

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**PROCEEDINGS**

**AT THE**

**2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND**

**HELD AT**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL,  
CIVIC CENTRE, CARLISLE CA3 8QG**

**ON**

**MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2016  
DAY ONE**

**Before:**

**Mr Neil Ward, The Lead Assistant Commissioner**

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Time Noted: 10.00 am:

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning and welcome to the first day of the public hearing in Carlisle on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for the parliamentary boundaries for the North West of England. My name is Neil Ward and I am an Assistant Commissioner of the Boundary Commission for England. First of all, an apology. We are surrounded by computers and the like, none of which we are using but we cannot move them at all. I will try and grow to look over them! I was appointed by the Commission to assist them in the task of making recommendations for new constituencies. I am responsible for chairing the hearing today and tomorrow and, indeed, all the hearings across the North West region. I am also responsible, with my fellow Assistant Commissioners, Nicholas Elliott and Graeme Clark, for analysing all the representations we receive for the North West, whether they are oral or written, and for considering whether it is appropriate to make recommendations for change to the initial proposals. We will do so during the course of the new year; we probably will not be able to begin that until February, March or April whilst we wait for the consultation period to close.

I should say at the outset that Assistant Commissioners have had no say in the drafting of these proposals; we received them the same as you did and we are considering them afresh in the light of local knowledge and other input that we get from these hearings and from the written representations.

I am assisted here today by members of the Commission, led by Glenn Reed, who is sitting alongside me. Glenn will shortly provide an explanation of the approach that the Commission took to the initial proposals. He will tell you also how you can make written representations and he is going to deal with one or two domestic administrative matters.

We are due to run today from 10am until 8pm and tomorrow from 9am to 5pm. My experience so far in these hearings is that we need to be a bit flexible about those timings. We do not have a great number of speakers booked today but we have a good chance that people will walk in and make proposals. However, we may find that we adjourn as the day goes on and recommence when we think we have business to discuss. The hearing runs over two days and can only run over two days; we have no power to extend it to a third day.

I might at this point ask Glenn whether he would provide a brief explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for the region.

MR REED: Thank you very much and good morning everybody. As Neil has mentioned, my name is Glenn Reed and I am a member of the Commission's staff. I am responsible for supporting the Commissioners in their role to recommend new Parliamentary constituency boundaries and at this hearing I lead a team of staff responsible for ensuring that the hearings run smoothly.

As Neil has already stated, he will chair the hearing itself and it is his responsibility to run the hearing at his discretion and take decisions about speakers, questioners and timings. My team and I are here today to support Neil in carrying out his role. Please ask one of us outside of the hearing if you need any help or assistance.

I would like to talk now about the Commission's initial proposals for the North West region which were published on 13 September 2016. The Commission's proposals are for 68 constituencies, a reduction of seven. Our proposals leave 14 of the existing constituencies unchanged. We use the European Electoral Regions as a template for the allocation of the 499 constituencies to which England is entitled, not including the two constituencies to be allocated to the Isle of Wight. This approach is permitted by the legislation and has been supported by previous public consultation. This approach does not prevent anybody from putting forward counter-proposals that include one or more constituencies being split between the regions, but it is likely that compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade us to depart from the regional based approach we adopted in formulating our initial proposals.

In considering the composition of each European Electoral Region we noted that it might not be possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties, therefore we have grouped some local authority areas into sub-regions. The number of constituencies allocated to each sub-region is determined by the electorate of the combined local authorities. Consequently, it has been necessary to propose some constituencies that cross county or unitary authority boundaries.

As I have mentioned, the North West has been allocated 68 constituencies, a reduction of seven from the current number. Due to the significant change required throughout the region our proposals leave 14 of the 75 constituencies unchanged. We propose that the metropolitan boroughs of Greater Manchester be combined in a sub-region with the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, the unitary authorities of Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester and the boroughs of Halton and Warrington. We propose two constituencies that contain electors from both Cheshire and Greater Manchester, which combine Altrincham and Knutsford in a constituency and the towns of Bramhall and Poynton in a constituency. Although we have treated Lancashire and Merseyside as separate sub-regions, we have nonetheless proposed one constituency that crosses the county boundary which combines three wards of the Borough of West Lancashire with the town of Southport. We propose five constituencies contained entirely in the country of Cumbria.

The statutory rules allow us to take into account the local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. These include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal boundaries, known as wards or electoral divisions. We seek to avoid dividing wards between constituencies wherever possible. Wards are well-defined and well-understood units which are generally indicative of areas which have a

broad community of interest. We consider that any division of these units between constituencies would be likely to break local ties, disrupt party political organisations and cause difficulties for electoral registration and returning officers who are responsible for running elections. It is our view that only in exceptional and compelling circumstances would splitting a ward between constituencies be justified and our initial proposals do not do so. If an alternative scheme proposes to split wards, strong evidence and justification will need to be provided and the extent of such ward splitting should be kept to a minimum.

The scale of change of this review is significant and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period. We are consulting on our proposals until Monday 5 December so there is still time after this hearing for people to contribute in writing. There are also reference copies of the proposals presented at this hearing; they are available on our website and in a number of places of deposit around the region. You can make written representations to us through our consultation website at [www.bce2018.org.uk](http://www.bce2018.org.uk). I would urge everyone to submit written representations before the deadline of 5 December.

Finally, I would like to remind all participants that this hearing is part of a public consultation and you will be asked to provide us with your name and address if you make an oral representation. The Commission is legally obliged to make a record of the public hearings and as you can see we will be taking a video recording from which we will create a verbatim transcript. The Commission is required to publish the record of the public hearing along with all written representations for a four-week period during which members of the public have an opportunity to comment on those representations. We expect this period to occur during the spring of next year, as Neil has already mentioned. The publication of the hearing records and written representations will include certain personal data of those who have made representations. I therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's Data Protection and Privacy Policy, a copy of which we have with us and which is also available on our website.

Before I hand you back to Neil to begin the public hearing, I would just like to read the fire regulations which the council have asked me to do. To enable Carlisle City Council to ensure your safety, please take note of the following information. In the unlikely event of fire alarms being activated while the meeting is in progress, please make your way out of the building in an orderly manner. Following the green fire exit signs, go to the visitors' meeting point located in the car park adjoining the Civic Centre at meeting point H. Exits from the Chamber are either from the rear, which will lead directly to the car park or, if these exits are no longer available, you will need to leave by the main office entrance to this room and taking the first left down the stairwell follow the green exit signs to leave by the side building exit. We will be using the attendance register for roll call if required and please remain at that point H until you have been told it is safe to return to the building. If you do not intend to return to the building, please inform one of the staff here. If you have mobility issues or require assistance, please make one of us

or a council officer immediately aware of your requirements. Lifts cannot be used during evacuation and your location will be communicated by a fire officer located at the main reception. So basically, if we do need to go, it is probably best if we all go together.

On that point I will hand you back to Neil.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Glenn. I have a reminder on a couple of process points. First of all, the purpose of this hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals, probably for Cumbria in the most part here but can be for anywhere in the North West. It is an opportunity to present either support for or counter-proposals to the Commission's proposals; it is not a forum for debate with the Commission about their proposals or with each other about the proposals that are on the table, nor is it a place to make political points, please. You may not be surprised how little weight political points count in this particular forum.

There will be an opportunity to seek clarification from any of the speakers, but if you do so please let me know if you wish to speak and I will offer you the opportunity to seek clarification.

We have a number of people who have booked specific timeslots today and we will aim to stick with them but as the numbers who have booked are few I hope we can be a bit flexible about this in terms of timing. It is not important whether you have registered or not, but I hope that anyone who wishes to speak will have the opportunity to speak over these next two days.

I am also conscious that a number of people who are booked to speak are public speakers in their own right and it should not be too onerous for them. However, for other people, particularly members of the public, it can be quite a big task to come up here and make presentations, so I would be grateful if we could all bear with them and be supportive of anyone who wishes to speak. Our aim is to let everyone give of their best in making presentations.

The only point I will build into the day at the moment, there will be a lunch break between 1.30 and 2.30. I may have to adjourn as we go through the day and resume, but we will take soundings from each other as we go.

Does all that make sense in terms of anything Glenn or I have said so far?

We will begin the representations. Typically we allow for no more than ten minutes per speaker; in practice experience shows that most people do not need the full ten minutes but we are a bit flexible so we will see how we go. If I may start, I will ask Mr John Stevenson MP to come forward and speak. Sam will put up maps on the screen once he gathers which constituency you are going to speak about, which may be Carlisle!

MR JOHN STEVENSON: (MP for Carlisle) Possibly! Thank you very much, Mr Ward. I am John Stevenson, Member of Parliament for Carlisle. My home address is Wood Villa, Great Corby, Carlisle CA4 8LL.

My comments this morning will be restricted to Cumbria and, in particular, Carlisle, where I would like to start with. Parliament, as I think everybody knew and knows, decided that the number of constituencies should be reduced to 600, they should be broadly equal in number and the review would be every five years. So quite logically the Boundary Commission has decided that Cumbria should have five constituencies, given the number of voters within Cumbria, and making them into equal numbers again is part of the legislation.

I will take Carlisle to start with. In the proposals by the Boundary Commission the numbers fit. My constituency has been a sizeable chunk of the district council which the proposal completely encompasses. It includes Dalston and Brough to the west in terms of rurality. The proposals from the Boundary include the eastern part of the district council, Brampton, Longtown et cetera. The proposals do seem to be eminently sensible because they are co-terminus with the district council. The areas that you are talking about – Brampton, Longtown, et cetera – all, in many respects, look to Carlisle as their major centre for business, schooling, leisure; the community sees Carlisle as the centre. Therefore, again it does seem logical that they would be part of the same constituency.

There have been proposals, I think, to take Dalston out of the constituency; again I do not think that that would be particularly sensible because Dalston is already part of the constituency and therefore has a long history of being part of the Carlisle constituency. It is also part of the district council and again looks towards Carlisle as its centre.

I do not think a great deal needs to be said by me because I think the proposals are logical, they are sensible and I fully support the proposals by the Boundary Commission for the new Carlisle constituency. I think also I am pleased to see that the proposed name remains just Carlisle and again I think that would be something that everybody within the constituency would think is sensible. I do not think there was any need to go for something like Carlisle and the Border because I think people locally see themselves as very much part of the Carlisle District Council and Carlisle the city and therefore Carlisle the constituency.

I would just like to make one or two comments about the rest of Cumbria because obviously it fits into the whole county proposals. If you look at Penrith and Solway and Westmorland, I think the Boundary Commission have again been sensible in that they are very much rural constituencies and therefore the element of rurality will identify with each other and the boundaries do seem to be, generally speaking, sensible and I would support the recommendations for Westmorland and Lonsdale and Penrith and Solway

as being the two big rural constituencies within Cumbria. There is then the new one on the west coast. Again I agree with the recommendations by the Boundary Commission. It seems sensible and logical that the west coast should be a unified constituency, bringing together Workington and Whitehaven. The voters on the west coast will logically look to each other as being part of one constituency rather than coming across to the east. In the south we have Barrow, which is a little bit similar to Carlisle, and again the proposal just to come a little bit north would seem sensible because it brings in the numbers that are required but generally speaking keeps the nature of the constituency very much as it was. I think, with the exception of the west coast seat, one of the proposals by the Commission does seem to be that the constituencies are broadly speaking remaining as they were with just changes to reflect the numbers and the fact that Cumbria is reducing from six constituencies to five.

I do not really have much more to say because I am very much in support of the recommendations. I think they are logical, sensible and are appropriate for Cumbria.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Can I check if anyone has any points of clarification that they would wish to ask? [No] Can I just ask one question? As you were going down the coast between Workington and Whitehaven and Barrow, there was a point I think in the Commission's report about Seascale and whether that should sit to the north or the south. I wonder if you had a view. I guess it is to do with the power stations really and where that sits.

MR JOHN STEVENSON: Yes, I get that. There is an argument that actually it should come south because then that would mean the constituency on the west coast would be separate from the nuclear power station and then you would effectively to some extent have a constituency that was based very much around nuclear because you have the BAE systems in Barrow itself, you have the nuclear power station on the coast, so there is actually some logic to bringing those two together because I think you would then have a member of Parliament who is very much au fait with the nuclear industry and things that flow from nuclear, whether it be military or whether it be civil. It might also mean that you would then have a more unified seat with Whitehaven and Workington because there is a danger that there is a division because of the nuclear plant. You see that already to a certain extent between the district councils, one has the nuclear plant within it and one does not, and there is a bit of conflict between the two that is not necessarily beneficial. You can see the same happening again with parliamentary constituencies because there is an element of that already, whilst if you actually took the nuclear plant out of one constituency and put it very much in with the Barrow Constituency, you might actually help resolve that issue to a certain extent.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any further points of clarification? [No] Thank you very much indeed; thank you for coming this morning.

MR JOHN STEVENSON: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am just looking to see who else might be here. Is Mr Brendan Sweeney in the room? Would you be ready to speak now?

MR SWEENEY: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is a bit earlier than you were planning but it gives us a bit of continuity.

MR SWEENEY: (Labour Party) Good morning. My name is Brendan Sweeney. My private address is 27 Haverigg Gardens, Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 3TH. I am here this morning to represent the Barrow and Furness Constituency Labour Party and the MP for Barrow and Furness, John Woodcock and to support the proposals presented by the North West Labour Party at the hearing in Manchester last week, in particular the proposal to leave the Bootle Ward with a majority of its Copeland brethren in the Workington and Whitehaven seat.

The guide to the 2018 Review refers to special geographical considerations and clearly Cumbria, with its mountains and lakes, has those in abundance. Cumbria also has large areas of inter-tidal land on the Solway in Morecambe Bay and, of particular relevance to this proposal, in the Duddon Estuary. The Commission's maps do not make it particular easy to assess the impact of geographical features. If I may, I would therefore like to refer you to these extracts from the Ordnance Survey Cumbria tour map, 1:115,000. (Same handed) The Commission proposal is to set the new boundary of the Barrow Constituency at the River Mite which joins the sea at Ravenglass. This brings in the Copeland District Council Ward of Bootle. The Labour Party proposal, as you can see, is to stop at the Millom Without Ward, which has its northern boundary along the height of Black Combe. This would leave both Workington and Whitehaven and Barrow and Furness Constituencies still within quota, so there are no knock-on consequences from that. I do have copies of a photograph of Black Combe to pass round. (Same handed)

The reasons for the proposal. In electoral law, as I expect everybody here will be conscious of, we have one of the most resonant titles of any act of Parliament, the Representation of the People Act. Which proposal will best allow the people of the area to be represented? On the statutory factors the special geographical considerations, Black Combe is not one of Cumbria's highest mountains but it is one of its most prominent. I cannot resist repeating Wordsworth's quotation from Wainwright's *The Outlying Fells of Lakeland*, "The amplest range of unobstructed prospect may be seen that the British ground commands." The reverse of that, of course, is if you can see everywhere from it, everyone can see it from where they are.

As you can see from the map and from the photograph, Black Combe is both a visual and physical block across the landscape. It even blocks the television signals and as a

result north of Black Combe, in common with much of Cumbria, is served by the BBC from Newcastle and ITV Border. South of it we are in Granada land and have our local BBC from Manchester.

Another geographical feature that I must draw your attention to is the coastline. The Boundary Commission maps go out to the yellow of the sands, but look at the road route along the A590 and A595. From Barrow town hall, 23 miles to Millom takes 45 minutes, it is not a great road; to Ravenglass it is 35 miles and takes over an hour.

On the local government boundaries and other statutory factors for consideration, there are the six district councils to be covered by five constituencies, so clearly there will be cross-over in these proposals. However, our proposal keeps a larger portion of Copeland District Council wards together in their core constituency. On the boundaries of existing constituencies there is a similar issue. The proposal moves less of the electorate from the current constituency.

On local ties, health services, health is everywhere in the country one of an MP's biggest constituency issues and currently there are major concerns in Cumbria, particularly severe concerns both north and south of the country. They are covered by two separate health regimes. The one in the north of Cumbria is based on the North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust which has a hospital at Whitehaven; the south is based on the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust which has one of its three hospitals in Barrow. These trusts and NHS systems are going through completely different health improvement regimes, different in type as well as being separate. There is one clinical commissioning group for Cumbria currently but this is about to formally divide with the south part, including Barrow and Millom, to join with North Lancashire. Millom's current health links are very strongly with Furness General whereas north of Black Combe links become increasingly strong with West Cumberland Hospital near Whitehaven and, indeed, with the hospital in Carlisle and onwards from there into Newcastle. The regional connections for those two hospital trusts are separate. From the south our regional connections would be to Liverpool and, in some cases, Manchester, so Alder Hey for children's services.

On health matters the interests of the people of Bootle, because of their closer connections with the Whitehaven Hospital, can be much more strongly and effectively represented by the MP for Workington and Whitehaven rather than the MP for Barrow and Furness whose other constituents are covered by the south region.

In terms of other local ties, local newspapers and TV, as mentioned above, divide at the proposed boundary. In travel patterns a significant number of people travel from Millom to Barrow for work. This drops off sharply north of Black Combe where the movement becomes much more northwards to Sellafield and Whitehaven. Similar patterns exist in shopping. I will be leaving with the Commission copies of my speaking notes. I have put a travel timetable in there but, for instance, Ravenglass to Barrow, the 35 miles take

62 minutes; Ravenglass to Whitehaven, 17 miles, takes 31 minutes. You are doubling up the time. With Bootle it is obviously at the south part of what is a very large ward and the difference is less stark. Bootle to Barrow, 27 miles in 50 minutes; to Whitehaven, 24 miles and 49 minutes.

This is a minor modification to the Boundary Commission proposal and otherwise we are very supportive of its proposals for our constituency, but one which we believe is well-worth making in the geographical circumstances of Cumbria. Perhaps if I just follow on slightly on the question of Seascale and the nuclear industry, Barrow is nuclear; I am personally involved with it through an LGA special interest group, Nuclear Matters. They are very different in type and scope. The extent to which the nuclear part of the submarine comprises its work is quite small whereas Sellafield is overwhelming, it is all nuclear. In Barrow the number of people directly nuclear related in terms of putting the reactors into submarines is relatively small.

The other point that I think would be of great significant there in terms of Copeland District Council, Sellafield is overwhelmingly its big employer, its biggest business rates payer and I think there would be significant sensitivities there for Millom Council and its elected mayor if Sellafield was put in with a Barrow and Furness constituency and was somehow considered to be part of a south nuclear. It is a major, major part of the Copeland economy, I would think far and away the biggest part.

Thank you for your time and attention; I am obviously very happy to take any questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Sir Robert Atkins.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: (Conservative Party) Sir Robert Atkins, representing the North West Conservative Party. I have two quick questions, if I may, Mr Sweeney. Where predominantly does the population live in relation to either Millom Without or Bootle? Is it more coastal or is it up country?

MR SWEENEY: Millom Without will be some at Silecroft, which we would obviously pick up. In terms of numbers, I have not done an analysis of it and I am just thinking in terms of what lies on what side of the Duddon. Ulpha would be within Millom Without, which obviously is inland on that side of the Duddon. In terms of interests for the people, we have one side of the river anyway so the other side is very similar. Obviously a lot of that ward is virtually empty; it is just mountain with scattered farmhouses on it.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: That would be true of Bootle as well up the A595.

MR SWEENEY: I think up the A595 you would be seeing coastal. Obviously as you get further up, with it being the River Mite, you are starting to pick up along the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway and Ravenglass itself. So in terms of whether they are inland or

coastal, primarily coastal but then there is more activity going along the coast there with the holiday trade et cetera.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Thank you. In terms of the railway and road, you commented on the times and I am interested in those. Are they predominantly commuter routes or are they tourist routes in your judgment?

MR SWEENEY: Commuter routes. From Barrow alone we have about 550 people working on the Sellafield site. I do not have the numbers; I am not sure if they are collated in the same way. The Sellafield site have very great detail on who lives where. There is commuter trade certainly from Millom down into Barrow; there are coaches bringing people down to work there and if you are catching a train at Barrow station, the trains coming in from Millom have significant numbers of people in them. The amount of tourist trade on that route, the rail itself will have people passing through on it to do the coastal route because of its scenic capabilities, but I would have said very, very strongly it is commuter and shopping as well.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So people in Ravenglass, where would they commute to?

MR SWEENEY: They are just off this map but you will see on other maps. Sellafield will be just up the coast. Obviously this has come on us fairly recently and it is not part of our current constituency in terms of knowing the data on it, but I would have expected that they would much more. I am not conscious of people from there particularly coming down to Barrow. They are shopping for the larger shops. They would clearly be far, far quicker to go to Whitehaven to the supermarkets for their major shops.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I had the advantage five years of hearing some of these discussions previously, but also taking to drive throughout the whole of Cumbria to see what the geography did. I have driven that road, as you might expect, and I think that the point that it is a coastal route rather than the hills do block a view but actually they do not prevent access. It is not the same as going over the pass to the right, the Hardknott Pass.

MR SWEENEY: If I may come back on that point, in terms of local connections I think the Lake District has shaped communities, its geography shaped its communities. In a shaping here, the shape would be that if you are north of Black Combe you would look and have your connections with people looking north - that is how the councils are set up - and looking south. Yes, it is not in that sense but its sheer dominance in the landscape is that if you are at Millom you are going to be looking towards Barrow. Physically in the north what you see is going north. The connections will be there; the flow is much more that way.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any other points from anyone?

MR JOHN WALSH: (Conservative Party) John Walsh, representing the Conservative Party. Can I just pick up on a point that you made just for my clarification? You mentioned a figure of 500 workers travelling from Barrow to Sellafield.

MR SWEENEY: Yes, it is about 550 from figures that Sellafield provide to us.

MR JOHN WALSH: So Barrow has some very substantial links northwards through Bootle.

MR SWEENEY: They work there but they have not chosen to live there so I would suggest it is the fact that we have crossover on the travel to work. They are divided; the Millomers in the north travel to work.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is not due until 11 o'clock. Can I check if there is anyone else in the room who would like to make any points to us? [No] If not, we will not do any more business until 11 o'clock in practical terms.

Time Noted: 11.00 am

MR TIM FARRON: (MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale) I am Tim Farron, MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale. My address is 9 Hilltop, Milnthorpe, Cumbria. First of all, I am very grateful for the opportunity to make an oral submission. I would say on behalf of myself and indeed on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Party that whatever views we have about the process and the government side of all these things, when it comes down to the Boundary Commission for England we are strongly supportive of the recommendations for Cumbria and believe that there are five strong logical seats. The geographical arguments for them absolutely hold weight and it is hard to see an alternative that would have the same strength in terms of that logicity.

In terms of the Boundary Commission for England's choice to consider Cumbria as a distinct sub-region, we are very supportive of that. The quota of 5.02 seats that Cumbria is allocated, if you like, as a consequence of all this means that there is no reason at all to cross the boundary into Lancashire and of course there would be community reasons why that would not be advisable and we would not want to support that anyway, but there is no need to do that and we very much respect the Boundary Commission for England's view in setting that out.

I think it is important to say that what the proposals do, not just for my constituency but for the whole of the county, is that they respect geography. I said they are logical; in particular, they are logical because they use the Fells as a natural dividing line which is

very sensible. They also make use of roads and other communications as strong natural links. The A595 and the Cumbria coastal line linking the new constituency of Barrow and the Workington and Whitehaven seats, for example, the A66 being a logical link for the Penrith and Solway seat, and with Westmorland and Lonsdale the A590, A591 and A685 make that a very coherent and connected seat.

I have just a few remarks about the Westmorland and Lonsdale Constituency in particular, I think it is very logical that the areas that have been proposed for addition to the seat are suggested. There are strong links from Appleby, Kirkby Steven, Tebay, Orton, Ravenstonedale, Warcop towards Kendal. I am bound to say that Appleby is the historic county town of Westmorland and there are many of us who see this as potentially a glorious reunification of the County of Westmorland and there may be dancing in the streets at some point in the future as a consequence of all this. However, in all seriousness, I think the entity of the historic County of Westmorland being recognised in this way is very, very welcome.

The constituency has a consistency to it in the sense that people from Appleby, Kirkby Steven and the other towns and villages in Northern Westmorland have strong links to Kendal as the main service centre. The road network clearly links the area with the existing constituency. It is worth bearing in mind that many, many students, for example from Appleby, Kirkby Steven, Ravenstonedale, Tebay, Orton, use Kendal College. I can tell you that anecdotally there are dozens and dozens of kids that I meet there who are from that part of Westmorland. Also, of course, there are many people from the towns and villages in Northern Westmorland who work in Kendal as well. In addition, of course, Westmorland General Hospital is used by many of those from places like Appleby and Kirkby Steven.

In summary, we are of the view that the five seats that are recommended for Cumbria make logical sense, that tweaking them is not something that we would wish to support and we think the Boundary Commission's recognition of the geographical natural dividing lines and the communications that bring communities together is something that fits the county very well, given the number of seats allocated to it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Farron. Are there any points anyone wishes to make?

MR SWEENEY: Thank you, Mr Farron. I am Brendon Sweeney on behalf of the Labour Party. Looking at the map it is quite clear that the Crosby Ravensworth Ward has not been put into the new constituency. It bites right into it south of Appleby and in fact it appears that the road to go to Appleby one would have to drive across the other constituency on the B6260. I wondered what your view was on that and also on the Long Marton Ward to the north which comes right down to the town of Appleby and therefore will be the hinterland for Appleby but has been left in the other constituency.

MR TIM FARRON: I guess the observation is that there are other parts of Cumbria that you could add into any constituency that potentially would have some logical links to it. Obviously there are parts of the western end of my constituency that look at Barrow for town and consider it to be town, and indeed, Ulverston as well. However, I think by and large the communication links are stronger with the towns and villages that are included within the proposed constituency. Given what it would do to unsettle other constituencies around the county, particularly Carlisle, I think the proposals actually make sense given the constraints that the Boundary Commission have had put upon them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: On the same point, would public transport typically come across the corner of that ward? Or would they go round on the main road which goes through Brough and Kirkby Steven?

MR TIM FARRON: The public transport links there are weak to start off with. Many of them would be more likely to be linked with Penrith. That is generally how it tends to operate, although my strong view is that public transport in that part of Westmorland is poor and that is a challenge to the links that have been identified.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any other points? [No] Thank you very much, Mr Farron.

MR TIM FARRON: Thank you for having me. Take care.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have no new faces in the room and we have no planned speakers for some time yet, until 6.30 today. This does not rule out people walking in in passing so I am going to reappear at 12 o'clock. We will adjourn until 12 o'clock and I may do it every hour thereafter; we will take a judgment call. If no one comes around 12 then we will see how the afternoon goes. The reality is that people come after work and that is when our next speaker is coming. We will see if we can contact them to see whether there is a possibility of changing the timings. Thank you. We will adjourn for the moment.

After a short break

Time Noted: 12.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, we have had no additional people so I am going to adjourn again. I will come back at one o'clock but only in the part expectation that someone might come in in their lunch hour. I am then likely to adjourn until three o'clock and then five o'clock. At that stage I might take a judgment whether to finish for the evening. Feel free to join me or not, as the case may be. I have no great expectation at this stage but I do hope. Thank you.

Time Noted 1pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will adjourn again until 3.30. We will then take a judgment call at that stage.

Time Noted 3.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, gentlemen. We still have no additional speakers for the moment. We have another due at four o'clock. I suggest we resume at 3.45 and if he arrives early we will start as soon as he is available.

Time Noted 4.10

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon. I understand Mr Gareth Ellis is here and is available to speak.

CLLR ELLIS: (Carlisle City Council) I will be talking about the Carlisle Constituency. My name is Gareth Ellis and I live at The Hollies, Cargo, CA6 4AW, currently in the Penrith and the Border Constituency. I am also a city councillor at this council; I represent a ward within Carlisle, which is in the north of Carlisle, called Belah. I am currently the deputy leader of the Conservative Group.

Mr Assistant Commissioner, Carlisle is currently 60,500 in terms of constituency size and the proposal is to make it to 76,825. I sympathise with the difficulties in trying to take 650 constituencies down to 600 and then have to have them within 70,031-odd and 78,507. However, when it comes to these proposals for Carlisle this must be one of the less difficult decisions to come to. Here we have a proposal to make the entire constituency coterminous with the boundaries of the City of Carlisle. It fits comfortably within the quota laid down by Parliament. The entire administrative area of Carlisle City Council has an established boundary that has existed for 42 years. By bringing in the northern area of Penrith and the Border within the same area, you reinforce existing ties to the community of Carlisle. Carlisle City Council area covers over 400 square miles but there is no doubt that areas such as Penton, such as Brampton, Gaitskill (which is in Dalston) look towards Carlisle for the economic, municipal, political and social ties.

I have heard suggestions that the Commission do in fact include these areas of Penrith and the Border in Carlisle but that they should remove Dalston and place Dalston into the proposed Penrith constituency on the pretext that including Dalston in the Carlisle constituency puts it too close to the top of the quota while ignoring the proposals that to put it in with Penrith would actually make Penrith even larger than the Carlisle proposals I am talking about today. It would unnecessarily rip Dalston out of the constituency and the urban area that it wraps around from the west of Carlisle to the south and to the top of the east of Carlisle. This area is soon to become a key industrial and economic driver for the development of the city's economy. It would take a ward from a

constituency that covers one council area and add it to a constituency that would essentially encompass three council areas. In essence, Dalston would be isolated from its community and the area that it looks towards for geography, for civic representation and culturally. It would create an unnecessary anomaly.

The Office of National Statistics predict that population growth will barely be 2000 over the next 15 years. Within the Carlisle City Council area that number of registered voters will be significantly less than that 2000 which comfortably keeps the constituency within the quota for 2020, never mind ten years' time. It is not a boundary that will need to be re-drawn anytime soon.

I recommend that the existing proposal offers accountability, accessibility and it stitches together what is a community that has already existed for over 40 years. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much; that was all very clear and not unexpected relative to Carlisle. I cannot remember whether I have read or heard somewhere on my travels in this trip that actually the electorate of Carlisle is understated, it has dropped over the last two times. I wondered whether you have a view on that, given that you have looked ahead to 2020 and therefore whether or not we are going to remain comfortably within the margin for acceptability.

CLLR ELLIS: When we looked at the numbers, we found a de-population within the centre of the city but what we are finding is a growing population on the outside of the city. I think there are several mistakes within the city council's proposed local plan which accepts that we are going to see a growth on the outskirts of the city, which currently will be in the Penrith and the Border area of the Penrith and Border constituency, but I feel that they totally under-estimate the existing trend of a de-population in the city, a de-population of what is understood as Castle and St Aidans wards, is quite dramatic. We have such an imbalance in our local government wards that we have three member wards in the middle of Carlisle which actually have fewer electors than two wards have in the Penrith and the Border area of the Carlisle City Council administrative areas. So I do not think there is going to be much of a net growth but there is going to be a movement from the centre outwards.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is de-population rather than under-registered, you think.

CLLR ELLIS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any other points? Mr Walsh.

MR JOHN WALSH: (Conservative Party) John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. Can we just look at Dalston Ward for a minute so

that I am clear in my own mind? You said that it is a key economic driver for the city. Where does the population with Dalston sit? Where does that population look for its culture, education, shopping and other requirements?

CLLR ELLIS: Currently it is entirely within the city. You find the travel to work area is to the city, the schooling; there is a transfer school so you have residents in the Dalston ward going into schools in the city and you have citizens from the city going into schools that are in the Dalston ward. It is tied inextricably to the City of Carlisle.

MR WALSH: Do some of the links exist for educational needs east and west into the proposed Penrith and Solway constituencies?

CLLR ELLIS: No, I do not think they do. I think that Dalston was at one time part of the Penrith constituency but that was so long ago now and even when it was part of that, it was isolated from Penrith. It sits far more comfortably within Carlisle, as it does now, because it has sat within the Carlisle City area for over 40 years.

MR WALSH: Looking at the boundary between Dalston and the city, how well-defined is that? To me, as an outsider, it does not look like a particularly well defined boundary; it looks as though the population straddles. Am I correct in that assertion?

CLLR ELLIS: Yes. The population straddles because the City of Carlisle's urban boundaries have essentially become meaningless because of population growth. If you travelled around the Dalston ward and you look at the boundaries on the map, sometimes they bear no relation because what would have been fields are actually now housing estates, they are actually part of the city and not a separate conurbation.

MR WALSH: So as an outsider I would have difficulties defining that boundary.

CLLR ELLIS: Yes.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am just having a look at the road map now.

CLLR ELLIS: It is almost like a glove holding the centre of the city right along the bottom, so it travels from the A595 which is on the west of Carlisle, it travels all the way around the bottom of Carlisle and it comes up to border an existing ward call Harrowby. This is quite a dramatic area which, to be honest, 20 years ago was almost entirely fields but now there is significant housing developments right along there. In actual fact, that ward itself is going to trigger a local government boundary review.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points? (No response)  
Thank you very much for taking your time to come along. We appreciate it.

CLLR ELLIS: My pleasure.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. We will sit here and wait for a speaker who, I am told, could be arriving at any stage.

Time not noted

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will continue with the afternoon hearing. I would like to welcome Mr Robert Currie. I am sorry there is not a bigger audience for your presentation.

MR CURRIE: I did not really expect one, to be honest with you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: With more notice we might have been able to, but we are grateful to you for coming. We are filming these for the record so it is important written evidence as well as oral evidence, so if you could give your name and address and then please begin your presentation.

MR CURRIE: I am in the middle of moving house so should I give the address I am registered to at the moment.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Give the one you are living in today.

MR CURRIE: Thank you very much for having me. My name is Robert Currie. The current address I am living at is 22 Brook Street, Carlisle, CA1 2HY. I have come straight from work, Carlisle United, which probably explains my get-up; I am not as smart as everyone else in the room.

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak today and put forward my support for the new boundary changes which have come in for the City of Carlisle. There are three reasons I want to support them today. The first reason is because I think it is sensible to make the constituency boundaries the exact same as the council boundaries. It currently causes a lot of confusion. A lot of people I have spoken to, particularly pensioners who live within the city council boundaries are very confused by why Rory Stewart is their MP and yet they live under the Carlisle City Council boundaries. There are a number of people who live in the Carlisle constituency as well who work out at Kingstown and large numbers of industries support Carlisle itself at Kingstown. However, currently Kingstown itself is classed as Penrith and the Border despite being just outside the Carlisle City Centre and much closer to Carlisle than it is to Penrith. It makes far more sense to me to include Kingstown within the Carlisle City boundaries and the Carlisle constituency boundaries. Not only this, we have also had far worse

boundaries in the past. For example, the constituency boundaries have finished at Botcherby in the past, meaning that half of the city has actually been classed as Penrith and the Border rather than Carlisle itself. At the moment we have only just managed to get Dalston, which is just outside the city, into the city. If we do not have places like Dalston and like Wetheral and like Longtown within Carlisle City, it makes no sense to me whatsoever. Hopefully as well this could potentially push to a single unitary authority for Carlisle, one council, one MP.

I think this also helps to redress the balance in UK politics. I am huge supporter of first past the post; I think it is by far and away the fairest way for all parts of the country to have an equal say and without this review, this would not be the case. We cannot allow the rotten borough mentality to return within the country. Currently the smallest constituency in the UK is Na h-Eileanan an Iar which has an electorate of 21,769; the largest constituency in the UK is the Isle of Wight which has an electorate of 108,804, which is five times the size. It is not just restricted to the islands either. Arfon in Wales has an electorate of 41,138 and Ilford South has an electorate of 91,987, which is over twice the size. In order to equalise, Carlisle has to increase in size from 68,827 as it is at this moment in time. Making the council boundaries the constituency boundaries makes absolute perfect sense in order to make it that exact size. I do not want Britain or Cumbria to end up like North Carolina which is home of three of ten most gerrymandered congressional seats in the United States of America. The word "gerrymandering" has been thrown around a lot during these exchanges. The problem is, it has been used by the wrong side. The only people who say that the government is gerrymandering are those who are opposed to equal constituencies for ideological reasons. I used to work with the elector register before the removal of the names came in so, for example, students and families who had not lived in houses for so many years, had still be left on the register. It was not unusual to have eight voters registered to a two-bedroom house and for all the scare stories you might see in the papers, that was not true; they had just been left on.

My final reason for this is wanting to cut the cost of politics. This would save taxpayers massive amounts of money. For example, fewer MPs means fewer salaries. Cutting 50 MPs means an annual saving of £3,748,100 on salaries alone; expenses even more. An average of £7.5 million per year would be saved by cutting 50 members of parliament. Causing another boundary review, which would certainly be required, would cost an extra £13 million at least to taxpayers.

In summary, the city council boundaries for Carlisle would be positive to all concerned, particularly allowing those people who live in Carlisle will no longer have confusion as to who their member of parliament is. New boundary changes will help address the imbalance within UK politics and allowing the boundary review to go ahead will cut the cost of UK politics dramatically. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anyone in the room have any points of clarification? For my part, I am very grateful to you for explaining the ties and the local ties which are quite important. Your wider points, although nicely researched and covered, probably carry less weight with me in reality because I am not about the politics, but I am very interested in the local ties and roots, so I am grateful for that. Mr Walsh.

MR JOHN WALSH: You talked about the employment zone at Kingstown which, as I recall, is to the north-east of the city.

MR CURRIE: Yes.

MR JOHN WALSH: We have heard previously about employment zones in Dalston.

MR CURRIE: Yes.

MR JOHN WALSH: How important are the two, relative to each other in terms of links to the city and employment and economic regeneration of the city?

MR CURRIE: The vast majority of people who work out at Kingstown and work out in Dalston actually live within Carlisle City itself. At the moment you have Kingstown, which is within Penrith and the Border despite being far closer to the City of Carlisle, having greater links. Particularly out at Dalston there is the Nestlé factory which has huge numbers of people who work out there from the city centre. In my view it is imperative that they should be able to work and live within the same constituency. Dalston and Kingstown itself are both far closer to the city centre than they are to Penrith and it just makes no sense to me whatsoever to move them further to a different constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you just clarify for me where we are talking about? Can you show me on the map where Kingstown is roughly?

MR CURRIE: Round about here (indicating). Dalston is round here as well (indicating). Both are close to the city centre.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Carlton, which I heard talk of once before, is a growing dormer town now for Carlisle.

MR CURRIE: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points in the room? (No). Thank you very much for coming along, Mr Currie; I appreciate it.

MR CURRIE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no other planned speakers. I am just looking in the direction of our new colleague who has just arrived in case he wants to speak? I understand he wants to speak tomorrow. In which case I think we will adjourn for the moment. I am not quite going to call off the evening; I will give it until 5.30 in case people come in after work and want to come and give a presentation. Otherwise I will adjourn at that point for the evening and we will meet again in the morning at 9am, although I do not think we have a speaker until a little bit after that, but we will see how we go in the morning. We are a bit torn tomorrow in the sense that we have either got early or late; we have three or four speakers late afternoon, around 4.00 to 4.30.

Time Noted 5.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening. It is 5.30 and there are no new arrivals and have not been for 45 minutes or so and there are none anticipated for the evening. I am going to adjourn the first day now and we will resume again here at nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

At 5.30 pm the hearing adjourned until 9.00 am on Tuesday 18 October 2016

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SIR ROBERT ATKINS, 10, 11	
	<b>C</b>
MR CURRIE, 18, 20	
	<b>E</b>
CLLR ELLIS, 15, 16, 17, 18	
	<b>F</b>
MR TIM FARRON MP, 12, 14	
	<b>R</b>
MR REED, 2	
	<b>S</b>
MR JOHN STEVENSON MP, 6, 7 MR SWEENEY, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13	
	<b>T</b>
THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21	
	<b>W</b>
MR WALSH, 12, 16, 17, 20	