

2011 ELECTORAL STATISTICS

1. This paper analyses the electoral statistics obtained from the new electoral registers published by each local authority between 1 December 2010 and 1 February 2011. The collection and processing of this data is an important aspect of the Commission's work each year. Every autumn, each local authority in England has to compile a register of electors, which is published on 1 December each year. Up until 2001, the electoral register was published on 16 February each year and could only be amended in a very limited fashion. From 2001, local authorities were required to update their register on a monthly basis (termed "rolling registration") and qualifying residents could be added or deleted from the register throughout the year.

2. The Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 require that each local authority supplies the Commission with an electronic copy of its electoral register. Each local authority is also required to supply the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with a summary (form RPF29) of the number of electors in its district, which is copied by ONS to the Commission. Using these two sources, the Secretariat is able to compile spreadsheets that allow the Commission to consider the electorate of each parliamentary constituency, calculate the electoral quota (EQ) for England for that particular year, and calculate the theoretical entitlement (TE) to constituencies for each local authority. The Secretariat also presents the data in a format that allows the Commission's geographic information system (GIS) consultants at ESRI(UK) to match the electoral statistics with digital map data in the Commission's GIS.

3. In requesting the RPF29 form from the 326 local authorities in England, ONS stressed the importance of the form in relation to the 2013 Review. Each local authority submitted a form to ONS, although some took a degree of chasing. Two local authorities (Central Bedfordshire and West Somerset) submitted ward data in relation to the new wards that are due to be used for the first time at local elections on 5 May 2011. The data relating to the "old" wards were created by Gerald Tessier from the electronic copies of the electoral registers that are supplied to the Commission. The collection of the electoral data for 1 December 2010, and the work that has been required to rebase some ward data, demonstrates that it is of vital importance that the Commission continues to receive data relating to the number of parliamentary electors in each ward in a format that is easy to use, particularly in a year in which a review is scheduled to commence. Without such information, it would be very difficult to conduct reviews of parliamentary constituencies.

4. As stated in paragraph 2, local authorities are statutorily required to supply the Commission with an electronic copy of their electoral registers. However, these are not always supplied in a format from which it is easy to extract the relevant ward data. This is why the annual RPF29 data collection exercise is valuable to the Commission and the Secretariat. The Memorandum of Agreement between the Population Estimates Unit (PEU) of ONS and the Secretariat has been of enormous benefit in maintaining the flow of data between the Secretariat and PEU.

Total number of Parliamentary electors

5. As outlined at the Commission meeting on 21 February 2011, the number of parliamentary electors in England has risen again in 2011. The total electorate is now 38,443,481, an increase of 314,399 (0.82%) between 2010 and 2011: on the basis of the average constituency size for the 2013 Review, this is the equivalent of four constituencies. The electoral statistics for each county and London borough are shown at Appendix A. The EQ and TEs in Appendix A are based on 533 constituencies.

6. The majority of the increase in the electorate between 2010 and 2011 has been recorded in the non-metropolitan counties (164,531) and large increases have also been recorded in the metropolitan counties (69,949) and Greater London (79,919).

Growth and decline in the electorates

7. As always, the overall trend in the electorates has masked some significant increases and decreases in individual districts. Of the 326 districts in England, 251 show an increase in the number of parliamentary electors between 2010 and 2011, whilst 75 show a decrease. The five districts showing the greatest electoral decline are:-

Rank	District	Change from 2010 to 2011	% change from 2010 to 2011
1	Thanet	-4,167	-4.28%
2	Northumberland	-3,262	-1.33%
3	Castle Point	-3,127	-4.62%
4	Richmondshire	-2,612	-7.01%
5	Calderdale	-2,524	-1.71%

8. The ten districts showing the greatest electoral growth are:-

Rank	District	Change from 2010 to 2011	% change from 2010 to 2011
1	Durham	+13,452	+3.44%
2	Bradford	+8,616	+2.68%
3	Wiltshire	+7,727	+2.25%
4	Sheffield	+7,702	+2.03%
5	Manchester	+7,523	+2.24%
6	Tower Hamlets	+7,348	+4.99%
7	Shepway	+6,581	+8.96%
8	Newham	+6,550	+3.82%
9	Nottingham	+6,497	+3.48%
10	Greenwich	+6,440	+4.20%

9. Previously, the Secretariat has recorded the ten districts that have experienced the greatest electoral decline. As with last year, the number of districts that have shown a decline in their electorate in 2011 has fallen. In 2009, 114 districts showed a decline in their electorate, in 2010 it was 83, and in 2011 it was 75. The lower levels of decline in a smaller number of districts and the higher levels of growth in a greater number of districts is, perhaps, not unusual given that the electoral registers published between 1 December 2010 and 1 February 2011

almost certainly contained electors who came onto the register for the May 2010 general election.

The current constituencies

10. The table at Appendix B shows the number of electors in each of the current constituencies. Of the 533 current constituencies, 247 (46.34%) have an electorate that is within 5% of the EQ (76,641) for the 2013 Review.

11. The Commission are asked to note the 2011 electoral figures set out above, which will be used throughout the 2013 Review.