting to our proposal for a two-member Drayton & Sutton Courtenay ward. On balance, the Commission is persuaded that two single-member Drayton and Sutton Courtenay wards would better reflect the interests and identities of local communities and therefore proposes that arrangement as part of the final recommendations.

In response to submissions provided to us during the consultation, the Commission also proposes to alter its recommendation in the Marcham area so that Cothill Road is included in a ward with the rest of the Dry Shippon area. We have therefore made that change to the single-member Marcham ward.

In Abingdon, the Commission confirms its draft recommendations for five two-member wards as final. Although the Commission was not persuaded that its proposed boundaries in the Abingdon area should be altered, we propose to

change some of the ward names we put forward previously and which were put to us by local people and organisations. As such, we propose that the five wards should be called Abingdon Caldecott, Abingdon Central, Abingdon Fitzharris, Abingdon Northcourt and Abingdon Peachcroft.

North east of the district

The Commission received strong evidence that the whole of the parish of North Hinksey should be included within a single ward. We therefore propose to adopt a different warding pattern in the north of the district, namely a two-member ward comprising the parishes of North Hinksey, South Hinksey, Wytham and Sunningwell.

The Commission's final recommendations for this part of the district are for two-member Botley & Sunningwell, Cumnor and Kennington & Radley wards and a single-member Wootton ward.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of Vale of White Horse 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 district council elections in 2015.

The full report and maps are available at: www.lgbce.org.uk and consultation.lgbce.org.uk.