

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

MERCURE, EXETER
EXETER, DEVON

ON

TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2016
DAY TWO

Before:

Ms Anita Bickerdike, Lead Assistant Commissioner

Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
83 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0HW
Telephone Number: 0203 585 4721/22

Time noted: 9.10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning. Is Mr Phillip Wearne in the room, who was booked to speak at ten past nine? (No response) Mr John Murphy, who was booked to speak at ten, are you happy to speak earlier?

MR MURPHY: Yes. Can I come forward?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Of course you can. Would you like to come round to the lectern, please?

MR MURPHY: Good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Murphy. Can I ask you to give your name and address? As you can probably see, the proceedings are being video-recorded for the sake of the record which will be published in due course. Can I just remind you that you have a 10-minute speaking slot?

MR MURPHY: Yes. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

MR MURPHY: I do not think I should go over because I have timed my comments to about 8 minutes, but if I were to go over, then please stop me, okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will do.

MR MURPHY: I am sure I can get through it all right.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR MURPHY: Thank you for giving me this opportunity of coming and making my comments today. I am very grateful. My name is John Murphy. I live at 2 Marlborough Court, Lyndhurst Road, Exeter EX2 4NX. I have lived in Exeter for nine years although my family have strong connections with Exeter going back to 1840 when my great granddad, Joseph, came over from Kinsale in Southern Ireland to join the British Army, but that is another matter.

I am coming here today because I want to put forward the arguments for including St Loyes ward into the Exeter parliamentary seat. I think that St Loyes is an integral part of Exeter. I am not saying I go there every week, but my family, my older grandson goes and plays football, for example, at St Peter's. He lives just up the road in Exeter, and there are very many different examples like that which we could give.

St Loyes is an integral part of Exeter. Many residents in St Loyes work and lead their lives in Exeter. Their children go to schools in Exeter and to colleges there. They shop in Exeter. They play sports in Exeter, and vice versa. They look to Exeter to fulfil their social, religious, cultural and business interests, and they look to Exeter for the delivery of health services, both regional and local. I feel that here is no sensible justification for retaining the current political link, because that is what it is, of St Loyes with East Devon, which I feel is at best accidental, but is fundamentally counter to the way voters and residents in St Loyes lead their lives.

I do not really feel from my experience that they go to Honiton very much. They very rarely head to East Devon for their business, social and cultural activities, and I feel that, to be relevant, politics should reflect the lives of the voters and the way they lead those lives. I feel it should not be distorted to meet the requirement of maintaining effectively the status quo in the face of considerable evidence of the need for and support for change.

I support the arguments which have been put forward by the Exeter Conservatives for this change. I think you may have heard already the details of those changes. For example, the Exeter Conservatives have pointed out that the statutory criteria require constituencies to have an electorate as close to the 74,769 figure as possible. A 5 per cent margin is allowed either way, and the Commission's initial proposals, which are on page 28 of the South West initial proposals, leave Exeter under quota at 71,404, which is a variance of 4.51 per cent whereas East Devon at 77,959 electors is 4.1 per cent over quota.

Were St Loyes to be transferred into Exeter constituency, the percentage variation for both constituencies would be significantly reduced, and that would certainly seem to be a good thing, it would therefore be much nearer to the optimum figure of 74,769. So with St Loyes included in Exeter, the Exeter electorate would give a total of 76,008, which is 1.7 per cent above quota, removing St Loyes, the electorate in East Devon 73,355, which is 1.9 per cent below quota so, in fact, the transfer of St Loyes to the Exeter constituency would bring the constituencies nearer to the statutory level as quoted previously of 74,769.

Moving on, St Loyes is a ward in Exeter City Council, as you have heard. It has substantial community, transport and administrative links with the city here in Exeter. In contrast, it has no such links, to my knowledge, with East Devon. The designation of Exeter as a borough constituency and East Devon as a county constituency in my view reinforces those differences.

As I have said, St Loyes is a suburb of Exeter. It is urban and it has little in common with the delightful rural villages and small towns which form East Devon. St Loyes is situated on the eastern edge of the city. It has housing, shops, business premises. It

actually borders in Exeter the local communities of Heavitree, Whipton and Wonford. There is a smaller housing estate in Clyst Heath, but the community is almost wholly within the area bordered by the outer by-pass, that is the A3015.

The current placing of St Loyes in East Devon results in communities being artificially split with one side of Honiton Road placed within Exeter and the other side in East Devon, so you have got an example of residents in Rifford Road split between the two constituencies. The first row of houses on the eastern side up to Lethbridge Road junction is in East Devon, but the remainder is on the eastern side of the road in Exeter, so residents in Rifford Road and Woodwater Lane have more in common with each other than residents in Exmouth and Budleigh, for example.

In my view, the current arrangements are positively harmful to the communities involved. For example, some residents in Rifford Road are represented by our MP in Exeter whereas those in the houses next door are represented by the MP for East Devon. Consequently, you have the MP for East Devon needing to communicate with two local authorities, and those who write to the wrong MP will see their issues taking longer to resolve, given that MPs have to refer their enquiries from their non-constituents to the proper MP.

Let us have a look at the local schools. The big secondary school there is St Peter's C of E on Quarry Lane. It is the main secondary school within the area and it is in East Devon. Most of the feeder schools are, for example, St Nicholas Roman Catholic Primary down on Honiton Road on the other side. There is St Michael's C of E Primary in Heavitree behind the shops there, and there is also Ladysmith School where my two grandsons go, which is in Heavitree. A lot of the children from those schools do go to St Peter's. My own grandson goes there because he loves football and they have got great football facilities at St Peter's, so a typical example of the way in which families interlink is shown there.

Let us have a look at transport, for example, which is a good way, I think, of seeing how people run their lives. We have got Digby Halt railway station. That is an important part of the railway line. Then you have got the H and D buses operated by Stagecoach. They work on a loop from the centre. They go in and out of the city. They go right the way through there to St Loyes. The direction of travel is actually towards Exeter and not East Devon. I mean, it does not touch East Devon.

So finally, just in my last minute, I would say that many people in St Loyes work in Exeter. There are organisations like the Devon and Cornwall Police Headquarters at Middlemoor, which is in St Loyes, but serves Exeter as well as Devon, and there is Tesco as well where a lot of customers obviously come in from Exeter. There are strong links between Exeter and St Loyes in jobs and business. I think with that, I will end my comments. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Murphy. If you would like to stay there just for a second, just in case there are any questions from the floor.

MR JOLLY: Good morning. Ian Jolly from the Liberal Democrats. What I am about to say does not make any difference to the argument about whether St Loyes should be in Exeter but it is just a point of clarification about the guidance that the Boundary Commission gave. It says at section 34: "The Act does not require the BCE to seek to achieve constituency electorates that are as close as possible to the UK electoral quota."

MR MURPHY: Right, okay.

MR JOLLY: Do you agree with that, or does Exeter?

MR MURPHY: I take your view. I mean, as far as I can see, from what I have read there is a target which people should work towards. It is guidance. It is not mandatory as far as I know, but it is guidance, and I am arguing here that in fact you can get closer to that guidance, to that figure which is given. That is what I would say.

MR JOLLY: You have given your view, and I have given you mine.

MR MURPHY: All right, okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any more questions from the floor? (No response) Okay, thank you very much, Mr Murphy ---

MR MURPHY: Thanks for your time. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: --- for speaking to us this morning.

MR MURPHY: Okay. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Our next speaker is not booked until ten past ten. There was a gentleman booked to speak at ten past nine, who has not arrived, so we will wait until around 9:30 to see if that gentleman arrives. If we have no more speakers at 9.30 then I intend to adjourn until ten past ten, which is our next scheduled speaker.

(After a pause) As no more speakers have arrived, I am going to adjourn the hearing now until the next speaker who is scheduled at 10.10. Thank you.

After a short break

Time noted: 10.10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning to everyone in the room. It is just about ten past ten and I understand we have a speaker booked in for the ten past ten slot. Can I call Mr Roger Cashmore to come forward, please? Mr Cashmore, come to the lectern, please.

MR CASHMORE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Cashmore, can I ask you to give your name and address, please?

MR CASHMORE: Sure. Of course.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just be aware that we are recording the proceedings for the purpose of having a record which will then be published later.

MR CASHMORE: I have got nothing to hide! My name is Roger Cashmore. I am a member of the public, although I used to be a councillor and I take an active interest in all things to do with local government. I have read the report, and I understand your objectives, which are basically to balance up the voting rights of various constituencies, and I have read from your report that, quote:

“We largely use local government wards as the building blocks. We try to retain existing constituencies where possible, and we try to take regard of geographic factors.”

This could turn your job into a simple and very economic desk exercise if the current boundaries on which your proposals are based also adhere to those basic common principles. Unfortunately, down here, they do not.

As a matter of interest, I am really intrigued to know if you actually consulted with all the local councils before you drew up your proposals because down here, in the South West, there has been a long history going back many, many years of successive local government administrations changing local boundaries, often for purely political reasons, for example to include a particularly strong candidate in your own party, or to exclude a strong candidate from an opposing party. There are some classic examples not a million miles away from here where various district councils and unitary boundaries have been manipulated over the years, and we have got some really, really weird tongues of one district pushing right up into another district. For example, I can take a five-minute drive and go through across four different boundaries in five minutes in the countryside just north of Exeter.

Not all districts have completed their 30-year strategic plans and had them approved, and there are some significant new constructions, including new towns in the pipeline

which will attract significant numbers of incomers and new voters from all over the country - well, we hope they will - and these will also surely have a high impact on your calculations. A simple comment I want to make is the premise on which you are basing your report and your initial proposals I think could be improved, and I would like you to consider taking the opportunity to engage properly and professionally with all the local district councils and take this opportunity to correct some of the terrible mistakes that we have got in our boundaries at the moment.

We have got parts of one district jumping across a motorway. We have got river boundaries being ignored, all within the space of a mile where I live. Do not assume that the current boundaries are of any historic import or have any significance whatsoever, because, often they might down in Cornwall but, up here, they do not.

Do not assume that the current headcounts will be relevant in the very near future because, as I said, there are mammoth construction projects in the pipeline. Take this opportunity to work with local councils in order that you can tidy up some of these current anomalies.

I have just one question at the end of that. There are plans to unfortunately combine the counties of Devon and Somerset and to take advantage of some funding to get a rural mayor. I do not know if that will have any impact on the political constituency boundary sessions. That is all I really wanted to say. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to just stay there for a moment, please?

MR CASHMORE: Sure.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just in case there are any questions from the floor.

MR CASHMORE: I do not even know who is in the audience.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Perhaps if anybody does have a question, I will also invite them to introduce themselves to you, so, first of all, can we ascertain are there any questions from the floor? (No response) It seems not. Thank you very much for your representations.

MR CASHMORE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The next speaker is Mr David Henson. Is Mr Henson in the room?

CLLR HENSON: Indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to come forward, please. Thank you. If you would go to the lectern, please, and can I ask you to give your name and address? Just be aware that the proceedings are being recorded for the purpose of taking a note, which will then be published later.

CLLR HENSON: (St Loyes ward) My name is David Henson. My address is The Lodge, Clyst Heath, in Exeter. The reference today is to the St Loyes area - I make that very, very clear and not general. I am a local councillor, St Loyes councillor, and a member of the Exeter City Council and not East Devon Council.

We have a particular problem, or confusion really, with the residents of the area basically because the area is a split constituency between Exeter, the constituency of Exeter and that of East Devon, and that cites just a problem with the residents who really want to know whom they actually are looked after by. It is the same with me. I live in the ward. Although I am an Exeter City councillor, I actually live in the East Devon ward.

The problem I think that we have generally is really about belonging somewhere and with today's split it just does not make sense. We have nothing in common with East Devon, because, of course, it is a rural and urban constituency compared with what Exeter is.

The St Loyes community has stronger links to Exeter in transport, education and employment than it does to East Devon. St Loyes has a large number of retail businesses and premises that also have more connections to Exeter than they do to East Devon, and St Loyes is part of the Exeter City Council and not the East Devon Council. Neighbour, neighbourhood and areas surrounding our area are basically all committed to Exeter, and that is Heavitree, Whipton and Wonford, all belong into the city of Exeter.

Sorry. I should have asked you if you wanted to get that up first. All transport from St Loyes focuses on the city centre. Digby has a commuter station and buses run a service to and from the city centre. Everyone in Exeter in St Loyes feels part of Exeter and feels somewhat disadvantaged by having to vote, or indeed they bother to go out, which a lot do not, and vote for a constituency really though they have nothing in common in the area they live in. These are just part of a few reasons why the residents are asking for consideration in transferring St Loyes ward back to the Exeter constituency. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like to remain there just for a moment in case there are any questions.

CLLR HENSON: Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions?

MR LONG: David ---

CLLR HENSON: Hello. I did not see you creeping in.

MR LONG: Yes, it is just to ask you a simple question. The boundaries have been reduced to actually spread the numbers out more evenly.

CLLR HENSON: Sorry?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask you, before you put your question, could you just say your name, please?

MR LONG: Yes. Long, Exeter City Council, ex-leader for 16 years. I do know a little bit about it. They did in fact reduce the boundaries that even out the parliamentary boundaries because there was an excessive number in Exeter in the old days. A proposal came forward with the then Boundary Commission which suggested that we should in fact split the city in half at the river. That was more illogical than I would suggest than two wards at the far end of the city, because you did not mention Topsham, which of course went at the same time and that was in East Devon prior to that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just stop you there, please? The questions are for a purpose of clarification. Are there any questions you would like to ask the speaker to clarify?

MR LONG: For clarification, I would like to know how he was going to balance his numbers up to meet the requirements of the Boundary Commission.

CLLR HENSON: I cannot answer because I do not think that is my job to balance the numbers up. I would understand there are problems, and I understand balancing the numbers up. I really was not taking that. I was just taking St Loyes as a whole and that they actually did not have anything in common with what is over the road or their next door neighbours, which is East Devon, because it is rural and urban and they really have nothing in common, and everything that we do in St Loyes comes into Exeter, even the councillors, and there is my point. The balancing the numbers really was not my problem. Balancing the numbers is obviously the Boundary Commission's problem, not mine.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Do we have any more questions for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much for attending to give your representations.

MR LONG: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker is not booked until 12 noon. Is there anybody in the room who would like to speak? We have plenty of time. (No response) On that basis I will adjourn the hearing now until 11.15. We will come back at 11.15 in case there are any more people who wish to speak. The hearing is adjourned until 11.15.

After a short break

Time noted: 11.15 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back to the hearing, at quarter-past 11.00 and we will resume the hearing. I understand that our next booked speaker is not until 12 noon, but we do have a speaker who would like to speak from the floor. Mr Long, would you like to come forward, please? Would you like to come to the lectern? Thank you, Mr Long. Would you like to give me your name and address, please?

MR LONG: Yes. Vivian Long, 44 Beacon Heath Exeter, EX48NR if you want to know.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Can you just be aware that we are recording all of the representations for record purposes and also to publish them later?

MR LONG: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask you to speak quite loudly so that we can make sure that we can actually hear your representations on the recording?

MR LONG: Okay, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR LONG: I have already given my name and indicate first of all to come to the lectern and say I am satisfied with the proposals for Exeter, having them in existence for the last two general elections. It seems to me that people who might be dissatisfied were not that dissatisfied 10 years ago when they came and produced these existing boundaries.

I know that when we come to deal with it, people tend to come to terms with their alterations that come into being, and, having been on the council for 37 years, 16 as leader, I do know that they are far cleverer than we give them credit for.

I would suggest that if people would note that one submission that David Henson made when he was speaking earlier on in favour of a change was that one of the reasons was that he was in a constituency, or in a ward, which was for the purpose, for his purpose anyway, something that was an urban area mixing in a rural constituency. It seems a bit pointless to point out that that existence would also apply to the other ward from the Exeter City Council, which is Topsham, which would mean that they would be in the same constituency, that is East Devon, and therefore would be in the same problem.

The other thing I pointed out, or asked the question, was in the case of numbers. I think I have been told that it is not necessarily the case but following, as I have, the political field for many years, I thought that was the only argument that was being advanced, quite frankly, rather than anything else. Notwithstanding that, I would reiterate that I am happy with the boundaries. I do not want to see a change unnecessarily which would cause confusion in other parts of the Devon County boundaries because you have got to start evening out the numbers at some time. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Would you just remain there for a moment, please, Mr Long. Are there any questions for Mr Long from the floor? (No response) Mr Long, thank you very much for attending and giving me your representations.

MR LONG: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is Mrs Ruth Funnell in the room? Mrs Funnell, are you happy to speak early?

MRS FUNNELL: Yes, I am.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you happy to speak now?

MRS FUNNELL: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Would you like to come round to the lectern, please? Mrs Funnell, would you give your name and address, please?

MRS FUNNELL: Yes indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just be aware that the proceedings and representations are being recorded for record purposes and also for later publication.

MRS FUNNELL: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MRS FUNNELL: (Green Party, Torridge District) I am Ruth Funnell. I live in Torrington. Do you need the full address? Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like to give your address, please.

MRS FUNNELL: Yes, okay. Fairlight, Torridge View, Great Torrington EX39 8DN. I am a town councillor in Torrington. I am also a member of the Green Party, but I do not think this is particularly political.

The problem, as we see it in Torrington, is that the county council ward of Torrington Rural has been moved from the Torridge and West Devon constituency into a proposed Central Devon constituency, and the county council ward comprises four district council wards - Torrington, Two Rivers, Clinton, and Winkleigh - and they are all wards within the Torridge District Council. This will result in a constituency - Central Devon - which contains parts of four district councils, Teignbridge, West Devon, Mid Devon and Torridge, making it very difficult for the elected MP to represent the area and keep a connection with local politics. I have to say we have enough trouble getting our MP up to the Torridge District Council meetings, so it would be even more difficult if they have to get to four district councils. It leaves Torridge split in two for parliamentary representation.

We have a focus in our area, in Great Torrington, which is much more to Bideford and to Barnstaple. The pupils who attend Great Torrington School, which is an 11-16 school, continue on either to Bideford College or to Petroc FE College in Barnstaple. The town's focus is either within the town or towards Bideford and Barnstaple for shopping, recreation and cultural activities, and the same is true for most of the Torrington Rural County Council wards. The people in Torrington, Clinton and Two Rivers in particular do not travel to Okehampton for these essentials, and certainly not to Crediton, which is a considerable drive, so we would be in a constituency which we have no real relationship to.

The boundaries of Torridge, when it includes us, encloses an area whose main sources of income are tourism, agriculture and fishing. There is coherence to the area. Then I looked at population. The electoral register for these four district council wards contained 10,743 electors. The current constituency of Torridge and West Devon, which includes these four district council wards, is 114 more than the top number in the Boundary Commission's parameters. It seems arbitrary to dismantle a viable constituency for this rather rag-tag creation for the sake of 114 voters. Those figures surely are a bit moveable.

I am just suggesting it would be better to relax the amount that constituencies can vary in size to avoid such an arbitrary and problematic new constituency which bears no relationship to how people live, work and socialise in our area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you just remain there for a moment just in case there are any questions from the floor?

MRS FUNNELL: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would anybody like to ask any questions for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much, Mrs Funnell.

Our next scheduled speaker is booked at 12.20. Is there anybody in the room who would like to speak? (No response) As we have no more speakers in the room until 12.20 I am going to adjourn now until that time, so the hearing is adjourned until 12.20.

After a short break

Time noted: 12.20 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Hello, everyone in the room, and welcome back to the hearing. We have a speaker booked for 12.20, Mr Rob Lambert. Come to the lectern. Would you state your name and address, please, Mr Lambert? Just be aware that your representations are being recorded for the purposes of keeping a note and then for publication later.

MR LAMBERT: No problem. Rob Lambert, 6 Jesmond Road, Exeter EX1 2DG. I just wanted to come and quickly speak today just to say that obviously, talking about Exeter, I think the proposals as they are are pretty much spot-on. You might remember back to 2010 there was a big hoo-ha about "West Ex" potentially being moved in with Okehampton, and there was a big letter writing campaign here in Exeter. It is something that the people of Exeter felt particularly passionate about that that should not happen. I think these boundaries kind of safeguard that happening in the future.

There are a lot of buildings being built, particularly in the south east part of Exeter on the edge of Pinhoe, and a lot that have been built in the St Loyes area as well, and by keeping the boundaries as they are, they kind of prevent this eastern sprawl of the constituency being moved out into East Devon, and it keeps Exeter's historic boundaries intact.

Obviously the stuff outside Pinhoe is completely new and, as any local historian will tell you, St Loyes is a bit of a nothing place. It emerged out of nowhere in the 1960s, and a lot of elements that have been built within the St Loyes area are new-builds and they had not existed there before. At Newcourt station out there, there is a big expanse of

housing, and that is only likely to continue, and keeping Exeter kind of within its historic boundaries is something that I think the residents of Exeter will be very happy with. That is what I would like to say, really.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Lambert. Would you remain there just for a moment, please, in case there are any questions from the floor?

MR LAMBERT: Yes. No problem.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody have any questions for clarification for Mr Lambert? (No response) Thank you, Mr Lambert, very much for attending and giving your representations.

MR LAMBERT: No problem. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker is due at 12.40, so I will keep the hearing open just in case she arrives early, and review it as that time passes, but our next speaker is not due until 12.40.

After a short break

Time noted: 12.40 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is Mrs Susanna Aves in the room? Hello. You have just walked in. Are you ready to speak now? You have a slot at 12.40. Yes. Would you like to come forward, please, to the lectern? Good afternoon. Mrs Aves, am I pronouncing your surname correctly?

MRS AVES: Yes, you are.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Can I ask you, please, to just state your name and address for the purpose of the record, and just to inform you that the proceeding are being videoed.

MRS AVES: Yes, I knew that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: In order that there is a record from which then we can determine what needs to be published. It will all be published in due course. Thank you.

MRS AVES: I am Susannah Aves, and my address is 20 Clifton Hill, Exeter EX1 2DL.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you; if you would like to make your representations.

MRS AVES: All right. How long do I have? I just talk for a short while?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have a 10-minute slot, so if you can try and make sure that you encompass what you want to say in a very concise way so that you cover everything that you want to tell me.

MRS AVES: Is it helpful if I describe who I am, or why I am here, as well as what I am saying?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you feel it is relevant, then please do that. The main thing is that you make your representations about the initial proposals for the South West region, and this is your opportunity to tell me your thoughts around that, and any alternative schemes that you think would better serve the area that you are referring to.

MRS AVES: Okay. The area I am interested in is Exeter City itself. I agree with the proposed boundary that is already there. I think it is well considered, and it works really well as it is at the moment, and I do not think it does need to be changed, so congratulations. I think that was a good decision. I am coming here to support the current boundary that is being proposed.

The reason for that is I have lived in the city for a long time, over 20 years, 22 years, 24 years, something like that, and I have brought up my family here. They go to the local schools. We use all the local facilities, and so forth, that the city provides

I have been involved since my second daughter was born. I stopped work and I have been involved a lot in community, and doing things with community locally. I think the way the city works and the size that it is is certainly big enough, and works well as a constituency and I feel that the MP that covers the constituency is able to support and do what is needed for the size of the constituency that it is. I think that works really well.

I also feel it is really important to keep Exeter as a city within a large rural Devon, and I think it is very important for it to keep its city status the way it is because the issues and the needs of a city are very different to the rural environment that is around, and so the borders that there are work very well for Exeter itself.

I feel that there have been considerations about nearby wards and whether it should stay the size it is, and I feel that nearby wards, for instance, St Loyes and Topsham, are a very different make-up and do not fit in as well to the city as it is.

I was surprised that the number of electors had gone down from last time when the boundaries were looked at. My concern over that is that what is not being taken into consideration is perhaps students are no longer registered. Within the city itself there

are a very large number of students, and therefore I do not think they have been included in the numbers. I feel that the numbers do not quite represent the number of electors that might register, so I think the number will be an awful lot bigger than it is.

Also, there is an awful lot of building going on in the city itself so if another ward was added, plus all the building that is going on and all the extra people that will be living here, it would push it over the limit because I know it has got to be between 71,000 and something and 78,000 and something, it has got to be between those figures. Although on the fundamental numbers it looks like we are lower than we might otherwise be in Exeter, if I have understood from reading the document, but I do not feel a lot of people have been include in the numbers who would otherwise vote plus all the thousands of extra people that will be living in the city and within the boundary, as you have proposed, the numbers will be going up hugely anyway. I think it should stay as it is otherwise it will go over the number that it should be. That is my main argument, or suggestion. Continuity is good. It works well as it works now.

I think that is mainly it, just being concerned about the issues and the needs of Exeter. I was brought up in Cornwall, so I know the needs and the concerns of the rural community, and I know, having lived here now for 22 years-plus, it is definitely a very different set of circumstances for a constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and for those representations. Would you remain there just for a moment in case there are any questions of clarification?

MRS AVES: Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions of clarification from the floor? (No response)

MRS AVES: No. Is that it?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Aves, thank you very much for attending.

MRS AVES: All right. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have a speaker booked for the slot at 12.50. It is just coming up to 12.50 now. I am not aware that that speaker is here, but I will keep the hearing open in case that person arrives. My intention is to break at 1 o'clock for lunch, but I am keeping the hearing open at the moment.

(After a pause) Can I just ask you first of all to your name and address?

CLLR ASHWOOD: Rose Ashwood.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Just be aware that we are recording the proceedings for publication later.

CLLR ASHWOOD: (St Loyes ward) Yes. My address is 17 Raleigh Road, Exeter EX1 1DG. I am the city councillor for St Loyes, here to speak against its inclusion in Exeter parliamentary constituency. The primary reason for this is I have been councillor for St Loyes since May and I have discovered that it has a lot more in common with Topsham, which is the other area that is not include in the Exeter constituency, than it would do with the rest of Exeter, i.e. more in common with East Devon as a community.

I think that people in St Loyes are quite familiar with the boundaries, so in terms of continuity I think it is quite important for it to stay the way it is just because people are far more likely to become engaged electorally if they are familiar with the MP, which people in St Loyes already are. Also, as I understand it, there are new developments on the edge of Exeter around St Loyes way, and this would set an odd precedent if they moved somewhere expecting to be within East Devon and then, all of a sudden, they are in the Exeter constituency.

For future developments as well on the edge of Exeter, because Exeter is expanding, they again would have more in common with East Devon than they would have with central Exeter. Again, I would really oppose it on that ground.

Just generally, the communities have communicated to me that they are just really happy with the way things are. Unless anyone has any questions?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions from the floor? (No response) Thank you very much, Ms Ashwood.

Is there anybody else who would like to speak? (No response) In that case, I will adjourn the hearing now until 2 pm.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, and welcome back to the second day of the public hearing. We have a speaker at 2 o'clock and that is Duncan Wood. Cllr Wood, would you like to come forward, please? If you just come round and come to the lectern please? Cllr Wood, if I can ask you to tell us your name and address, please, and just be aware that the proceeding are being recorded for later publication.

CLLR WOOD: Okay. Thank you. My name is Duncan Wood, and my address is 35 Venny Bridge, Pinhoe, Exeter.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your presentation.

CLLR WOOD: (Pinhoe ward) Thank you very much. The reason I have come today is that my career has led me to be in the Civil Service and around the public sector, and also in the voluntary sector. I know that consultations like this often attract detractors more than they do supporters, and usually those that agree are very silent, so I just wanted to come along to say that actually I am quite impressed with how well the Commission has struggled with matching the criteria that it has to match in terms of maximum and minimum numbers across the county whilst preserving as much as is possible of the constituencies who are connected to and value their MPs. Exeter is a prime example of that, where we have a valued MP with a long record of serving the city.

I think one of the temptations would be to adjust the boundaries just a little to pick up extra numbers for this section or that section, or constituency, and I think it was a very brave action to try and preserve as much as possible. I am quite pleased to see Exeter has survived, as it were, and that the maximum effort has been put into this review to try and keep people's communities connected to their community identity and also the MPs that they value. Really, I am just here to say thank you, really impressed with the work that was done, and I fully support it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Cllr Wood. Would you like to remain there in case there are any questions?

CLLR WOOD: Yes, certainly.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions from the floor? (No response) Thank you. Thank you very much for attending and giving your representations.

CLLR WOOD: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Our next speaker is not booked until 3 pm. Is there anybody else in the room who would like to speak now? (No response) In that case, I will adjourn the hearing until 3 pm.

After a short break

Time noted: 3.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is a speaker booked at 3 pm. Would you like to come to the lectern, Mr Vizard? Mr Vizard, would you give your full name and address, please? The proceedings are being recorded for the purpose then of publication later. Can I just remind you, you have a 10-minute slot?

CLLR VIZARD: (Chair, Exeter Labour Party) Thank you. Cllr Matthew Vizard, 1 College Road, Exeter EX1 1TE. I wanted to firstly express my support for the Boundary Commission's proposal to leave Exeter unchanged. I am pleased that the review has recommended no changes. While no constituency boundary can ever perfectly reflect the wishes of everyone, I feel that the current boundary minimises confusion to residents and accurately reflects the city, the city area, encapsulates Exeter's make-up, its communities very cohesively and effectively, so I would support no change. I think from Pinhoe to the east of the city, to Alphington and Exwick in the west, our strong community identities are reflected and included under the current boundary. The two sides of the River Exe are reflected well, and Exeter's distinctiveness from the surrounding areas too.

While I appreciate Exeter falls within the range for the electorate and is certainly below the current ceiling, as I understand it, I feel it is important to consider the impact of the building that is to come. There are a number of new homes being built around the city in areas like Pinhoe which will impact significantly, I think, on that electorate figure over the next few years. The areas that do fall outside the present boundary, such as St Loyes, I think have largely more in common with the East Devon constituency than they do with Exeter.

I acknowledge completely that the Boundary Commission has been tasked with a very difficult job of reducing 650 constituencies to 600 nationally, as it states in the document I have read, it says:

"In the absence of exceptional and compelling circumstances it would not be appropriate to divide wards in cases where it is possible to construct constituencies that meet the electorate rules without doing so."

I think that very much applies to Exeter, and I think where constituencies can be left unchanged they should be. This provides stability, clarity and consistency to an area like Exeter that has such a clearly defined identity. It also avoids a knock-on effect obviously to other constituencies that are changed, and unnecessarily changed in my view, would have. In summary, it works, I support the proposals for leaving Exeter unchanged. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Vizard. Would you remain there for a moment? Are there any questions from the floor for Mr Vizard? Could I just ask you to wait for the roving mike, and then just to state your name, please?

MR TAGHDISSIAN: My name is James Taghdissian. Mr Vizard, I think I heard him right in saying that St Loyes has more in common with East Devon, and I just wondered what it has more in common with East Devon in. I live within the new part of St Loyes, since the Local Government Boundary Commission extended the boundary. I do not understand what “St Loyes old”, so to speak, has in common with a constituency made up of a number of rural villages and small towns.

MR VIZARD: St Loyes was just an example, I think, obviously of one of the areas that is on the outskirts of Exeter where a boundary falls. The boundary has to fall somewhere, clearly. I think that St Loyes, just for the fact that it has been in East Devon for a while and because the area encompasses Newcourt and new-build areas, and the station is out there, it feels, although some of it is very much part of Exeter, some of it is not, so it is one of those areas where you could argue both ways, whereas I think other options on the outskirts of the city, Pinhoe village, the outskirts of Exwick, for instance, Alphington, there is less of a case for chopping off bits there so. That is my view.

I completely understand that some people in St Loyes feel very much part of Exeter, but the boundary has to fall somewhere, so I think it was just an example of “I know an area where some people have suggested.”

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Vizard, thank you for clarifying that.

MR VIZARD: Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any other questions for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much attending, Mr Vizard, and for your representations.

MR VIZARD: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do we have Mr James Taghdissian? Thank you. Would you like to come forward, please, come to the lectern? Have I pronounced your name correctly?

MR TAGHDISSIAN: It is as good as anybody else pronounces it, so thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to tell me how it is correctly pronounced?

MR TAGHDISSIAN: I always pronounce it “Tardissian”.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: “Tardissian”.

MR TAGHDISSIAN: So the “g” and the “h” becomes an “r”.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for that clarification. Could I ask you then to give your full name and address before you give your presentation?

MR TAGHDISSIAN: Yes, of course. My full name is James Ali Taghdissian. My address is 20 Honiton Road, Exeter EX1 3ED. I hope you have got that down right, and I have not gone too fast.

My representations to you, if I can begin by making them, are these. In my view, the 2012, I think it is, boundary, or the previous boundary of the St Loyes ward, should be transferred from the East Devon county constituency to the Exeter borough constituency, and there are a number of reasons I take that view.

Can I begin by making a point in terms of the electoral numbers? My understanding is that the statutory requirement within the 2011 Act is for constituencies to have an electorate as close to 74,769 as is possible, and a margin of 5 per cent is allowed either way, save for specific cases, and I think one such is the Isle of Wight.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just clarify that point? There is no requirement for the Commission to actually make the eventual number as close as possible to that; it is sufficient for it to be within the quota.

MR TAGHDISSIAN: Within 5 per cent.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR TAGHDISSIAN: The reason that I understand the Act to have that general requirement of within 5 per cent of 74,769 is to try to equalise the number of constituencies in terms of the electorate size. The Commission’s proposal, at page 28 of the South West initial proposals document, leaves the Exeter constituency under quota at 71,404, a variation of 4.51 per cent. I am saying under quota being that it is not; it is 4.1 per cent at variance by being under the statutory number of 74,769.

East Devon, at 77,959 electors, is 4.1 per cent over the total number, so if one looks at those numbers they are at perhaps the wider end of the parameters afforded to the Boundary Commission in terms of the statutory number of 74,769. In my opinion, were the St Loyes ward transferred to the Exeter constituency, the percentage variation for both constituencies, even accounting for the additional proposal that has been made for the East Devon constituency, significantly reduces the variance and brings both constituencies much nearer to the statutory number of 74,769. I can give you the exact numbers based upon the document that I have just referred to:

“Were St Loyes transferred from East Devon into an Exeter borough constituency, the Exeter electorate would then total 76,008 voters, a 1.7 per cent differential and by removing St Loyes from the East Devon county constituency, but even accounting for the additional changes that have been made for that constituency, the electorate falls to 73,355, 1.9 per cent below quota.”

That, in my opinion, is significant and important because a lot of the development which is taking place within Exeter, which a previous speaker referred to, is actually taking place within the Topsham ward. Topsham ward would then remain in East Devon, and so there would be a greater variation, or ability to accommodate the new build taking place.

In terms of numbers alone, in my opinion, and I would support the transfer of St Loyes back to Exeter, it would be a restoration of St Loyes to its historically linked city and it would have the added advantage, before I move on to the community ties aspect of the argument, of bringing the Exeter borough constituency up to total or nearer to the total or to the optimum level and reduce East Devon downwards towards the optimum total.

With regards to the other criteria which the Commission, as I understand it, can consider within Schedule 2, Rule 5, they are as follows: St Loyes is a local government ward within the Exeter parliamentary seat. It is an Exeter City Council area in its own tight. It has substantial community, transport and administrative links to the city. In contrast, it has no such links to the East Devon constituency. The designation of Exeter as a borough constituency and East Devon as a county constituency reinforces the difference, you might think.

St Loyes is a suburb of Exeter. It is one which is very heavily built up. It is suburban in its nature. It is a large number of housing areas, which have obviously their own community ties, but the integral link between them is that they effectively accommodate people who utilise the services of Exeter. In contrast, it has very little in common, if one thinks about it, with the more rural villages and small towns which comprise East Devon.

If one also looks at the map, which I see you have up on the screen, I mentioned earlier that it would effectively be a restoration of an integral part of the city. One can actually see where it would fit and how it would in fact come back in, because it would actually bring in to the constituency something which is currently divided and away from it. It would effectively bring the constituency much nearer to being almost entirely within the M5 boundary, which is a much more natural boundary than currently exists.

The current boundary is essentially Honiton Road, a small part of Rifford Road down to Lethbridge Road, which actually takes a number of people who are in Rifford Road, and therefore, effectively if you look down the Rifford Road those on the left-hand side of it until Lethbridge Road fall into East Devon whereas their neighbours opposite and everybody in the block of flats probably about 20 houses down suddenly falls into

Exeter. I suspect that if one went and asked the vast majority of people who lived in those houses “Which area do you feel most akin to and with?” they would say “Well, undoubtedly Exeter.” The reason for that is, as I say, there are substantial community ties between Exeter and St Loyes.

For example, in terms of - I have just mentioned a number of them - the current boundary actually splits a road not in half, so to speak, because it only takes in the top, I suppose quarter, not even that, possibly a fifth of the road, and they are going to find themselves and all the housing estate behind them are going to find themselves in a much more rural constituency - East Devon – whereas, as I say, those opposite them find themselves in the urban constituency, which is essentially a false boundary and it is potentially one which, having spoken to the local ward councillors I know from their telling me, affects people’s inclinations to vote. They do not see why they should be voting for a Member of Parliament in a constituency they have no link to, and no mental link to either, as well as physical, when they consider themselves to be in Exeter.

You have also got, as I say, established community ties to schools, for example, which serve people who live not only in and around the immediate area of St Loyes but also further afield. For example, my son currently goes to a local primary school which is in the Exeter constituency. It is only in the Exeter constituency because it happens to be on the right side of Honiton Road. It is St Nicholas Roman Catholic Primary School. When he transfers, and we are looking at a secondary school for my son, and our second one in due course further down the line, the primary school is a feeder school for St Peter’s Church of England Aided School which sits on Quarry Road and is in St Loyes ward.

People who are sending their children to St Peter’s and also to Woodwater Lane academy who live in the Exeter constituency but because of a rather absurd boundary, if you forgive me for putting it in that way, find that their school is actually in a different constituency. That is not, by itself, unusual, but when you do not have to do that, and you could actually encompass St Loyes within Exeter, it is remarkably strange and not one which really seems to be particularly defensible.

In terms of other matters, almost all the transport links within the St Loyes area are focused on Exeter and its city centre. For example, the Digby railway halt is a commuter station into the city and is a key part of Devon County Council’s wider efforts to meet the travel needs the city. It is, I think, a part of the Avocet line, which is a hugely popular line bringing people into the city and trying to get them to stop the use of their cars. To suggest that that station is not part of the City of Exeter is, in my view, as someone who lives nearby to it, frankly absurd.

Bus routes are also focused around the city centre. Almost all of the buses which run through that area are focused on going back into the city centre, or serving the hospital, for example, as well.

In my opinion, and to conclude, because I think we have only got 10 minutes, or something like that, to speak, if you actually look at the Commission's proposal, namely to keep Exeter intact, in my view that is wrong, and it is wrong numerically because it must be sound principle that if you have an optimum number set down by Parliament, the closer you can get to it, the better,

The transfer of St Loyes back to Exeter, and I say "back to" because that is exactly what it is, it is back to the city which it has historical links to, and you would notice that if you look at the other names, Exeter has a lot of saints within it, and St Loyes is a historically integral part of that proud tradition in this city. Numerically, it makes sense to transfer St Loyes back into the city, and, by way of community ties, it makes sense to transfer St Loyes back into the Exeter borough constituency.

I agree entirely with the last speaker that there has to be a boundary somewhere. That boundary being somewhere does not prevent St Loyes being in Exeter because it meets the 5 per cent rule. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for your presentation. Would you remain there for a moment, please? Are there any questions from the floor? (No response) Thank you for attending. Our next speaker is scheduled to speak at 4 o'clock, so I will adjourn the hearing now until 4 o'clock.

After a short break

Time noted: 4.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask Dr Stephen Aves to come forward? If you would like to give your full name and address, please. Just be aware that the proceedings are being recorded for the purpose of publication later.

DR AVES: Okay. My name is Dr Stephen John Aves. My address is 20 Clifton Hill, Exeter.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your presentation, please.

DR AVES: Okay. I would like to talk about and make my presentation about the constituency of Exeter. I have been a resident and I have worked in Exeter for over 30 years. I would like to support the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for England to leave the existing constituency of Exeter unchanged for the following reasons.

Firstly, it is within the number limits. It is within the 95 to 105 per cent bounds of the UK electoral quota, so it fits there. Secondly, it makes sense geographically. Its shape is obviously a single entity. It is internally accessible. It is a defined community, a defined urban community, and it has a very clear identity. Apart from two wards it is contiguous with the district boundaries of the City of Exeter.

Those two wards, Topsham and St Loyes, are obviously not included for number purposes but are in East Devon constituency and they are the most east Devon-facing wards in the City, by which I mean geographically. I mean, for example, St Loyes ward, geographically a large part of that ward literally faces east Devon. It faces out across to the hills of east Devon, Woodbury Common. It is part of the River Clyst catchment rather than the River Exe catchment, and it is accessible to east Devon via three major A-roads, including the A30.

With those two exceptions the current constituency follows the boundaries of the City of Exeter. Any other rearrangement of the wards that make up the current constituency of Exeter would risk breaking up the community in the defined area that is the urban area of Exeter and would break very strong local ties.

Those kinds of arguments have been rehearsed in the past and have been taken on board. For those reasons I would strongly support the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for England to leave the existing constituency of Exeter as it is. That is it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Dr Aves. Dr Aves, if you would just remain there for a moment in case there are any questions from the floor.

DR AVES: Sure.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions from the floor? (No response) Thank you very much, Dr Aves, for attending, and for your representations.

Can I invite Mr Kingswood, please who I understand has registered to speak? Mr Kingswood, if you would like to come to the lectern, please. Mr Kingswood, if you would give your name and address, please.

MR KINGSWOOD: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Please be aware that the proceedings are being recorded for publication purposes.

MR KINGSWOOD: Of course, yes. I have spoken.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. Can I remind you that have a 10-minute speaking slot?

MR KINGSWOOD: Yes. Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR KINGSWOOD: Peter Kingswood. I am visiting from the Royal County of Berkshire, where I am registered as an elector.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What is your address?

MR KINGSWOOD: It is in SL4 3ED. We have heard about the expansion in different places across the whole of Devon. We have heard about Cranbrook. One could also talk about, in the future, Sherford, but you can play with the numbers, and certainly in East Devon the projected figures for Cranbrook have declined. There is a current local government review in East Devon, so one could play at that but, no, I will stay with the strategic.

To the Commission, thank you for choosing to use as regions the nine European regions. They have evolved since the early 1990s. We may disagree with them as geographics, but they have evolved as administrative regions. They have got coherence. Within those regions the local government unit is the ward, unless you are in Cornwall, because it is a unitary county, the Commission choose to use the word "ward" for simplicity.

I have said it at London and at South East, Please stay with the wards. Please do not tinker with the wards, because although it may be tempting to use polling districts, polling districts are transient. A ward can certainly be in existence for a dozen years. I could quote many examples where wards have been in existence for almost 20 years because of slow change, and that the local authority's wards fit within with the rules that the Local Government Commission observe. There is a law that requires local authorities to examine their polling districts every four years, so, if they did choose, the polling district is very much a transient thing. Please, for simplicity and so as to keep Pandora's Box closed, stay with the regions and stay with wards

I think that I had better leave it at that, just keep it on the strategic. What I would say is thank you, in the case of Central Devon, not to go beyond four districts. Four districts is more than enough for an MP to get their head around. Ideally every constituency should be wholly within a district.

Certainly yesterday I made a comment about Newton Abbot. I have since looked at figures, and I am still looking at figures, but ideally a constituency within a district is the ideal. I live in a constituency --- (Interruption from outside) Right, leaving aside the

“heckler”, I live in a constituency that has pieces of three districts. Trying to get an awareness of identity one finds it is rather like a troika, that Russian device for skating over the ice, but there are other occasions when constituencies have to have bits and bits of districts. I leave it at that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Kingswood. Would you would just remain there for a moment.

MR KINGSWOOD: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody have any questions from the floor for Mr Kingswood? (No response) No. Thank you very much for your representations, Mr Kingsford, and for attending.

MR KINGSWOOD: Okay. Thank you, and thank you for your courtesy.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. We have no more registered speakers. The hearing is due to close at 5 o'clock, so we have plenty of time if there is anybody in the room who wants to speak. (No response) In that case I will adjourn the hearing until quarter to five and review the situation at that point. Thank you.

After a short break

Time noted: 4.45 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is now 4.45. Do we have any more speakers? Nobody else has made themselves known to us yet. Is there anybody in the room who would like to speak? Would you like to come forward, please? Would you give me, please, your full name and address, and just be aware the proceedings are being video recorded for the purposes of publication later.

MR FOALE: My name is Robert Anthony Foale. I am from Exwick here in Exeter.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your presentation, please?

MR FOALE: I would make a short point that to me and many other people St Loyes has always been a part of East Devon and not part of the city. It has its own separate identity in the same way, but different in the way that Topsham has. I am not sure the people of St Loyes identify that strongly with those wards within Exeter. I also believe there is a clear geographical boundary made up of the A38 that separates.

The final point is that if there is a growth area on that map, it is probably within the St Loyes ward and the knock-on effect of Cranbrook and other new housing estates. A

change now for the sake of change might mean they need to change back again in five years' time, which I think would be a great shame in terms of people's identity with their own ward. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Is there anybody who would like to put questions for clarification? (No response) I understand there are no questions, Mr Foale, but could you please give your full address?

MR FOALE: Yes. It is 163 Exwick Road.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for that. Thank you for attending and for your representations.

MR FOALE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just to let people in the room know, the hearing is due to finish at five o'clock, and I will close the hearing at five o'clock. I intend to leave the hearing open until then in case any other interested people come in to make representations.

(After a pause) As it is five o'clock I am going to close the hearing. Thank you to everybody who has attended and spoken.

The hearing concluded at 5.00 pm

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