

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

SMALL HALL, GUILDHALL, MARKET HILL, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 3QJ

ON

FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016
DAY TWO

Before:

Ms Sarah Hamilton, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

**Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
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Telephone Number: 0203 585 4721/22**

Time Noted: 9.10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Cambridge for Day 2 of the public hearing for the Boundary Commission. I am Sarah Hamilton and I am the Lead Assistant Commissioner for the Eastern Region. Today is the second day in Cambridge when we will be hearing from members of the public regarding the initial proposals.

I understand we have Mr Kevin Price first, if he would like to come to the front. All speakers have been given about ten minutes if they want that long, and if you could start by giving your name and full address please, and, just to let you know, all proceedings are being recorded today.

CLLR PRICE: Good morning, thank you. I am Cllr Kevin Price, I am the deputy leader of Cambridge City Council and member of the Labour group. My address is 14 Birch Close, Cambridge, CB4 1NN.

As I see the change to the boundaries, I am perfectly happy to accept the area of Queen Edith's to be part of the Cambridge constituency. It is part of the city council area so we are fairly well covered with that.

I do, however, think that to bring Milton in as part of the city would be possibly a step too far. I used to live in Milton, oddly enough, and it is definitely a village. It has a village feel. I am certain the people of Milton will have their say but they are not part of the city. You have to cross the A14, there is this huge dual carriageway that separates the two areas which, in my view, also makes it feel less like it is part of the Cambridge constituency.

There are areas of the city, to the north of the city, which are inside the A14, namely Orchard Park and King's Meadows, which I know are part of Histon, but they are at least only separated from Cambridge by one ordinary road, Kings Hedges Road. If we have to have a bigger area, then I think keeping it within the A14 boundary is probably the best way forward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any questions of clarification? No. Thank you very much for your time.

CLLR PRICE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker is due at 9.20 am, so we will wait until he arrives.

Time Noted: 9.15 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 9.20 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to Cambridge, Day 2 of the public hearing. For the people who have just joined us, we are continuing to hear from members of the public this morning regarding the Boundary Commission's initial proposals.

If I could ask Mr Lewis Herbert to come up to the front please? Mr Herbert, we are asking everyone to give their full name and address for the record and, just to let you know, all proceedings are being recorded today.

CLLR HERBERT: Thank you. I am Cllr Lewis Herbert, I am leader of the City Council. I am not speaking for the City Council but speaking as a councillor who has been active as a councillor for 12 years. My address is 171 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 8RJ.

If we look at the map of Cambridge, Cambridge is effectively a fairly limited sized city with some development on its edges but which essentially has a shared community of interest. The addition of Queen Edith's ward as proposed by the Boundary Commission is a logical step and, as a Queen Edith's resident and also a councillor nearby, I have observed and remember various occasions when the case for including Queen Edith's in Cambridge has been made.

The complexity we have is that obviously the Government has objectives of setting numbers. In that numbers issue I believe, and I have evidence for it and we have evidence from our registration, as a city we have not been able to fully register particularly students and the electoral registration system has radically reduced the number of students who are enrolled. Also, as a person who knocks on a lot of doors and uses the electoral register, there are streets in my ward of Coleridge where there are large numbers of houses where there are people I know, both UK citizens but also EU citizens entitled to vote in local elections, who are just not on the register. One of the concerns we have as a city is, in addition to my point of adding Queen Edith's, is the lack of full accuracy and thereby the issue that the electoral roll understates the true population and the voting population of the city. That is a side issue.

In terms of what is a community of interest, I was leader of the opposition at the time but we have had extensive discussions with South Cambridgeshire about effectively extending the city to, in short language, the last house. Those discussions nearly came to a conclusion in 2009. The city was all in favour, it was South Cambridgeshire which pulled out. We have to look at the city and the links to the parliamentary boundary as reflecting a true community. That community is bounded by the A14 in the north and by the M11 in the west and has extended south with the expansion of Trumpington ward and the significant population increase there. So our concern in terms of a logical

community is that the addition of Milton is just a sporadic addition of a community that has no direct connection to the city, that is part of the county council as a combined ward also with Waterbeach, so most of its ties and its links are to the north. And it has a four-lane carriageway between it and the city.

We appreciate that the Boundary Commission has a focus on using ward boundaries, but we have to the south of the A14 a significant population in the area of Orchard Park, which has a contiguous link with the city, which shares community facilities and is a more logical area to consider; the area that is to the north of Kings Hedges Road. If you take the boundary of Kings Hedges Road there, you have a significant additional population, right the way across to the B1049, so effectively these are two junctions on the A14 (indicating). If you added that population in, the boundaries of the new Cambridge constituency would, we believe, meet the necessary addition. We are already adding Queen Edith's ward, which is a significant addition, and this is part of a logical community. We are very happy to continue the discussion with our neighbours and we believe that this area would in the future be far better administratively served as part of the city council. We have very friendly relations with our neighbours and we have had that discussion.

There is also an area of East Chesterton and the area of Fen Road, where there is an area which is significantly a traveller population to the north of East Chesterton in that area beyond the railway line. It is in this area. It is in South Cambs. (indicating) This is only an example of illogicality, it does not by itself address the Boundary Commission's numbers criteria, but there is a significant population along that road which is bounded in completely from any other access except south through East Chesterton. It is a population which I think suffers because of that, not because South Cambridgeshire Council does not administer it effectively, but it is just another of these examples that we have, along with a number of land-bounded cities around England, of major inconsistencies where small communities are completely cut off from their neighbours and not included.

If you look at Milton ward, I link up with their councillors on issues particularly in that enclave, because that is part of Milton ward, but there is no particular logic. So our case is that Milton ward does not have any direct connection. It has a footbridge and a cycle bridge but it is a separate community and certainly in terms of logical progression for Cambridge as an administrative area, a city council, and a parliamentary constituency, co-terminosity in the north with that area that has a lot of services provided by the city council would be a far more logical area to adopt.

Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Do we have any questions?

MR COOK: (Conservative Party) Laurence Cook from the Conservative Party. I see the sense of making the suggestion of including the Orchard Park polling districts below the A14, but would you apply the same logic to Trumpington Meadows in the south west of the constituency where we have had representation that Trumpington Meadows is separated from the rest of Trumpington?

CLLR HERBERT: I would believe the same principle would apply, in that it has a connectivity. If you just take the local plans and the approach of the planners, we have worked very closely together – South Cambridgeshire and the City – there has been a route to effectively support the Green Belt but also just have development that adds on to the City rather than connecting on. So a number of these communities on the edge of Cambridge, partly through a planning policy but specifically from the view of South Cambridgeshire, have a distinct gap between the city development and the next village. That means those villages like Trumpington Meadows would fit far better with the city because, again, all their services are provided through the city and there is no connectivity to South Cambridgeshire.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Next questioner please?

MR ROSENSTIEL: Colin Rosenstiel. On the suggestion relating to Orchard Park, you do realise that part of the population of the Histon & Impington ward - to the left side of the map - south of the A14 is not in Orchard Park but in Histon & Impington parish, the area south of Kings Hedges Road? So you would get a rather awkward boundary if you just took out Orchard Park.

CLLR HERBERT: Not all boundaries are simple, Colin.

MR ROSENSTIEL: You could argue that that community belongs in Cambridge as well. It is the square in the middle of the screen now.

CLLR HERBERT: Which bit?

MR ROSENSTIEL: Between Histon Road to the west, Kings Hedges Road to the north and then the existing city boundary to the south and east.

CLLR HERBERT: Which bit? This bit (indicating)?

MR ROSENSTIEL: No. The St Margaret Square estate, on the old allotment site.

CLLR HERBERT: Part of this (indicating)?

MR ROSENSTIEL: No, the old site that was built before Orchard Park, next to the Meadows. That is a self-contained community as well. Indeed all the land in it that is built on is owned by the City Council.

CLLR HERBERT: I would support districts or lines that we can draw simply, but I think there would still be some incongruity as a result. I have not full knowledge of the approach of taking whole wards but I would just ask the Boundary Commission to consider polling districts because of the nature of the community and the better representation that could be given. If you imagine how an MP is going to represent an area, they are going to be in a far better position to represent a community that shares the same interests.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

Mr Rosenstiel, I think we have you next. You know the drill – name and address please.

MR ROSENSTIEL: Since we have this map up ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Name and address first please.

MR ROSENSTIEL: Colin Rosenstiel, 98 King St, Cambridge. Just to wrap up the point we were discussing there and just try and make the point clear, south of the A14 you have a number of --- I think Orchard Park because it is a parish is probably a polling district. But you have this estate here, which is older, you have new developments coming in this area as well but I don't think there's anything built there yet, and you also have an extension at this end which I think is probably part of Orchard Park. (indicating)

With Milton, you then have the Fen Road section, which I will address anyway. OA4 is in fact the Orchard Park polling district, but the other one down here ----- there is a separate polling district for that so you could actually include both. (indicating) That is part of the Histon & Impington parish, and Orchard Park is separate. Actually it is a community, not a parish these days.

To go back to my principal contribution. I am Colin Rosenstiel, 98 King St, Cambridge, as I already said. I served as a city councillor from 1973 to 1998 and from 1992 to 2014. For a number of years I chaired the City Council's Civic Affairs Committee, the regulatory committee responsible for elections. Later I was vice-chair. As chair I piloted the review of the city ward boundaries which was implemented in 2004 and is still in use today. I have extensive experience in the field of elections as well as on boundaries, including service as chairman of the Electoral Reform Society for five years. I am a Liberal Democrat but contributing today in a personal capacity. I was a member of a team of Liberal Democrats which drew up evidence presented at the Lead Hearing in this region in the aborted 2011 review. I also represented the party and its predecessors at all Cambridge parliamentary inquiries from 1981 until the last review to be completed.

I wish to address the Commission's draft proposals, and some of the representations made of which I am aware, mainly relating to Cambridgeshire including Peterborough.

First of all, I want to comment on the process. A number of people have referred to the electoral register as a shaky foundation for a review, and I think that is becoming increasingly clear, but it means the next review in five years' time, when I suspect the situation will have settled down a bit, could produce rather different results and a different balance of electoral numbers, and that could be a problem then. It is becoming clear that basing the register numbers on a date that related to the old method of household registration and before there were rolling updates gives a false picture of the true electorate. The electoral register gives its most complete snapshot of those entitled to vote at the closing date for rolling update claims before each major electoral event. Recent examples are the 2015 general election and the referendum this year. In each case, thousands of additional names were added to the Cambridge electoral register between the previous 1 December and those dates. I have figures in my records that show that was 9,500 in 2015, and that is an awful lot of people.

On the other hand, a happy outcome of this under-registration is that this review allows Cambridge to be reunited. It seems Parliament has not considered the impact of rolling register updates and individual registration on the date used to base electoral reviews. I believe it should now be the date of that last update, and the Boundary Commission should suggest to the Cabinet Office that this matter must be considered before the next parliamentary boundary review after 2020, otherwise public faith in the fairness of the process may well be lost. It is a matter of regret that none of the alternative proposals put forward that I have seen have included tables of figures to demonstrate that the changed constituencies are compliant with the now strict plus or minus 5% rule for the electorates. This makes it particularly hard to assess Mr Summers' and Ms Geake's wide-ranging proposals that we heard yesterday, for example.

In Cambridgeshire, I generally support the proposals. A general point here across the region is that the proposals retain borough constituencies for the main towns and cities, and that applies as much to Norwich, Colchester and Ipswich as to Cambridge. It is obviously important to people like me who live in Cambridge in relation to their own city the statutory rules have created this terrible problem in the past which leads currently to Queen Edith's, but previously also Trumpington, being outside the constituency. It is a great relief that a ward that has been outside the city since 1983 – somebody yesterday did not realise it was quite that long – should no longer have to be excluded in this review. I was one of those who objected to this change being made as far back as 1981.

I was going to say that it is hard to appreciate just how much immense confusion this has caused and how welcome it is that it is to be righted, and I thought it unlikely that people would realise this gave them a chance to say so, but in fact we have been well

served by people coming along making precisely that point, and you have probably had more representations on that point than any other. It is interesting the breadth of community that has come along to say that.

While I welcome that political unity, I would refer to the other elements of the proposals that were in particular described by the Labour County Councillor Group leader, Cllr Ashley Walsh, who is also a boundaries geek and shares that enthusiasm with me. He raised a significant point, which I agree with, that Teversham and Fulbourn – we are now moving outside the city to the eastern fringe – should be in the same constituency because of their share in estates that in effect are former extensions of Cherry Hinton. You will need to zoom in a little bit on Cherry Hinton. That is the Cherry Hinton bypass and those significant estates within the bypass not in Cherry Hinton, not in the city, and the boundary does not even quite follow the railway line which otherwise separates Teversham and Fulbourn. They have a huge commonality of interest, they were built at much the same time, they are separated from the villages in whose parishes they fall, with quite separate facilities, and they very much look upon themselves as part of Cambridge. In fact in some places around the boundary, the City and South Cambs have to co-operate on collecting refuse from each other's properties simply because the access is too awkward otherwise. Cherry Hinton is part of Cambridge but also, as we were hearing about Milton, retains much of its village character despite having been part of the city since 1934. While I am firm that the city should be all one constituency as long as the electorate numbers allow that, these two areas have sufficient in common with each other to warrant them being in the same constituency. I do not, however, support achieving that in the way proposed by Cllr Walsh.

The first issue here is the inclusion of Milton – if we can go back to Milton. While I accept that Cambridge could numerically stand as a constituency without Milton and the argument by some that it is a separate village, I have shown above that areas of the city retain some village character too. I have mentioned Cherry Hinton but Trumpington is another example – that was also a village incorporated into the city in 1934. Unlike all the other Cambridge necklace villages however, Milton includes the Fen Road area, which was previously mentioned, which is this area here, which is part of Milton parish. It is actually accessible along the Hayling Way, along the river bank there, because basically this area here was added to the city in 1934 because it is the sewage works and the outfall into the river was included into the city and cut it off. (indicating) The proposed changes to the city boundary that Cllr Herbert referred to earlier were actually going to resolve that, in particular by not having the outfall in the city. It is only accessible by road however through the city and it functions very much as part of the city as Milton parish. Until recently it was not even regarded by Milton as worthy of its own polling district. I heard about this shocking effect by somebody I knew who was a Milton parish councillor who was trying to fix the problem, and I think it is now a separate polling district. There was huge under-registration there and there is a demographic reason that was hinted at by Cllr Herbert, that it is composed of a traveller population - largely, not entirely - and it is very much cut off from its village. So although

claims were made about the village character of Milton, we are talking about the whole parish and the impact of not being in the city on this area is much greater than any of the other necklace areas. That is the case I am making here.

Milton also includes the Cambridge Science Park there; the whole of that area up to the A10 is the science park. There is also the Cowley Road area, which is this one. That is one of the star examples of town and gown working together; somebody from Milton claimed otherwise yesterday. While a small part of the park – you can see the boundary parallels the old Milton Road and so a little bit of the park round here is in the city – is in the city, it is mostly in Milton. (indicating) I actually worked there in the early 2000s and it felt very much like working in the city, I had worked previously down by the river in East Chesterton for Philips which was situated there for many years until recently.

On the other hand, St John's Innovation Centre, which is about here I think, and its associated developments in Cowley Road, are mainly in the city but partly in Milton. Again the boundary runs at the back. When I worked in that building and did the same job as I did in the Science Park before it moved, my office was inside the city but I walked through the back of the building to eat my lunch in Milton. The area also includes the Business Park, which is down this road here, this area here; and industrial sites up here as well as the sewage works we have referred to which is in the city of course. They are entirely in the city. From next May we anticipate that all these developments, in the city and in Milton, will be served by the new Cambridge North railway station which will be around the Chesterton junction here. (indicating) This is under construction as I speak and will itself be divided between the city and Milton. One of its problems that I came across, because I was also chairman for a time of the licensing committee, is that the station forecourt will be in Milton and that will have consequences for taxi services to it, because there are almost no licensed taxis in South Cambridgeshire and city taxis are not legally allowed to ply for hire there. That is a problem that my successors on the council are still grappling with.

The main reason I do not accept the Labour proposal however is the continued inclusion in South East Cambridgeshire constituency of the Histon & Impington ward. You will need to zoom out a bit at this point – it will be more apparent if you zoom quite a long way out. We have a boundary that goes right round Histon & Impington and north of it is in South Cambs and south of it is in the city, and west of it in South Cambs. There is only this little land bridge into South East Cambs, even if Milton was included in South East Cambs it is still a promontory of South East Cambs. (indicating)

The only access to Cottenham, north of Histon, is on the B1049 road here, which goes straight through Histon, and in fact they share county councillors at present – Histon & Impington and Cottenham. (indicating) The only effective lines of communication are north-south.

So it makes no sense for both Cottenham and Histon & Impington wards not to be in the same constituency. This arose as something of an anomaly. I think it was recognised at the time but the usual problem with boundary reviews is that there are unavoidable anomalies because of the requirement to try and achieve equality, but it is time this anomaly was fixed.

If you then put the Histon & Impington ward into South Cambridgeshire, to compensate Fulbourn has to remain as it is today in South East Cambridgeshire, and Linton also needs to remain there which is off the bottom of the map as you are showing it. You need to move the map up. Linton is there. Linton should not be separated from Balsham, this ward here, because their primary communication corridor is the A1307 which goes to Haverhill down here. (indicating) Balsham has basically no communications in that direction; the only route to the rest of the world for most of them is through Linton. So this proposal to separate them into different constituencies breaks natural ties.

I think it was Cllr Walsh yesterday but I forgot to write it on my notes, who claimed that Linton and the Abingtons should be kept together. He has a fair point because they also share the A1307 corridor very clearly. However, they are not currently in the same constituency so I am unclear – and I am putting this on the table without taking a firm view either way, it is up to the Commission to try and work out the balance on this and I am not sure we have had representations from Linton or the Abingtons – as to which way the case goes, but there are consequences of which way you do it. I have suggested that if it is felt that Linton and the Abingtons should be in the same constituency in future, this objective can be achieved but only as long as Meldreth – now you have to go over to the west and up a bit so you can see North East Hertfordshire – and the three wards of the The Mordens, Bassingbourn and Melbourn go into North East Hertfordshire numerically to cope with what we just talked about.

I have argued above that Milton should remain in Cambridge in all this.

Mr Summers actually made a very valid point yesterday and I am slightly surprised we have not heard from anyone in Meldreth, that Meldreth and Melbourn should be in the same constituency. Those villages are pretty inseparable – central Melbourn is there right on the boundary; Meldreth is up by the railway, the other side of the railway – basically a field apart and they also share the same railway station. (indicating) That is not always that significant. I am personally interested in railways and I hold office for the University Railway Club but this bit of the line between Royston and Cambridge has three rural stations – Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton; the most amazingly intense service for such a rural line. You can get home from London at nearly midnight I think and it is well used, so the focus on the railway there seems to suggest that Melbourn and Meldreth belong together. Because of the numbers, because the Cambridgeshire constituencies are all on the large side, the only way to do that is to put Meldreth in with Royston and North East Hertfordshire. That transfer can be made without affecting

considerations between South and South East Cambridgeshire unless the Abingtons have to be in the same constituency as Linton, in which case the numbers require it to come in as South Cambs would have too many electors.

I have done a table and put it in my paper which shows the numbers of the relevant wards. I have not done a complete ward table so there is an entry saying “remaining wards as proposed in all the constituencies”.

I have also done a map and if you look at the map – zoom right out – you end up, starting here with a remarkably straight boundary down to here, compared to the somewhat salamanderish squiggle on the proposals. (indicating) So in terms of tidiness I think it is quite an improvement, although it is not done for that reason.

I want to move on and make some comments on Peterborough, which did not attract much comment yesterday. I think it is unique now as an example of a local authority where ward boundary changes have been implemented this May after the date to which the Commission has to work. In such areas there is immense scope for confusion in following boundaries that are no longer used. I hope the Commission will try to avoid this source of confusion in its boundary drawing if at all possible. This is mainly a point against Mr Summers, I am afraid, because his proposals were fairly cavalier in addressing this question, and they would fall foul of the different boundaries to a large extent. Coping with new constituency boundaries is going to be a large administrative task in any case; following ward boundaries that are no longer in use will make administrators’ lives even harder and will confuse the electorate even more as well. I made some comments back at the 2011 review where the same sort of issue arose in Bedfordshire, and I will not repeat them here but they are in the paper.

If we go to look at Peterborough and look at the boundary basically from here to here, between Peterborough constituency and the North West Cambs constituency, as far as I can work out with the help of the election maps website last night, this part of the boundary up to there, the old and new ward boundaries were virtually the same with no significant difference. In undeveloped areas like that, I am never quite sure if you can adjust the boundaries without affecting people. There are then two areas where it is non-trivially different – this area here, the triangle between the Spalding railway line there and the boundary and also the village of Peakirk, or the parish of Peakirk, there which is flipped. It is now in a ward with Ginton and Caster. If anybody is going to get confused by this it is going to be people in Peakirk. There are a few people in this area on Lincoln Road, the old main road there, but there will be very few others. Unfortunately the polling district boundaries are very unhelpful there because the same polling district covers both sides of the railway line but there is no way to cross it. The area, the Wellington North ward, has now been truncated along that railway line, leaving this area, and maybe that is because of planned development in that area – I do not know – which is mainly fields at the moment, apart from the houses on Lincoln Road. (indicating)

The other point, a small one, is St Neots. I was impressed that four people came along yesterday to say they wanted St Neots in the name of their constituency. It is, after all, the largest town in Cambridgeshire. This is not a new question that has arisen actually. It deserves recognition and to have the name of the constituency it is in. The new Huntingdon proposed is a rather spindly little construction. I am not complaining about those boundaries but it does mean that there is not a lot in it that is not Huntingdon, Godmanchester, St Ives and St Neots. If it is wished to avoid a cumbersome name like Huntingdon and St Neots - which would satisfy the St Neots residents possibly although they want it to be just called St Neots - that is rather unfair on Huntingdon and St Ives which are very much twin towns and much older towns going back to the 12th century. The grouping commonly referred to on planning documents is the Ouse Valley towns, because the Greater Ouse goes right through there, so you could give the constituency the name "Ouse Valley" and correctly describe the whole area. Whether this gains support or not, I have no idea. It could be equally panned by everybody but I toss the suggestion in for consideration because it seems to me there are genuine feelings in St Neots which will be ignored if you adhere to the name of Huntingdon.

I thank you for your time this morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Rosenstiel. Do we have any questions? No.

Our next speaker is due at 10 am so we will just wait for him.

Time Noted: 9.55 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 10.00 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, the speaker who was due next is not able to make it at this stage, so I will now adjourn until 10.45 am. Thank you.

Time Noted: 10.01 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 10.45 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to Day 2 of Cambridge, the public hearings. We are continuing this morning with hearing from members of public regarding the Commission's initial

proposals. We have first Mr Peter Fane. Mr Fane, if you would like to come up to the front. We are asking people to start by giving their name and full address and, just to let you know, all proceedings are being recorded today.

MR FANE: Thank you. Peter Fane, I live at 27 London Road, Great Shelford. I am vice-chairman of the South Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats, but I would stress that our formal response as Liberal Democrats is being submitted regionally so all I am seeking to do is draw the Commission's attention to concerns that have been expressed to us in relation to one part of the boundary. This relates to the close community link there is between Melbourn and some of the villages around it particularly Meldreth. They are closely integrated communities. Our councillors in that area, both county and district, have a regular community newsletter, not political, in which we have sought to consult people and we are finding that people have difficulty expressing their concerns because it is clearly difficult to put alternatives when you do not have all the information at your fingertips. So what I am saying is based on conversations which our councillors have had with local people and, as I stressed at the start, it is not a formal position.

The local people we have spoken to, mostly - and I would not claim this is universal - have felt it would be a pity and against the community interest element of this report to split Melbourn from Meldreth in particular and to some extent from some of the other villages around it such as Bassingbourn. I hope that is fairly clear on the map.

The other issue that was raised with us is whether, if it is possible - and it seemed to us it might be possible without a specific response on this - to align the boundary more closely with the county boundary so as to avoid confusion amongst people as to where they actually are and to make it easier for all the parties concerned to represent their constituents effectively.

That is really the limit of what I have to say because we will be responding on other areas and other points more formally on a different occasion.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any questions? No. Mr Fane, thank you very much for coming.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are no other speakers booked in for the next hour, so I will now adjourn until 12.00 pm and of course that will allow us to have a two-minute silence at 11 am today. Thank you.

Time Noted: 10.50 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 12.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to Cambridge and Day 2 of the public hearing. I am Sarah Hamilton, the Lead Assistant Commissioner for the East of England Region. We are continuing to hear from members of the public regarding the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for this region.

I understand we have Elizabeth Parkin who would like to speak? If you would like to come up to the front here and start off by giving your full name and address please and, just to let you know, all proceedings are being recorded today.

MS PARKIN: Thank you very much. My name is Elizabeth Parkin and I live at 139 St Matthews Gardens, Cambridge, CB1 2PS. I chair the Cambridge Liberal Democrats but I am speaking in a personal capacity this morning. I wish to speak only on two points.

The first is to welcome the return of Queen Edith's ward to the city constituency. It is clearly part of the city as well as the city council area. It is really good for it to be properly reintegrated into the parliamentary constituency as well.

I also want to comment on the inclusion of Milton within the city constituency. This is somewhat less obvious than the re-inclusion of Queen Edith's but it does have a logic and it is acceptable. I understand that this has not really been done because of the size of the Cambridge constituency but because it makes numbers work elsewhere but, nevertheless, the area includes land and businesses close to the Business Park and parts of the Science Park, it also includes the area for and around the Cambridge North station. All these elements are related and they do feel part of the city in many ways when they lie on both sides of the current boundary.

In terms of residents, Milton includes the Fen Road area, and it is more closely linked to the city in many ways than it is to Milton; including literally more linked to the city.

Various residential areas closely linked to the city could be incorporated into Cambridge - there are various options - but, nevertheless, Milton is one of those options and it does make sense. I think that is a perfectly acceptable and sensible proposal.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any questions for Ms Parkin? No. Thank you for coming today.

We do not have any other speakers now until this afternoon but I will adjourn to 12.55, just to make sure no one has come in and if we don't have any speakers we will adjourn until after lunch at 2 o'clock. Thank you.

Time Noted: 12.05 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 12.55 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to Cambridge on Day 2 of the public hearing. We are here today to listen to members of the public give representations and speak to us regarding the Commission's initial proposals for the Eastern Region.

I understand we have Alan Borgars here. Would you like to come up to the front? If you could start by giving your name and address and, just to let you know, all proceedings are being filmed today.

MR BORGARS: Thank you, Ms Hamilton. Alan Borgars from Ware, Hertfordshire. I am pleased to note this recording is being filmed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could we have your full address, we do need it for the record.

MR BORGARS: 35 Priory St, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 0DE.

I have looked at this in rather close detail, particularly regarding transport connections in Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. Bedfordshire does not need much tweaking from the initial proposals although I think it would be wise to call South West Bedfordshire "Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard" instead because these two towns clearly dominate the constituency as a whole which is rather urban despite having some outlying rural areas, part of which, as a consequence of structural changes to Bedfordshire's local government, will be absorbed into Luton South. But otherwise not much change is needed there.

Hertfordshire represents a particular problem because, despite still being entitled to 11 constituencies, the current Hitchin & Harpenden is not a seat which should be kept because there is really no way to get from Hitchin to Harpenden via public transport or generally private transport without going through another constituency. So in this instance it would be wise to pair Hitchin with Letchworth and Baldock, with Royston being paired with Puckeridge, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford in an East Hertfordshire constituency. This may not be ideal but because of the way Hertfordshire is made, and in particular the intrusion that was made when Potters Bar was moved into it in 1965 when the rest of Barnet was cut off from Elstree and Borehamwood. It naturally creates problems and we have to make compromises around.

Harpenden should instead be paired with the city of St Albans, not including the outlying wards of London Colney and Colney Heath which, whilst being suburbs of St Albans, are not part of the main city of St Albans itself. These could be paired with Welwyn & Hatfield, which you can slightly tweak to extend to Hertford, Ware and Hoddesdon. This

is not the most ideal constituency but I understand that your options are limited by the parameters in which you have to work, in particular the ward sizes of the various districts and boroughs within Hertfordshire.

I can understand of course the concerns for the Hemel Hempstead area and Three Rivers in particular, unfortunately the only solution I have been able to find to re-connect Berkhamsted and Tring with Hemel Hempstead rather than Chorleywood and Rickmansworth, which they have very little connection to, is to essentially add Apsley et cetera to a constituency, Three Rivers, which would cut Hemel Hempstead in half, and I therefore would not recommend this.

I further believe that within Hertfordshire, we should have Hitchin & Letchworth, East Hertfordshire, Hertford & Hoddesdon, Cheshunt & Potters Bar - okay there are problems with that but we are trying our best – a Borehamwood & Bushey constituency taking in most of Hertfordshire (sic) and at least establishing some connections, because Carpenders Park, which the Boundary Commission has proposed to include in the Hertsmere constituency, has no connections with the rest of Hertsmere and is a de facto suburb of Watford and it therefore should only be placed in the constituency of Watford. The borough of Watford is not too large, it has 63,484 electors on 2015 figures, meaning to be in quota it can just absorb Oxhey and Carpenders Park to create a viable constituency. South West Hertfordshire in any event should just be West Hertfordshire.

As for Essex, I generally approve of many of the plans in the northern part, although North East Essex should just be called North Essex because the Boundary Commission's proposal is basically the same constituency as the North Essex of 1997 to 2010, and I furthermore note that the north east compass point of Essex is covered by Harwich & Clacton.

I further believe there is little connection between Brentwood and Ongar, and that Ongar should be united with most of Epping Forest to create Loughton, and that Harlow should absorb Epping itself to create Harlow & Epping because sadly, Waltham Abbey is too large for Harlow to absorb to get an in-quota constituency.

Also Castle Point should extend westwards, not eastwards into Southend, which makes dealing with the Southend area much easier and allows for greater integrity in the area.

Basildon South & East Thurrock needs tweaking a bit so that can be called Basildon & Stanford le Hope, which is the largest town in the East Thurrock bit. Thurrock should be called Grays Thurrock in light of this; there is only a borough of Thurrock, there is no such town as Thurrock. The largest town is Grays. Therefore the constituency of Thurrock, whilst correctly being left unchanged, should have its name changed to Grays Thurrock.

Cambridgeshire: due to the fact that Cambridge has effectively annexed some surrounding villages and this has not been properly acknowledged by local government legislation, it is not easy to tell where the actual boundaries of the city of Cambridge ipso facto are. So, therefore, I think Cambridge should just be the entire city of Cambridge area and should not include outlying wards.

I furthermore propose that within the South West Norfolk proposal, which extends to Littleport, that the Boundary Commission is on the right track but it needs to extend it further to Ely. I propose that Thetford, which has no rail connections to Downham Market and has poor road connections to Downham Market compared to Ely and Littleport, should be cut off from South West Norfolk and instead paired with Wymondham, currently in Mid Norfolk, to form a Thetford & Wymondham constituency. That has very good rail links and road links and is considerably more coherent than the current Mid Norfolk, which I instead propose to be renamed Dereham and to absorb a large part of Broadland which will not end up going into Norwich North.

I also believe that North East Cambridgeshire should just consist of the entire district of Fenland plus Eye and Thorney of Peterborough, which it included until 2010, and be renamed Wisbech. Peterborough should include Fletton as usual.

North West Cambridgeshire, I note, is within what was traditionally Huntingdonshire and contains no part of what was Cambridgeshire before it was expanded in 1974. I therefore propose that North West Cambridgeshire be renamed Ramsey, which is what was in Huntingdonshire from 1885 to 1918; and that Huntingdon should be renamed Huntingdon & St Neots due to the expansion of the town there. In order for this to work part of Huntingdonshire needs to be moved into a Cambridgeshire constituency; a constituency that is mostly composed of wards in South Cambridgeshire - this will be South West Cambridgeshire and St Ives.

As for Norwich, I do not think it is advisable or wise to move any part of Norwich North into Norwich South. To solve the under-quotaness (as I call it) of Norwich North, I would simply ask for it to expand to absorb the Broadland wards of Taverham North, Taverham South, Drayton North and Drayton South, which are effectively suburbs of Norwich and which will easily fit into the Norwich North constituency and have been part of it before.

Norwich South can simply absorb Old Costessey to the west of New Costessey in South Norfolk, which will also put South Norfolk, which I would like to rename South East Norfolk, in quota. I think this will give two coherent Norwich constituencies where there has been relatively minimal change.

This also means that North West Norfolk only has to take in one ward of North Norfolk and I think this should be Priory ward, which contains the village of Wells-next-the-Sea, which is quite well connected to King's Lynn. Normally I would not advocate this but the

district of North Norfolk contains too many electors for just one constituency and North West Norfolk has 70,679 electors on 2015 figures, making it under-quota, so it needs to absorb wards to the east. North Norfolk can thus absorb the North Norfolk wards which have been contained up to now in Broadland, giving it a more coherent look.

The rest of Broadland, which has not been absorbed by Norwich North, except for the east which will be absorbed into Great Yarmouth to bring that up to quota, will instead be paired with Dereham, currently in Mid Norfolk, and the constituency itself will be called Dereham, because there are really no large villages or towns in Broadland left after you have absorbed them into the Norwich constituency.

That therefore is the summary of what I believe should happen in the Eastern Region with regard to the new constituencies for the 2018 Review. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Borgars, and can I say hugely impressive that you did the whole of that without any notes whatsoever. Mr Borgars, we are asking whether there are any questions from members of the public just for clarification, not for cross-examination purposes.

MR ROSENSTIEL: Colin Rosenstiel from Cambridge. Bearing in mind that last remark, have you got these proposals tabulated?

MR BORGARS: I have, yes, on my blog which is available on-line to the general public. It is called <https://greensocialistalan.blog.co.uk> and constituency maps of appropriate size are provided to give the correct sizes of the constituencies in question and what constituencies they succeed, with also further details of why I have chosen these. You can also search "Alan's Green Thoughts" on google, yahoo or any other reliable search engine to find this.

MR ROSENSTIEL: Does that mean you will upload that information to the Commission's website?

MR BORGARS: I already have.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have already submitted it to us?

MR BORGARS: I have not submitted it to you, I have just made it available on my blog for the public.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like it to be taken into account for the review, if you could submit it through the portal - our website is bce2018.org.uk - that would be much appreciated.

MR BORGARS: I shall do so. I shall give lists of the wards that these new constituencies contain as well as maps from my blog.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be really helpful. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

Do we have Mr William McCarthy? If you would like to come up the front and start by giving your name and address for the record, thank you.

MR McCARTHY: William McCarthy from Saffron Walden constituency. My address is Winchmore, Ardley End, Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM22 7AL I will be a lot briefer than the previous speaker.

I have two points to make, the first a general one and then, secondly, a specific one about the current arrangements.

The first general point is that we have felt for some time that the Boundary Commission, when it makes its deliberations, does not give enough regard to human geography. It is quite clear that a lot of the boundaries are drawn up without any thought for how the people in the area feel themselves and how they are attached.

This leads me on to the second point, which is for the people around Chelmsford, the four Chelmsford wards that are currently within the Saffron Walden constituency have no connection whatever with Saffron Walden; they have no attachment and they look totally towards Chelmsford. It seems to me that with a little more care for those wards we could have Chelmsford split into two constituencies taking in some of the surrounding areas. I see, for instance, the current proposal is from the far north east of Chelmsford they are likely to be part of the Brentwood constituency, which seems to me to be nonsense. These people certainly do not feel to be part of Brentwood and it would make much more sense if we could have the Chelmsford city made into two constituencies.

Quite clearly then there would have to be some paring away of other constituencies, but the most unnatural set-up there at the moment is the Brentwood one, which stretches from the far north of Chelmsford right the way down to the Epping border. There is no connection and no unity in that set-up.

So my request is, please, give some consideration to how people feel so we get constituents who feel themselves to be part of a whole and not just an add-on addendum to really a bureaucratic re-working of the constituencies.

That is my lot.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much Mr McCarthy. For anyone you are speaking on behalf of, please encourage them to make representations to us through the website so we understand how local people feel.

MR McCARTHY: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any questions for clarification?

MR BORGARS: Alan Borgars, the previous speaker. Mr McCarthy, or William, whichever you prefer to be called, I understand your position but we need to be careful with how Chelmsford is paired because whilst it is too large for one whole constituency, it is not large enough for two whole constituencies under the Review quotas. Which district of Essex should Chelmsford be paired with to split Chelmsford in two and make sure both constituencies are in quota, ie within the range of 71,031 to 78,507 electors?

MR McCARTHY: The way I see it is that you need places like Stock; then round to the south West Hanningfield, and maybe something out of Brentwood & Ongar. As I have intimated before, I see Brentwood & Ongar as the bit that has been left over when all the other considerations are done and I would quite happily see that broken into bits to serve other ends.

Just incidentally, I agree with your comments about Harlow and the arrangements for Loughton. It is quite clear, in the old days Harlow and Epping were part of the same constituency. At the moment, when you look at the way the constituency is, it is stretched to bring up the numbers and, again, no coherence in terms of the communications or links between people.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any more questions? Thank you for your time and thank you for coming.

We are now going to adjourn for lunch and we will come back at a quarter past 2. Thank you.

Time Noted: 1.15 pm

After the luncheon adjournment

Time Noted: 2.15 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to Cambridge on Day 2 of the public hearing. As we do not have any speakers booked until 3 pm I will adjourn until then. Thank you.

Time Noted: 2.16 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 3.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to Cambridge, Day 2 of the public hearing of the Boundary Commission. My name is Sarah Hamilton and I am the Lead Assistant Commissioner for the Eastern Region. We are going to continue this afternoon with hearing from members of the public regarding the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for this region.

I would like to ask Mr Richard Harrington to come up to speak. Mr Harrington, we are asking all people who are speaking to start by giving their name and address for the record and, just to let you know, all proceedings are being filmed this afternoon.

MR RICHARD HARRINGTON: (Member of Parliament for Watford) Good afternoon, I am Richard Harrington, Member of Parliament for Watford and my address is 30, The Avenue, Watford.

Thank you very much for your time today. I start really by saying I think it is a very, very difficult project that you have had to undertake and I commend you for the way you have done it, Ms Hamilton, because it is easy for everyone to opine but we are not the ones who have to do the work. From the Act that went through Parliament, I know the premise is the numbers and you are commissioners rather than Merlin the Magician and we cannot please everybody all the time. With that in mind, I commend you largely with what you have done with Watford, because you have kept the borough, the town, intact, and well done on that. It is a unit which, from every other point of view, is homogeneous and I think that is very good.

I would like to mention two points, if I may, to do with the proposals. I accept the fact – it is a statement of fact – that the numbers need to come down because of the law and equalising the constituencies throughout the country, but I was quite perplexed however by the area of South Oxhey, which the proposals include within the Watford constituency. It is problematic for a number of reasons, not least of which it seems strange to me to be adding to take away from elsewhere. The area itself has no natural community links or ties to Watford and the area risks being within the community but very much out on its ear because it is just not really regarded as being part of Watford and never has been.

My proposal is that it should remain with the neighbouring Eastbury, which the Boundary Commission previously combined into one county council division at the county review, and that does seem to fit with that. That itself would maintain its local links and relationships in an area of South West Hertfordshire, for example within Three Rivers council which it already is part of. I do understand that Watford obviously is over

the constituency size and there is no way of getting round it, but if there has to be a change it seems to me very strange that South Oxhey which has no links whatsoever with Watford should be included within it, when there are areas excluded like Carpenders Park which have solid, long-term transport and community links to the area. I would ask for a logical solution to be found to address that, what seems to be an illogical proposition.

That is not to be discourteous to the Commission but when you can see it more from the micro-point of view, it just seems it is swapping population for population, from one that is part of an established community to one that is not.

Without taking too much of your time, I would like to move on to the areas that the Commission proposes to remove from the Watford constituency. I mentioned Carpenders Park briefly on one side of the constituency, but I also have great concern about the plan being proposed for Abbots Langley. The Boundary Commission is exploring taking this area out of the Watford constituency altogether and then splitting it up on arbitrary lines which were quite poorly drawn up, if I may say so, during the Local Government Boundary Review. I recognise again the logic of the numerical facts but I do feel respectfully the Commission is ignoring important local links which I know are also part of local policy for the new constituencies. So either it seems to me the majority of this area which has long and close links to Watford, for example all bus routes and where people work, should remain inside the Watford constituency, which has been proposed by the Conservative Party, or else the whole town, consisting of Abbots Langley & Bedmond, Gade Valley and Leavesden, should be maintained in one single constituency.

By the way, I have mentioned the Conservative Party and its proposal, but the proposed alterations and the original proposals of the Boundary Commission actually politically do not make much difference. I speak from a more logical constituency point of view rather than one side suiting the Liberal Democrats, another Labour and another Conservative. I do not think that is the case here.

I know from personal experience how close the town of Watford is held for people in the whole of Abbots Langley, and they also are confused and would much rather an arbitrary line was not drawn down the middle of their town and it be parcelled off into the seats of Hemel Hempstead and St Albans.

I would welcome proposals that achieve one or both of these solutions. They seem to me very logical. It is a delicate job and, as I say, I do not wish to take much more of your time, but I do feel what I am saying is logically rather than politically based.

Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Harrington. Any questions for Mr Harrington? People are permitted to ask questions of clarification as opposed to cross-examination.

MR ROSENSTIEL: I may have missed something but did you have a proposal for compensating Hertsmere for losing Carpenders Park?

MR RICHARD HARRINGTON: No, not as far as Hertsmere is concerned.

MR ROSENSTIEL: Hertsmere constituency, sorry. We have to be careful here because of course the present constituency and the district are the same. Carpenders Park is an addition to make the numbers fit. There are compensating additions elsewhere.

MR RICHARD HARRINGTON: I agree, but it is logical just to pick out one. Why pick out Carpenders Park? It is not next to it, linked to it, there are no bus routes to it.

MR ROSENSTIEL: I am not disagreeing with that, it is just to make a coherent scheme I just wanted to check whether we have a series of suggestions ---

MR RICHARD HARRINGTON: No, there is no magic solution, I am afraid.

MR ROSENSTIEL: ----- which hangs together, which is the problem we all face.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just for the record, that question was from Colin Rosenstiel.

MR ROSENSTIEL: Sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other questions? Many thanks for your time.

MR RICHARD HARRINGTON: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We now have Mrs Linda Topping. Again, Mrs Topping, if you could just start by stating your name and address for the record.

MRS TOPPING: My name is Linda Topping, I live at 1 Temple Close, Watford. Good afternoon.

May I begin by saying that today I am speaking as a Watford resident, although I do hold the position of the elected chairman of the Watford Conservatives, but I am not speaking in that capacity.

I have two substantial concerns over the changes proposed by the Boundary Commission. They relate to our community and the future relationships within that community.

My first concern is over the notion of removing Leavesden ward and Langleybury, which is part of Gade Valley ward, from our constituency and switching the area effectively into three between Watford, St Albans and Hemel Hempstead. This appears to me to be entirely without logic or concern for local residents and connections. The members of the Commission may not appreciate the fact but Leavesden as an area stretches from the south of Abbots Langley, all the way down to a part of Watford known as Garston. This area is served by the All Saints parish church which is attended by many of the residents across Leavesden, Langleybury and Gade Valley ward and Abbots Langley town, as well as Woodside ward and Watford constituency. This should demonstrate to you the closeness of this community and what local ties there are in the area.

I would ask the Commission to seriously think again before splitting a community into so many separate constituencies. I entirely understand that Watford is over the legal maximum when it comes to guidance over the size of the revised boundaries, however there seems to be a lack of sensitivity to the Leavesden area in particular.

My second concern follows on from the first and relates to Abbots Langley town. This is a community with a firm identity. Taking it out of Watford is not ideal, however further splitting it between the seats of Hemel Hempstead and St Albans puts yet another split within the local community. I have spoken to several residents and friends local to Abbots Langley, and all are opposed to the idea of splitting the local area into three, that being Watford, Hemel and St Albans.

The logical solution would surely be minimising any division and that could either be achieved by keeping the whole of Abbots Langley together with Abbots Langley & Bedmond ward, Gade Valley ward and Leavesden ward, all going into St Albans, or else putting Abbots Langley & Bedmond ward into St Albans and retaining Gade and Leavesden. Either one of these proposals would, I feel, minimise the disruption to the local community in and around Leavesden and Abbots Langley.

As I understand it, a number of Watford constituents are preparing evidence that would back the former solution. I have put it down and also highlighted it on the maps.

Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is really helpful. Thank you. Any questions for Mrs Topping? Many thanks for your time, thank you for coming today.

MRS TOPPING: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Next we have Mr Daniel Patterson. Again, Mr Patterson, if you could start by giving your name and address for the record.

MR PATTERSON: My name is Daniel John Patterson, I live at 2 Canfield Gardens, London.

I am here today to speak about the changes proposed to the Watford constituency. It has been alluded to by the two previous speakers but there are two issues to do particularly with Carpenders Park, with South Oxhey and with Abbots Langley.

I would like to start, if I may, with South Oxhey. To give you some background, I have worked in the constituency for about a year and a half now as a campaign manager and am fairly familiar with the terrain. South Oxhey is entirely apart from the town of Watford and does not have local connections to the place. It has connections with Eastbury, with which it was included in the last boundary changes in 2014 for the county council review, and I believe it is a better idea to keep it within that community, within South West Hertfordshire.

In terms of Carpenders Park, moving to that, I do not understand why the Commission have moved it from Watford into Hertsmere. I think it breaks Rule 35 of the Boundary Commission's guidelines, which suggests that you should be able to get from one part of the constituency to the rest of the constituency without going through a third party constituency. This is not the case with Carpenders Park as you have to go through Bushey Arches in Watford.

In terms of a solution to putting Carpenders Park back in the Watford constituency, there is a solution that I have come up with, which is moving London Colney from St Albans into Hertsmere to compensate. This works also if you move the three Abbots Langley wards in the north – Leavesden ward, Gade Valley ward and Abbots Langley & Bedmond ward – all over to St Albans to compensate. This would keep Abbots Langley together as a town and a community. The further logic to this is that the dividing line between St Albans and London Colney is the by-pass that splits the two areas.

I think that is it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any questions of clarification? No. Many thanks. Thank you for your time today.

MR PATTERSON: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do we have Elizabeth Mansfield? If you could start by giving your name and address please?

MS MANSFIELD: My name is Elizabeth Mansfield, Deane Croft, High St, Guilden Morden, Royston, Herts, SG8 0JP.

Good afternoon. I have two major concerns about the change of boundary for the villages of Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden and as far as Melbourn. Apart from social things, they are transport and education. It is stated in this booklet here, which I have just had a chance to look at, that there are many transport links to Royston. (indicating) There is a bus every two hours to Royston and that only is between 8 am and 15.50 - this is not a good link.

My other great concern is education. At the moment, Guilden Morden is in a system which is three-tier. That is primary – most villages have a primary school – secondary, where they go to a village college – in my particular area it is Bassingbourn Village College – and then they have a choice of sixth form in Cambridge. These sixth form colleges are excellent. Where will our children go to school if we are changed from South West Cambridgeshire to Hertfordshire? In particular, it is the change from the sixth form college system.

The links towards Ashwell and Hitchin from Guilden Morden consist at this moment of one bus on a Wednesday in order to link up with a bus in Ashwell which takes people to Hitchin market primarily. So all the transport links are inadequate at the moment for us, and without insurance that they will improve, things will be even worse. For instance, I happen for medical reasons not to be allowed to drive for six months and if I were not retired it would be impossible, and even then as a retired person I have had to reduce my social life in terms of coming to courses in Cambridge or whatever because I cannot drive. So I know what it is like for people who cannot drive for various reasons and for children and teenagers who cannot get around without good transport links.

Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Do we have any questions for clarification?

MR WATKINS: Graham Watkins, I live in the village of Farcet in the north of Cambridgeshire. You talked about education but the fact you are in a different parliamentary constituency has surely no effect on the educational provision within the county of Cambridgeshire. You are not being moved to another county.

MS MANSFIELD: We would be.

MR WATKINS: You remain in Cambridgeshire, and subject to Cambridgeshire county council who provide education.

MS MANSFIELD: But we are going to be moved to a Hertfordshire constituency.

MR WATKINS: Yes, but that is nothing to do with education.

MS MANSFIELD: Well, I think it will have.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am not an expert on this but, as I understand it, it is simply changing who your MP would be. It would not change the criteria for which school or college your children go to. Somebody might correct me but that is what I understand.

This is Matt Grist, who is the Review manager.

MR GRIST: This is about changing the boundaries of the parliamentary constituencies, not the boundaries of the local government authorities, so it does not have any effect on service provision.

MS MANSFIELD: At the moment, if parents in Guilden Morden – and some do, a few – want their children to go to a school in Hertfordshire, they can only get them in if there is a space; they have no right for them to go there. So surely the same thing will happen if we are moved into Hertfordshire, if somebody wants to get their children into a sixth form in Cambridge and there is no space, they will be last on the list to get in.

MR GRIST: That will not happen because ----

MS MANSFIELD: It happens to Ashwell children at the moment, whose parents want them to go to sixth form college in Cambridge, they find it very difficult to get into the sixth form in Cambridge.

MR GRIST: That is because they are outside the county council area.

MS MANSFIELD: Precisely.

MR GRIST: We are not changing the county council boundaries, we are changing the parliamentary constituency boundaries. They are two different things. The Local Government Boundary Commission changes the boundaries for local authorities, but we are not changing those at all, we are changing the boundaries of the parliamentary constituencies. So the only thing it affects is that you will change areas for parliamentary representation, not for anything else.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So you will not change which county you are in?

MR GRIST: We are not moving the county boundaries, we are moving the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies.

MS MANSFIELD: So education will remain the same?

MR GRIST: Exactly the same, yes. Education might change but it will be nothing to do with this.

MR ROSENSTIEL: You don't get the *Cambridge News*, do you?

MS MANSFIELD: No, we don't get that, but we get the free Royston paper which is where I read about this meeting. It is the only reason I know about it. As I have seen, none of my fellow residents in Guilden Morden and Steeple Morden are here, it has had very little impact.

Sorry, why did you ask? What was in the *Cambridge News*?

MR ROSENSTIEL: Colin Rosenstiel from Cambridge. I think the *Cambridge News* has a sister paper in Royston and there may have been the same story there, but there was a very misleading article by a journalist who is famous for his misleading articles, reporting this inquiry without mentioning the words "parliamentary" or "constituency" at all, and therefore implying that the likes of Melbourn and the Mordens would be moved into Hertfordshire, which is very misleading and not what is happening, as has just been explained.

MS MANSFIELD: Oh, right. Then I have misunderstood.

MR ROSENSTIEL: If that story was also in whatever the Royston paper is, I can imagine you would have picked up the wrong message, which is very bad.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Perhaps that is what explains it. We have not had any other representations at the hearing about this.

MS MANSFIELD: I am surprised there is nobody from the parish councils here.

MR GRIST: We did have some people from Melbourn come but they did not speak, they just came to ask questions. There have been some.

MS MANSFIELD: Okay. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for your time.

MS MANSFIELD: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We do not have any other speakers booked in for this afternoon, so I will adjourn until 4 o'clock and, if no one has arrived by then, I will then close for the day.

Thank you.

Time Noted: 3.25 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 4.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, it is now 4 o'clock on the second day in Cambridge. We don't have any other speakers booked in for today so I have made the decision we will close the hearing.

This is the last hearing for the Eastern Region, so I would like to put on record my thanks to all the Commission staff and to all members of the public who have come and spoken, who have come to support us, and I look forward to working with the Commission in the next few months.

Thank you.

Hearing adjourned

Time Noted: 4.05 pm

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