

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**PROCEEDINGS**

**AT THE**

**2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND**

**HELD AT**

**CITY HALL, COLLEGE GREEN, BRISTOL, BS1 5TR**

**ON**

**THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016**  
**DAY ONE**

**Before:**

**Ms Anita Bickerdike, The Lead Assistant Commissioner**

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Time Noted: 10.00 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this public hearing on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for the new parliamentary constituency boundaries in the South West region.

My name is Anita Bickerdike and I am an Assistant Commissioner of the Boundary Commission. I was appointed by the Commission to assist them in their task of making recommendations for new constituencies for the South West region. I am responsible for chairing the hearing today and tomorrow and I am also responsible with my fellow Assistant Commissioner, Catherine Elliott, for analysing all of the representations received about the initial proposals for the region and then presenting recommendations to the Commission as to whether those initial proposals should be revised.

I am assisted here today by members of the Commission staff, led by Gerald Tessier, the Review Manager with the Commission, who is sitting beside me.

Gerald will shortly provide an explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for the new constituencies in this region. He will then tell you how to make written representations and he will also deal with one or two administrative matters.

The hearing today is scheduled to run from 10 am until 8 pm and tomorrow it is scheduled to run from 9 am until 5 pm. I can vary that timetable and I will take into account the attendance and demand for opportunities to speak.

I should point out that under the legislation that governs the Commission's review, each public hearing must be held over two days and cannot be extended into a third.

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals for the South West region. A number of people have already registered to speak and have been given a time slot and I will invite them to speak at the appropriate time. If there is any time free during the day or at the end of the day then I will invite anyone who is not registered to come and speak if they would like to do so.

I would like to stress that the purpose of this hearing is for people to make oral representations about the initial proposals. The purpose is not to engage in a debate with the Commission about the proposals, nor is this hearing an opportunity to cross-examine other speakers during their presentations. People may seek to put questions for clarification to the speakers but I would ask that they do that through me as the Chair.

I will now hand over to Gerald, who will provide a brief explanation of the initial proposals for the South West region.

MR TESSIER: Thank you very much and good morning. As Anita has mentioned, my name is Gerald Tessier and I am a member of the Commission staff. I am responsible for supporting the Commissioners in their role to recommend new parliamentary constituency boundaries and at this hearing I lead the team of staff responsible for ensuring that the hearing runs smoothly.

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

I would like to talk now about the Commission's initial proposals for the South West region, which were published on 13 September 2016. In considering the composition of each electoral region we noted that it might not be possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties; therefore, we have grouped some local authority areas into sub-regions. The number of constituencies allocated to each sub-region is determined by the electorate of the combined local authorities.

The Commission's proposals for the South West region are for 53 constituencies, a reduction of two. Our proposals leave nine of the existing constituencies unchanged.

We use the European electoral regions as a template for the allocation of the 499 constituencies to which England is entitled, that is not including the two allocated to the Isle of Wight. This approach is permitted by the legislation and has been supported by previous public consultation. This approach does not prevent anyone from putting forward counter-proposals that include one or more constituencies being split between the regions, but it is likely that compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade us to depart from the regional-based approach we have adopted in formulating our initial proposals.

In North Somerset, both the existing constituencies are unchanged.

In Bristol, two of the four existing constituencies are unaltered, while the remaining two are changed only by the transfer of one ward.

In Swindon, we have made changes to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

More substantial change is required, however, in other parts of the region. Consequently, it has been necessary to propose some constituencies that cross county or unitary authority boundaries.

We have proposed one constituency that contains electors from both Cornwall and Devon; it crosses the boundary in the north of the two counties, combining the towns of Bude, Bideford and Launceston. Another proposed constituency contains electors from both Dorset and Wiltshire, and combines the towns of Shaftesbury and Warminster.

Additionally, we propose that some electors from the north-east of the County of Somerset are combined with electors from Bath and North East Somerset in one constituency. We also propose that some electors from the south of the County of Gloucestershire are combined with electors from South Gloucestershire.

The statutory rules allow us to take into account local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. These include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal boundaries, known as “wards” or “electoral divisions”. We seek to avoid dividing wards between constituencies wherever possible. Wards are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. We consider that any division of these units between constituencies would be likely to break local ties, disrupt political party organisations and cause difficulties for electoral registration and returning officers who are responsible for running elections. It is our view that only in exceptional and compelling circumstances will splitting a ward between constituencies be justified and our initial proposals do not do so. If an alternative scheme proposes to split wards, strong evidence and justification will need to be provided and the extent of such ward-splitting should be kept to a minimum.

The scale of change in this review is significant and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period. We are consulting on our proposals until Monday 5 December 2016; so there is still time after this hearing for people to contribute in writing. There are also reference copies of the proposals present at this hearing and they are also available on our website and in a number of places of deposit around the region. You can make written representations to us through our consultation website at [www.bce.2018.org.uk](http://www.bce.2018.org.uk). I do urge everyone to submit written representations to us before the deadline of 5 December 2016.

Finally, I would remind all participants that this hearing is part of a public consultation and you will be asked to provide us with your name and address if you make an oral representation. The Commission is legally obliged to take a record of the public hearings and, as you can see, we are taking a video recording, from which we will create a verbatim transcript.

The Commission is required to publish the record of the public hearing along with all written representations for a four-week period during which members of the public have an opportunity to comment on those representations. We expect this period to occur during spring of next year. The publication of the hearing records and written

representations include certain personal data of those who have made representations. I therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's data protection and privacy policy, a copy of which we have with us and which is available on our website; and it is pinned to a board outside of the room.

A few matters of housekeeping. I am led to believe there is no fire alarm test this morning – there will be one tomorrow – so if the alarm does go off please follow the green signs and make your way out of the building as quickly as possible. Toilets are signposted outside of the Chamber. If you are speaking, during your speech I will put up maps of the constituency you are referring to. There is a pointer on the table there and if you need to point to a specific area within the constituency I can either blow that up if it is a particularly detailed point; or if it is a general point if you want to illustrate that please use the laser point that is on there.

At this stage I will now hand back to the Chair to begin the public hearing. Thank you for your attendance today.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you Gerald. We do have a number of speakers booked in this morning. Speakers would normally be allocated a ten-minute slot, but we are certainly not fully booked this morning so I have some capacity to allow speakers to continue for a little bit longer should they wish to do so. If we do get fully booked then I will be shortening it to the ten-minute ascribed slots.

The first speaker this morning is Mrs Claire Young. Mrs Young, if you would like to come to the lectern please. Good morning, would you give your name and address please.

MRS YOUNG: It is Claire Young, 33 The Causeway, Coalpit Heath, South Glos, BS36 29D.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your representations please.

MRS YOUNG: I support the Boundary Commission's proposals for new parliamentary constituencies for South Gloucestershire. They minimise disruption to existing seats and bring together areas with similar settlement patterns, geographical links and local ties.

Under the proposals the vast majority of the residents of South Gloucestershire would remain in their existing constituencies, minimising disruption and providing continuity for local people.

Those of us in Thornbury and Yate would of course be sorry to use the communities and the wards of Boyd Valley and Frampton Cotterell, especially as Frampton Cotterell

has close links with Coalpit Heath and Westerleigh ward, and we regret the disruption to those communities.

However, given Bristol forms four constituencies on its own I understand the need for the southern end of South Gloucestershire to have a hard boundary with Bristol.

Kingswood and Filton and Bradley Stoke are both largely urban constituencies with much of their population living in the east and north fringes respectively of the conurbation of Bristol.

By contrast, the current Thornbury and Yate seat consists of market towns and their surrounding rural areas. The wards being added to form the Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency are similar in nature, maintaining the constituency of the seat.

Any other configuration of South Gloucestershire wards is likely to result in mixed urban fringe and market town seats, as we saw with the last Parliament's initial proposals. Then rural market towns like Thornbury and Yate, along with the smaller communities that are linked to them by transport, education, commerce and cultural activities, were instead linked with urban Kingswood and Filton and Bradley Stoke. The Boundary Commission's current proposals are a vast improvement as they keep the towns of Thornbury and Yate together and link them with other Gloucestershire market towns.

Turning to geographical considerations, the new Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency is surrounded on most sides by natural physical boundaries. So those wards in the west all form part of the Severn flood plain going down here. The Cotswold escarpment runs down the north and eastern side of the constituency through Dursley, the two Cam wards, Wotton-under-Edge, Kingswood, Cotswold Edge and a tiny bit of Westleigh ward – the escarpment runs down through those. There are therefore clear geographical links that bind the constituency together.

It is appropriate for the proposals to link the rural part of South Gloucestershire with the South of Gloucestershire County. There are strong local ties between the market towns in the new Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency. All are served by versions of the same weekly paper, *The Gazette*, with much of the content being common to all editions.

Communities such as Charfield in the current Thornbury and Yate constituency look to Wotton-under-Edge as their nearest market town. So Charfield is there and Wotton-under-Edge is there, although they are cross-county boundaries.

Many children from the current Thornbury and Yate wards attend Katharine Lady Berkeley's School in Wotton-under-Edge.

Many people in South Gloucestershire, particularly older people who have lived here for a long time, see themselves as living in Gloucestershire. Yate has a growing town centre, including major retail chains and a multi-screen cinema, which attracts people from market towns like Wotton-under-Edge, Cam and Dursley.

There are also good transport links between the different towns and villages in the proposed constituency. Cam and Dursley and Yate are linked by a railway line; and the reopening of Charfield station on the same line has been proposed. There are regular bus services linking Thornbury with Yate; Wotton-under-Edge with Chipping Sodbury and Yate and Dursley with Thornbury.

The A38 and M5 – so we have the M5 here (indicating) and then the A38 – provide a transport corridor linking the wards of Severn in South Gloucestershire, Thornbury South and Alveston and Thornbury North ward, Ladden Brook, Charfield --- I am not very practised with using a laser pointer; I am sorry. So that is Ladden Brook, Charfield, the Vale ward, Severn in Gloucestershire, Cam West, Cam East, Dursley and Wotton-under-Edge are all broadly on that A38/M5 corridor.

Thornbury and Yate are linked by the B4059; the B4060 runs down the middle of the proposed constituency, linking Cam West, Cam East, Dursley, Wotton-under-Edge, Kingswood, Charfield, Ladden Brook, Chipping Sodbury and Yate North.

The A46 runs down the east of the constituency, linking Kingswood, Cotswold Edge and Westleigh wards.

Finally, the A432 links Westerleigh, Yate North, Yate Central, Chipping Sodbury and Cotswold Edge Wards. So there is a strong road network that links all the proposed market towns.

It is clear that Cam and Dursley have many things in common with Yate and Thornbury and their connection to them is as strong as their connection to Stroud. Similarly, Wotton-under-Edge is more strongly connected with the communities in the current Thornbury and Yate constituency than it is with the other towns in the current Cotswold constituency.

By contrast, the communities in Boyd Valley ward relate to those in Siston and Emersons Green wards for facilities like secondary schools, and are linked to them by the A420.

The new Lyde Green development crosses the boundary of the Emersons Green and Boyd Valley wards.

The M4 motorway forms a barrier between Boyd Valley and the rest of the current Thornbury and Yate constituency.

To conclude: the Boundary Commission's proposals provide continuity for residents, bring together similar historic Gloucestershire market towns and villages, conform to natural physical boundaries and respect local ties. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mrs Young, for your presentation. Would you remain there for a moment unless there are any questions for clarification from the floor? Are there any questions for Mrs Young? No. Thank you very much for attending.

MRS YOUNG: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Geoffrey Wheeler, if you would like to come to the lectern please. Good morning Mr Wheeler, would you give your name and address please?

MR WHEELER: My name is Geoffrey Wheeler and my address is 4, Five Acres, Dursley.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you; if you would like to make your presentation please.

MR WHEELER: (Stroud Constituency Labour Party/Stroud Labour Group on Stroud District Council) Firstly, thank you for allowing me to make this presentation this morning. I am making this presentation on behalf of the Stroud Constituency Labour Party and the Stroud Labour Group on Stroud District Council.

The current Stroud parliamentary constituency is comprised of all the Stroud district wards, except those of Minchinhampton, Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood, which are in the Cotswolds constituency.

This arrangement does provide a very strong relationship between the district and the Stroud constituency, which is very valuable for lobbying our MP on topics of concern to the residents of Stroud district, such as housing, the local economy and its infrastructure, which are all the responsibility of the district council. I speak as, until last May, the Leader of Stroud District Council. Also, I have experience of community work in Dursley where I was the chair of that council for some time.

The 2015 electorate for Stroud was 80,909 and therefore of course under the rules, under the current Boundary Review, there must be a reduction to conform to the limits specified by the Parliamentary Act.

The Stroud Constituency Labour Party advocate that the areas in the current constituency that must be lost to others should be as few as possible, in order to

preserve what is now a very homogenous area of small towns and rural areas and which share common opportunities and concerns.

The current initial proposals of the Boundary Commission do split the current Stroud constituency and split the district into two large parts and a smaller part, each in a different parliamentary constituency.

The Boundary Commission has taken the County of Gloucestershire and the South Gloucestershire unitary council area as one sub-region and we agree that that should be because otherwise you will not be able to fit nine constituencies within that total area.

Because the electorates in the current constituencies in South Gloucestershire are all under the required range, the Boundary Commission has suggested, as we have heard, that Berkeley, Cam, Dursley and the old Vale ward should be transferred to Thornbury and Yate, together with Wotton and Kingswood from the Cotswold constituency. To compensate for this the Boundary Commission proposes that Nailsworth ward (in Stroud at the moment) should then be transferred to the Cotswold constituency. This leaves the remainder of Stroud outside the range of the required range; it leaves it below the plus or minus five per cent. So the Boundary Commission have then proposed that the two Quedgeley wards in Gloucester City should be transferred to Stroud.

The constituency party in Stroud have looked at these proposals and we believe that they are, firstly, unnecessarily complicated – there are too many transfers. They lose the strong community and communication links between a large part of the district and the Stroud constituency and they tend to destroy the character of the constituency by importing what are clearly urban city wards from Gloucester City.

If I may expand on some of those points? The proposal to transfer Cam and Dursley to Thornbury and Yate constituency severs the parliamentary links between this small town area, Cam and Dursley, and its adjacent rural hinterland, Coaley and Uley and Nympsfield. These parishes, as well as Berkeley, Hinton and Hamfallow, fall within the primary area for pupils attending Rednock secondary school in Dursley. We believe that local educational matters need not be the responsibility, if it comes to that, of two MPs.

Nympsfield's local links also extend to Nailsworth, which the Boundary Commission proposes to transfer to the Cotswolds.

The Dursley area is well connected with the major town of Stroud in the Stroud constituency, through several major and minor routes. The road links between Dursley and Yate – indeed the shortest ones – are not direct, but principally through a series of B classification roads and other small towns. Dursley is not on the A38 – you have to go

through Cam and then out to Slimbridge in order to get out on the A38, down the A38 and then another route to get to the centre of Thornbury and Yate constituency.

If we look at the current Stroud district it is surely important to represent, as much as possible, as a district council, by one MP. The Boundary Commission's proposals currently split the council area, as I said, into a major part, a large minor part and another smaller part, Nailsworth; so the district would be represented by three MPs.

It may not be possible to get away from that when considering the reorganisation but you should minimise, I think, the impact there.

The Stroud District Local Plan was published in 2015 and sets out the development strategy in the council area to 2030 for both housing and employment. The major areas for development in Stroud district are just south of Gloucester City, Stonehouse, Cam and Dursley and Stroud Valley.

These important issues of development are interlinked and they often need consultation and, if possible, collaboration with the local MP. That cooperation is of course much easier and more readily accomplished with one MP representing the majority of the district area.

A major part of an MP's constituency work is dealing with complaints with regard to other public services such as social services, the police and the National Health Service. All three of these public bodies are organised on a sub-level on a district basis. All those services are largely coterminous with the county boundaries and they have an area of locality teams based on the individual districts. We believe that it would be inefficient to have different MPs with a large part of their constituency dealing with the same service, as it were, and probably confusing to the public.

Incorporation of the Quedgeley ward into Gloucester City would introduce these clearly major urban wards into now what is a homogenous constituency of small towns and rural areas.

The other part that it is suggested to transfer to the Cotswolds is Nailsworth and Nailsworth is part of the market town, Cotswold Valley and rural areas of Stroud district constituency. It is very closely linked to Stroud by the A46 – a distance of less than four miles away. The current MP for Stroud constituency has based his constituency office in Nailsworth, showing that it is very near the centre.

These are our objections I think to the current phases but we do of course need to put through what we would like to see. We think these are a simplification. They have been incorporated in the National Labour Party's submissions to the Boundary Commission and they form part of a consistent pattern which allows all the

constituencies within Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire to fall within the required limits.

So our proposals would retain Cam, Dursley and Berkeley in the southern part of the district in the Stroud constituency, with all the benefits and continuity from one MP for a large area of the district, and it does not divide up the market town area from its traditional rural hinterland.

Some years ago, when I helped put together the Community Plan for the Cam, Dursley and surrounding district those villages and towns were linked together within that and it is quite clear that they share common economic and social concerns and opportunities.

We would keep Nailsworth to its natural ties with Stroud town district and constituency. But we would agree that transferring the Vale ward to Thornbury and Yate – this has to be necessary because of the numbers – together with Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood from the Cotswold, that is rather a neat parcel together because all those wards – Wotton-under-Edge, Kingswood and Vale – are exactly those that comprise a single county council division, so that they do conform to a local council area.

We think Bisley and Painswick wards are identifiable as part of the Cotswold physical area; they are clearly within the Cotswold Hills area and would fit in with the Cotswold constituency. We know that Painswick Parish Council actually styles itself as the Queen of the Cotswolds.

We would keep the Quedgeley ward in their urban position in Gloucester City and the overall plan for Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire allows that.

So in summary we think that all that needs to be transferred from the current Stroud constituency are one: Bisley and Painswick wards to the Cotswolds; two: the old Vale ward – I say old because those wards have been withdrawn – to Thornbury and Yate. This retains a large common area and the population of this proud district to be represented by one MP for the Stroud constituency. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Wheeler, thank you very much for your presentation; would you remain there just for a moment in case there are any questions for clarification from the floor. If you wait for the roving microphone please because we do need to record the questions as well as the answers. You are nearest – this gentleman – if you would like to give your name please and then pose your question.

MR PRATT: (Conservative Party) Thank you very much. Roger Pratt, representing the Conservative Party. I have a few questions clearly of clarification. You talked about Nailsworth being very close to Stroud; I wonder if you could explain how near to Stroud Painswick and Bisley are as well.

MR WHEELER: Bisley is quite close to Stroud too; Painswick is some distance further away from the A46.

MR PRATT: The southern border of Painswick, does that abut Stroud?

MR WHEELER: Yes, it does.

MR PRATT: I am grateful to you with regard to that. In terms of Quedgeley, I wonder if I could seek clarification in terms of the Hardwicke ward, currently in Stroud. Could you clarify whether there is any continuous residential development between the Hardwicke ward and Quedgeley?

MR WHEELER: The residential area of Hardwicke abuts the residential area of Quedgeley.

MR PRATT: I am grateful to you on that. If I could clarify more generally in terms of local government links, you pointed out that the Boundary Commission has three constituencies and the Stroud district has three Members of Parliament it would deal with. Could you clarify how many would be under the Labour Party Plan?

MR WHEELER: As I said earlier, you cannot actually divide up the Stroud constituency without retaining three MPs. My emphasis during my presentation was that one MP should represent the large majority of the current Stroud district.

MR PRATT: I am grateful to you for that clarification. Two other points of clarification: in the wider consequences of your Stroud thing I wonder if you could clarify how many local authorities the current proposed Thornbury and Yate constituency includes.

MR WHEELER: I cannot.

MR PRATT: Would you accept that under the proposals it is two – Stroud and South Gloucestershire?

MR WHEELER: Yes.

MR PRATT: Could you confirm how many local authorities under your alternative plan, for clarification, how many local authorities the Thornbury and Yate constituency would consist of?

MR WHEELER: I believe it is two but I have not looked at that from my point of view.

MR PRATT: I wonder if you could clarify whether it would be three because it would include part of the Cotswold District as well.

MR WHEELER: Yes, that is right; quite correct.

MR PRATT: So it is three.

MR WHEELER: Sorry; thank you for reminding me.

MR PRATT: The current Cotswold constituency, how many local authorities is that currently and proposed?

MR WHEELER: Currently I believe it is two and I think the proposal is three.

MR PRATT: You would be proposing three.

MR WHEELER: Yes as a homogenous area; yes.

MR PRATT: Okay; I am grateful to you. Thank you very much.

MR WHEELER: My concerns here are strictly on Stroud. I think there will be further representations on the overall county area.

MR PRATT: Thank you; I am grateful.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Mr Wheeler, I think we have another question. Would you give your name please?

MR HUGHES: David Hughes on behalf Western Counties Liberal Democrats. I think we all recognise, and you recognise, that it is impossible to keep the whole of the Stroud District Council area within a single constituency, so it is a question of debating alternatives. You have referred, I think, to the development plan for Stroud in your presentation. To what extent does that focus on the extent to which infrastructure development in the Stroud area is partly influenced by the growth of economic activity in the Greater Bristol area? Linked to that, I wonder if you have a view about the extent to which the population of the Cam and Dursley area increasingly look to the Bristol area economically and therefore commute through the South Gloucestershire area on a growing basis.

MR WHEELER: Of course any filament within South Gloucester, particularly if you look to the north, in the Thornbury area, for instance, would impact on the economic life of the Stroud area. Indeed, when I was Council Leader I had regular discussions with the Leaders of South Gloucestershire on that and we looked particularly to the future as to possible new power stations, situated at Oldbury, which we did. To meet that we were able to, as a partnership, include a training centre for engineers, for instance – nuclear engineers – at Berkeley within our area, linked to Stroud College. So, yes, there are in fact but it does not necessarily mean that you have to join together those two parts.

As you quite rightly said, people commute from Dursley and Cam to the Bristol area. There is also large commuting to Cheltenham and Gloucester too. I do not think you can say that influences one or the other. We have commuters going to Swindon as well but I could not encourage any diversion out that way too.

So, yes I would agree there are there links, but I do not see that need to influence the division of parliamentary constituencies.

MR HUGHES: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any more questions from the floor for Mr Wheeler? Thank you very much Mr Wheeler for attending and for giving your presentation.

Our next scheduled speaker is not until 10.50. Is there anyone in the room who would like to speak who has not booked a slot, but would like to speak now? In that case I will adjourn the hearing until 10.50.

Time Noted: 10.35 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 10.50 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen. We have our next speaker now, Ms Marian Lewis. Ms Lewis, would you like to come to the lectern please. Good morning.

CLLR MARIAN LEWIS: Good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you give your name and address please.

CLLR MARIAN LEWIS: My name is Cllr Marian Lewis; I am from South Gloucestershire. My address is 274, North Road, Yate, BS37 7LQ.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to make your presentation please?

CLLR MARIAN LEWIS: I would like to speak in support of the proposed new boundary changes for the Dursley, Thornbury and Yate area. This has been put forward obviously by the Boundary Review, and the current constituency of Thornbury and Yate

obviously needs to be expanded to fulfil the new criteria of an electorate of around 77,000. Thornbury and Yate is not nearly big enough so it does need to be increased.

Now that constituencies can be extended over county boundaries the redistribution of electors has been made possible. This has redressed the imbalance which we currently experience and which has now been in place for a very long time. For 13 years Labour Governments have avoided a Boundary Review, presumably because they did not want to lose their electoral advantage; but opposing parties had to get at least ten per cent more votes just in order to draw level with the Labour Party seats, and they held mostly inner city seats.

With the proposed new boundaries each elector's vote will carry much more closely the same weight. There will certainly be objections from any political party which feels that it would be put at a disadvantage, but I think this will largely affect the inner city areas of our larger cities and therefore is not relevant in consideration for the Dursley, Thornbury and Yate area.

Thornbury and Yate constituency will be sorry to be losing Frampton Cotterell and Boyd Valley – two wards which we are about to lose, or we will lose if this comes into effect. But we understand that if those two wards were to be kept there would be a knock-on effect further south and other proposals for other areas and other counties would have to be rearranged. I therefore welcome the expansion to the north into Gloucestershire.

The proposed additions in the north of the area – that is Berkeley, Cam, Dursley, Vale, Wotton and Kingswood – are all areas which are similar to the current Thornbury and Yate areas. It is rural, with mostly villages and just three towns. The wards are all largely similar in their make-up.

We in South Gloucestershire have historic ties with Gloucestershire, as I think South Gloucestershire was once part of Gloucestershire before it got absorbed into the County of Avon.

We have common ties through our schools; many students from South Gloucestershire go to secondary schools north of the current South Gloucestershire area, such as Katharine Lady Berkeley's School at Wotton-under-Edge; and the secondary school in Berkeley I believe is attended by some children who come from Severn ward.

Many roads going from Gloucestershire to Bristol all pass through South Gloucestershire, so we have road and rail ties already in place with those wards and areas north of the current Thornbury and Yate.

People from Wickwar, which is one of our villages, go north to Wotton, which is over the boundary, for doctor surgeries and for shopping; and some go as far as Dursley for the

sports centre because the sports centre in Yate is quite busy and they find they get more space if they go to Dursley.

It makes sense for Boyd Valley to be added to Kingswood – that is the one we are going to lose from the south, or it is proposed that we lose from the south – as many residents do their shopping and go to school in Downend, which is a suburb of Bristol, and they also go further on into Bristol City.

Adding Frampton Cotterell, which is another area we are likely to lose, to Filton and Bradley Stoke seems to be a practical move. It is right next to Winterbourne which is a large village or a small town – I am not sure which – and residents go shopping in Winterbourne and they also go to school in Winterbourne; there is a big secondary school there whereas there is not in Frampton Cotterell. The Winterbourne Academy takes care of those children from Frampton Cotterell. So there is already a big connection, a close tie between Frampton Cotterell and Winterbourne.

That is basically all I have to say. The name Dursley, Thornbury and Yate seems to be a bit cumbersome. We would like to change it and there has been quite a bit of discussion locally as to what we should change it to. I wonder if South West Gloucestershire might be inclusive of all the villages and not just mentioning the big towns. So that is my suggestion for the new name. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much Ms Lewis; if you would like to remain there for a moment just in case there are any questions for clarification from the floor. Are there any questions for clarification? No. Thank you very much for attending and thank you for your suggestion of the new name and for giving your presentation.

CLLR LEWIS: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg please. Good morning Mr Rees-Mogg.

MR REES-MOGG: (MP for North East Somerset). Good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask you to give your name and address please?

MR REES-MOGG: My name is Jacob Rees-Mogg and my address is Gurney Court, West Harptree, Somerset.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you; if you would like to make your presentation please.

MR REES-MOGG: First of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and present to you today on these very important boundary changes. The starting point for any Member of Parliament is that no MP wants to lose parts of his constituency. Over a period in office inevitably an MP builds up a relationship with the villages and towns that make up his constituency, and therefore change is awkward because those relationships get broken; but within that I recognise what you have to do and the absolute requirement to be within the 95 to 100 per cent of quota – so 71,031 to 78,507 voters; that that is clearly established by law as your primary objective with very few exceptions across the country, depending on size and the number of specific constituencies.

That, from my position, leads to an inevitable consequence, whether I like it or not, that I am a doughnut seat, to use the colloquial term, along with York Inner and York Outer – I believe the only two in the country; and that Bath, the hole or jam in the doughnut, depending on your perspective, is considerably under size, and the only constituency it can take from is mine. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the right bits of my constituency are potentially being added to Bath. There, I think, what you have decided is what is inevitable: that it would have been very odd to have taken any other villages. That if you look at Bathavon North as the council ward that has long historic ties to Bath – is very closely associated to Bath – it has been in the Bath constituency before. It basically makes up the old Hundred of Bath Forum, so it really is a very ancient connection. But also it is the bit that touches Wiltshire and if you did not take that you would have essentially the North East Somerset seat going three-quarters of the way around Bath and not entirely around Bath; so you would have had an odd geographic construction if you had not gone with Bathavon North; and from that follows, I think, Bathavon South and Peasedown to make up the numbers that you require.

So, much that I wish this did not have to happen and much that I wish I would keep all the villages that are in my area, I think the logic of what you have done is compelling.

Then it comes to the extension of my constituency and where that goes and the various factors that you may consider but are not obliged to consider. So under the 2011 Act – this is 5(1)(b), 5(1)(c) and 5(1)(d) that I think are relevant – 5(1)(b) is Local Government Boundaries and this really applies to your whole scheme across Somerset, and it seems to me that you have done everything you could within reason to meet that requirement, that I do indeed go into a new local authority area, the Mendip District and the Somerset County Council; but you have limited those effects for other boundary changes and that ties in with 5(1)(c) the Existing Constituencies.

At the similar event last time my greatest concern was the change to the overall North East Somerset constituency which was being cut up much more than any other constituencies. That is not the case this time; it has been broadly preserved and therefore Keynsham is staying in, which was not happening last time. So I think in those terms it is a much better, more robust proposal than the first proposal last time.

The one to which I attach the greatest importance is 5(1)(d) – Other Local Ties. You are absolutely correct to be sticking to the historic county boundaries. Frankly, most people are not very interested in local administrative boundaries; you do not meet people who proudly say, “I am a Bathonian” but people do attach real importance to being from Somerset. It is a county to which they owe their loyalty; it is the county for which they support the cricket team; it is the county on which they self-identify. I think the same applies to Gloucestershire, although I am not particularly here to talk about Gloucestershire. But containing Somerset as a unity makes complete sense.

Then within that, looking beyond the administrative boundaries and seeing that actually Kilmersdon, the old Kilmersdon Hundred goes very well with Radstock. Radstock historically was part of it but an artificial administrative boundary has separated Radstock from its rural hinterland, and I think by putting that together you are improving things and creating a sensible constituency.

I also think that in keeping the City of Wells in the Wells constituency you are recognising the importance of a city of historic importance, albeit a small city but none the less one that has a real focus, a very proud history and has been a parliamentary constituency for an extremely long time. So I think North East Somerset taking in Shepton Mallet makes much more sense than the potential alternative of taking in Wells. It leaves Wells as an absolute focus of its own existing constituency which recognises the prestige and notability of that city.

So in summary I support the proposals; I think they are very well founded; I think they meet all the requirements set down by the 2011 Act. This does not stop me regretting the losses that I will inevitably have, but the gains, by a quirk of fate – not a matter for your consideration – actually means every village I have ever lived in in Somerset will be in the constituency that I will be standing for election for, God willing, in 2020. So thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much Mr Rees-Mogg; would you remain there for a moment, there may be some questions for clarification from the floor. Thank you. Again, we are recording the questions so can I ask you to state your name please.

MR HUGHES: Yes, David Hughes. I previously introduced myself as on behalf Western Counties Liberal Democrats but I probably also ought to make clear I am a member of the local party in Wells.

Could I say how much I agree with the thrust of what you are saying, particularly with regard to the cross boundary points between the BathNES area and the Somerset County area? I wondered whether, particularly with a reputation as a historian, you might also agree with me that of course a lot of that area which is being attached on,

going between BathNES and the Shepton Mallet area, is of course historically part of the North Somerset coalfield, which ironically was represented by an NUM sponsored Labour MP in 1945. So there is an historic link there and I wondered if you would also welcome that as a factor? May I say otherwise how much we agree with your presentation?

MR REES-MOGG: Thank you very much. Yes, my reading last night was checking up in Collinson's *18<sup>th</sup> Century History of Somerset* and the remarkable return to the Ancient Hundreds, which I think is an interesting indicator of the continuity of communities. But it is absolutely true that the North Somerset coalfields will primarily be in the North East Somerset constituency, and they have a very strong feeling of community, and that Writhlington and Kilmersdon – Writhlington in my constituency, Kilmersdon currently not – have had a really longstanding association because of mining. So it is a very good point and I am delighted that there is such cross-party agreement; this is quite an achievement by the Boundary Commission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT LEAD COMMISSIONER: Are there any more questions for Mr Rees-Mogg? Thank you very much for attending and for your representations.

MR REES-MOGG: Thank you very much. Our next scheduled speaker is not booked until 11.20. That speaker is not yet here so we do have some spare time. Is there anyone else who would like to speak from the floor at this point? In that case I will adjourn the hearing until 11.20.

Time Noted: 11.16 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 11.20 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back to the hearing. We have had a little change here. Our next scheduled speaker has decided he does not want to speak. He wanted to ask some questions which have been clarified by the Boundary Commission staff. So on that basis our next booked speaker is not until one o'clock. We have a planned break now so I will break now and we will come back at 11.50; so I will resume the hearing at 11.50.

Time Noted: 11.21 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 11.50 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen. Mr Chris Kite, would you like to come and speak?

MR KITE: Good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like to come to the lectern please, Mr Kite. Would you like to give your name and address?

MR KITE: Yes. My name is Chris Kite and it is 19 Downend Road Horfield, Bristol.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you Mr Kite. Just to remind you, we are recording all of the presentations for the purpose ultimately of making a formal record of what people say. That record will be published in due course so that people can have access to that. So that is the reason for me to ask you to give your name and address.

The purpose of the hearing today is for people to come and make their representations or give their comments about the initial proposals for the changes in the parliamentary constituencies that have been published by the Commission.

What would you like to tell me about that?

MR KITE: Why are the parliamentary boundaries tied off with the local government boundaries? How do you arrive at the actual numbers because Bristol is supposedly, at the minimum, 440-something thousand people? So if you are not basing your 70 to 78,000 – 71,000 to 78,000 where are the missing people?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just to clarify for you, the proposals that are on the table that have actually been drafted by the Commission have been drafted in accordance with various statutory rules and regulations. One of them that you have referred to is something called the electoral quota which requires the proposals to actually have a number of electors in each of the constituencies as close as possible and within five per cent of the electoral quota. So they are rules that have been laid down by Parliament and what the Commissioners have done is actually apply those rules and their knowledge and come up with these initial proposals. The hearings that are happening all around the country and particularly in the South West are for people to come and say whether they agree with those proposals or whether they want to suggest a different scheme that might suit the local people better.

MR KITE: I am living in Bristol and I want MPs to represent a minimum of 440,000 odd people. That is the lowest estimate. The actual estimate according to the Office of National Statistics is nearer a million. So where are all these people? Because the city is organic; it needs hospitals or enough hospitals to service those people; schools to service those people; to look after the old people because I believe that one of the

constituencies, part of it – Bristol South or something – has the oldest population in England statistically. So presumably to look after those people is the resources of the city of Bristol in this instance; I guess other cities do the same. Should not Members of Parliament represent the mass of people? Like London, you have the City of London, which is about as big as this room and you then have the mass around London, have you not? Should it not be on the same basis? In four to five years' time the projection of people living contiguously in Bristol is around two million people. So how is that going to be reflected by having – I looked at the map – Kingswood, which is city based, it is only four or five miles from the city centre. Half of it has countryside. I live in the city and my actual bit of rural area is going to the supermarket. So how can the people of Kingswood be represented because they are in the mass of people? Their demands, outlook, whatever can probably be completely different to the other part of the area that it is attached to.

That is the only point – it did not seem to represent where the people are. I mean, these missing people who are plus and minuses, if all these people that are not there, supposedly, if they said they all decided to vote, I guess, your figures are going to be horrendously wrong, are they not? I mean horrendous; it is not going to be plus or minus whatever, it is going to be like plus or minus 20, 30 per cent. I mean, it is horrendous. I am not criticising; it is not a criticism, it is that people should be represented by their Member of Parliament and I cannot see how a Member of Parliament can represent a different community from another community. City life is totally different from rural life – different demands, outlooks, work. It is totally different. That is the only point I make and thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for that point and I do understand what you are saying in terms of your views. Is there anything else you want to say to me about your own feelings about it?

MR KITE: No because, as I say, for me the parliamentary boundaries should be nothing to do with county boundaries or local authority because, again, it is on a different level of government.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Would you just remain there for a moment? Are there any questions from the floor for Mr Kite, for clarification? No. Thank you very much Mr Kite for coming to speak to me. I am interested in knowing what people's feelings are, what people's views are and if there are any alternative schemes that people in the locality feel would work better than the initial proposals.

MR KITE: Yes because I guess there could be a knock-on effect that people – they say they feel disenfranchised; of course they are if they not taken into account. That is it; thank you so much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you so much Mr Kite. Mr Oliver Colville, would you like to come to the lectern please. Good morning Mr Colville.

MR COLVILLE: Good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you happy to speak early because I realise that you have a booked slot.

MR COLVILLE: I am very happy to speak early because I have other things to go and do, and I came down bright and early for the simple reason that I wanted to make sure that I knew where I was going to.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am very pleased that you are here and that you are happy to speak before your allotted time. Would you like to give your name and address please?

MR COLVILLE: (MP for Plymouth Sutton & Devonport). Yes. Oliver Colville and I am the Member of Parliament representing the Plymouth Sutton & Devonport constituency. So for these purposes I will say the House of Commons, Westminster, if that is all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your presentation?

MR COLVILLE: Plymouth is an historic city full of rich military heritage set against the beautiful Sound and the Sound is the water underneath the Hoe.

I am pleased that the main crux of the constituency that I currently represent will remain as it is – intact.

I am pleased that the Commission has decided to add in Plymstock Radford and Plymstock Dunstone, ensuring that the constituency is kept within the local authority boundaries, keeping in line with the geographic issues too. What that does is it makes sure that the south as a whole end up by being represented in these boundary changes.

However, I will be disappointed to lose the Peverell ward which includes not only the Lye Centre at Home Park but also houses the mighty Plymouth Argyle Football Club, which I will be going to watch on Saturday.

Despite this I support the physical changes to the constituency the Commission aims to make. I do, however, disagree with the naming of the constituency. Our city has a long past of historical names – Plymouth Sutton, Plymouth Drake, Plymouth Devonport and latterly Plymouth Sutton & Devonport.

I would urge the Commission to keep the constituency name as Plymouth Sutton & Devonport. Plymouth South is simply a nod to a point on a compass and, frankly, is deeply municipal. Plymouth Sutton & Devonport shows the real historic nature of the constituency.

Devonport dockyard employees 25,000 people directly and indirectly within the Plymouth travel to work area and indeed my mother grew up in Devonport as well when her father was the First Lieutenant of the Naval Barracks there.

It is a real driver of the local economy and the local area and should be rewarded with this in the title of the constituency.

The former Plymouth Sutton seat was represented by the late great Lady Astor, the first woman Member of Parliament to take her seat in the House of Commons when she got elected. The first female MP, as I say, to take her seat and what better way to keep this great legacy than by keeping Sutton within the constituency name.

The Commission has done excellent work in drawing up these boundaries to ensure that they are fair, not only in Plymouth but throughout the South West. However, if we retain the name Plymouth Sutton & Devonport we can give real credence to the historical nature of our city. That is it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much Mr Colville. Would you remain there for a moment in case there are any questions? Are there any questions for clarification for Mr Colville? No. Thank you very much for attending and thank you for your presentation.

MR COLVILLE: Thank you very much indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next booked speaker is not until 2.30 this afternoon. Is there anyone in the room who would like to speak? No. On that basis I will adjourn the hearing until 1.15 just in case we have anyone who has decided to come in without having booked a slot. So the hearing is adjourned until 1.15.

Time Noted: 12.02 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 1.15 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back. Good afternoon everyone. I believe that we do have a speaker, Mr Phillip Walsh. Mr Walsh, thank you. If you would like to come round to the lectern please. Good afternoon Mr Walsh.

MR WALSH: Good afternoon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like to stand at the lectern there. We are recording all of the representations and they will be published in due course as part of the consultation process. Can I ask you to give your name and address please.

MR WALSH: My name is Phillip Walsh, 9 Berkeley Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 8HF.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you Mr Walsh, would you like to make your presentation?

MR WALSH: I just want to make a very brief comment actually about the proposals before us. As a resident of Bristol West I can see that the option proposed is to move the ward of Easton into Bristol East. I am in fully in favour and supportive of the need to right size Bristol West, so I am behind that proposal.

Secondly, I think in terms of the logic and the options available I do feel that the move of Easton to Bristol East is actually the most sensible suggestion.

One option and one consideration there actually is the M32 for me, which I think is a psychological dividing line between the communities. Therefore, to move Easton into Bristol East just seems like a very sensible thing to do. It is also in the name – Easton does have the word “east” in it which might be another rather trivial reason for making it more palatable to the residents of Bristol East.

So as a Bristol West resident the proposals get my support and that is really all I wanted to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Walsh thank you very much for coming down to talk to me today. Would you remain there for a moment? Are there any questions from the floor for clarification for Mr Walsh? No. Thank you very much for attending.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next booked speaker is not until 2.30 so I will now adjourn the hearing until 2.30.

Time Noted: 1.18 pm

After the luncheon adjournment

Time Noted: 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the public hearing. Our first speaker this afternoon is Mr Oliver Raven. Mr Raven, if you would like to come down to the lectern please. Mr Raven, would you give your name and address please?

MR RAVEN: My full name is Oliver Raven; my address is 4 Highbridge Road, Burnham-on-Sea.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I understand that you have a presentation as well and you have just been shown how to use the equipment.

MR RAVEN: Yes, if I do not click it should eventually override and move me on to try to cajole me to keep it to ten minutes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have quite a lot of capacity so if it takes a bit longer then that is not a problem; just tell me what you would like to tell me.

MR RAVEN: I should probably begin by introducing myself further. I was born here in Bristol in a hospital. My grandmother was actually born round the corner in a house that is now demolished, and my other grandmother was born in Redruth, so plenty of roots in the region.

In the mid-1980s I lived in the not at all lamented, much maligned district of Northavon, which has also been abolished; but I do not really remember that. For nearly 30 years I have lived on the Sedgemoor Coast.

In the last eight years I have spent a lot of time in Wales, in the South East and on the continent but I have always maintained a base back in Burnham-on-Sea; and I have many family and friends' links as well across the region. I would say I have travelled extensively in the rest of the region but particularly within my own county and very comprehensively; so I like to think I know the region very well for those reasons on the ground.

I come here with no partisan or tribal interest. In the three generations I have been able to vote I have voted with three different of the main five parties; and at other local and European elections I have voted for independent candidates for minor regional parties – all sorts. So I am absolutely just here out of interest and hoping to see the most equitable solution possible. My credentials: I have an AS level in government and politics, but other than that just an interest in it.

I know that there have been hearings in Poole, Exeter and Truro already and I would think it is best to concentrate mainly on Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somerset and here

but I propose obviously a whole South West solution for completeness, to show that it is comprehensive and all fits together.

Because of the time constraints I am afraid I will focus on disagreement first and then see if we can get to areas where I agree. But overall I would thank the Commission for the effort they put into this region and their attempt to get the South West right at the first attempt because I think it shows that certainly there are solutions between February and September that I had not noticed myself, and the Commission's initial proposals certainly pointed me towards them even when I have ended up disagreeing with some of the ideas – and ended up closer to what the Commission proposed than anything I would have thought off the top of my own head.

I agree obviously that cross-county constituencies are necessary; I think consensus emerged in that very quickly after the figures were released in February, given the strict rules laid down in the relevant registration. I welcome the decision here which contains both part of Wiltshire and Dorset as well as the somewhat more controversial choice of constituencies that straddles West Devon and North East Cornwall, but I think that is inevitable.

I do not consider that the proposed seat in Bathnes, Bath and North East Somerset and the Somerset County Council area, nor the South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council area to be cross-county constituencies, but in both those cases I would welcome the Commission's approach.

Additionally of course in view of the concept of basing the smaller review areas on existing local government boundaries, nevertheless I would like to simplify things by referring mainly to the historic counties rather than the current unitary authorities. So the five sub-regions would have much shorter names than those in the South West initial proposals' report – just Somerset, Bristol, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset and Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. You do not need to list North Somerset and Poole and things like that separately and Swindon, I do not think.

It would be wise to move on to the next slide now. Wiltshire, probably the place I know the least on the ground – very seldom have I been there other than going on the train, obviously Chippenham to Swindon going west to east and Bradford Westbury and Salisbury going in the south easterly direction; but actually going there, I have been to Centre Parcs and Longleat in the last few years and Swindon a couple of times. Probably the map shows that I know it the least on the ground.

It should be obvious that that is not the map from the Commission's own website. I do apologise for not using them but I do find them a lot less user friendly than those put together on the private boundary assistance side, but the copyright is the same – all the data is from the same place.

So for Dorset and Wiltshire combined I agree that no boundary should be left unaltered in the sub-region and it should be one of the two areas that loses a seat in reallocation because for the region as a whole it is possible to make Devon and Cornwall lose two but that would not be fair on that area.

Yes, there is something in the quota that every seat has to change one way or the other. I think Trowbridge and Warminster is similar to Wiltshire South West, but elsewhere I have taken the opportunity to suggest more radical alterations.

I agree that the Shaftesbury area of North Dorset is correct to add to a part of southern Wiltshire to create a new cross-county constituency. I note that Shaftesbury is sometimes mentioned here on the local news for this Points West region and sometimes it only covers Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, but bits of Dorset in the North West do overlap; so that is another link and reason why the Shaftesbury and Gillingham area works well with a bit of Wiltshire.

A difference is – you can see it at the bottom – it is probably clear on the Dorset map that Salisbury is the area rather than Warminster that is combined with the part... So that seat would have a very different shape.

Turning on from that, Chippenham would be extended to take in Calne and Devizes would include Royal Wootton Bassett. I can see the merit in combining Calne with Devizes but this plan has the advantage of not splitting Corsham and that is something that the Commission already anticipated complaints about in the initial report.

The remaining parts of the Wiltshire council area would be freed up for a Melksham-Almsbury constituency, and I think generously I will describe that as running through the heart of the county because it sort of snakes through and it is the closest I came to using a mid-Wiltshire description, but I would still rather name it after some towns.

Swindon would be into Swindon East and Swindon West and I have designated them borough constituencies, if that distinction matters much anymore. I feel that this approach works better than keeping the existing north-south divide, despite making significant changes.

Then you can see Dorset as a whole. Dorset has eight seats to itself at present; of these three are mainly urban, three are largely rural but two are mixed, and one of those is the Christchurch seat that takes in a lot of East Dorset. The other is a complete mess, Mid Dorset and North Poole and I think that the Commission has acknowledged that and that is why they pointed people in the direction really of the fact that there is a broad approach fitting four constituencies in the south eastern conurbation, which you will see a close-up on next, is the way to go. Then the three other seats entirely within the Dorset County Council area are all purely rural, clearly county seats and I think that works much better.

I not only disagree with both the names and the boundaries that the Commission proposes, I suggest that the entirety of the Purbeck district be combined into the Dorchester area of West Dorset, plus Abbey ward from North Dorset into a Dorchester and Swanage constituency which prevents that one last orphan ward, preventing Glanville and Sherborne from going over quota. I do know Swanage very well, having holidayed there very frequently, especially as a child but also as recently as March of this year, and I really do not think they like being combined with Weymouth down there.

So the remainder of West Dorset district can be combined with the entirety of the borough of Weymouth and Portland in the Weymouth and Bridport seat. From what I consider the borough of Christchurch – so let us move on to the close-up on that area – less that one ward around Ham in the north, which is where Bournemouth Airport is, the one more rural ward, better paired with the Burnham Boscombe neighbourhood of Bournemouth and the town's northern wards and that would be called Christchurch and Boscombe rather than the proposed Bournemouth North and Christchurch. Boscombe I think is a lot more famous than the other towns that are going to be used for names in that area because that is the home of AFC Bournemouth who are now world famous because they are a world premier league football club on the men's side at least. So I would hope that people have heard of Boscombe. I have cousins in that area as well.

The downtown area of Poole, what you might call the historic Poole proper, not the whole borough, can be paired up with Bournemouth town centre and I would controversially call that Bournemouth and Poole constituency. If it suggests that the entire two boroughs together would be far too large for one seat, essentially you have the centre of Bournemouth in and the historic part of Poole, there in 1C and I would see no problem in calling it Bournemouth and Poole.

That leaves just a single ward from Christchurch to be combined with the northern part of Bournemouth borough and six wards from East Dorset which make up the numbers in this area. Those six wards are currently split between two seats and would be in the neater Ferndown and Kinson constituency. I had to look up where Ferndown and Kinson were when the Commission proposed that and I can see that, you know, these successors to the Mid Dorset and North Poole seat working much more neatly down there.

It differs because it does not contain Broadstone and instead the rest of the Poole local authority area, which is presently split among three constituencies and one ward from East Dorset would end up in a Broadstone and Branksome constituency. That is the purple one that you can see there.

Then on to Somerset, not as much disagreement here except I considered North Somerset alongside the rest of Somerset rather than leaving it as a separate sub-region with no change. This also makes it easier to leave the existing Somerton and Frome

seat unaltered. Frome looked very isolated in the corner with the Commission's proposals. It had a very strange shape with Frome as the sort of tail of it. So leaving that unchanged I think is preferable even though it means messing slightly with the North Somerset seats.

I suggest extending the current Bath seat even further also including a Bathavon West. It is already going to have Peasedown Bathavon North and East. On the present boundaries they could justify the name City of Bath but the inclusion of the rural surrounding areas means it would be more apt to just keep the name of Bath.

The remainder of Somerset North East would have to take in five wards from the Mendip District rather than six, but all of those wards would be currently in the Wells constituency rather than two from Somerton and Frome and two from Wells. So that leaves Wells far below the tolerance threshold, the five per cent. Then it would have to take in the Paulton wards to the east of Bridgwater and the Puriton Woolavington area and I know all of those really do gravitate towards Bridgwater, but there is no way else to make it work.

What is left of Bridgwater and Somerset West could be renamed Bridgwater and Minehead and that would then be within the five per cent threshold.

Yeovil is unchanged; Taunton Deane I think could go back to being called Taunton, but again no changes to the actual boundaries. Weston-Super-Mare keeps its name and loses that one ward in the east; Blagdon and Churchill works much better as a splodge rather than as a thin strip with the North East Somerset seat. That could be so-called Keynsham and Shepton which I prefer along the general principles for nomenclature which I am quite fussy about. Perhaps then North Somerset could become Clevedon and Portishead. It does not cover anything like the whole North Somerset area and that could certainly lead to confusion.

Gloucestershire, this is where there was a lot of trouble last time in the abandoned seats' review and obviously Westgate in Gloucester caused particular issues and so it is good that this time there is a solution that works around that very well.

I concur with the general approach, the sub-regions. I agree that all the boundaries have to be altered to the same allocation despite again some seats being within the quota. Particular constraints of regional wards and geographical features in this part of the country, you have to appreciate that you have a regional band at the top and you have Wales to the west of it. So I endorse the proposed boundaries within the Gloucestershire County Council area; you will see that there is no change to the Cotswolds or Tewkesbury or Cheltenham or Gloucester – they are probably called Gloucester City of Gloucester. It is entirely within the local authority area.

Again, West Gloucestershire should be renamed Cinderford if the Forest of Dean is not deemed appropriate any more because it has extended beyond the Forest.

Dursley, Thornbury and Yate we find just as Dursley and Yate, Dursley obviously acknowledging that it has taken in the Cam area at the end of Stroud, but I do not think Thornbury was especially well known enough it needs to be in there anymore.

Pucklechurch, where I lived for the first years of my life, I do not think that should be in the Kingswood ideally, which explains the strange shape perhaps at the bottom of that map. So in order to avoid ward splitting Boyd Valley ward would have to move back Dursley and Yate and Westerleigh and Ladden Brook wards would go with Kingswood. It is Charfield ward that it is part of, so that is one I have tried to keep within the more rural cross-county seat.

Filton and Bradley Stoke I am treating as part of the Bristol area. I would keep the border's name, certainly the borders of that. The community reality, even if the administrative borders have not come up, is that is basically the real Bristol North as far as I am concerned, so I would perhaps choose different names for some of the other Bristol seats – but Bristol South and East would certainly stay the same. But absolutely those five seats you will see are exactly the same as in the initial proposals and I certainly do not think any deviation, certainly within the City of Bristol would be wise just moving east to north is absolutely the right way to go.

Finally, Devon and Cornwall, the most controversial area and yet those boundaries are exactly the same as the one in the initial proposals' report. Again, the only things I want to list is, first of all, absolutely welcoming Plymouth being two seats there, being Plymouth North and Plymouth South. I do not think any city in the country, apart from London and Birmingham, are big enough to justify using names of suburbs. A north-south split of that division is absolutely right and we need to acknowledge that in the name.

Sutton and Devonport, it is for historic reasons and sentiment why people wanted to get that. Moor View is a misnomer for most of that seat – you cannot see Dartmoor, I can guarantee that. So, yes, this is one where you could lose two seats but losing one is a lot fairer. It would be theoretically possible to have five seats just in mainland Cornwall, but then combining the Isles of Scilly with another county would be absurd in my view.

Yes, so I would proceed with the so-called Devonwall seat and consider it inevitable until such time as the governing legislation for boundary reviews provides otherwise.

The case of St. Ives where the Isles of Scilly actually are, the name brings to mind for many people a town in Huntingdonshire and I think it is at best the fourth most prominent settlement on the main part of the constituency. So even if that has been used as the name of a constituency for centuries I would still rather call it Penzance and

the Scillies because, yes, at the same time it is far too confusing a name for people in other parts of the country, and even not the most prominent type of people that live there.

I think local authority names dating from the mid-1970s are generally unloved and should not be employed at all. They encompass directions and descriptions which should only be for urban city seats. So we should use the original guidance from legislation for setting up periodical reviews which should contain the name of one or two prominent towns within rural seats. So to that end I would rename Central Devon Okehampton and Ashburton, North Devon, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe East Devon Exmouth – a town I know very well.

Torbay could be Torquay and Paignton; Bideford, Bude and Launceston perhaps just Bideford and Launceston. Bideford is what it tells you, it is a coastal seat – with no disrespect meant to Bude. South East Cornwall would then be Saltash and Liskeard and I inverted the names of Ivy Bridge and Tavistock but it probably does not matter which order you put them in. Again, Exeter I would suggest the same thing as with Gloucester, calling it the City of Exeter getting it entirely within the ambit of the City of Exeter.

I think that is that. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you Mr Raven for putting together that very comprehensive proposal. I understand that you have actually given Boundary Commission staff a copy of your presentation; so we have that.

MR RAVEN: Yes, that is available plus a spreadsheet with the actual data.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to remain there for a moment in case there are any questions for clarification from the floor. Does anybody wish to ask a question for clarification. If you would like to give your name, please?

MR PRATT: Thank you very much indeed; Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party. Obviously I am at a disadvantage because I cannot actually see all the proposals but firstly can you confirm you change both North Somerset and Weston-Super-Mare which are unchanged in the Commission proposals?

MR RAVEN: Yes. I understand one of the sub-clauses in the legislation points towards minimum change and that is why I understand why the Commission went that way; but I just think that Bath and North Somerset, both seats being under the five per cent tolerance threshold they are intruding too much on the Somerset County Council area really. There is no need to change Somerton and what is left of it when you take out the wards from the northern edge of that look ridiculous. Yes, the Blagdon and Churchill area, the ward they have taken out is North Somerset. Yes, I do not know too much

about it – it just seems to look better. But Blagdon and Churchill I do know about and really if anything they have more in common with the neighbouring seats, wards like Cheddar and Shipham, but there is no way of justifying putting them into Wells. So I do not see what is wrong with putting them in with the Chew Valley either. The link is as good as they can get in a rural area transport wise and for businesses and things.

MR PRATT: Can I just check, Bristol – you agree with the Commission; is that right?

MR RAVEN: Absolutely.

MR PRATT: Entirely with the Commission.

MR RAVEN: Yes.

MR PRATT: I wonder whether we could get back on the screen your Gloucestershire map. I cannot quite follow. There is an apparent seat to the left of the screen in red – not the big red one, the other red one. Can you explain that constituency because I cannot understand it?

MR RAVEN: That is Kingswood. I spent the first years of my life in Pucklechurch. There is clearly a rural hinterland between Bristol proper and that part of South Gloucestershire. I know Kingswood is well under the quota at the moment. The only other thing I would do – but I really do not think there is any need for splitting wards in this region – the other thing to do would be to still take in most of that Charfield ward and still put it in Kingswood and that would probably be enough. Then the top of it, which is Pucklechurch, could still go within Dursley and Yate. That is why Kingswood has taken in all these wards up there to make a very strange venture because that is the only way to get it... Those are very small rural wards and the only way to get it above the threshold of 71,000 electors.

MR PRATT: So you have Boyd Valley which is in green, is that right?

MR RAVEN: I did mention Boyd Valley.

MR PRATT: Which is not in Kingswood.

MR RAVEN: Yes.

MR PRATT: Then you have the other Kingswood wards and you have one on top if it and another ward.

MR RAVEN: Yes. Even just adding one directly on top of it was not enough to have enough voters in it I am afraid.

MR PRATT: So that basically is your proposed Kingswood seat?

MR RAVEN: Yes, as hideous as it looks; but I am very attached to the first place I lived and I do not particularly want that to be a seat with urban Bristol – it does not belong there.

MR PRATT: I am grateful; thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I think there is another question for you.

MR HUGHES: Hello. I am David Hughes from the Western Counties Liberal Democrats, and given what I am about to say I ought to also say I am a member of the Party in the Wells constituency and some years ago was the parliamentary candidate in the former Westbury constituency of Wiltshire; so I say a little bit about those areas.

It seemed to me that you have put a huge amount of effort into this but I wonder whether you had given due attention to the issue of existing communities and community links. To take a couple of examples, you highlighted, for instance, in your Somerset proposals keeping Somerton and Frome intact, whereas of course Somerton and Frome is very much the new creation of the Somerset constituencies since it only came into existence in 1983 and was regarded by many people then as a rather unnatural creation, whereas the other four seats in Somerset have been much more consistent – not untouched of course, but consistent over the years.

Similarly, it struck me when I looked at your map of Wiltshire with that constituency sweeping across the middle that knowing the community links of the West Wilts towns and the towns in North Wilts – just the north of them in Chippenham and Causham – it struck me that you might be slightly undermining those community links.

Similarly I thought in Dorset your radical surgery on West Dorset and South Dorset did not really---

MR RAVEN: Much needed, much needed. Swanage does not really come into it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Hughes, can I ask you to get to the question that you want the speaker to answer for clarification please.

MR HUGHES: Absolutely. So really the key theme of what I am saying is: have you given sufficient attention to existing community links and, if so, perhaps you could give us an example or two of your thinking behind that?

MR RAVEN: In haste in February when the figures were first released I came out with a much more radical plan for Somerset. So you can certainly get rid of Somerton if you

want but again there is a clause in the legislation saying basically – with different words but it is basically saying minimal change. I think that is why Somerton, as unnaturally as it seems, has to be protected and I think the transport links internally are not too bad. My aunt and uncle use them on a regular basis and get from one end of the constituency to another. So I do not think it is that terrible. During the abandoned review I think the local Labour Party suggested some sort of central Somerset constituency and that really would have shaken things up a lot more. I do not see how keeping a couple of wards at the end of Somerton is massively disadvantaging that area. I am sorry that Westbury is no longer mentioned in the name of the constituency because it would be a seat where Trowbridge and Warminster are much bigger. I do admit that on the run I do not know the interior of Dorset, so Weymouth, Lyme and Swanage are all very well and obviously Portland and Bournemouth; but as far as I am concerned the interior of Dorset is a desert where the Army trains. I do not know that that many people even live there and I do not think that changing the seats will ever get a solution with great internal transport links, for example.

Corsham you mentioned, yes, perhaps that should be with Chippenham and Devizes with Calne but then what do you do with Wootton Bassett? But at least Corsham is not split in this plan is what I would say. Yes, that Melksham seat does look terrible but Wiltshire is very awkward or place but is also a place where I would be inclined to put the least effort in because I just do not know it as well on the ground, I am afraid. Sorry. Thanks for your question.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Have you already handed in one of your written papers?

MR RAVEN: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for attending and for your alternative proposals.

MR RAVEN: You are welcome.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Mark Hawthorne; I understand that you are happy to speak a little bit earlier than your time slot?

CLLR HAWTHORNE: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The next speaker who was actually booked in to speak at three has not arrived yet; so if you are happy to speak now then please come up to the lectern.

CLLR HAWTHORNE: I will be very short. I have a copy to leave you of what I am going to very briefly speak to this afternoon and thank you for the opportunity for

allowing us to speak. My name is Mark Hawthorne; I am the county councillor for the Quedgeley division in the City of Gloucester. Myself and my colleague Councillor Dave Norman are here today representing the views of Quedgeley residents with regards to the recommendations that have been made in the Boundary Commission's publication. We are not proposing any alternate arrangements but we have felt very strongly that it was important that the Boundary Commission was aware of the views of Quedgeley residents in its deliberations.

As councillors for Quedgeley and Kingsway division of Gloucester we recently undertook a survey of all local residents within the area regarding the proposed changes to the parliamentary boundary for Gloucester. A letter with which we will provide you a copy was hand delivered to 5,005 addresses across the two Quedgeley and Kingsway divisions, and a total of 217 were returned via a free post option representing the views of 272 residents.

The headline of this survey – and the full breakdown of the survey is available in the paper copy that I have here for you today – was that 91 per cent replied no to the question “Are you in favour of the proposals to move Quedgeley into a new Stroud constituency?” In addition 79 per cent that they would describe themselves as living in Gloucester or Quedgeley as part of Gloucester. Only 3.7 per cent stated that they accessed the majority of their public services in what would be the new Stroud constituency; and 61.3 per cent stated that they spent the majority of their free time in Gloucester and the city centre. Indeed a full breakdown of the survey is available in our very brief submission.

While we appreciate that the Boundary Commission has a task to create constituencies of equal size – something that we totally and wholeheartedly support – we believe that the Boundary Commission should be aware that the residents of Quedgeley feel very strongly that they are part of Gloucester and have little in common with Stroud. However, I do have to say a similar survey would inevitably show that the much closer wards of Elmbridge and Longlevens would have equal feelings of connectivity to the City of Gloucester.

We would therefore ask that the Boundary Commission take on board the very strong feelings from Quedgeley residents and look again at their proposals for both Stroud and Gloucester; and we present this on behalf of the residents of Quedgeley. I hope that was short and sweet.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you Mr Hawthorne. Could you give your address please?

CLLR HAWTHORNE: Yes, my address is 16 Estcourt Road, Gloucester.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any questions for Mr Hawthorne? No. Thank you very much for attending and for your presentation. Mr Rob Telford. If you would like to come to the lectern please. Would you give your name and address please?

MR TELFORD: It is Rob Telford. What is the address going to be used for?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The address is used so that we know where you live.

MR TELFORD: Can I just give my postcode; is that all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is there an issue about the postcode? That is okay. It is just so that we can associate comments with the area that people actually live in.

MR TELFORD: So the postcode is fine then?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The postcode will be absolutely fine.

MR TELFORD: BS5 0LL.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you Mr Telford. What do you want to say today about the proposals?

MR TELFORD: I am generally supportive. Clearly in Bristol the only change I think, if I am right in saying this, is between Easton ward moving from Bristol West into Bristol East in the Boundary Review. I think that is the only change; am I correct? Yes; okay. I think that makes sense; it is called Easton for a start so it should be in Bristol East, I think that makes sense.

I am not sure it makes sense not to move Lawrence Hill ward because that is also acknowledged as part of East Bristol. In terms of community ties those two are very close together and it means they will be in different constituencies. So I personally see that the community development work that goes on in those areas, Easton and Lawrence Hill, as quite linked; so I do not want them to be in different constituencies for that reason.

Having said that, I understand the need to equalise the constituencies; I do not actually disagree with that. I am not a big fan of the Government but I actually think that is quite a good thing to do – equalise the constituency so it is fairer, so people's votes mean about the same amount.

The other thing I would say – and this is probably independent of this inquiry – this is not what is going to change people’s sense of democracy; it is not going to make people participate more. I do not think necessarily that will happen unless we change to a system where people actually have a vote that counts. We do not have that system in the UK; we do not have proportional representation; we do not have a way for people to make their voice heard in that way. So that is the other thing I would say, but I think that is independent of this inquiry.

So I would say that Lawrence Hill moving to Bristol East would make more sense, at the same time as Easton moving. I live in Lawrence Hill myself but I have very close connections with Easton, so it feels like it is slightly like the communities being split in two and I do not think that is desirable. I am hoping that some of the community organisations in Easton and Lawrence Hill will say that as well because that has always been a very strong community together, those two areas of the city.

I would say that is probably all I want to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would stay there for a second, just remain for a moment please. Are there any questions? Mr Hughes.

MR HUGHES: David Hughes, Western Counties Liberal Democrats. Did you have a proposal as to how one can make up the numbers if Lawrence Hill was moved over as well?

MR TELFORD: No. That is the thing, you could always move Bristol West further out into Bristol North West. I do not know whether that would make the numbers right, I have not examined it in any level of detail because I am not too dissatisfied. But I am in the sense that I do not think that those communities should be split; but I do not have a ready-made answer for that. Sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any more questions from the floor? No. Thank you Mr Telford; thank you for attending and thank you for your representations.

Our next scheduled speaker is not booked to speak until 6 o’clock. Is there anybody in the chamber who would like to speak and who has not booked a slot? No. On that basis I will adjourn now until 4 o’clock and review the situation at that point.

Time Noted: 3.06 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 4.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, it is now just about 4 o'clock. We have no more speakers that have booked in since our last session. Our last speaker, as I mentioned earlier, is not until 6 pm. I will adjourn now until 4.30 and just review the situation at that point.

Time Noted: 4.01 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 4.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, welcome back to the hearing. We have no more booked speakers. Our next booked speaker is still the speaker that I mentioned earlier at 6 o'clock. Is there anybody who would like to speak from the floor? No. On that basis then I will adjourn the hearing until 5.45.

Time Noted: 4.31 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 5.45 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening everyone, it is now 5.45. Our 6 o'clock speaker has not yet arrived. No one else has made themselves known in terms of wanting to speak; so I will adjourn until 6 o'clock to await the arrival of our next booked speaker.

Time Noted: 5.46 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 6 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ms Klina Jordan, would you like to come forward to the lectern please? Ms Jordan, could you give me your name and address please?

MS JORDAN: Yes, I am Klina Jordan and I am living at 28 Cliftonwood Road, BS8 TW.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to make your presentation please?

MS JORDAN: Certainly. It is very straightforward, to be honest. It is simply that I do not believe – and I am a facilitator for Make Voters Matter, so we do not believe that the

Boundary Review can make votes fair which is meant to be one of the main reasons that it is happening. We believe the only way to make votes fair and equal is by having proportional representation. I understand that that is not your remit but there is no other formal place in which to give that feedback. I understand that lots of people have been giving this feedback as a consequence. If the objective is to make votes fair then it has to be proportional representation. There is an overwhelming majority of the public in favour of PR, with polls going back to the 1970s showing the majority want PR; and in the year of 2015 there were at least three polls showing up to 74 per cent of the public do want PR. That would cancel the need for having changes for boundaries in the way that they have been proposed at the moment.

Shall I continue or is this any more of a kind of conversation?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is really for you to put your views forward. Obviously you accept that the remit of this public hearing is about the initial proposals that have been published in line with the statutory provisions that govern those proposals. So is there anything you would like to say with regard to those proposals in addition to what you have already said?

MS JORDAN: Yes. I would like to say we have put forward a Freedom of Information request which was responded to actually quite clearly with more information than one sometimes gets from these things, in which the government confirmed that there has not been any review of our voting system since the 2015 general election, which was the most disproportionate in history. That would indicate that the government has not actually looked at the issue that we are raising here and they are doing something completely different, which I am not going to say it is entirely a partisan thing that has been done but it does result in the current government having an advantage as a result of this particular rearrangement of boundaries, and actually we want completely fair votes instead of it being – I am not going to call it gerrymandering, but we think that needs to be PR.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for attending. Would you remain there just in case there are any questions from the floor for clarification? No. Thank you very much Ms Jordan for attending and for your representations.

Our next scheduled speaker is not booked to speak until 7.40. Is there anybody in the room here who would like to speak? No. In that case I will adjourn the hearing until 7.30 in the hope that they might come early. So the hearing is adjourned until 7.30.

Time Noted: 6.04 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 7.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening ladies and gentlemen; it is now 7.30 and I will reopen the public hearing. Mr Matthew Lewis, would you like to come down to the lectern please. Good evening Mr Lewis, if you would like to give your name and address please.

MR MATTHEW LEWIS: Matthew Lewis, 2 Woodmans Close, Chipping Sodbury.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, and if you would like to make your presentation please.

MR MATTHEW LEWIS: It is only a very short speech really but I just wanted to attend today to not only give my support to the proposed boundary changes, but the support of my family, many friends, colleagues and some of the residents of Old Sodbury as well.

Having looked closely at the boundary changes I was so pleased with the proposals of the constituency known as Thornbury and Yate. I am also a co-opted member of Sodbury town council, representing Old Sodbury ward, which gives me a great interest and knowledge of the catchment areas and geographical links.

I live in Old Sodbury, which my family, friends and colleagues consider to be rural. I know this constituency years ago used to be part of Gloucester so I am delighted that the proposals do take that into consideration; and this reflects and respects the local ties that we already have with parts of Gloucestershire.

It is such a sensible move to join us with Dursley, Berkeley, Cam, Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood, all within a short commutable distance. Many of us regularly use the facilities in Dursley and Wotton-under-Edge. This includes shops, restaurants and Dursley sports centre of course, as the Yate one gets very busy.

I also know that many children go to the school at Katharine Lady Berkeley who live in the present Thornbury and Yate constituency. They also use a local school bus that is provided.

Rural links are excellent along the A38 and A46 which join up these Gloucester villages, towns and Severn and Thornbury on the A38, and Sodbury to Kingswood and Wotton along the A46 and so forth, which gives a good flow with no splitting of wards and are all very essential when looking at the local authority boundaries.

All these wards are similar in character without our Severn wards and Thornbury. Collectively they will serve the local communities well.

There are good established bus links with Yate's new bus station and these Gloucester villages which, as I do not drive, I know is essential.

I note your move of Boyd Valley to the Kingswood constituency, one excellent link that is going to have not only on the whole of Kingswood but with Siston and surrounding rural villages – again, very well linked. I have relatives in this ward that are delighted, as most who live in Boyd Valley attend the schools in Downend and shops in Kingswood Bristol.

Friends of mine who live in Frampton Cotterell have also considered they should be part of Winterbourne as they have attended the local Ridings Academy School and use the local shops, all of which are in Winterbourne ward. They felt that the last boundaries' change, that Frampton should have gone over to Filton and Bradley Stoke with Winterbourne.

All in all I would like to praise the Boundary Commission for their work with the new proposals. I feel many things but the geographical changes are excellent and I would like to submit my support for these proposals.

My only negative comment would be the new name; calling our constituency Dursley, Thornbury and Yate, would cause problems with the surrounding villages as Thornbury and Yate currently a little bit do. This gives the impression of alienating the village communities; therefore, I feel that this name is far from suitable. The proposals would either be South Gloucestershire and Cotswold Edge or South Gloucestershire North.

Thank you very much; that concludes my speech.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for coming to speak to me Mr Lewis. Would you remain there for a moment in case there are any questions for clarification from the floor? Does anybody have any questions for clarification from Mr Lewis?

MR JOLLY: Hello. Ian Jolly from the Devon and Cornwall Liberal Democrats. I just misheard something at the end. Could you give your alternative names again?

MR LEWIS: Yes, I have South Gloucestershire and Cotswold Edge and South Gloucestershire North.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any more questions for Mr Lewis? No. Thank you very much for attending, Mr Lewis, and giving your presentation.

MR LEWIS: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Lewis was our last booked speaker. It is now 25 to eight. We have had no speakers really other than those that booked early on today, so very few people have chosen to just walk in and speak. On that basis I am

now going to close the hearing. We will reopen day two at 9 o'clock in the morning.  
Good night to everybody.

Adjourned until 9.00 am on Friday 18 November 2016

Time noted: 7.35 pm

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