

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**PROCEEDINGS**

AT THE

**2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND**

HELD AT

**HAVERING TOWN HALL, ROMFORD RM1 3BB**

ON

**TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2016**

**DAY TWO**

Before:

**Mr Howard Simmons, The Lead Assistant Commissioner**

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At 9.00 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the second day of the hearing here in Romford. We have quite a busy day with a large number of scheduled speakers and so we will move into that after a couple of administrative statements by Tim.

MR BOWDEN: Thank you very much indeed, Howard. Good morning and welcome, everyone, to day 2 of the Romford public hearing. As Howard has mentioned, we have got a busy day of at least 25 speakers. First of all, in terms of the fire alarm, we are expecting the fire alarm to be tested this morning at 9.30 am. Should it go off after that, it is real. Exits are either to my left or out through the main double doors and out into the car park. In terms of toilets, they are out the double doors and through the corridors opposite. If you do have a mobile phone with you, please do switch it off or put it onto silent and, if you do want to use it, we would please ask you to exit the room via the rear doors. Finally, I will now pass back to Howard to chair the hearing and thank you very much indeed for coming.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I will call our first speaker to the chair, please.

CLLR GOLDS: Thank you. My name is Cllr Peter Golds, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. I live at 112 Langbourne Place, London E14 3WW. As I said in my earlier submission, I was a professional Conservative Party agent and have recently acted as a voluntary agent in various parts of North and East London, in particular Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Islington, Barking and Dagenham and, indeed, on one occasion in Waltham Forest.

I am an elected councillor in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and I have held that position since 2006. I am the Conservative opposition group leader and I have held elective office within the London Regional Conservative Party and I will explain further. Let me begin this morning by talking of Tower Hamlets. My local party and the Conservative group fully support the Commission's proposals for Tower Hamlets.

The proposed southern constituency will be contained wholly within the borough which we think is a very good idea, and it follows almost identical boundaries to the former constituency of Stepney and Poplar which existed between 1974 and 1983. This was an effective constituency and we support the proposal. We would recommend that as the historic heart of Stepney is included in the constituency and, indeed, wards from the former borough of Stepney are in the majority, it should be renamed Stepney and Poplar to reflect that position.

We have noted other proposals. One from a Mr Bryant yesterday and one from the Labour Party which suggest a very long thin almost riverside constituency from the

Tower of London to Barking Reach. In our view, that would not be necessarily good for communications and your proposal which is a much more compacted constituency and would retain a single constituency within the London borough of Tower Hamlets would be particularly appropriate.

We have noted the proposed constituency of Bow and Canning Town and would say to the Commission that this follows modern lines of communication and reflects the extraordinary changes that have taken place following the Olympics. The DLR and buses connect the proposed constituency to the Olympic Park and the now regional Westfield Shopping Centre. The Olympic Stadium (which I gather we cannot call it the Olympic Stadium but I think it is the Olympic Stadium) can be viewed from much of the constituency and, since 2012, communities are linked together.

I noted this weekend, for example, that you can get a DLR train from Canary Wharf stopping at All Saints within this proposed constituency and travel straight to the Westfield Shopping Centre right through the proposed wards of the Bromley wards, the Lansbury ward and, indeed, the Bow wards themselves. There is a real link that did not exist even six or seven years before, so that is a real linking constituency.

We also support the proposed linking of the wards making up the former borough of Bethnal Green and we note the Commission has linked together the wards of the former borough of Bethnal Green and wards making up the former borough of Shoreditch into a constituency. There are connections there going back centuries. Indeed, the borough boundary is so intertwined that, very interestingly, Shoreditch parish church, St Leonard's Church, is actually on the Bethnal Green boundary, within the Bethnal Green boundary. Very few people know that.

A little while ago there was a programme about the legendary boundary estate which was constantly described as the boundary estate, Shoreditch. For those of us who know the area, of course, it is the boundary estate, Bethnal Green, but the area is so entwined they are one community together. The Shoreditch High Street area is becoming a must-visit part of London and the massive development site of Bishopsgate Goodsyard is within both boroughs who are now joint planning authorities for this connecting development.

The proposed constituency is closely linked with both areas and has excellent transport links. We fully support this, but we would recommend that it should be called Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, or Bethnal Green and Shoreditch, whichever you would prefer, bearing in mind in particular that Shoreditch has been a continuous constituency name since the 19th Century.

I turn to your proposed Finsbury Park and Stoke Newington constituency. I know the constituency extremely well and I would simply point out that both parts of the constituency are either in or are affected by the Emirates Stadium Controlled Parking

Zone, which extends either side of the Blackstock Road. This alone must generate considerable casework for Members of Parliament and councillors and, for better or worse, is a unifying aspect of the proposed constituency.

Indeed, if you wish to go to the Emirates Stadium and park your car on the Hackney/Clissold Park side of what would be the area, you have to go beyond now Stoke Newington Town Hall as the Emirates Stadium CPZ extends that far. We believe that there are already enormous links to make that a cohesive constituency.

I drafted these notes before we reached Haringey and I had come to this point with considerable care and I have listened very carefully to what was said yesterday and I support the proposed Conservative constituency linking wards from both the existing constituencies of Hornsey & Wood Green and Tottenham.

Firstly, we are proposing that Bounds Green, Noel Park and Woodside wards from Wood Green and the Haringey, Hornsey, Stroud Green wards from Hornsey constituency; and I think very importantly to specify the Seven Sisters, St Ann's, Tottenham Green and West Green wards from Tottenham, which are effectively the historic Tottenham town centre. If you ever looked at a map of what was once Tottenham where the old town hall was it is that cluster there come together into a single constituency which would be wholly contained within the London Borough of Haringey.

Much was said yesterday that Tottenham finds itself divorced from the Haringey Civic Centre. We are proposing a constituency that links these areas, has massive transport links and would bring Haringey Civic Centre into a constituency with Tottenham. Of course, there are again the dramatic changes we refer to of Westfield. We now have Wood Green Shopping City contained within that constituency and that area.

There are several ideas of names. We did think of possibly calling it Wood Green and Harringay, spelt in the historic way with two Rs and an A, as opposed to the London borough with one R and an E. Incidentally, Mr Simmons, you may be interested to know at one point that the London Borough of Haringey was seriously going to be considered being called Totsy Green of Tottenham, Hornsey & Wood Green. Fortunately, better views prevailed on that one. I can produce the documentation for you.

We actually suggested Wood Green and Haringey. Perhaps a better title would be Wood Green and Central Tottenham, which would bring the two areas together and prove that there is a constituency that links Tottenham and the borough's administrative centre. There appears to be a cross-party consensus of a constituency uniting Lower Edmonton and North Tottenham into a single new constituency.

These are two communities which have developed either side of the Hertford Road over

centuries. We saw yesterday of the historic Hundred of Edmonton which extended right down from the boundary to the north of Tower Hamlets, which would include much of what we would now call Hackney, Tottenham and, indeed, Edmonton. But it has developed. Over the 19th Century, the railway lines came down over the Hertford Road, came down parallel to the Hertford Road. Industry developed both sides of the Hertford Road and we believe there are linking communities there.

I would venture to state it would appear the Labour Party would have a similar view, that they can link in that area to form a cohesive constituency. There is some controversy on this, but we have put this forward for your recommendation which we believe would help numbers. We turn to Enfield. I believe there are compelling arguments against the somewhat flawed proposal by the Boundary Commission for a Finchley Southgate constituency.

It should be noted that the Finchley and Southgate, as such, share only two connecting roads, which is the North Circular Road which is hardly unifying because it gets bigger and bigger and bigger and is expected to be widened, leaving the Woodhouse Road free and Barnet Road as the only connecting road from Finchley to New Southgate station. Between this area and your proposed constituency, if you look it up, is a railway line. It will be, in my view, almost like a tube of toothpaste trying to squeeze two communities together.

Yes, you have suggested the Barnet Brunswick Park Road joining this proposed constituency, but Brunswick Park was historically free and Barnet, which was never part of the historic borough of Finchley or the municipal borough of Finchley. I will point out that two of the interconnecting parts are cemeteries. If you look, there was cemetery on the Enfield Southgate side and a cemetery on the Barnet Brunswick Park side and they are hardly interlinking areas. You have a railway line and then two cemeteries and I would suggest that, although it might look good on a map, that proposed constituency will not work terribly well.

I turn to Redbridge, Waltham Forest and Barking. We have heard a great deal of returning Chapel End to Walthamstow, which we fully support, of putting Cann Hall into the Leytonstone and Wanstead constituency, which we fully support because Cann Hall is part of Leyton and Chapel End is demonstrably part of Walthamstow.

I will point out again, as traffic lines and lines of communications have changed, the councillor for Chapel End ward yesterday made reference to the Crooked Billet. The Crooked Billet was a historic coaching inn. It is one of the few places in London that was really known as the Crooked Billet. We are not talking of the Nags Head, Holloway. We are actually talking of Crooked Billet, which was a point.

It was a bus destination point. It is now underneath an underpass on a vast road system. What was once an area that could have connected Walthamstow and

Chingford no longer exists. I think she mentioned that the Crooked Billet is gone and the idea of pushing Chapel End with Chingford is as arbitrary as trying to resurrect the Crooked Billet.

We would support Mayfield and Goodmayes joining the Barking constituencies. For example, that would place Barking Bus Garage in a Barking constituency for the first time and I would add that. We note what you have called Forest Gate and Loxford constituency. That part of Central Ilford does look towards Newham. There are massive bus links. You just get a 25 bus and I would almost defy anybody to know where the boundary is.

We would propose that constituency be called not Forest Gate and Loxford, which is merely a connecting bridge, but Forest Gate and Ilford Town. Indeed, on the proposed boundary changes for Redbridge, there is to be an Ilford Town ward. Forest Gate and Ilford Town gives an indication of where it is and gives credibility to that central part of Ilford in a constituency.

People talk much of Ilford South, but Ilford South is somewhat amorphous. What is Ilford South? It has contained wards from Ilford North and Ilford South which have gone backwards and forwards over years. But Ilford Town is an entity. You can get out at a station and find where Ilford Town is. There is Ilford Town Shopping Centre and everything else and we believe that gives the people of Redbridge a name that links the various parts of the constituency.

I turn for a few moments to South London. Although in all my adult life I have lived either in North West or East London, I spent my early years in South London. I began in Brixton and moved further southwards. My late grandparents lived at 368 Bishopsford Road, Morden on the St Helier Estate and I have heard much of Bishopsford Road in the last week.

Although they lived on the Merton and Morden Urban District Council side of the road, Rose Hill Shopping Centre, the local cinema which in their day was called the Gaumont, and the estate public house, the Rose, where my late grandfather was an illegal bookmaker - but that is another story - and is now a supermarket. Apparently, when I was a baby in a pram, he used to put betting slips in the pram and hide them from the police, but that is even a further story. They were across the road on the Carshalton Urban District Council side.

Now my grandfather did his betting in the Rose. He did not actually say, 'Oh, I can't cross to Carshalton. It is somewhere else.' That was the St Helier Estate which was created in the 1920s by the London County Council. It happened that Bishopsford Road was merely a line, a parish line, that divided the two, but the St Helier Estate is the St Helier Estate.

Indeed, my grandparents, when we would go and see them there were the 80A and 88 buses which follow different routes now which would take them to Sutton, which was then a principal shopping centre. If you walked up to Rose Hill, the links were down to Morden station, where, of course, they could then travel to work. You went down St Helier Avenue.

We actually heard last week of St Helier Avenue and we have heard of Bishopsford Road. They actually interconnect like that. At the point where I have got my hands there, the borough boundary runs behind it. Again, does anybody know which is Merton and which is Sutton? I think, obviously, for local government purposes there is a unit but for representation of Parliament I do not know.

I would add one further thing of my family history. My mother used my grandparents' address when she was pregnant with me because she did not trust the South London Hospital for Women which enabled me to be born in the St Helier Hospital, Carshalton, although my grandparents lived in Bishopsford Road in Merton and Morden Urban District Council.

There is no doubt the concerns of Mitcham need resolution. Mitcham has formed part of a constituency since 1918. Although it has never had sufficient population to be a standalone constituency - there has never been a constituency that was purely Mitcham - until 1945 it was joined with Carshalton and Beddington and Wallington. Between 1945 and 1974 it was the borough of Mitcham and the borough of Beddington and Wallington. Then, from 1974 there was what was once the borough of Mitcham, now contained within Merton, and wards from the former Merton and Morden Urban District Council, of which nobody seems to be terribly interested in protecting.

I think we can actually look at it like this. Merton and Morden have sort of disappeared. We had Mitcham borough, Wimbledon borough and there seems to be no home rule for Merton and Morden, the wards that made up Merton and Morden, which were actually more than a third of the borough. Merton and Morden was the largest component of the borough of Merton, scattered and dissipated.

We believe the wards of Cricket Green, which includes the Vestry Hall which were the headquarters of the former Mitcham Council, Figges Marsh, Lavender Fields and Long Thornton, form the centre of the town and are the Mitcham community. We heard much of splitting the Mitcham community and we think it would be wrong to split those elsewhere.

The ward of Colliers Wood, which is the postcode South West 19, some might say Wimbledon South West 19; Graveney, postcode South West 17, some might say Tooting south west 17; and Pollards Hill, which does include elements and little bits of Streatham, South West 16, are less close to Mitcham proper. It is possible they have another focus, but we believe that Mitcham deserves to be put together and the

Boundary Commission should consider keeping those central wards together.

I think the arguments were very well put, very well argued and much was said to retain Mitcham. There are communities in London that look like Mitcham where you have a central point. Perhaps because Mitcham was a borough with the Vestry Hall and the council and the alderman and the mayor and the robes and the chain of office, as was Wimbledon, and Merton and Morden was an urban district, it looked different. There was an element of Mitcham that was Mitcham as opposed to the others and I think we can consider that.

I do not think it is possible to simply retain the existing Merton and Morden constituency. Some work will have to be done on that, but Mitcham can be contained, and work can be done so we do not end up with the London borough of Merton having five MPs which does seem to be absolutely bizarre. The identified continuity of representation is to be desired.

Just as retaining Mitcham as an entity, there is no reason whatsoever to split Hampstead for the first time since 1885. Why would anybody split Hampstead any more than splitting Mitcham? Are you going to suddenly, as we heard of Mitcham we talked of the problems of who is going to represent them at the cenotaph, what would happen in two weeks' Sunday if you split Hampstead straight up the middle? We do not think that actually works. We think there is a real job to retain these communities.

We have heard of Southgate's wishes to be retained part of Southgate, and the interesting enthusiasm of Palmers Green to be included in the Southgate constituency. There is nothing political on that. There can be nothing party political on that because it could be argued my party might wish Palmers Green to be elsewhere. We believe Palmers Green, however it votes, is an integral part of Southgate and the Southgate community.

Mitcham is a community. Hampstead is a community. Indeed, we noticed this proposal where it has been suggested that Chelsea, which has been part of a Parliamentary constituency by name since 1868 either on its own or northwards or uniting with the former borough of Fulham, it is proposed to split that three ways. I do not think that brings real cohesion together. We are actually talking of working against these constituencies.

Yesterday, we heard of the Rush Green issue and I think also I would draw attention, I think a very relevant part, and by former councillor David Conway of Enfield, who described London as a densely populated area but different communities put together in different ways. We have the old Roman roads which go absolutely straight, but within the structure of the Roman roads you have areas that sometimes go to the east, to the west, to the north, to the south. They do not actually follow the line of the road. Many of them follow the lines of pilgrimage. You can read Chaucer. You look at the lines that

took people to Barking Abbey.

You look at this issue we had yesterday which I went home and at about 11.30 last night I established that the parish of Dagenham was part of Barking Abbey and the reason Rush Green is isolated because, even when the Abbey was dissolved, it was sold off to farmers and landowners, but it comes against Romford which is the, "Liberty of Romford." So it was quite two different things, but today we have an orphan area. We talked of orphan wards and yesterday we learned that Rush Green area is almost an orphan within its own ward of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. That is where you have densely populated communities that sometimes you need to look at very carefully.

Finally, may I conclude with, once again, reiterating the concerns of the Brent Returning Officer. We should be seeking to reduce cross-borough constituencies and not create them. I think about what Caroline Downs said, and perhaps we should almost look at her contribution in neon lights we should be thinking of preserving existing communities, the Mitchams, the Hampsteads, the Southgates of this world, the central part of Tottenham.

Preserve those communities where people have lived together, however somewhere has developed, and keep them together and do what we can; but there, where they have extended, let us work outwards but let us try and preserve the best of what we have got, because I believe that will give us good representation. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. That is both thoughtful and thought provoking. Joan Ryan, would you like to come forward and speak? Make yourself comfortable and just introduce yourself by way of name and address, please.

MS RYAN: (MP for Enfield North) Good morning. My name is Joan Ryan. I am the Member of Parliament for Enfield North and I live in Enfield and my professional address would be the House of Commons. In my comments today, I want to focus on the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for Enfield North and on Enfield as a whole.

I know that the Labour Party provided its submission to the public hearings on 17 October and I think they offer sensible and comprehensive counter-proposals which all conform to the requirements of the statutory electorate range. Therefore, I will be speaking in favour of the Labour Party's plans and I think the Labour Party's proposals are more consistent with the statutory criteria used by the Boundary Commission to redistribute seats.

I live in Enfield, as I said. It has been my home for nearly 20 years. I know the communities very well indeed, both as the MP and as a local resident. It is my view that

the borough needs MPs who are focused on the needs of our community and our area. The borough is already the fifth largest in the Capital according to the latest Greater London Authority figures and is due to become the fourth largest by 2026.

I note and accept paragraph 34 of the Commission's report which states that Enfield is too large for two constituencies, but what I think is much less acceptable is the Commission's proposal to split the borough's wards between five different Members of Parliament. In my opinion, this would spread the borough too thinly across too many MPs and does not pay due respect to existing local government boundaries.

The Commission's plans would create constituencies with orphaned Enfield wards, whereby one Enfield ward would be grouped with a number of wards from different local authorities. I am thinking particularly of Hornsey & Wood Green and the Chipping Barnet and Mill Hill proposals there.

The Commission's proposals would also break a number of local ties in Enfield in the three existing constituencies and the Boundary Commission states in its rules that local ties are an important factor they may consider when dealing with the redistribution of seats. Certainly, the Labour Party's plans do recognise the similarities and the connections between Ponders End, Jubilee, Lower Edmonton wards and the rest of what would be the eastern Enfield wards.

All of those wards, Ponders End, Jubilee and Lower Edmonton, they look to Enfield and they relate to Enfield, whereas Haileybury, Lower Edmonton and Edmonton Green are much more associated with and much more similar to Tottenham. I am thinking of connections such as the shopping areas that people use, the leisure facilities people use, the train stations people use and the catchment area of schools. I think it is very much the case that Jubilee, Lower Edmonton and Ponders End are all much more facing Enfield than they would be Tottenham.

I think the Labour Party's revised proposals stipulate that there would be four MPs representing the wards in the borough of Enfield and not five, which I think would be an improvement, and no single Enfield ward would be isolated from other wards in the borough unlike under the Boundary Commission's plans. I think, interestingly, none of the amended proposals I have seen from other major parties support the idea of having five MPs involved in the Parliamentary representation of the borough of Enfield. I hope the Commission will look at this aspect again.

Turning to specific areas of the borough that I represent, the Commission has proposed a seat called Enfield whose wards are listed. I will not go through them, but under the Labour Party's counter-proposals the existing wards of Chase, Enfield Highway, Enfield Locks, Southbury and Turkey Street in Enfield North would be retained with the addition of the wards of Jubilee, Lower Edmonton and Ponders End from the current Edmonton constituency. I believe these proposals do make good sense.

It would consolidate wards which either directly border or lie to the east of the major geographical division that is running through the borough of Enfield, that being the A10 road. Grange ward, as well as Town and Highlands wards, which would move into Southgate, on the other hand, all lie to the west of the A10 and do not directly border this road.

The final recommendations of the fifth periodical review came into effect at the 2010 General Election and the review included the decision to move Ponders End ward from Enfield North, as it was then, and into the Edmonton constituency. During the consultation for that review, the proposals for Ponders End caused a great deal of local controversy, a lot of upset.

A residents' campaign was launched at the time and some four and a half thousand Ponders End residents signed a petition in protest. Their request, sadly, was not granted, but I imagine that petition is still on record from the submissions that were made at the time. I believe the current boundary review process provides, therefore, a great opportunity to restore Ponders End's local ties which were broken by the constituency changes last time around.

Up until the fifth review came into effect, Ponders End had been a very important part of Enfield North constituency, certainly ever since the seat was created in 1974, and Ponders End is an area with roots going back centuries in Enfield. It even started out as a large hamlet in the parish of Enfield. The historic Enfield boundary ditch that runs along Ponders End ward's southern border, and which is still marked on Ordnance Survey and Google maps today, is another clear reminder of the ward's intrinsic links to Enfield and to the ward to the north of Ponders End.

Given the Commission has made an explicit recommendation to return Ponders End to Enfield North during the last boundary review consultation in 2011, those proposals that were brought forward then, I was surprised that the Commission did not suggest the same this year too. I think it is noteworthy that there is consensus across the labour MPs, councillors and residents about placing Ponders End into the proposed Enfield seat and the Conservative Party has also suggested the same. I think the level of consensus is probably rare and says something about how everyone locally sees Ponders End as part of Enfield and not part of Edmonton.

Many residents of Ponders End still think, in fact, that I am their MP and I have been approached by a number of community representatives from Ponders End who tell me they will be making written submissions in support of Ponders End being reinstated in Enfield. That includes two community centres in Ponders End that represent the Turkish and Kurdish communities, a residents' association, a Bangladeshi support group, a Tamil community group, youth workers from the area, and some local teachers and many other individual residents who are upset about Ponders End not being still

part of Enfield.

I hope they do make their submissions and their voices are heard. Returning to paragraph 34 of the Commission's report I noted with interest that a key factor in the initial proposals for Edmonton was, "To provide for improved road connections within the constituency." I am sure this same applies to Enfield. By using the Commission's own frame of reference, I believe that labour's counter-proposals would offer vastly improved road connections within the revised constituency of Enfield. On the eastern side of the borough of Enfield there are three main north-south arterial roads.

I have already mentioned the A10, or Great Cambridge Road, which links onto junction 25 of the M25, and runs through the borough towards Central London. Secondly, there is the A1010, or the Hertford Road, which runs along the border between Turkey Street and Enfield Lock wards and it then cuts through the wards of Enfield Highway, Ponders End, Jubilee and Lower Edmonton.

There is also Mollison Avenue, which turns into the A1055 and this cuts through the wards of Enfield Lock, Enfield Highway, Ponders End, Jubilee and Lower Edmonton. They are parallel like two sides of a ladder or two spines through all these wards that the counter-proposal would bring together. In addition, one of the major east-west arterial roads in the borough is the A110 or Nags Head Road, which becomes Lea Valley Road. This road cuts along the heart of Ponders End ward and Southbury ward as it heads towards Central Enfield, linking those two wards very strongly together.

I think Labour's counter-proposals would provide for comprehensive coverage of this network of roads which play a vital road in the lives of local communities and in our local economy. All our local shopping areas run along the Hertford Road. They would be particularly relevant for local businesses which operate from the Brimsdown Industrial Estate. That is the second largest industrial estate in the whole of London now. It is located alongside Mollison Avenue.

By bringing Enfield Highway and Ponders End wards back together again into one constituency, the ties between the northern and southern sections of the industrial estate would be restored. The community facilities on the Hertford Road and the business and industrial facilities along Mollison Avenue would all be connected through connecting up these wards along those two spines.

Looking into the longer-term, Labour's counter-proposals would also bring together many of the wards at the heart of some of the borough's most current and future infrastructure projects: Plans to include a comprehensive solution to the traffic congestion and pollution problems on our road through the council Led Northern Gateway Access Package; the four tracking along the West Anglia Mainline to improve rail services; and the development of Crossrail 2. Both of these rail developments provide another spine running parallel with Mollison Avenue through these wards that

would make up the revised proposal. I think the borough of Enfield has a bright future and I think the plans I have outlined will play a valuable role in assisting that success.

I will provide you with my statement today. It will be somewhat uncorrected at the moment because I have varied it as I have gone along, but I will also submit a fully referenced version before the deadline of Monday 5 December. I think Enfield is a very vibrant community. I think that the commonality, the connections, the similarities along these eastern Enfield wards is very important and the local communities.

There has been substantial demographic change over the past 20 years, the last two decades, and I think that demographic change and that community development is further justification for these proposals. Thank you very much for listening.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, thank you very much. It is most helpful. I am going to ask for matters of clarification now. Lord Hayward?

LORD HAYWARD: Lord Hayward. Just one quick question. You did not refer to it, but I think I am right in saying that the Enfield and Haringey boroughs are linked by a common GLA member, is that correct?

MS RYAN: Yes, that is correct, Joanne McCartney, who is also the deputy mayor of London.

LORD HAYWARD: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Great. Any other matters at all? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed and we would be most grateful for your written submission as well. Kate Osamor. If you would just make yourself comfortable and introduce yourself by way of name and address just to begin, please?

MS OSAMOR: (MP for Edmonton) Thank you. I am Kate Osamor. I am a Member of Parliament for Edmonton. Shall I give you my home address?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just House of Commons.

MS OSAMOR: House of Commons, yes. The House of Commons is my address, yes. Of course, I do not live there, but, anyway, yes, that is where I work. I am here today, really, to talk about Edmonton as a constituency. I recently got elected as the Member of Parliament for Edmonton in the last General Election, so the wards as I know them are the wards which I work with. It is on that basis that I actually am here to say that I do not want the constituency to be broken up.

I understand that prior to me becoming the Member of Parliament there was a time when Ponders End was in Enfield North, but I have had conversations with people in

Ponders End who have said that they are very happy being within Edmonton as the constituency stands. The counter-proposals which have been submitted by the Labour Party actually breaks up the constituency and it means that I would no longer be the Member of Parliament for Edmonton. I would actually have to go up against another MP potentially because I would not have over 40 per cent of the previous constituency within the new make-up.

I am against the actual Labour proposals because, again, it breaks up the constituency. The initial counter-proposals which were put together by the boundary review actually kept the constituency together and included another Labour ward which was actually next door. It was Palmers Green, and that comes under the same local authority. I have a lot of dealings with Enfield. I go and visit and meet with the different leads on areas, whether it is housing. I meet also with the Chief Executive.

When it comes to continuity of work and dealing with one local authority. the initial proposals, which obviously I would rather it was not happening but we are where we are, would mean that that work would continue and I would not actually be working with a neighbouring local authority around issues which are pertaining to my constituents. I think one of the problems I am having with this is that I am having to come in and talk against my own party and that is where I would not like to be, but I have to ensure that my voice is heard amongst this proposal and amongst these changes if they are going to go forward.

That is basically why I have come today. There is a lot of history around Edmonton and I am very happy to submit that before the deadline, but I did not think it was actually that important at this stage to bring it all up because I only have ten minutes and the main thing really is to get across that, as it stands, the constituency staying together is what I support.

The initial proposals, which actually include one ward which is actually within Enfield, would actually make sense more so than splitting it up between two local authorities. There is a big issue around this casework that I initially am getting and the fact that the neighbouring local authority and the neighbouring seats have a very similar demographic, very similar problems. So, yes, the workload may increase but they are very similar.

Haringey, as a local authority it is similar but the problem is is that you would end up speaking to two local authorities about the same issues and I think it would be a lot easier if Edmonton was kept together under Enfield as a local authority. That is what I would be pushing forward. I agree that it is important that they stay together but, more importantly, if I am going to object to anything it is about it being split which is not helpful. I would rather that I am not here and I would rather that it is not being looked at in this, way, but I will submit all the information just to back up what I am saying more thoroughly and make sure you get it before December 5.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is great. I understand your difficulties in terms of position but that is very helpful and very clear and we look forward to receiving your written submission. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much for attending. I think our next speaker is it Cllr Alev Cazimoglu, if you would like to come forward.

CLLR CAZIMOGLU: Good morning. I am Alev Cazimoglu and I live at 5 Woodstock Crescent, London N9 7NE. That is in Edmonton. I am very grateful for the opportunity to come and present my views today on the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the London Borough of Enfield.

The focus of my speech will be on the revised Enfield constituencies, with particular attention paid to Jubilee ward as well as Ponders End and Lower Edmonton wards. I have been a Jubilee resident for almost 40 years and I am here today in my capacity as a local councillor for the ward as well as a resident.

I understand that the Boundary Commission must comply with the 2011 Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act when making their proposals on the redistribution of seats, but I would like to state for the record my concern about the seemingly arbitrary rule to cut the number of MPs to 600 across the United Kingdom from 73 to 68 in the London region. I believe that this will put extra pressure on MPs by increasing the number of constituents they need to serve and especially in areas of high need.

This is of particular relevance when considering the borough of Enfield. With the introduction of the benefit cap at the time as extensive central Government cuts to local authority funding, outer London boroughs like Enfield are facing much greater pressures than we did a decade ago. Parts of Enfield are some of the most deprived in the country. Poverty and inequality are a real concern, particularly in those wards on the eastern side of the A10 which includes Jubilee, Ponders End and Lower Edmonton.

Therefore, I believe that a fundamental requirement of a boundary review is to ensure the best possible representation for people in Parliament which, in turn, would help strengthen our democracy. This is done by seeking to enhance constituents' link with their MP and trying as much as possible to protect improved community ties within constituencies.

Unfortunately, I think the Commission's proposals fall short in this regard. I have spoken with a number of council colleagues and there is concern from both the Labour and the Conservative Party about the plans for our borough. There has been a lot of discussion, debate and disappointment expressed about the proposed changes to Enfield Southgate in particular.

I know this proposal will be hotly contested and I also think there is a lot more scope to reconfigure the proposed Edmonton and Enfield seats so that local ties are improved. As a Labour councillor, I have seen my party's counter-proposals. I note Labour's revisions have already been provided to the Commission and that they have been given detailed suggestions on how the numbers and wards will be balanced out.

I think there is real merit in placing the wards of Jubilee, Ponders End and Lower Edmonton into a revised Enfield North or Enfield seat, as you would call it, just as I think there are advantages to Labour's plans for an Edmonton and Tottenham constituency, given the community ties which run along Fore Street and across the North Circular towards White Hart Lane.

Jubilee and Ponders End ward residents, in particular, both look towards the existing Enfield North constituency. Ponders End ward, for example, was part of the seat for 35 years before the last boundary changes kicked in just in time for the 2010 General Election. The ward has always felt like a part of that seat. I know a lot of Ponders End residents who would welcome the chance for it to return if the Boundary Commission was willing to look again at its plans.

In relation to Jubilee ward, which is without a train station, local residents travel either to Ponders End or Southbury stations when commuting to London. These stations are within far easier reach than Edmonton Green station to the south or Bush Hill Park station to the west which you can only get to by crossing the A10. But Jubilee and Ponders End residents will head into Southbury not just for the transport links but for the Southbury Leisure Centre, cinemas on Southbury Road and other local amenities.

In return, Southbury ward constituents will be using the shops and businesses on the Hertford Road running both through Jubilee and Ponders End and they will be spending their time making use of the fantastic Jubilee Park in my home ward too. As I have mentioned previously, communities and businesses in Jubilee and Ponders End, as well as Lower Edmonton, have been shaped by their links along the Hertford Road.

This road starts at the Edmonton Green roundabout and cuts through these three wards before heading into Enfield Highway and along the boundary between Turkey Street and Enfield Lock wards in the existing Enfield North constituency. Edmonton Green roundabout, where the Hertford Road meets Fore Street and which lies on the northern fringe of Edmonton Green ward, is seen as a physical and psychological boundary for residents in the area.

A lot of the residents from Ponders End, Jubilee and Lower Edmonton who need to use local shops, leisure facilities or do business will often do so along the Hertford Road, rather than crossing the roundabout onto Fore Street and heading towards Tottenham. Just like residents who live in Edmonton Green ward, Haselbury ward and other wards to the south will rarely head the opposite way to shop or do business along the Hertford

Road.

I know this not only because I am a long-term local resident and councillor, but also because my family has a printing business which has been operating for more than 20 years on the Hertford Road. Located on the border of Lower Edmonton Jubilee, the business has built up a lot of regular customers over the years. It is very rare that we get anyone coming in from beyond Edmonton Green roundabout. The vast majority of our customers come from Jubilee, Ponders End, Lower Edmonton, Southbury and Enfield Highway wards, and this is true of neighbouring businesses.

Given the task at hand for the Commission, I can only imagine how difficult it must be to produce the set of proposals for constituency boundaries. There are so many important factors to consider and so much information available only at local level. I applaud the Commission for holding these types of hearings which allow members of the public, councillors and so on to have the opportunity to feed information into this important process.

I know there are no perfect options, given that there are competing interests involved and because you will always have to consider the knock-on effects on surrounding constituencies of counter-proposals, but I hope in my presentation today I have been able to give you a better understanding of some of the local ties that links specific parts of my borough together.

I hope for those reasons you will give due consideration to placing Jubilee, Ponders End and Lower Edmonton wards into a revised Enfield or Enfield North constituency. I will submit my thoughts to the Commission in writing as well. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. That was very clear and helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response) in which case, thank you very much. Mike Gapes, would you like to come forward and just start by giving your name and address please.

MR GAPES (MP for Ilford South): Thank you very much. I am Mike Gapes, the Member of Parliament for Ilford South and my address is the House of Commons London SW1A 0AA.

I recognise that the Boundary Commission for England have been given a very difficult task by the legislation which forces them to reduce England from 533 to 501 constituencies and, as a result, cuts the number of constituencies in London from 73 to 68. The task is made even more difficult by the narrow 5 per cent numerical margin of flexibility and their own decision to use local government wards rather than polling districts as the building block jigsaw pieces of this new construction.

I speak with the experience of nearly 25 years as Member of Parliament for Ilford South.

During that time, my constituency has grown significantly in population and electorate so that there were 140,000 residents, almost 90,000 voters, at the 2015 General Election, making it one of the largest in the country. The subsequent introduction of individual electoral registration and inadequate efforts by central Government and local authorities resulted in the huge drop in the number of registered voters.

In Ilford South there were just some 78,000 at the arbitrary December 2015 cut-off date. Although thousands more re-joined the Register for mayoral and GLA elections and the European Referendum, they are not counted in this exercise. The Liberal Democrats/Conservative Coalition Government proposed and Parliament decided to cut the number of elected MPs from 650 to 600.

Since then, hundreds of additional unelected members have been added to the House of Lords and, on that unfair absurd basis, the Boundary Commission have been given the task of implementing these unjust changes. I have had to deal with the consequences of boundary changes before. In 1994 to 1997 I lost part of the Becontree Estate in Goodmayes ward to Barking and Dagenham and gained Seven Kings and Chadwell wards from Ilford North. As a result, my electorate was increased significantly from the original 56,000.

I also represented parts of two London boroughs and had to deal with two local authorities for three years. These proposed changes are, however, far more brutal in their impact. The relationship I have worked to build with the fantastic, diverse and dynamic Ilford South communities over 25 years will be cast asunder with the stroke of a bureaucratic pen.

Ilford Town Centre and historic Ilford has had its own Member of Parliament for almost 100 years. Before 1918 Ilford was part of the southern division of Essex. Due to extensive building in the northern parts of Ilford in the first half of the last century, including Clayhall, Gants Hill, Newbury Park and, later, Hainault, in 1945 Ilford was split into two constituencies, North and South. Later, Ilford North was expanded into what had been part of the Chigwell Essex constituency with the establishment of Greater London and the London Borough of Redbridge in 1964.

Ilford South has had its own Member of Parliament since 1945, a period of 71 years, being represented by just five MPs in that time. My impressive predecessors were Jim Ranger, Labour, 1945 to 1950; Albert Cooper, Conservative, 1950 to 1966, and 1970 to 74; Arnold Shaw, Labour, 1966 to 1970, and 1974 to 1979; and Sir Neil Thorne, Conservative, 1979 to 1992. Although I am the longest serving Member of Parliament for Ilford South, I do not also wish to be remembered as the last MP for Ilford South.

The draft proposals of the Boundary Commission will abolish the Ilford South constituency in its entirety, cutting it into four parts and linking it with four separate London boroughs, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Newham and Barking and Dagenham. I

am extremely disappointed at the destruction of the historic Ilford South. However, I recognise that some change is inevitable. I would prefer to keep all the existing Ilford South together but I recognise that is not possible. Ideally, I would prefer minimal change with the retention of most of the nine wards of the existing Ilford South.

I recognise there is logic to the Commission proposals to reunite Seven Kings and Chadwell into a new Ilford North constituency along with the bulk of the existing Ilford North. This proposal returns seven Kings and Chadwell to the Ilford North constituency they were associated with for 50 years before 1997. When I fought Ilford North in 1983, the constituency included both Seven Kings and Chadwell wards. When I was elected as MP for Ilford South in 1992, my constituency did not include Chadwell and Seven Kings which was still in Ilford North.

However, I do not agree with the Commission proposal to also move Newbury ward. The bulk of the existing Newbury ward has always been in the same Ilford South constituency as Valentines ward, with which it is closely associated. It is, in my view, important to have the wards surrounding our historic award-winning, internationally great 'Celebrity Bake Off' famous Valentines Park in the same constituency.

The Boundary Commission proposal to move two wards, Goodmayes and Mayfield, to Barking constituency is a regrettable but logical consequence of the arbitrary nature of this process. It also puts the wards and streets surrounding Goodmayes Park into the same constituency. Although there will be a continuing, if amended, Ilford North under the draft proposals, the proposal by the Boundary Commission for the total abolition of the historic Ilford South constituency is illogical and unacceptable.

I cannot accept or see any merit in the Boundary Commission proposals to split Ilford Town Centre into two separate constituencies. Ilford Town Centre wards have always been in the same constituency, both in the period before 1945 when there was only one Ilford constituency and the period since 1945 when Valentines Park, Cranbrook and the Ilford shopping centre, Ilford High Road, Ilford Lane, Ilford Broadway, Ilford Hill and Ilford Council, later Redbridge Council, administrative offices were all in the Ilford South constituency.

The Boundary Commission has come up with a strange proposal to put one part of historic Ilford, the wards of Loxford and Clementswood, into a constituency with Forest Gate, Green Street and Plastow Newham, but another part of historic Ilford, the wards of Valentines and Cranbrook are to go into a new Leytonstone and Wanstead constituency. The Boundary Commission has not taken any account of the community interests or historic community relationship of the four Ilford Town Centre wards.

As a result, Ilford Railway Station and Ilford Bus Garage and Valentines Park and Valentines Mansion will be linked to Leytonstone in Waltham Forest, but Ilford Police Station, Ilford High Road, Ilford Hospital, Chapel, Redbridge Town Hall and Ilford Lane

will be linked to Plastow and Green Street in Newham. This proposal also splits the Ilford Exchange Shopping Centre into different constituencies with different MPs. If there is an incident outside one shop there will be one MP concerned, and then the next door's shop it will be a different MP. It means that if you stand outside the soon to be improved Ilford Crossrail Station, near the junction of Ilford Hill and Cranbrook Road, your right foot will be linked to Forest Gate and Plastow, Newham, and your left foot tied to Leytonstone and Waltham Forest.

The essence of these proposals is to destroy community relationships with a crude mathematical formula. There is a much better alternative proposal which I support which takes the four town centre historic Ilford wards and the associated Newbury ward and keeps them together in a new Ilford South and Wanstead constituency. The new constituency is composed of five wards of the existing Ilford South, Cranbrook, Clementswood, Loxford, Newbury and Valentines, and to this added the neighbouring Redbridge wards, Snaresbrook and Wanstead and the Newham wards of Little Ilford and Manor Park.

There has, over the centuries, been a historic association dating back to a reference in the Domesday Book between Greater Ilford and Little Ilford, linked as they have been by the Romford Road which is the old Roman road crossing the River Roding. Today, many residents of Little Ilford and Manor Park shop and work or go to school in Ilford. Indeed, the Boundary Commission in its draft proposal recognised that relationship by joining the Newham wards of Manor Park and Little Ilford with the Great Ilford wards of Loxford and Clementswood. This proposal would also keep that link but on a wider, more logical and less destructive basis.

There is another benefit to this proposal because it would restore the link between both sides of Wanstead Flats and put both parts of Aldersbrook in the same constituency by joining Wanstead ward and Manor Park and Little Ilford wards together. This returns to the position as it was before the separation of these areas into different boroughs and constituencies in 1964. It would also link Wanstead Park Avenue with Wanstead Park Road which has been separated after the building of the A406 North Circular. Both sides of Wanstead Park would be in the same constituency by the joining of Wanstead with Cranbrook and Valentines.

The new proposed Ilford South would ensure that all Ilford Town Centre wards are in the same constituency. It also ensures limited change to the existing Ilford North and that the name of Ilford South continues to exist as a parliamentary constituency as it has done since 1945. Most importantly, Ilford retains two constituencies, Ilford North and Ilford South and Wanstead, and I will not be the last Member of Parliament for Ilford South.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very helpful indeed. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). Are you submitting ---

MR GAPES: I have given a copy out there. I have other copies here and I do not know whether you wish me to submit it in any other electronic form as well or?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, I think, Kevin, if you collect some copies that will be most helpful.

MR GAPES: I have got some copies with me. Okay, thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like to come forward to the microphone, please, thank you.

MR JACKSON: First, can I just clarify that I am not actually John Rudd. I am one of his, what you would call, clergy people but I am not actually him. I am from the same church representing him. I am Keith Jackson. My address is St Ann's Church, Avenue Road, London N15. I just speak on behalf of the South Tottenham ward.

From our point of view, we in South Tottenham do not look south towards Stoke Newington. We look back down the A10 towards South Tottenham. From the north, we do not look towards Edmonton. We look back into South Tottenham. We feel that the original Boundary Commission lines are correct and we believe that they were drawn in the correct way and they suit South Tottenham.

We find no sense in removing the resources to Edmonton or any other way because that would only make South Tottenham, which is a very dependent and a very struggling ward with very few resources, even more poorer and more dependent on outside help. We feel that in South Tottenham we best manage the small resources that we can to help South Tottenham.

Speaking as someone who works on the Broadwater Farm, we come across the issues we have and we feel transferring those small resources out of South Tottenham would only make Tottenham more dependent and more worse with the different crimes on different issues we have. We feel the original boundary should remain as it is because we feel it is more helpful towards South Tottenham.

Secondly, if you look at the boundary and the work that is done in Tottenham, it is specifically targeted for those areas in Tottenham that needs help. From a church perspective, we go out into four different estates where we can help those youngsters, those young men who are in gangs, and we feel if we are short of resources and we have to be stretched then that help will not be forthcoming to those areas that badly need the help that we have at the moment. We will strongly campaign that the boundary lines as they are will remain the same. That is it, very simply.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, that is very clear and very focused,

thank you very much indeed. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed for your attending. David South. Welcome. Make yourself comfortable at the microphone and just introduce yourself by way of name and address, please.

MR SOUTH: Good morning. My name is David South. I live at 172 Cormorant House, 2 Alma Road, Enfield EN 34QH. Thank you for the chance to come and speak to you today about my area and why I think changes should be made to the Boundary Commission's plans.

I see the Commission want to add Palmers Green ward to Edmonton constituency in the borough of Enfield and I see you have proposed adding Grange ward to the seven wards in Enfield North in order to create a seat simply called Enfield, but I want to see Ponders End ward made part of the proposed Enfield constituency instead. My home is in Ponders End ward which is currently part of the Edmonton constituency.

Ponders End is a great place. It has a real mix of people, young, old, English, Turkish, Cypriot, Bangladeshi, Polish, all rubbing shoulders with one another. I am proud to have been an Alma Road resident for more than 40 years and a member of the lively Kurdistan community since 1962. For most of the time I have lived there, my ward has been part of the Enfield North constituency. That all changed a few years back when we were made part of Edmonton.

I remember this decision upsetting quite a number of people at the time. I was one of thousands of local residents who signed the petition urging the Boundary Commission to reconsider. There are strong community ties between Ponders End ward and other wards in the north-east side of Enfield.

We have got a lot in common with communities living in and around the likes of Bullsmoor Lane, Hall Lane, Enfield Wash and Turkey Street. Just like Ponders End, they are strong working class areas. I feel a lot more of a connection with them than some of the other places we find ourselves in Edmonton now like the wealthier Bush Hill Park ward which is cut off from us on the other side of the A10, or with the likes of Upper Edmonton ward which is a lot closer to Tottenham and Haringey communities in the south of the seat.

I was pleased when the last boundary plans came out a few years ago to see that the suggestions were to return my ward, Ponders End, to Enfield North. Therefore, I was hoping that when the Commission's most recent proposals came out in September this would be part of the plans this time around as well. I was really disappointed that it was not and many of my friends agree. How can you call a seat Enfield if it does not contain Ponders End?

I care for my area. I have had an active role in the Ponders End community for a

number of years. I know a lot of people. I helped set up what is now called Alma Residents' association on the Alma Estate where I live. I am glad to say that it is now one of the strongest residents' associations in the borough and it is soon to become a tenant management organisation, so that the residents have the responsibility for running their own homes.

Since September, I have been speaking to friends and knocking on doors on the estate and across the ward to ask them to sign my petition in support of Ponders End becoming part of the new Enfield seat. I have had a great response so far. I might add that I will be submitting by 5 December the petition list. I will write to the Commission with a copy of the petition and a list of signatures before the deadline in December.

I know that for my plan to be looked at properly the maps need to be worked at and I need to have thought about what happens to other constituencies. I have read through the online version of your report and proposals and looked at the voter figures for each seat. I understand that any idea to fit in with the Commission's rules which says that every constituency should be no smaller than 71,000 and no bigger than 78,000, give or take a few hundred.

The easiest way to do this would be to put Ponders End ward into Enfield and replace it with Grange ward into Edmonton. That way, you will still have eight wards in each of the Enfield and Edmonton constituencies. Enfield would have about 74,000 voters and Edmonton would have 73,300 voters.

This is just one idea. There are probably a lot of different proposals from other groups that will work just as well. I would be happy to support any possible and practical plans, just as long as Ponders End ward, my home, is put back where it belongs. I hope you consider my request. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Sir. Very interesting. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). No, thank you. And you will be writing in with the petition?

MR SOUTH: I will.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excellent, thank you very much indeed. Our next scheduled speaker is at 11 o'clock and so we are going recess now until 10 to 11, just in case anyone comes in before then. Thank you very much.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we are reconvened and I think we are going to call Martin Cain. If you would like to come forward to the seat down here where the microphone is on. Make yourself comfortable and then just

introduce yourself then by name and address, please.

MR CAIN: Good morning. My name is Martin Cain and my address is 71 The Drive, Acton London W3 6AG. As I say, my name is Martin and I live in Acton which is actually part of the Acton Central ward of the London Borough of Ealing in the constituency called Ealing Central in Acton.

I want to register my objection to the proposal for the inclusion of three wards from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, specifically the Askew, Wormholt and White City and Shepherds Bush Green. They want to merge those three within the constituency with six wards from the London Borough of Ealing and then call it Ealing Central and Shepherds Bush. I think that that is a problem because it would remove Acton from the political map of London. Acton had been a borough and now it seems to have been totally wiped out with these changes.

I think it is a problem because it includes this area beyond the significant boundary of Askew Road and Ealing Central. Askew Road separates the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham from the borough of Ealing. It would cause some real problems I think. Apart from the complications of creating a divided parliament constituency with a misleading name, the proposal would create considerable administrative burdens for the member of their staff, clearly detrimental with the interests of the constituents.

What I want to support is the move of the Walpole constituency to Southall and the Heston constituency and both Southfield and Northfield constituencies to the Brentford and Chiswick constituency, the other that is outside. I think the Cleveland and Perivale wards should actually be included in Ealing Central and Acton constituency.

The Cleveland and Perivale wards have stronger links with Ealing Central than with the constituency they are proposing for the north side which would be Greenford and Northolt. I think these moves would create a more accurate Ealing Central and Acton constituency. It would actually consist of Acton Central, Cleveland, Ealing Broadway, Ealing Common, East Acton, Hanger Lane, Perivale and South Acton, which seems to me to be a much more sensible geographical boundary for a constituency. That is it, gentlemen.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). No, that is fine, thank you very much indeed. Alan Kasket. Again, welcome, and if you would make yourself comfortable and just introduce yourself by name and address, please.

MR KASKET: Good morning all. My name is Alan Kasket. I live in Ealing Central and Acton, current constituency number 13, Westbourne Avenue, London W3 6JL. It is currently in Ealing Central and Acton.

I would like to draw the Commission's attention to aspects of the newly proposed constituency of Ealing and Shepherds Bush. The new proposed constituency would cede the ward of Southfield to the new Brentford and Chiswick seat and the ward of Walpole to Southall and Heston. It would meanwhile add the wards Askew, Wormholt and White City and Shepherds Bush Green which are currently in Hammersmith.

I would first like to say that I have relatively recently moved to Acton, early last year. Prior to that, I lived in Shepherds Bush in what is the current Hammersmith constituency. As a result, it is more I suppose a heart rather than head plea here. When my family looked at areas to live we spent much time in and around the boroughs of Ealing, Chiswick and Hammersmith and Fulham and became drawn very strongly to Acton.

We like the neighbouring feeling around Churchfield Road, Horn Lane and surrounding areas. We liked the shops, community and arts groups, restaurants, pubs and the level crossing there. We like the "Welcome to Acton" sign which now greets us as we travel along the vale, just after we have walked our dog in Acton Park. For me, also, I like the Acton Centre.

Last year I had an accident which meant I was in a wheelchair for a short while and the Acton Centre almost literally was a lifesaver for me. We eventually decided to move to a lovely road, Westbourne Avenue, which is moments away from Acton mainline station, a future Crossrail station. You may be interested to hear that there are, in fact, nine stations with the name or word Acton in them, and ten if you count one which has been renamed, which remains Acton Green to locals.

You may have noticed a common theme running through my comments and certainly my recent family history and movements. We discovered and have developed a huge affection for Acton and its unique character, which brings us to the proposed new constituency of Ealing and Shepherds Bush. I very much fear that in a constituency which omits Acton's name altogether and adds a disproportionately large chunk from Hammersmith that there will be a gradual decline in the character of this town of Acton Town, a diminution in the community and the neighbourhood spirit that so strongly pervades it now.

Of course, that is not some romantic notion of holding onto the status quo in the face of progress. I well understand the pressure the Boundary Commission is under to fulfil its brief to equalise and reduce the number of constituencies, but it is a well-known phenomenon at the same time that a shared community identity and sense of belonging helps greatly with social cohesion and has huge benefits for the area which add up to a sum greater than its individual parts.

I am one of a large number of people who has come to Acton for any number of

reasons, each and every one of us hoping to make our home there. I would hate to think that this vibrant and diverse Acton community and communities would come to feel that we are somehow either marginalised on the one hand or squeezed into nothingness on the other. Therefore, I would like to see the new constituency not only retain the name of Acton itself, but also include Acton as a vital component part in name as well as importance and, of course, resource allocation.

This brings me then on to the additions to the proposed new constituency. As I mentioned, before I moved to Acton I was in Shepherds Bush, moments away from Westfield Shopping Centre. I very much enjoyed it. We moved before Westfield opened and we observed at first-hand how the area changed significantly over the years. With the development of one of the largest shopping centres in Europe on our doorstep it could hardly have been otherwise.

As neighbours, we welcomed these changes. We saw the local area adapt to and accommodate the demands of this commercial behemoth. Hammersmith adopted, I am sure, a long-term strategic what I call whole constituency development plan which balanced the transport, administrative infrastructure and other demands of Westfield together with the needs of residents and community groups throughout the remainder of the constituency and a unique ecosystem grew up as a result and I believe it worked very well for all parties.

But these new proposals involve transplanting just that one part of that ecosystem, Shepherds Bush Green, and its neighbouring wards, Askew and Wormholt and White City, arguably the wards which have received the most disproportionate attention, not to say resources, over a number of years, all of a sudden into a new elongated - you can see for yourselves on the map - construct of Ealing and Shepherds Bush where there is none of the history of the co-operation or balancing resource allocation or perhaps even understanding between the competing needs of Westfield and the remainder of the constituency.

I believe this would not only be hugely disruptive to the proposed new constituency as a whole, but it would also create challenges for the communities in the new constituency for the MP trying to manage and satisfy all interests and for Westfield itself. I appreciate in the past there was geographically a similar constituency, Ealing, Acton and Shepherds Bush, but Shepherds Bush and White City were completely different in character and content then: No Westfield, no on-going growth and this popularity of Westfield and all that I have described above in terms of managing resources across the whole constituency and its stakeholders.

As such, I believe that these three wards should not form part of the new constituency as proposed by the Commission. In conclusion, I would like to support the Ealing Central and Acton Conservatives in proposing that Ealing central and Acton would be made up of the wards of Acton Central, Cleveland, Ealing Broadway, Ealing Common,

East Acton, Hanger Hill, Perivale and South Acton. It would have an electorate of just under 71,500 and it would remain in the borough of Ealing under one local authority, much clearer for the MP, for residents and, indeed, all stakeholders. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, that is helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, can I thank you very much for your submission. Ian Duncan Smith, would you care to come forward, Sir? Welcome, and if you could just introduce yourself by way of name and address before you make your presentation, thank you.

MR DUNCAN SMITH (MP for Chingford and Woodford): I am Ian Duncan Smith, Member of Parliament for what is now Chingford and Woodford Green and my address is officially the House of Commons. The proposal I want to just make is that I think that this is an opportunity that the Commission could have used but has had an opportunity I think to right what we thought were some of the slight wrongs from the last boundary changes.

The alternative I want to propose for our seat is that it would be a Chingford and Woodford seat, which would take in Bridge ward from Redbridge as opposed to Chapel End, which is presently the proposal and that would remain in the Walthamstow seat. The constituency name should be changed to Chingford and Woodford and it would be better for the Chapel End ward residents that it was part of the Walthamstow constituency and it better for the Bridge ward residents to be reunited with what I consider to be the historic community of Woodford than come into the new Chingford and Woodford parliamentary constituency.

It is worth bearing in mind that Chapel End was taken out of the Chingford constituency some years ago for pretty good reasons at the time, which was it was believed that Chapel End was actually more to do with Walthamstow than it was to do with Chingford and that the border between the North Circular carved across meant that the communities rarely travelled across into each other's. I will come to more details about why then Chapel End makes more sense to be in Walthamstow.

The proposals that I am making today would, I believe, reunite the community of Woodford which has essentially been a community together for about 150 years. There is an annual Woodford Festival. Strong Woodford community groups already exist. There is one local newspaper title which is also circulated in the Woodford area. Most of the Bridge ward lies west of the River Roding and the N11 corridor, but there are good road links via Chigwell. The road snakes then east and the A1009 Broadmead Road.

The 275 bus service runs through four wards in the suggested constituency, linking Bridge ward to Monkams ward, Hatch Lane ward, and Hale End and Highams Park

ward. The W14 and 549 services link Bridge ward with Church ward. So, extensive links. The eastern part of Bridge ward is separated from the adjoining Redbridge wards by Claybury Park and the adjoining sports fields.

The Woodford London Underground station serves residents of both Monkams and Bridge wards and the area surrounding the station is the main local shopping area for both wards, also providing local amenities like, for example, the Woodford Library. Then, there is the St James Hawkey Hall in Monkams ward, which is the only really large assembly building in the west of Redbridge and is directly accessible to Bridge ward residents via the A1009 Broadmead Road and the 275 bus route. Woodbridge High School and Ray Lodge Primary School serve families from across Bridge, Monkams and Church End wards, as they already share Ashton Playing Fields, the major local authority sports facility in the area.

Just to turn to Chapel End ward for a second, Chapel End ward is almost entirely south of the A406. There is just a little nib of it which does not really have many people there at all. Within that ward, it is entirely in a kind of deep cutting with two road crossings, it is also separated from the Hale End and Highams Park ward by the Chingford to Liverpool Street railway line along its entire eastern boundary with only one road link. That is actually a curtailed road link quite a lot of time.

The northern boundary of the ward is the River Ching, the recognised boundary between Chingford and Walthamstow. Almost all residents of Chapel End regard Walthamstow as their main town centre and have an East 17 postcode which is culturally linked, without question, to Walthamstow. The current Walthamstow, Waltham Forest Town Hall, which was built in 1937 to 1942 for Walthamstow Council, is firmly in Chapel End ward, as is the famous Walthamstow Assembly Rooms. Both would sit oddly in a Chingford constituency.

Lloyd Park, which comprises part of the grounds of William Morris's former home, now an art gallery, is in Chapel End ward and William Morris's name is inextricably linked with Walthamstow. If Chapel End remained in the Walthamstow constituency, as I propose today, Cann Hall could move to Leyton and Wanstead, and Valentines could move from Leyton and Wanstead into Ilford North, both effectively remaining within their current seat and so requiring fewer electors to be moved into new constituencies.

Again, let me thank you for allowing me to speak today. I had listed a set of numbers if they are of use to you at all, how these changes would affect the constituencies. Under our calculations, Chingford and Woodford Green, as proposed, would be 71,252; remove Chapel End, 8,001 electors and add Bridge, 7,854 electors, giving a total of 71,105, which I believe is within the minimum figures.

With Walthamstow as proposed now it is 76,575; remove Cann Hall, 6,921 electors and add Chapel End, 8,001 electors, giving a total of 77,655, within the limit maximum of

78,507. With Leyton and Wanstead as proposed at 73,833; you remove Valentines, 7,891 electors and add Cann Hall, 6,921 electors, giving a total of 72,863. With Ilford North as proposed at 78,100; remove Bridge, 8,854 electors, add Valentines, 7,891 electors, giving a total of 78,137.

The changes that we propose will actually affect nowhere outside of this area and would, in actual fact, allow these different communities to remain as part of the communities that they have been historically linked to. It is worth reminding you today that what is becoming clear is, by and large, the North Circular acts as a natural boundary now in a way that it might not have done many years ago.

There was always a different character in a sense to Chingford from what was Chapel End. I do not say that that is by any means a matter of disregard of Chapel End, but there is a different character because it used to lie within its own borough originally.

There is a natural proposal here which allows the North Circular, essentially, to become, for the most part, the natural boundary of the constituency. I accept that there is one element of that which would fall below, but that is because it straddles both but predominantly its character, that is to say in Hale End, is very much Chingford based rather than Walthamstow based.

My proposal is that we make these changes. These changes, I say, affect nobody outside of this area. They have no knock-on effects outside. They are fully contained and, as I understand it, they are by and large accepted by pretty much all political parties, or certainly most political parties within this area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. That is very clear. Are you leaving us your statement and the figures?

MR DUNCAN SMITH: I will, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, that will be most helpful, thank you. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much for coming and giving your submission. Cllr Ameet Jogia. Welcome. If you would like to come forward, Sir, and take the chair. As usual, if you can just introduce yourself by way of name and address, thank you.

CLLR JOGIA: Thank you very much. My name is Ameet Jogia and my address is 252 Headstone Lane, Harrow HA2 6NE. Thank you very much for taking the time to see me today. My name is Ameet Jogia and I am the councillor for Canons ward in the London Borough of Harrow. I want to speak today just to emphasise what an integral part the ward I represent, Canons ward, is to the district of Stanmore and to put forward the case of keeping Stanmore ward in the Harrow and Stanmore proposed new constituency.

By way of background, just to give you some context to our proposals, Stanmore, as many of you know, is a leafy London suburb which actually dates back to settlements from Roman times on Bromley Hill, which is in Canons ward. It is a district which sprawls from Bromley Hill, which is in Canons, to Stanmore Common, which is also in Canons ward, all the way to Bentley Priory which is in Stanmore Park ward and then it goes all the way south to Belmont ward and then back east to Little Stanmore, which comprises of Whitchurch and Canons Park, which is in the Canons ward as well.

Do not worry, I am not going to give you a history lesson, but I just wanted to stress that these are not just political boundaries. These date back centuries and they have underpinned Stanmore for centuries and it is so important to the people who live there sort of socially economically and also culturally by the way where people live where they shop on Stanmore Broadway and also now where people worship as well.

I was shocked when I saw some of the alternative proposals, namely the Labour proposal to move Canons ward into the Hendon and Edgware constituency. It all boils down to the fact that if we are going to have a Harrow and Stanmore constituency, it makes sense to have Stanmore in that constituency which Canons ward is an integral part of. We have Stanmore Station which is a famous stop on the Jubilee line where it starts from. That is in Canons ward.

We also have the Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue which actually we are proud to have the largest Jewish congregation in Europe. We also have, just yards away, the Stanmore Hindu Temple, which is next door to the Stanmore Islamic Centre and all of these religious institutions have large congregations residing in the Stanmore district. We also have the Royal Orthopaedic Stanmore Hospital and the Stanmore Country Park as well.

Further down, we have Stanmore Marsh, which is an ancient wetland which has just received funding from City Hall and sort of emphasises again the integral part it plays in Stanmore. We also have the Canons Drive Estate which is part of the ancient little Stanmore Village. Edgware Road actually forms not just a physical but it has been the boundary of Stanmore for centuries, as I have said, dating back all the way to Roman times. Residents from the area feel a natural connection to Stanmore.

Across the Edgware Road, which is Edgware and Hendon, the majority of residents have no affiliation to that and so it makes no sense to move Canons ward into Hendon and Edgware, which I think will not only upset residents but sort of take away sort of years and years of history. Just to sum up, I think it would be bizarre to have a Harrow and Stanmore constituency without Stanmore.

That is why it is important, I feel, to keep Canons in the Harrow and Stanmore constituency, but also to include Belmont ward which is also part of Stanmore. The

majority of Belmont, I think nearly all of it, has the HA7 postcode, which is a Stanmore postcode, and it seems a great shame to split away Belmont from the Stanmore district into Kenton which, again, many of the residents have little association with.

In conclusion, I would support the proposals to keep Canons, Stanmore Park and Belmont wards in the Harrow and Stanmore constituency because they are historically in the Stanmore district village. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very clear, very helpful. Are you leaving us a copy of your written submission or do you want to tidy it up and send it to us?

CLLR JOGIA: Yes, there are some rough notes. I can tidy it up and send them to you, if that would help.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, that would be very helpful, yes. I would welcome that, thank you. Matters for clarification?

LORD HAYWARD: Lord Hayward. Councillor, I think I know the answer but, just for clarification for the hearing, when you were referring to the different religious centres, the Synagogue, the Hindu Temple the Muslim Centre, the Mosque, you said you are referring to them as Stanmore; they are in Canons ward, are they not?

CLLR JOGIA: Yes, thank you, sorry, I should have been more clear. They are, yes, in Canons ward and Canons ward as a councillor I am very proud to have so many different religious institutions just in one ward. They are all in Canons ward and with worshipers coming from the ward itself and nearby in Stanmore, the Stanmore district.

LORD HAYWARD: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right, thank you very much indeed. Timothy Pollard. Welcome, and if you would make yourself comfortable and, again, just introduce yourself by way of name and address, please.

CLLR POLLARD: Thank you. Good morning and thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you. My name is Cllr Tim Pollard and I would like to speak about the proposed changes to the parliamentary boundaries in Croydon. I am the leader of the opposition in Croydon, so I am here to speak on the proposals for all of the borough of Croydon and the areas overlapping it and not just my ward, although I live in Sanderstead ward which is the ward I represent and have done since 2002. My full address is 42 Lime Meadow Avenue, Sanderstead CR2 9AR.

Since the principle underpinning this review that the number of MPs must reduce from 650 to 600 was announced, we have known that the current tidy arrangement of

constituencies wholly contained within our borough must change. Statistically, it is inevitable that two or three wards currently in Croydon seats will have to transfer to adjoining parliamentary constituencies.

The key question for Croydon within this review is which borough boundary should be broken and which should remain. The longest boundaries are to the east and west and it seems necessary that one of them must be breached. There is a much less coherent case for breaching the southern boundary because this forms the border of Greater London and the northern border is relatively tiny. In the west, it is possible to breach the border either into the borough of Sutton or Merton or both, whereas in the east the boundary is almost entirely with the borough of Bromley.

If the Commission believes it is necessary to keep the Sutton boundary intact and, instead, breach the one with Bromley, I agree that its draft proposals for Croydon were the only possible proposal that does not involve breaking ward boundaries. It works in statistical terms in that it creates correctly sized constituencies, but there are a number of weaknesses in that the changes divide many communities.

In the draft proposals, Purley, Croham and Waddon are split from Coulsdon and Kenley when really they belong together. Purley and Coulsdon have a long association and share services, transport links, infrastructure. Indeed, until 1965 they were not even part of the borough of Croydon. They formed their own Purley and Coulsdon District Council. This gives rise to a very strong shared identity.

A further weakness with the draft proposals is that the community of Shirley is split into three, Shirley being in the sort of central and eastern part of Croydon. It is split into three with the wards of Ashburton, Heathfield and Shirley really belonging in one seat, but the proposal as it stands splits them three ways into a Croydon South constituency, a Croydon Central constituency and into Beckenham.

Residents in most of Ashburton ward and the northern end of Heathfield ward would identify themselves as living in Shirley. Most southern Heathfield ward residents would identify themselves as living in Selsdon. A final weakness of the draft is that it carries forward only three out of the current eight wards in Croydon Central and five of eight in Croydon South, which clearly would cause significant voter confusion.

I understand that the Commission's proposals have given rise to significant concerns in other parts of South London and that, in addressing those concerns, the Commission might need to look again at its proposals for Croydon as a whole. Whatever proposal the Commission comes up with, there is a very strong case that the three wards that make up the community of Shirley, that is Ashburton, Heathfield and Shirley wards, should be in the same seat.

The Commission's current proposal involves a constituency boundary running down the

Wycombe Road, which is the very centre of that community. The issue is also true of one of the currently known counter-proposals from another party which does exactly the same thing.

There is a strong case for Heathfield and Selsdon and Ballards wards being in the same seat, since the southern part of Heathfield ward, Addington, Forestdale, monks hill, really looks to Selsdon as its local district centre. There is a strong case that Addiscome and Ashburton should be in the same constituency, given that western Ashburton and eastern Addiscome form one community.

These three points make a strong argument for a Croydon seat comprising Addiscome, Ashburton, Shirley, Heathfield, Fieldway, New Addington and Selsdon and Ballards, plus one other ward to make up the number. The most obvious ward in terms of minimum disruption to existing constituency boundaries could be Fairfield, but this would leave the new Croydon South too small unless the Commission is prepared to look at crossing ward boundaries.

In the south of the borough, the Commission's initial proposals splits Coulsdon and Purley and these two communities have always been in the same seat and, as I identified earlier, there is a very strong case that they should continue to be. There is also a strong argument that Croham and Waddon wards should be with Coulsdon and Purley since they sit either side of the valley that runs from Croydon Town Centre through Purley to Coulsdon with the A24 and the London to Brighton Railway running through them.

People living in the southern part of Waddon would identify themselves as living in Purley. These issues with the splitting of communities come about through the wider decision of maintaining the borough boundary between Croydon and Sutton and breaking that between Croydon and Bromley. How would it work if these decisions were reversed and the Bromley boundary was the one that was preserved?

A number of counter-proposals have come forward in recent weeks which do that. These proposals demonstrate that this can still work in the wider context of South London. The most promising of these proposals sees a Croydon South West seat created which runs along the A23 and takes in the key communities on either side of it. It is made up of the two Coulsdon wards, Kenley, Purley, Croham, Waddon and Fairfield, and there would also be a Croydon South East seat which takes in Sanderstead, Selsdon, Heathfield, Fieldway and New Addington, Shirley, Ashburton and Addiscome.

Croydon North would take in Thornton Heath, Selhurst, Bensham Manor, the two Norwood wards and Woodside from Croydon Centre to which would be added Gypsy Hill and Knights Hill which covers the remainder of the area of Norwood. Norbury West, Thornton and Broad Green wards would form part of a seat with Merton. This proposal

makes sense on a lot of levels. In the south-west it reunites Purley and Coulsdon with spines provided by the A23 and Brighton Road.

It ensures that the community of wider Purley stays together, drawn as it is from the southern part of Waddon, Purley Town Centre, southern Croham and Purley and Kenley wards. The proposal also keeps the entirety of the area which would consider itself urban South Croydon together and that is parts of Fairfield, Croham and Waddon wards.

In the south-east it preserves the integrity of the community of Shirley, so all of the wards which look to wider Shirley are in the same seat. In the north it unites Woodside and South Norwood in one seat, sharing as they do a district centre and it brings together all of the areas that would consider themselves to be part of Norwood in the form of Upper, South and West Norwood and it reunites the communities around Pollards Hill currently split between two seats.

In this proposal there are two wards which do not have a sort of obvious home that they have to be in, and they are Sanderstead ward, my ward, and Fairfield. The proposal I am talking about puts Sanderstead into south-east and Fairfield into south-west. Because of the disparity in ward sizes, Fairfield being much the larger ward, this makes both constituencies work in a fair manner.

Sanderstead is my ward and the truth is it could be split in many ways. The western quarter of the ward considers itself to be in Purley and has a Purley postcode. The eastern side looks much more towards Selsdon. The southern end actually considers itself to be in Wallingham in Surrey. Thus, the ward could equally reasonably be attached to south-west or south-east actually.

Fairfield ward is also flexible. Its southern portion looks to South Croydon which would put it in south-west but its eastern portion looks to south-east, and, as it happens, its northern portion looks to Croydon North. The numbers say it should go to South East and there is no strong community argument to dispute that. Indeed, the argument about maintaining the integrity of South Croydon actually supports it.

To me, this counter-proposal makes sense. It is not perfect, but of all the ways to carry out this exercise it actually looks to be the best. There is a second counter-proposal on the table which moves the two Coulsdon wards into a seat with Sutton based wards. Croydon South would then be Purley, Kenley, Sanderstead, Selsdon, Heathfield, Fieldway, New Addington and Croham. Croydon Central would be made up of Waddon, Fairfield, Selhurst, Addiscombe, Ashburton, Woodside and Shirley, and Croydon North broadly retains its current wards but loses Selhurst and gains Beddington North.

This is a less well thought through proposal on lots of levels. Putting the two Coulsdon

wards into Sutton does not make sense. The areas do not form a community in any accepted sense. Coulsdon and Purley, on the other hand, are a community with provenance and history and Kenley looks to both Purley and to Old Coulsdon, so these wards should be kept together.

The proposal I am talking about, putting Waddon in a different constituency from Purley which divides another community, southern Waddon residents looking to Purley as their home, and it splits the community of Beddington into two which I am sure would be opposed by residents there. It splits the community of Greater Shirley in two along the Wycombe Road, which is also unwelcome.

Finally, it maintains the current illogical split of the South Norwood district centre between two constituencies which this review has the opportunity to put right and the other main proposals do put right. Whilst it looks tidy on the map, it is actually a major breaker of communities and creates much less coherent constituencies and is the least good option on the table.

With a whole of Croydon perspective, I find myself supporting the first of these counter-proposals which you will note did not originate with my party, because it respects the communities of Croydon most closely and because it is superior in this respect to both the current draft and the alternative counter-proposal. Thank you for listening to my case.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very clear. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). Are you going to leave us a copy of your submission?

CLLR POLLARD: I already have.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have, excellent, thank you very much indeed. Jessica Learmond-Criqui. Are you happy to come forward? We will just set the presentation up, so it will take a few minutes to do that.

MS LEARMOND-CRIQUI: Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you today. I am from an area called Hampstead which is in North West London and I thought just to help you to realise where we are, because I know you are listening to a number of different presentations today, I have brought along some maps to help you to understand where we are. At the moment, Hampstead is in Camden. Your proposal at the moment is --- can you hear me all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sorry, it is just name and address.

MS LEARMOND-CRIQUI: My name is Jessica Learmond-Criqui, 14A Reddington Road, London NW3 7RG. The purpose of me coming today is to address counter-

proposals which have been put in relation to a new constituency which is the Boundary Commission has suggested of Hampstead and Golders Green. Hampstead and Golders Green is around the sort of Camden area and I have brought this map just to help you to identify where we are.

Camden, if you look at it, is that green bit next to Haringey at the top. It is underneath Barnet and Enfield. That is the area of the country that we are talking about. This map shows at the moment the Camden Borough Council area and you will see in the top left Hampstead Town. I wonder if you can see that. Have you got the handouts? It might assist because it is a bit difficult to turn your neck (Same handed). Thank you. There should be two copies there.

We are on the second slide. Hampstead Town is the pink section on the left-hand side next to Highgate. Frognal and Fitzjohns is underneath that. Again, this is Camden Borough Council's map but it has the names of the wards that are included in much of your proposals and, my representations to you today relate to the proposals by Labour to split Hampstead Town and Frog and Fitz into two different constituencies.

If I can invite you to turn to the next slide. This is a section of your proposals, so your lines that are drawn are the black lines, which is bang in the middle. Do you see the name Finchley Road there? So the area around the Finchley Road is what you propose as the new constituency for Hampstead and Golders Green.

The only thing I would say about that name, and I will just make a segue now, is that I would invite you, if you do maintain those proposals, to change the name from Hampstead and Golders Green because it does not actually have Golders Green ward in it. Perhaps Hampstead and Hampstead Garden Suburb is what you might wish to call it.

Now if I invite you to turn to the next slide, in geographic terms, the wards which are Hampstead Town, Frognal and Fitzjohns, Childs Hill, and I will point you to those in a moment, are essentially around Hampstead Heath. The Boundary Commission's proposals are eminently sensible at the moment because you encapsulate the various wards around the Heath.

You have got Highgate to the right of Hampstead Heath. You have got Childs Hill to the left. You have got Hampstead Garden Suburb, which is to the top of the map. You have got Hampstead Town which is immediately below Hampstead Heath and then you have got Frognal and Fitzjohns ward, which is the sort of Siamese twin to Hampstead Town, if you like. They are both called Hampstead. They are just in different areas.

Essentially, Hampstead is between the road, do you see North End Way? Do you see that? Heath street? Do you see that? Then it goes east, Heath Road, which is just on the boundary of Hampstead Heath at the bottom. That is Hampstead Town there and

then it becomes Froggnal and Fitzjohns. Do you see the red road where it is called Heath Street in the middle of the map? So Froggnal and Fitzjohns is to the left of Heath Street.

Hampstead Town is vaguely to the right and so they tie up two halves of a whole. Labour's proposals is to split that into two different constituencies. Hampstead, which includes Hampstead Town and Froggnal and Fitzjohns wards, has been together since 1885. The issues are very similar, the cultural ties are very important to the people in the area. No one really understands that they are living in two different wards. As far as they are concerned, they are living in Hampstead.

It is very important for us that they are kept together and not separate as Labour has suggested. Now if I invite you to turn to the next map, I am not interested in the colours here, it is the best map that I can get to demonstrate what I needed to show you today but, essentially, this is the current constituency of Hampstead and Kilburn. You will see that Hampstead Town is at the top right.

Next to it is Froggnal and Fitzjohns. They have been together for ever, over 150 years. Then, you get Fortune Green, West Hampstead, Swiss Cottage and so on, going into Kilburn. It joins the two bits of Kilburn. It has Queen's Park and Brondesbury Park. Now Kilburn is split in two as a matter of course because half is in Camden Borough Council and half is in Brent Borough Council.

The current constituency was formed not that long ago, a few years ago. I do not remember exactly how long, but before then we had the London Borough of Hampstead which changed in the 60s to become the different constituency it is today. If I invite you to turn to the following slide, please.

These are the proposals of Labour and what they say is the correct split for them of Hampstead and Froggnal, in the top one they propose a Camden Town and Hampstead and you will see in the middle there Hampstead Town? In the one below, West Hampstead and Kilburn, which you will see underneath Camden, it has Froggnal and Fitzjohns, do you see that?

Essentially, what they are trying to do is to split those twins, if you like, into two separate constituencies and I think that that is a very bad idea and I would counsel you against that. I would invite you to reject those proposals. To help you, if we look at the final map, with what they are proposing, this is a map of the wards in the Brent Borough Council. You will see that they are in addition to the map that I showed you before with Hampstead and so on.

They want to take in what is Mapesbury, Brondesbury Park, which we have at the moment, the other bit of Kilburn which we have at the moment, Queen's Park which we have at the moment, but they then want to add Kensal Green which we do not have and

Mapesbury which we do not have. So those five at the bottom right-hand corner they want to attach on to some of the Camden wards which I have shown you, which include Frognal and Fitzjohns and have those as a separate constituency.

If I invite you now to turn to the final slide, this is just a summary of the cultural ties and the points that I wanted to bring to your attention to include in your deliberations. Hampstead Town and Frognal and Fitzjohns, which really people know as Hampstead. When John Constable painted the various scenes that he did in Frognal and Fitzjohns, he was painting in Hampstead. He was not painting in Frognal and Fitzjohns.

Most people understand the two areas to be Hampstead. Geographically and culturally, they are sort of Siamese twins. They share the same issues. Although MPs cannot deal with planning issues and crime and so on, they are a powerful voice in the community. In Hampstead, we do feel a bit marginalised by Camden Council, simply because it is a very big area and there are lots of issues to do with that, but we need a very strong voice in Parliament to represent Hampstead.

We have some very thorny issues that we need to address, particularly with HS2 which is coming which our current MP has been fighting very hard with Camden Council to try to ameliorate some of the impact. It will be very important for us to continue to speak to one person and not to speak to two people on the same issues who will have different priorities and, actually, dilute the impact that can be had for Hampstead.

The amenity groups in Hampstead cover both areas and they cover a much wider area too. The Heath & Hampstead Society which I sit on - I am not representing them today, I am here as an individual - not only look after the health of the Heath but they look after the amenity of Hampstead, which includes Frognal and Fitzjohns, Hampstead Town and, of course, they have members in Belsize Park and further afield as well. They are a very powerful force within that community.

I have mentioned already the feeling of being marginalised by Camden Council and I have mentioned the strong voice in Parliament. Most of the people who live in Hampstead have a very deep and abiding love for that area and no one that proposes to split Hampstead could have its best interests at heart. We would invite you to reject those proposals, please. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much and thank you for the helpful slides. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed for your submission. Ian Parker, would you like to come forward, Sir, and introduce yourself by way of name and address at the beginning, please?

MR PARKER: My name is Ian Parker, 109A Foxley Lane, Purley, CR8 3HQ. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak about the proposals for parliamentary

boundary changes in the south of the London Borough of Croydon. I speak as a resident of Purley for over 20 years, of Kenley for nearly ten years and as someone who has worked in the Coulsdon West ward for nearly 30 years.

I am also a chair of governors at Woodcote High, a 1,200 pupil comprehensive school in Coulsdon and, also, I am speaking as a member of the Purley and Woodcote Residents' association. The PDWRA is a large, active and influential community group covering a large chunk of the current Croydon South constituency.

I would ask that whatever proposals the Commission finally put forward, they should, firstly, preserve the Croydon borough boundaries around Coulsdon. To change the borough boundaries would create unnecessary disruption in so many respects. Whilst recognising the Commission has a difficult task in terms of electoral quotas, I am sure it is not beyond the wit of man to produce a proposal that preserves the borough boundary around the south of the borough.

If the borough boundaries are to be breached, it would be more appropriate where there are similar communities across both sides of the borough boundary in the north of Croydon. Secondly, the Commission should keep the two areas of Coulsdon East and Coulsdon West in the same constituency as Purley and Kenley. I remember an earlier Boundary Commission proposal for Croydon included moving Coulsdon's boundaries into a newly formed Sutton constituency. I and other local residents are delighted that the Commission has not proposed such a significant and unnecessary move.

There are strong historical ties between Purley and Coulsdon. The local authority used to be Coulsdon and Purley Urban District Council. Indeed, the old Purley and District Urban District Council Town Hall remains on the Brighton Road in Coulsdon. It would be a terrible shame to break this historical tie. Indeed, many of the residents of Coulsdon West think of themselves as living in Purley.

My office is in the Coulsdon West ward but has a Purley postal address. Likewise, across the road from my office, our residents write 'Purley' in their address but live in the Kenley ward. Again, the Coulsdon, Purley and Kenley wards are all one homogenous community. Thirdly, the Commission should keep the catchment area of as many children as possible who attend Woodcote High School in the same parliamentary constituency and the same borough, Croydon, with which the school has a longstanding and healthy relationship.

If boundaries were moved to take Woodcote High into the borough of Sutton, as was previously proposed, this would create unnecessary confusion. Our school is in Coulsdon and most of our students are from the Coulsdon/Purley area. We are a natural fit in Croydon and ask that the Commission respect this. Finally, the Commission should ensure the boundaries of the Purley and Woodcote Residents' association remain in the London Borough of Croydon.

The area covered by our association - I have a map if required - is, largely, Purley and Coulsdon West with just a small chunk of Kenley thrown in. If the Commission would consider seriously any proposal that would keep our area in one constituency, allowing us to maintain and develop a relationship with just one Member of Parliament, it would be beneficial to the smooth running of our association and the relationship between our organisation and elected representatives.

Again, an earlier Boundary Commission proposal was to move Coulsdon into neighbouring Sutton which, as I said earlier, would split our association and impact negatively on the functions of our organisation. The fact that the residents' association contains a section of Coulsdon, Kenley and Purley wards gives further evidence to these strong community links.

To summarise, the areas of Kenley, Purley and Coulsdon fit comfortably together in terms of historical, geographical, community and transport links. I would hope that the Commission can come up with a revised draft that respects these important considerations and avoids the negative effects of splitting them. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, and if you could let us have a copy of your map of the residents' association boundaries that would be very helpful. Any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed. Lord Hayward, are you happy to come forward? That would be excellent.

LORD HAYWARD (Conservative Party): Mr Simmons, Lord Hayward, speaking on behalf of the Conservative Party, presenting an alternative scheme with some other general comments in relation to things that have gone past in the last few days. Can I apologise at the start that I am going to speak away from script and, therefore, I will provide a written response formally at a later stage, because I want to pick up a number of things that people have said as much as anything else.

I speak as somebody who was a Member of Parliament for nine years for Kingswood in Bristol, who had the honour to represent, in fact, areas which covered three local authorities: Bristol City, Kingswood District Council and, also, the County Council, at that stage, of Avon County Council.

I, like Keith Hill and others who spoke on other occasions, have had the challenge of representing more than one local authority. It is not insuperable. It does provide a challenge but it is best enhanced, if you can, by doing it as what I would describe as a balanced constituency.

If I can throw in at this stage the observation, we have heard a number of comments

this morning in relation to Edmonton and Tottenham Hale or Edmonton and Tottenham constituencies across the borough boundaries, both we and the Labour Party - but I would emphasise our own proposals - produce five wards from one borough and four from the other.

I was in the fortunate position of having 48 per cent of my voters from Kingswood and 52 per cent from Bristol. There is no question that if you have a balanced constituency it is more easy so to represent, but it is not impossible. As Mr Hill said the other day, "You just work with what you have got." I think there has been an element of hyperbole about areas being forgotten, disregarded, snubbed or whatever.

I do not think any MP of any political persuasion sets about so doing. I have been a resident of South London (and most of my comments will relate to South London) for 30 years, since I was first elected and moved there from my London home. I must admit I live 800 yards from what was described, I had missed the presentation, in relation to Walworth Village, but in those 30 years I have never ever heard reference to Walworth Village and I am not quite sure the logic of putting the three wards that were identified together because we live in an area - and I shall come back to this - of mixed communities.

The point has been made on a number of occasions in relation to London that one has mixed communities throughout. Sorry, I should have just in passing when I was referring to Edmonton and Tottenham Hale, say, of course, that the constituency is as was suggested largely in the previous review in 2013 and I refer to AC85 and 86 in the previous report.

Coming back to the question of identification of communities, London is difficult. There are lots of different communities. Some merge very rapidly into others but there are still remaining a number of dividing lines. What I would like to do is touch on the area specifically of South London. In doing so, I would like to emphasise that we proposed a scheme for 26 seats in the South Thames sub-region and we continue to support our proposal for that, but with certain clarification to which I shall return in a minute.

We specifically, and I would emphasise, support our counter-proposal in relation to Putney, Wimbledon, Sutton, Carshalton, Bexley and Greenwich, to which I shall return, because I think we have shown that there are actually clear communities in what constitutes in the majority of cases each of those areas.

You will possibly have noticed that I did not refer to Battersea, to which I shall return in a minute. We note alternative proposals and, in fact, there have been comments made just now about the question of Bromley Croydon. We stick by the proposals that we originally submitted, but we are conscious that the Commission may choose to accept three seats in Bromley. These would result in a knock-on effect and we would suggest an alternative scheme for that.

Mr Simmons, we recognise that you face an enormous difficulty because there have been substantial representations and less in numbers, but some equally heartfelt in relation to places like Mitcham, Streatham and North Croydon, to which I shall return and, inevitably, because of the discussions about what constitutes a community, contradictory comments in relation to a number of comments.

I am not drawing a negative view about those. I am merely making the observation that there are contradictory comments, particularly about areas in South London, and I shall return to those in a few moments. I have put up the map for the Commission's initial proposals and then the Labour Party proposals. I would only like to comment on the map at this stage in relation to one constituency which has not been commented on in this proposal. That is the Greenwich and Lewisham constituency, which is that one there, stretching from Greenwich Peninsula through down to Downham.

The other day I went onto the TFL website to check how one would travel from Greenwich through to what I describe as the South Lewisham wards. We took two different routes. One, you would go from North Greenwich and you would actually be required, according to TFL, to go into London Bridge and then come out to Grove Park.

The other alternative is to go by Jubilee Line, to get from North Greenwich to Beckenham Hill, via Canada water. You would then go overground to Peckham Rye and then you would go by rail to Beckenham Hill. Both those stops are actually outside the constituency from which you set and to which you ultimately arrive.

I do think that that constituency strikes everybody, as one looks at it, as not a sensible collection of wards to form a natural community. Can I now comment on a number of issues that have come up on a range of submissions? Can I, first of all, delete the word South Thames at the top of that chart because, in fact, I will refer to a number of different wards, some of which are not necessarily in South Thames.

There has been much discussion about orphan wards. It is inevitable that there will be orphan wards under any proposal, and I am not claiming that our proposal or the Labour Party or the Boundary Commission is better or worse in terms of numbers. To be an orphan ward within a constituency - and, as I say, MPs will cope - what I do, however, believe is that you should have an orphan ward that naturally links with whatever constituency you are proposing.

I would here refer back to the fifth periodical report in 2007, page 25, where it actually addresses this issue of orphan wards. It identifies five particular bullet points, the fourth of which is:

"Where there is continuous residential area or some community of interest across the relevant boundaries."

I would like in referring to that to mention three orphan wards under the Labour Party proposals, two of which are not in South Thames - they are in North London. That is Heathrow Villages, where the overwhelming majority of the electorate lives north of Heathrow and, yet, it is proposed to be in a constituency that is essentially a south of Heathrow constituency.

Equally, Osterley is linked into an Ealing constituency and, yet, as we heard from Mary McCloud earlier in Westminster, the vast majority of the electorate of that ward live actually south of the park and, therefore, have no direct cohesion with the Ealing area to the north. The other ward I would refer to, but others have commented on it so I am not intending to at this stage, is Beddington North, which I think Paul Scully and others have referred to on different occasions.

The second complex issue which I think you have been asked to address on a number of occasions is that of split wards. Colonel Bob Stewart MP said that he did not like split wards. I do know that he was referring specifically in relation to Bromley and the proposed constituency, although I know that other people took that as meaning something else.

Can I refer to what is, in effect, three different sorts of split wards that have been discussed. Lesnes Abbey, which has been identified in the introductions, any split ward needs to meet compelling and exceptional circumstances. I think it has been shown quite clearly that there are exceptional and compelling circumstances where, on an all-party basis, subject for confirmation on November 8, ie next week, the ward boundary will change for Thamesmead East and take in that one polling district of LA1 to the north of the railway line and substantially divided. I think this is clearly a quite exceptional and compelling case.

Mr Simmons, can I at this point allow a slightly personal view? I am Lord Hayward of Cumnor, from just west of Oxford. As a historian, you will probably identify it with Amy Robsart. That is my home. What is striking is that polling districts LA1 and TE4 and TE5 contain references to Hinksey, Somercotes(sic), Port Meadow, Stanton Harcourt, Yarnton, all areas to the north and west of Oxford. Nobody who built an estate with street names and road names, all of which are from villages and communities in and around Oxford, could not have believed that they would be anything other than within that one constituency, one estate and one development. It goes naturally together.

There was discussion yesterday by Mr Rosindell as a Member of Parliament about Romford and Rush Green. That throws up a different issue, but I think in some ways a very similar issue. In the case of Thamesmead and Lesnes Abbey, it is one of recent development and there is no question that it was always the intention that the parts of Thamesmead should be together. In the case of Romford, one is, instead of recent developments, looking back centuries and I do think there is a very strong argument for

recognising that split.

On the other hand, there is a debate about Croydon, which is more immediate looking forward as to whether there would or would not be a split. Mr Simmons, the third category I have identified there is the discussion which we have had about boroughs without seats entirely contained within them. Westminster has historically been linked with the City of London and is technically, therefore, not a seat within one borough but, in reality, it is two authorities but perceived for such historical reasons as being one.

I would just like to make reference to Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. If one looks down, again I am not selecting specific places but I am saying in theory there should at least be one seat within each local authority, if at all possible. What is striking me about Kensington and Westminster is that under the Labour Party proposals you would go from by far the smallest electoral borough - borough in electoral terms, ie Kensington and Chelsea - in two different directions into Westminster, not a sensible circumstance I think.

The other one is in relation to Harrow, where we have heard earlier this morning that there is a clear boundary up the Edgware Road. It is not only historical. It is current. There is open space along Canons ward, between that and Barnet. I think, therefore, it must make sense to use that as a boundary and give to Harrow a seat entirely within its borough.

I move now to the question of communities. This is where the difficulty arises because in South London we have heard either nothing about or a lot about Mitcham, Streatham, North Croydon, Crystal Palace, Dulwich, Norwood, Herne Hill, Sydenham and Tooting - all areas that conflate in one form or another from one place to another to another.

We have had difficulty working out what should be linked with which places within that area. We made an original submission and we stick by that, but we have recognised that there are arguments that say different combinations. We have heard MPs who are of the same political persuasion disagree as to what constitutes a community, and I think that is quite a reasonable discussion. There have also been some areas where I have been struck by the fact that we have heard relatively little. I will come back to the question of unmoved electors at the end.

The Conservative Party is, therefore, picking up from the Liberal Democrats' proposal in relation to Croydon and, therefore, if you should be so minded, to move to a three seat Bromley to what we have just heard from Cllr Pollard and others is a Croydon South East and a Croydon South West constituency.

This is the map for South and South East London. We remain committed to the constituencies as proposed in Bexley, including the Lesnes Abbey split to which I have

referred. The contrast in transport between a Greenwich Peninsula and Lewisham seat as proposed by the Labour Party is that we have constructed a Woolwich constituency where, at the same time as looking on the travel on TFL, you could go directly from Charlton straight through the constituency to Belvedere on the same railway line - no change, regular service. It indicates that there is a continuous and direct link both by road and rail for the proposed Woolwich constituency.

If, however, you are minded not to accept the split Lesnes Abbey ward, then we would remind you that we have put in an alternative proposal for Bexley. In relation to Battersea, which I referred to earlier, I do not think anybody has actually challenged the existence of Battersea as a community and as its wards.

We heard from Jane Ellison the other day that it would make sense that you take the existing Battersea constituency --- we originally suggested, because the Boundary Commission had proposed it and we had not noticed the relevance of this, that it should be Thornton ward, but Jane Ellison identified that it should alternatively be Clapham Common ward.

It is significant that the leader of Lambeth Council who represents Thornton ward, Keith Hill, and Chuka Umunna all said that Thornton actually looked to the south rather than to the north and that, therefore, it is not a logical ward to include in a Battersea constituency. While commenting on this part of Battersea/Wandsworth, I would possibly draw reference to Earlsfield ward - which is there - and Wandsworth Common, which are the two wards to the left-hand side of what is essentially our proposed Battersea constituency.

If one looks on a map and the limited number of submissions we have had, I would just make the observation that both Earlsfield and Wandsworth Common you can either identify that they look to the north or, alternatively, look to the west. Although they are currently in a Tooting constituency, they would be far better situated in a constituency that, if necessary --- and it is "if necessary" --- either to the west or the north. I am going to skip over the figures, as such. I have covered Clapham Common, the change there.

I have I think identified that if there is to be a three-seat option, we would prefer the Croydon South East and Croydon South West constituencies which are, as we have heard, well-defined with strong links. We believe this contrast, as Cllr Pollard has identified, fits much better than the alternative which has been put forward. I identify the reasons that we believe that there are for maintaining our proposals in relation to Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham.

I have been concerned on occasions by other people's hyperbole, so can I actually correct item 2 where I say that there is, between Lewisham East and Greenwich, negligible transport links, can I reduce that to 'inadequate', please? I am not an individual who naturally goes for hyperbole.

We will, in conclusion, submit a full scheme, if we can, by December 5. We reserve the right to make any further changes, but I do hope that we will be able to make a full proposal. In the meantime, if you could consider these as a revised set of proposals specifically for South East London as an alternative, depending on what you are minded to do, and a revised proposal for Battersea constituency.

Can I just, in passing, admit to how sad I am, Mr Simmons, that on Sunday I drove around all these parts of South London in an effort to try and identify what was a community and what was not a community. I am not sure that I was greatly the wiser, but one thing that did strike me was that St Helier Station is not actually in St Helier ward.

As Cllr Gold said, it is in a different ward in a different borough, ie Merton. There are two wards that are called St Helier and it does seem to me that they fit naturally together. Can I, although it is early, take this opportunity, after nine and a half days, to thank you and the staff for your efforts in keeping us in order and listening to all the submissions attentively. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, thank you very much indeed. That is very helpful and we will pay close study. Thank you very much for your work on that. Matters for clarification, I think there might be some, yes?

MR BENNETT: (Labour Party) Richard Bennett from the Labour Party. Just to say that I am pretty sure that Colonel Bob Stewart, the Member of Parliament for Beckenham, said that those split wards were unacceptable. I do not think the record will show that he caveated that to just Bromley, but other than that I will leave Lord Hayward's proposals with you (inaudible).

LORD HAYWARD: I think you will find by the time his submission is ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, thank you very much indeed. That is really most helpful. Mary Arnold? If you would just introduce yourself by way of name and address, please?

MS ARNOLD: Good afternoon. My name is Mary Arnold and I am speaking on behalf of the Labour Party. My address is 37 Montrose Avenue London NW6 6LE. I was formerly Kilburn ward Councillor in Brent for 16 years up until 2014. I am currently a South Kilburn Trust Board member and I chair the Kilburn Park School Governing Board. I am also a founding member of the Kilburn Neighbourhood Plan Forum, recently designated by Brent and Camden Councils. For many reasons, I wish to speak against the proposal for Kilburn to move into two new constituencies as it breaks up Kilburn.

I want to defend maintaining Kilburn within the single constituency, as it is now, of Hampstead and Kilburn. Kilburn is well-recognised as a distinctive area with a cultural and historical heritage and a very diverse and coherent community. Its reputation has been built positively and supported by the recently formed Hampstead and Kilburn constituency in the face of longstanding disadvantage. Kilburn High Road, its natural centre, also forms the boundary between the two boroughs, the London Boroughs of Brent and Camden, and that has acted as a barrier in the past.

Much community time and commitment and Government and local resources have been invested to ensure that the two councils work in partnership to improve the area. For example, earlier this century we had £30 million single regeneration budget funding supporting the new commitment for Kilburn. We had £50 million new deal for communities funding, triggering a huge housing and on-going community facilities' development in South Kilburn. There is a plan being worked up by Transport for London to improve the high road.

It seemed natural that the boundary change in 2010 created the new Hampstead and Kilburn constituency which brought the two Kilburn wards, one in Camden and one in Brent, together under one political structure, further bonding the Kilburn communities on both sides of the High Road and generating shared activities such as the Kilburn Festival, campaigns to diversify the business, shopping and community facilities and to rejuvenate the High Road.

My colleague who is following me will talk more about this. Further evidence of the popular support for recognising Kilburn (that is the two Kilburn wards) is demonstrated in the recently formed Kilburn Neighbourhood Plan Forum, which has a focus on the High Road and the people who live either side. From being marginalised by the councils in the past - so in Brent, Kilburn is far from its main centre in Wembley, and on the western extreme of Camden which is an inner-city borough - Kilburn is, nevertheless, a major town centre with the, A5 which is the old Roman road, connecting it into London Centre.

Coming into the single Hampstead and Kilburn constituency has given it a huge boost in terms of support for a stronger Brent-Camden partnership which is vital to get the services co-ordinated, a strengthened neighbourhood identity and funding opportunities, promotion and growth of local services provided across Kilburn creating a place where people, as we say, love to live work and play. That has been successful.

Splitting Kilburn into two reconfigured constituencies which spread across three boroughs - so that would be involving Westminster too, going across that area - would put this positive regeneration and community work at risk, likely to lower its priority again and to cause more unhelpful bureaucracy. Over time, I have been working with Kilburn people, its communities and organisations, representing them on the Council and through my current voluntary work which does include a lot of accountability work. I

am confident that the view not to break up Kilburn into two constituencies reflects the views of a substantial number of people and groups in the area.

Finally, I would like to say that, while the boundary changes implemented in 2010 have worked in favour of Kilburn, the proposed arrangements to split just two of the Brent wards - that is Queen's Park and Kilburn Brent - away from the constituency of Hampstead and Kilburn and into Queen's Park and Regent's Park constituency, I think would be detrimental to having just those two boroughs away from the whole Kilburn/Brent/Camden area where a lot of the work goes on through those two boroughs. That is my case.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Great, thank you. That is very clear and helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed. Ajay Kumble, would you like to come forward, Sir? Just introduce yourself, please, by name and address, thank you.

MR KUMBLE: I am Ajay Kumble, a local resident of Kilburn, 28A Gascony Avenue NW6 4NA. As a local resident of this area, I am very passionate about where I am because it is one area which has brought the diverse communities together. The high street, Kilburn High Road, is the actual town centre. If you see, there is not much of an open space, apart from the park, which brings people together from different communities to either shop or to spend their time apart from living in the cocooned place where they live.

I am the chair of a local community centre called Kingsgate Community Centre. That is where the idea to form Kilburn Neighbourhood Forum kind of started. When we started a neighbourhood watch, we realised that the local neighbourhood required something to bring them together without a language or any of such sort. We formed a neighbourhood watch which brought the communities together, but then, again, to connect them would be to bring the gardening activities together.

In the process, we realised that the High Road plays a vital role in bringing the two sides together when safety comes into question. The High Road is very well connected. Because of that, you do get a lot of unsavoury elements into the neighbourhood. The police also realised that without a joint police force on the High Road to patrol the street would bring a lot of well-being.

Also, because of the two boroughs there was a lot of, what you call, bureaucratic issues. The local communities were having a lot of problems trying to get the things that they would like to see happen on the High Road. Kilburn High Road was, as I understand, the place to shop in the 50s. That has slowly deteriorated because of the two boroughs not coming together or having issues coming together to strengthen the entire stretch of the one mile road.

The community came together to talk about how to come over this, and that would only happen when the two sides have a common place to talk. The Neighbourhood Forum, which is just being designated as a fully-grown forum, is one which would promote the idea of the local residents, the community and, by having this new proposal to mark that again as a boundary between two boroughs, would dishearten a lot of invaluable time, effort and energy that the local communities have spent.

All of them are volunteers who come together. We know that a volunteer is a major force and to bring about any kind of dissatisfaction in their personal time which they have sacrificed would affect them by this boundary change. I strongly feel that that would again happen, because with this change in 2010 everyone was quite happy because then they thought there will be one voice for the High Road, which is their town centre, but now that has been taken away.

This is not a scripted talk that I am giving you, Sir, but I would like to give you a proper structured community voice in writing, so I could forward my comments along with a few other community organisations and local groups which feel very much against this new proposal.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Well, I think you have spoken very clearly this morning but, yes, a written submission and, if you can engage other people to share those views and share them with us, that would be helpful and we can take those into account. Sir, thank you very much.

MR KUMBLE: Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed. Is it John Saynor? If you would just like to introduce yourself by name and address, Sir?

MR SAYNOR: My name is John Saynor, 27 Kylemore Road NW6. I have lived in Kilburn for 12 years and in the Hampstead and Kilburn constituency and its predecessor for nearly 30 years. I have spent my working career in information technology in the private sector.

I am here to say why I think we should keep Hampstead and Kilburn Parliamentary constituency as the one that serves the whole of Kilburn. I live between Kilburn High Road and Weston Lane. It is an area that estate agents like to call West Hampstead, but which the longer-term residents, especially the large original Irish community, known as Kilburn. That is what it has always been. It is mostly made up of late Victorian terraced houses, interspersed with public housing estates covering a wide area either side of the bustle in Kilburn High Road.

This was, of course, the original Roman road from London to St Albans in the north. It

is also known as the Edgware Road. It is a characteristic inner London zone 2 neighbourhood with a big mixture of housing types: Privately rented, publicly rented and owner occupied. Most people live in flats, either converted or purpose built, while some of the well-off have a house to themselves. There is a huge diversity of wealth and the big mixture of ethnicity, in which no single community dominates, which can be seen just by walking down the High Road.

Wikipedia tells us that, in particular, our area is home to people of Irish, Afro-Caribbean, Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Eritrean and Ethiopian descent - just typical inner London really. Although the High Road and its continuation, Shoot Up Hill, splits Kilburn artificially between two boroughs, people who live there seldom appreciate the distinction. Community organisations - I mean, I can mention one, the Kilburn Older Voices Exchange or KOVE - span both sides of the High Road. Transport is a common factor for people in Kilburn.

The area has, in common, its rail and transport links, including the Jubilee Line and two TFL overground lines, each of which crosses the High Road and provides multiple stations on either side. It is an area where regular private car usage is quite low. People in Kilburn are big public transport users with all of the issues that that gives rise to.

When it comes along, the HS2 project will also affect the area and will require a common approach from residents and politicians on both sides of the road. We also share the very well-maintained and very pleasant Kilburn Grange Park, which is actually on the Camden side of the road. The High Road itself, I think, I would say is thriving as a big retail artery. It also seems busy, but in the current climate for retail with many high streets in decline this cannot be relied upon.

Issues such as the proliferation of betting shops, the regulation of night life and, indeed, road safety and traffic affect the area as a whole. The borough boundary down the middle of the road always makes dealing with these kinds of problems and sorting them out difficult. There have been various schemes, for example, to make the traffic safer but they never really come to anything.

An MP who represents the area on both sides of the road can help focus councils on issues that might otherwise be neglected. The serious social issues that the area faces, especially the availability of affordable housing, are also the same on both sides of the High Road. It does not help that, by London standards, the area is distant from the headquarters of the respective councils: Wembley, in the case of Brent Council and Kings Cross in the case of Camden Council.

These are the sort of factors that mean the existing shape of the constituency reflects the inner London character of the area, and the problems which it faces, which are rather different to those of the more well-to-do districts further out in Hampstead Garden

Suburb, which, as I understand it, are the areas that are currently proposed to be added onto the constituency.

If you go further north up Shoot Up Hill, there are lower density residential areas on both sides of the road which also have much in common with each other and could, thus, make a good fit where we are looking at how the Hampstead and Kilburn constituency could be expanded.

To conclude, all of this means that a Member of Parliament representing the whole of Kilburn and its surrounding communities can make a difference to the people that live there. While the Romans were able to draw lines on a map and build their roads and towns accordingly, we do not have that luxury and we should have respect for how and where people live today. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is again very clear. Matters for clarification?

LORD HAYWARD: Mr Saynor, I am tempted to make the observation in relation to my niece who is the Labour leader of Camden Council that she is neglecting you, but I shall disregard such an observation and just ask for confirmation that you, actually, said that the constituency had actually been Hampstead and Kilburn for ten years and prior to that Hampstead and Highgate for some 36 years.

MR SAYNOR: No, that is where I have lived.

LORD HAYWARD: Okay.

MR SAYNOR: So I have lived in one or other of the constituencies. I have lived in the area for 12 years and in Hampstead and Kilburn/Hampstead and Highgate for a total of 30 years.

LORD HAYWARD: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Great, thank you very much indeed. Well, thank you for the submission, thank you. We have a scheduled speaker at 12.50, so I suggest we adjourn until then and reassemble at that stage, thank you.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right, ladies and gentlemen, we reconvene and our speaker has arrived. Mr Barry Kendler. If you could just introduce yourself initially by name and address and then give us your presentation, that will be fabulous.

CLLR KENDLER (Harrow): Thank you, Sir. My name is Barry Kendler. My address is

1 Kynance Gardens, Stanmore HA7 2QJ. I live in the borough of Harrow where I am a councillor. I live in the Harrow East Parliamentary constituency. I am also one of the three elected councillors for the Harrow ward of Edgware.

I have been connected to that ward. My parents moved there in 1957 from Hackney and are still living there, so I have had a connection with the area for nearly 60 years. My evidence is I am supporting the proposal to create a constituency that goes across the A5, the Hendon and Edgware proposal to amalgamate six wards from the current Hendon constituency with two from Harrow East, the two being Canons and Edgware.

The reason why I believe it is important that you look at that as a serious proposal is I am going to make my presentation around commerce, places of worship, charities and general community life. Shopping. The Broadwalk Shopping Centre in Station Road, Edgware actually gets more trade from people who live on the Harrow side of the Edgware Road than from the Barnet side.

When it was originally designed in the late 70s/early 80s, when you come out there are two lanes to turn right toward inner Barnet. Those lanes are empty. The lane that is packed is the single lane that turns left towards Harrow. There are important shops within the Broadwalk, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's and Boots.

Also, on that side of the present Harrow East constituency there is a large Jewish community, living particularly in the Canons ward. They shop in Edgware because there is a very good choice of kosher shops. Carrying on, Sir, with the theme of worship and charities, I want to give you four examples. Two synagogues, Yeshuren and Stone Grove, are right on the Edgware Road. Now Yeshuren is an orthodox Jewish synagogue and, therefore, on High Holy Days and Sabbaths their congregants walk there, and just as many come from the Harrow side of the Edgware Road as they do from the Barnet side.

Also, there are now two Islamic places of worship, one in High Street, Edgware on the Barnet side and one in Deansbrook Road which just goes into the Deansbrook ward of Barnet. Again, I have met people at the Islamic Cultural Centre. They have as many worshipers coming from Harrow as they do from Barnet. Charities. There is a charity in my ward called Flash musicals that does work for young children and youth, introducing them to song, dance and acting.

They advertise on the websites of both Barnet Council and Harrow Council and see them very much focused for the community in Edgware. They do not recognise this divide. A very important thing that has existed for a long time: All residents that live in Canons and Edgware wards are placed, in National Health Service terms, in what is called the 'Barnet Overlap'.

This means, as in the case of my parents who live in the Harrow Edgware ward, that

when they need hospital care they are referred to the Edgware Community Hospital or, if that is too small, the Barnet General Hospital near High Barnet. This piece of NHS structure has never had a political champion in all the years I have been connected with Edgware, except for the Secretary of State. Whichever worthy person fills that role, now, I am afraid, from an Edgware point of view is somewhat remote.

I then want to look at public transport. First of all, there are arguments, I know there is a proposal to link Canons with Hatch End. Now try going by public transport from the Canons part of Edgware to Hatch End, it is very difficult if not impossible. There is an even more relevant question, why? Why would you want to go from Canons to Hatch End? All the shops, all the places of worship, all the community activity, if you are living in that area, are in Edgware not Hatch End.

Generally, the public transport links from my side of Harrow, where I am a councillor and where my parents live, into Harrow and even the further western side of Harrow where Hatch End is, are very difficult. The traffic is extremely heavy and the bus services are sparse and at school times overcrowded. People do not naturally see them going west. They go east. They go into Edgware.

Also, railway commuters living in Edgware and Canons, not exclusively but largely use the Northern Line, which actually the stations, Edgware and Burnt Oak, are in Barnet and would be in the constituency idea that I support. Again, this is about a voice. Those who are concerned about Northern Line services have no voice competent for the Mayor of London. It is the same argument as the Secretary of State for Health: The Mayor of London is a regional politician. It is too remote. There is no political champion for commuters living in the Canons ward and the Edgware ward about the Northern Line.

Crime and community safety. In the three years I have been connected with the Harrow Edgware ward, first as a candidate and since as a councillor, I am aware of very fast social and demographic changes. It is actually happening on both sides of the Edgware Road. We are getting a change from owner occupation to private rented housing and many of these properties are actually unlicensed houses in multiple occupation. When you look at heat maps by both Harrow Council, Barnet Council and the police, you will see that this is often linked to crime. We have a severe problem in Burnt Oak of alcohol abuse, drug abuse and prostitution.

Even though, Sir, we have a London-wide police service, co-ordination is difficult because of the present political structure. This leads to a difficulty in getting resources focused on the problem areas and they have no single political champion except, once again, from the Mayor of London. I make the same point: That political post, while important, is too remote.

My final argument is regeneration. Edgware and Burnt Oak, particularly Burnt Oak, lack

investment due to the divided nature of the present political structures. A Member of Parliament with a single Edgware focus will quickly understand the need for regeneration in Burnt Oak and will bring about a change of focus.

I would like to draw your attention, Sir, to an article - I am afraid I have not brought it with me - in the Economist in February 2015 that showed how areas like Edgware, that are politically divided by borough and constituency boundaries, lose out when it comes to investment. I have been connected with Edgware and Burnt Oak since 1957. It is still known as, "the forgotten corner." It is time to change all that and have a political voice for Edgware. Thank you, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very interesting and very well-put. I will take that into account. Thank you very much indeed. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed for your submission.

CLLR KENDLER: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will adjourn now until 2 o'clock for the lunch period, thank you.

#### After the luncheon adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we reconvene after lunch. Welcome back. I believe our first speaker is Mr Jason Cummings. If you could just commence by giving your name and address before you speak, thank you.

CLLR CUMMINGS (Croydon): Certainly. My name is Jason Cummings. My address is 4 Shepherds Way, Croydon CR2 8HS. I am a councillor in the Croydon ward of Heathfield which currently sits within the Croydon Central parliamentary seat. I have lived in Heathfield for 20 years now.

I wanted to come here today to express my views on the initial proposals for the constituency boundaries and also offer my thoughts on the local area and its communities. The ward of Heathfield was formed in 1999 at the last local boundary review and I imagine would not be formed under today's guidelines. The only reason it was formed then was to facilitate three member wards within the borough.

Heathfield is by far the largest ward within the borough of Croydon and consists of two distinct parts. The north of the ward is part of the community of Shirley. The south of the ward is part of the community of Selsdon. Between these two sections are two golf courses, a large park, farmland, woodland, a country house and a dual carriageway. It is hard to imagine two such separate areas existing within one ward in an area like Croydon, but they do.

All of the residents in the northern polling districts refer to themselves as living in Shirley. Those in the southern ones to Selsdon or South Croydon. Nobody thinks of themselves as living in a place called Heathfield. To further illustrate the point, let me list some of the names within the Northern section. You have Shirley Windmill, Shirley High School, Shirley Hills, Shirley Inn, Shirley Methodist Church. I could give you a whole list of Shirley names.

In the Southern you have Selsdon High school, Selsdon Park road. As a Southern Heathfield resident my children went to Selsdon Primary School and used Selsdon Library for their books. The distinction is very clear between the two sections. When considering the placement of constituency boundaries, I would ask that the Heathfield ward be in the same constituency as the wards of Selsdon and Ballards and Shirley. This is the only way to avoid splitting these two large local communities.

In the initial proposals, I note that Shirley and Heathfield were split, not only split down the main road in the district centre of Shirley, but as an example of how odd a divide this would be the local MP has his office on the Wycombe Road, intended to be in the heart of one of the largest communities in the current Croydon Central. If Shirley and Heathfield are separated, then this office would then be on a constituency border.

I would counsel against any proposal that split Heathfield and Shirley in that way. I would like to stress that I fully understand just how difficult drawing up these constituencies is and I do not envy you your task, but if I may expand my comments for a moment. The Heathfield ward, if joined to Selsdon and Ballards and Shirley, must also, by virtue of it being the only Croydon ward you can access them from, be joined to the wards of Fieldway and New Addington. As a building block, this is quite a large part of what would make up a constituency.

The northern part of the Shirley community falls within the ward of Ashburton - another ward that straddles two communities, those of Shirley and Addiscome. If you were to add Addiscome and Ashburton to the wards I have already mentioned, you are only one ward away from a constituency.

My suggestion would be that Sanderstead was added to these. That is for two reasons. The first and most practical is elector numbers, in that this allows for the remaining South Croydon wards of Coulsdon East and West, Purley, Kenley, Croham, Waddon and the town centre ward of Fairfield to make a second viable constituency, both of which would be wholly contained within the borders of Croydon borough, thus avoiding crossing either the Bromley or Sutton border for either of these two constituencies.

The second reason is the two distinct types of constituency that these would make. The more southerly would be characterised by the A23 main road that would run straight through the centre, along with all of the mainland overland rail stations for the south of

Croydon borough. This would be a clear bringing together of the direct commuter communities that wish to walk to a station and take one train to Central London.

The more south-eastern constituency would be characterised by the lack of overground stations. This area is a secondary commuter area where it is necessary to use public transport to get to a station first and then catch a train and, as such, has a much higher non-commuter community. It seems odd that within Croydon a difference so stark could be made between two constituencies, but if you look at a map you will see that the stations all sit within one area.

There is no greater issue than trains and public transport in South London these days, and having such a clear grouping of communities would I am sure aid in their representation. To summarise, I am in favour of there being two constituencies covering the south and centre of the Croydon borough, one centred on the town centre to Coulsdon A23 route, and the second covering the non-mainline station areas to the south and east of Croydon Town Centre, taking in the communities of Addiscombe, Shirley, Selsdon and Sanderstead.

I understand that the Croydon border must be crossed by the virtue to the borough elector numbers, but would advocate that the best place do this is around the Pollards Hill area of Norbury in the north of the borough where there is a distinct community that already crosses the borough boundary. No such situation exists in the centre or south of Croydon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. That was very clear. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case thank you very much indeed.

CLLR CUMMINGS: Do you want me to leave a copy?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would, please, that would be most helpful. Stuart McNamara. If you would like to come forward and sit in the chair there, please and, again, if you can just introduce yourself by way of name and your address to begin, thank you.

CLLR McNAMARA (Haringey): Thank you. My name is Stuart McNamara. I am a resident in Haringey and more specifically in the Tottenham constituency and a councillor in the Bruce Grove ward in Tottenham. I live at 8 Greenfield Road, Tottenham N15 5EP.

I grew up in Tottenham and have lived over three-quarters of my life there, as well as spells in Islington and Enfield, and consider myself to have an in-depth understanding and knowledge not just of Tottenham and Haringey on a wider level but of North London. Clearly, we are here because, as the will of Parliament has determined, the

House of Commons will reduce from 650 to 600 by 2020. This will, of course, mean a five-seat reduction in London from 73 to 68 seats.

It is an unenviable task to try to satisfy the criteria as laid out for how the proposals have been put together, yet the Boundary Commission, I personally believe, has done a sound job so far with the proposals put forward. There are a number of points that I would like to make both in my own regard and also building on the views that I know have been made by others, including yesterday by the sitting Member of Parliament for the Tottenham constituency.

Firstly, and in no particular order, Tottenham as a community has a sense of geographical purpose that a number of other constituencies that border it do not have to quite the same extent. What I mean by that is not to detract from the genuine town or village characteristics of any of the areas that make up a number of the constituencies around there.

But what I certainly believe is that with nine electoral wards in the constituency of Tottenham to be almost anywhere within those wards you feel (and so do people who live and work there) like they are in Tottenham in a way that, for example, if you cross the border into Hackney, although the borough is called Hackney it has a number of very clearly defined and historic areas which are much smaller than the borough itself.

Also, Haringey is a construct in terms of the name of the borough in the way that, for example, the two boroughs to the south, Islington and Hackney and also to a certain extent Enfield in the north with two of the constituencies, are named after areas within the borough that are more geographically linked to what people associate with the area. Virtually no one, other than the Haringey-Green Lanes corridor, would have associated the name of Haringey prior to its creation in 1965 with the merger of the Hornsey, Wood Green and Tottenham constituencies.

As has already been said, there are geographical boundaries to Tottenham, and I would say that of course I am fully aware that the Boundary Commission is in the position where it must now to a certain extent be ready to disregard some of those previous maxims: Not crossing rivers, main roads and various other things such as that. But the borders of the North Circular Road, the East Coast mainline and the River Lea do serve not only to act as geographical boundaries to Tottenham but, again I go back to my previous point, that the area in between really is genuinely associated with being Tottenham.

What I would also say as a Tottenham councillor, my ward, Bruce Grove was very badly affected by the August 2011 riots. The two wards most demonstrably affected, three probably being more realistic: Tottenham Hale, Northumberland Park and Bruce Grove were the epicentre of the riots. I have seen in my six years on the Council the real green-shoots of a long-term regeneration of the area, not only from work from the

Greater London authority but from Haringey Council and front and centre by our Member of Parliament.

Again, I say this not just because of the hard work of the incumbent (which I do not consider to be a central issue at all), but more to do with the fact of the genuine need for a single voice in Parliament to represent the people of Tottenham, as quite clearly have been put before by a number of other people has been affected by two riots and not just one.

As someone who grew up in the area having witnessed both of them, it was deeply shocking and there is a fear that I hope never comes to fruition of further unrest. The answer to that unrest is cohesion, investment, investment in schools, housing and all kinds of other local infrastructure, particularly in an area of austerity where Tottenham is one of the most deprived constituencies in London if not the UK.

I am very conscious that there are counter-proposals by both the Conservative and Labour Party. I would give historic credit to certainly the Labour Party for sound and rational proposals that have been put in every Boundary Commission round where constituencies have been redistributed.

What I would say is that they have, like everybody, like myself, like the Boundary Commission themselves, had to grapple with the invidious task of trying to come up with proposals that fit, for want of a better term, the square peg into the round hole. With the prospect of all kind of geographical boundaries to the new constituencies that do not meet the old criteria, having to go down to polling district level in some cases, I believe that this is a very difficult task.

I think that there is merit in a number of those proposals, but I would draw out Tottenham as probably one of the central parts to those counter-proposals that I just disagree with. With the best will and intention, I think that some of the historic and administrative strengths of the constituency and arguments in favour of not splitting the constituency, whether it would be the inner and outer London characteristics of Enfield and Haringey that would create anomalies if a constituency bordered both areas, the geographical separation that would be created by a constituency that straddled the A406 North Circular Road.

I would say overall that, again, to sum up, having seen what has happened in Tottenham not just across my lifetime but my parents having emigrated to the UK and moved to Tottenham in the late 1950s that area has seen seismic change. It has gone from being a relatively prosperous suburb of Middlesex outside London to being absorbed into London, into the new construct of the London Borough of Haringey and incredible industrial decline in the Lea Valley throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

What we have seen probably in the last five years is the greater chance that we have

got to firmly and fully regenerate the area for all of the people there concerned. I do believe that one of the unforeseen consequences, were the counter-proposals to be accepted, would be the slicing into of Tottenham, which I think will have a devastating effect.

I do not doubt that anybody who comes here and speaks passionately in favour of the constituency with which they intended to make their representations, and there are going to be counterarguments right across the board that it is the unenviable task of the Boundary Commission to unpick, however I would genuinely say --- not just because I live there or because I have come here with the intention to speak in favour of Tottenham remaining as a parliament constituency - it genuinely is in my view a very strong case for being kept in the most uniform as possible shape and size as it is at the moment.

The incorporation of Stroud Green ward I think is sensible and it is achievable, not only because Stroud Green ward fits along the western corridor for probably three-quarters of the ward of Haringey which sits wholly at the moment within the constituency of Tottenham. I would say as a funny aside that most people in Stroud Green assume that the park is in their ward and it is in Hornsey & Wood Green, when actually it is a Tottenham park.

That aside, Finsbury Park is the link between the Stroud Green and southern Hornsey area and Tottenham. It will fit well. It will also add an affluent piece to the jigsaw of Tottenham which I think will also benefit the genuine social mix that everybody who is serious about regeneration strives to achieve. Again, with Hornsey & Wood Green to the west, absorbing Bowes to the north, a constituency where the southern part of Palmers Green --- which Bowes almost exclusively fits in --- has very strong characteristics in common with the southern part of Wood Green that sits within Haringey.

In conclusion, I believe that Tottenham must stay as a single constituency with the understandable need to add in an extra ward to make sure that the eventual constituency meets the parameters of the new minimum and maximum numbers of voters.

I completely understand the proposals put forward by the Labour and Conservative Party and I do believe that those proposals should not be set aside. There may well be some very sensible parts of that. Whether that is a message to those two political parties or to the Boundary Commission, I think that the work that is undertaken over the next year or so before the final proposals are laid before Parliament, I believe, in 2019, I think there is time for the best fit to emerge, but I would like that best fit to include Tottenham as a single constituency. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very helpful.

Can I just see if there are any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed. Julie Mills, would you like to come forward, please? Just by way of introduction, if you would give us your name and address, please, thank you very much.

CLLR MILLS (Kensington and Chelsea): Good afternoon. Thank you very much for allowing me to come and speak to you this afternoon. I come actually wearing a couple of hats, and if I could just outline those for you and tell you the mandate that I have got so that I can go through the details in some depth.

My name is Julie Mills. I am a councillor for Kensington and Chelsea and I live in the Norland ward and represent the Norland ward. In addition, I am the Chairman of the Kensington and the Chelsea and Fulham Association, which looks after the two constituencies. You might be aware that at the moment it is a split constituency. I am also the Chairman of Licencing on the Council and a former cabinet member for adult social care, housing, environmental health and health.

I give you that information because we were responsible, or it was under my brief that we had the responsibility for early bedding down Tri-borough, which is an across-service provision between Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham and, indeed, Kensington and Chelsea. I am here to tell you perhaps how some of that works and how some of it does not work.

If I could begin, first, by saying that the association has nearly 3,000 members across Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham. It has given me a mandate to say that it entirely supports the Boundary Commission's very clear, elegant and well thought through proposals for the unification of Kensington and Chelsea as a constituency to be coterminous with the present borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

That is regarded as a very sensible, competent and efficient solution to what is actually a very small borough and which, in any event, you might know is one of the most densely populated. In fact, I think at the moment it is either the number 1 or the number 2 most densely populated borough in the whole of the country.

It has a diversity that everybody will be aware of on both the international stage and the local stage, but also in terms of a very settled and stable community that ranges from the north, the middle and the south. That is from the top of Kensington, the Harrow Road, which you have so clearly delineated in terms of your geographical demarcations, and down to the south to Chelsea which is the River Thames. Again, that is to be commended.

We also commend the fact that the Liberal Democrats have also endorsed the reunification of the constituency along Kensington and Chelsea lines. I come here as I say wearing those other hats to try and demonstrate to you that Kensington and

Chelsea, despite being so small and so densely populated, has got a very unique personality and a very unique set of reference points.

By that, if I may cite what defines Chelsea, if we could start at the bottom and move up with your leave, is not anything to do with Westminster - and in this I refer directly to the counter-proposals that Labour has proposed, and one of those is that the two wards of Brompton and Hans Town and Royal Hospital, two very distinct wards with large voting populations (they are about nearly 5,000 each) should be joined into Westminster.

I would like to suggest to you, Commissioners, that when you examine that proposal you understand that the very things that typify and make Chelsea Chelsea, very separate from Westminster, are the very things that are contained in those two wards. If I may suggest, Sloane Street, with which everybody is familiar, Sloane Square, with which everybody is similar, the tube that is called Sloane Square, Peter Jones, the Kings Road, the Chelsea Pensioners' Hospital, the Chelsea Flower Market, the Saatchi Gallery, and perhaps the Kings Road and to a Harrods, are the things that make Chelsea very separate and distinct in personality from Westminster, indeed from Fulham, indeed from Kensington.

The idea that you could take those things in those two wards and take them right over into the Cities of Westminster and the City, I would suggest would rip out the heart of Chelsea. I have been asked to say that to you by several of the residents, the businesses, the charities etc. who live in that part of the place. In addition, we have at the moment three split wards, Brompton and Hans Town, Redcliffe and also Stanley.

The thing about the split wards is that it is really only because of the goodwill of the two MPs that the population, if you like, is not confused. Very often, and I can say this in a political capacity, we get problems right across the three wards. We are a very active organisation. We campaign every week. We have street markets. We have market stalls. So I do not say this to you in a frivolous way, Commissioner.

I say this to you with some sense of anecdotal expertise. Basically, what happens is that when the residents have problems, and the problems in Kensington and Chelsea, the issues are always going to be of a very inner city but also of a very different nature. If it is the Diplomatic Service, it is going to be about their housing, their residence, it is going about their planning issues, it is going to be about health and schooling.

To my mind, and indeed to many of us who live locally, it is quite difficult to ask that three MPs, as it is presently proposed or two MPs as the counter-proposals would indicate, would be able to be in a position to satisfy those in an efficient, competent and timely way. I say that because right now it is not working. Brompton and Hans Town, in particular, is split almost half between Kensington and between Chelsea and Fulham. You may have heard from representatives there that that is not the easiest, if you like, of relationships in delivering efficiencies for the voters and for the residents.

If I could then move on to the other two wards which Labour is proposing should go off into a new constituency called Chelsea, Fulham and South Kensington. Frankly, quite a lot of the proposals, the constituency, they are nowhere near Chelsea, nowhere Fulham and nowhere near South Kensington. It is a quite difficult demarcation, it is a difficult name and it actually does not marry up the types of communities that live down there which have lived there for quite a historic and long period of time.

If I could then move through towards Kensington. Kensington, again, has a very distinct personality. You will be aware of something called the Notting Hill Carnival. In fact, Commissioners, when I Googled coming here today, Romford to Notting Hill, which was the tube I was going to come from, what does it say? It says the Notting Hill Carnival. It does not say the North Kensington or North Westminster carnival. It says the Notting Hill Carnival.

If I may say, I am Trinidadian by birth. I have a very long and historic connection with the Carnival. It was imported into Kensington and into Notting Hill specifically by the West Indians who arrived here in the 1950s. Its footprint covers all of those six northern wards, four of which are proposed to go into the new constituency. The footprint of the Carnival goes right down.

As the name Notting Hill would imply, it starts in Notting Hill. Notting Hill starts in the Holland ward. I am sure that the maps will bear this out but it starts in the Holland ward, the Camden ward, the Pembridge ward and the Norland ward, my own. Therefore, effectively, the whole of the Carnival would be truncated, if you like, completely split off into and across something like three boroughs. It would be impossible, in my view, and I can say this very safely as a licensing chairman at the moment to deliver the real efficiencies that a street festival of such international importance, and in fact importance to the United Kingdom and to London would effect.

The reason that I say that now is that we license over 40 of the sound systems. It is Kensington and Chelsea that does that licensing. I invite you, and we will add it to our written submissions, to look at the Carnival footprint. The Carnival footprint, there are two sound systems out of the 40 that are in Westminster and there are ten streets out of something like 200 streets that is controlled by Westminster.

The Exhibition Road which is the great west road of Westminster was chosen historically because it was wide enough to accommodate the judging points of the large bands coming down. Most of the administration, in fact I would hasten to say that pretty much all of the administration, is done by Kensington and Chelsea. I ask you to consider how difficult it would be to have the Carnival, which attracted two million people in 2016 (I have looked this up and verified this, for your information), how is that going to be managed successfully across the borough of Brent, the borough of Westminster, the borough of Kensington and Chelsea? Indeed, if the proposals for the

west of Kensington and Chelsea are reviewed or looked at, you could be talking about Hammersmith and Fulham and Ealing.

I would suggest to you that that cohesive population, the West Indians - who have been there for nearly one hundred years because they actually came over in 1920 - that, basically, you would be splitting or it would be to split up a very very stable community with schools and has its very significant cultural activity in the north of the borough. In addition, we have got Portobello Market.

Now Portobello Market is even older, if I may suggest, than the Carnival. Portobello Market attracts 100,000 people a week, again verifiable on Google. They all come through Notting Hill Gate, the one tube there that is, as I said to you, on the Notting Hill Gate Road and that spans something like four to five boroughs. Again, it would be to us at the very heart of the thing that makes Notting Hill and Kensington Kensington.

It would be to strip it out completely to make it a sort of a political smorgasbord that would only really bring disharmony, a lack of cohesion, break up communities and completely distort an identity. I would like to say to you, Commissioners, that that identity is manifest not just in inner London, but you have only to consider 'Notting Hill', the movie. Richard Curtis lives in the Norland ward. You have only to consider 'Bedknobs and Broomsticks'.

This old part of Kensington is typified through these particular cultural activities, the Carnival and the footprint of the two markets, Portobello and now expanded into Golborne. If you were to visit the area, you would see that, because of the tightness of the streets and the fluidity of the flexibility of movements between the streets and because it is small, it is best, as you have so rightly suggested, that they should stay together and continue to be what they have always been, Kensington and Chelsea.

If I may add one last thing in all of that. When we go out now and we canvass - and we do, as I said to you before, canvass very very regularly - the thing that is apparent to anybody in Chelsea when you go and say to people in Chelsea, and again Chelsea has got a very stable, ageing community, and you say to them, "You are in Chelsea and Fulham." They say, "No, we are not, we are in Kensington and Chelsea", because historically that is how they have always felt they have been.

It is a little bit like fish and chips. Kensington and Chelsea goes together. It just happens to be like that. That is because of all these very unique festivals and these unique services that have been provides. I was just going to try and raise all of that with you to say that many many people - and you will be receiving written representations I should think, a number of them to say that this is not about North Kensington, this is not about South Kensington, this is not even about West Kensington which is in Hammersmith and Fulham.

This is to say to you that this is about Kensington and the reunification, as you have so rightly suggested, of what has been a very traditional togetherness of Kensington and Chelsea where they actually understand each other and there is a lot of interconnectivity. There is even one resident's permit and I cannot tell you how important that would be in the scheme of things. That is because the people from the north of the borough travel down to the hospitals in the middle of the borough, to the schools in the middle of the borough, there is a Kensington acted and there is a Chelsea Academy. They have their housing issues. All those issues are, basically, across the one borough.

Therefore, it would make an impossibility, in my view, a real challenge, for there to be more than one MP. The choice of one MP at the moment is working extremely well. We have noticed a big difference in terms of benefit regeneration to the people who once were traditionally in what we would call the old Karen Buck constituency. I am here to answer any questions that you might have.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed for that sort of guided tour through the borough.

CLLR MILLS: Yes, we are going to ask you if you would like to come.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Absolutely, thank you. Anna Firth. If you could just start off by giving your name and address before you start, thank you.

MRS FIRTH: I am Anna Firth and I live at Colgates, Shoreham Lane, Halstead, Sevenoaks, Kent. Thank you, Chairman. I am here because I strongly support the Conservative Party proposals for the new constituency of Erith and Crawford. I am the elected parliamentary spokesperson for Erith and Thamesmead Conservative Association, having been the parliamentary candidate for that constituency in 2015.

I am, therefore, very familiar with the geography, the local government boundaries and the local community ties in the area, having campaigned extensively there in the north and the south of the borough both last year and, indeed, this year. I am also a qualified barrister and portfolio holder for legal and democratic services which includes governance on Sevenoaks District Council, so I actually have quite a bit of experience of ward boundaries, constituencies and, indeed, the rules that govern the Boundary Commission's parliamentary constituency review.

Firstly, Mr Chairman, I agree wholeheartedly with the Conservative Party's proposal that including the two Bexley wards of St Michael's and Lesnes Abbey in the proposed Woolwich seat makes very little sense. With the sole exception of the Lesnes polling district, LA1, which I will talk about later, these two areas of Bexley have very little contact or community connection to the Greenwich wards or, indeed, to Woolwich.

St Michael's ward itself is adjacent to both Lesnes Abbey ward and Brampton ward. Housing is the same in both areas and residents naturally considers themselves to be part of Bexley and they look to Bexleyheath and to Welling for shopping and for local services, not to Woolwich. Indeed, many children in those areas go to Bexley schools and most residents in those wards have very little connection or contact with the Greenwich wards.

There are significant physical boundaries as well between St Michael's ward and the Greenwich parts of the proposed Woolwich seat. There is Bostall Hill, there is Bostall Woods, there is Bostall Heath and there is the East Wycombe open area. There is a natural geographic separation.

On this point, in conclusion, the communities that live in St Michael's ward and Lesnes Abbey wards are far more connected with the proposed Erith and Crayford seat than with the Woolwich seat. Since St Michael's ward is currently in the current Bexleyheath and Crayford seat, it makes far more sense for both of those wards to be situated in the new Erith and Crayford seat.

My second submission, Mr Chairman, concerns the area of Thamesmead and, with it, Lesnes Abbey polling district LA1. Chairman, as you are very well aware, as currently configured, the Commission's proposals splits Thamesmead into two constituencies. Thamesmead Moorings and Abbey wood moves into the proposed Woolwich seat. Thamesmead East stays in the proposed Erith and Crayford seat.

Mr Chairman, I can tell you, without any fear of contradiction at all, that Thamesmead East has strong historic links to Thamesmead Moorings ward and, indeed, to Abbey Woodward. It is very obvious, even to a stranger entering the whole area, that the housing, the leisure amenities, local clubs, schools shopping and transport links, that Thamesmead was clearly designed and intended to be developed as one entity. The clue, if you like, is in the name.

Just as one example of that, a very large part of Thamesmead East, Thamesmead Moorings and Lesnes Abbey polling district LA1 are actually all part of the Peabody Estate, formerly known as Gallions, and so they are all very similar in design, character, location and, obviously, community.

The other point Chairman, which I think is vital to remember, is that Thamesmead East is already an integral part of the current Erith and Thamesmead constituency, which is the only constituency in this area that straddles the borough boundary between the London Borough of Bexley, on the one hand, and the Royal Borough of Greenwich on the other.

Clearly, Thamesmead is the most logical location in both boroughs for a cross-border

constituency, for that reason alone, if not its history, community ties and geography. Of course, you have got the very natural barrier, a very clear barrier of the River Thames to the north. There is strong cross-party support for this view, Chairman, since the current Labour Member of Parliament for Erith and Thamesmead, Teresa Pearce, MP, who has represented the area since 2010 also agrees that the area of Thamesmead must remain united.

I know that others have mentioned this, but if I could mention it again, she has gone on record in the New Shopper about the boundary proposals. What she says is this:

"My biggest concern with the proposed parliamentary boundaries is about the changes to Thamesmead. The area is already in two boroughs, which causes problem. It has stopped becoming a community with a heart. Without a single MP, it will be even harder to regenerate the area and it will never have a single voice. It will be a bit of a disaster."

Chairman, this is probably the only time when I can say that I agree with Teresa Pearce MP completely. Thamesmead is a very deprived area. It is in the process of a major regeneration. It desperately needs the stability and consistency that a strong and dedicated Member of Parliament can provide.

I submit, Chairman, that keeping Thamesmead united is a logical, sensible but also a social imperative. The most logical thing to do, therefore, if you accept this analysis, is to swap St Michael's ward with Thamesmead East, so that Thamesmead East moves into the proposed Woolwich seat, alongside Thamesmead Moorings and Abbey Wood, and St Michael's ward and also Lesnes Abbey ward move into the proposed Erith and Crayford seat, with the sole exception of polling district LA1.

Lesnes Abbey, polling district LA1, Chairman, merits separate attention. That small polling district was always historically part of Thamesmead East ward. It is logical that it should go back into Thamesmead East. It was only transferred into Lesnes Abbey in a previous local government boundary review and it was always regarded as an anomaly, because it is separated from the rest of Lesnes Abbey by the railway line which is a big west-east boundary at that part of Bexley borough.

If I can put it this way, Mr Chairman, everywhere north of the railway line is essentially regarded as South Thamesmead. Indeed, Coralline Walk, which is where the first residents who moved into Thamesmead lived, is actually situated in LA1. It is the core and heart of Thamesmead itself.

The housing and community facilities between LA1E and Thamesmead East and, indeed, with Thamesmead Moorings and Abbey Wood are shared. Because of this natural barrier of the railway line, clearly, shopping and community links and schooling are all contained in different parts of the ward.

Furthermore, in Bexley's recent ward boundary review, the Boundary Commission agreed with the proposal that polling district LA1 was really part of Thamesmead and should go back into Thamesmead, albeit we are awaiting a final decision on that which is due next week, I believe, November 8. It would be slightly illogical for two parts of the same organisation to come to totally different views. Although I completely appreciate that splitting wards is not generally satisfactory, I do believe in this instance that the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria are made out.

Finally, if you agree with what I have said so far, there will still be a need to achieve electoral parity. One way of doing that would be for Belvedere ward to be brought into the Woolwich seat. Belvedere ward sits geographically next to Thamesmead East. Both of those areas also have historic community and transport links, but I know that others have better knowledge and can talk with more authority on that issue.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, the case for keeping the community of Thamesmead together, and championed by one MP, is compelling and would be celebrated. The transfer of St Michael's and Lesnes Abbey wards into the new Erith and Crayford seat will preserve and protect longstanding local ties. Finally, it makes sense for the polling district of LA1 to go back exceptionally into Thamesmead East from where it came. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, that was very very clear. Are you leaving us a written statement?

MRS FIRTH: Yes, I am going to leave this with you, Chairman.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Fantastic, thank you very much indeed. Any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed. Mr Jeff Anderson. Make yourself comfortable and then start off by introducing yourself by name and address, please.

MR ANDERSON: Thank you Mr Chair. Good afternoon. I am a Harrow councillor and resident. My address is in Grange Road in Harrow, okay. As I said earlier, I actually live in Greenhill ward in Harrow, and I think sort of as the local resident I believe the current proposals ignore the link to the neighbouring wards and Greenhill's economic role.

Greenhill is sort of, really, the very centre of Harrow and indeed is one of only 13 metropolitan shopping districts in Harrow. It is closely linked to the central corridor with sort of Harrow-on-the-Hill, Marlborough and Wealdstone wards. In planning terms, it fills that important sort of regional role really and so I think that needs to be taken into account.

As I said, Greenhill is the heart of Harrow commercially and an important transport hub with rail and tube interchange and a bus station which is linked directly in with the metropolitan town centre. Again, that fits in very much with Greenhill remaining a major part of Harrow rather than being moved sort of to Stanmore way. It would be sort of very isolated.

In terms of the local population, whether it is shopping, eating, going to local churches, temples and synagogues and Harrow Central Mosque, Greenhill's community links very much with Harrow-on-the-Hill, Marlborough and Wealdstone. The ward actually goes right up to the historic parish church at the top of Harrow-on-the-Hill, and the war memorial for the fallen of Harrow-on-the-Hill is actually located in Greenhill ward.

I think there are very sort of important cultural and community reasons that Greenhill should very much remain as part of the wider Harrow community, rather than Stanmore which it has no real connection with. Economically, the Council's regeneration strategy treats Harrow-on-the-Hill, Marlborough and Wealdstone as the vital corridor for the borough. There is a large regeneration programme strategy going on with new jobs in commercial developments, new arts provision, schools, housing, and with more family and affordable homes.

It makes logical sense that that central area should all be treated as one. Splitting Greenhill off from that, I think sort of will weaken the stability of the whole project. Conversely, really, looking at moving Greenhill to Stanmore, there is very few, if any, social or commercial links with Stanmore or, indeed, the east side of Brent. Also, the Watford-Euston railway line acts as a natural barrier to the east of the ward.

Again, there will be geographical sort of difficulties there. Again, I am also a Rayners Lane councillor and, clearly, if you talk to local residents there and the issues that local residents raise with me are about their relationship with wider Harrow and particularly South Harrow communities. They see themselves very much as part of South Harrow. That is where, basically, most of their community links are.

They shop at South Harrow or Harrow Town Centre, using the first-class transport links to Harrow and South Harrow. They have direct links using the Metropolitan Line and the Piccadilly Line at Rayners Lane station. The Piccadilly Line goes right through the area and links Rayners Lane very directly with Harrow-on-the-Hill, Greenhill and, indeed, through onto Sudbury. Good local buses such as the H10 provide links to Harrow Town Centre and Wealdstone too.

The transport links to sort of Northwood and Pinner are much poorer. There is no direct train or tube connection. Indeed, to go by train or tube you would have to go back into Harrow-on-the-Hill and then come out again. Harrow is the most religiously and socially diverse borough in the country, there is an extremely large Tamil community in Rayners Lane and, indeed, in South Harrow generally, and that community uses a temple which

is located in the Marlborough ward.

I think we can say that the current proposals overlooked, really, those important social and community and, indeed, economic links. Where people shop and transport connections exist, they seem to have been completely disregarded. There is no strong community link between Rayners Lane and Northwood or Hillingdon or Stanmore whatsoever.

Moving Rayners Lane ward into Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner I think is also unnecessary. Hatch End ward very clearly identifies itself as part of Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner. The residents use Pinner and Northwood heavily. There is no real reason to move Hatch End ward. If you do not move Hatch End ward, there is no imperative to really sort of move Rayners Lane and that can remain where it naturally sits.

I think, really, what I am saying is I believe that the Harrow South and Sudbury constituency is a sensible and viable option. It recognises social factors, the demographics of the area, the extensive transport and road networks. It allows continuity with the current Harrow West seat, which broadly speaking in some form has existed, although not as Harrow West for over 50 years, probably approaching 60 years.

It also recognises existing political boundaries such as the GLA seat, which is Brent and Harrow, where there is a joint Assembly Member. I think both sort of keeping Greenhill and not moving Rayners Lane will make ideal sense and can be accommodated within the sort of the greater plans without too much difficulty.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right, thank you very much indeed. That was helpful. Any matters of clarification? (No response).

MR ANDERSON: I will send something in on the computer. I have not got anything with me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, no, fine, please. If you could send it through, that would be a very helpful email.

MR ANDERSON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed for your submission. Mr Philip Read. Welcome, and if you would make yourself comfortable at the seat and then introduce yourself by name and address, please.

CLLR READ (Bexley): My name is Philip Read and it is 53 Myrtle Close, Erith, Kent. Mr Chairman, I am a member of Bexley Council and I represent Northumberland Heath ward in that authority. I am also Deputy Chairman of the Erith and Thamesmead Conservative Association.

I am speaking here today in support of the submission from the Conservative Party in respect of the proposals for the Erith and Crayford constituency. I strongly agree with those proposals to move Thamesmead East ward, Belvedere ward and polling district LA1 from Lesnes Abbey ward into the proposed Woolwich seat, whilst moving St Michael's ward and the remaining four wards of Lesnes Abbey into Erith and Crayford.

I will refer, firstly, if I can to the Thamesmead East and polling district LA1. Mr Chairman, to give you a little bit of background, I have lived in Bexley and more specifically the northern part of that borough for most of my life. My late parents were married in Belvedere, I was christened in the same church and then subsequently married my first wife there.

I went to school in the north of the borough and was first elected to Bexley Council in 1968 representing Belvedere ward which, at that time, included Abbey Wood and what has now become the Lesnes Abbey polling district LA1. It was in that capacity that I found myself representing Bexley Council on the Thamesmead Committee of the then Greater London Council.

That was the Committee that was charged with agreeing the strategy for the development of Thamesmead as a cohesive entity, including approving the design of the town, its layout and its relationship with its near neighbours. In fact, Mr Chairman, it is perfectly possible, not that it gives me any great satisfaction to say so as I am sure you will understand, that I might well be the last person remaining alive who sat on that Committee and can, therefore, talk first-hand of the expectations, hopes and dreams of those who worked on bringing this new town into being.

I mention all that, Mr Chairman, in order to demonstrate my longstanding personal knowledge of and familiarity with the areas of Belvedere, Abbey Wood and Thamesmead. The GLC's Thamesmead Committee included representatives from the London Boroughs of both Greenwich and Bexley, together, of course, with GLC members and officers.

From that background, I can tell you at this hearing that all who served on that Committee viewed Thamesmead as a whole, a complete entity that would and should be viewed as such. It was also anticipated that, by virtue of the road and public transport links, the residents would look to Woolwich and Plumstead as their nearest and closest major commercial centre.

I do understand that some who have spoken about this on behalf of the Labour Party have claimed that Thamesmead East ward is somehow not significantly related to the rest of Thamesmead. That is a transparently partisan claim, completely at odds with reality and common-sense, and contradicts evidence to the Local Government Boundary Commission not just by the Conservative Party but also by the Labour Party.

Thamesmead is and was always intended to be, and clearly by geographic and community reality remains, a cohesive whole.

That is the view, as you heard earlier, supported by Teresa Pearce, the Labour Member of Parliament for Erith and Thamesmead. Her comments were mentioned earlier but they do, I believe, bear repeating. She said that her biggest concern is about changes to Thamesmead:

"The seat is already in two boroughs which causes problems. It has stopped becoming a community with a heart. Without a single MP, it will be even harder to regenerate the areas and it will never have a single voice. It will be a bit of a disaster."

In common with my colleagues in Bexley, I completely concur with Ms Pearce's assessment. It is for that very reason that I also support the inclusion of the present Lesnes Abbey polling district LA1 into the Woolwich constituency. I do recognise it is unusual to split wards and usually I would oppose that, but in this case LA1 sits far more appropriately with the rest of Thamesmead, but in Thamesmead East ward and being separated from the rest of Lesnes Abbey by the railway line and Lesnes Abbey Woods. It also contains much of the very first phase of the Thamesmead development.

By bringing the residents of this polling district together with their neighbours in Thamesmead East, Thamesmead Moorings and Abbey Wood within the same constituency, it will reinforce the sense of community cohesion and belonging that we and the sitting MP seek by reinforcing and complementing the emergence of strong community facilities and services.

This is a view of which there is agreement between both the Conservative and Labour Parties locally as far as the Local Government Boundary Review is concerned, for the latter said in their submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission that the proposed inclusion of LA1 within the new Thamesmead East ward would correct, "The anomaly of that neighbourhood identifiably Thamesmead sitting outside of Thamesmead."

They further went on to say that communities at the upper and lower ends of the current Lesnes Abbey ward have little in common and are quite distinct from one another. In that, they are absolutely right, Mr Chairman.

Turning now to Belvedere ward, which I know from my time representing it that there are compelling grounds for retaining the community ties to Abbey Wood and Thamesmead that recent history and its geographical location have forged. Historically, Belvedere and Thamesmead are strongly connected with much of the Thamesmead development on the Bexley side of the boundary, much of which was on the marshes, having taken place in an area within the then constituted Belvedere ward. Indeed, the

current Thamesmead East ward and polling district LA1 were within Belvedere ward until the 1974 Election when Thamesmead East was established.

The transferring of Belvedere ward into Woolwich enables the whole of the Thamesmead area to be unified within the proposed Woolwich constituency whilst ensuring that the Woolwich and Erith and Crayford constituencies stay, with one other adjustment, within the statutory electoral quota.

That other adjustment, and which I also strongly support, is the proposal to remove St Michael's ward from the proposed Woolwich seat. There are significant physical boundaries between St Michael's ward and the Greenwich parts of the proposed Woolwich constituency. These boundaries include Bostall Hill, Bostall Woods, Bostall Heath and the East Wycombe open space. St Michael's ward itself is adjacent, as you heard earlier, to both Lesnes Abbey and Brampton wards with no barriers of any consequence to separate them.

Residents feel that they are part of the same community and, like the residents of both those other wards, St Michael's residents look for historic and traditional reasons to the facilities of Bexleyheath and Welling, not Woolwich. All the St Michael's ward residents to whom I have spoken consider themselves to be part of Bexley. Many of their children attend Bexley schools, whilst residents shop in Bexley, are part of the Bexley community and have minimal contact with the Greenwich wards.

It, therefore, makes sense, we argue, for that ward to stay within the Erith and Crayford constituency where those links will remain. The community living there are far more connected in terms of their use of those facilities to the Erith and Crayford seat. Mr Chairman, our suggested changes to the Commission's proposals reflect the desire to ensure community cohesion and satisfy the Commission's remit regarding population numbers.

They would also satisfy the statutory criteria under Schedule 2 of the Act, namely the taking into account of the special geographical considerations, the boundaries of existing constituencies and historic community ties. We believe - in fact, we know from speaking to many people - that they will be strongly supported locally and they remain within the electoral quota.

I do hope, Mr Chairman, that your careful consideration of this matter will lead you to share our conclusion; in which event, a decision to keep Thamesmead, including Lesnes Abbey polling district LA1, together as a whole within one constituency, whilst ensuring the continuation of the relationship between St Michael's ward and the four other polling districts of Lesnes Abbey to the centres of which they have traditionally been associated and connected, will be welcomed by the overwhelming majority of residents. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is again very clear. Any matters for clarification? (No response). Are you going to leave us a copy of your ---

CLLR READ: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is most helpful, thank you very much. Thank you for your attendance. Mr Neil Gerrard. Again, if you could just start by giving us your name and address to begin, thank you.

MR GERRARD: Yes, my name is Neil Gerrard. The address is 43 Eden Road, Walthamstow, E17. It is to Walthamstow that I want mainly to refer. My background is that I have lived in Walthamstow since early 1969. I was a member of the Council there from 1973 to 1990 and leader of the Council for part of that time. I was the MP for Walthamstow from 1990 to 2010, when I retired.

I think I can claim to know the area pretty thoroughly. The present constituency boundaries came about after a very long and very thorough public inquiry at a review in the 1990s. I think this is actually the fourth review that I have had some involvement with. But that review did make significant changes because, at the time, what was happening was that six seats across Waltham Forest and Redbridge were being reduced to five. There was a lot of interest.

The Boundary Commission took evidence and actually changed its initial recommendations, and I think the boundaries that we have got now have really worked well. I appreciate they have got to change. The rules, particularly with regard to numbers, mean that they have to change. There are the other rules, of course, that the Commission can take into consideration about boundaries of existing constituencies and local ties.

It is those particular criteria that I want to speak about mainly. If you look at the current Walthamstow boundaries, I think it has some of the clearest boundaries actually in the area. On the west side it is cut off from inner London by the Lea Valley. The east side is Epping Forest. At the north - and I am going to talk at some length about this - there is a major division between Walthamstow and Chingford where the North Circular Road runs.

I think it has got some of the tightest and best defined local boundaries. Probably the least well-defined is the south, but certainly east and west are very clear natural boundaries. On the north side. As I said, the major dividing line between Chingford and Walthamstow geographically is the North Circular Road. At the moment, the two Walthamstow wards which adjoin that are Higham Hill ward and Chapel End.

In the Commission's proposals, Chapel End will be one of the wards that is taken out of

Walthamstow. If you actually look at it on the ground, it is not just the road; you have got quite a lot of open space, playing fields and there are quite major separations there between Walthamstow and Chingford.

I understand, having looked at it, that the submission from the Conservative Party agree with that and says Chapel End is naturally part of Walthamstow rather than being part of Chingford. If you asked people who lived in Chapel End where do they live - well, there is a very small part of the ward which I think from sort of historic accidents when ward numbers were being balanced and it ended up on the north side of the North Circular, where the vast bulk of the ward is south of the North Circular - they would say Walthamstow. Their postal address is Walthamstow East 17.

I can certainly recall in the 90s, between 1992 and 1997, Chapel End actually then was part of Chingford. It had been moved from an old Walthamstow seat into Chingford by a review in the 1970s. I think, like any MP, I used to get people approaching me who did not live in the constituency. That happens to everybody. Sometimes it is because of something that has happened in that you have been in the national news, but it is also surprising how many people do not actually know which constituency they live in, even just after an election.

One of the things that was really striking to me was that the constant stream of people coming to me who lived in Chapel End ward; and, when I said to them, "Sorry, you do not live in Walthamstow", "but, yes, I do, of course, I live in Walthamstow" was always the reaction. That is the way that people think of themselves in that Chapel End area. If you look at the patterns of where people from that area would go to shop, yes, for major big shops they might go as far as Westfield or they might go to one of the big stores on the North Circular, but for local shopping they would go to Walthamstow. They would not go to Chingford.

If you look at the schools, there is a sixth form college in that area. It is one of two sixth form colleges in the borough and so, not surprisingly, that does attract students from a wide area. If you look at the secondary schools and the primary schools, I think what I am certain you would find very very few people pupils who were travelling to schools on the other side of the North Circular from where they lived.

The people on the north side of the North Circular would be going to Chingford schools. Those on the south side in Chapel End would be going to schools in Walthamstow. The same applies with transport links. The transport links run into Walthamstow Central. That is the way that most people would travel.

If Chapel End is naturally part of Walthamstow, which I would argue and which I said the Conservative Party's submission argues as well, then I think that applies at least as much to Wood Street ward which is the other ward which it is proposed to take out of the current Walthamstow. I live actually close to that ward boundary.

If Wood Street is taken out of Walthamstow it may look fine on a map. But when you are actually on the ground what becomes the constituency boundary, there is a little path that runs behind houses on Beulah Road which is a small residential road. All sorts of things cross that boundary. School catchment areas do. There is actually one school that would have its two sites in different constituencies. There is a conservation area there around Walthamstow Village. Some of those roads running off Beulah Road are probably not strictly in the conservation area, but they certainly regard themselves as living in Walthamstow Village.

I know estate agents are very inventive sometimes in describing the extent of Walthamstow Village, but I do know that people who actually live in those roads would say, "Yes, I live in Walthamstow Village." There is a small shopping centre in Wood Street, but the major shopping trips, I am sure, again, would be into the centre of Walthamstow and very very few people from Wood Street would think of going to Leytonstone or Wanstead to shop.

On the east side - and I think this is the most important point about it - the separation between Wood Street and the other wards that are being in the proposed Leytonstone and Wanstead constituency is Epping Forest land. To walk across would take you at least 20 minutes. There is a major separation there between Wood Street and the wards to the east, whereas at the west side of Wood Street, let us say the proposed boundary, there is a little path that just runs behind the back of some residential streets.

I do not think there are any real community links whatsoever across from Wood Street into Snaresbrook and Wanstead and, again, the transport links are into the centre of Walthamstow. Essentially, what I believe is that, as well as looking at the numbers, it is important to look at the local community links when drawing constituency boundaries.

I think it is possible in this area to keep those strong local links and to meet the numbers criteria. That is achieved by the counter-proposal that has been put forward by the Labour Party that keeps the current wards within Walthamstow and adds on Forest ward from the current Leyton and Wanstead. It brings in a ward that is adjacent to the current Walthamstow wards of Wood Street and Lea Bridge. It means, actually, that virtually every ward within Waltham Forest remains in a constituency which is very close to the current arrangement. It gives rise to minimal change.

What I think it does is produce a constituency which adheres much more closely to natural boundaries than the recommendations which have been made, because what they do I think is take away the natural boundaries. They certainly take away the natural boundaries at the north of Walthamstow and the east and add on four wards from the current Leyton and Wanstead constituency.

What that would result in then is a long sort of narrow constituency running from the

North Circular right down to the boundary with Newham. Those wards that are adjacent to Newham, wards like Cann Hall ward and Cathall ward, their local connections with Walthamstow are minimal. The people from there, if they are going shopping they will go to Stratford. That is the nearest place for them to shop. It is the easiest place for them to travel from. The links between the north and south end of this proposed Walthamstow constituency really are quite minimal.

I hope that the Commission will look again. The change that is being proposed works in terms of the numbers. It is still within the limits that are required by the rules. What I think it does deliver, certainly for Walthamstow and I think for Chingford and for the other parts of the borough as well, are constituencies which are much much closer to where the natural boundaries lie, where people think they live, where they regard themselves as living and where there are local communities.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. That is very helpful. Any matters for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much then. Tim Mitchell. Again, if you could just introduce yourself by way of name and address please, at the beginning.

CLLR MITCHELL (City of Westminster): I am Cllr Tim Mitchell. My home address is Flat 7, 23 Sutherland Avenue, London W9 2HE. I am speaking in support of the Boundary Commission proposals in respect of the Cities of London and Westminster and for Queen's Park and Regent's Park constituency.

I am a councillor for the City of Westminster. I am the cabinet member responsible for finance and corporate services which has, under my remit, the electoral registration and other electoral matters. I am also chief whip of the majority party, the Conservative group, on the City Council. I am councillor for St James ward, which is in the south of the present Cities of London and Westminster constituency. I am presently a resident of the present North Westminster constituency. I live in Maida Vale.

I am speaking, first of all, from the point of view of Westminster City Council, speaking to a paper which will be coming to you subject to a vote tomorrow at a committee from an official view about the proposed constituencies, which can be summarised as follows. First of all, the initial proposals maintain the historic link between the two Cities of London and Westminster, whereas the previous proposal took away that historic link.

The initial proposals present a better administrative framework for council officers to administer where we have the Westminster wards in two parliamentary constituencies, whereas the previous proposals had our wards in three parliamentary constituencies. That goes on to make the point that Westminster's returning officer would act as returning officer under these proposals for the two constituencies, whereas on the previous proposals it would be only one of the three Westminster constituencies where they would act as returning officer. Administratively, it makes more sense.

Also, in our view, the initial proposals create less confusion for Westminster voters, as what is proposed make comparatively little change to the existing boundaries. Of course, we acknowledge, because of the numbers, that there has to be changes. Also, the proposals do not propose splitting any of the existing ward boundaries. Therefore, from a City Council point of view we propose to support the proposals.

Speaking as a member of a ward within the present Cities of London and Westminster constituency, I am, as I mentioned, one of the three ward councillors for the present St James ward which is along the river to Temple and then goes up to Covent Garden. The proposals are to unite Covent Garden into one parliamentary constituency, which from a community point of view makes a lot of sense.

There is a very strong Covent Garden Community Association which straddles both boroughs and this would give an extra focus to those. Therefore, the proposal in respect of the Holborn and Covent Garden ward in Camden, and its neighbour Bloomsbury, makes a lot of sense from a ward point of view.

Elsewhere, the proposed Cities of London and Westminster constituency have the proposal to add Lancaster Gate which was up to 2010 part of the Cities of London and Westminster constituency and, therefore, it is joining what was an existing link. In respect of the present North Westminster constituency, despite the radical name change proposed by the Commission to Queen's Park and Regent's Park, the proposal is to take away Lancaster Gate and then add two wards from Brent borough, which as one can see from the papers the proposal is in respect of adding Queen's Park ward from Brent which is the identical name to our own Queen's Park because we straddle the Queen's park to the north and south.

Also, the point about the addition of the Brent wards and the view the Commission has taken in terms of natural boundaries. On the one hand, you have the Grand Union Canal which goes up and splits Westminster and North Kensington at present. On the other hand, you have the railway tracks which also go through Queen's Park. In my view, the railway is no greater a boundary than the canal presents at the moment.

Lastly, I would like to make the following points. The counter-proposals which the Labour Party have made, in my view, will add to greater confusion by seeking to join Westminster with Kensington and Chelsea in two places which will add to greater confusion. Both Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea are comparatively small boroughs and to keep a distinction makes a lot of sense. Also, play has been made of the present tri-borough arrangements between Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster.

I would like to put on record that the City Council has tri-borough arrangements with those two other boroughs; bi-borough arrangements with Kensington Chelsea, and also

mono-borough arrangements and has a number of other partnerships with Central London boroughs - for example, Central London Forward, the Cross-River Partnership and various other arrangements. For example, we are in discussion with Camden and Kensington and Chelsea over a service, coming together to provide a building control service. So we are not wedded to tri-borough in every single respect of the services which we provide.

In my view, the Commission's proposals fulfil the criteria in terms of, as far as possible, maintaining the existing constituency and also having due respect to local ties, both in South Westminster in respect of Covent Garden but also in North Westminster in respect of Queen's Park. Thank you very much indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Just to clarify, I think you said subject to a committee meeting tomorrow and a vote, presumably, we will have a formal submission?

CLLR MITCHELL: Indeed, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excellent, thank you. Are there any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thanks very much indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next scheduled speaker is at 4.00 and so we will adjourn until 10 to 4. Thank you.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will reconvene and our next scheduled speaker is here. I hope it is Mr Andrew Dixon, yes?

MR DIXON: It is, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excellent. If you would just like to start and, by way of introduction, just give us your name and address, please.

MR DIXON: My name is Andrew Dixon. My address is 3 Bremer Mews, Walthamstow, London E17 9RA.

I am here today to speak as a resident of Walthamstow. I am a member of the Labour Party and I am Chair of the Waltham Forest Co-operative Party, but I speak as an individual resident of Walthamstow who has come to feel particularly strongly about the proposals and the impact they could have on this community.

In doing so, I think I am speaking on behalf of many more people. Indeed, in conversation with and by email with other local residents, I have taken on board and will try to make use of comments and statements that they have made. To be clear from the outset, I have objections to the current proposals as they affect Walthamstow constituency.

I believe the proposals would split off what are considered by most to be integral parts of Walthamstow and conjoin them to areas with which they have very little connection or shared identity in a way that most residents of those areas would view as quite alien. I believe that these objections, which I will try to set out, would be best tackled by the adoption of the counter-proposals submitted by London Regional Labour Party at the hearing in Westminster, for reasons I will try to make clear.

I note that these counter-proposals meet the requirements for the statutory electorate range for Walthamstow constituency and the whole of the London region. Walthamstow has a strong sense of place that I think is both historic and very much present. It has also a very strong - and I would say as a relatively new resident, a surprisingly and noticeably strong sense of itself. Its sense of place is bound up in very clear and difficult to miss geographical boundaries.

To the west, the River Lea and Walthamstow Marshes form a very natural boundary between Walthamstow and Tottenham and Hackney. To the east, Epping Forest forms a natural break with Woodford and Wanstead and Snaresbrook. To the north, the four lane North Circular creates a clear physical barrier between Walthamstow and Chingford.

Walthamstow's sense of identity and self is bound up in its shared public spaces, its historic sites, its transport and shopping hubs and not least its famous East 17 postcode. Its Member of Parliament, I think, is a central part of that sense of self in a way which is not dependent on any individual parliamentarian, and I think it is noticeable that its previous and very highly regarded MP, Neil Gerrard, has also given evidence here today.

Chapel End and Wood Street, two wards which under the proposals would be separated off into other constituencies, make up integral parts of that place and identity which is Walthamstow. The splitting of the constituency in this way, I and many other people believe, would be genuinely quite detrimental to the area and its sense of identity.

I will start with Chapel End, which under the proposals would move into the Chingford constituency. The ward itself includes key and historic Walthamstow sites which form an integral part of the identity of the area and the local community. That includes Waltham Forest Town Hall and, in particular, the grade 2 listed Assembly Hall, the correct title for which is Walthamstow not Waltham Forest Assembly Hall. Residents I

have heard from have strongly objected to this. As Julian Richards of Woodfield Road said:

"The town hall is emphatically and historically part of Walthamstow. It would be bizarre to have it in any other constituency."

The ward of Chapel End also includes crucially Lloyd park, which is unquestionably a central part of Walthamstow life. To give one instance, every year since I have lived in Walthamstow, Lloyd Park has hosted the Walthamstow Garden Party - and, again, at the risk of labouring a point, it is called Walthamstow Garden Party not Chingford Garden Party. It is also home to the award-winning William Morris Gallery, dedicated to the work of one of Walthamstow's most famous residents and set in his childhood family home. I quote another local resident, Anna Jewett:

"Lloyd Park and its surrounding residential area and schools are very much a part of Walthamstow. Many families have children in Winns, Hillyfield and other schools and go there daily. The park and the resources in it, such as the children's centre, are used by people from all over Walthamstow. It should remain part of the Walthamstow constituency."

Moreover, there is very little connection between the Chapel End ward and Chingford. The North Circular represents a very real, not to say, physically formidable barrier between Chapel End and Chingford and the rest of the Chingford constituency. Ruth Allen of Spruce Hills Road said:

"We are definitely part of the greater Walthamstow community rather than Chingford. Separated by the North Circular, there are no natural links and it would be difficult to form political links."

I now come on to Wood Street, which under the proposals would move into a Leyton and Wanstead constituency. I believe, quite strongly, that Wood Street is clearly and demonstrably a part of Walthamstow. Indeed, the eastern-most part of the ward is named Upper Walthamstow. In fact, Google tells us:

"Upper Walthamstow is the easterly part of Walthamstow, London, England. It occupies an area of about 0.5 square kilometres, bounded by the A406, Wood Street and the railway track."

Moreover, the proposed constituency boundary would take out of Walthamstow constituency residents living literally no more than one minute's walk away from the historic Walthamstow Village Centre. The new boundary, which would run along Beulah Path, otherwise a fairly insignificant alleyway, would skirt the village itself. Residents affected by this would strongly consider themselves as residents of that historic Walthamstow Village.

The community as a whole I think feels that that division particularly would make no sense and certainly makes no sense to them. Like Chapel End, the lives of residents of Wood Street naturally gravitate towards Walthamstow. Walthamstow provides their main shopping centre and their main social and entertainment hubs.

Walthamstow Central is their major transport hub. Wood Street railway station is used as an access point to Walthamstow, but not to Wanstead and certainly not to Leytonstone. The transport links from Wood Street to Wanstead and Leytonstone are not great. To sum up the view of many Wood Street residents, I quote Helen and Laurie Hunt of Fyfield Road, who write:

"We are residents of Walthamstow. We live in Wood Street ward. We are involved in various community projects in Walthamstow which encompass the whole area between Epping Forest and Walthamstow Marshes. These two areas forms the natural boundaries of Walthamstow. Despite living close to the shopping centre of South Woodford, we never visit it to shop or use other facilities there as the physical boundary of the Forest is between us. Walthamstow is where most of our friends live, our children's schoolmates and the town centre we use. It is our community."

I hope I have managed, in some way, to provide the Commission with a strong sense of the ties that bind these two wards into Walthamstow. I would further note that, when speaking to and emailing people about these changes, I was struck, among other things, by the numerous examples people gave of the engagement with community activities and community groups that people reported. Those ties stretch across the current Walthamstow constituency, but they were rarely replicated or accompanied by similar engagement with neighbouring areas.

To end, I would like to add that I think the addition of the ward of Forest to the existing Walthamstow constituency, as has been put forward as an alternative proposal, would make far more sense to local residents. It would retain parts of Walthamstow which are integral to its identity and sense of place but would otherwise be hived off.

In addition, the southern boundary of Walthamstow is less obvious and less geographically defined than the north, the east and the west boundaries. I think, in this sense, the inclusion of Forest would feel more natural and would make use of Epping Forest as an obvious natural boundary.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, that is very helpful and very clear. Any matters for clarification? (No response). Are you writing in as well?

MR DIXON: I can do, if that would be helpful.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think it would be helpful, yes, if you would, thank you. Calvin Robinson. Would you like to come forward and give your evidence, Sir? If you could just introduce yourself by way of name and address to begin, please.

MR ROBINSON: Good afternoon. My name is Calvin Robinson. I live on Chamberlain Road in Kensal Rise. As a resident of Queen's Park ward and a former candidate for Kilburn and Brent ward, I support the creation of the Queen's Park and Regent's Park constituency. I support these proposed boundary changes because they, essentially, unite Queen's Park Brent with Queen's Park Westminster.

We have a very active and engaged community in Queen's Park. In fact, Queen's Park was the first borough in London to have a parish or community council. The community council and the residents' associations are very active and they run events such as Queen's Park Day which make no differentiation between the Queen's Park boroughs. The community is one and of its own.

Queen's Park residents are united by our communal green spaces. It makes very little sense to separate these wards. We have Queen's Park, the park itself. We have Queen's Park, the gardens. Kilburn is also currently separated with a split to the south. The new boundaries would reunite South Kilburn and Maida Vale with the top end of the Kilburn High Street but, more importantly, they would include West Kilburn.

It also makes a lot of sense to incorporate more of the Harrow Road in the boundary, as it is the main road running along both Queen's Park wards, down into Westbourne and Bayswater, which are also part of the Queen's Park and Regent's Park constituency. Queen's Park and Regent's Park constituency would include more of the Harrow Road up to the sensible boundary that is the junction of Kensal Green station.

Queen's Park overground and Bakerloo station (*sic*) is the nearest station for most part of both Queen's Park wards, as well as the majority of West Kilburn. This shared transport hub also identifies the close links in the area. Local newspapers, namely the Times, report activities in and around Queen's Park, making no differentiation between Brent and Westminster Queen's Park.

The paper also reports on Kilburn activities, only up until the border between Brent and Camden, meaning our major local newspaper already covers the community issues within the area that are proposed by these boundary changes. Kilburn Library and Kilburn Police Station are both on Queen's Park High Street, Salisbury road. Queen's Park Farmers' Market, also on the High Street, is a local go-to for fresh produce in Queen's Park, Kilburn and Maida Vale, the whole surrounding area.

The relationship between Queen's Park and Kilburn is a strong one. The area has, essentially, been the Brent bit of Hampstead and Kilburn constituency for a long time. While Queen's Park and Kilburn share community, transport and geographical links with

each other, this has not necessarily been the case for Queen's Park and Kilburn with the rest of Hampstead and Kilburn. H and K is mostly Greater Hampstead, which has its completely different vibe, separate transport links and very few ties to Queen's Park and Kilburn.

The new constituency links Queen's Park and Kilburn to West Kilburn, Maida Vale, Warwick Avenue, all of which are linked by the Harrow Road, access to Queen's Park, the actual park itself, and they border the local canal. Queen's Park and Kilburn are far more united under the initial proposals than they are under the current boundary. As the local resident, the initial proposals looks promising for our community.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is very clear and very helpful, thank you. Any matters for clarification? (No response). In which case, thank you very much indeed.

MR ROBINSON: Thank you, good afternoon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have no further scheduled speakers but, I believe, Lord Hayward, you wanted to make a submission?

LORD HAYWARD: Thank you. My apologies for coming back to the microphone a second time today. During my presentation, I said I would refer to the topic of unmoved electors at a later stage. I am afraid I failed to do so, for which I apologise. I have given Richard from the Labour Party notice that I intended to mention this. It would appear from the submissions of the two parties that, in fact, we have made calculations in relation to unmoved electors in different ways.

What we intend to do for the Conservative Party is to look at the Labour Party's submission and try and resolve the differentiation between numbers and then identify them and cross-refer them so that the Boundary Commission and yourself are actually looking at the same comparable logistical process. Thank you for allowing me to come back and, as I say, I spoke to Richard earlier on and said this is what we would be doing. I will repeat, I think on behalf of all of us, our thanks to you and to the staff for the way we have handled the last ten days. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, thank you very much indeed and thank you for raising the point. We have no further scheduled speakers and so we can could the proceedings to a halt or we could wait a little longer in case there is passing trade. Do you have any views on this matter?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is the Chairman's decision, Mr Chairman.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Shall we last until 4.15, what do you think?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will go to 4.15 and, if no one else strides in through the door, then we will call it to a close. Can I thank both all of you for your constructive input into the proceedings and the staff for excellent support to what we have done. Thank you very much indeed.

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