



BCE/2017/1st meeting

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Notice of meeting

A meeting will be held at 35 Great Smith Street, London on Thursday 4 May 2017, at 14.00.

Agenda

Welcome (AN) and minutes from last meeting (SH)

1. Programme update (14.05) - Paper 1 (TBe)
 - a. Timetable
 - b. Risk register
 - c. Highlight report
2. Initial consultation period evaluation (14.25)
 - a. Communications strategy (SH)
 - b. Public hearings (WT)

Break 15.25-15.45




3. 2018 Review - towards the revised proposals (15.45)
 - a. Ways of working and generic revised proposals report (SH)
 - b. Regional updates (TBo)

Close (18.00)

Sam Hartley
Secretary to the Commission

28 April 2017

Strategic Risk Register: 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

1	2	3	4	5,6,7 - Inherent Risk			8	9	10	11,12,13 - Residual Risk			14	15	16
Risk ID	Title	Description / Indicators	Owner	Impact	Likelihood	Severity level	Response	Controls	Mitigation status	Impact	Likelihood	Severity level	Risk trend and status	Appetite	Actions required
	Broad title	Description of risk and / or indicators	CLT member	Severe; significant; moderate; minor; insignificant	Negligible; remote; possible; likely; almost certain	Red; amber; green	Transfer; tolerate; treat; terminate	Internal controls	Red; amber; green.	Severe; significant; moderate; minor; insignificant	Negligible; remote; possible; likely; almost certain	Red; amber; green	Trend: Reducing; increasing; static; new	Red; amber; green	Actions required to ensure that residual risk = appetite
1	Legal challenge to BCE	A legal challenge to the review policies or procedures delays the delivery timetable and/or demands additional staff / financial resource to address	SH	Significant	Possible	12	Treat	1. Review of all internal policies and procedures; 2. production of Guide clearly outlining policies, practices and legal obligations or interpretations; 3. Equality Analysis conducted; 4. legal advice sought from TSol when appropriate; 5. Commission meetings and associated communications with qualifying political parties; 6. regular quality assurance of internal procedures		Significant	Remote	8		8	
2	Legislative change	Changes are made to the primary legislation governing the structure of the Commission and the procedures for a review, causing uncertainty and disruption for an ongoing review	SH	Severe	Remote	10	Tolerate	Good communications with Government (sponsor team) and political party representatives to ensure earliest possible knowledge of any prospective changes.		Significant	Remote	8		9	Particularly close working now General Election has been called.
3	Human resource	Insufficient numbers and expertise levels of Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and staff inhibit the delivery of the review	TBe	Severe	Possible	16	Treat	1. Detailed initial resource planning against project plan; 2. six monthly formal reviews of staffing needs; 3. ad hoc review of staffing needs as necessary; 4. provision of business cases to CO Approvals Board as required in light of review needs; 5. close working with CO to fill vacancies that arise; 6. engagement of staff through staff survey; 7. steps to broaden knowledge and capacity of retained staff; 8. steps taken to capture		Moderate	Remote	6		8	1. Contingency planning for loss of expertise relating to specific roles and responsibilities; 2. Clarity regarding future redeployment options

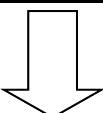
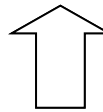

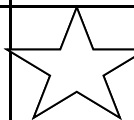
Strategic Risk Register: 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

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4	Financial, physical and data resource	Inadequate budget, physical accommodation or information management leads to inability to deliver review to quality and timescale required	TBe	Significant	Possible	12	Treat	1. initial budget against project plan; 2. monthly review and reconciliation meetings with CO finance; 3. scrutiny of spend requirements to ensure value for money; 4. forward planning of accommodation needs and clear advance communication of those to CO; 5. clear information management policies communicated regularly to		Significant	Negligible	4	↔	5	
5	Technology	Hardware and/or software (particularly GIS and consultation website) unfit for purpose, leading to significant delay to the timetable and/or reputational damage	TBo	Severe	Possible	16	Treat	1. clear and detailed supply and maintenance contracts with suppliers; 2. ongoing review of appropriate enhancements and improvements to software.		Significant	Remote	8	↓	4	
6	Reputation	Inappropriate conduct and/or errors in published material leads to lack of public confidence in BCE competence and/or independence	SH	Significant	Possible	12	Treat	1. Clear communication of expectations and policies on public service propriety; 2. develop and adhere to clear communications strategy and plan; 3. develop and apply rigorous quality assurance procedures for internal procedures and publications.		Significant	Remote	8	↓	4	

RISK SEVERITY LEVEL MATRIX						
See Likelihood and Impact Definitions on Risk Assessment tab						
IMPACT	Severe	5	10	16	20	25
	Significant	4	8	12	18	20
	Moderate	3	6	9	12	16
	Minor	2	4	6	8	10
	Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5
		Negligible	Remote	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
	LIKELIHOOD					

Risk Severity	Green	Amber	Red
	Rating 1-5	Rating 5-10	Rating 12-25
Likelihood x impact. Enables a judgement on the degree of action necessary to manage individual risks and escalation points.	Risk is being managed within acceptable levels	Risk should be monitored closely by the Group Head to ensure the mitigating actions contain the risk .	Urgent action is needed to reduce the risk to a manageable level. Operating Committee should be made aware.

RISK STATUS					
	Green	A/G	A/R	Red	Blue
Status of mitigating action to manage risk	All mitigation actions are underway and are on schedule to be completed.	Some but not all of the mitigation actions are underway. No issues or problems reported which may affect delivery.	There are some issues or problems with completing this action, but there is mitigating action in place to bring delivery back on track.	Not yet begun or there are critical issues or problems which are impacting delivery of this action.	Action completed. The risk and mitigations no longer need to be managed. Risk and actions closed.

Risk trend	
Reducing (R)	
Increasing (I)	
Static (S)	
New (N)	

Risk Appetite Risk Appetite - 'The amount of risk which an organisation is prepared to be exposed to at a point in time.' To enable CO Groups and divisions to judge whether their risk exposure is acceptable, they need to consider the CO's risk appetite. Risk owners can use this to assess whether their current exposure is reasonable, or needs attention – e.g. is 'green' or 'amber/green' acceptable.

LIKELIHOOD			IMPACT			
Level	Likelihood	Expected or actual frequency of the risk materialising	Impact	Financial	Operational	Reputational
1	Negligible	May only occur in exceptional circumstances; simple process or project; no previous incidence of non compliance	Insignificant	Minimal impact from a financial perspective eg cost < £50,000 Project costs unlikely to be affected or within contingency;	Little impact; resolution achieved in business as usual management Project can be maintained on target through standard project management; no effect on benefit realisation	Non headline exposure; not at fault; no impact. Event that will lead to public criticism by external stakeholders as anticipated
2	Remote	Could occur at some time; less than 25% chance of occurring; non complex process or project &/or existence of checks and balances	Minor	Minor impact from a financial perspective eg cost < £250,000 Project costs likely to increase by up to 10% above contingency	Issues minor but noticeable; inconvenient delays; negative effect on two or more corporate objectives; Project may need to be escalated; up to 10% benefits not realised	Non headline exposure; clear fault settled quickly; negligible impact. Event that may lead to widespread public criticism.
3	Possible	Might occur at some time; 25-50% chance of occurring; previous audits/reports indicate non compliance; complex process or project with extensive checks and balances; impacting factors outside the control of Buying Solutions	Moderate	Substantial impact from a financial perspective eg cost between £0.25m and £1m Project costs likely to increase by up to 20% above contingency	Material delays or objective under achievement that without careful management would adversely impact operational performance Project under threat requiring focused mgt action; up to 20% benefits not realised	Repeated non headline exposure; slow resolution; Ministerial enquiry/briefing. Event that will undermine public trust or a key relationship for a short period.
4	Likely	Will probably occur in most circumstances; 50-75% chance of occurring; complex process or project with some checks and balances; impacting factors outside the control of Buying Solutions	Significant	Serious impact from a financial perspective eg cost between £1.0m and £2m Project costs likely to increase by up to 30% above contingency	Significant delays; performance significantly under target; failure of key strategic project or programme Project may need to be de-scoped and revised; impact on corporate objectives;	Headline profile; repeated exposure; at fault or unresolved complexities; ministerial involvement or regulatory breach Confidence of key project stakeholders undermined. Event that will destroy public confidence or a key relationship for a sustained period or at a critical moment.
5	Almost Certain	Can be expected to occur in most circumstances; more than 75% chance of occurring; complex process or project with minimal checks and balances; impacting factors outside the control of Buying Solutions	Severe	Serious threat to the viability of Cabinet Office eg cost > £2m Project costs likely to increase by more than 30% above contingency	Non achievement of corporate objectives/ outcome performance failure Project failure - stopped; BS objectives adversely impacted	Maximum high level headline exposure; Ministerial or regulatory censure; loss of credibility Relationship with key project stakeholders significantly damaged. Event that will destroy public confidence or a key relationship.

RISK SEVERITY LEVEL MATRIX						
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LIKELIHOOD						

Risk trend	
Reducing (R)	↓
Increasing (I)	↑
Static (S)	↔
New (N)	☆

Risk Appetite
<p>Risk Appetite - 'The amount of risk which an organisation is prepared to be exposed to at a point in time.'</p> <p>Risk appetite is represented using the same matrix (above) as the residual risk.</p>

RISK STATUS		
Green	Amber	Red
All mitigation actions are underway and are on schedule to be completed	Some, but not all, mitigation actions are underway. There may be some issues regarding delivery	Mitigation action not yet begun, or there are serious issues or problems affecting delivery

Programme management - BCE 2018 Review Highlight Report 17

April 2017

Achieved / delivered (Good news/highlights)	Key risks / issues (Including mitigation)	Forward look (Activity over the next period, update on whether on track in the immediate/long term and status of significant milestones)
Schemes and Representations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All representations into database. Final count: 8,017 (92% portal, 4% letter, 4% email) • Continue modelling main counter-proposals in GIS • First regional briefings to senior managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of losing access to GIS during critical time for modelling revisions to initial proposals. Close working with supplier to minimise likelihood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude briefings of senior managers • Conclude briefings of Assistant Commissioners
Communications and Stakeholder Management		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive communications restricted to ensuring accurate information readily accessible in public domain about next steps in review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling of early General Election led to some confusion about consequences for review. Short factual statement published to clarify position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued low-level and largely reactive activity, certainly during election period.
Human and Corporate Resource		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial out-turn for 2016-17 and final budget for 2017-18 agreed with Cabinet Office as sponsor department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Officer vacancy needs filling (candidate identified). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Officer appointed. • Call-off contract agreed for printing of hard copy revised proposals documentation.

Initial consultation period – evaluation

Communications strategy

1. Annexed to this paper is the formal evaluation of the performance of our communications strategy for the initial consultation period, prepared by our specialist communications officer earlier this year.
2. It is a thorough consideration of the strategy, planning and execution of our communications activity and details the notable successes such as:
 - High levels of media coverage, with strong use of our key messages.
 - 88% of representations made through the website (compared against a target of 70%).
 - Above average metrics with regard to use of the website.
 - Good partnership working with other departments and organisations.
3. Commissioners are invited to consider the paper and note the key lessons learned as follows:
 - Plan early – allow plenty of time to plan communications, both paid-for and in-house. This avoids last minute rushes and allows plenty of time for narrative development and testing.
 - Dedicated professional communications support is needed early in the process, throughout the duration of the first consultation and after the consultation. This allows them to contribute to planning, implementation and evaluation.
 - Measurable objectives should be established for all channels (not just paid-for) to support good evaluation.
 - Advertising works well and driving engagement and awareness – especially on local newspaper sites and Facebook.
 - Regional media should be considered as important as national media – regional journalists often ran our content when it was tailored.
 - Brief hard from the outset – making it clear the Commission is politically impartial and neutral from the outset worked in our favour, ensuring coverage portrayed is neutrally.



**Boundary
Commission
for England**

**Communications evaluation:
Initial proposals publication and
consultation
13 September-5 December**

February 2017

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1. Introduction

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is currently conducting the 2018 review of Parliamentary constituencies in England, with the final report due to be submitted to Parliament in September 2018. As part of preparing our recommendations we will hold several public consultations to ensure our recommendations both meet the requirements of the legislation and include consideration of public opinion. The first of these ran from 13 September (when our initial proposals were published) to 5 December 2016. Before and during this period, and indeed as we continue to progress with the Review, we wanted to raise awareness of the Review and encourage engagement with the consultation process.

1.1. What we did

We realised that unlike in past boundary reviews we would need a more proactive approach to communications. In past Reviews traditional forms of advertising were used, mainly publication of adverts in key national papers, media interviews were approached with caution, and digital communications weren't considered or initially even an option. For the 2018 Boundary Review we want to ensure awareness of the Review is raised and encourage people to contribute to the consultation. In addition, we want the majority of contributors to make representations via the portal (which we are using for the first time), with a target of 70% of all representations submitted during the first consultation being made via the portal.

From the outset, the Commission was aware this Review's initial proposals were of a higher standard and less controversial than those developed in the previous postponed review and that this may affect levels of engagement – people are more likely to submit a comment and encourage others to engage if they disagree with proposals. This meant good communication was even more important.

1.1.1. Objectives

The aim of the communications was to - 'Inform, engage and educate':

Inform: Ensure key audiences are aware the review is happening. Let as many people as possible know they have the opportunity to have their say and how to do this.

Engage: Encourage citizens to go online or come to face to face hearings to view proposals and discuss and share local ties. Position local people and communities as the experts needed to help shape local areas, ensuring local ties are taken into consideration.

Educate: Reinforce that the boundary review is a fair and trustworthy, process. Convey that the consultation is genuine and does not have a predetermined outcome.

Reassure citizens that 'day-to-day life' won't change for instance their bin collection and local schools.

1.1.2. Strategy

The communications approach utilised multiple channels to reach a wide audience – we primarily wanted to engage those who are currently eligible to register to vote but were also aware there was a secondary audience in those who will become eligible to register to vote between now and the next general election, when boundary review changes will be instigated. With this in mind we chose to proactively engage with national and regional media, place adverts in national newspapers and on radio, support our own social media content with promoted posts on Facebook and Twitter, advertise on local newspaper sites and local council sites and engage with key stakeholders. Each of these is considered in more detail below.

1.1.3. Key messages

- The key messages we wanted to deliver through our communications were:
 - The Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that is reviewing proposals to reduce the number of constituencies in England to make them more of an equal size.
 - We need the help of local people and communities to help shape areas ensuring they take into account important local ties.
 - It's easy to help us and have your say. You can view the proposed changes online and have your say in a couple of minutes or come to a public meeting.
 - You can find out more about the review and the different ways to get involved online at www.bce2018.org.uk.

1.2. Key results

The number of consultation results was on target with 1,233 contributions made at public hearings, 15,867 through the portal (although some may be duplicates) and 2,115 via email and post. This was slightly less than the number made at the last review. However, we met our portal target with 88% of representations made via the portal during the first consultation, demonstrating success in encouraging over 70% of responses to be made online.

Online engagement in general was good. The click through rates (CTR - the percentage of people who see our adverts who then click on them) for our paid-for advertising was higher than the average seen in government campaigns and statistics suggest numbers who went on search their postcode was also good. Again this reflects well on our aim to encourage engagement with the Review process.

The vast majority of media coverage was balanced, helping to present the Commission as trustworthy and independent. Coverage in regional papers made the Review relevant to local communities, again encouraging engagement. Whether this was successful in driving people to public hearings is unclear, as the majority were far from fully attended. The value of public hearings in their current format is under review.

These results show that the campaign achieved its objective of encouraging engagement in the Review process. Unfortunately, we are unable to track changes in awareness levels. However, it can be expected that awareness of Boundary Reviews was low before the 2018 Review was launched because it's not a campaign about policy or legal obligations that people should already be adhering to (e.g. speed limits, tax returns). Good engagement following the launch of the Review would therefore indicate some degree of increase in awareness - although we are unable to put any figures to this. There is probably now little value to be gained in tracking awareness levels over the next two consultations without an indication of levels before, during and after the first consultation. Tracking awareness levels during future boundary reviews could be considered if the benefit of the additional insight was likely to improve our communications and evaluation and could justify the spend.

1.3. Key lessons learnt

This report considers the successes and areas for improvement identified in our communications around the publication of our initial proposals and the first consultation. At a first glance the key lessons learnt are:

- Plan early – allow plenty of time to plan communications, both paid-for and in-house. This avoids last minute rushes and allows plenty of time for narrative development and testing.
- Dedicated professional communications support is needed early in the process, throughout the duration of the first consultation and after the consultation. This allows them to contribute to planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Measurable objectives should be established for all channels (not just paid-for) to support good evaluation.

- Advertising works well and driving engagement and awareness – especially on local newspaper sites and Facebook.
- Regional media should be considered as important as national media – regional journalists often ran our content when it was tailored.
- Brief hard from the outset – making it clear the Commission is politically impartial and neutral from the outset worked in our favour, ensuring coverage portrayed is neutrally.

The partner pack did not generate as much stakeholder engagement as hoped, questioning whether it is worth the resources. However, dedicating time to building ties with local councils and the Local Government Authority proved more beneficial – these stakeholders were far more supportive than the wider third sector.

2. Media

2.1. What we did

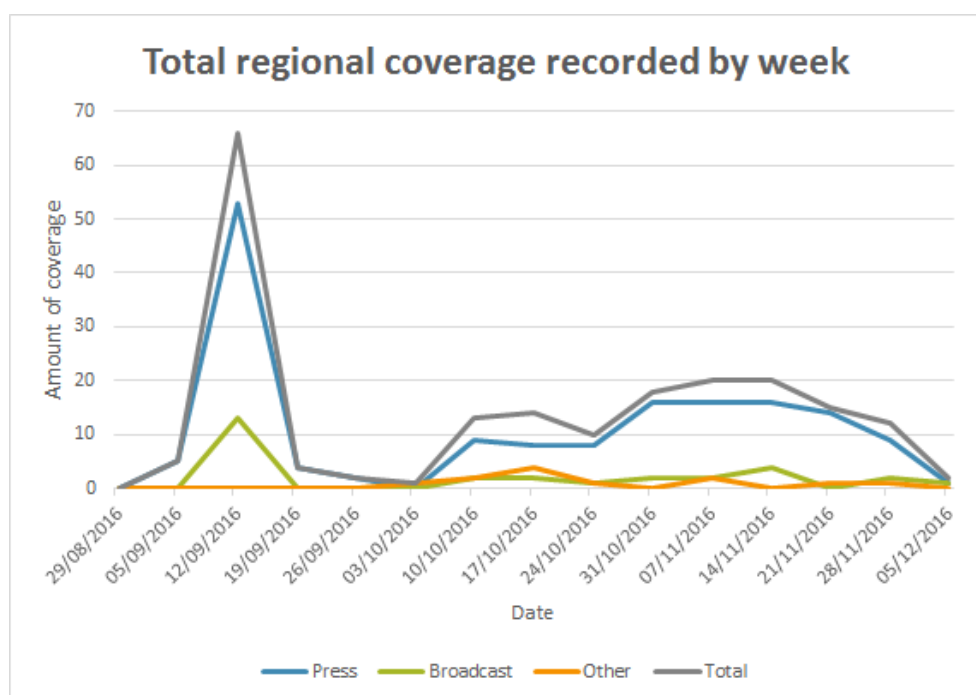
We expected both national and regional media to be interested in the publication of our initial proposals on 13 September, so planned media activity at the beginning of September to focus on gaining national coverage. This included a pre-publication media briefing, circulation of an embargoed press release and allowing media access to the initial proposals the day before publication via a secure website. We then ensured spokespeople (Secretary to the Commission, Deputy Secretary to the Commission, Head of Reviews and two experienced Review Managers, all of whom had undergone media training) were available for all national and regional interview bids from 13 September onwards.

We anticipated that after 13 September, the national media's interest in the Review would wane but that of regional media would continue to grow, especially during public hearings, as journalists explored local impact and opinion. We therefore focussed on regional press in October and November and circulated an Op-ed in early October, staggered regional press releases to coincide with lead hearings throughout October and November, letters to editors in November, and a "Two-weeks to go" press release in late-November. Throughout the duration of the consultation spokespeople also undertook interviews with local media outlets.

2.2. Evaluation

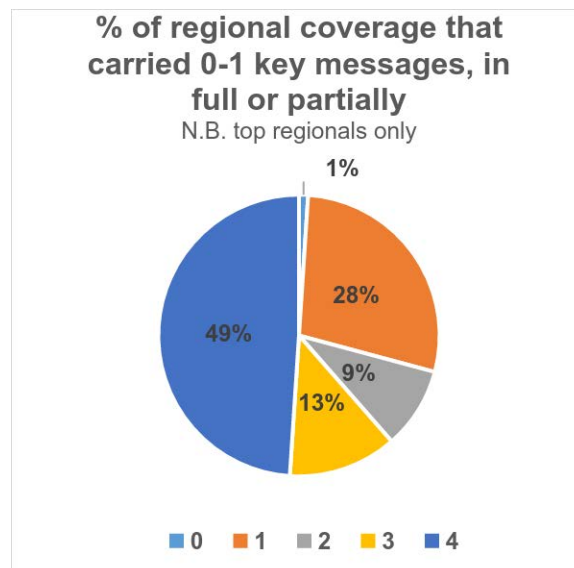
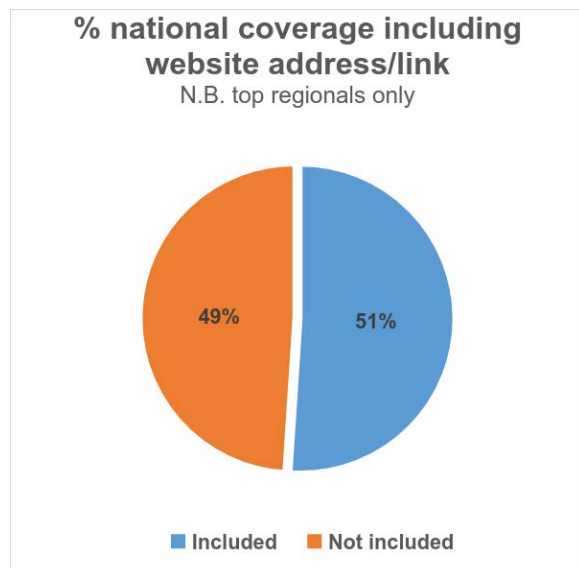
2.2.1. Outputs

Between 1 September and 5 December, we recorded 257 pieces of coverage (this is what we managed to record – there may have been more). This breaks down to 189 pieces in newspapers (online and print), 44 pieces on radio and TV and 24 pieces appearing in other outlets. Over a third of this coverage ran in the week commencing 12 September, coinciding with publication of our initial proposals, and almost 80%



appeared in regional media, with a gentle increase and sustained period of coverage during the public hearings.

Throughout the consultation the majority of coverage portrayed the Commission in a neutral light. Although the political aspect of the Review was reported on in the majority of coverage, it was done so in a way that displayed the Commission's independence from the political outcomes. Regional coverage was more likely than national coverage to encourage audiences to "have their say" and carry our website address, with almost half the coverage from the top regional outlets¹ carrying all four of our key messages and over half



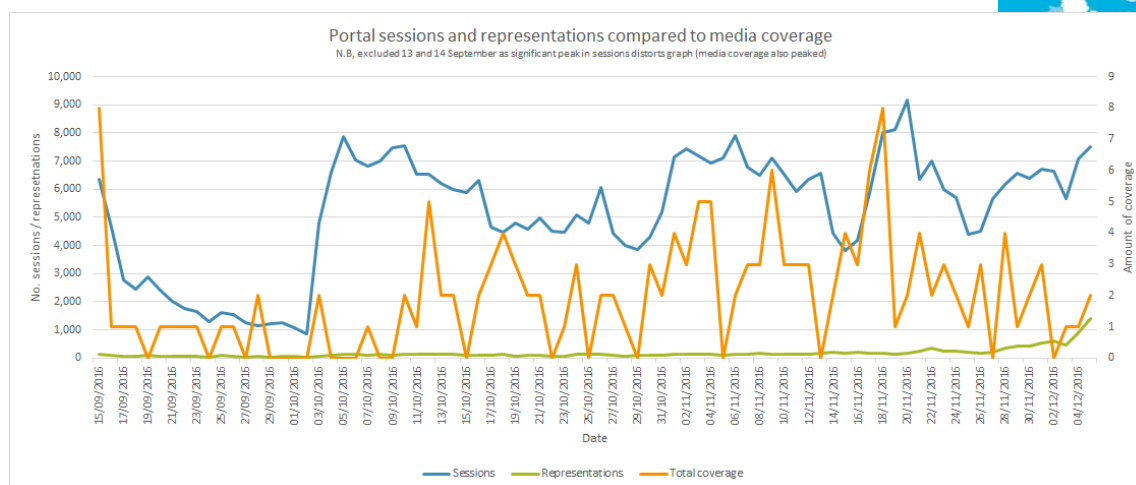
carrying our website address.

2.2.2. Impact

The impact of our media work is to some extent anecdotal as we are unable to track awareness or compare coverage figures from this review with previous reviews as the data is not available. However, staff who have worked on previous reviews are confident we have received more balanced coverage during this consultation than during past consultations – that the majority of coverage portrayed us in a neutral light and respected our political impartiality supports this.

We are also able to compare levels of coverage with portal sessions and representations made via the portal. The correlation is not very strong, but you can see decreases in sessions coincide with decreases in coverage; although the lack of strength suggests people may read about the review but not necessarily take action straight away. Interestingly, there is a peak in coverage on the 17 November when we circulated a regional press release reminding audiences the consultation closed in two weeks, which was followed by a peak in sessions and then a steady rise in representations. It appears messaging including upcoming deadlines drives more decisive action.

¹ Top regional outlets - the top 20 on list of circulation figures for regional daily paid-for newspapers over the six months to the end of June 2016 (England only) and top 20 on list of number of daily average unique browsers for regional publications over the past six months to August 2016 (England only) (Source: ABC)



2.2.3. Lessons learnt

Regional media was the most successful channel in terms of quantity of coverage and also produced coverage that resonated on a local level helping to highlight how the changes could affect the public – making them more relatable. Nevertheless, national coverage at the start of the consultation was still valuable as it raised initial awareness and engaged public interest, setting the scene and emphasising the importance of the Review. An example of the benefits of good national media coverage and of having a presence online can be seen from the number of portal sessions on the first day of the consultation. The highest number of portal sessions, by far, was seen on the 13 September (210,572) and the majority (110,163) were directed to the site from the BBC website. The Review featured on the BBC News landing page for much of 13 September and interviews with our spokespeople featured on a number of the BBC's national programmes including Radio 4 Today Programme, Radio 2 Jeremy Vine Show, BBC Breakfast, news bulletins, Daily Politics and Radio 5Live. Attaining coverage with both channels should be invested in – the importance of regionals should not be overlooked.

Op-eds and letters to the editors were not successful, perhaps due to the requirement for them to be politically neutral – there was more interest in comments from political activists, local MPs etc. Despite this, both national and regional media consistently separated political observations from the Commission's work, showing that our hard briefing from the outset that we were impartial, independent and would not comment on political outcomes was successful. Spokespeople were rarely asked about political outcomes and in many cases reporters acknowledged that the politics was out of our hands.

3. Social media

3.1. What we did

3.1.1. Organic

The Commission's Facebook and Twitter presence needed improving – at the beginning of August we had just 32 likes and 347 followers on Twitter. There was no plan for social media activity with content being shared sporadically and long periods of inactivity – nothing was posted on Facebook or Tweeted in August. We began by developing a comprehensive social media plan to ensure we produced and shared content on Facebook and Twitter on a more regular basis throughout the consultation period. This was focused on key activity each week so we could increase awareness of upcoming events to drive engagement with the consultation. Content was varied and included graphics, a video, photos and links to blogs from members of staff. Variety was key in appealing to a range of audiences and visual content/links will always perform best. This also helped drive visits to our consultation website.

3.1.2. Paid-for

We engaged agency Kindred to produce graphics for use on social media (writing the copy ourselves) and Carat to deploy these as promoted posts and Tweets (biddable adverts) throughout October and November, to coincide with the height of activity during the consultation – the public hearings. This was intended to increase our audience reach – engaging a wider range of individuals. The audiences we targeted via Facebook were all over the age of 16 with specific interests or in various groups such as residents of multicultural communities or retired. The target audience on Twitter was those over 18 who had lived in England for over six years and were residents of mixed communities. This paid-for activity intended to drive as much traffic as possible to our website.

3.2. Evaluation

3.2.1. Outputs

We increased organic output on social media from zero posts and Tweets in August to 46 Facebook posts and 209 Tweets from 1 September-30 November. Content included graphics produced by Kindred, photos from events and staff blogs. We also routinely promoted the public hearings – including links to book your place. Posts and Tweets that consistently achieved higher engagement were those with a clear call to action and links. Addition of deadline reminders in late November also promoted engagement.

This was complimented by paid-for posts and Tweets placed by Carat, seen over 20 million times. Our largest spend on biddable was Facebook, driving a high output - Facebook adverts were seen over 15 million times. Twitter had a smaller share (and we correspondingly spent significantly less), with adverts seen over 6 million times.

It is worth noting this Review has spent less than previous reviews and also updated its communications approach, making better use of online channels – saving money and producing results.

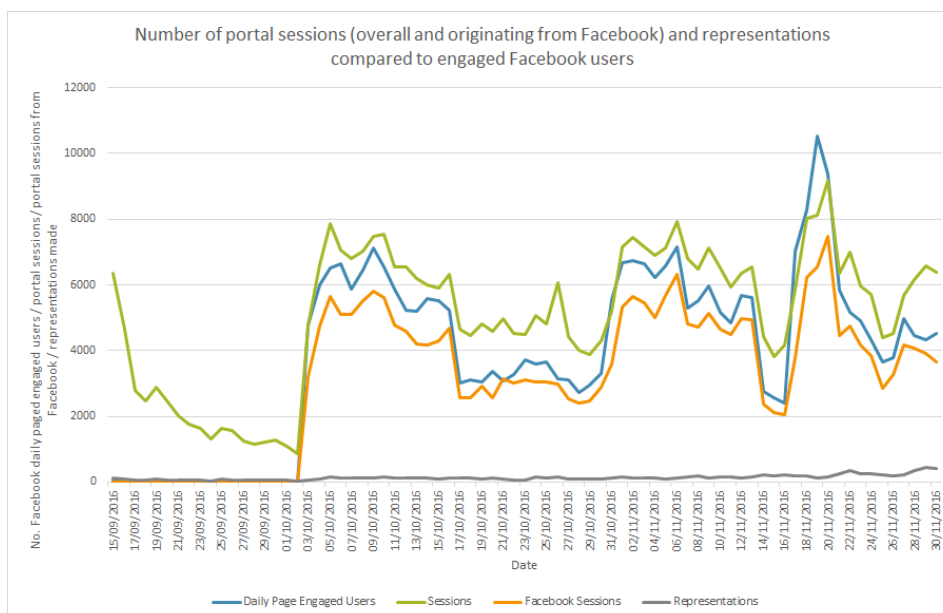
3.2.2. Impact

In addition to a marked increase in Facebook Likes (2537 by end of November) and Twitter Followers (1639 by the end of November), engagement, as expected, increased following the publication of our initial proposals and then again following the start of our paid-for content.

The biddable adverts on Facebook and Twitter performed better than expected. Facebook adverts were clicked on more often than Twitter, a total of 450,000 times (over 300,000 times more than originally planned). This translated as a click through rate (CTR) of 3%, impressive when the average for government campaigns is 1%. Although not as good as Facebook, our graphics still performed well on Twitter, with a CTR 4.5x higher than benchmarks at 1%.

This good performance in biddable boosted aspects of engagement with our social media channels in general with clicks, reach and impressions for all our social media content peaking during the period when adverts appeared on social media. The majority of those who saw our Facebook posts in October and November (93% and 99% respectively) saw paid-for content rather than organic content; additionally Twitter impressions increased dramatically starting at 178,000 in September and increasing to 2,260,000 and 3,550,000 in October and November. Engagement also increased on Facebook with page visits up from 84 in August to 592 in September and around 4,080 in both October and November; and post clicks increasing from 416 in September to 162,278 in November.

Engagement translated into portal sessions, with the majority of sessions coming from Facebook once paid-for content started. Changes in session numbers also correlated with the number of engaged users on Facebook. Analysis of the Facebook adverts also shows that 17,562 of those who clicked on the adverts



then carried out postcode searches (this only tracks postcode searches and doesn't include those who searched by region or navigated to another page).

3.2.3. Lessons learnt

For a relatively unknown organisation paid-for advertising on social media helped to raise our profile and greatly increase engagement with us on social media. This in turn drove users to our portal.

Our biddable advertising delivered good value for money with the cost per click coming in lower than expected. Carat's overarching recommendation was to replicate the main framework of the campaign due to its success. This means targeting the same audiences, using the same channels and choosing messaging with a strong call to action. However, there is always room to do more depending on budget. The most interesting suggestions included using the Facebook pixel to create customer audiences so we can retarget

people that have already been engaged with our activity, this could be beneficial in a process like the Review where there are several stage individuals can get involved at. Other thoughts were expanding to advertise on Instagram, adding new audiences and trialing different advert formats. In each of these cases it would be important to compare back to previous performance to assess if they add value. Full details of Carat's recommendations can be found in Carat's evaluation slide-pack.

Anecdotally, messaging on our graphics received some criticism as "Boundaries are changing" was seen as too definitive – people questioned the value of their contributions and the wider consultation when it looked like change had already been settled upon. However, it is worth bearing in mind this was the vocalised opinion of the few. It is unlikely that those who saw no issue with it would have said so.

4. Advertising

4.1. What we did

We ran a combination of adverts in printed press, on radio and online.

Adverts (25cm x 4cols) developed with Kindred were placed in the national media on 13 September (including the Express, Guardian, Mail, Mirror, Sun, Telegraph and Times). In addition adverts were placed in specialist media to throughout the consultation to reach under-represented audiences, this included disability magazines Pos'Ability, On Track and Enable. We secured better prices for the adverts in the specialist media by taking unfilled spots close to copy deadlines and negotiating inclusion of online advertising and editorial pieces.

Radio adverts ran from 13-25 September across regional stations. As our campaign was focussed on England audiences alone, we missed some potential audiences due to not being able to advertise on UK wide stations, which tend to have growing audiences.

We worked with Carat to buy advertising space online targeted at key audiences. Biddable advertising began in October and focused on Google Search, Facebook and Twitter (Facebook and Twitter is covered in section 3. Social Media). Digital Display advertising started 13 September and consisted of open marketplace (OMP) advertising using audience targeting, contextual targeting and keyword targeting (most adverts were delivered through keyword targeting within OMP and overall); and private marketplace (PMP) advertising on local newspaper sites and local council advertising.

4.2. Evaluation

4.2.1. Outputs

We planned to run adverts in eight papers but due to an error the Financial Times failed to run the advert. Adverts appeared in The Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Guardian, Daily Express, The Sun and Daily Mirror. All seven papers ran the adverts in their first half, with 29% running adverts in the first quarter of their publications. The adverts were seen by almost 11 million people.

Our radio adverts were aired on 37 channels reaching almost 14.5 million listeners (17% lower than the target). However, opportunity to hear the advert was higher than expected at 7.4 times (68% higher than expected). This higher frequency will have given us a stronger level of cut-through amongst listeners - the same people will have heard it more than once helping the message stick.

Under biddable, we spent the least on Google, which was reflected in the low volume of searches throughout the campaign (there was a spike around the launch). We were, however, consistently first position on paid search results.

Digital Display adverts succeeded in surpassing the impressions target of around 26 million by 11%, achieving over 29 million impressions.

4.2.2. Impact

Unlike online advertising it is more difficult to assess the impact of either printed or radio advertising. We are able to tell how many people saw or heard adverts but not how they acted following this without relying on individuals to tell us how they heard about the review.

Our paid search results drove 13,832 clicks at a strong click through rate of over 14% (well above the government average), of which 12,264 landed on the home page. 66% of these lands then carried out a postcode search - suggesting a fairly good quality of engagement even if volumes were low.

The impact of digital display was better than expected, with almost 32,500 clicks on the adverts (84% higher than expected). This meant value for money was delivered, as the cost per click was almost 50% lower than expected, although it was not as low-cost as biddable. However, the engagement delivered by these adverts was of a high quality, with over 40% of those driven to the website going on to carry out a postcode search - and this doesn't include those who searched by region or navigated to other pages.

4.2.3. Lessons learnt

In order to better track the impact of printed and radio adverts we should ask individuals how they heard about the Review. This still only gathers information from the 88% who commented online, and are perhaps more likely to have seen adverts online, and misses those who write in or attended public hearings, and may have been more likely to have seen or heard our offline advertising. It would still give an indication of where the majority are hearing about the Review.

To improve press and radio advertising, Carat advised placing adverts in freesheets and highlighted a need to book radio space earlier. We missed out on potential audiences because we left booking late and the better slots had been taken. However, this did allow us to up the frequency of our adverts.

Carat highlighted way to improve volume on Google Search ads but the value of this is questionable as our website was appearing first in organic searches, which cost us nothing. It would be worth considering whether to use this channel again in future review.

The overwhelming advice from Carat was to retain the current structure of this element of the campaign.

5. Stakeholders

5.1. What we did

Working with Kindred we developed a partner pack for stakeholders (attached at **Annex A**). This included a guide to the Review, posters, social media infographics, news release templates, blog templates and a factsheet. This was placed on our website and we contacted stakeholders (a mix of local government and third sector stakeholders) ahead of the publication and again ahead of the public hearings to ask them to help promote the Review either by using the resources in the pack or through social media. In addition we worked with the Local Government Authority (LGA) to raise awareness of the review through their channels and encourage local councils to support our communications by using the pack.

5.2. Evaluation

5.2.1. Output

Local Government were most supportive with various councils using the resources provided to post on Facebook and Twitter as well as following us on social media and sharing our posts. They would have received the resources directly from us but also via LGA who ran a feature in their magazine and carried several reminders and calls for support in their communications bulletin. LGA felt this was one of the best instances of joint-up working between local and central government.

Conversely, we didn't notice any significant activity from other stakeholders, in some instances they told us they wouldn't be able to support our communications.

5.2.2. Impact

The impact of our stakeholder work was two-fold, with the real value perhaps less in the promotion of the Review and more in the development of good working relations. Firstly, our messages were endorsed by trusted sources (local councils) in a public domain (social media) potentially increasing our reputation. Secondly, and as highlighted above perhaps more importantly, our relationship with the Local Government Authority developed throughout the campaign, with them providing valuable communications support and providing positive feedback on our approach to working with them.

5.2.3. Lessons learnt

The low/good take-up of the partner pack suggests it is/isn't worth developing for the Review. Instead, we should focus on creating a select few good quality resources specifically designed for local government who did support us through this consultation.

6. Conclusion and forward look

A more coordinated approach to communications throughout the first consultation has led to steady balanced media coverage and improved social media engagement. This has driven visits to our website and we know anecdotally has raised awareness. We have successfully encouraged the majority of people who took part in the consultation to make representations online (and they will hopefully continue to do so in the next two consultations) and generated discussion around the Review on social media.

Whilst we reached a lot of people through online advertising and social media, there was a clear need for more traditional forms of communications as not everyone uses the internet. This made the media coverage we secured valuable, especially in terms of encouraging people to find out more. The value for money of the printed and radio adverts is questionable, it is likely the value in these lays in their use at the beginning of the Review to raise initial awareness and that they don't need repeating throughout the Review, even as future consultations are launched. Their potential value should be thoroughly considered before using at future reviews, as an ever digitising world could reduce their impact in the future.

Speaking to people at public hearings our messaging appeared to be clear and easily understood. The one area that repeatedly came up as a source of confusion was the public hearings – many people turned up having not understood what they were booking and/or the nature of the hearing. This is potentially a result of the combination of some being familiar with past reviews where the public hearings had a different format and some having no experience of this form of consultation. Communications in this area should be considered at future reviews in order to ensure clarity around the process.

The next consultation will start in late February. We propose further communications to support this including content generated by ourselves and paid-for elements. We will once again run biddable adverts, which proved good value for money and drove high numbers to our website. We won't be repeating Digital Display adverts for the second consultation as we don't have the time to produce new graphics and cannot re-use the existing artwork. However, we did recognise the quality of the engagement driven by Digital Display and will include it in communications plans for the third consultation when we think more will be interested in the consultation (as the proposals will have changed) and which has a longer lead time.

We will also run adverts in the press again, but also placing in freesheets to widen our reach. This ensures we are targeting those who may not use the internet. However, we won't be running radio adverts due to the costs and time involved in preparing for these and the unknown value they bring.

We believe the focus should now be on emphasising how the Review could impact the individual and how the individual can impact the Review. We predict the next big national moments will be publication of the revised proposals and/or the final report (as long as the Private Members' Bill doesn't gain momentum). With this in mind in-house communication resources should be focused on more targeted regional communications for the second consultation.

Finally, as we identified the resources invested in the partner pack did not offer a high return we propose updating the partner pack in-house using existing graphics and removing out-of-date resources before sharing again with local government. This should be better value for money than outsourcing updating the existing/creating a new partner pack.



2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies Partner Guide September 2016



7. Annex A – 2018 Boundary Review Partner Pack

Contents

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Introduction

Dear partner,

We'd like your help to promote a public consultation on new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.

On 13 September 2016 we will publish initial proposals for new constituencies. These proposals will reduce the overall number of constituencies and make them more equal in terms of the numbers of electors each contains. This will be followed by a 12-week consultation period, where we want people to tell us whether they agree with the proposed changes, ensuring those responses capture the views and knowledge of local residents.

We need your help to spread the message that it's easy for people to get involved and that all views genuinely count. The proposals will be available to view online, and people can share feedback through our consultation website, or at public hearings across England. We will consider every piece of feedback that we receive.

There will be two further consultations: one on the feedback received in response to our initial proposals (most likely around spring 2017); and finally one on a complete set of revised proposals (most likely in late 2017). We will look at all the evidence received and make any final changes to the proposals for new constituency boundaries. Those final recommendations and an accompanying report will be published and presented to Parliament in September 2018. It will then be for Parliament to decide whether to implement the recommendations for the next scheduled general election in 2020.

Please get involved and help your local communities have their say!

You will find a number of resources outlined within this guide to help you with this.

3

About the review

Following a decision by Parliament to reduce the number of constituencies in the UK to 600 (from 650), and to ensure that there are roughly the same number of electors in each constituency, the Boundary Commission for England will make independent recommendations about where the boundaries of English constituencies should be. There will be a reduction in the number of English constituencies from the current 533 to 501. We will publish the initial proposals – the first time people get a look at what the map of constituencies might look like – on 13 September 2016. An initial 12-week consultation will follow, ending on 5 December 2016.

How people can get involved

We want to ensure the final recommendations reflect the views and knowledge of local residents and communities. If people want to have their say, it is easier than ever:

- People can view the proposed changes online (www.bce2018.org.uk) and submit any comments direct to us through the consultation website
- They can give us their views in person at any of the 36 public hearings being held across the English regions (information about these hearings can be found on our website)

Contact information for partners

If you wish to get in touch with us at any time, you can:

- E-mail us at: information@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk
- Call us on: 020 7276 1102
- Write to us at: Boundary Commission for England, 35 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BQ

4

Key messages



5

How to get involved

We want as many people as possible to have their say on the proposed new boundaries. Feel free to use any or all of the tools and resources in this guide to help share the message.

- Follow us on social media and regularly update your organisation's social media platforms. We have provided some suggested copy and graphics for you to use in tweets and Facebook posts.
- Link to the consultation website (where people can view and comment on the proposed changes) from your organisation's website or your internal and external bulletins/newsletters.
- Distribute the campaign materials at your venues and events. We also encourage you to share the message far and wide within your networks, including arm's-length management organisations, housing associations, community groups and your internal staff. We have provided graphics for a poster that you can use.
- Send a press notice to local media encouraging others to share their views.
- Blog about it. We have included a sample blog if you want to carry one from us, or you could write your own.
- Attend a public hearing and share your views in person.

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Resources: Social media

Follow us on social media and regularly update your organisation's social media platforms. We have provided some suggested copy and graphics for you to use in tweets and Facebook posts on the next page, but feel free to come up with the best approach for your audience.

Follow us

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/BCCommEngland/>

Twitter – @BCE2018

Share a post on Facebook or send a tweet

If you are using Twitter you can use #2018boundaryreview in posts and tag us @BCE2018 or on Facebook you can tag us @BCCommEngland

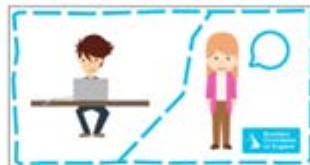
7

Resources: Social media

You can share these infographics on Facebook or Twitter and we have suggested some messaging to help you with this, but please feel free to come up with the best approach for your audience.



Help re-draw the Parliamentary map for your area
www.bce2018.org.uk



Share your views on the new parliamentary boundaries online or at a local public hearing
www.bce2018.org.uk



Local knowledge needed to help shape new constituency boundaries. Have your say
www.bce2018.org.uk



Join others from <insert your area here> and share local views on proposed boundary changes
www.bce2018.org.uk




There's still time to have your say on proposed boundary changes for your area
www.bce2018.org.uk



Boundaries are changing to make constituencies more equal. Share your views here:
www.bce2018.org.uk

Downloads

Facebook infographics 

Twitter infographics 

8

Resources: Sample messages for websites/bulletins

Link to the consultation website (where people can view and comment on the proposed changes) from your organisation's website or newsletter/bulletins.

Website text

Did you know that Parliamentary constituencies are set to change? The independent Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has announced proposals for changes to constituencies in England for the next General Election and needs your help to shape their final recommendations, ensuring they take into consideration local knowledge and views.

From the 13 September there will be a 12-week consultation allowing you to share your knowledge about your local area. It is easier than ever to get involved, and the BCE considers every piece of feedback that it receives, whether that is about where the constituency boundaries should be, the name of the constituency, or even what type of constituency it should be.

Go online to view interactive maps showing the proposed changes. You can send feedback on the changes through the website in a couple of minutes. You can also attend one of the public hearings the BCE will be holding across England to give your views in person.

Find out more at www.bce2018.org.uk


Newsletter/bulletin text


The independent Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has published proposals to reduce the number of Parliamentary constituencies across England and to make them more equal. Go online at www.bce2018.org.uk to view and comment on the proposals or you can attend a public hearing throughout October/November to have your say in person. Don't miss out – contribute your local knowledge and have your say on what the new constituencies should be by Monday 5 December 2018.

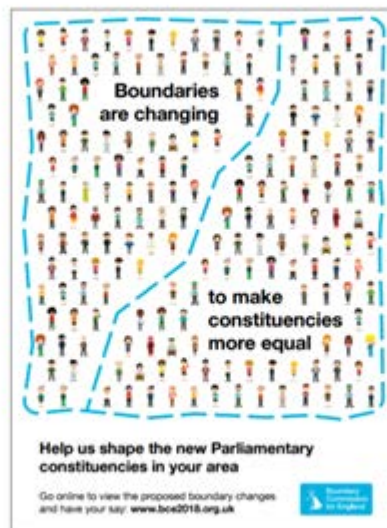
9

Resources: Poster

Downloads

Poster for print 


Poster for screen 



10

Resources: Press notice

You could consider sending a press notice to local media, encouraging others to share their views. You can find a template press notice on the BCE website or use the link below.

Download 



11

Resources: Blog post

Why not carry a blog about the review through your channels. Here is a sample one from the Secretary to the Boundary Commission that you could use.

Download 



12

Resources: Fact sheet leaflet

Here's a fact sheet leaflet with essential information about the review that you can easily print off (it fits on the back and front of a sheet of A4 paper) and give to anyone who is interested.

Download 



13

FAQ

Why are you reviewing constituency boundaries?

We have been asked by Parliament to review constituencies in England to ensure that there is a more even distribution of electors across them. Parliament also required the number of UK MPs to be reduced to 600 (there are currently 650). This means the number of constituencies in England will be reduced by 32, from 533 to 501. A review process is necessary to see how best these two significant requirements can be implemented, as their combined effect will lead to some change in a large number of constituencies across England.

How do you work out the proposed changes to boundaries?

The law specifies how to calculate the 'electoral quota' for a constituency review. This is essentially the mean average number of electors for each constituency. The electoral quota for this review is 74,769. Under the rules, every constituency in the UK – except two covering the Isle of Wight and two Scottish island constituencies – must have a number of registered electors within 5% of this figure. This means no constituency will have an electorate of more than 78,507 or less than 71,031 (other than the four island exceptions).

Will my MP or constituency be affected by the boundary changes?

The number of constituencies in England will need to fall by 32, from 533 to 501, and each will need to have a similar number of electors. To implement these requirements, there will need to be changes to the majority of constituencies. View the proposals online for your particular area to find out more.

When would the proposed changes take effect?

The Boundary Commission will make its final recommendations to Parliament in September 2018. If Parliament agrees the changes to boundaries, the new constituencies will take effect at the next scheduled General Election in 2020.

Will this review favour one political party over another?

The Boundary Commission for England is independent and impartial and will not take into account patterns of voting or the results of elections when reviewing constituency boundaries. Nor do the political parties' views on where boundaries should be have any more weight than those of members of the public.

How long will the review last?

Initial proposals are being published in September 2016, with final recommendations submitted to Parliament in September 2018.

Why do you need my views?

We want to make sure that the final recommendations have taken local views and knowledge into consideration.

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How can I share my views?

There are a number of ways to comment on the proposals.

Online: you can go online at www.bce2018.org.uk; enter your postcode and view and comment on proposed new Parliamentary constituencies in your local area.

In person: you can attend one of 36 public hearings being held across the regions of England and share your views with the BCE.

Equal consideration will be given to all feedback.

Will the changes affect my local council services, bin collections or schools, for example?

No. The boundary changes only relate to Parliamentary constituencies (the area an MP is elected to represent in Parliament). Services and council tax in your local area are set by your local authority and this review does not change local authority boundaries.

Who will make final decisions on the new boundary areas?

Parliament will make the final decisions. The review will finish when the final report of the Commission's recommendations is published and provided to the Government in September 2018. The recommendations must then be put before Parliament by the Government, and Parliament will decide whether or not to implement the recommended new constituencies.

Will the name of my constituency change following the review?

Possibly. As well as looking at where the boundaries of constituencies should be, the BCE will recommend a specific name for each constituency. Generally, the more a constituency has changed, the more likely it is that the BCE will recommend a change of name. Naming of proposed constituencies is certainly something the BCE welcomes views on during the consultation periods.

You can find a more detailed list of questions online at:

www.bce2018.org.uk/faq



Initial consultation period – evaluation

Review of public hearings

1. In accordance with the requirements of section 5(1)(b) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 ('the Act'), the Boundary Commission for England conducted 36 public hearings across the nine regions of England between 10 October and 18 November 2016 (weeks 5-10 of the initial consultation period). Schedule 2A to the Act makes more detailed provision for these public hearings, but left a number of matters within the discretion of the boundary commissions and those who chair the public hearings.
2. This paper provides a review and lessons learnt of the delivery of the 2018 Review public hearings from a number of different perspectives, taking into account feedback received from the political parties, members of the public, and the Assistant Commissioners, as well as the direct experience of secretariat staff. Where appropriate, the paper makes a number of recommendations for delivering future public hearings at the next review.
3. This review covers eight key areas:
 - planning of the public hearings
 - communications
 - booking systems
 - locations and venues
 - lead hearings
 - assistant commissioners
 - staffing and administration
 - transcriptions

Overview

4. The delivery of the 2018 Review public hearings was on the whole deemed to be successful from an administrative point of view, with very good feedback received during and after the hearings from a number of assistant commissioners, politicians, the main political parties, and members of the public. There were, however, a small number of complaints from the public, and a couple of politicians, about the administration of the hearings but this would represent a very small proportion of those attending the events themselves.
5. Communications about the public hearings were extremely successful, with wide range coverage in both national and local news media – some making headline news bulletins. But despite this, the attendance at a majority of the venues was low. Analysis of the figures records an average of 56 speakers making oral representations per hearing, in venues holding a maximum capacity of 100 people. The lowest number of speakers was recorded at Northallerton (12), with the highest being recorded in Birmingham, with 74 speakers.

Planning and preparation

6. Concrete plans for the public hearings commenced immediately after the meeting with the political parties in March, and the subsequent meeting between the secretariat and the commissioners in April. However, in practice, general planning of timescales and venues had begun in late 2015.
7. Although the lessons learnt from the 2011 public hearings made the planning relatively easier, there was however a significant amount of 'new' planning and preparation work to undertake, including the recruitment of the ACs which the Commission had to run entirely, the procurement of the video and transcription service, the process for which had changed considerably from previous public hearings, and the issue of staffing.
8. The Commission's staff had to conduct the entire recruitment process for the appointment of the ACs. While this exercise is not only relevant to public hearings, the timing and scale of it is germane in any evaluation of the planning for the hearings. The recruitment exercise raised the issue of the staffing within the BCE's corporate team, which was already running a member of staff down. The Commission received well over 500 applications for the 21 positions. The administrative burden of running this exercise in-house, while saving money, became a challenge and placed a lot of strain the available staff.
9. Crucially, this also meant that all the resources were focussed on the recruitment thereby caused a delay in beginning the practical planning and administration of the hearings themselves, such as sourcing, visiting and booking the venues. This activity could not commence until June when the new support staff member was in post. While this work was then conducted efficiently, nonetheless in a number of cases the secretariat was unable to secure council buildings, which were our preferred options in terms of suitability and/or cost in every location.
10. The administration of travel for staff proved to be challenging and occasionally chaotic, with staff travelling to and from the same location being booked on different trains. The reason, again, was due to the corporate team being short staffed.
11. The Cabinet Office uses a prescribed company - HRG - as its official supplier of hotels and, as such, we had to use its services to book hotels recommended by us, which in reality should have made making hotel reservations very easy. However HRG can only take over the entire administrative process for group bookings. Given no decision was made on the number of people (staff and ACs) required at each location, it was agreed to opt for the group booking option which meant that we had to booking a minimum of 10 rooms per location. But unfortunately as the arrival date approached, most of the bookings were reduced to below 10 rooms, which did result in some of the unused rooms being paid for. In addition also, administratively, it became overly bureaucratic.
12. The secretariat had to find and make the initial booking with a majority of the venues, and before passing the list on to the Cabinet Office's official venue and conference finders (Calder) to confirm the bookings. This in itself was a challenge as it introduced a third party responsible for the booking, but not the arrangements at the venue. There was therefore significant to-ing and fro-ing between us, the venues and Calder. There were difficulties in finding appropriate venues in some locations, e.g. Harrow, Bromley, Norwich, and there was also the issue of those venues whose preference was not to deal with a third party like Calder, which the secretariat had to take responsibility for. A

site visit to all venues resulted in changes to two of them, as they were not deemed appropriate for the hearings.

13. The most significant lesson learnt from the practical administration of booking the hearing venues, accommodation and travel, is that reliance on the Cabinet Office's central and prescribed agencies for such services led to difficulties and increased the administrative burden (rather than decreasing it, a perceived benefit of being sponsored by the department). The contracts agreed were not flexible enough to accommodate our particular requirements, which therefore introduced added work in getting around these systems.
14. Finally, given the lessons learnt from the procurement of the transcribers for the last public hearing, it was agreed that the hearing will be video and audio recorded, with the recordings sent to be transcribed. Both the companies who recorded and transcribed the recordings were identified very early in the process which ensured constant conversation and enabled all parties understood what was expected. This also meant that the procurement of the services of both companies for the hearings was done on a single tender process through Crown Commercial Service. This saved us time and effort of going through the complicated open tender.
15. In light of the above experience, the secretariat recommends:
 - a) That although plans cannot be made for all possibilities like elections etc, the recruitment of the ACs should commence immediately after the launch of the review – in particular ensuring that the resources are in place to assist with the process.
 - b) Similar concerns apply to the process of procuring the video and transcription services for the hearings. Given the limited number of companies equipped to fulfil our requirements, as well as the time constraints involved, procuring them should continue to be done on a single tender process. It should remain a key requirement that the companies must have experience of recording/ transcribing public hearings.
 - c) The role of the business manager should be kept as lead public hearing co-ordinator in future; however, that role should have at least three temporary band C staff in addition to the two permanent staff to provide support, particularly on the AC recruitment and booking of the travel and provide support in all the other administrative processes in the lead to and throughout the hearing period.
 - d) An earlier meeting with any central venue booking organisation (e.g. Calder in this experience) should take place immediately after the decision is made on the locations of hearings to ensure that council buildings are secured.
 - e) Similarly, an early meeting with any central travel/accommodation booker (e.g. HRG in this experience) should happen immediately after agreement of venues. A review the number of rooms required in future, perhaps book fewer rooms for the locations where it is not necessary to have that many staff in attendance.

Communications (advertising the public hearings)

16. An early policy decision was taken by the Commission to focus its communications budget on promoting awareness of the review and advertising the public hearings. A press officer was appointed to increase the promotion of the public hearings and

respond to media requests for interviews. Our campaign evaluation is covered in another paper to this meeting. However, there is anecdotal evidence that the public hearings became news headlines in local news media. The specific locations and dates of public hearings were also publicised in the region-specific proposals reports, the BCE website, our consultation webpage, facebook page, and via Twitter (other general promotional activity focused on directing people to our consultation website).

17. The secretariat therefore recommends:

- a) The Commission continues with its strategy for targeted localised media promotion. Increase activity on local radio and television interviews.

The booking system and timings

- 18. At the meetings with the political parties February and the meeting with the Commissioners in March, it was agreed that we should give the opportunity for people to be able to speak outside of normal working hours, to give flexibility. As a result the hearings were scheduled from 11am – 8pm on day 1 and 9am – 5pm on day 2.
- 19. It was noted that for a majority of the locations, day two was less well-attended, which begs the question as to whether it was worth having a two-day hearing. However, on the interests of accessibility, we would recommend continuing to run two-day hearings; indeed in some locations (notably Truro in Cornwall) it was suggested by members of the public that two days was not long enough.
- 20. As at the last review, a pre-booking system was set up online via eventbrite for members of the public to book a 10 minutes speaking/ presentation slots in advance of the hearing. The booking facility was advertised on all our publication materials about the hearings. The pre-booking system for a hearing on the day before the hearing, but it remained possible for individuals to attend and request to speak on the day, subject to the Chair's agreement.
- 21. With regard to the evening sessions, while the principle was felt to be right, in order to accommodate full-time workers, the late afternoon and evening sessions were the least attended. It was also felt that the day did end up being a very long one, both for the Assistant Commissioner who were required to concentrate for the whole day on what is being said, and also for the secretariat and support staff, who begin setting up the venue from 8am. In addition, there was also cost implication, as some of the venues charged a higher rate after 6pm.
- 22. Managing the booking service this time was much more effective, although there were some individuals who claimed to have used the online booking system, and subsequently attended a hearing, but we could find no record of their booking, which brought to our attention the problems with that system. This was quickly rectified.
- 23. Finally, Assistant Commissioners varied their approach to closing the hearings early. In one case day one of a hearing was closed around 5pm, and an attendee arrived the next day saying they had been hoping to attend around 6.30pm on the first day. Although this situation was handled and no reputational damage was done, there is a significant risk of such damage if hearings are closed unreasonably early. In contrast, in other locations ACs insisted on leaving the hearings open for the full opening hours.

24. The secretariat therefore recommends:

- a) Speakers other than qualifying parties at a lead hearing should be allocated a ten minutes slot, but should also be advised at the point of registration that they should expect to be called to speak 'at some point within their allocated time', and that they should aim to speak for no longer than ten minutes. This allows for greater flexibility, whilst retaining a reasonably strong degree of clarity about when an individual will be speaking;
- b) If the hearings remain two days in length, perhaps the first day should either start after lunchtime and finish at 8pm, or run 9am-5pm then have a window 7pm-8pm to accommodate speakers unable to attend during the day on an exceptional basis;
- c) Subject to decisions on opening hours and running time above, stronger guidance should be given (including mandating if necessary) on the minimum opening hours;
- d) The facility to make a booking request via a website should remain, given the relative popularity of this facility, but a longer period should be allowed for proper defining, implementing and testing before the system goes live.

Locations and venue suitability

- 25. Following lessons learnt from the 2011 on the suitability for venues for the public hearings the BCE opted to use a mix of local authority venues, third sector venues and hotel conference rooms, with each offering positives and negatives. 80% of the venues used were local authority buildings. They provided a greater sense of authority, and most had substantial fixed desk space and PA systems, and are usually known to local people. They were above all cheaper. Although the local admin and/or technical support was available, but the availability of the wifi connection was patchy in some locations.
- 26. The hotels chosen were in the main generally more customer-focused and had staff readily available to help at all times, with generally more modern facilities and car parking more readily available, but acoustics were sometimes not good (e.g. Hull), and there is the risk of disturbance from other functions taking place at the same time. They were in the main more expensive. Third sector venues made up only 2%, were mainly cheaper but were not deemed suitable for the hearings.
- 27. Careful consideration was also taken to ensure that most of the venues for the hearing were centrally located, better served by public transport and easily accessible. There were however a few exceptions like Harrow which was located slightly away from public transport.
- 28. In relation to hearing location, in some cases where there were very low attendance figures perhaps reflected the fact that there was very limited (if any) disagreement with the initial proposals for that part of the region. Harrow, for example, although being located away from public transport, was well attended.
- 29. There were some concerns expressed about the hearing in Truro, with members of the public arguing both for a move to Penzance (at the extreme south west of the county) but also for a visit to the cross-county boundary proposal of Bideford, Bude, Launceston at the next review to give more people the opportunity to attend the hearings.

30. The secretariat therefore recommends:

- a) Locations should continue to be selected on the basis of accessibility within – and a reasonably even spread across - a region, rather than on a prediction of likely controversy in an area;
- b) A specific venue within an area should only be booked if it can be confirmed that there is reasonably good accessibility to it by public transport (preferably multiple types and routes);
- c) There should be a general policy to select local authority venues over private sector conferencing venues or third sector organisations, but individual venue booking should rely primarily on the specific site visit by the Business Manager to check fitness for purpose;
- d) Finally we propose the majority of the locations used for this review be considered at the next review - the secretariat has kept full records for the next review of which locations were suitable and which were not..

Lead hearings

- 31. The principle of holding a lead hearing in each region seems to have remained a success, as the Assistant Commissioners seemed to find it helpful to receive an overall picture from the main parties. Having gained a good understanding of these at the beginning of the lead hearing, they were then able to check the extent to which subsequent individual speakers throughout a region were expressing support for the counter-proposals of one of the main parties.
- 32. The lead hearings also seemed to generate most (though not all) of the media attention, and therefore seemed to be successful in having provided a focus for that, even if that did not then seem to generate much in the way of momentum for subsequent hearings in the region.

Assistant Commissioners

- 33. Feedback from members of the public and staff on how effectively the Assistant Commissioners chaired the hearings has been generally positive, as regards their independence (whilst remaining willing to consult and listen to advice from secretariat staff), efficiency, courtesy, and seeking to put nervous individuals at their ease.
- 34. Staff noted that at some of the hearings the requirements for speakers and questioners to all give their name and address was frequently not picked up on by the chairs. But this was quickly corrected as the hearings went on.

35. The secretariat therefore recommends

- a. That the induction training for Assistant Commissioners should continue to contain a dedicated element for the lead Assistant Commissioners, on dealing with the need for consistency in the application of the guidelines relating to questioning of speakers and giving of names and addresses by speakers and questioners.

Staffing and administration

36. The administration of the hearings on the whole was deemed a success by colleagues, ACs and some members of the public. The daily conference call between the BCE staff, to share issues, solutions, good practice, and general information about what was happening elsewhere proved to be very useful.
37. The introduction of the press officer at the lead hearings was also a success. They were able to handle media briefing/ queries as and when necessary.
38. At the start of the hearings, the proposed standard secretariat 'team' for a hearing was five (one senior manager to support the Assistant Commissioner directly throughout (and be the lead representative of the BCE itself for media etc); the relevant review team for the region as a technical expert on the proposals in the region; and two admin support staff to run the registration desk, handle ad hoc administrative and logistical issues. Generally, more staff were present at lead hearings. However, the recruitment of temporary staff took much longer to achieve than expected (due to delays in Cabinet Office processes) so there would have been critical staff shortages at hearings, had permanent staff not been willing to attend more hearings than scheduled. This was exacerbated by the loss of the Deputy Secretary on long-term caring leave shortly before the hearings began.
39. Nevertheless, the permanent staff found ways to run the hearings with as little as three members of staff - while this would present a risk in terms of resilience, it also saved money and resources and did not cause any significant problem.
40. It was essential to have a member of the business team with overall responsibility for the couriering of all materials, such as the stationery boxes, along with the boards and banners, in order that they arrived at their destinations in advance of the hearing beginning.

41. The secretariat therefore recommends:

- a) A standard staff team for a hearing (including a lead hearing) should be four, consisting of one senior manager (that may be the Secretary to the Commission), the relevant review team officer or manager for that region, and two admin support staff;
- b) The recruitment of the agency staff should be done two months in advance of the hearings to ensure that their security clearance comes through in time for the hearings;
- c) The logistical arrangements for delivery of the materials worked very well, so should be adopted again. However staff at the public hearings must ensure that stationery taken out of the box must be put back as well as ensuring that the box is tidied before it is shipped to the next location.

Transcriptions

42. The use video and audio recordings of the hearings has been a success in terms of transparency and organisation. The recordings were then transcribed to be published alongside the audio and video recordings. The recordings and the transcription of the hearings have all been delivered within weeks of the final hearing.

43. However, they are not without significant cost, with the combined recordings and transcripts costing over £150,000. The Commission has a legal obligation to take a 'record' of the hearings - due consideration should be given at the next review as to the best way of doing so. While the current arrangements worked well, given the pace of technology it may be the case that a more cost-effective way of taking a record can be found at the next review.

Conclusions

44. Overall, the running of the hearings for the 2018 Review has been a qualified success. We received very little criticism about the administration, conduct or purpose of the hearings. They were generally as well attended as they were at the last review, with good use of technology to improve elements such as booking and administration, and presentations on the day.
45. The administration burden is not inconsiderable, and thought should be given to increasing the staffing complement specifically dedicated to the recruitment and management of Assistant Commissioners and the booking and running of public hearings at the next review. The reliance on Cabinet Office systems, procurement and contracts is also, on balance, more hindrance than help. Again, assuming the Commission remains sponsored by the Cabinet Office at the next review, a case may need to be made for exemption to the usual contract arrangements on elements such as hotel and venue booking given the particular requirements for the public hearings.

2018 Review – towards the revised proposals

Ways of working and generic revised proposals report

1. This paper provides a brief reminder of the Commissioners' preferred ways of working towards the revised proposals, and sets out in more detail the manner in which we hope to arrive at robust and well-evidenced proposals later in the year.

Previous policy discussions

2. Towards the end of last year, Commissioners considered some policy issues regarding division of regions between Commissioners and the Deputy Chair, conduct and attendance at public hearings, and the ways of working/scrutinising the work of Assistant Commissioners. That consideration, and subsequent agreement, is annexed to this paper, which updates Commissioners only on the lattermost issue – ways of working with Assistant Commissioners.
3. The secretariat has now begun engaging with the Assistant Commissioner teams as we begin to analyse the representations and come up with options for commissioners, for revisions to the initial proposals. At today's meeting, the Head of Reviews will provide a regional update as to the main issues that have been raised in each region. This will include issues such as proposed ward splits, cross-regional proposals, and level and quality of evidence provided.
4. This, we hope, will be the first attempt at addressing the issue raised by Commissioners previously – namely, that Commissioners are better armed to challenge and scrutinise the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners.

Timetable

5. Commissioners will not be surprised to learn that the timetable to sign off revised proposals is tight and will rely on prompt and timely preparation of papers by the secretariat, and clearing of drafts of reports by Assistant Commissioners and Commissioners. In essence, there will be two stages of report-writing: first, the secretariat will draft reports with the Assistant Commissioners to present to Commissioners in advance of the July sign-off meetings; then the secretariat will turn this text (assuming agreement to the recommendations) into the Commission's voice for the revised proposals report. As intended, this differs from the 2013 Review, during which Assistant Commissioners wrote and presented reports almost as a *fait-accompli*, leaving the Commissioners little room to challenge the ACs.
6. The below table shows the intended timelines leading up to the briefings with commissioners in July:

Activity	Dates
Regional teams briefing senior management	Ongoing, until end May
Regional teams send out initial paper briefing to ACs	Friday 28 April 2017
Head of Reviews briefs Commission	Thursday 4 May 2017
Regional teams' first briefing for ACs	Ongoing until w/c 22 June 2017
Lead AC meeting to discuss cross-cutting issues for consistency	6 June 2017

Tours of regions	From 8 June 2017 to 26 June 2017
<i>Chance to update commissioners on significant issues by exception</i>	<i>w/c 19 and 26 June 2017</i>
Reports to Commissioners being drafted and cleared by ACs	Ongoing until w/c 26 June 2017
AC reports sent to Commissioners in advance of briefings	From 5 July 2017
ACs and regional teams briefing commissioners	w/c 10 and 17 July
Amendments to recommendations if needed	w/c 17 July latest, by correspondence
Revised proposal reports being cleared	From w/c 24 July to w/c 7 August, by correspondence
Deadline for last report to go to editors/printers	11 August 2017

Generic revised proposals report

7. The secretariat has prepared a generic revised proposals template, which draws heavily on that used successfully for the 2013 Review, and asks for comments and agreement from the Commission to this draft in order that it can be ready for use as the basis for the revised proposals. This is at annex B.