

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**AUDITORIUM, THE STOREY
MEETING HOUSE LANE, LANCASTER**

ON

**TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2016
DAY TWO**

Before:

Mr Neil Ward, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

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

Time noted: 9 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this, the second day, and indeed the final day, of the public hearing in Lancaster but the final day of the public hearings across the North West of England. These hearings are into the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the revised parliamentary boundaries for the North West of England.

My name is Neil Ward. I am the Lead Assistant Commissioner appointed by the Boundary Commission to do two things. First of all, to chair these hearings and, secondly, along with my colleagues Nicholas Elliott and Graham Clark, as Assistant Boundary Commissioners, to take on board all the representations we are receiving, whether in the public hearings or in written form, all of which are due by 5 December, and to consider whether in the light of those representations we ought to recommend changes to the Boundary Commission's initial proposals.

The purpose of these hearings is to take on board representations. It is not to debate the merits of the Boundary Commission's proposals with the Boundary Commission, it is not to cross-examine speakers. I know, looking at today's list, that not everyone speaking today are professional speakers and therefore I hope we can all be supportive of all the speakers. It has been the case in all of the hearings so far and I am sure we will be able to continue it today.

Typically, we give everyone 10 minute slots, often it turns out that people do not need 10 minutes, and I will adjust the timing according to which speakers are here or available. If we have to adjourn we shall do, we will have a little bit of flexibility as the day goes on. My aim is to try and enable everyone who wishes to speak to speak. I can see we are getting quite a lot of names today and if I can I will. The hearing lasts from now until 5 pm and will close at 5 pm. Therefore, we will try to accommodate everyone we can within that time scale.

For those who like to plan their day, we will break for lunch at 1 o'clock, probably until two, but that might depend on demand, and there will be a couple of comfort breaks throughout the day.

For domestics, there are toilets out in the main areas of the building and there are no fire alarms planned today so if the fire alarm does go off we should assume it to be real and the fire exits are marked on all three doors in this room. Is that clear to how we proceed? I am really looking at two newcomers who have come into the room as most of the people here have been to other hearings.

All the representations are being filmed and recorded because it is part of a public consultation and, therefore, it is a matter of record. We shall require anybody who

wishes to speak to come up to the podium, give their name and full address and then make the presentation and at the end of that either I or others may or may not seek clarification of any points depending on how the presentation has gone. It is not a point where people cross-examine anyone but there might points where it is not clear on the map or elsewhere where we are talking about. If we are ready to go, I believe Mr Tim Hamilton-Cox is here and if you can come up and proceed as I have just explained. I will be taking notes as we go through.

CLLR HAMILTON-COX: (Green Party) My name is Tim Hamilton-Cox. I am a city councillor for Bulk ward, which is where most of the focus is for my slot. My address is 29 Alderman Road, LA1 5FW.

The first point I want to make is to contest the Conservative proposal that Bulk ward should be absorbed into Morecambe and Lunesdale and will preserve that constituency.

There is no historic precedent for such a move. I have looked at the parliamentary boundaries from 1832 to current and never has Bulk ward been subsumed into a constituency to the west of the Lune. Yes, from 1832 to current that is the case. Either it has been a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, as it was 1885 to 1948, or Morecambe and Heysham has been separate from Lancaster, so it is an entirely opportunistic move by the Conservatives.

If you look at the development of Lancaster, illustrated by John Speed's map from 1610, you will see that Bulk and the eponymous Castle ward were the nucleus of the development of Lancaster from at least late mediaeval times.

The second point I want to make is about the numbers. I know Boundary Commissioners are constrained by law, but if the law is an ass then I am not backward at coming forward in saying that. The December 2015 registered electors number for Bulk is 4,592. That compares with the number of electors in May 2015, when I was re-elected, of 5,249. In May 2011, when I was first elected, the number of electors was 5,112, you will see substantially above the December 2015 figure.

Since May 2011, I have totted up there have been planning permissions totalling around 675 new households, most of which have now been built up. There is another phase of development of around 60 homes underway. If I use the metric, the one solid figure we have got for population, the 2011 census, it was 5,874 aged 18 and above against the figure being used of 4,592, so again the ratio is 28% population above the number of registered electors.

I am just giving you an indication of the level of development since then, so that gap will have grown even more and that does not include all the purpose-built student accommodation and the conversions which have been added in since 2011 as well.

The 4,592 is going to effectively lead to an under-representation of Bulk ward. I think I have made my main points and I will leave it there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: As you rightly surmised, we are committed to the December 2015 figures and will use them. Why do you believe those numbers dropped in December 2015 to 600 or 700 below?

CLLR HAMILTON-COX: Setting aside the transient nature of the student population there is also a part of the ward that is transient in terms of it is rented and it turns over quite a lot. There are several areas, both private and social rented, which turn over quickly.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is a question from the front.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Sir Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. I take it from what you have said that you support the Boundary Commission proposal for Lancaster and Morecambe. If you do, as I am drawing that conclusion, does that mean you are happy that the university is excluded from the constituency?

CLLR HAMILTON-COX: I did not come to talk about that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Were there any other points? (No response) Catherine Jackson? Thank you very much.

CLLR JACKSON: (Green Party) My name is Caroline Jackson. I live in Bulk ward, 15 Melbourne Road LA1 3QB. I am also a city councillor for the ward and have represented that area for the last three and a half years.

I would like first to comment on the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission and then on the idea of moving Bulk ward into another constituency. The proposed Morecambe and Lancaster constituency does represent a compact easily identifiable predominantly urban area which has some strong advantages for us as a district. In terms of the district council we have a common interest and it would definitely be more efficient working if we had one MP alongside the district rather than two. We do have difficulties when two MPs represent very different interests and sometimes one gets involved with the other. It can disadvantage when it is working with the district and often a district has bigger interests in the economy areas that the MPs would be working with us on.

I understand the difficulty about the university, and I understand that is about numbers, and the university does represent a big interest. However, looking at the other constituency, the huge rural constituency presents some difficulties for an MP, but having been a head teacher in Hornby area I understand too that the residents of rural

areas have very big common interests and an MP representing a big rural area could help advance their interests.

As a Bulk ward voter and councillor I know the area pretty well. My chief concern would be for the way that the people in that ward understand their representation. I do not feel that they would feel enfranchised by being part of a constituency that is basically, for them, across the river and has not got a commonality of interest.

If the rest of Lancaster is part of it, yes, I think they would see a common interest, but to be on your own is to feel just a convenience, particularly for some people who are quite vulnerable in that ward and we have had increasing interest in voting, which is definitely pleasing in terms of that means that people are taking an interest and feeling that they are part of what is going on. I do not see that continuing to happen if we are just one little part of a constituency that is basically across the river rather than one part of a district. I would feel that the chief difficulty for Bulk would be the sense of disenfranchisement by being put in what appears to be an electoral efficiency or just useful in terms of what the MP might be wanting to do. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just so I understand your last point there, you were then speaking in relation to the counter-proposal which would move Bulk into a Morecambe and Lune constituency?

CLLR JACKSON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask you a little bit more about north Lancaster speaking from your experience. Can you just elaborate a bit more on that because we have heard that this is an enormous constituency with no real centre to it and therefore is it a manageable proposition?

CLLR JACKSON: In terms of an MP, I think it is a difficult proposition in their life but then they choose where they want to represent. I think in terms of the people who live in it, we have got a very large farming group in there and they have their links between farming groups. Their common interest is quite often across the borders of counties even and it is about what they do and how they do it and therefore you will find links quite widely, they will probably go up into the Lake District as well, and they are often family links.

Yes, I think you would find people have a common interest. I have a tenant farmer on a very small bit of land of mine, he has interests that go down as far as Garstang and as far up into Yorkshire into the Hornby border because that is the way the settled communities work. I agree that the university is a real problem; I do not know how that would work, I am sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any points?

MR WALSH: (Conservative Party) John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You talk eloquently about the importance of the wards which form the city, what about electors, and your perception? I am sorry, I did not understand how you disengaged from electors in Carnforth or in the lower Lune Valley all of whom I understand are in the city council?

CLLR JACKSON: I agree with you that Carnforth represents an urban area, some of it, although that is not all an urban group. Whichever constituency boundary you draw will have that problem. We are saying that the Bulk ward one is a problem, Carnforth is a problem. Carnforth, looking at that, and I do not know what the numbers are, is probably a smaller problem than Bulk ward, especially since Bulk ward is growing. As well as what Tim mentioned, there is a proposal for a very large amount of building there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Just as a general comment, as a councillor for Bulk ward, I think it is fair to say that we as Assistant Commissioners have heard and received the message very loudly about the positioning of Bulk ward. That is not to pre-judge our view but we have definitely heard the view. We heard it yesterday and I am sure we will hear it again today. We understand where Bulk sits and we understand its relationship to the city of Lancaster.

CLLR JACKSON: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is that Janet Regan taking her coat off? I gather you do want to speak, but please settle yourself down first.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: She did, but I don't have any speakers at the moment. I am happy to wait but equally, whenever you feel settled feel free to come up. The form is that anyone who wishes to make representations comes up to the podium, gives their name and address and makes whatever representations they wish to make. There may be points that people wish to clarify, we have had a couple already this morning, but it is fairly relaxed in here. It seems more formal than it is. When you have finished there may be points of clarification, but otherwise when you are ready please come up and make your point.

MS REGAN: My name is Janet Regan, 104 Ullswater Road, Lancaster LA1 3PX. I do not know a huge amount about all of this process and things. I have seen the Boundary Commission's plans and I think probably putting Lancaster and Morecambe together seems like a very good idea in a lot of ways, but I am particularly concerned about the counter-proposal that puts the area where I live out of Lancaster.

I feel that very much it is part of Lancaster and it should all be part of the same constituency. I am a five minute walk from the centre of town, my kids go to school on this side of town, I work on this side of town, I shop here. I very much feel like I do live in Lancaster and not Lunesdale or wherever we would be out with or even Morecambe under the counter-proposal. That is what has motivated me to come here really. I do also think that possibly on the proposal for the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency it could go a bit further out from the city. I think there are some areas that probably consider themselves part of Lancaster that are not included in that, but I do not live in those areas, I am not quite as qualified to give an opinion on those I do not think. That was kind of all I came to say, really.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Can I just check, Ullswater Road you said?

MS REGAN: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is that in the Bulk ward?

MS REGAN: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Out of interest, can you elaborate - and I understand you did not feel qualified to speak in detail about the others - which areas you were talking about so at least I have it in my mind?

MS REGAN: When I said about outside?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MS REGAN: As far as I am aware, is the university going to be outside?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MS REGAN: Then that would extend to places like Galgate and other places that seem to me to be very connected to Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am just looking at my map to check I understand. It is just a bit further south of the university?

MS REGAN: Yes, exactly.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points anyone wants to ask? (No response) Thank you for coming along, I appreciate it. Is James Leyshon here? The position is if you could give your name and full address and then make your representations, then there may or may not be points of clarification afterwards.

MR LEYSHON: I am struggling to speak here, I think I am losing my voice. My name is James Leyshon, I am a cabinet member on Lancaster City Council and my full address is 3 Hastings Road in Lancaster. My contribution really is going to be very short. I just came to speak in support of the proposals for a combined seat including the urban areas of Lancaster and Morecambe, including Heysham as well.

As a cabinet member on the city council I know how well the district works together and how individuals from both Morecambe, Lancaster and different areas of the district they feel very much as one community. Events that are put on across the district are well attended from both areas of the district and from different areas. We are very much one area. There are areas over in Morecambe that have Lancaster postcodes who feel very much as one community.

My contribution was also going to include just a very quick mention about the university and University ward. I am actually a recent graduate of Lancaster University. I was elected to Lancaster City Council while actually studying as a student at Lancaster university, so my contribution is just actually to say that students can have a very, very active role in the city in the district as a whole.

I very much, as soon as I came up to Lancaster for university, threw myself into life living in Lancaster and the district. The university is very much a part of our district as a whole.

My other one was very quickly about proposals that include removing Bulk ward from the proposed single seat. I think it is farcical, the idea of not having, for example, the Dukes Theatre, which is a very, very central part of our district, a big economic driver, a big cultural driver for our district, not having that included. For example, with the castle there is a lot of collaborative work that goes on across the district and the idea of them not being included is actually quite scary, to be frank. That is my contribution and I just wanted to put that across.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Very well put. Can I check in relation to the university, given that you were a student there? Obviously the first year students live in halls of residence, where typically after that would students find their lodgings?

MR LEYSHON: It does actually change. The majority of students live on campus, but not necessarily all. I know people who had family who lived in Lancaster so they actually stayed off campus in the first year. I lived on campus in the first year, I lived in university halls of residence that are actually in the city centre in my second year and then in my third year I lived in private rented accommodation in the city centre. There is quite a mixture but very much integrated with the city as a whole. It is very much integrated and it is not an isolated separate part of the district.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have heard people, not today, talk about the distinct characteristics which identify Morecambe from Lancaster and in particular it might be a bit of chalk and cheese, that they do not get on together. That is not quite what I gathered from the way you were explaining about them working well. I just wondered whether you have encountered that as a district councillor.

MR LEYSHON: Yes. I think you can have very, very distinct identities while working very, very closely together. I think Morecambe has a very proud heritage, as does Lancaster, and they complement each other quite well, the very historical nature of Lancaster and the seaside resort nature of Morecambe, I think they complement each other and the city council does a lot of work across both of those areas a lot of investment into Morecambe. I think it has to work together not as separate isolated areas and I think one Member of Parliament could effectively represent both areas most definitely.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You clearly argue the case for a ward like Poulton, the heart of Morecambe, to be linked to the city but equally eloquently argue the University ward and I am not clear, given the constraint of numbers, which you perceive to be the stronger link?

MR LEYSHON: I think actually there are a lot of areas up towards the north of the proposed constituency, for example in Bolton-le-Slyne. I have spoken to representatives from different parties, including the one that the gentleman represents, who actually feel like areas, for example in Bolton-le-Slyne, would fit much more in a more rural northern seat. I do not know if the numbers would work. I think there are different ways to look at it. There is also the possibility, and I know the Boundary Commission do not particularly like to split council wards in half, but given the unique nature of this seat, the University and Scotforth Rural elements of that city council ward, it may potentially be worth at whether the University and Scotforth Rural may be worth being put in different seats. I have not crunched the numbers particularly, I just wanted to say from a perspective of they are very much part of it and there are northern parts that are perhaps more rural that may fit in a different seat.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) Very interesting, thank you. Is Anna Lee here?

MS LEE: Good morning. Anna Lee, 33 Harriot Court, Lancaster LA1 1AE. I can see this building from where I live. I would like to speak firstly in supporting the proposed changes and why Lancaster and Fleetwood is an inefficient constituency that a few months ago I tried by public transport to go from Lancaster to Fleetwood. It took me over two hours to get there with the majority of the time spent outside the constituency in Preston and Blackpool.

Having lived here in Lancaster for five years now and having come up here for the university, I am struck that there are clear, strong links with the students from the university but that as a student who lived in the city the whole time at university there is also a hugely strong link between the city independently without the university and how that outside of studying I had huge links with the city itself, utterly unrelated to the fact that I was a student.

In Lancaster where I have lived, I have lived both in Castle ward where I currently live, and in Bulk. Many of my friends live in one or the other it seems appalling for the other proposals, as stressed in the *Lancaster Guardian* this week, to split Bulk off into a Morecambe and Lunesdale seat and that to split it from Lancaster itself. I find that a real shame as this just seems like nothing but gerrymandering and it should be part of local communities which come together. As you heard just now, as James said, that Morecambe and Lancaster work very well together. There are many community groups like around the Bay which work across Morecambe and Lancaster itself, numerous charities that work across the area supporting the needs which granted have differences but have so many similarities.

I started by talking about transport. Getting from Lancaster to Morecambe is an absolute breeze by bus or in fact by walking with the numerous bridges across. Hopefully the new link road will make travelling by car even easier. I firmly support the new proposals.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask a general question? It is not something you touched on but it is related, you live very close to it. Is the River Lune a barrier between Morecambe and Lancaster?

MS LEE: I do not think so, so much that over the summer I regularly walk across the Lune to go to the parks the other side of the river and I think numerous people within the community, particularly those who live on the other side of the river, feel very much part of the Lancaster community. I think there is not a firm barrier which it might appear when looking at a map.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: To ask a follow-up question, where would you say Lancaster ended, from here to Morecambe?

MS LEE: That is a difficult one. I am not actually sure. I think it is ever so slightly just north of the river, but I am not sure where exactly. I would need to look at a map properly to work that one out.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: (Conservative Party) Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. You support the proposals as put by the Boundary Commission, but you speak knowledgeably about the university and the university is outside on the Boundary Commission proposals. Do you believe that the university

should be in or outside and if it is in what would you knock off at the other end to match the numbers?

MS LEE: I have looked at the numbers for Lancaster university to be included and from what I can tell, and I have not heard of the idea of splitting that ward in half, but to include that the obvious one would be Bolton-le-Slyne and for those numbers to work you would also need to include Ellel which I do not think would be appropriate. I think while with some due consideration that sadly the most sense would be to keep it as it is. I would like to see the university itself inside, if it is possible to have Bolton-le-Slyne move in the rural seat and then for this seat to gain the university but the numbers that the Boundary Commission are working on do not seem that way.

I would like to make note how greatly different the numbers of people registered at the university differ from right now to the figures that the Boundary Commission are using. There is a significant difference where the numbers from the university is far, far higher. I think potentially the university is a special case where the registration has in the past been very low and it has recently picked up very strongly due to initiatives to increase registration and that will remain the case with the higher number and potentially the Boundary Commission could look at using the newer numbers instead.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am not entirely sure the Boundary Commission can use different numbers but I understand the point you are making.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You talk about the numbers varying, is it not the case that the university used to block register and there were no individual registrations?

MS LEE: Yes, indeed. I am sure you are very aware that the changes of methods of registration decimated student registration to vote. However, the university, in collaboration with the Student Union, this year has put together a new method of encouraging students to vote which has seen a huge increase in the registrations to vote and this was also in collaboration with the city council, so I think this will massively counteract the damage that was done by the coalition government before.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I do not think there are any other points of clarification, thank you very much indeed. Very helpful. We have other speakers planned who we know are in the building but they are not in the room at the moment so we will just sit and wait for a few minutes for someone to arrive. (After a short pause) My apologies there, for a moment I was just consulting colleagues.

Mr Mace, are you ready to speak? It is a little bit earlier than you were planning.

CLLR MACE: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Bluglass has just arrived and you are the next two speakers in my plans and it is a matter of choice. There are people to speak after you, so feel free. The form is that you will come up to the podium, give your name and full address, because we are recording these as part of the public consultation, make whatever representations you wish to make, at the end of which I or others may have any points of clarification. We are not going to engage in debates with each other over the relative merits of any representations that are made. Feel free to make whatever points you wish to make providing you are not making blatantly political points in which case I will call them out of order. Thank you for coming ahead of your time, I appreciate it.

CLLR MACE: I am John Roger Mace, city councillor. I live at Downterry, Halton Road, Nether Kellet, Carnforth, Lancashire. The postcode is LA6 1EU. I am a chartered accountant, resident for almost 40 years in Nether Kellet, a village with some 500 voters situated six miles north of Lancaster.

I am attending this hearing as a Lancaster city councillor representing Kellet ward, a rural ward containing five villages. I have represented Kellet ward since elections in 1999.

In my experience, residents in the Carnforth postal area, of which my ward is part, do not see themselves as having anything in common with the Preston area or with the University ward of Lancaster. To recognise the extent of communities with common interests is an integral component of setting constituency boundaries. Drawing boundaries on maps is not a desk exercise, it has to respect the emotions of voters if the result is to be an effective enhancement of democratic representation.

Carnforth has a proud history as a rural hub in North Lancashire and has a hinterland spreading into south Cumbria. The county boundaries are becoming less relevant as localities develop. Already patients in North Lancashire are directed on occasion to the Westmorland General Hospital in Cumbria and this natural decay in the importance of county boundaries over time could underpin a re-drawing of constituency boundaries that no longer treated county boundaries as sacrosanct when seeking to equalise the size of constituencies.

The proposed North Lancashire constituency is very large geographically resulting from the relatively low population density in the rural areas of which it is composed. Residents in the Carnforth hinterland have little cause to travel south of Lancaster but will travel to Kendal quite happily.

The *Westmorland Gazette*, a local newspaper, circulates in Carnforth where it finds a ready market. I cite this as independent evidence of the community of interest between South Lakes and the Carnforth district to which I have referred.

Crossing county boundaries is already proposed in respect of the Southport constituency, so any principle of following county boundaries has already been breached in the current proposals.

In my view, it would be preferable to extend the existing Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency to the north or to the east of its present boundaries than to take the Carnforth area out of Morecambe and Lunesdale and add it to rural areas to the south and east of Lancaster being wards in the Lancaster and Preston districts and even more distant wards in the Ribble Valley and Wyre districts.

The lack of a functioning public transport system would make it impractical by reason of timetables and travelling times to make a return journey by public transport from some villages in the north west or north east of the proposed constituency to locations in the south west or south east in a single day.

In summary, I believe the initial proposal for combining disparate places with little topographical coherence into a new constituency of North Lancashire is inappropriate for the following reasons: (a) community cohesion and (b) the travelling distances involved. The proposed large new constituency would be an aggregation of villages with no overall sense of community or of shared interests, history or loyalties.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Sir, some interesting propositions. I understand your point about communities of interest and your links and you have little interest, you were explaining, with those at Preston and the southern half of this proposed large constituency. What about interests with Heysham and Morecambe? Does the same apply? Which way would you look currently?

CLLR MACE: The current arrangement is something that we have lived with since 1970s and that covers the majority of local people, therefore I think we are entirely content with our current boundaries extending to Heysham. We have accepted Heysham as part of our local area for a long time and a change I think would not be welcome.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Heaton, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. Can you just develop the two points that you made? One, the university, you said the university had little in common or few links with Carnforth. Do you see the University ward as being a city ward in that case?

CLLR MACE: I see it much more as a city ward than as a rural ward. The hinterland of the university does not really extend as far as Carnforth, the students do not live that far out so there is no particular of community interest between the university and the Carnforth area.

MR WALSH: You mentioned Carnforth at length. As I came here this morning, I saw a bus that was heading for Ripley College via Carnforth and Slyne, does that indicate that those two are one? When you are talking about Carnforth do you see Slyne as being linked to Carnforth?

CLLR MACE: Yes, that is immediately adjacent to the Carnforth area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any other points of clarification? (No response) Mr Bluglass, please.

MR BLUGLASS: I have lived in Bulk ward for about 30 years.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry, Mr Bluglass, can you just give your name and address?

MR BLUGLASS: Yes. My name is Charlie Bluglass, Ullswater Road, Lancaster LA1 3PP. I have been a resident of Lancaster since coming to university here in the early 1980s and for the last nearly 20 years I have been a youth community worker both in the rural areas and in the last few years in Lancaster covering Skerton and Bulk and city centre wards. I think I know the communities pretty well. I just wanted to make some observations about the nature of the way the communities in those areas see themselves.

I hope I have got no particular axe to grind here, but I would say from my experience of working with the adults and young people in the Skerton wards they would tend to look towards themselves as being part of Lancaster. The young people that I meet and talk to, when they go out at night they go to Lancaster. They may go to Morecambe but they talk about going to Morecambe. On another point, I would say as a resident of Bulk ward we are very much part of Lancaster too. That is the main thing that I wanted to say.

The other point I wanted to make was about the University ward which was kind of a surprise that that was taken out of the Lancaster constituency. When I first came to Lancaster the talk was very much that of promoting the links between the town and the university and it was kind of envisaged that the town would grow towards the university over intervening years. The fact that it has not has maybe got something to do with green belt restrictions, I am not sure, but it is known as a university town. If you look up various descriptions of it and various web pages, that is how it is described.

I can understand from reading your proposals that it is maybe felt to balance out the population of a large rural constituency. I am not quite sure if that was the intention. I think you have been given a really very hard circle to make into a square. If you wanted to get there, well we certainly would not start out from here. That is it really.

As I say, I can see the task you have been given is quite a hard one and there are political axes to grind on both sides, but as a resident those are my reflections, that Bulk is very much part of Lancaster but that Lancaster does extend beyond the River Lune. It is not quite the impermeable boundary that it is sometimes made out to be, particularly with the new bridge people and can just walk across.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Can I ask, does your community work stretch beyond the city limits?

MR BLUGLASS: It is pretty much Lancaster is my patch, so I would go up to Lancaster and Morecambe College. As a Lancaster youth worker, very much those Skerton wards are priorities for us to due to the economic deprivation in those areas. Then probably to the south I would go to Scotforth because there is one of the centres I am managing in that area, Barton Road, currently.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: When you are going into Skerton wards to work where does your territory stop as it were? It looks to me as though it is continuous.

MR BLUGLASS: Yes. I would tend to work with Mount Avenue and Beaumont areas when there is the need, when we pick up the needs of young people in that area there that need some support.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You obviously talk about your area of responsibility and refer to the two Skerton wards. Do the two Skerton wards have a lot in common with Bulk ward?

MR BLUGLASS: Socially, possibly not. There are certain economic differences but of course there are people that cross over those areas that work in the city centre, and vice versa. I live in Bulk and I work several times a week in Rylands Young Peoples' Centre. I see my young people come into town at the weekend.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) Thank you for taking the time to come. Is Lucy Atkinson here? Again, if you could give your name and address and then make your representations.

CLLR ATKINSON: My name is Lucy Atkinson. I am a city councillor representing the University and Scotforth Rural ward. I live at 18 China Street, in Lancaster city centre. I have three points to bring today. My main obvious issue as a university ward councillor is that the university should not be included in this giant rural seat. It is not a rural area; it is essentially a small town. The links with Lancaster as a city are paramount in terms of the economy and where people live. I myself moved into the town for my second year and I now live in accommodation that is owned and rented out through the university with LUSU Living. It is so linked to the university that it does not make sense

to be out. It has very distinct differences to the rural seat, and different problems that will not be represented under a rural area.

I would even argue that the ward itself has very different issues within it in terms of the university and the Scotforth Rural parts of it. I spend time in both of them, more time at the uni as a student myself. I have been out in the rural area, it is very different. I would actually say that they need that representation and if it would be possible for us to split that ward up and put the university back into the Lancaster and Morecambe seat and put the rural part into the major rural seat because then the needs of both are met.

Cat Smith at the moment is a fantastic MP working for the university and the case it is in at the moment and cares for our needs. She was with me campaigning the other day about grants. I do not believe that in such a seat that big that an MP is going to come and campaign on the fringes about grants when it does not matter to anybody else in that area.

I would also like to express my support for the Lancaster and Morecambe seat as a whole. Other than the uni part being out of it, I like the seat, I think that it makes sense to have them linked together. I have been to Fleetwood once and that was only because I was campaigning at the time. I have been to Morecambe a lot, and even before I became a councillor I went to Morecambe quite a bit.

Me and my friends, as students, actually walk over the bridge to go to Aldi because it is a lot cheaper than shopping at Sainsbury's down the road. That is just an example of walking through and going over that area into Morecambe. I have been bowling there, I have gone to the arcades. I think it works well to link Lancaster and Morecambe together, and actually pushing it as a link might make more students actually go over to Morecambe.

If you think about the transport links, there are buses all the time going to Morecambe whereas there is not a direct bus to Fleetwood at all.

Also, there has been this weird talk of Bulk should be taken out and put into another seat, leaked proposals, which I think is ridiculous. I spent a lot of time in that area during the county council by-election earlier this year. It is well and truly part of the town. It would take me like five minutes to walk it into the city centre. It does not make sense for that to be separated, we are one town.

My proposal would be either to split up the ward or to actually look at the realistic numbers of the uni, which was not done correctly. The problem with individual registration is that those numbers do not represent the actual amount of people that live in that area because not enough people were registered. The numbers were taken at the beginning of the year when people were coming, they had bigger things on their mind than thinking about political registration, especially when we do not have politics

as a subject in school. No one really knows about registering to vote. I believe that there were freshers settling into their subjects and they were not thinking about registering to vote. The way we did it this year was basically automatic registration where you opt out has given us more accurate numbers and when the register is published officially those numbers will be seen to be reflective of what actually is going on at the university.

I would think if those numbers were looked at it would be feasible to actually see that it would be able to swap out maybe Bolton-le-Slyne, if you wanted it that way, instead of splitting up a ward, but I do believe there are options that will keep the university well and truly where it belongs.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just for the record, it is worth saying that the problem with the university in Scotforth Rural is not a Lancaster and Morecambe problem, it is, as I understand the way the Boundary Commission have set out their proposals, is a North Lancashire numbers issue and that is why it is separated out. It is not separated out because the numbers will not allow it to be brought in, it needs to be counterbalanced somewhere else.

CLLR ATKINSON: So maybe put Bolton-le-Slyne in and swap it that way?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There are lots of proposals and if, when you are thinking about when you are going to submit written evidence, you might give a thought to how you offset your proposal. All the propositions we receive are better put for considering the ripple effect of making one change and demonstrate how it might work, and why, for example, there might be a community of interest elsewhere which is better. I understand your split ward points, but I do not know whether it is possible or not.

I understand the students, but can you say a bit more about the business links between the university and Lancaster town? I heard two counter points, one is that the business links are national companies elsewhere and are not really a Lancaster issue. The other is that there is a link a growing link which is binding the university and city even closer. Can you give me your views on that?

CLLR ATKINSON: If you think about restaurants, for example, we do not have many big chain restaurants within Lancaster. When you think about all the Italians we have only got Bella Italia out of all the other massive companies. A lot of things, like for socials for various societies on campus, if you go into town for a meal - obviously as students you cannot afford to go out all the time - but as celebrations and stuff, they are linked to that. There are other independent shops, for example, the fancy dress shop, I remember going in my freshers week to get something from there, especially before we had a Primark it was one of the few places.

I do think that there is business links there with independent shops. There is the market which is really good for students because you can get cheap food, especially vegetables. I do think there are definite business links because if you have a bus pass, or even if you do not, it is not expensive to get into the town.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response)

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Colin Hartley has just arrived. Are you able to speak now, rather than later?

CLLR HARTLEY: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excellent. Come up to the podium, give your name and full address and make whatever representation you wish to make, at the end of which there may be points of clarification.

CLLR HARTLEY: My name is Colin Hartley. My full address is 43 Kingfisher Drive, Heysham, postcode LA3 2FT. I was born and brought up in Morecambe but went to school in Skerton, Lancaster and then worked at Mitre House, which is near the castle. My parents retired and stayed in Morecambe until they died.

I moved to Lancaster in 1980 with my partner, married and brought up a daughter there and moved to Heysham 2014. Our daughter and her husband also live in Heysham. I am a Lancaster City Councillor, a magistrate sitting in Lancaster, a governor at the University Hospital Morecambe Bay Trust of which the Royal Lancaster Infirmary is a part and a primary school governor.

I say all these things to demonstrate my community credentials and that I know both Lancaster and Morecambe and understand the community ties. I am here today to support the Boundary Commission's proposals for a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, and a North Lancashire constituency. Having one MP for Morecambe and Lancaster makes sense because we are one community with strong links. The evidence for this is Morecambrians use Lancaster for shopping; the new Primark store has increased Lancaster's attractiveness. Schools: many Morecambe children go to school and have friends in Lancaster. Work: you only have to see the traffic from Morecambe into Lancaster each morning to know that this is true. Hospital: the RLI (Royal Lancaster Infirmary), is the main hospital in the area and is well used for accident and emergency and non-emergency treatments, both for in-patients and out-patients. Of course, nights out, Lancaster is a popular place to go in the evening with many pubs, restaurants, two theatres and the cinema and is well used by people from Morecambe.

Turning it on its head, Lancastrians travel to Morecambe for work. Heysham nuclear power station is a big employer and an example of people travelling from Lancaster to work in Morecambe.

Festivals: Morecambe has many festivals during the summer and is a big draw for people from Lancaster and from all over the district. Music: The Platform in Morecambe is a well used venue often a variety of music from Pink Floyd tribute bands to orchestras, and, finally, not forgetting the Bay and the seaside. On a lovely day it is still popular and attracts people from Lancaster and further afield.

Arguments have been made to retain Lancaster University within the constituency. Personally, I think too much is being made of this. Many students live in Lancaster and not on campus, so would be included in the proposed boundary. Lots of those living on campus are from overseas so are not eligible to vote in national elections. Others remain registered at their homes and do not transfer. The Commission may have already been told of the difficulties of persuading students to register locally.

I understand that the case has also been put forward to include the Bulk ward within the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency. Other than to artificially increase the numbers to meet the required size for an enlarged Morecambe and Lunesdale, I do not know why anyone would suggest this. Bulk is very much and has always been part of Lancaster city. It has also been said that Skerton looks towards Morecambe and does not see itself as part of Lancaster. I am flabbergasted that anyone would say this. I went to Skerton school, as did my wife who is from Skerton, my mother-in-law still lives in Skerton, as do other relations. They certainly regard themselves as part of Lancaster and would be affronted if it was suggested they are part of Morecambe.

Finally, the Commission will be aware that we have one local government body in the form of Lancaster City Council. Having one MP would encourage closer working between local and central government for the benefit of the area. In the past boundary reviews have treated the Lune as a barrier - it is not. People have done and continue to travel to Lancaster from Morecambe and to Morecambe from Lancaster and we have family and friends across the urban area.

Briefly turning to the proposed North Lancashire constituency, although large there are clear similarities that would make it appropriate to be represented by one MP. It is largely rural with similar issues around rural living and rural services. One MP would be able to focus on these. It has two market towns. Garstang is probably the more prosperous of the two, but having both in one constituency would enable the MP to work with both town councils. They are far enough apart to avoid competition but close enough to encourage collaboration and to learn from each other to drive up the services and improve their respective offerings.

Although they cover a large geographical area, any practical organisational difficulties at election time for these constituencies can easily be overcome. Rather than bring in all the boxes from polling stations to one counting station, sub-counts could be done at two or three locations. Once each sub-count is completed the results could be phoned through to the main count. This approach, of course, was successfully followed during the Police and Crime Commissioner Election and the recent EU referendum.

In conclusion, I believe that having one MP for an urban Lancaster and Morecambe constituency and another for the North Lancashire constituency is an appropriate solution for this district. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any points anyone?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. You mentioned that the proposed North Lancashire constituency has two market towns. You mentioned Garstang, you did not mention what the name of the other is?

CLLR HARTLEY: Carnforth.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) Thank you very much and thank you for speaking early. I have no other planned speakers at the moment so we will just wait. We have people booked but not yet here.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What we find here is that the Assistant Commissioners get a few ideas in our heads and we go and crunch numbers and find ourselves getting swallowed up by a myriad of alternatives to try and work out what the proposals are.

Welcome those who are new to the hearing so far. I am Neil Ward. I am an Assistant Boundary Commissioner appointed by the Boundary Commission to hear representations on the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the North West of England. I and my colleagues, in listening to the oral representations and receiving written representations, will consider whether we think we should be recommending changes to the Boundary Commission in order to reflect a whole myriad of things from community links through to geography through to other ideas and it is enormously helpful for us to be able to hear representations.

I have two speakers planned at the moment. I wonder if I might suggest Rachel Hughes comes up next. The position is you come up to the podium. We are recording and filming all the representations as part of the public record in much the same way as if somebody had sent in written material.

If you want to give your name and full address, make the representations you wish to make, at the end of which there may or may not be points of clarification. People are not going to enter into a debate with you but ask points of clarification.

MS HUGHES: My name is Rachel Hughes. I live 48 Aberdeen Road, Lancaster. I am here as a student representative, I am one of the Vice Presidents at Lancaster University Student Union and I am speaking on behalf of the six full-time officers that make up student representation of elected officers at Lancaster University Student Union.

We are concerned about the proposed changes to the boundaries. We felt on campus student apathy towards politics at the moment as a result of multiple things, but including the EU referendum result, and we feel these boundary changes are confusing but also go some way to deepen that apathy on campus and in the city. That is because these boundary changes would divide our on campus students and our students who live in the town. Student voice is best when unified and we are worried that dividing the political representation of our students would make them the minority voice in each constituency.

We represent students on campus and in the city and this would make the process of feeding back to parliamentary representatives much more difficult and confusing to then convey to our students. We are trying to better our relationship with the city. We have got a bunch of strategic direction points which we hope to do that, which is also a joint venture that we are trying to do with the university. We feel that politically and also symbolically dividing the city from the university goes some way against that. Those are my main points, and thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much and well put. You were talking about dividing the student vote. Can you elaborate on that slightly, how that is occurring?

MS HUGHES: So the university and the city will be divided by the proposed boundary changes. Although we know that that still means that every student who is registered will get a vote, by having different parliamentary representation but also by having conflicting places for them to go to feed back or even to cast their votes is confusing and also goes some way to symbolically separate our students and something we are always striving to do is make the relationship with our off campus students just as strong as the ones on campus.

At the moment we have just managed to bring in a new system for voter registration on campus meaning everybody who lives on campus is automatically registered to vote. Obviously we cannot do this off campus. We are conscious that this means that there

could be an even greater divide meaning that the on campus students have more representation and more of a say than our off campus students.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Currently they are all represented by the same MP?

MS HUGHES: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points anyone? (No response)
Excellent. Thank you very much indeed. See, not so bad after all. Thank you. Mr Blackburn, do we need to make any adjustment for you to the microphone? You settle yourself wherever is best for you and we'll adjust for you.

CLLR BLACKBURN: Good morning. My name is Cllr Wayne Blackburn. I am the Secretary for Pendle Labour Party and I am here to represent them today. I have submitted a short written statement from Pendle Labour Party and I would just like to expand on it a little if I can.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Before you do, can you give your full address?

CLLR BLACKBURN: (Labour Party) Yes. My address is 25 Netherfield Gardens, in Nelson, BB9 9RL. Pendle Labour Party's statement has been submitted to you and I should first of all point out that we do note the submission of the Labour Party that was made on 11 October, and, whilst we are largely supportive of that submission, we do respectfully disagree with paragraph 7.5 and 7.8 to 7.10 on the proposals for East Lancashire.

We are concerned at the initial proposals of the Commission in splitting the Pendle constituency between New Burnley and Clitheroe and Colne constituencies. We firmly believe that Pendle constituency is a longstanding constituency which has built and maintained a strong community base. Given the geography of the area and in particular the iconic Pendle Hill, that sits overlooking the whole of the constituency, Pendle Labour Party feel that it is important for Pendle to remain on the political landscape.

Our current counter-proposal would be that we continue with the current Pendle constituency as a whole with the addition of Lanehead, Queensgate and Daneshouse with Stoneyholme, which would mean, including those, it would be an electorate of 74,879 in the new Pendle constituencies. We have suggested these three wards because they are contiguous with Pendle and all of the closest economic, demographic and historic similarities to. We would also emphasise the cultural ties between the whole of Pendle and Burnley, the already established transportation links and the allegiances felt across those.

I would also point out, and this is in agreement with the Labour Party as a whole, that we do still maintain concerns about the process as a whole and would submit that we reiterate the concerns that it is based on out of date electoral register data which means that hundreds of thousands of electors, particularly young people, are being disenfranchised. I would submit the rest of the details and any questions I am more than happy to take them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: To deal with your last point first, the Boundary Commission are bound by law to deal with a particular set of data and in this case it happens to be the December data. Whenever they chose a data there is bound to be a different set of data certainly by the time it is enacted. Noted the point, but there is not much that I can do about that. In making your counter-proposals, have you considered the ripple effect everywhere else? Would that deal with the changes that it would cause for other proposed constituencies?

CLLR BLACKBURN: The main concern has been the general feeling within Pendle and the strong feeling that we have got from residents and representatives that Pendle should be kept as a whole. It is the overwhelming public opinion that we are certainly getting. We have not looked at the knock-on effect, I am afraid. It is rather complicated issue, as you will be aware, and it will be quite a lot to work to work the way through the rest of Lancashire. We have just focused on Pendle.

MR WALSH: (Conservative Party) John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. Just for my clarification, I have not got your written representation, you mentioned the wards of Lanehead?

CLLR BLACKBURN: Yes, the wards of Lanehead, Queensgate and Daneshouse with Stoneyholme.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Blackburn, my name is Nicholas Elliott. I am an Assistant Boundary Commissioner. Mr Ward has already mentioned the fact has it got implications elsewhere. I know it is complicated, but for our part, if you can conclude a counter-proposal that does take into account other aspects of the wider community, it certainly helps us. We will try and do the work but if you can do some as well your representation will definitely receive even more consideration. We will consider it.

CLLR BLACKBURN: I am more than happy to go back and see what further submissions we can make.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) Mr Blackburn, thank you very much for coming. Mr Watson, if you are ready to speak now

could you come up and give your full name and address and then make your representation and there may or may not be points of clarification at the end.

MR WATSON: My name is Tom Watson. I live on 18 Scott Park Road, Burnley and I will be talking about the Pendle and Burnley constituencies today.

For people who do not know me, I am 22 and live in Burnley but I also work in Nelson for Andrew Stephenson MP as a caseworker. As I said, my comments are about your latest proposal and how they affect Burnley and Pendle.

As someone who is involved in politics, I want to make it very clear that my job is affected by this and my comments today are not motivated by my anxiety to keep my job nor are they politically motivated.

Let me start, if I may, with what your proposals will do to Pendle and the communities within it. As you may or may not be aware, Pendle comprises a good balance of rural and suburban and urban areas which allows for effective and substantial representation from the local Member of Parliament. It is currently made up of 62,891 electors, of which 25,703 of them live in Nelson, Brierfield and Brierley.

Under your proposals these 25,703 electors move into the new Burnley county constituency and, to put that into perspective, that is roughly 41% of the electorate moving out of Pendle and being put into Burnley. What impact does this have?

Nelson and Colne have always been closely linked, in fact, for 65 years stretching from 1918 to 1983. Nelson and Colne was a parliamentary constituency, meaning that by the time the boundary changes will come into effect they would have been together for a century. There are even colleges and rugby and sports clubs named after them, being Nelson and Colne College and Colne and Nelson Rugby Club.

There is also a sense of a large community that has been built up over the century which could potentially be slowly pulled apart again. It is also worth noting that during this time there were the infamous race riots took place in Burnley which nearly spilled over into Pendle.

The community was on edge, tensions were high and riots were possibly imminent, but thanks to the local communities coming together these were avoided and over the last 16 years or so new stronger relationships have been formed throughout Pendle crossing different cultures, religions and races. This goes to show how close the links between the communities have become and how close they should remain. This has a lot to do with a sense of belonging somewhere.

To the locals in Pendle, it is not just a name or a collection of towns, it is one big community. It is a place people strongly identify with. Often when you ask people on

the street where they are from, it is not Colne or Nelson or Barnoldswick that they tell you, they will tell you they are from Pendle, so to split Pendle into two and change the names strips away that sense of belonging to a large community. The newly proposed Clitheroe and Colne constituency is, simply put, too big and too weird, not in terms of population but in terms of the physical size and shape of the constituency.

When I was first told of the new constituency plans to be changed and it was going to be called Colne and Clitheroe, my exact phrase was, "How is that going to work, there is a mountain in the way?" Having seen then what the constituency looked like I was horrified.

It crosses three borough council areas to meet the requirements for the number of electors. It either carved up Lancashire and caused a bizarre chain reaction to the other constituencies or, as I think is more likely, it is a constituency of orphan wards brought together into a new spare parts constituency. It stretches from Barnoldswick to Bamber Bridge, which on an extremely lucky run would take about an hour in the car. On an average journey you are looking upwards of an hour and a half. The quickest way sees you having to leave the constituency and travel along the M65, which cuts through Burnley, around Blackburn and then just back into the constituency towards Bamber Bridge.

You may as well call this constituency Barnoldswick to Bamber Bridge because residents just simply will not identify with the name Colne and Clitheroe. This throws up several questions on practicalities as well. How is a single individual supposed to represent a constituency of this shape and this size? Where would the MP have the office, there is no central point in the constituency? At worst it would be an hour away from different sections of the community and at best it is half an hour away tucked away in a little village somewhere.

How does an MP who has a meeting in Bamber Bridge get to a meeting they have next in Barnoldswick, because as often is the case MPs have back to back meetings and often lead very busy lives? Half of their day would be spent travelling between meetings and they would not be able to get on with the job they are there to do.

How does a person who does not drive get to the other end of the constituency if that is where the MP's office is? There is no direct train link from one end of the constituency to the other. You can go from Bamber Bridge to Colne, which takes an hour and four minutes, you then have a wait for a bus which would take roughly 40 minutes to get through the traffic into Barnoldswick, and a lot of people do not have four hours plus travelling time to go and see their local MP.

Does this then create a situation where constituents that need help from their MPs cannot simply get it? Are they then expected to deal with this on their own?

With the shape and the size of the constituency of Pendle at the moment people are used to free and easy access to their MP. If this change goes through as is their quality of representation is diminished and possibly their quality of life suffers.

Even if we take out the extreme examples and we use the constituency name, from Colne to Clitheroe by car it is half an hour, and as mentioned you have to drive around the mountain, or just short of one. I am sorry, I am not used to public speaking.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Take your time.

MR WATSON: On a bus your best time is an hour and in normal traffic conditions you are looking at an hour and a half. There are natural and manmade boundaries. As already said, it crosses a mountain in the heart of the constituency. The A59 along the spine almost splits the constituency in two. The M65 and M6 motorways you also have to cross to get to sections of the constituency.

Would communities come together with these boundaries? I find it very unlikely that people in Clitheroe would associate as one community with the people in Colne, or the people in Bamber Bridge as one community with those in Barnoldswick.

Do Pendle and the borough council support this constituency? In fact, on 20 October 2016, Pendle council unanimously passed the following motion which was proposed by a Lib Dem, seconded by a Conservative and achieved cross-party support of every single councillor present including the Labour councillors. That motion was that Pendle Council:

“1. Notes the draft proposals from the Boundary Commission for new parliamentary constituencies Lancashire and it rejects proposals for Pendle.

2. Pendle Council believes that the best interests of the people in Pendle would be met by keeping the whole of the borough within one parliamentary constituency.

3. Pendle Council in particular believes that the proposed Colne and Clitheroe constituency should be rejected due to its long and narrow geographical shape and lack of infinity and common interests between the communities at the opposite ends of the proposed area.”

To put this cross-party support into perspective, at that council meeting there was widespread arguments about several other council items on the agenda. It got to a point where it descended into name calling and accusations of bullying, but so strongly did these councillors feel that these proposals did such a disservice to Pendle that they came together and backed it unanimously.

To conclude on the current proposals, I strongly to object to the Colne and Clitheroe seat being created and to the Boundary Commission's proposals for Lancashire as a whole. The proposed shape of the constituency is illogical and the association of Bamber Bridge with Barnoldswick is absurd and travelling from one end of the constituency to the other to see your MP is almost impossible and the Pendle Borough councillors believe that it is in the best interests of the people in Pendle to keep them all in one parliamentary constituency.

How can we meet the legal maximum of electors and achieve that without causing serious disruption to the communities in the area? For the solution I turn to the Conservative Party's proposals that propose to keep all 20 wards of Pendle together in one constituency adding three outlying wards from Burnley, namely the Briercliffe ward, the Cliviger with Worsthorne ward and the Lanehead ward. These proposals will no doubt be familiar to the Boundary Commission and that is because they are largely based on the last redraw of the parliamentary constituencies in 2012/13 which is basically your suggestion for Pendle with the addition of Lanehead.

Why should these wards be included in Pendle? These three wards together do not unsettle the current the balance of the constituency. They are suburban, semi-urban and rural wards in keeping with the rest of Pendle. Being that the Burnley constituency has a dense population in the centre of the constituency, these outlying wards often struggle for equal representation from their Member of Parliament, whereas in Pendle they would fit in perfectly with the current balance and would have the opportunity to receive the equal and diligent representation that they are entitled to. It also meets the minimum requirement for the number of electors taking the new total to 75,853.

If you let me now turn briefly to the proposals for the Burnley county constituency. I live in the Coal Clough with Deerplay ward, which is not on there because it has now been moved into Accrington. It is in the heart of the ward, it is two minutes away from the town centre, five minutes away from Turf Moor. You can see it is just on the edge there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is a laser pointer to your left.

MR WATSON: It is five minutes away from the Turf Moor. I think I live somewhere in that section there. Obviously being so close to the home ground of the premium league football club which I support, Burnley football club, and having lived in this town for 22 years, I am sure you can understand me when I say Burnley is part of my identify as it is for almost everyone who lives in the area or in the town for that matter.

We also fall easily within the borough council area being so close to the town hall, which again is around a two minute walk from my house. It has a close linked community with no natural or manmade boundaries, it flows smoothly into the rest of the town. It is an urban area like the rest of Burnley and has the opportunity, being so close to the town

centre and the MP's office, for equal representation from that Member of Parliament. Coal Clough with Deerplay plays an integral part of Burnley and it should remain so.

Under your proposals I would become an elector in the Accrington constituency, which is 15 minutes away from my house. I find it incredibly difficult to understand the Boundary Commission's proposals to remove my ward from the centre of the Burnley constituency and tack it on to the end of the Accrington constituency.

I would urge the Boundary Commission to move the Altham, Barnfield, Central, Clayton-le-Moor, Huncoat, Milnshaw, Peel and Spring wards into the existing Burnley constituency minus the Briercliffe, Lanehead and Cliviger with Worsthorne wards as previously mentioned.

The creation of an Accrington and Burnley seat makes more sense than taking wards out of the centre of Burnley and moving them into Accrington. I therefore support the Conservative proposals for Lancashire and strongly encourage the Boundary Commission to do so. Across Lancashire the Boundary Commission's proposals are unnecessary, radical and the reduction in seats can be achieved in ways that much better represent different communities across Lancashire.

I sincerely hope you abandon the current plans and adopt more sensible proposals as I think I have outlined. For the Boundary Commission it is a case of a few lines being moved on a map, but for people who live in these areas it is the difference between towns and communities being torn apart and to us it really does make a difference. I have also been asked to relay apologies from Andrew Stevenson who would liked to have come but he is tied up in Westminster with his duties as PPS to the Foreign Secretary, but he will be making a written submission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Just for a point of information for others, there is a distinction here between the Boundary Commission, the author of these proposals, and the Assistant Commissioners who are here to hear representations and to consider whether changes are to be made, so we are the honest brokers in a sense. I did not interrupt you otherwise you might assume that you meant me, but actually it means the Boundary Commission in the context to which you refer and I think it is quite a big distinction to make.

MR WATSON: I am sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask you a slightly side question to this, which is to do with Barnoldswick. How does that sit? I am looking at Clitheroe and Colne at the moment in relation to that constituency, and I understand the point you are making about the size and I know others have made a similar point. The wards of Craven and Coates up in the top right-hand corner, where do they relate to then?

MR WATSON: That is Barnoldswick.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I understand that, but where would the people who live in Barnoldswick link to because you were comparing Bamber Bridge to them both being extremes of this particular constituency. Is that also an extreme of the consistency you were outlining? It is in Pendle at the moment?

MR WATSON: It is, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it on the edge of Pendle?

MR WATSON: Yes. It would take around 20 minutes to get to the centre of the constituency across. It is not miles and miles away. I think there is a neighbouring constituency of Skipton and Ripon that then comes on the outskirts of a much larger area in terms of other constituencies neighbouring it, the same with Ribble Valley on the other side.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It looks almost rural certainly relative to Nelson, Colne, Burnley?

MR WATSON: Yes. It has quite a dense population in the middle but there are lots of rural areas as part of it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. Can I just follow up on that point? You mentioned the Burnley wards you suggest should be linked to Pendle being Briercliffe, Cliviger with Worsthorne and Lanehead. The Briercliffe and Cliviger with Worsthorne wards in particular, are you saying that they have a very similar make-up in terms of the rural nature to the Craven wards that we have just been talking to?

MR WATSON: Yes. Briercliffe probably a little bit more urban than Cliviger with Worsthorne and probably a little bit less populated, but in terms of the make-up of the individual areas they are very similar.

MR WALSH: For my benefit, I think I know the answer, but if we could return to the Clitheroe and Colne ward, can you point out to us where Pendle Hill sits in there?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Pendle Hill being the mountain?

MR WALSH: The mountain, indeed.

MR WATSON: Just short of about 200 feet. It is just in this section [here](#).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points of clarification anyone would wish to seek? (No response) No. In which case, thank you very much indeed, very helpful. I would just make another general point - you will have heard it before - that proposals which come with consideration of the ripple effect to other constituencies are much greater received in practical terms because it shows us how it is possible to make the changes without us having to again sit at one removed and try and make the changes ourselves. Is Mr Stuart Morris in the room? If you could give your name and full address and then proceed to make your representations.

MR MORRIS: Good morning. My name is Stuart Morris. I live at Flat 1, 57-59 West End Road, Morecambe, LA4 4DR. How do I follow that?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just wait a moment and can someone close the door, please. I did not mean you, Sir, but thank you.

MR MORRIS: I live within the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency and I would like to register my disapproval of the proposed boundary changes to merge Morecambe and Lancaster in the same parliamentary seat. This proposal is very unpopular and does not do justice to the existing constituency of Morecambe and Lunesdale that is treasured by those that live there within this constituency.

Lancaster takes all of the funding from Morecambe as it does not want to see Morecambe prosper and bears no resemblance in terms of demographic, the people and its future. I do not want, as a resident who lives in Morecambe, to be joined with Lancaster and lose our identity. The rural areas of Morecambe and Lunesdale bear no resemblance to Preston, especially Carnforth that it is proposed to join in with.

To me, this is not a party political issue but one of having a passion for where you live, work and want to be developed. Morecambe needs representation to bring out the real potential of the area and there should have been a thorough consultation prior to the announcement. There should have been a process whereby constituents were informed of the possible changes and had a chance to air their views. Morecambe people are very passionate about where they live - we are very passionate about where we live. Therefore, I fully support my local MP David Morris in his efforts to oppose these proposals.

The proposal is to add Bulk and Lower Lune Valley to Morecambe and Lunesdale. Lower Lune Valley, half was Morecambe and Lunesdale until 2010. Valley is one area and not seen as two separate areas under Lower Lune hosts and starts the link road in the corner of the ward next to the M6. Bulk, Newton and Ridge mirror Skerton as a similar area. Lansil Industrial Estate should be linked with Whitelands because of the link road cohesive industrial strategy. Old Moor Hospital development is linked more

with the rural area in the valley next to it than Lancaster on the outskirts with many moving from the Valley to this new development.

All the roads to Morecambe will be linked in the new constituency proposal. That is all I have got to say about it. As I live in the constituency, I talk to a lot of people, I go to the gym where I live and people are very angry that they were not given a chance to actually say anything about it in the first place, so I have sort of come as a spokesperson for a lot of my friends and people who I live with because they were a bit nervous about coming up and doing something like this, and I am a bit nervous myself, so this really comes from the heart of the people that we would like it to stay as it is.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just on the consultation period, in a sense you are right in the middle of the consultation. The process is the published proposals, there is then a consultation period that runs through to 5 December.

MR MORRIS: Yes, I am aware of that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: This is at the very start of that. They were only published on 13 September as initial proposals. In a sense, speaking for the Boundary Commission, I would say that actually everyone has a really strong opportunity to influence the outcome of this because someone has to start drawing a line on a map somewhere or other and given that both constituencies currently in the area you talk about have to change because of the numbers, therefore they set up their stall and it is available for anyone to make contributions. We have had lots of contributions across the whole of the north west of England, but also a lot in relation to Morecambe and Lancaster and therefore I would urge you and your friends, you have already come along and spoken for them, we have taken on board your points, to offer written representations backed with whatever details of community links and the like that you wish to make. It would be very helpful for us.

MR MORRIS: I will go back to them and say that the best thing you can do is to write in. I think what people were concerned about is that instead of just coming here, perhaps going to Carnforth to Morecambe and have places where people can see what the changes were. All of a sudden they have read the newspaper and seen what is going to happen and thought, "Oh my God, we don't want that to happen." The general public and the people I talk to are a bit nervous about coming to something like this. They would have liked to have gone to a local village hall and seen it and been able to talk to somebody and seen maps and actually visualise what was going to happen, but it just has not happened, they just read it in the newspaper. We live in a democracy and it would have been nice they feel to have had the chance to do that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am the sure the Boundary Commission have heard that point. There is an enormous amount online but not everyone is online.

MR MORRIS: Yes, correct. There are a lot of elderly people who do not have access to the internet either, so they are just being fed information.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I understand the point entirely. Can I ask you a clarification question on the points you made? You spoke in favour of the people keeping the current constituency, you believe it works?

MR MORRIS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have a difference of interest with Lancaster to Morecambe. Indeed, you were worried that it is going to be subordinated by being linked with Lancaster. Skerton West and Skerton and East, which sit within the constituency on the north side of the Lune, I am guessing with the geography, west side probably which I have heard described as being an integral part of Lancaster. I am wondering what your view is on that and whether they should stay there or whether they should be moving to link with Lancaster wherever you think Lancaster should go?

MR MORRIS: It should stay because it is Morecambe because it is on that side of the river. During the election I canvassed for Skerton, I was canvassing for a Conservative MP, so it is within Morecambe and Lunesdale.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I do not know the answer but there are town councils for both Morecambe and Lancaster?

MR MORRIS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Which one speaks for Skerton?

MR MORRIS: I do not know the answer to that. It's a city council.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If I was reversing the question I would ask whether Morecambe town council speaks for and on behalf of the residents of the two Skerton wards, but you do not know the answer and I do not know the answer.

MR MORRIS: I would have thought it would be Morecambe because it is on that side of the river.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, but we do not know.

MR MORRIS: It needs to be clarified.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no other points of clarification.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You talked about the two Skerton wards linking with Morecambe and that case you clearly set out, but I think you said Bulk was rather like the Skertons and sits also, would you say that was correct?

MR MORRIS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can you elaborate on that in terms of why you think Bulk, which looks on the face of it to be pretty much central within Lancaster, would be similar to the Skertons? I am not trying to ---

MR MORRIS: Cross-examination!

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am trying not to do that. We have heard a lot from Lancaster and therefore someone from Morecambe who has a view might have a view that can help us.

MR MORRIS: I just feel that link road creates a more cohesive industrial base and that link road is going to bring an awful lot of job opportunities for people in Morecambe and Lunesdale. It is a perfect opportunity for it to be taken and the industrial estates of the Whitelands are just begging out for business. I know business owners who just have not got enough industrial space to expand into, so that link road is huge for Morecambe. It is absolutely massive for us, it will bring thousands of jobs, and the young people they can stay here and work. It has a knock-on effect that could go on for a long time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anyone else have any points? (No response) It may have felt a bit like a cross-examination, but you live in the area and I do not so, therefore, I am using the opportunity of your knowledge to help me.

MR MORRIS: Morecambe people are passionate about where they live, they love the Bay and it is a fantastic place to be and just want it to be left alone. You want to come and have a look, the Midland Hotel if you can afford it!

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are not the first person to tell me about the Midland Hotel.

MR MORRIS: It is a fantastic place.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is Mr Eric Hamer here? We have a slight gap because we are running slightly ahead. If you could give your name and full address and please say whatever points you wish to cover. Thank you.

MR HAMER: Good morning, everybody. My name is Eric Hamer. I am a resident of Morecambe and Lancaster and I live at 19 Peacock Crescent, Hest Bank, Lancaster

LA2 6EW. I support wholeheartedly the stand of the Conservative Party, the way they want to do this. I am not going to talk politically, what I have done is interviewed many, many people through the whole of the area and I would like to bring to the Commission their feelings.

I have found that in Morecambe and Lancaster, the Morecambe people do not want ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is simply a laser pointer so if you were going to refer to places on the map it would be easier if you could use it.

MR HAMER: I will not be doing that. I am sorry about that. I was saying that the people that I have met in Morecambe and Lancaster feel that they want to stay as they are, mainly because the people in Morecambe feel that they are being downgraded by being lumped with Lancaster. They have felt for a long time that funding for Morecambe has been used in Lancaster and you only need to look along Morecambe Promenade and the front and see what effect that has had. There are many derelict buildings which need to be done and we need a good programme to alter that. We are one of the primary seaside areas and we want to stay that way.

If you look out over the bay we have probably got one of the best views in the country and we want to keep that. We want to be a tourist town and we want to have people coming in and admiring it, but we need the facilities behind us to do that. That is the Morecambe people.

When we come to the Carnforth side, this is a much more complex problem. The people of Carnforth and all the rural areas round about are 100% against the proposal. They feel they belong to the bay area and they do, they are part of us. Their mothers, their fathers, their grandparents all through the ages have been part of Morecambe and wish to stay there. They do not want to be pushed down towards Preston. They have given me an example of what would happen if they had to go and see an MP in Preston. It is 42 miles or an 84 mile round trip, they would have to get a bus if they are not using their own transport from Carnforth to Lancaster and then a change from Lancaster to Preston and then another change Preston to Skipton and another change from Skipton to wherever the constituency headquarters would be. Similar journeys would be done by train, and all the changes doing the same stops.

This community are very, very angry to think that they are going to be moved from a constituency within six miles of where they live to something 40-odd miles away. There are a lot of old people there and the expenses that they would be put to to go down there would be quite expensive for them to do and they do not want to do it. They have nothing in common with north Preston or the Ribble Valley or anything down there and they wish to stay in the Lune area.

One of the things that was put to me was why is Milnthorpe, Arnside and Grange-over-Sands in a separate little block, I think it is South Lakeland. It means that the whole of the bay has got three authorities to look after them. If we had such a problem as we had ten years ago when the Chinese cocklers got caught with the tides and we lost 29 people, I think it was, with three authorities trying to organise it, it is pretty well impossible.

If we move those three towns into Morecambe and Lunesdale, the continuation from Morecambe up round and the Barrow side would stop where they met us and that would make things a lot easier for the lifeboats and everybody else involved in an emergency. That is one point they have made to me.

Other than that, I think that pretty well covers what these people have said to me and I have said I would bring back these thoughts to you and see what you think about them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is excellent. Thank you very much. Can you just explain to me how and why you gathered these views?

MR HAMER: People that I know, people that I have gone to speak to. I have spoken to people I do not know and got into conversation with people and tried to find their views. I am a parish councillor in Hest Bank and I do know people and I do speak to whoever I can do on these points and they are points they have brought to me so I thought they would be of interest to yourselves.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have two others points, if I might just ask. I was interested in the round trip from Carnforth to Preston taking you through Skipton and the like. We are very interested in the ease of travel and the like. Why do the people you have been speaking to feel that is a journey they would have to make?

MR HAMER: They feel that if they are within 6 miles of anywhere and they wanted to see somebody they could do it easily. If it is not, and I am not sure where the headquarters would be, I have been told Barnoldswick, so I have used that as a base but I do not know whether that is the right place or not, the roads and transport to get from the rural areas around Carnforth to there are illustrated by how they would have to get there.

Even if they used their own transport, they are very narrow roads, not a very good journey down, so they feel that they would be cut off from what they have always known.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Currently if someone in Carnforth or Hest Bank had to go and wanted to see an MP, where would you go?

MR HAMER: Lancaster. The MP has an office in Lancaster, so we can go there quite easily. It is the fact that if they could not do that and they had to go to Barnoldswick it would be very difficult for them to do it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The constituency you are currently in is Morecambe and Lunesdale?

MR HAMER: Morecambe and Lunesdale.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You said Lancaster. Did you mean Lancaster?

MR HAMER: The constituency is Morecambe and Lunesdale; the proposal is to join Morecambe and Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you saying if it was part of that constituency then you think you would go to Lancaster which is a lot closer than going to Barnoldswick or wherever?

MR HAMER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Finally, if I may just ask another question, you talk about making the South Lakeland areas becoming a Morecambe Bay kind of constituency. Have you or any of your colleagues done any of the calculations to see whether that is a feasible proposition in relation to the numbers? We would look at it.

MR HAMER: I do not think they have, it is just something that has come up. It is always felt that Milnthorpe, Arnside and Grange-over-Sands are part of Carnforth round the bay and it just makes sense for them to be joined together. Also, there is such a good rail link from Barrow right the way round the bay into Morecambe and Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points anyone would like raise? (No response) Thank you very much indeed, that was very helpful. Is Maggie Trewhitt in the room? You will have seen how the form works, so if you come up and give your name and address and then make any representations you wish to make and we may or may not have points of clarification.

MS TREEWHITT: Maggie Trewhitt, 39 Ashbourne Drive, Lancaster LA1 2DW. I have been put in at the deep end here because I was only coming to make informal comments, I did not realise this was a formal process, so I have not prepared anything. I just wanted to say I feel very strongly that Lancaster and Morecambe should be one constituency. I think there is a very strong bond between the two places and it is completely illogical to have them two separate constituencies. Until very recently I lived

on the south side of the river and last year I moved to the north side of the river to Skerton and now I find myself in a different constituency.

The two places are inextricably linked. We complement each other. We have one city council that covers both areas. I know that people in Morecambe sometimes feel that they are overlooked to the detriment of them as opposed to Lancaster, but from my experience working for the city council I do not think that is the case. I think there is a lot of investment in Morecambe. We see it as an integral part of our work for the whole region. I appreciate some people are not happy with the rural constituency that you are proposing but there are other ways to divide that up whilst still having Lancaster and Morecambe as one constituency.

It just seems to make no sense whatsoever to me to have two different constituencies and to have both areas extending quite far north or south depending on which side of the river you are on. I am sorry, I have not prepared anything, as I said.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No reason to prepare anything, thank you. Did I pick up from something you were saying there that you are on the city council or you work for the city council?

MS TREEWHITT: I work for the city council, I am not a councillor. I work for the city council and our whole work is looking at the whole of the region and it seems madness to have two. When I saw the proposals to bring us all together I thought it was fantastic because then we can have one MP working for all of us working together.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Point at the front?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. You support then the Boundary Commission proposals?

MS TREEWHITT: For Lancaster and Morecambe, yes.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: What is your view on the university not being included in the constituency given how fundamental it is to the city?

MS TREEWHITT: I think that is very unfortunate, but I had a look at some of the documents online and, from what I understand, the main purpose of this review is to try and get all the constituencies a similar size because at the moment constituency size varies so much across the country, and as far as I can see there is just no way bringing the university in. It is very unfortunate and I wish there were a way to bring that in. I have read on the website that is just not possible without creating a constituency that would be a lot bigger than others, but that is unfortunate.

MR EVANS: Maggie, when we were talking outside you wanted to make a comment about the counter-proposal. Is that part of this?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is, and I understand the point you are making and I will allow it to happen. Before you do so, I wonder if you could give your name and address.

MR EVANS: Richard Evans, 69 Borrowdale Road, Lancaster LA1 3EU.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MS TREEWHITT: My concern was, because I have already made comments on the website, and I came here today because there have been leaks about Conservative proposals to ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is public.

MS TREEWHITT: Is it public, sorry. To hive off further parts of south Lancaster into the Morecambe constituency, Freehold where I used to live and where these people live, it just seems even crazier than what we have at the moment. We are one area, we all work together, we should work together.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think the reference to the leak, to be clear, is because the newspaper report had a document before the MP came here yesterday and then he spoke to it, if I have read the article properly.

MS TREEWHITT: Thank you. I have not read the newspaper since yesterday.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, Conservative Party, New Hall Lane, Bolton. Just to put on record that that is not a leaked document, it is a published document, as you rightly say, and I would want the record putting straight on that. Can I pick on something you said about your role? You work for the city council?

MS TREEWHITT: Yes.

MR WALSH: Does that not therefore include a large number of wards which will be excluded from the proposed Morecambe and Lancaster seat but would be in a much larger rural North Lancashire seat stretching from Carnforth to Gisburn?

MS TREEWHITT: Yes, it would, and again it is just impossible. It is like with the university, we just cannot get all the areas into one, but I feel that the link between Lancaster and Morecambe is so strong that that is stronger than the links with the rural areas, which I feel have different issues and we are best served by having a different constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) I am grateful for your contribution. We currently have a situation where we have no current booked speakers for another 20 minutes or so. Is there anyone else in the room who has not put their name down to speak but who would like to speak? It is not important that everyone prepares presentations to come here, it is important that we hear good views. I am afraid you will have to repeat your name and address?

MR EVANS: Richard Evans, postcode LA1 3EU. I have not studied these proposals in detail. Is it appropriate to make a comment about the process of this review?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You make your comment and we will decide whether it matters. It is better that you speak than not speak.

MR EVANS: I effectively stumbled across the fact that this was all happening by accident because I did not get the local paper and I have not seen any information about it. When I looked on the website the information that I saw on the story website seemed to imply that you just turned up, a free event. I think this forum, with me having to stand here with a microphone with a camera on me, is actually quite intimidating and I am sure that there may be a lot of people who would like to express their views who would be intimidated by this particular process. That was my initial comment about the process.

Anyway, as to the point I wanted to make about the constituency. Like the previous speaker, I understand there are many real difficulties in coming up with a solution that suits everybody. However, my comment is about the exclusion of the university from the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency. I have lived in Lancaster for 24 years and I worked at the university for nearly 25 years. I feel that the university is an integral part of the city even though it is three miles distant from the centre. There are a huge number of people working at the university who live in Lancaster and Morecambe.

Many of the students do during the three or four years they spend at the university and they become residents of the city as well. I think it would be very sad to see the university excluded from the city constituency, I think it has got much more in common with Lancaster and Morecambe than it has with the rural areas that surround it. That is my main point.

The second point I wanted to make was about the counter-proposal that was just referred to. Where my partner and I live in Lancaster is very much part of the city, it takes us 10 minutes to walk into the centre of the city, yet in the counter-proposal we would not be part of the Lancaster constituency. I think that is right. We are in Freehold. In fact, the division running up Moor Lane seems arbitrary, it seems strange, so I think that is a far worse proposal than what is being proposed by the Boundary Commission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I understand your point about the environment and the format to come in. It is very difficult to get the right format because it has moved from what used to be very much an enquiry and cross-examination and interrogation to something which is about receiving information now, rather than having a debate and the strongest argument wins, now it is about receiving information. It is hard to create a forum which does not allow that. We do not want to create a debate in the room, it is a place where we receive information.

MR EVANS: Could I make a suggestion? Perhaps if there was another room with these maps so that we could study them and have members of the Boundary Commission on hand to answer questions about it before we come in to give our views. Certainly when I was looking online I could not make sense of it, there was not enough detail looking at the maps online. Also, of course, most people are online but there are lots of people who are not, so I think it discriminates against some communities, particularly the elderly, in not being able to view the stuff except online.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think they are all excellent points and I am sure Glenn Reed, who is the leader of the Boundary Commission team, will take that on board and indeed for other places that still having hearings elsewhere in the country.

I think the issue about having more maps available is critical and the extent to which you can make them available in all the libraries and the like is an important point. I do not know how the Commission would approach that, but the point is well made and I am sure will go on their list of things they can try and do differently next time.

MR REED: We have put paper documents at various places throughout the country, certainly some are, I think, in Lancaster. I need to double-check and find out exactly where we did, but they were sent out and made available publically so that people could actually access those paper documents. The point is taken.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. Mr Evans, I take your point about intimidation and the intimidating nature. For future or other people you talk to, we do receive written representations, it is not closed, and we will give equal weight to the written representations, so if you feel concerned or your friends feel concerned about making oral representations write in and we will listen.

MR EVANS: Could I make another suggestion too, that looking at the information about the event that was on the website it was totally unclear to me what to expect coming here today. I expected there would be information for us to look at and there is not

really. When it talked about speaking slots I did not know what that meant, and I am sure lots of other people do not know what that means.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The Boundary Commission have taken on board your points. Do you still wish to make a comment?

MS WALKER: Yes. Catherine Walker, 69 Borrowdale Road, Lancaster LA1 3EU, partner of Richard. It was just an additional point really in regard to the maps. I think it would be really helpful if, in addition to the proposed new constituency boundaries, there were also maps showing us exactly where the current ones go, because I know it is Lancaster and Fleetwood we are in but I do not know precisely what is in and what is not in that constituency as it stands at the moment. I may be wrong, but I asked outside if there was a current map of the constituency and I do not believe that was available. Again, from a point of understanding precisely what is proposed and what implications it has for people in various parts of the neighbourhood I think that would be really helpful.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, that is a very helpful suggestion. Just in the spirit of helpfulness, I know it is an online issue, and the Boundary Commission have a lot of information on this, but if you also go to the BBC online and look up 'BBC Boundary Commissions' and enter your postcode on their website it will give you both the Boundary Commission proposals and it will shade in the existing constituency proposals, so you get quite a good view if you do have a look. They feed off each other but they happen to have overlaid the existing constituency, which, as somebody who is trying to do this, it is complicated to try and match existing and future world. The discussion is really about the future world, but unless you understand where we are today it is more difficult.

MR REED: I have found the address. The paper records were placed and deposited at Lancaster City Council in Dalston Square, that is the place where they were sent, so you should be able to access hard copy of the documents there to have a look at.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think Dr Love and Mrs Love have just arrived. If you are ready to speak, give your name and full address and make whatever representations you wish to make and then we will see if there are points that anyone wishes to clarify or seek further information on. Thank you, Sir.

DR LOVE: I am Ian Love. I live in 10 Johnson Close, which is off Willow Lane in the Marsh ward of Lancashire. Basically, the new proposal from the Boundary Commission I felt was a big improvement on what we have had. Obviously there had to be changes since the numbers in the constituency and in the neighbouring constituency of Morecambe and Lunesdale were too small. I am pleased with the change. Having the current situation in Lancaster going with Fleetwood is rather weird because it is a long way away, it is difficult to get to, and although there are some similarities between the demography of Lancaster and the demography of Fleetwood it is not very great,

whereas pairing with Morecambe makes a lot of sense because our demographics are pretty similar: we have rich areas, we have wealthy areas, we have poor areas, we have both urban areas. I think that is a big improvement.

I think the boundary proposals also are not just over the sort of people who are in the two areas that is proposed, really we are very much linked together. Everyone knows the Morecambe Road gets very busy with all the traffic. There are some heavy lorries, but there are mainly private vehicles and buses. There is an incredible amount of movement between Lancaster and Morecambe, so it seems logical for us to be paired together in that way with an MP.

We know that within the city council there are meetings in Lancaster and meetings in Morecambe, Morecambe has its town council. Morecambe obviously has its own interests, has its own links to Carnforth which will be outside the proposed boundary, but the interaction between Lancaster and Morecambe is far, far greater and therefore that would seem to me an ideal intention to move along.

The suggestion going back in history to have Bulk ward area on this side of the Lune going into a different constituency from the rest of Lancaster seems crazy to me. It might have had some historical reason but nowadays it has no such reason whatsoever. One could say that the near wards on the other side, Skerton East and Skerton West, also link much more to Lancaster than they do to Morecambe, similarly with the Vale area.

I think it makes far, far more sense to put things together with Lancaster and Morecambe to make a constituency of a suitable size than it does to split the urban area into two different constituencies, which is the current situation and one which there has been some suggestion should continue. I think that is basically my comments.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I have no particular points of clarification. I can see one in the front here.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. Dr Love, as I understand it, you support the proposals of the Boundary Commission. What is your view then on the university being excluded given how fundamental it is to the city of Lancaster?

DR LOVE: It is unfortunate. There is always bound to be exclusions at some stage or other. It would be nice to have the university within. The university itself is only part of that ward, University and Scotforth Rural. If one included the university then one would have to exclude something else, Bolton-le-Sands or something like that would be the obvious one to exclude, which again has its own reasons for links with Morecambe and Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Just for a point of clarification for you, not putting in the university in Scotforth Rural into this proposed constituency does not discount this proposal but it does affect the North Lancashire proposal where the numbers are adjusted and would be underneath the required quota. That is the difficulty the Boundary Commission faced. Are there any other points anyone would wish to raise? (No response). Thank you, Dr Love.

MRS LOVE: My name is Alison Love. I also live at 10 Johnson Close off Willow Lane, in Marsh, and I will probably say really rather similar things to my husband since we do normally agree about things, but I will put it in my own way.

We arrived here just over four years ago, so anything I say is not really talking from any sense of the history of the constituency, it is from a sense of the present realities as I felt them as I was learning to live in Lancaster, which was a city I did not really know, I had only passed through it previously.

Thinking back, I rapidly realised that what I had not realised, as an outsider, the close links with Morecambe, which struck me immediately. I also found that people I met who lived the other side of the river in Skerton definitely identified with Lancaster rather than Morecambe. The people I met tended to live in Lancaster or come here for their social contacts. For example, at the church I go to people will come way over the river to go to our church. I was also struck, I think gobsmacked was the word, when I finally discovered what the constituency actually consisted of with Fleetwood. I know there are reasons for it, I found out, but I was totally bewildered.

I think the proposed boundaries do recognise local community ties, which is what perhaps I am most concerned about. Lancaster and Morecambe are effectively contiguous and there are strong transport links, which there certainly are not with Fleetwood even with the ferry. There are buses, there are trains, and as I use them, which I do quite often, I realise that it is very frequent. People are all the time moving between Lancaster and Morecambe and Morecambe and Lancaster, it is both ways, and they do it for work, for shopping, visiting relatives, for entertainment, for relaxation, so it seems to me they are linked, they have community links.

I realise that Morecambe values its own separate identity, everyone always does, so the point that the existing boundaries cut Skerton and Skerton area off from its natural links, so there is a problem whatever.

Thinking about the alternative proposals which I gather have been made, and it has been mentioned in the *Lancaster Guardian*, for example, I find it frankly weird to put the Bulk ward off and tag it on to Morecambe, which is how it feels to me. Bulk ward contains what I would almost call civic institutions, both the theatres the bus station - can you have Lancaster bus station - the fire station, even Sainsbury's. In other words, as I got to know Lancaster all those things, but not the fire station, became part of my

daily life. More seriously, much more seriously, the Bulk communities of Freehold, Ridge and Newlands, people I know there identify as part of Lancaster. I have never met anyone who said, "Well, I live over here but I really feel part of Morecambe." They may say, "My family came from Morecambe", but that is different.

I do regret the exclusion of the university from the constituency but I appreciate the reasons the Commission has given. There is also the point that in fact many students and staff actually live in Lancaster and participate in the life of the city. There are not such a huge number that live on campus these days. It is a tricky situation, it is sad, but there it is.

I feel on the whole that the Commission's proposed changes would create a much more cohesive constituency certainly than we have had in the past and I feel more cohesive than either of the alternative proposals that have been put forward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I should say a bit like a presenter on the BBC, that there is more than one counter-proposal, there are variations of a theme, so it is not simply one or the other. When all the submissions get published after the consultation period closes then in the New Year they will be published and everyone can have another look at these, and you will see there are a number of alternatives that people have floated, it is not just one or other. I have no comments. Thank you very much indeed.

We are in the position again where we have got a short break while we are waiting for the next planned person who has got representations, which is due at 12.30, so I am going to suggest I will sit here and wait. If people want to sit and wait feel free to do so.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to formally resume. I understand that Hilary McManus is here who has got some views that she would like to make. The way it works at the podium, if you can give your name.

MS McMANUS: I am not going to use the podium.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The difficulty we have is that this is a public hearing and therefore we are putting points on record and we want to correctly record and capture the information and it would be easier to use the microphone.

MS McMANUS: Okay, okay. I am only going to speak for about that two seconds.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I understand that, but even people who ask a question also have to give their name and address, it is all part of the official public consultation. If you could give your name and full address for the record and make

whatever representation you wish to make and at the end there may be points of clarification.

MS McMANUS: My name is Hilary Lyn McManus. My address is 7A Moor Lane, Lancaster LA1 1QD. I am in Bulk ward and I am staying there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are very welcome.

MS McMANUS: I only came here off the cuff because I am interested in what the Boundary Commission are doing. I have lived in Lancaster for 26 years and I have seen the borders being messed with quite appallingly the last time they were messed with, which separated an urban environment, which was Morecambe, and attached it to Lunesdale, so you have an entirely separate urban environment attached to Lunesdale. Neither of them have anything in common with each other.

Whilst I do not live in Morecambe, I work in Morecambe and I am well aware of all sorts of people's jobs, people's work and environments. I do not see how taking my city centre ward - it is a city it is not a little town - it is a city centre whether you like it or not, you do not divide part of that city centre off and off and throw it across the river into Morecambe.

However, I do also see that it would make sense if you are changing the boundaries to maybe have a more urban concentration of boundaries, so that perhaps you have Lancaster urban, Morecambe urban, Heysham urban. If there were a way to have those represented as one set, if you like, rather than splitting Morecambe across into an area that is never going to be representative of it, or it representative of Morecambe, and I am going to be political here and say David Morris does not represent the people of Morecambe, I would prefer to have a proper, good, solid representation of the urban areas here and the quieter areas, if you like, the more rural areas, that have very, very, very different things that need addressing, could be seen in a different light with a different constituency. The bottom line is I will not be split. Bulk ward, I am not having it. I have been here for 26 years and it is Lancaster city centre and it should stay that way.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well put. Just to clarify for you, the Boundary Commission's proposals do not split Bulk ward out of Lancaster, they are the proposals for the Boundary Commission. What you are reacting to, I am sure, is a set of counter-proposals that are being put forward by others as an alternative to the Boundary Commission's proposals and you have made pretty clear how you feel about that, as indeed have several residents from Bulk ward that it is inappropriate. There is no question other than that everyone who has been in this room and heard the discussions, has heard the views of the residents of Bulk that they have got a very clear preference and that it is an integral part of the city of Lancaster.

MS McMANUS: I do think, like there always will be, there has been a real difficulty in trying to understand what these proposals are without almost going round everyone in the borough with a paper map of what the changes are. I tried to download the boundary map and I had difficulty. I am a bit of an idiot with technology, I will admit that, but I am not that much of an idiot and I found it very hard to download, so there will be a whole raft of people who are struggling with understanding what this means to us.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have had several people, so more than one or two, who have said to us that the consultation process has been quite hard to get hold of and come to grips with. If I can say two things: one is that the Boundary Commission have listened to the concerns and I am sure we will react to it; secondly, written proposals do not have to go on until 5 December and therefore there is quite a lot of further opportunity to make points. There is also the opportunity through word of mouth for people to be able to pass on the point I have just made to you, for example.

There is a distinction to be had between the local press picking up counter-proposals, which have set hares running, but that is what proposals are for to give people the opportunity to debate, and the Boundary Commission's proposals themselves, which when one looks closer may still or may not meet people's needs, and indeed they do not meet everyone's needs. They are the proposals which are the subject of debate and the counter-proposals are simply a set of representations to be heard alongside your own representation and any other individual's representation. It does not matter whether it is an organisation or an individual; they each stand on their own merits.

MS McMANUS: Just as a matter of interest, do you have this map on paper?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, we do.

MS McMANUS: Because I think that is something, and I am in Lancaster Residents' Association as well, the Association members would be interested in.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Whether you can get a copy of it here, it depends on the extent to which we are able to use the facilities here because the maps are A3 size and we can only do what the hosts are doing here and the host is this building.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It can be downloaded on the BC website.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I might have said that had our speaker not said it is actually not quite so easy to do.

MS McMANUS: A lot of people do not have computers and they cannot download them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There are copies at the city council offices, so it is possible to go there and I am sure they will make available copies for you and other associated residents groups and associations to be able to share. I would encourage you to share and encourage people to give us their views wherever they feel strongly about points, whether to support or disagree. Indeed, what you have come to do, surprisingly, is to support the Boundary Commission's proposals for the placing of Bulk in the way which you have spoken, but it happened that you came on the back of reading about the counter-proposals. Could you wait, there may be a point of clarification?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. Just for the record, Sir, can I make it clear I think you said Morecambe was at a previous review linked to the Rural?

MS McMANUS: It is been Morecambe and Lunesdale, is it not?

MR WALSH: It has been Morecambe and Lunesdale since at least 1898, it is not a recent change. It became Morecambe and Lunesdale more recently, but it is Morecambe and Lonsdale going up into Cumbria at least from 1898.

MS McMANUS: That may be the case but in terms of constituencies that is not because it used to be Geraldine Smith and it was Lancaster and Morecambe, the constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think the point he is making is that it has always been linked up through the coast but it was linked up into what is now Cumbria rather than Lunesdale, which is the point you were making, it is that change.

MS McMANUS: Yes, it has been changed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Which is the point you were making, it is that change. It still links Carnforth and so on up through the bay, I believe - I have learnt. Is Mr Glen Cooper in the room? If you could give your name and full address for the record and then make whatever representations you wish.

MR COOPER: Glen Cooper, 28 Queens Drive, which is Bare, Morecambe. I was born in Morecambe and have lived there all my life. I have a wife, who was born and brought up in Lancaster, four daughters, all of whom have lived and gone to school locally, one Heysham, two Morecambe and one Lancaster. I currently work in Lancaster, my wife is from Lancaster.

I started work in 1978 in Lancaster as a journalist, I was news editor for *Lancaster Guardian* and later moved to the *Morecambe Visitor*, where I was editor for 11 years

before leaving the profession. I currently do some radio work for Bare Radio covering Morecambe Football Club.

I was prompted to speak here after receiving a letter through my door, as I think most of the population of Morecambe did, from Morecambe MP David Morris urging me to register my protest against the boundary change proposals. Specifically, what prompted me was phrases about Lancaster taking all Morecambe's money over the past since 1974 and local government reorganisation, Lancaster being jealous of Morecambe and not wanting it to do well, which I thought was a bit childish, I thought we had moved on from that kind of talk. It provided a pre-paid envelope for us to send our comments, not straight back to the Boundary Commission I noted but instead back to him. I suspected that he might have wanted to vet them before sending them on or not, but I might be wrong. I did not reply that way, I logged onto the Boundary Commission site and registered my view that way direct to the Commission unvetted.

I am broadly in favour of the proposals. I know David Morris was trying to protect his job, and in the same position I might do something similar but I hope I would involve myself in a more adult debate. Comments received that way I suppose need to be seen in that context, that they are prompted. I am here as an independent. I have no affiliations to any political party or to any particular position other than, I hope, of common sense.

The Electoral Reform Society suggests regarding constituency boundaries that it is important to have a system that does not awkwardly split or graft together awkward communities. Currently, we have Skerton, which is very clearly Lancaster and always has been, split from Lancaster. That is the most obvious awkward split that I can see in the current constituency arrangements, it is currently in Morecambe but never has been seen that way by Morecambe people, it is always Lancaster.

Then you have grafts, for example, that link Heysham at one end with Leck and Whittington, with which they have no relationship whatsoever really. Similarly, and I am not the first one to point this out, Lancaster with Fleetwood, bizarre. Currently, we have some very awkward grafts and one, as I would describe it, awkward split.

In an ideal world I can see that there is an argument that says one MP for Morecambe and another for Lancaster would be nice, but if population sizes of those individual constituencies would not stack up I believe the new proposals make far more sense than the situation we have currently.

Whatever some people would like to have you think, and people do still trot out the old Lancaster version Morecambe rivalries, I get that, it still happens, they are one and the same place. Our children do not have a problem thinking that way and I do not think we should either going into the future. We work on one side of the river and live on the other, people from Morecambe quite happily send their kids to school in Lancaster.

People from Lancaster have days out in Morecambe and Morecambe folk shop in Lancaster and eat there, go to the theatre and have friends and relatives in both places. It is, effectively, one and the same place.

There is no reason why one MP, whoever that might be, cannot properly represent the area, which has long been marketed as city, coast and countryside. It is a really nice mutually beneficial mix that any MP would be proud to promote and work for and should enjoy doing that.

If I was being hyper critical, and I know it is a difficult situation and you cannot please everybody and you have to make boundaries somewhere, I might have added Carnforth into the new proposal for Lancaster and Morecambe to be joined, but again if it is about numbers and making a sensible boundary then I think the new proposals are a pretty good effort. They certainly make far more sense than the situation we have at the moment. That is me, and I am happy to answer any questions on that. On the history of boundary changes I might flounder a bit but I will just give an honest answer if anyone has a question.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, that was very helpful. Can I ask a question just towards the latter when you were talking about Carnforth. To what extent does Carnforth have, if you know, much in common with the rest of the Lune Valley looking up towards Upper Lune wards and that?

MR COOPER: I am a Morecambe lad. I have lived in the Slyne area, which is on the border of Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth, and we have used Carnforth quite a lot. How Carnforth relates to anything further north I think probably would best be answered by somebody from Carnforth. If I am looking at it from my perspective, I see Carnforth as a natural flow from Morecambe, Hest Bank, Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth. After that, I would see it, there is a motorway junction and I would see that as a fairly sensible split. I do appreciate it is difficult and you have got to draw the line somewhere and if population comes into it then Carnforth and north of Carnforth would not be a silly amalgamation but I still see Carnforth as pretty much the boundaries of the local government area really.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any other points?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You talk about your knowledge of Lancaster and its history. Can I just explore with you what you see as the University ward being split from the city under the Boundary Commission's proposals?

MR COOPER: I have to admit, I have not examined that end of the proposal as fully as I have the Morecambe/Lancaster city areas. I would see a sensible split as just south of Galgate, I do not know how that fits into the boundaries proposed. I am sorry, does that

make sense? If you were to explain a little bit more I might be able to give you a view. I see Galgate as a natural split there.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Cooper, my name is Nicholas Elliott and I am Assistant Boundary Commissioner. I think I understood you to mention a place call Whittington that was not part of the existing constituency. Could you help us identify where it is?

MR COOPER: I looked on the Boundary Commission website.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it part of the existing constituency but not the proposed constituency?

MR COOPER: Correct, yes.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you identify where it is on the map.

MR COOPER: It is the north east extremity of the boundary.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: North Lancashire?

MR COOPER: Yes. The point I was making was that somebody in Heysham would not have any relationship at all unless they had family there with that extreme end.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) Thank you. Is Mr Mark Townsend here? We are running a few minutes ahead of the planned time, but if you are ready to speak that would be very helpful. If you could you give your name and full address and then make your representations.

CLLR TOWNSEND: (Labour Party) It is councillor Mark Townsend, 2 Rose Cottages, Burnley, BB10 3QQ. Obviously I am here to talk primarily about the Burnley constituency but primarily across Lancashire. I think the Boundary Commission have had a very difficult job to do here in terms of trying to keep communities together and ensure that basically the whole infrastructure of constituency boundaries retains communities.

I certainly think that the proposals we have on the table now are far better than they were in 2012, I need to say that, certainly the initial proposals.

What I particularly like about the current proposals is that it does keep the towns of east Lancashire intact pretty much as entities in their own right, so Blackburn, Accrington, Burnley, and the proposals this time are far better in terms of the affinity the communities have with how the constituencies are now being split.

In 2012, pretty much Burnley was split more towards the Accrington side rather than the Nelson side. Anybody who knows the area will know that Accrington predominantly gravitates towards the Blackburn area and the Nelson side of Burnley gravitates towards Burnley in terms of how things naturally evolve, where the town centres are, where the major shopping precincts are. Basically, what I am saying is I think the Boundary Commission have done a good job in terms of making sure that the community needs are reflected within the current boundary proposals.

Obviously it would have been ideal if Burnley could have retained its boundary, because we are a self-contained boundary now with the constituency and the local government boundaries as well. I understand, because the Government are going down this line and wanting to reduce the number of MPs, that was going to be impossible in terms of the size of the constituencies at the moment.

We have got the Padiham end, which is the Gawthorpe and Hampton with Park areas, which is a self-contained community in its own right. Under local government reorganisation in 1974, and some people would say that they never got over it then, that basically it came more closer to Burnley, but Padiham has always been treated as a community in its own right and keeping Padiham together I think is a good thing. That community, although there is a degree of unhappiness that it would go into a different constituency after four decades of where it is, it is absolutely right that it is kept together under these proposals, that is Hampton with Park and Gawthorpe.

Coal Clough with Deerplay, obviously it is a little more contentious because it does stretch a little bit more into the inner urban Burnley boundary, but I can see exactly where the Boundary Commission have come from. When you look from 30,000 feet down on the constituency lights it does make more sense in terms of the rural aspects of that ward even though it does take some chunks out of the urban area of Burnley.

As far as Nelson goes, the people of Nelson have a very close affinity with Burnley. Many people there shop in Burnley. They come to Burnley naturally for many of the community things that they need to with their business, in terms of superstores, legal aspects and various community issues. I think it is important as well that it is kept quite simple in terms of the local government structures. We have got some complexities, we are a two tier authority in Lancashire, and we need to try and keep the local government and the parliamentary governance as simple as we possibly can and I do think your proposals do go some way towards doing that, even though our local government will have to interact now with more than one parliamentary representative. Overall, I think the Boundary Commission have done a good job and that basically the proposals as outlined are overall supported by the people of Burnley and Padiham in terms of what you have done and I am sure in time the people of Nelson, although Pendle constituency does have its own views, will come to make Burnley constituency its home.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no points myself. Does anyone have any points they wish to make?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, representing the Conservative Party. Can I just take you to the west of Burnley town centre and those wards which coming up almost to the town hall, including Turf Moor and areas like that? Do they not look very much to the town centre rather than elsewhere?

MR TOWNSEND: You mean the areas like Brunshaw and Bank Hall?

MR WALSH: What you are saying is they are all part of the town centre, are they, from what you have said?

MR TOWNSEND: Pretty much. Basically, they join up to the town centre. Turf Moor is just on the outskirts of Burnley town centre and that is covered by Brunshaw ward and Bank Hall ward and they are very much the inner core of Burnley's community, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any other points? (No response) I am not currently expecting any other speaker until 2 o'clock. Is there anyone in the room who has not spoken but who would wish to?

CLLR BRYNING: Yes, very briefly.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am afraid you will have to come to the front. It seems a nuisance, but, as I have explained earlier to others, because this is a matter of record for the consultation period it is helpful if you do speak. In which case, I will have to trouble you to give your name and address again. I know you gave it outside, but for the microphone if you could.

CLLR BRYNING: I came in this morning expecting and hoping to hear various points of view. I came in at short notice assuming, for example, that there might be some literature available about the actual geographical maps for anybody who comes up. Myself, I am a Lancaster city councillor.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Before you proceed any further, and my apologies for interrupting, could you give your name?

CLLR BRYNING: Abbott Bryning, city councillor for one of the Skerton wards. 51 Sefton Drive, Lancaster LA1 2QD. As I say, I came in just wanting to listen to various points of view, and I have heard one or two, but my principal concern is that the proposals sacrifice important co-ordinated community spirit for arithmetic accuracy as far as you can achieve knowing what the Commission is seeking.

I have been a city councillor now for 50, years which is something, I have lived in the area all my life, I am 84 years old by the way, except for being at university for a few years some years ago.

My principal concern really, if I narrow it down, is the impact of the proposed changes on Carnforth, which was once an urban district council until the 1974 merger. I have also experienced four or five, correct me if I am wrong, boundary changes in this area which have either put us on one side of the river or the other side of the river and all that means to people in Lancaster, not least in Skerton.

I believe that to isolate Carnforth and include in it what must be one of the biggest rural constituencies in the country, and correct me again if I am wrong, I was actually born in Pilling and I do not what has happened to Pilling. Oh yes, there it is. I really believe that it goes too far, this particular proposal. I am not against the general principle of the Commission trying to even up the size in voter terms of constituencies, but there are limits in my mind and, for my money, the limit is the question of what impact it will have on people in Carnforth, so far removed from the rest of the proposed constituency.

Carnforth was pretty happy in 1974, coming in with two other rural districts, it was an urban district, coming in with other two rural districts and the old borough of Morecambe which caused some problems occasionally, much exaggerated in my opinion, having been brought up in Morecambe, in fact, but not since 1959.

That is not really terribly well expressed, I know, because I did not come with any prepared notes other than I have scribbled down since I heard the previous speakers.

Last time we were involved in this sort of thing it was not to do with voter number equalities, it was to do with things like we wanted in this area a unitary authority, and we could not have it, with or without bits of Lancashire across the sands, which was a possible alternative that never came to anything.

I hope in a nutshell you have gathered from what I said what my main objection is and it is to the exclusion of Carnforth from the proposals.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The great thing about being 84 is two things: one, it gives me great hope for my own future and if I can be as spritely as you are at 84 then I am looking forward to it. The second thing is you bring a lot of history and therefore a lot of knowledge about previous reviews. Can I ask you a question about Carnforth? You were concerned about it being isolated out from the proposal for Lancaster and Morecambe?

CLLR BRYNING: Which is the view, by the way, of the Carnforth Town Council and others.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it sensible to separate Carnforth from the other rural hinterland that sits behind it, which is Warton, Silverdale, Kellet and Upper Lune?

CLLR BRYNING: I would imagine they will be speaking for themselves. They may or may not have done, I cannot speak for them, but I see Carnforth it is everywhere described as a thriving market town et cetera. However you look at it, and I think there is a community of interest there that is shared by all of us. I should declare myself, I am a Labour politician, but it goes beyond that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So I can understand Carnforth a bit better, it is a market town and normally I associate market towns with rural areas which they are in, but in this context you are saying it very much has things in common with Morecambe and Lancaster?

CLLR BRYNING: It is not a market town in the sense that Clitheroe might be seen as one. I think they would mainly look down into Morecambe or possibly up to Kendal. Again, I do not see that as being something that should be lost and I think it would be. I think I know the feelings amongst some people who would have a lot to say in Carnforth.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Although I have not heard too many of them, there are views at the moment. Are there any points in the room?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, representing the Conservative Party. Can I pursue the point for my clarification and others? We have heard previously Carnforth sits with Kellet and Warton, is that your perception? As you get to the north of Carnforth ward it merges into Kellett, it merges into Warton, and to the south it merges into Bolton-le-Sands and Bolton and Slyne, is that correct, it is the link between those areas?

CLLR BRYNING: Obviously if they are next to one another they obviously have links, but the places you have mentioned also have their separate parish councils and they will have a view. I think the view I expressed, I am only aware that the people on Carnforth Town Council have strong views as well and they are cross-party.

MR WALSH: If you argue that Carnforth should be linked to the proposed Morecambe - and this is not cross-examination - you will recognise that there is the need to do something at the south to remove numbers in the south. Have you given thought to that?

CLLR BRYNING: No. I understand that if they still persist with the arithmetic argument any votes that they need elsewhere from Carnforth might be available elsewhere, but that is not my immediate concern and nor should it be used as such.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points in the room? (No response) We have no other scheduled speakers and I think everyone in this room has had the opportunity to speak, so I am going to break for lunch now and we will meet again at 2 o'clock when we have other speakers. Thank you very much to everyone who has come along.

After the luncheon adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming along to this final afternoon. We are scheduled to run this afternoon from 2 o'clock to 5 o'clock. We have a significant number of speakers but I will try and fit everyone I can in. Those who have booked I will fit in and those who have not booked I will see if there is an opportunity to take them.

A number of people were here this morning, but this is just a reminder for those who were not. It is an opportunity to present information to the Assistant Boundary Commissioners so that we consider whether it is appropriate to make any recommended changes to the Boundary Commission on their initial proposals. We will do so by taking the oral representations and the written representations together and give equal weight to each. It is most helpful to us if anyone who puts forward a counter-proposal can manage to square the circle, as it were, by making the numbers matching any corresponding consequences that they either inadvertently or advertently bring into play.

A little word on format: it is a presenting room rather than a debating room. People will come forward, give their name and address and then make their representation, after which there may be points of clarification either from myself or from others in the room. All three Assistant Commissioners who are involved in reviewing the Boundary Commission's proposals are in the room, so we will all take on board points, we might have comments ourselves or we might not. It is not meant to be a debate, it is not meant to be an interrogation, it is meant to be can you help us if we ask questions, that is the intention of it.

I have a number of speakers down. I will work through the list and see if they are in here. I know we have at least one or two of them. First on the list is Munsif Dad from Accrington? I do not think he is here yet. Lizzi Collinge?

CLLR COLLINGE: (Labour Party) Hello, thank you. My name is Lizzi Collinge. I am the county councillor for Lancaster East. That division includes Bulk ward, which I believe you have talked about today. I want to make clear that I am a Labour Party county councillor; I am not speaking on behalf of the Labour Party, I am speaking on behalf of myself as a resident of Bulk ward and on behalf of the other residents of Lancaster East, especially Bulk ward.

I would like to speak on two things. Firstly, with a couple of caveats, I would like to support the Boundary Commission proposals for a Lancaster and Morecambe seat. I would like to oppose the counter-proposals that I believe the Commission has seen that would split off Bulk ward from Lancaster city.

First of all, to support the Boundary Commission's proposals for a Lancaster and Morecambe seat. Lancaster and Morecambe are distinct communities, they absolutely are, they have their own identity and their own history. However, we have so many links together, we are so connected, and we have a lot of common interests and common challenges. I will give you a few. We are both urban areas, we both have the challenge of economic development, challenges like empty shop fronts which unfortunately we do see. We are both looking at how we can attract more tourists and how can we develop and protect our heritage. This is something we share.

We have both got vibrant arts and culture scenes that are currently coming under a lot of funding challenges and we need to be doing more to work together across Lancaster and Morecambe on the arts and culture.

More than that, Lancaster and Morecambe, family and friends cross between the two every day. Workers cross between the two every day, you can see that in the traffic. If you have sat in the traffic between Lancaster and Morecambe you will see there is a lot of connection there.

The rural areas outside of Lancaster and Morecambe, I grew up in a rural area, the rural areas have different challenges and I think deserve a separate and different representation.

In short, I think Lancaster and Morecambe should have one MP, it makes sense. We have shared challenges, we have shared communities as well as our own distinct identities.

One of the main things I have come here to speak about is there have been counter-proposals to the Commission that propose splitting my county division in half, splitting Bulk ward into a semi-rural Morecambe and Lunesdale seat. I want to reiterate here I am speaking on behalf of my residents; I have been talking to them. The idea to Bulk ward residents that we would be part of a semi-rural Morecambe and Lunesdale seat is laughable, it is genuinely ridiculous. Bulk ward, which I live in, starts at the bus station, that is Lancaster city centre bus station, so Lancaster bus station would not be in Lancaster, and that is just odd.

People are genuinely spitting feathers. I am co-ordinating a residents' petition and I just want to read you the text of it. I will be submitting this separately as a written submission. This petition has only been going a week and a bit and this is how many

signatures we have got already and that is not all of the shops that it has been, I have only collected from a couple of them so far. The petition text says:

“I object to the Conservative Party’s plan to split the Ridge, Newton and Freehold ...”

That is Bulk ward, that is just what the local people will know it as rather than Bulk ward:

“... off from Lancaster by making it part of their proposed Morecambe and Lunesdale parliamentary constituency. This would split our community from our natural neighbours and the rest of central Lancaster and would not serve our interests.”

That is what we have got in a few days and there will definitely be a lot more.

I have not been in these sessions but I have heard there have been other submissions to the Commission that people in parts of Bulk ward, especially in the new houses on the edge of the city, look more to Lune Valley rather than to Lancaster city. That is abject nonsense. I represent those people and when I talk to them on the doorstep all I get are complaints about not enough buses going into Lancaster. I do not get one single person going, “Oh, but what about our neighbours in Lune Valley, I want to go out there?” Everything that they say to me is about being part of Lancaster and being part of our city. Also, I do not know how much you know the local area, the edge of Lancaster is 20 minutes’ walk from the city centre, it is not a big city.

People in the other part of my division, so my county council division also takes in other wards, it takes in most of the city centre, half of John O’Gaunt ward and Bulk ward. The people in the other parts think it is an absolutely barmy idea to split Bulk ward off. In fact, they cannot quite get their heads around why they would have a different MP to their neighbours in Bulk. They cannot get their head around why the bus station would be in Morecambe and Lunesdale while the Dukes Theatre, the Grand Theatre would be in Morecambe and Lunesdale. It just simply does not make sense.

Our communities are not built like that, our communities are very much part of Lancaster. Bulk ward is an indivisible part of Lancaster city, to split it off would genuinely be splitting neighbourhoods apart. I again reiterate this is not a party political view, this is my residents saying this. I am sure you will hear representations from other political parties supporting what I am saying. I would just urge the Commission to keep our communities together and to go with a solution that keeps Lancaster together and keeps Lancaster and Morecambe, which has the same challenges and so many shared characteristics together with one MP. Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any questions?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You could help. I have the tourist map for the city [here](#). Could you just draw on for me where Bulk ward is on that map?

CLLR COLLINGE: I have got it on my tablet if you want to see.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, no, because I will take that away, I will not be able to take your tablet.

CLLR COLLINGE: This is where I have to remember where the exact boundary line is.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is just to give me an indication how far it came in from the way you were speaking, with apologies to everyone else because I cannot zoom in far enough. Nearly everyone else in this room knows and I just want to check. Just two lines would do.

CLLR COLLINGE: Bulk ward is there. Obviously because it is a tourist map you do not have all the residential areas that are up there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Therefore, this bank of the Lune is effectively the edge. I see you are running along the footpath here. Thank you. I personally have no points of clarification but I see at the front and back we have two points.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. From what I understand, you are saying that you support the Boundary Commission proposals for the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency?

CLLR COLLINGE: Yes, with some caveats.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: What then is your view on the fact that the university, which is so critical to the city, is excluded by virtue of being in another constituency altogether?

CLLR COLLINGE: One of my caveats of support is the university. I believe other people have and will be speaking on this, and I knew I had limited time so I wanted to leave that out. I work at the university and if there is a way of including the university then, yes, I would absolutely urge the Commission to do that. I believe the process and the guidelines by which the Commission are working under to be flawed. However, we are where we are and those are the rules. If you can include the university that would be brilliant, however I do think it is more important that we get two constituencies in the area that reflect the communities that they serve, so I include Lancaster and Morecambe and then a rural seat there.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner, it may be that you have answered it because you started by saying you have subject to caveats?

CLLR COLLINGE: Yes.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have mentioned one as the university, can you say the other if there is another one? If you have not got it do not worry.

CLLR COLLINGE: Yes. The main one is the university. I would have to look probably again more closely at the exact boundary lines, but definitely that the main one to consider would be the university.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

CLLR COLLINGE: Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is Eileen Blamire here?

MRS BLAMIRE: We are sharing a ten minute slot at the moment. I will try to be brief but it is difficult.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you could give your name and full address, please.

MRS BLAMIRE: My name is Eileen Blamire. At the moment I am leader of Lancaster City Council. I have been on the council for 30 years. Lancaster is my home town I was born here and I care passionately about it. Losing Skerton, where I taught for 20-odd years, was a real blow but at least the river divided us geographically and I could see the kind of logic of that, but this proposal to split Lancaster into two is incredible.

We work very hard to sell our district as a heritage town, Lancaster particularly, for tourism. We sell Morecambe for different reasons, quite different reasons, a coastal town, but they are joined together. People come to this area for city, coast and countryside, which was our strapline. Dividing the Dukes Theatre and all heritage that is in Stone Well from the castle and the proposed new development, it is just ridiculous.

The proposed new development, Canal Corridor, will then be in Morecambe. We are working with developers. We are very lucky to still have a developer who wants to do it and trying to sell it, they are selling it as part of a heritage city and three different areas of arts within it, two theatres and so on. It is all about the ambience of Lancaster, it is not about Morecambe. It is madness.

We work with Morecambe, we work with Carnforth, we are a district, and the Lune Valley, but Lancaster bus station, as has been said, will be in Morecambe. To have fought so many years for the university to come to Lancaster and not Blackpool, if anybody remembers that, and now to have it taken out of Lancaster and its fine reputation, are they going to change the name, are they going to call it Morecambe University? I do not know, it is just crazy. It cannot be Morecambe University. I have

forgotten what they are going to call that long strip along there. Whatever it is, it will not be Morecambe. I have no idea.

Put the university back in and take out Bolton-le-Sands and Slyne. The person who represents Slyne, the Conservative councillor for Slyne wants that to happen and keep Galgate in Lancaster to make up the numbers.

I support the Boundary Commission proposals with the exceptions that I have mentioned and, as I say, Lancaster and Morecambe are two urban areas, they belong together, and the other seat will be completely rural, including Bolton-le-Sands and Slyne, and the university will be back in Lancaster and Morecambe.

My ward is on the edge of this decision, it is just above the centre of Lancaster, and it is now right next to Bulk ward, in fact it is joined to Bulk ward in the county seat. Are we going to have to split that as well?

Please keep to the boundary proposals but include the university and take out some of the rural areas of Bolton-le-Sands and Slyne.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Before you go away, two things. First of all, sorry to be a nuisance, but if you could read your name and address into the microphone?

MRS BLAMIRE: I have registered my name and address.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I need to record it for the public consultation.

MRS BLAMIRE: I need to say it now?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, please.

MRS BLAMIRE: Eileen Blamire. I live 1 Thirsk Road, Lancaster LA1 4NE.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will see if anyone has got any points of clarification? Just so I understand, you are supporting the ---

MRS BLAMIRE: I am supporting the Boundary Commission, I think the university should be in the town, and if we need to make up the numbers part of Galgate, which it runs into, could be included too. Bolton-le-Sands and Slyne, as I say I am told that the representative, the Conservative councillor for Slyne, wants his seat to be included in whatever the other one is called, the other proposal. I just cannot understand why the university was left out apart from numbers.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Very helpful. You want to put Galgate in?

MRS BLAMIRE: Well, yes, because the university numbers will not be enough.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is still further out, that is another ward on again. Any other points of clarification anyone else has in the room?

MRS BLAMIRE: Can I ask you a question? Have the numbers to be absolute? If you had enough numbers without Galgate, fine let it go into what I call the rural ward, if that is what people want, but I just cannot see the logic.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The numbers are fixed by statute. I will not do the odd numbers, and I know other people can recite them by heart, it is 71 to 78 give or take a thousand and that is fixed.

MRS BLAMIRE: Generally speaking I have always thought that Lancaster and Morecambe go together and we have been disappointed in the past that they have not been one constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for coming. Anne Whitehead?

CLLR WHITEHEAD: I am Anne Whitehead from 6 Alderman Road, Lancaster LA1 5FW. I am also a city councillor, a Labour councillor for Scotforth East. I would generally support the Boundary Commission's proposal for a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency and a rural North Lancashire constituency, with perhaps one caveat which has been mentioned already in that it is unfortunate that the university is excluded from the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency because the students are a vital part of the city, so if there was any way in which the university could be included, possibly by including the university and Galgate or Ellel instead of Bolton and Slyne, then that may be a consideration. That apart, I am in favour of the Boundary Commission split.

I think it is natural to combine Lancaster and Morecambe. Working on the city council, we are trying to develop both Lancaster and Morecambe in terms of regeneration, arts facilities and the tourist industry, so it seems to be complementary while they are two distinct communities it is good. They have complementary pros and cons and so it would be sensible to keep them together to maintain that development.

I think it would be undesirable to split Lancaster into two constituencies. I know that it is to some extent because Skerton is part of Morecambe and Lunesdale, but to actually put the Bulk ward into a different constituency from Lancaster I think would be very detrimental and split Lancaster. Those were the main points I had.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just for information for you and others, and some of you have heard this already, the issue in relation to the university is not one of numbers and offsetting numbers. The difficulty is the next constituency, North Lancaster, will have too few numbers if it was not in there, so the Boundary Commission have been trying to balance the number of constituencies to get the numbers right. There is headroom within Lancaster and Morecambe for that constituency but it would need to be offset by introducing something else into North Lancaster or reconfiguring North Lancaster in some way and that is why the counter-proposals run across each other in that way. Any points of clarification?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. Can I just be clear, did you say that in order to seek to balance the numbers you might suggest Ellel ward was added to the city?

CLLR WHITEHEAD: Yes.

MR WALSH: Are you aware that if that were to happen it would leave no road links between the northern part and the Bowland in that proposed North Lancaster constituency?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You may or may not be aware, and I will just hold you there because I know you are planting a thought and that is more cross-examination than asking for further information. You can do it as much as you like when your colleagues are doing it but it is not fair to be asking that. Your point was very clear that if it could happen you would prefer it to happen.

CLLR WHITEHEAD: I am not sure I gave my name and address. You have a record of it but I wanted to be sure.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You did. Is Janet Hall here? Yes? So, a similar format you give your name and address?

CLLR HALL: My name is Janet Hall. My address is 17 Ayrton View, Lancaster LA1 2RW. I live in Skerton and I am a city councillor representing the Skerton East ward on the city council, which is one half of the Skerton area, which is a part of Lancaster to the north of the River Lune.

Putting aside the premise of the boundary review nationally and the misgivings that I have about reducing our electoral representation as our population continues to increase, today I want to focus on the proposed boundary changes locally and their effects on the communities of Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham.

I am in favour of the proposed constituency of Lancaster and Morecambe. As a resident of Skerton I am really pleased to see that it reunites Skerton with Lancaster,

the town which it is a part of. I am aware that some muddying of the waters has been attempted around this issue, but I am standing in front of you today to tell you that Skerton is part of Lancaster. If you ask residents in Skerton where they live they will tell you they live in Lancaster. In fact, many of them are so sure of that that when they have needed support from their parliamentary representative they contact Cat Smith because she is the Lancaster and Fleetwood MP and they live in Lancaster.

I also want to comment on the proposed boundary in the context that it merges Lancaster and Morecambe towns into one constituency and I know that this has been raised as a concern by others. This merged management exists on the city council and has done so successfully for 42 years. The council is currently run by a cabinet, a leader and cabinet, the members of whom are elected to represent areas of either Morecambe and Lancaster and make decisions about both every day.

I can understand in some areas perhaps the concern about merging two towns with substantial populations in each into one constituency. It will certainly change the character of the constituency from my current existing constituency of Morecambe and Lunesdale. What it will do is bring together urban populations with broadly similar representational needs.

I can understand, however, that this may be a challenge to some and perhaps would be perceived as increasing the workload of an elective representative. Likewise, the representing of two towns and populations will require managing by the elected MP. I think the purpose of the boundary review is to propose constituencies that bring together communities that can best be represented by one elected member and I think the proposal for Lancaster and Morecambe does that.

Finally, I want to say please think long and hard about the proposals you have heard over the last two days suggesting Lancaster be divided up in order to make up the numbers. I started by saying how pleased I am that the proposed new constituency reunites Skerton with the Lancaster parliamentary boundary, which is where it belongs, and I think that is a good place for me to finish, saying that again, and to congratulate the Boundary Commission on a proposal which unites Lancaster and Morecambe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sure the Boundary Commission will be pleased to hear that. Can I see if there are any points of clarification?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. Same question really, you support the Lancaster and Morecambe proposal of the Boundary Commission. What is your view on the fact that the university, so fundamental to the city, is not included in that constituency?

CLLR HALL: Like previous speakers have said, I would prefer to see the university in the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency. I did say at the beginning that I had

misgivings about the premise of the boundary review to start with. I think that is one of the reasons why the University ward is not being adequately represented in terms of where it is being placed.

The boundary review is predicated on the electoral register that was not up to date in December 2015, and the subsequent problems are from there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points? (No response) Thank you very much indeed. Can I check who is here? Mr Yates has arrived and I may ask you to speak shortly. Can I check, is there anyone else here who is not necessarily registered to speak but who would like to speak? No. In which case, can you come forward, give your name and full address and make your representations and we will see if anyone has any points of clarification.

CLLR YATES: Good afternoon, everybody, and thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. I am Peter Yates. I live at 16 Bloomfield Park, Carnforth, LA5 9LH. I am ward councillor for Carnforth sitting on Lancaster City Council. Carnforth and Millhead and Crag Bank are my areas. We have very close links to Silverdale up to Warton, to Hest Bank, Bolton-le-Sands, Slyne, Morecambe, and those are all the areas that are so close to the people who live there. I have worked there all my life and that is where our customer base comes from.

We have little in common with the areas of east Lancashire, Gisburn, Clitheroe or Dunsop Bridge or around the coast to Fleetwood, et cetera. We have little in common with them. We do not trade very much in that area, our culture, and we even speak a different language sometimes.

As we are now the Morecambe and Lunesdale are very, very well represented by our MP, but the people in our community, my community in particular, feel left out. We feel right out on a limb. We are only two and a half miles at the most from the Cumbria border and we do feel that the Preston-centric administration does not help us at all and unfortunately that will only get worse if we have such a massive area to cope with.

Carnforth is a conduit running along the northern edge of the area. We lead on to the Lune Valley right up to Kirby Lonsdale, and it would be nice to link all the Lune Valley together with our area that is already there.

There are problems with getting over to the other side to the southern boundaries of east Lancashire. The A65 is a terrible road, it is very, very dangerous, it takes you through to Gisburn. It is not a good road at all.

To get across to Dunsop Bridge you have got to travel over the beautiful Trough of Bowland, it is a beautiful area but unfortunately absolutely treacherous in winter and a very challenging road even in good weather.

The other route is up the M6 motorway, probably 28 to 30 miles of M6 to cope with. There are no direct routes, there is no direct rail travel, there is no direct bus, so anyone who is travelling there has to go by car. That in itself poses issues of wasted fuel, safety, and all these issues. My feeling is that if it ain't broke don't fix it.

Morecambe and Lunesdale is a very active and good constituency. If you need to do the sums, and cleverer people than I will work the sums out, and get things to balance. My plea is for our community, and we want a voice, we have got a voice with Morecambe and Lunesdale, we will lose our voice if we are absorbed into a big area because I am sure that the administration will not come from Carnforth, it will come from somewhere deep in east Lancashire or towards east Lancashire. I am sorry for my amateuristic view but that is my community's view on it. Thank you for this chance to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just to help me get my geography right, although I am from not too far from here, from Liverpool originally, I do not know Lancashire that well. When you talk about east Lancashire, does Preston count as east Lancashire for the purposes of this?

CLLR YATES: Yes. All the way around this area here.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is this the Ribble Valley you are referring to?

CLLR YATES: Yes. Between here, this is all Lancashire, very sparsely populated.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will struggle in a moment if you go too far from the microphone, I am just slightly anxious. Now we understand where you are talking about.

CLLR YATES: The area in the centre is very sparsely populated. It is very hilly, very difficult terrain, and you see Carnforth is right up at the very top. No one travels down to this area unless they have got family or for the beauty of it, because it is a beautiful area and there is no doubt about that. We are very concerned.

If you have an election you have got your ballot boxes, the safety and security of the people delivering them. It would be a logistical nightmare I would think to get over to this part of the world. I do not know whether it is anything anybody has considered, but I spent my life in motor vehicle accident recovery and I know these roads and I know that there are some horrendous places on there. I am very concerned at the thought of people being forced to drive by car to these areas because there is no public service vehicles to there and definitely no trains unless you go a long way around.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You voiced a concern earlier about a Preston-centric almost constituency. Is that based on any fact?

CLLR YATES: That is based on my experience as a councillor over this last 14 months trying to get things done, it is extremely difficult. I know it is going off a little bit, but we have got a situation in our area that everyone is trying to get attended to and Preston always come back at us and say, "Well, there's no money, we cannot do it." Of course, it is something that we have got to try and redress, we have got to get them to do things, and trying to get them to do things in a bigger area. I am quite sure there are people in Gisburn who have not a clue where Millhead is and I am quite sure there are people in Carnforth who have never ever been to Gisburn in their lives.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are a ward councillor for?

CLLR YATES: Lancaster City Council and I am a ward councillor on the city, there is three of us that represent Carnforth.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no other points, but I can see a point here.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You referred to the strong links between Carnforth, Silverdale, Bolton-le-Slyne and Warton. We have heard reference previously to the strong links between Bolton-le-Slyne, Bare and Torrisholme. Do you see all of those wards as a single community of interest?

CLLR YATES: They certainly have a community of interest, yes. It is Bolton-le-Sands, it is the first village south of us, and we are all in the same boat, as it were. We all speak the same language and all feel part of the community of Morecambe and Lonsdale.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for coming along.

CLLR YATES: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have one of those gaps. Sir Robert, would you be prepared to come forwards?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: I am Robert Atkins. My address is Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. I am formerly MP for Preston North and South Ribble between 1979 and 1997 and MEP for the North West of England from 1999 to 2014 and currently I am chairman of the North West region of the Conservative Party.

I am wholly in favour of the reduction of the House of Commons from 650 to 600 MPs, and wholly content with the electoral statistics being used by the Commission in the calculation of median numbers for constituencies.

I endorse strongly the principle of the minimum possible number of local authorities to each constituency, ideally coterminous where possible and rarely more than two. I speak with some experience as a former Member of Parliament as to the difficulties in dealing with different local authorities and I could hardly fail to notice over these last few days of the inquiry how many Labour councillors and Labour MPs have supported this request as well.

I wish to express my support for the Conservative Party proposals for North West England on geographical and demographical grounds. I have to confess some surprise at the final proposals in the 2013 Boundary Commission revised report have been changed so illogically as to produce a mish mash in Lancashire which is simply unacceptable.

The new constituency of North Lancashire, representing as it does 42% of the county's land mass, is plain daft with no sensible rail or road connections, no real centres of population, no community or other connections between Gisburn in the east, Preesall in the west or Carnforth in the north. It covers four disparate local authorities and the lightly populated Forest of Bowland in the centre prevents any real cross-constituency movement and results in huge travelling distances.

The axis of this part of Lancashire is north/south, not east/west, and it has been so for centuries, the Lancaster Canal in the 18th century, the mainline railway in the 19th century and the A6 and M6 in the 20th century.

Mr Chairman, it takes me a little over an hour to drive from Garstang to the Scottish border. It would take much longer than that to cross from east to west in the North Lancashire constituency. As we heard earlier, the roads are amazing and anyone who has tried to get through the Trough of Bowland, which is a single track road, in winter will know how difficult it can be.

Clitheroe and Colne is similarly poorly thought through and illogical, stretching as it does from the Yorkshire boundary through to the centre of South Ribble breaking community and local government ties and combining settlements with absolutely nothing in common. It follows, therefore, that if North Lancashire is redrawn those concerns referred to above must be met and the adjoining constituencies redrawn as well. This is done in the Conservative Party plan, which makes much more sense geographically and demographically, requires much less churn of electors, maintains community links, keeps local authority constituency connections to a minimum and matches more closely the declared parameters that the parliamentary Boundary Commission sets itself. It is also similar to the final proposals in the abortive 2013 review and addresses particularly

the Lancaster University problem, of which we have heard so much and which is referred to in paragraph 31 of the Commission's proposals.

I can also say at this point that David Morris, the Member of Parliament for Morecambe and Lunesdale, will be presenting this very day a series of surveys amounting to over 3,000 from his constituents, of which 93% ask for the retention of the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency.

I have one slight difference of opinion with the Conservative Party proposal, which is this. I would like to suggest an alternative name for the constituency proposed in the Conservative Party plan. Rather than the proposed Lancaster and Wyre, which ignores the sizeable Preston connection I would want it called Amounderness. Amounderness is the name of the Old Hundred which covered a substantial part of the new seat and thus avoids offending the sensitivities of the ancient conurbations of Preston and Lancaster, not to mention the borough of Wyre.

I would like if I may just to touch on South Ribble and Preston. As indicated above, I am the former MP for both Preston North and South Ribble and therefore know the area very well. I wish to emphasise the logic of attaching the ward of Eccleston and Mawdesley to South Ribble. It is a good fit in community terms, along with Lostock ward, and assists the numbers in Chorley. It is attached to South Ribble now and should be so again.

I must emphasise very strongly that the name of the constituency is South Ribble not Ribble South as some psephologists and many in the media persist in calling it. I do hope that the Commission will emphasise that fact: South Ribble, not Ribble South.

The city of Preston as it is now has always been too big for one constituency and too small for two. Historically, the longstanding constituency of Preston South included Bamber Bridge and it is a mistake on the part of the Commission to divide that urban village into two different constituencies; Bamber Bridge East and Bamber Bridge West thus divided.

The four wards of Samlesbury and Walton, Coupe Green and Gregson Lane, Bamber Bridge East and Bamber Bridge West form a natural block with a community of interest. This would release the Fulwood wards and the Preston Rural wards back into Amounderness where they have been for some years as in Wyre and Preston North.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I have got a couple of points, if I may start at the end there with Bamber Bridge. I understand the linking of Bamber Bridge East and West to keep Bamber Bridge together. Does that secure the Bamber Bridge link, as it were? Does that make it whole or are there other wards?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Bamber Bridge has always been a distinct community, I think it has been referred to before as being so, and the road that connects it through to what used to be called and may still be Higher Walton and All Saints, brings that connection to the ward which is now Coupe Green and Gregson Lane very much to the fore. Yes, it is a natural entity insofar as any of these places are.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Taking from all the discussions I have heard over the last ten days about towns in Lancashire matter and then we find the right links to them, would that cover Bamber Bridge, those two wards, and therefore are Warton-le-Dale East and West different albeit neighbouring?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: They are different and indeed the road out goes either to Walton-le-Dale or to Bamber Bridge depending on which bit you take.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask one more question and then I will throw the floor open? We have heard several representations during the course of the day about the Bulk ward, which in the Conservative counter-proposals goes across, I wonder if you have a view about that?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: As is always the case, as I am sure you may remember from in the past, it depends where you start from in terms of where you finish. If you start from Preston and work outwards, as a number of Boundary Commission inquiries have done so, you get a different result from if you start at the edge and work inwards.

If you work on the premise, as I advance here, that the Lancashire North constituency is barmy then everything else has to fit around that. Whilst clearly I do understand the concerns of the people living in Bulk, equally, as we heard, those concerns have been endorsed about the university. I happen to think that the university is more important than Bulk in the context of the overall constituency line-up and in those circumstances our plan includes the university and I think that is actually more important.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points of clarification in the room? (No response) Thank you very much, Sir Robert. At this point I have no other planned speakers and may not have any until 4 o'clock or thereabouts. Rather than formerly adjourn, in the expectation on current plans that people may turn up and wish to speak, I will simply sit and wait and if people turn up I will hear them. If they do not then at some stage we will resume back onto the timetable here, but it could be an hour's gap at this stage.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am pleased to say Mrs Sue Clark has arrived and would like to say a few words. If you could come up and introduce yourself and please carry on.

MRS CLARK: My name is Sue Clark and I live 86 Patterdale Road, on the Ridge estate in Bulk ward in Lancaster. I have come to speak in favour of the original proposal to create a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency and I am against the counter-proposal which has asked to put Bulk ward in with Morecambe.

I have lived on the Ridge for nearly 30 years now. I am chair of the Ridge Tenants and Residents Association, which is a very small group, I have to say, but one which tries to work with the local people on the Ridge estate. I am also a member of the Labour Party and I have been fairly active in politics and canvassing and supporting candidates. I have talked to most of the people on the Ridge, certainly most of the people in Bulk ward over the years, and I can state quite categorically that we do not think we are part of Morecambe nor have we ever done.

I am also totally convinced that the people of Skerton think of themselves as primarily Lancastrians. They were taken at the last boundary review into the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency but there has been a level of resentment in Skerton that they are in the wrong place, that they are the people of Lancaster and that they want to be in Lancaster. That does not mean to say we do not want to associate ourselves with Morecambe, we do, but we want to be Lancaster and Morecambe equal partners.

Some 10 to 15 years ago a group came about in Morecambe, the Morecambe Bay Independents, which wished to declare UDI and remove Morecambe from the district council. That group has largely vanished, mainly because the Lancaster and Morecambe district works, and works for all the people across the district, and people have come to believe and feel that they are part of a city council, a district council that actually works and they want to be part of a constituency that works as well as an urban seat with the kind of MP who understands the urban area and not be a small chip in a large rural seat where the rural area dominates. That is all I wanted to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no points from myself. Does anyone have any points? One at the front here.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You talk about rural seats, how would you describe the Overton ward?

MRS CLARK: I think that is fairly rural.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There are no other points. Thank you very much for coming along and giving us your views. Again, I will just tread water here until we see if anyone else comes along. Thank you very much for coming along. Feel free to wander around and we will try and summon you back if we have got any speakers.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you can give your name and full address. I know you have just put it down on a piece of paper but it is because we are taping things and make any representation you wish about the proposals that are on the table for the North West of England probably locally, I understand, and then there may or may not be points of clarification afterwards.

MR SELKIRK: My name is Chris Selkirk. I am a resident in Lancaster in the Bulk ward also known as the Freehold. I am here motivated by hearing and speaking with people about proposals of splitting wards of Lancaster and sharing them with the Morecambe district which I am very anti against, but I am pleased to see that the Boundary Commission's proposals are to join Lancaster and Morecambe as a represented area because I think Lancaster and Morecambe as urban areas have a lot in common and work better when they are unified together, so I support that. The counter-proposal to take Skerton and Bulk ward and add those to Morecambe and them not being part of Lancaster, with a view that the people who live in Bulk identify more with Morecambe, I find odd as a resident there for over six years.

Just by locality, we are only a ten minute walk to the city centre of Lancaster and yet an hour's walk over towards Morecambe. My view towards Morecambe is because I am on a hill looking over towards that way. A more unified Lancaster and Morecambe I fully support. It is just a shame that as part of my view of unified and being represented as one people here the university is not actually included in Lancaster and Morecambe as a representative of a Member of Parliament. That is why I have been motivated to come in and speak today. The Boundary Commission proposals I like, Lancaster and Morecambe being jointly represented, but the idea of splitting Lancaster city wards and putting them in a separately represented area to the rest of Lancaster I do not see any sense in and I do not understand the opinion of the residents in those areas that support that either from speaking with friends, colleagues and neighbours over the last 24 hours. Those are my comments I would like to make.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much Mr Selkirk, succinctly put. It is a view we have heard already but none the worse for hearing it again. I will check if anyone has any points? (No response) I think not from experience. Thank you very much indeed.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Apologies for keeping everyone, but we have been open for business all afternoon. We are reaching the last stretch now; we will finish by 5 o'clock at the latest. We have people who are here to make representations this afternoon. I wonder if I might ask Mr Steve Daly to come up. The form is to come up to the podium, state your name and full address for the recording

and make your representations, after which there may or may not be points of clarification that people might seek.

MR DALY: My name is Steve Daly. My address is 5 Strawberry Mews, Heysham, LA3 2NW. Excuse me, I am sucking a Locket because I am slightly breathless. First and foremost, I want to support the Boundary Commission's proposed constituency of Morecambe and Lancaster. I would possibly support some tinkering around the edges with regards Carnforth and down to the university, but essentially I think it is a good plan.

One of the reasons I am out of breath is I had to run across town because I had to park somewhere else because I have come in from Heysham. Seemingly, one of the major problems of Lancaster and Morecambe which ties them together is the traffic and the roads. The dominant traffic, as much as the link road may help, is people who live on one or the other side of the river and travel to work, or to home or to school on the other side, otherwise we would not be having congestion at the same time of day.

It is natural in my view for the two towns, because of the intermixing of the populations, to have one representative in Parliament because it means that one person can deal with both problems of work, living, transport whatever.

The bulk of the work in the area as far as I can see - I have no particular expertise on this so please do not challenge me too much on this - there are industrial estates and retail parks that cater for most people on both sides of the river. There is the Port of Heysham, the power stations, and I know people who live in Lancaster and work at the power stations, work at Port of Heysham. I know people who live in Morecambe and Heysham who work at the university and at the hospital and schools around the area, frequently coming backwards and forwards between the two.

There is White Lund Industrial Estate, Lune Industrial Estate, colleges, universities and this is where I might ask for one bit of tinkering to the south to try and bring the university in, but as most of the students and staff live away from the university and in Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham, Carnforth, et cetera, then I would not be too worried if they did not.

The Carnforth end of the constituency, again people move into Lancaster from there, and there is not a lot beyond Carnforth, I could see a reason where more of that might be brought in.

One issue for me is the hospitals and care homes. Morecambe is full of care homes, my mother is in one. She used to live in Lancaster and my brother still lives in Lancaster and has to visit. Until this year she was living to the east of Lancaster in Quernmore, which is in the current constituency of Lancaster and Fleetwood. She is in a care home in Morecambe, there is a lovely view of the Bay but we have still got to get

between the two. The hospital still manages the care homes around here, it is all very complicated and I will not even touch the health service. There are retail parks on Mellishaw Lane, officially known as Lancaster Retail Park, so it is in Lancaster not Morecambe.

Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is one of the main areas for people. I personally use the university as well. We come on to something else of my interest, which is arts. I play music locally and I play at Morecambe and Lancaster at different festivals. Most of the people who organise these festivals, Lancaster council festivals, are the same people. They organise festivals in Morecambe and they organise festivals in Lancaster. They perform at festivals in Morecambe and in Lancaster, they perform either way.

Having a single person representing the tourist industry of Lancaster and Morecambe, with the freshly opened castle and so on, is an obvious choice to me. The theatres, there is the Dukes in Lancaster and the Grand in Lancaster and we have got the Winter Gardens in Morecambe, the two tie together beautifully. There is the Platform in Morecambe as well. I notice people have put in counter-proposals splitting Lancaster, which seems absurd to me and there is an even more absurd one from somebody I do know which is extending the constituency across the Bay, which if he wants to walk across the Bay and deliver leaflets that is up to him. I would not recommend it.

Morecambe and Lancaster, being largely the same people in each, really should not have any identity differences, they are both basing themselves on tourism, one more on the history of tourism and one more on seaside tourism but it is still tourism.

I do see Bolton-le-Sands as being different from the west end of Morecambe but not from Lancaster. I think the west end of Morecambe is the same as parts of Lancaster, there is no way you can divide people along any kind of constituency boundary line.

I come to my next point, the most significant event for both Morecambe and Lancaster recently was Storm Desmond, which flooded both sides of the river and affected people on both sides of the river. In my mind this demonstrated the need for a single MP to deal with both sides of the river. Bay Radio provided a vital service. I got stranded and fortunately my wife had gone to Wales, but I was dealing with a disabled mother in Quernmore, where she lived at the time, with power cuts and so on. Bay Radio was absolutely vital to know what was going on. Lancaster's MP was virtually resident there communicating for both sides of the river, talking about the people in Morecambe and trying to get the power back on for people of both Morecambe and Lancaster, who were both blacked out by one event on the border of the river on the Lancaster side.

One of my submissions here is the MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale visiting the power place that got flooded in Lancaster. In many ways he behaved as if he is a representative of both the people in Lancaster and Morecambe. It was much later than the actual floods, it was in February, and this is from the Electricity North West website,

so you can see how important it is to work on this side of the river and that it affects the other side of the river. I will stick with him for a moment, because this amuses me as well. His picture was in the paper, he seems to treat himself as wherever he is that is his constituency. He is in Lancaster and there was a famous Lancaster icon called The Rocking Horse, which needed renovation, and he had pictures taken shaking the hand of the person who had done it and reinstalling it, in the middle of Lancaster. I have got a quote from him here in the *Lancaster Evening Post* saying: "It is absolutely marvellous to see that we have got her back, it is a great icon, it is part of the Lancaster."

If he is going to say total separation then I have got to wonder what his motive are because it is certainly not for the interests and Morecambe which are best served by Morecambe constituency with one MP in Parliament. There I think I rest my case, M'Lord.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, very helpful making the community links. I have not got any points.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. You talked about the traffic being a uniting thing. Given that the link road is going to open at the end of this week, or something like it, which will take a lot of traffic either to or from Morecambe and Heysham without going anywhere near Lancaster, do you not think that will be a natural and extra dividing?

MR DALY: No. For the very simple reason, as I was driving in here, it is mainly people not goods and transport and heavy goods vehicles which come from the Port of Heysham, that happens when the tide is in and the ferries come in. There is a lot that it will take out, but the bulk of people travelling backwards and forwards will not be affected by that. I am not convinced it will have a major effect on the traffic of Lancaster and Morecambe. The traffic lights where they are, are just going to be a nice big road block for everybody in my view.

When you look at what is travelling between Lancaster and Morecambe coming down, because I knew I was giving this speech, I was purposely looking for heavy goods vehicles and there were very few. What there were at this time of day was people in cars. Now I got a motorbike to travel between Lancaster and Morecambe at this time of day because there is no other way other than bicycle, which I also have and I do not use enough. The travel problems between Lancaster and Morecambe are simply cars with people travelling between work and home or school and leisure. It is not the major obstruction. Trucks come by some of the time but they are doing that all through the day. It will not help the rush hour traffic greatly in my view just by travelling between them. That is my expertise on it, not traffic authority or anything. I think most of the people I know tend to agree with me on that one, not that they are here to support anything.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. You talk extensively about leisure, culture, arts. Are they not a provision of the city council and therefore continue across wherever constituency boundaries are drawn in your perception?

MR DALY: They do but that indicates why it is one constituency, it is Lancaster and Morecambe City Council. I do not see how that contradicts what I have said. I have played up Lunesdale very rarely. I have played down the Lune Valley very rarely. These events are handled locally, but it would be good to have one MP campaigning for tourism money for both of the areas. It would be good to have one MP promoting both of the areas supporting the art community in both areas. There is a feed through between the two.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Daly, thank you for coming along, there are no other points. There are a couple of papers you quoted from and I wonder if you could hand them in so we can keep them as part of the record?

MR DALY: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Is Darren Mason here?

MR MASON: My name is Darren Mason. I currently live at flat 5, 15 China Street, Lancaster LA1 1EX. I have previously lived at my parents' house in Galgate and I have been at the university for the last four years as well. I moved into the district when I was about six, so 2001 that would have been. I have been here since, local student, local boy.

I am in favour of the proposals and again, as with the previous speaker, the only thing which I would add is that I think the university as Lancaster University should be in the Lancaster constituency.

It seems bizarre to me to have the current constituency boundaries. Lancaster and Fleetwood, as far as I am aware, have very little keeping them together whereas Lancaster and Morecambe do. Again, as the previous speaker said, you have people in Morecambe who work in Lancaster and people in Lancaster who work in Morecambe and vice versa. There are very good transport links between the two whereas Lancaster and Fleetwood you have none essentially, apart from the roads.

Some of the issues which we have in Lancaster we have in Morecambe as well, so again the transport, you have housing issues. The fact that we have the local authority as the city council covering both Lancaster and Morecambe in my case strengthens the view that we should just have one MP for Lancaster and Morecambe rather than two separate MPs with different agendas, et cetera.

When we have had events which covered the region, again Storm Desmond, it would be good to just have one MP to represent the area.

It is Friday afternoon so I will keep it short, and apart from that there is not much else to say unless anyone has got any questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well said. Does anyone have a point?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think you said it is Friday afternoon. I am Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. If it is Friday afternoon I have been here for an awful long time.

MR MASON: It feels like a Friday afternoon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are coming to the end of two days' worth of hearings. We are extremely grateful to you for coming along.

MR LOGAN: My name is Peter Logan. I live in Bare in Morecambe LA4 6TM. This discussion seems to me to be very, very similar to what was discussed, I believe, in Southport when people decided that it should be merged in with Merseyside. The Southport people did not want that. Also, I originally come from Lytham St Annes and there was also the proposal that Lytham St Annes should merge with Blackpool, and the Lytham St Annes people did not like that.

I think the same is now with Morecambe and Lancaster. The Morecambe people do not regard themselves as being part of Lancaster, if you know what I mean, because our viewpoint is that we are a seaside resort, or were a seaside resort, and we want to try and preserve that. We just feel that a Lancaster MP would concentrate on the historical cultural part of Lancaster and the industrial part of Lancaster and the tourist industry would be rather neglected.

We feel that with the local council, and we feel there would be more influence and pressure put on an MP whose main consideration might be Lancaster and we just feel that Morecambe might be left on one side. That is just a viewpoint I have gathered from people I have spoken to who like yourself live in Morecambe.

MR MASON: I understand that point of view but you can make the same arguments about Lancaster and Fleetwood.

MR LOGAN: Fleetwood is nothing to do with it, that is ridiculous.

MR MASON: There is more connecting Lancaster and Morecambe than there is Lancaster and Fleetwood, so for me there is a far more logical case than having the

current boundaries. Although I respect the point of view of the people of Morecambe may want to have their own identity, they still have so many links with Lancaster and we share the same issues. People who live in Morecambe work in Lancaster and vice versa and the same for me, it just makes more sense.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Point at the front here. I wish to avoid the situation where we have a debate across the floor. We had the advantage of having your views, for which I am grateful, but I do not want to end up by us all extending our points by adding another point. You have a point of clarification?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. To be clear, you said you approved of the university and Galgate?

MR MASON: Yes.

MR WALSH: Where is your current address?

MR MASON: Flat 5, China Street, round the corner here.

MR WALSH: It is very close. Whilst you were at university, did you see that area as being part of the city?

MR MASON: Yes, I did. So many people travel in from the university when they live on campus, so many students who are in their second or third year live in town and obviously go to the lectures at the university. For me, that would be the only alteration that I would make to the current boundary, to the proposed boundaries, which would be the inclusion of the university because it makes so much logical sense for me for the university, which is a major employer in the town. So many students obviously enrolled at the university live in town, so it just makes more sense.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Sir. I am expecting two other people, who may or may not come. I imagine they will come, so I am going to sit and wait in the hope both arrive, but if not I will adjourn.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr James Groves, if you could come forward to the podium and give your full name and address and then make whatever representations you wish to make.

MR GROVES: My name is James Groves. I am a resident of Lancaster and have lived here for 20 years now. I am the Secretary of the Lancaster and Fleetwood Constituency Labour Party and I will partly be speaking in support of the regional document which I think was presented at the Manchester presentation.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry to trouble you, but could just give your full address?

MR GROVES: My full address is 1 Cobble Court Yard, Carr House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1SW. I am basically speaking in support of the position that the Labour Party has made, which in this part of Lancashire is in support of what the Boundary Commission has proposed. I see that Lancaster and Morecambe is up there but I am assuming I am free to ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Talk about anywhere in the North West.

MR GROVES: I will make five basic points and then if any of the people present want to question me on them that is absolutely fine. If I could start at the other end, the Lancaster and Fleetwood end, and briefly say we see a lot of merit in the proposed Blackpool North and Fleetwood borough constituency. In particular, in the Labour Party we like the way that we now have a seat which keeps all of Fleetwood but also Thornton and Cleveleys in the same constituency. The bottom right bit is the bit of Thornton that has been cut off from the rest of Thornton since at least 1997 forming a somewhat artificial boundary, we think. It is nice that for once the whole of Thornton-Cleveleys and Fleetwood are together with North Blackpool and we certainly support that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is on the podium there, if it has all been put back together again, a laser pointer, so if you press the button at the top which will help others in the room.

MR GROVES: Very roughly, that is the bit of Thornton that is currently in Wyre and Preston North. There is also a little bit of that in Wyre and Preston North. The boundary round here really does cut through the middle of a street, it is not a particularly natural boundary.

We also like what you have done to Poulton-le-Flyde, which is this bit here, which has been moved into the new Flyde seat. We could probably keep it on this because certainly since the current Wyre and Preston North and going back to Lancaster and Wyre, because this bit here is in Flyde borough it has always been the case the Poulton-le-Flyde has been sort of stuck on to Wyre across the Wyre estuary leading to a somewhat artificial boundary. Whereas if you want to go from this part of what is currently Wyre and Preston North to this part you essentially have to get a boat because the Shard Bridge cuts across here and it has always struck us as a good thing that by moving this into the Flyde seat, it seems to belong better there. The name of the town would certainly suggest it certainly has an affinity to Flyde there.

Moving back up to this end, to Lancaster and Morecambe, in the boundary review that never was, the one from a few years ago - I do not know whether it was the same Commissioners who were involved in that one - the Labour Party supported a Lancaster and Morecambe county constituency, slightly different boundaries then. I think you may recall that then the Boundary Commission decided against it, but we are very pleased that they are recommending a unitary Lancaster and Morecambe county constituency this time.

It is a single unitary urban area and has been since 1974. There may have been debates at the time over 40 years ago but I think we have moved on. Certainly in terms of work patterns and in terms simply of the common analogies of interest we think people in urban Lancaster, urban Morecambe and urban Heysham have a lot more in common than we have that divides us. Certainly from the perspective of someone living in Lancaster, the commonalities between the issues that affect me living in Lancaster and the issues that affect people living in Morecambe or Heysham, or for that matter elsewhere in the Lancaster and Morecambe area, are a lot more than the things that keep us together than the things that divide us. Other people have suggested that there are things which divide Lancaster and Morecambe, but I do not see it myself.

Certainly, the Lancaster residents I have been in a parliamentary constituency with when I first moved here, whilst Hilton Dawson was an MP, we had Garstang in our seat and indeed Poulton-le-Flyde, now of course we include the whole area across to Over Wyre and certainly in terms of having a constituency with a certain degree of a commonality of interest and any decent transport links, and indeed the fact that one can finally get from one point in the constituency to any other without going through another constituency, let alone going through three constituencies, is certainly something to be supported.

This may have been mentioned before, but the fact that since 1997 north Lancaster, which is Skerton East and Skerton West, has been divided off from the rest of Lancaster within the Morecambe and Lunesdale seat. I am sure you may have had people from Skerton mentioning the fact that they very much see themselves as part of Lancaster. I think it is a thing very much to be supported that the natural community that is Lancaster, as we would describe ourselves which is essentially this bit, is to be reunited again for the first time since 1997. I think the support you will get from reuniting north Lancaster and south Lancaster certainly far outweighs any disagreement that you might get from people who would look to the north of the Lune and to Morecambe. People in Skerton know that they are from Lancaster and if you ask the people from Skerton they will say they are from Lancaster, so we think is very much a keeping together of the natural communities of Lancaster and Heysham and of Morecambe with the rural parts just to the north and just to the south.

Lastly, the North Lancashire seat, it is a large one, which I will certainly acknowledge. The transport links are relatively good given the large size. You have got the M6, which

admittedly does not quite stay within the new seat, it sort of cuts through about here but it does mean that it is possible. I guess the key test should be is it possible to get from one side to the other as quickly as is reasonably possible. Clearly in some of these seats in some of these areas it will take a while, but we think it is a viable seat and we do think that again it will mean there is at last one person to speak for rural North Lancashire, the whole of rural North Lancashire, which is certainly a thing we would support. I will conclude my ramblings there. Thank you very much for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Let me ask a question that others may ask. You are supporting the Boundary Commission proposals for Lancaster and Morecambe?

MR GROVES: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It excludes the University and Scotforth Rural ward. Do you have a view?

MR GROVES: I spent a reasonable amount of time running dialogue with colleagues in the Labour Party trying to see if it would be possible to come up with a configuration, this is the bit we are talking about, that essentially kept within the rather stringent criteria that you are working to whilst essentially being a viable seat. The only way that I could find that is sensible in terms of numbers is that as other people may have spotted it is possible to essentially swap Bolton-le-Slyne, which is this bit, for the University and Scotforth Rural and Ellel.

If you are purely looking at communities, the majority of people in Ellel live here within commuting distance of Lancaster, and certainly within the wider urban Lancaster area. However, what does it do to North Lancashire? Well, it sort of turns it into two bits joined at this rather very beautiful part of the world up there. I do not know if you have ever been up there, but it is essentially one road joining these two bits. It would have the disadvantage of being what is a reasonably well connected North Lancashire seat, which is through here, to being two rather almost disconnected pairs, but the numbers do work. I just fear that in terms of what it does to North Lancashire it does not seem viable. Essentially, the university was built in a rural area, and that is the case, there is a bit of green between the uni and the southern bit of Scotforth, so it is located in North Lancashire.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It sounds like you have had the same exercise that the Boundary Commission went through in order to reach their own conclusion. Are there any points of clarification?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. In your opening you said you had five areas you wanted to talk about

and I have missed one. Can I go through? I have got Blackpool North and Fleetwood, one, Flyde, two, Lancaster and Morecambe and North Lancashire?

MR GROVES: Yes, I am sorry. Five points, but the one on Lancaster and Morecambe you can maybe regard as 3A and 3B. They are a connected part and then the specific point about north Lancaster being reunited with south Lancaster in a single seat.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other questions?

MR LOGAN: Peter Logan, from Morecambe. I would like to ask the speaker, what exactly are the reasons for him not wanting Lancaster University in this constituency? It seems so logical to me. Most of the students who do not live on the campus will live in Lancaster, it is Lancaster University and in time the houses will spread south, so Lancaster will be part of the city and town anyway. The students do their shopping in Lancaster, they go to the cinema, they go to the pubs, they go to the shops in Lancaster. I cannot understand your objection to it. Is it purely political grounds that you do not think there would be any Labour supporters in the university? It does not make sense to me.

MR GROVES: The Boundary Commissioners will note that a by-election is due at the University ward and we can test that theory there. No, it is simply the numbers. You come very close. We tried a lot. Essentially, if you try and move Bulk, Bolton-le-Slyne from Lancaster and Morecambe into North Lancashire and then you try, let us see if you can put University and Scotforth Rural in but leave out Ellel in North Lancashire, I think the gap is about 270, it comes very, very close to the lower limit for Lancaster and Morecambe

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The issue is not so much whether you can join the university with the rest of Lancaster, which I think gets a common echo round the place, it is once you move it out of the north Lancaster proposal the numbers drop below the acceptable quota for electors. Therefore, you have to find an alternative and that is the issue you have struggled with and the Boundary Commission have struggled with as how to balance that book. It is not a Morecambe and Lancaster issue, it is an issue for offset elsewhere with the electorate numbers. We are struggling with it, we are still trying to find a way to resolve it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The additional population which would result in the university coming in the Lancaster constituency would mean that the other constituency will lose the population?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, which would which would take it below the acceptable figure and therefore there has to be somewhere else to be found,

not necessarily from there but from somewhere, which could be put in, if this constituency survived all the discussions and the representations, to be put in there in order to get it over this 71,016 or whatever the precise number is.

MR GROVES: It is essentially a jigsaw puzzle. The closest we could get to a solution was to include Ellel with Lancaster and Morecambe. Perhaps I should place on the record, I think I will regret it is perhaps the best way to describe it because the statutory requirements for using the 1 December 2015 register, coupled with the fact that we now know that there was under-registration on campus at that determining date, and we know that because the university has just brought in a new system of registration where essentially students register when they register for their course and we know that there are now well over 3,000 registered on campus. If this were taking place 12 months down the line then what the gentleman over there suggests would be possible because there would be enough residents registered on campus to rearrange the jigsaw in a way that would add the University and Scotforth Rural to Lancaster and Morecambe in what would be certainly geographically and community based very sensible. As I say, at the moment the numbers do not quite do it because there is this under-registration on campus, which I think is now acknowledged in the numbers. If you look at the current registration literally with the city council ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is not something we can take account of.

MR GROVES: Yes, I know it is not a thing you can do, but I would like to record a regret that this has happened.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Groves, I appreciate it. I think you were right to describe it as a jigsaw puzzle, but it is an emotional jigsaw puzzle because each piece is loaded with some sort of baggage that has links and community ties and we have to try and get the right pieces together with the right neighbouring piece. Mr Groves was my last booked speaker. I just want to check, Chris Heath do you want to speak?

MR HEATH: I came mainly to watch and I have seen most of the proceedings, so I can give a personal view about my experiences of the wards in question.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You do not have to. What I have is a maximum of about seven minutes now and I would be very pleased to hear you. Is there anyone else in the room who would wish to make any representations before I close us down at 5 o'clock? (No response) No. In which case, give your name and full address and feel free to make whatever point you wish to make.

MR HEATH: My name is Christopher Heath. I live 21 Silverdale Road, Yealand Redmayne, which is in the Warton and Silverdale area of North Lancashire. I suppose I

came here today to just briefly hear what the situation was because I do understand that it is a numbers game and you are following quite a strict criteria, but I must admit I was quite surprised when I saw the proposals that came out and saw that we had been put into this very big, very nebulous constituency with effectively only one transport link from north to south and it takes at least 40 minutes or so to drive if you are driving at the top speed on the motorway.

There is very little commonality of interest between people on the north Preston border area or even off up along the Ribble Valley to people on the Morecambe Bay coast. If anything, if we have a commonality of interest, if not in provision of public services, it is actually with South Lakeland. South Lakeland have had some responsibility in recent years. They have been overlooking the development plan for the area, so including our part of Lancashire rather than the city council.

The area itself cannot be characterised as rural North Lancashire in the same sense as the Upper Lune Valley or Ribblesdale, it is post-industrial. Carnforth was a former steel town and it is not a part of the rural economy at all. Warton and Silverdale is a combination of local businesses and retirees. Whilst there is some farming, it is mostly focused on holiday and leisure industry.

I do not really see how being moved into this particular constituency would give us very good access to an MP because their attention would be completely taken by the southern part of the constituency and, like I said before, local services, everything is very different, it is provided by the city council. Overall, the feeling of the area is a bit like South Lakeland. The services are provided by Lancaster City Council and we were quite well represented in that respect when we were in the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency. I kind of think of it as a constituency for grouse rather than for people to be honest. It really depresses me to see it.

I am also a little disappointed with the Labour candidate for giving up on Morecambe and Lunesdale, which had a bad candidate at the last election and has been a labour seat. I think it is backsliding on their behalf, but that is a political view.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You will forgive me for stopping you going down that path, especially at five to five, but I would have stopped you at five past nine or five past ten yesterday morning for the same reason. Thank you, that is very helpful. If I was trying to find your alternative solution for where we might put Warton?

MR HEATH: Basically, if I look at the population I see you have got this problem that you have got a grossly under-populated constituency here and you are scrabbling round to fill it up. The proposed Lancaster constituency also has about 4,000 less, I saw 3,000 leeway to be within the bounds of what is to be expected, and I would prefer Carnforth, Warton and Silverdale to be folded in. It is perhaps a similar question to the university one, but I would say that universities are a transient population, most students

are not there for even a full parliamentary term, they tend not to register. They are a good source of volunteers for local constituency parties and so on, but they still would be. It is, as people said, out of town and you do need a little bit of population in the centre of the constituency which, like I said before, is very empty.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points anyone wishes to cover? (No response) No, in which case, thank you, Mr Heath.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, New Hall Lane, Bolton, representing the Conservative Party. On behalf of all of those who have participated in the exercise over the last ten days, and having attended for all bar one of those days, can I place on record my thanks, and I am sure of those who have attended also, to the Commission staff for their support, to the Assistant Commissioners, and not least yourself, Sir, for the manner in which you have conducted in such a friendly and coherent manner what at times has been a somewhat disjointed exercise, but sincerely our thanks for your help on that one.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. I just echo the views about the Commission staff and our technical colleagues. It has been a whirlwind ten days. I have learnt more in these ten days about the north west of England, especially as someone who is from the north west of England, than I ever knew about it. I am grateful to everyone who has spoken, whether they be elected representatives and particularly individual members of the public who have come along here and been able to give us their views, and not just here but across the whole of the north west region.

I would like to thank everyone very much. The position now is that until 5 December it is possible still to make written representations and I would encourage anyone who has an interest in how the constituencies should be shaped to offer written representations and in particular if you are seeking change to consider what the consequences are and therefore try to think through the task that myself and my two colleagues will have of trying to find the offsetting changes that will need to be made in order to accommodate changes from the Boundary Commission.

Thank you all and have a safe journey home.

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