**2018 Boundary Review – template blog (Feb/March 2017)**

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**2018 Boundary Review – getting to grips with the second consultation**
By Sam Hartley, Secretary to the Boundary Commission for England

In September last year, we published our initial proposals showing for the first time changes that might be made to parliamentary constituencies across England. This also marked the beginning of our first consultation, during which the public could tell us what they did and didn’t like about our proposals.

We received close to 20,000 individual comments over the 12-week consultation, with numerous others signing petitions or letter-writing campaigns. Some raised concerns, some suggested alternatives and I was delighted to see many supporting our ideas! All the comments will help us develop a better idea of how local communities live and work together across the country, what’s important in different areas, and they have shown us just how passionate the public are about the communities they live in.

Since the consultation closed in December the BCE team has been busy preparing for our second consultation, which opened on 28 February and runs until 27 March.

The second consultation is different to the first as we now want you to tell us what you think about other people’s ideas rather than ours. On 28 February we published the representations made during the first consultation and asked you to look through them and comment on these. All the comments are available at [www.bce2018.org.uk](http://www.bce2018.org.uk). There’s even a handy how-to guide, to help people navigate through all the representations!

Once again we want you to think whether the comments from other people reflect the community you live in – for instance do their suggestions mean the local places that are important to you, such as where you go to use local services, play sports or attend clubs, are in the same constituency as where you live? Do you recognise and agree with the evidence about local community ties that has been put to us? We want you to tell us which ideas you like, which ideas you don’t like, what you think works better than our proposals and where you feel our plans are the best solution put forward – and don’t forget to tell us why.

Once this four-week consultation closes on 27 March, our assistant commissioners will be drilling into the detail in all the comments received during both consultations. With the help of the team here at the Commission, they’ll consider all the evidence submitted and arguments made, including where there is support for the initial proposals. Based on this work, they’ll then advise the Commission on where they think the proposals should be revised.

Revised proposals will be published as part of a final consultation in late 2017/early 2018. This will be your last chance to comment on the proposals. Again we’ll look carefully at the comments you make on the revisions before, with our commissioners, compiling our final recommendations and submitting them to Parliament in September 2018.

Our work is then done. The 2018 Boundary Review will be out of our hands and in Parliament’s, who will vote on whether or not our recommended map of new constituencies should be used at the next general election. That final stage is some way off yet and our proposals are still in their early stages. They are likely to change somewhat over the coming year – so make sure you take the opportunities to get involved and help us make our proposals the best they can be.