

Public Hearings - SCHEDULE 2A to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986

PUBLIC HEARINGS ABOUT BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS

Purpose of hearings

- 1 The purpose of a public hearing is to enable representations to be made about any of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.

Number of hearings

- 2 (1) In relation to any particular report under section 3(1)(a) of this Act –
 - a) the Boundary Commission for England shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in each English region;
 - b) the Boundary Commission for Scotland shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Scotland
 - c) the Boundary Commission for Wales shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Wales
 - d) the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Northern Ireland.
- (2) The public hearings in an English region shall be concerned with proposals for that region, and shall between them cover the whole region.
- (3) The public hearings in Scotland shall be concerned with proposals for Scotland, and shall between them cover the whole of Scotland.
- (4) The public hearings in Wales shall be concerned with proposals for Wales, and shall between them cover the whole of Wales.
- (5) The public hearings in Northern Ireland shall be concerned with proposals for Northern Ireland, and shall between them cover the whole of Northern Ireland.

Chair of hearing

- 3 For each public hearing the Boundary Commission concerned shall appoint a person to chair the hearing.

Length of hearings

- 4 A public hearing shall be completed within two days.

Procedure at hearings

- 5 It is for the chair of each public hearing to determine the procedure that is to govern that hearing.
- 6 The chair shall make arrangements for a public hearing to begin with an explanation of –
- a) the proposals with which the hearing is concerned;
 - b) how written representations about the proposals may be made (as mentioned in section 5(1)(a), (4)(b), or (5)(c) of this Act).
- 7 (1) The chair of a public hearing must allow representations to be made –
- (a) by each qualifying party;
 - (b) by any other persons (whether individuals or organisations) considered by the chair to have an interest in any of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.
- Paragraph (b) above has effect subject to sub-paragraph (3)(b) below.
- (2) The chair may restrict the amount of time allowed for representations –
- a) by qualifying parties, and
 - b) by other persons,
- and need not allow the same amount to each.
- (3) The chair may determine –
- (a) the order in which representations are made, and
 - (b) if necessary because of shortage of time, which of those wishing to make representations are not allowed to do so, in whatever way the chair decides.
- 8 (1) The chair may put questions, or allow questions to be put, to a person present at the hearing.
- (2) If questions are allowed to be put, the chair may regulate the manner of questioning or restrict the number of questions a person may ask.

Interpretation

- 9 In this Schedule –
- “the chair” means the person appointed under paragraph 3 above;
- “English region” means an electoral region specified in Schedule 1 to the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 (ignoring paragraph 2(2) of that Schedule and references to Gibraltar) as it has effect on the day referred to in rule 5(2) of Schedule 2 to this Act;
- “public hearing” means a hearing under section 5(1)(b) of this Act;
- “qualifying party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act 2000 and either –
- (a) Has at least one Member of the House of Commons representing a constituency in the region, or (as the case may be) the part of the United Kingdom, in which the hearing is held, or
 - (b) Received at least 10% of the [first preference¹] votes cast in that region or part in the most recent parliamentary general election.

¹ These words to be inserted if the voting system for parliamentary elections is changed to AV).

