

Electoral Review Briefing Warwick

22 September 2011

Introductions

- Max Caller CBE – Commissioner and Chair of the LGBCE
- Richard Buck – Review Manager

About us

- An independent body set up by Parliament in April 2010 by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- We are independent of Government and political parties, and directly accountable to Parliament through the Speaker's Committee
- We are responsible for reviewing local authority electoral arrangements, administrative boundaries and structure
- Our recommendations for this review will be implemented by Parliament

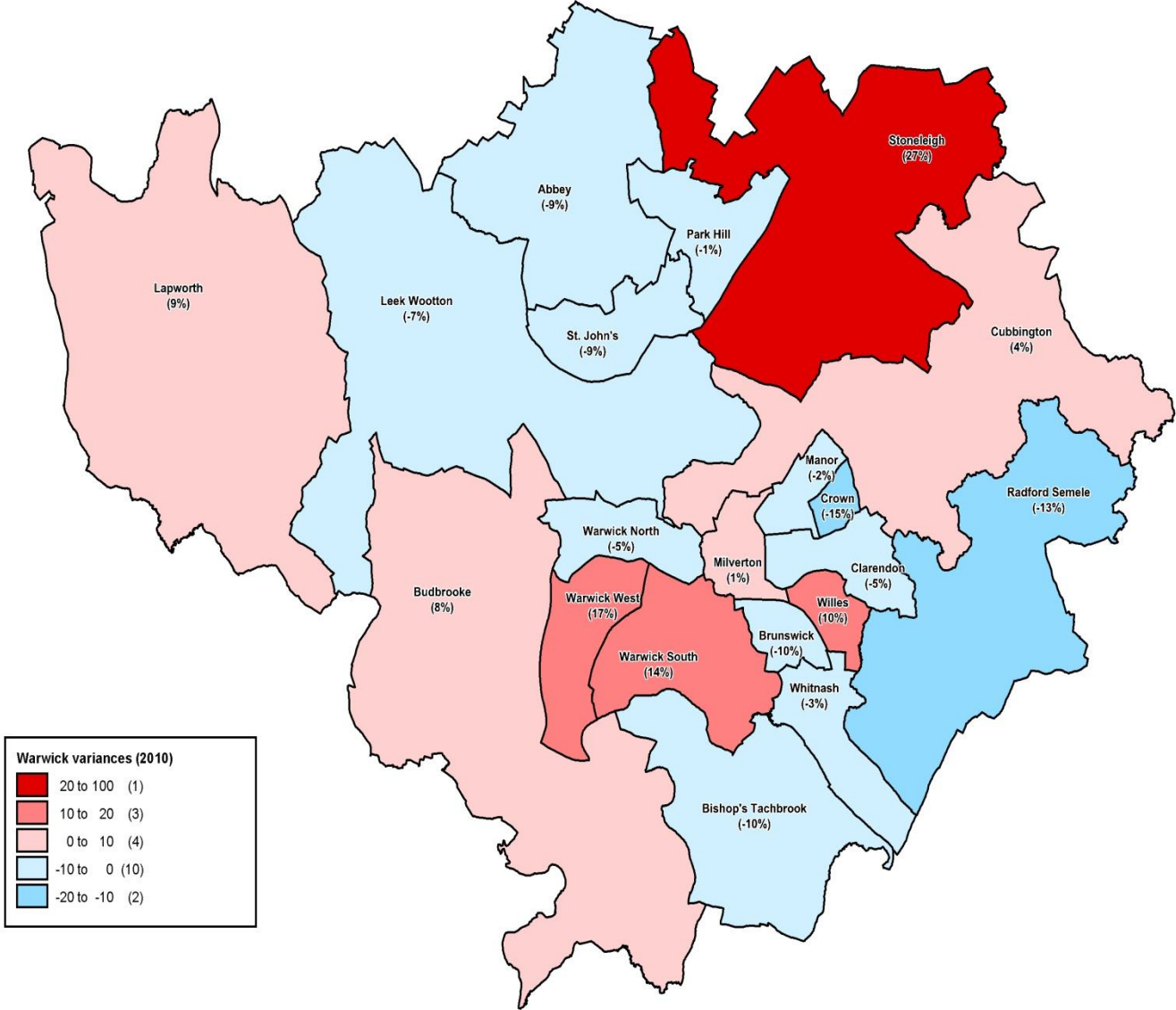
Why are we conducting an electoral review of Warwick?

- Our aim is to try to ensure that each councillor represents approximately the same number of electors
- Our criteria for starting an electoral review is where:
 - 30% of wards have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average and / or
 - one ward has an electoral variance more than 30% from the average

Why are we conducting an electoral review of Warwick?

- Warwick has five wards with a variance of greater than 10% from the average
- Highest variance is in Stonleigh ward (27% variance)
- The council requested a review to address these imbalances

Wards and electoral variances in Warwick



Scope of the review

- The review will decide the pattern of wards for the entire district – not just wards where there are levels of electoral inequality
- We will decide:
 - Total number of councillors (council size)
 - Number of wards
 - Names of wards
 - Boundaries of wards

Statutory criteria

- Electoral equality
 - optimum number of electors per councillor
 - Five year forecast
 - In time for next election
- Community identity
 - parishes as building blocks
 - strong boundaries
- Effective and convenient local government
 - coherent wards with good internal transport links

What we cannot consider

- Parliamentary constituency boundaries, which are drawn by the Boundary Commission for England
- Current district wards
- Local political implications of recommendations
- School catchment areas
- Postcodes or addresses
- Polling districts

Types of Review

Depending on outcomes of preliminary stage, Commission will then determine the type of review:

- A – No expectation of change in council size: Typical length: 26-30 weeks
- B – Expectation that any change in council size will be small: Typical length: 42-50 weeks
- C – Expectation that a change in council size could be substantial: Typical length: 52-62 weeks

Review process

- Preliminary stage: 6 – 8 weeks
 - council size discussion
 - Do you have the right council size?
 - What are the demands of time on elected members? Could the council operate more effectively with a different number?
 - Opportunity for council to consider political management and governance
 - Consideration of members representative role
 - Effective representation of constituents
- Council size consultation (subject to discussion)

Review process

- Further information gathering (10 weeks)
 - Invite warding patterns from council, public, parish councils, everybody who takes an interest
 - Welcome proposals for whole district or just a few parishes
 - Commission tours area
- Commission publishes draft recommendations
 - Posters provided to parish councils to publicise review

Review process

- Open consultation on draft recommendations (10 – 12 weeks)
- Commission publishes final recommendations
- Final recommendations will be implemented by order in the Houses of Parliament

What characterises a good review

- Detailed rationale for council size.
- Accurate electorate figures and robust methodology when forecasting expected growth
- Scheme coming forward which gives good electoral equality while balancing other statutory criteria, has cross-party support, has been consulted on locally
- Highly important to involve as many groups/individuals as possible at as early a stage as possible
- Where cannot secure consensus across a scheme, tell us where there is agreement
- Representations based on evidence, not just assertion

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