

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

VICTORIA SUITE, THE QUEEN HOTEL, CITY ROAD, CHESTER CH1 3AH

ON

THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2016
DAY ONE

Before:

Mr Neil Ward, the Lead Assistant Commissioner

**Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
83 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0HW
Telephone Number: 020 3585 4721/22**

Time noted: 11.00 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this public hearing on the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries for the North West Region. I am Neil Ward. I am an Assistant Commissioner appointed by the Boundary Commission to assist it in its task of making recommendations for new constituencies. I am responsible for chairing the hearing today and tomorrow, and indeed across the whole of the North West, and I am also responsible, with my fellow Assistant Commissioners, Nicholas Elliott who is here and Graeme Clarke, for analysing all of the representations received, whether oral representations or written representations, and considering them and presenting our final recommendations to the Commission as to whether or not we believe it is suitable to amend its initial proposals.

It goes without saying, therefore, that the Assistant Commissioners have had no say and we have not had any hand in the drafting of the proposals that are on the table before us. We are in a sense "honest brokers" in taking on board the comments we receive, the representations we receive, and then deciding the merits of the case and presenting it back to the Commission for it to consider how to proceed.

I am here today with members of the Commission. I am supported by members of the Commission led by Glenn Reed, who is sitting beside me. Glenn will shortly provide an explanation of the Commission's proposals for the new constituencies. He will also tell you how to make written representations and deal with one or two administrative matters.

The hearing today was scheduled to run from 10.00 am - let us say 11.00 am at the moment - until 8.00 pm, and tomorrow it is going to run from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Those who have been to other hearings will know that I have the power to vary the timings of these hearings. Indeed, experience so far, even today, has shown that we may stop and start as we go through the day in order to accommodate or wait for speakers rather than everyone sit in the room formally open. Hearings can only last for two days. They have to be held by law over two days and they cannot spread onto a third day. Currently our plan is to run on the two days and we have speakers going in up until the end of the days.

The purpose of this hearing is to allow people to make representations to us about the proposals. We have some speakers booked and given timeslots and I intend to try to keep to those timeslots. If there is any time free during the day, anyone who has not booked a slot is welcome to speak. I will give people the opportunity to speak whenever we have that opportunity. It is meant to be a supportive environment. It is not a place of challenge. We will do all that we can to make it easy for anyone who wants to speak to be able to speak up here. It is not easy to come up and speak in public if you have not done it before. I am conscious of that and we will try to help. It is about making oral representations to us on the proposals. It is not a place to debate the Commission's proposals with the

Commission. It is not a place to debate with the individual speakers the merits of their arguments, but there will be an opportunity for individuals to seek clarification on any points in the presentations that have been made. If anyone wishes to do so, please, they should do it through me and I will control that.

I will hand over to Glenn Reed at this moment who will provide a brief explanation of the Commission's proposals.

MR REED: Thank you, Neil. Thank you very much and good morning, everybody. As Neil has mentioned, my name is Glenn Reed and I am a member of the Commission staff. I am responsible for supporting the Commissioners in their role to recommend new parliamentary boundaries, and at this hearing I lead the team of staff responsible for ensuring that the hearing runs smoothly. As Neil has already stated, he will chair the hearing itself and it is his responsibility to run the hearing at his discretion and take decisions about speakers, questioners and timings. My team and I are here today to support Neil in carrying out his role. Please ask one of us outside of the hearing if you need any further help or assistance.

I would like to talk now about the Commission's initial proposals for the North West region which were published on 13 September 2016. Our proposals for this region are for 68 constituencies, a reduction of seven. Our proposals leave 14 of the existing constituencies unchanged.

We use the European electoral regions as templates for the allocation of the 499 constituencies to which England is entitled, not including the two constituencies allocated to the Isle of Wight. This approach is permitted by the legislation and has been supported from previous public consultation. This approach does not prevent anybody 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 us to persuade us to depart from the regional-based approach we adopted in formulating our initial proposals. In considering the composition of each European electoral region we noted that it might not be possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties. We have therefore 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. Consequently, it has been necessary to propose some constituencies that cross county or unitary authority boundaries.

As I have mentioned, the North West has been allocated 68 constituencies, a reduction of seven from the current number. Due to the significant change required throughout the region, our proposals leave 14 of the 75 existing constituencies unchanged. We have proposed that the metropolitan boroughs of Greater Manchester be combined in a sub region with the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, the unitary authorities of Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, and the boroughs of Halton and Warrington. We propose two constituencies that contain electors from both Cheshire and Greater Manchester, which combine Altrincham and Knutsford in a constituency and

the towns of Bramhall and Poynton in a constituency. Although we have treated Lancashire and Merseyside as separate sub regions, we have proposed one constituency that crosses the county boundary, which combines three wards of the borough of West Lancashire with the town of Southport. We propose five constituencies entirely contained within the county of Cumbria.

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 the 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 and so there is still plenty of 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 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.bce2018.org.uk. I do urge everyone to submit written representations to us before the deadline of 5 December.

Finally, I would like to 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 recording 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 the 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 the spring of next year. The publication of the hearing records and written representations includes certain personal data to those who have made the 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 also available on our website. Just before I hand you back to the Chair to begin the public hearing, I would like to thank you for your attendance today.

Just a couple of domestic issues. The toilet facilities are down the corridor from, looking at it, the right-hand side of the reception desk - on the left of the reception desk. We have been told that there are no fire drills today or tomorrow. If we do hear the fire alarm it means it is the real thing. Our nearest exit is the doors behind you and we assemble on the forecourt just outside the hotel. Thank you very much. I will now pass you over to Neil.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Glenn. We normally have a series of breaks during the day. In practice, as I was saying a few minutes ago, we will probably be quite fluid during the day. What I can confirm is that we will break for lunch between 1.30 pm and 2.30 pm. We have a number of speakers planned today. Significantly, they are back-ended. There are several after work this afternoon. Before we begin, are there any points of clarification on anything I have said or Glenn has said so far? (None) So we will begin with the representations then. Typically we will allow up to ten minutes for presentations today. In practice, often people are able to make their point a lot quicker than ten minutes. I do not think we are going to be pressed for time, so feel free to take the amount of time you wish to get your point across properly. Perhaps then we might kick off and if I might ask Mr Brian Crowe to come forward then and make his presentation. As we were saying, we are recording, so if you could state your name and address and then begin your presentation after that.

MR CROWE: Thank you. Brian Crowe from Glebe Farm, Mollington, Chester CH1 6LJ. Good morning, Chairman, and thank you for allowing me the time to make representation to you today. Believe me, I'm not intending to be too controversial.

I've lived in the village of Mollington all my life, apart from a couple of years or so in the services some 50 years ago. The village of Mollington lies three miles to the north of Chester and three miles or so to the south of Ellesmere Port. For general election after general election throughout the '80s and '90s we were pushed between the two like pawns on a chess board. It certainly did not please the residents in general, nor did it satisfy in any way those of us that sit on parish councils - and there are six of them here - so often changing allegiance to different members of parliament, making the continuity of work involved in local government far more difficult than it ever should be. Thankfully, we have been within the City of Chester constituency now since the general election of 1997.

I do realise that the task being undertaken by the Boundary Commission is a pretty daunting one, especially so when one hears the statement: "You can't please all of the people all of the time". We thank them for their endeavours on our behalf.

The City of Chester is a county town and, as such, is also the seat of local government. Stability and continuity should therefore be a major consideration when changes are being proposed. On that premise I do support the proposals being put forward and under consideration today for the City of Chester constituency. Yes, it is unfortunate to lose the parish of Orford to Weaver Vale and to lose three of our neighbouring parishes, those of Puddington, Woodbank and Shotwick, to

Ellesmere Port, but understandable, it has to be said, if there is a wish to alleviate the splitting of council wards. The same criteria of course apply to the addition to Chester of the parishes of Mickle Trafford from Ellesmere Port and Rowton and Waverton from Eddisbury, all being in the Chester Villages ward with the parishes of Christleton, Littleton and Guilden Sutton which are already in the Chester constituency. This addition then brings the population numbers for the City of Chester constituency to within the required tolerance.

In summary, therefore, Mr Chairman, a daunting task overall. The proposals for the City of Chester constituency are practical and reasonable and worthy of support. Mr Chairman, thank you once again for allowing me the time to make my representation to you. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Crowe.

MR CROWE: Can I leave that with you? (Same handed).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You can indeed. Thank you. I will just check before you depart the podium whether anyone has any points of clarification from that. I would be surprised. (None) Thank you very much indeed.

MR CROWE: I get off quite easily, do I?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Very clear. It is a good example really that support is as welcome as criticism of the proposals.

MR CROWE: Will you excuse us, Chairman? No disrespect, but I am just getting up to an hour in the car park.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. That is as good a reason as any! Better than most! Thank you. I understand that Mr Philip Barton is here.

MR BARTON: Yes, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is a bit earlier than your scheduled time, but are you able to come up and speak now?

MR BARTON: Yes, I am.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be perfect. Again, if you could give your name and full address and then begin when it suits you.

MR BARTON: My name is Phil Barton. My address is 20 Edgeway, Wilmslow SK9 1NH. It's proposals on the boundary changes for the constituencies in Cheshire and Wirral. I should include that I'm a voluntary Conservative working in the Cheshire and Wirral area.

I want to compliment the Boundary Commission on the proposals. I don't think it's an easy job. By definition reducing from 660 (*sic*) to 600 is a big task and by no means easy. I really want to compliment them on the fact that the majority of what they have proposed is good. Any of my comments that follow are really only on the peripheries where I think we can improve. It's not merely a personal view but it's taken from the 15 current constituencies in Cheshire and Wirral. I have spoken with most of the chairmen, most of the associations, and taken their views into consideration as well as my own.

I've relied on the work of Roger Pratt and the official Conservative Party report which has already been submitted. I will not repeat the detail of his work, nor am I able to really comment on that detail. I have tried to avoid blatant gerrymandering and have focused on changes reflecting rules 5(a) to (d), in other words trying to make sure that there are consistent results in the proposals.

My suggestions are based on what I consider to be the only flaw in the Commission's work. If you start from the centre and work out, you end up with - the best word I can come up with is - silly situations, typified by the 40 per cent of Lancashire that was in a single rural seat which was clearly too big. However, I understand that in starting that huge amount of work you end up doing that and think: "Well, okay, we can sort the detail later". I hope my proposals are taken in that vein. The solution proposed by the Commission seeks to solve the problem of smaller city seats by adding from rural areas rather than resolving the seats in the city and only by exception adding from the rural areas. I want to pick up the detail of that from the impact on the Tatton constituencies and the Cheshire towns associated.

Cheshire and Wirral: in this area we support the Commission's proposals in their entirety for Bebington and Heswall, which we hope will be renamed The Wirral, Wallasey, Birkenhead, City of Chester, Halton, Warrington North, South and Congleton.

We would like to see minor changes in line with rules 5(a) to (d) in Crewe and Nantwich, Eddisbury and Northwich, Weaver Vale and Ellesmere Port and Neston. I have shown the number effects.

We do not support the Commission's proposals for the following seats and propose major changes in line with following comments: North and East Chester, covering Altrincham and Tatton Park, especially Tatton Park; Bramhall and Poynton as it affects Wilmslow; Macclesfield as affected by both of the above; and other Greater Manchester seats - a knock-on effect from our counter-proposal.

I do not quite know why the pattern changes. It just goes to show what happens when you change the size of something in PowerPoint. Fundamentally, the red is the proposal. The black is the current area of Tatton. What you can see is that Tatton is split five ways, which is drastic to say the least. The worst part of that is in the top right-hand corner of that. You can see Handforth and Dean Row, which are

part of Wilmslow, split completely off. So Wilmslow is split into two. So not only do we suffer the indignity that Tatton ceases to exist but we also end up with Wilmslow being split into two.

This is the breakdown of Tatton and the impact of where I'm proposing that the various wards move to, working consistently on the wards, but in the red you will see the Tatton wards where we seek to put them into a single seat, which is a proposed seat of Cheadle and Wilmslow.

We have proposed as part of Roger Pratt's presentation the redrawing of the boundaries for Altrincham, Bramhall and Poynton, the Cheadle and Wilmslow seat, Macclesfield and Knutsford. The impact and detail of that for Greater Manchester is covered by Roger Pratt's presentation.

This is the physical impact of it. The most important part is the yellow area which covers the Knutsford areas and makes those split from Chelford, which you can see is adjacent to Knutsford and really part of that community, and rejoins that community into a single joint access between Knutsford and Macclesfield and links together under a Cheadle seat the whole of Wilmslow and Cheadle. The advantages are that the local ties are restored in reuniting Wilmslow in one seat and avoiding the confusion with the electorate. The proposal would mean that in that area some people would be talking about four different boundaries for local and parliamentary elections, which is confusing to say the least. The single constituency is based on the A555 SEMMMS project to exploit the opportunities immediately adjacent to the airport, so we bring the corridor down the 34 which covers the eastern side of the airport and the development that results from the A555.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sorry to interrupt. I should know what SEMMMS is, but I do not.

MR BARTON: South East Manchester Metropolitan --- It's the development of ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Trams?

MR BARTON: Sorry?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it the trams or something?

MR BARTON: No, no. Sorry. I should know.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I be helpful?

MR BARTON: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They run the airport. It's Airport City. It's the infrastructure necessary to create that development.

MR BARTON: But it expands eastward from the airport rather than west from the airport. It's a major industrial strategy/powerhouse-type initiative.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Sorry for interrupting.

MR BARTON: It is fine. It ends up with close to 10,000 fewer electors changing constituency and the traditional Cheshire ties - Knutsford, Mobberley, High Legh, which is separated by the Bollin and mostly by the M56 from Trafford - are retained in Cheshire.

The Cheadle and Wilmslow seat contains the Handforth East development, which will also be a large growth area associated with SEMMMS. Similarly, the Bramhall constituency will separate the point of development and therefore give greater future stability because if those areas grow in populations you will end up changing it again in five years' time, which we really want to reduce. This is the impact on an actual map basis. I apologise. I will go back again. That covers the North and East Cheshire area which I put a strong case for the development of.

In the West Cheshire counter-proposals, all we have done is move one or two seats that were in existing constituencies back into the same constituencies and swap them about a bit. In the west of Cheshire we would like to see minor changes. I have covered this but, just to reiterate, Crewe and Nantwich moves from 72,000 to 76,000, Eddisbury from 72,000 to just over 72,000, Weaver Vale from 73,000 to 72,000 and Ellesmere Port and Neston from 77,000 to 73,500, so fundamentally not big changes, just trying to rationalise, and in line with "Why move people if you don't have to? Just keep those together".

The advantages from the counter-proposal are that: Audlem has previously been a Crewe and Nantwich constituency and has a very good communications link with the constituency and should remain there; Farndon, Tarporley and Tattenhall are all retained in their existing constituency of Eddisbury, with ties restored to Malpas, Wrenbury and Bunbury wards; and Hartford and Greenbank is retained again within its existing constituency of Weaver Vale. We don't understand why you're moving things between constituencies when they don't need to be. Again, another 10,000 fewer electors are moved from their existing constituencies.

That is a summary from the North West which is taken from Roger Pratt's presentation which is all trying to say that, in line with rule 5(a), we improve the geography. I don't actually think there are three local authorities, but in terms of four electoral boundaries -- we are reducing that down to three electoral boundaries in rule 5(b). We move fewer electors in accordance with rule 5(c). We break fewer local ties in accordance with rule 5(d). That is my presentation. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That was very helpful. Thank you, Mr Barton. Although we have heard bits of it before, it is always good to hear it from a different perspective as well. Thank you very much. Are there any points of clarification that anyone would wish to seek? Mr Lorgan?

MR LARGAN: Terry Largan from Whitefield, Manchester. You said in fact Hartford and Greenbank have been retained. Which constituency will they be retained in? It was the slide before. It went off the screen.

MR BARTON: Sorry. I apologise for that. They are now in Weaver Vale. They move back to Weaver Vale.

MR LARGAN: Thank you very much.

MR BARTON: Sorry. I went through too fast. You can put it down to my nerves.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points that anyone wishes to clarify? (None). If there are no other points, thank you very much.

MR BARTON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think we have a gap in planned speakers. Is there anyone in the room who was hoping to speak at some stage and would like to take the opportunity now? (No response). In which case I am afraid I am going to adjourn again until 1.00 pm, which is the scheduled time for the next speaker. My apologies if it disrupts everyone's plans, but rather than keep you sitting here maybe it is time to get a breath of fresh air if you wish to. Thank you.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming back. We have a couple of speakers in this session. Thank you, Mr Holland, for agreeing to speak in this session. Just a reminder that we are filming and taping for the record - because this is part of a public consultation. When the speakers come up, I will ask you to give your name and address and then to begin in your own time. It is a supportive environment - someone may ask a question at the end in terms of clarification, but there is no debate to be had here about the merits of anyone's representations - so feel free to be relaxed about the environment in which we are talking. Perhaps I might ask Ms Judie Collins to come forward.

MS COLLINS: Do you want me to stay here?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No. We would like you to come up. If you want to take your coat off and whatever, feel free. If you tell us at an early stage where you are talking about, we will get a map up on the wall if we can.

MS COLLINS: Altrincham and Sale West, moving to Altrincham and Tatton.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So if you introduce yourself, with your name and full address, and then please begin when you are ready.

MS COLLINS: Judie Collins, Apartment 14, 2B Beech House, Acresfield Road, Timperley, Altrincham.

Altrincham, which used to be part of Cheshire, looks forward to Cheshire and back to Greater Manchester. Trafford is the only Conservative council in Greater Manchester. I think we have more in common in with Cheshire than with Greater Manchester. For example, when Greater Manchester put a big bid in called Ambition for Ageing, Trafford was excluded because it was thought not to be needy enough.

A lot of Altrincham children go to school in Knutsford. We have grammar schools. We have a lot of children at Knutsford Academy who use the local train service.

We have a really good constituency MP who I am sure would do the same for his constituents in Knutsford and Wilmslow as he does in Altrincham and Sale West.

As chairman of our local civic society, I am doing a lot of work at the moment on Cheshire Gateway, which will be a big scheme by Tatton Estates in green belt linking Altrincham and Knutsford.

I think that because the NHS in Cheshire East is not in a terribly good state that Knutsford residents particularly, but also Wilmslow residents, are using Altrincham's excellent NHS services. We have a new hospital. We have a new health and wellbeing centre just being built.

We have little to do as a borough, I think, with Sale West. I understand that Partington would be included. I think that would be good for Partington. I think it would be good for Altrincham and Tatton. I think that the link with Tatton would be very good because I think devolution looks as if it is turning out to be a lot more than Greater Manchester and there are not any firm plans yet for Cheshire and Warrington.

We also have a very good football team. Although we have a lot more City fans than we used to have, a lot of Cheshire residents use our train and excellent tram service to get to United and to the Etihad.

I know that Knutsford Town Council is not terribly keen on the idea, but Knutsford, Altrincham and Wilmslow share a great deal of heritage. Altrincham has five conservation areas. Knutsford and Wilmslow have some excellent heritage buildings. I do a lot of work in Tatton and I really would like to see the two parts united.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Ms Collins. Can I just check before you go away whether anyone has any points they just wish to ask of clarification? Could you come back, please? As I was mentioning earlier, there will only be questions of clarification rather than any debate with you.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, 52 New Hall Lane, Bolton. You mentioned the tram service and the links into Greater Manchester. Do those links extend into Cheshire?

MS COLLINS: They do. The major, award-winning Mid-Cheshire Line, which runs from Piccadilly to Chester --- A lot of people get off at Altrincham and use the tram. The Altrincham interchange is a tram, train and bus interchange.

MR WALSH: But the Metrolink itself does not extend into Cheshire?

MS COLLINS: No.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. But the key point you were making, Ms Collins, is that it is a major interchange for the transport system?

MS COLLINS: Yes.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do you have a query? Thank you.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. You mentioned the linkage between Altrincham and Knutsford. I would like to know how you actually get there. Which road do you use? Are you able to say?

MS COLLINS: There is a train line from Piccadilly to Chester which includes Knutsford. There is also a round bus service from Altrincham to Wilmslow to Knutsford.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is there any road communication?

MS COLLINS: Yes. There is the A56 and the new A556 road has just opened.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points? (None). Thank you very much indeed. One of the advantages we find of these hearings is that local residents are able to paint a picture that we cannot get from the maps and the wordings. It always helps us as Assistant Commissioners to understand that. Thank you very much. Mr Mark Holland, I believe you would like to speak.

MR HOLLAND: (On behalf of MP for Crewe and Nantwich) Thank you, Mr Chairman. My name is Mark Holland. I come to you today from 30 Victoria Street, Crewe CW1 2JE. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak. For clarity, I am speaking here today in my role as parliamentary assistant to Edward Timpson MP, who is Member of Parliament for the

Crewe and Nantwich constituency, an office he has held since 2008. To be absolutely clear, I am speaking in favour of the counter-proposal made by Roger Pratt on behalf of the Conservative Party for the North West region. Both Edward and I are firmly supportive of that sensible counter-proposal. If I may, I would like to focus my remarks on that part of the counter-proposal that affects our area of South Cheshire.

Looking first at the Commission's initial proposals for Crewe and Nantwich, there is much that is welcome. The Commission proposes only minor changes to the seat as it exists currently, making only the minor addition of that part of the parish of Leighton that is not already within Crewe and Nantwich. At present the local authority ward and parish of Leighton are split between constituencies and it is eminently sensible to reunite Leighton within a single constituency. It is extremely welcome that all of the other local authority wards that now fall within Crewe and Nantwich will continue to do so under the initial proposals. This means a minimum of disruption and reflects longstanding community ties between the communities that Edward represents.

If I may, I would like to say a little bit about the counter-proposal of the Conservative Party. The Conservative Party proposes a Crewe and Nantwich seat of 76,041 electors, including every ward of the present Crewe and Nantwich constituency plus the part of Leighton ward that the Boundary Commission proposes to add. To this we would add the Audlem ward, which in the initial proposals of the Commission is placed in the Eddisbury and Northwich constituency. Audlem ward is a ward of predominantly rural character which lies to the south and southwest of Nantwich. It was part of the Crewe and Nantwich constituency prior to the boundary changes that were applied at the 2010 general election. Like the other wards of the counter-proposed Crewe and Nantwich seat, it is a part of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough which existed until the formation of the Cheshire unitary authorities in 2009. For these two reasons it is true to say that many residents of the villages that make up the Audlem ward often believe that they are represented already by the Member of Parliament for Crewe and Nantwich. If there is any unique contribution that I can make to the hearing today it is this. The MP's constituency office for Crewe and Nantwich is regularly contacted by Audlem ward residents seeking advice and parliamentary representation. Many are surprised to be redirected to the member for Eddisbury, but since 2010 our office is of course happy to refer them in that direction.

We would submit that bringing Audlem back within the Crewe and Nantwich constituency is a logical choice. It would bring the proposed seat closer to the ideal electoral equality and the ward is a natural geographic extension to the seat. The strong north/south road links through the Audlem ward are the A529 and A530 roads. They both lead north to Nantwich, which is the local town, the centre of employment and shopping. There are two primary schools in the Audlem ward and they are feeder schools for the Nantwich high schools. Many residents of the Audlem ward access basic public services and healthcare in Nantwich. So in lots of ways, and at every stage of life, Audlem ward residents look towards Nantwich.

This suggested change, as I have said, is a component of the broad counter-proposal which has been referred to by other speakers and with which you will be familiar as the Conservative Party's Western Cheshire counter-proposal. It uses as its basis the Commission's initial proposals but makes the case for alternatives that affect Crewe and Nantwich, Eddisbury and Northwich, Weaver Vale and Ellesmere Port and Neston. Both Edward and myself are supportive of that rational proposal. In particular, I note that under the counter-proposal the Farndon, Tattenhall and Tarporley wards would be placed within the Eddisbury and Northwich constituency, thereby being retained with their neighbouring wards, Malpas, Wrenbury and Bunbury. In total, the Conservative counter-proposal for Western Cheshire moves 10,058 fewer electors between constituencies, reducing disruption and striking what I would say is a more sensible boundary between the Eddisbury and Northwich and Weaver Vale constituencies than does the Commission's initial proposals.

I would like to thank the Boundary Commission for the thought and effort that has gone into making its proposals. I commend the counter-proposal to it. I hope that my comments relating to the Audlem ward are helpful in understanding better the logic of that element of the counter-proposal. I hope you will find that it has merit. Thank you very much, Mr Ward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Holland. Are there any points of clarification? We have one at the back. Mr Largan?

MR LARGAN: Terry Largan from Whitefield in the metropolitan district in Bury. You mentioned about shops and feeder schools. Where is the local high school that those feeder schools - I presume you mean primary schools - feed into? Where is the location of the high school?

MR HOLLAND: Yes, I do mean the primary schools feeding into high schools. There are several but they are within the town of Nantwich and the Crewe and Nantwich constituency.

MR LARGAN: As regards the shops, you have said the people from Audlem look to shop in Nantwich. Do you have like a major supermarket there, like an Asda, a Tesco, or something?

MR HOLLAND: Again, there are several major supermarkets in Nantwich. Because it is a town, people will go there to shop. Lots of people shop in Nantwich, even from outside of the county, but I am particularly thinking of those parts of the Audlem ward that are closest to Nantwich. It is the natural place that you would go to for shopping and for leisure.

MR LARGAN: Are there no supermarkets in Audlem at all?

MR HOLLAND: I do not believe there are large supermarkets, no. Potentially there are supermarkets and facilities available to the south, but you may be aware that to the south of Audlem ward is the European regional boundary with the West Midlands and so south of Audlem is Shropshire. I think we have heard today from the Chairman that it would be extremely unlikely, without compelling reasons, for constituencies to be drawn across that boundary. Being as that is a hard boundary, if I were to choose where the residents of that ward looked to I would say it is almost exclusively Nantwich to the north.

MR LARGAN: That is very helpful. Thank you very much.

MR HOLLAND: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points? (None). Thank you very much.

MR HOLLAND: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We do not have another speaker now until 2.30 pm. We are going to break for lunch at 1.30 pm, I suspect. I will just look around the room. Shall we break for lunch now?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I second that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will meet again at 2.30 pm. Thank you very much indeed.

After the luncheon adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, gentlemen and lady. Thank you for coming back. I am pleased to say that we have Dr Andrew Garman here, who is going to make his representation to us now. Again, we have no further booking for timings until 4.30 pm, so following this representation I am going to suggest that we adjourn until 3.30 pm in case any people turn up who wish to make a presentation. If not, we will adjourn again until 4.30 pm. It is a bit dysfunctional, but that is the way we are. Dr Garman, if you could come up, please, and, as I was just explaining, if you could state your name and address and then feel free to go into your presentation. Thank you.

DR GARMAN: I am sorry that you have had to reconvene just for me. I hope I make it worthwhile. My name is Andrew Garman. I live in the village of Ashton Hayes, which is to the north part of the existing Eddisbury and will be moved to Weaver Vale under these proposals. I'm a former councillor on Chester District Council, but I'm not a member of any political party at the moment. I have an interest in good democracy. In this case I have to say that it's really about an interest in making sure that our democratic system doesn't get any worse.

If I can make a couple of general comments before I start on the boundaries. I do lament the fact that this boundary review is being based on an out-of-date register and the unfairnesses that result from that. I would also like to say that I have seen really very little publicity of these boundaries. In local papers there is a bit of a mention here and there, but it is mainly based on urban areas. Very few people read local papers these days.

Anyway, I want to focus really on the two proposed constituencies which are being called Weaver Vale and Eddisbury. I am okay with the boundary around the two of them. It's really the dividing line between those two constituencies which I think could be improved considerably.

One of the driving forces is that the proposed Weaver Vale has no real identity, no real sense of cohesion. There is no easy way of describing what the proposed Weaver Vale actually is. Indeed, the Commission kind of concedes that by saying that there is a name problem and that it would welcome suggestions for improved names. I think there will be a real problem getting a name unless you are honest and say that it is the Hotchpotch and Odds and Sods constituency because there is nothing really that links everything together. You have very rural areas in the south and urban and more industrial areas to the north. It is a very long, stringy constituency and very difficult to get from one end of it to the other. So it is hard to spot any cohesive feature there. Indeed, the proposed Eddisbury constituency is poorly named. It does not contain Eddisbury. Most people assume Eddisbury refers to Eddisbury Hill, which is in the proposed Weaver Vale ward, so there is no reason to call it Eddisbury at all. Indeed, if you look back further to the Domesday Book, Eddisbury is named after the Eddisbury Hundred, which is even further away from Weaver Vale. So the names are wrong. My issues are not really about names, though I think they are telling.

The second problem is that both proposed constituencies have rural and urban areas. They are a bit of a mix. I think there are some disadvantages there. I think it is unusual for MPs to have experience and knowledge of both rural and urban areas. That's my observation. It would be much better to have a constituency that is largely urban with an MP that knew the area and knew the problems, and, likewise, one for the rural area.

So the alternative I am proposing is that we redraw the boundary to provide more cohesion, doing a bit of trading between the two. It's quite difficult with the resources I have available to actually be very specific about that in terms of what wards should be moved where, but I would like to give you the general drift of it, which is that the boundary of Eddisbury at the north should be extended northwards to certainly include Marbury ward but also moving in the general direction of Runcorn to include as much as possible of that urban area to the north. This would essentially become something that approximates to the old Vale Royal District Council. If it was to be renamed Weaver Vale --- I will propose at the end that the name should be swapped, but it would then follow essentially the course of the Weaver Valley. To the south, to compensate, I am suggesting that rural areas round about Malpas and

Wrenbury and Audlem should be moved from the proposed Eddisbury to the proposed Weaver Vale. The outcome of that then is that the proposed Eddisbury ward - which should be called Weaver Vale, but I'll carry on calling it Eddisbury - would have a geographical cohesion in corresponding roughly to Weaver Vale, or the old Vale Royal, which did have cohesion as a district council. It would be largely urban, it would have a lot of industrial heritage - old industry and new industry - in common and it would be compact.

Then the proposed Weaver Vale - which should be called Eddisbury - would likewise be more compact. It would have a rural identity. It would have a natural centre in Tarporley, which is a large village which acts as a rural centre anyway. From Tarporley there are good roads radiating out in all directions to the different corners of my proposed constituency and it would include Eddisbury Hill and the old Eddisbury Hundred division.

I think this would be really good for democracy and enabling people to identify much more with their constituency, be able to describe them, be able to identify with them, and it also just makes it more cohesive and just generally good for democracy. So that is my suggestion. I would very much value comments and questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Dr Garman. Before I open it up for questions, can I just ask you again to put your full name and address on the record?

DR GARMAN: I am sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: My apologies. You gave us the locality and the village.

DR GARMAN: Yes. It's 15 Peel Hall Lane, Ashton Hayes, Chester CH3 8DE.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Can I just check, but I think I know the answer, you have made those proposals but you have not tried the sums to see whether they add up to the requisite numbers?

DR GARMAN: If you included Daresbury, Norton North and South and Windmill Hill and also Marbury, you get 23,000 to transfer. The rural area to compensate for that would only be 14,000. So there is a mismatch there but, as I say, with the resources at my disposal --- I am not sure to what extent it is acceptable to split wards. That has been done in the past. I don't know how the numbers stack up in terms of the leeway and I don't know if there is any wiggle room with respect to adjacent constituencies. What I am proposing is a general direction which I would like the Boundary Commission to move and to consider. If the arguments for it are accepted then I think there will be a way to manage those numbers. But certainly even if you went just as far as including Marbury, most of which is very close to Northwich, certainly population wise, and did a corresponding trade at the rural end at the south then that would be an improvement. I think the attraction of having the Weaver

Valley as the core of a constituency is high, plus all the other advantages I have mentioned.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any points?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, 52 New Hall Lane, Bolton. Can I just be clear about some of the wards that you named as possible transfers, please? You talked about transfers from Eddisbury to Weaver Vale being beneficial and you mentioned Malpas ---

DR GARMAN: Malpas, Audlem, Wrenbury and Bunbury, that general area.

MR WALSH: Thank you. As a compensation, you looked at Tarporley ---

DR GARMAN: No, no. Tarporley stays fixed. I am looking at the areas to the north, which would include Marbury ---

MR WALSH: No. Sorry. I am talking about the compensation. You were talking about the transfer the other way of Tarporley.

DR GARMAN: You mean the compensation in terms of benefits?

MR WALSH: No. You were talking about transfer of wards. As I understood it, you mentioned the wards you have just named as transferring from Eddisbury to Weaver Vale and being more appropriate with Weaver Vale and you then talked about Tarporley. Where do you see Tarporley sitting?

DR GARMAN: I don't propose Tarporley should be moved at all.

MR WALSH: Okay. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: At the back, please?

MR LARGAN: Terry Largan from the metropolitan district of Bury.

DR GARMAN: From where? Sorry.

MR LARGAN: Bury. It would be helpful actually --- Because I can't follow it, just the same as the speaker there.

DR GARMAN: I'm sorry. I was going to refer to the map. So this is the proposed Eddisbury and the suggestion is that this boundary here should be moved to the north so that this pocket here is moved to Eddisbury and that then would include the Weaver Valley, which is roughly along here actually, but it would also include Vale Royal District Council. So that is a very cohesive urban area which has a lot of close towns that have a lot in common anyway, a lot of services shared. In compensation, these wards here, or some combination of them, would transfer

across to Vale Royal so that you would then get a rural constituency which would essentially go around here - that would be the boundary - with Tarporley here as a natural centre. As I mentioned, you've got good links to the various corners of the constituency for road links, as opposed to having a very long ward here with nothing in common and roads that go in the wrong direction.

MR LARGAN: Can you switch on the other map then of Weaver Vale? Would that top part - Helsby, Frodsham, Gowy ---?

DR GARMAN: No. That would stay in the proposed Weaver Vale. Logically, in terms of geography and urban character and industrial character, it's this section here that you would want to transfer. That said, this is quite populous. You could cut this in some way. The essence is that I'm proposing that the boundary should start round about here, go down there, and include these areas down here, so that it becomes a rural constituency based on Tarporley. You could call it Tarporley. That would be a good name for it. It makes a good centre.

MR LARGAN: I am still not clear at all. The urban part at the top which is part of Runcorn - Daresbury, Norton, Windmill Hill - would they be with the urban area that you mentioned before?

DR GARMAN: Ideally, if there was more freedom on numbers, then the boundary would be along here, so you get Marbury and those areas there. There is a numbers problem which means that there needs to be some jiggery-pokery.

MR LARGAN: Would Northwich and Winsford be in the same constituency?

DR GARMAN: Absolutely, yes. So here you have a boundary between Northwich and Barnton which doesn't show up very well there, but that is quite a large population village which obviously look to Northwich -- the chemical industry and all of that. So that is an unfortunate dividing line really.

MR LARGAN: Okay. I get the rough drift of it now and I'm grateful to you for explaining it to me. Thank you.

DR GARMAN: Thank you. Do you have any comments on it?

MR LARGAN: Not now. I was just trying to find out roughly where the dividing line was.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points that anyone wishes to raise? (None). I think one of the things, Dr Garman, is that this is not really a forum for debate around individual recommendations, even though I know you would like to encourage that position. It is really for the receiving of information which we can then weigh up alongside what might be 50,000 other pieces of information - and it is very helpful.

DR GARMAN: I'll follow this up with something in written form for you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That would be very helpful indeed. Thank you very much.

DR GARMAN: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for coming. We have no --- I will stop myself from saying it! There are no other speakers planned for the moment until 4.30 pm. I suggest that I return again at 3.30 pm and see if we have any other guests. If not, we will adjourn again until 4.30 pm. As the day goes on it gets busier. Thank you.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon everyone. I said I would resume the hearing, but there are no new visitors and no new speakers. Our next speaker is at 4.30 pm and we have one at 5.00 pm. We will resume at 4.30 pm and then I will just sit here until the one after comes. Feel free to join me or not, as the case may be. Thanks very much.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon everyone. Thanks for resuming. I am pleased to say that Ms Jill Houlbrook has arrived a little bit early and is willing to speak earlier. We are desperate for people to speak to us!

CLLR HOULBROOK: (Upton ward) You have not actually heard me!

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What we are doing is I will ask you to come up now, give your name and address and then go into your presentation. You can see that we are filming and recording for sound for the record. At the end of your presentation/representation I will ask whether there are any points of clarification that anyone seeks. There will not be a debate but people may have one or two points. Please go ahead.

CLLR HOULBROOK: Thank you. Good afternoon everybody. I am Cllr Jill Houlbrook. I am councillor for the ward of Upton. Today I would like to speak in support of the Boundary Commission for England's proposal for the constituency of the City of Chester. I would like to thank the Commission for its consideration in keeping the natural and historically-based boundaries. I also feel it is important that those who support rather than oppose are loudly heard.

I have lived in Chester since 1963 so Chester has been my home for over 50 years. I am a Cheshire West and Chester councillor, elected by the people of Upton in 2006 to represent them. I served Upton on the Chester City Council for nine years from 1983. I am also a parish councillor and a school governor in Upton by Chester. In

the civic year 2013/14 I was privileged to be the Lord Mayor of the City of Chester, a role in which I became even more aware of the pride that our residents have in living and working in Chester. This includes not only the city itself but also the surrounding and connected wards such as Upton which, along with other wards, makes our community what it is today. Since I moved to Chester with my parents I have lived here and have worked here in the city for local businesses. Chester is my home, the place I love, and whose citizens are passionate about the historical links. I should therefore like to commend and thank the Commission for its initial proposals to keep the City of Chester united.

Chester is an historic city with a distinct personality and varied community, made up of clearly recognised suburbs or areas such as Hoole, Handbridge, Lache, Vicars Cross, Blacon and the surrounding villages such as Upton, Saughall and Mollington, Dodleston and Huntington, Christleton, Guilden Sutton and Littleton, all of which combine to create the City of Chester and the character of it as a whole. The initial proposals strongly recognise this by maintaining each of these areas - many of which are parishes - in the constituency which is focused around the city itself.

I feel it is important to maintain City of Chester as a constituency name and I thank the Commission for recognising this. There has been a City of Chester constituency in some form, more or less, since about 1545 and a mayor and a sheriff of Chester since the 12th century. Whatever the makeup of the constituency over the centuries, historically there has been a constituency focused around the city itself. The areas which are in the immediate vicinity turn to Chester rather than other towns or cities.

In order to meet the electoral quota, the City of Chester constituency needs to increase in size. The Commission has approached this in a logical manner by bringing into the city those surrounding areas that naturally look to Chester. A number of those villages surrounding Chester are already part of the existing City of Chester constituency - Christleton, Guilden Sutton and Littleton - and those areas form part of the Chester Villages ward of Cheshire West and Chester Council. The very name of this ward recognises the strong association these villages have with Chester both historically and culturally. As current parliamentary boundaries stand, Chester Villages is a split ward. It is split three ways between the City of Chester, Eddisbury and Ellesmere Port and Neston. The Commission has recognised that it is a logical proposal to unite Cheshire Villages and bring it into the City of Chester constituency, bringing in the villages of Bridge Trafford, Mickle Trafford, Picton, Rowton and Waverton. Bringing the villages together and within the City of Chester constituency, they will find their natural home and will reflect the current boundary where the villages, such as those within Saughall and Mollington ward and Dodleston and Huntington ward, already look towards Chester. These are areas with similar perspectives and which are strongly associated geographically to the outer city. This also enables the City of Chester parliamentary constituency to meet the necessary electoral quota.

Paragraph 60 of the initial proposal states:

“We consider that our proposals for the City of Chester constituency result in a reasonably compact constituency which, apart from alterations required due to changes to local government wards (including the Chester Villages ward, which is divided [among] constituencies), is otherwise unchanged...”

I feel, as do the residents who have expressed an opinion to me, that this is a positive outcome for Chester. It recognises not only the importance of the existing constituency boundary but also the Commission is proposing a seat where the constituent parts have a similar outlook and the communities and residents face similar issues and challenges. These initial proposals also maintain a constituency that is geographically relatively small and compact and which has longstanding and convenient transport links particularly between the City of Chester and its villages. In addition, the proposed constituency results in minimal change for our residents.

In the 2013 review, which was ultimately not implemented, there was strong and vocal opposition to the proposal to split the Vicars Cross area away from the City of Chester constituency into a seat that would have been linked to Winsford, halfway across the traditional county of Cheshire. Under this current review the Commission is using the compact and more manageable local government wards of Cheshire West and Chester as a foundation for constituencies. As a result, the existing City of Chester constituency can be successfully maintained with minimal disruption. The proposed boundary avoids the breaking of longstanding, distinct and proud local communities.

In determining new parliamentary constituency boundaries, the primary rule is the electoral quota. The Boundary Commission can of course take into account other factors, such as geographical issues, for example size, shape and accessibility. The Commission may also consider the existing local government boundaries, boundaries of existing constituencies and local ties that may be broken by changes to the constituencies. The City of Chester constituency as currently proposed by the Boundary Commission includes all those additional factors and actually enhances the local ties by drawing into the constituency those villages which naturally look to Chester as their principal city and it unifies the Chester Villages ward. I wish to commend the Boundary Commission for England’s proposals for the City of Chester parliamentary constituency. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. It is valuable for us to hear supporters as well as alternatives to the Commission’s proposals. Thank you very much. Are there any points that anyone would wish to raise? Mr Lorgan?

MR LARGAN: Many thanks for your very clear submission. I remember the opposition there was last time, which you described as “strong” and “vocal”, Vicars Cross in particular. Are there any other areas that expressed opposition last

time that have not been included? I was thinking in terms of a place called Mickle Trafford. Has all that been resolved?

CLLR HOULBROOK: That is within the new proposals.

MR LARGAN: All right. So there is nothing that is excluded from the proposed Chester constituency? There is no area that has been excluded now?

CLLR HOULBROOK: None that I have heard any opposition for, no.

MR LARGAN: Thank you very much for clarifying that for me. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed.

CLLR HOULBROOK: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for speaking early for us. In which case I am now going to adjourn until 5.00 pm. Thank you.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thanks to everyone for coming back. It is just to confirm that our speaker is not here at the moment. I am going to adjourn again, but I will remain around and, if they arrive, I will reopen as soon as the person arrives. Thank you. The next speaker after that is at 6.20 pm: Jack Jackson. I will wait for 15 minutes now. If not, we will re-adjourn until 6.20 pm for the rest of the evening. Thank you.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The speaker has not shown. We are going to formally adjourn now until 6.20 pm. Thank you.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening everyone. Although we were adjourned to 6.20 pm, there is no point waiting until 6.20 pm if we may --- I understand that Mr Jack Jackson is here. Are you ready to speak?

MR JACKSON: Yes, I am.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Please come on up. I will ask you when you get to the podium - well, I will ask you now, on your way to the podium - if you can give your name and full address, and then please proceed with your presentation.

MR JACKSON: Okay. Full name: Jack Jackson. I currently live at 3 Wenlock Way, Chester CH4 8BZ. I had to think about that!

Firstly, I would like to thank the Commission for their proposals. I know there would be a terrible difficulty in doing it because people are going to be upset either way, but I think by and large you have done a fantastic job. I would like to make that point first.

With regard to Chester, the purpose was to increase the electorate, as I understand it, because we are currently under the quota, and I think the inclusion of Mickle Trafford and Waverton, albeit losing Farndon, is the most logical choice for the constituency, first of all because it means that the Chester Villages ward is now part of the constituency in its entirety so that their voice is not diluted by having two MPs and risk being neglected, and I think it gives a very strong balance to Chester as a whole, especially as there were previous fears that we could split into two based on the 2013 boundary review - correct me if I'm wrong with some of these - so it's fantastic that we have one city, one MP, and, based on the previous boundaries and existing boundaries, we are pretty much still intact. Again, it just seems like a logical decision.

On the constituency itself, I live in the Lache and Chester itself has many, many accessible routes. First of all, I can get into Dodleston and Chester Villages, Huntington, before going on to the motorway, through the A55. Via the A483 I can go to Handbridge and Upton from Lache. Chester is a constituency with wonderful transport links. We are surrounded by countryside which almost cuts us off from the rest of the county so it seems logical that we keep the boundaries as they are in the proposal. Whilst we are a constituency with fairly distinctive suburbs, I would say that we are very much interconnected. For instance, as someone that lives in the Lache, I work just outside Handbridge ward and I go to church in Huntington ward. Based on that point, and I am sure the Committee will know, a church in Boughton, St Paul's, and the church in Huntington, St Luke's, have recently joined together, because St Paul's Church is being now mothballed which means that the parishes of both churches are now being joined up as well, so it makes sense that these areas are preserved within the boundaries and I thank the Committee for that. Again, it just seems a logical choice. As someone who lives right on the Welsh border, we could not expand out to the west to increase our size and we could not really expand towards the Wirral way, so including Waverton and Mickle Trafford is appropriate and it gives good balance to the constituency. I fully support the proposals. All the best on the future endeavours. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I will just check if anyone has any points of clarification for you, rather than any debate with you, on it. Are there any points anyone wants to raise? (None). I think that was pretty clear and pretty good. Thank you very much. We are grateful for you coming.

MR JACKSON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker is not until 7.00 pm. Mr Jackson, I am going to keep it fluid, but equally you are welcome to come or go as you please. We have a number of speakers from 7.00 pm onwards. I will just stay here. If they come, we will take speakers as and when they turn up and so on and see how we finish. Thank you.

After an adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening again. I am pleased to welcome Mr Tony Hooton. Would you like to come up and speak? If you come up to the podium and if you could give your name and full address for the record and then begin when suits you.

CLLR HOOTON: (Winsford Town Council) Thank you very much. My name is Tony Hooton and I live at 41 Windermere Road, Winsford CW7 2BY.

I am here this afternoon as a member of Winsford Town Council. I cannot say that I have the full support of the town council because we do not have a resolution from the town council, but the town clerk has consulted most of the members and I this afternoon have consulted with the rest so that between us we have spoken to all of the town councillors from Winsford. The town clerk was going to turn up this evening but unfortunately he is unable to attend. The majority view from the town councillors is that we would support very much Winsford joining with in particular Northwich and Middlewich because we are three mid Cheshire salt towns, all of our traditions and industry are based on salt, and it gives us, we think, a lot of affinity to work together. Apart from the traditional industries, we also get on very well with the three towns in social, entertainment and political issues together. So we do work very well together in many ways and it would be a good combination of the three towns together in the same parliamentary constituency.

In the past Winsford, as you can see on the map --- It does not show very well on there. We are in the Eddisbury constituency and we are stuck right on the edge of the constituency. To be stuck on the edge is no big problem, but the constituency consists of the one town and many villages and in many ways Winsford feels as though it is the odd one out amongst all of the villages and towns in the constituency. We think that this grouping together makes more sense for Winsford than the constituency which we are in at the moment. I think at the time when Eddisbury was formed the government thinking was that they did not want one urban and one rural and they tried to mix the two up together and make us a general constituency. I am not sure that that entirely works and I think this arrangement would be much better.

Mr Chairman, I do not wish to say any more other than --- I do. I have one more piece to say. Winsford Town Council - I am not sure if this is important to you or irrelevant because you are all independent - is 11 Labour and four Liberal Democrat councillors. I am speaking for the Labour councillors, but I do know that the town clerk consulted with the Liberal Democrats today and they also are fully in

favour of joining up with Northwich and Middlewich. So overall Winsford Town Council is in favour of this proposal. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Hooton. If you can just wait there in case there are points of clarification. Can I just check? You were welcoming bringing together Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich, did you say?

CLLR HOOTON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am just looking at the map and trying to see. On the current proposals I do not think Middlewich is in the same constituency. It is in Congleton.

CLLR HOOTON: It is in Congleton. I think that was going to be a bit of a problem. No, it is. You are quite right. I thought Middlewich was in as well, but obviously it is not. We would have welcomed that one as well, but certainly we welcome working with Northwich.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. So just so that I am clear on this, you are supporting the Boundary Commission's proposed constituency of Eddisbury and Northwich because that brings it together?

CLLR HOOTON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But if you had a choice you would prefer Middlewich to be in there as well?

CLLR HOOTON: Yes, we would. I realise there is a difficulty because Middlewich is in a different district council - it is in Cheshire East and the rest of us are in Cheshire West - and whether that causes any problem or not I really do not know, but certainly we would be pleased to work with Northwich.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Can I ask if there are any other points of clarification that anyone might wish to ask?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. I have just one question. Have you seen the Labour Party's counter-proposals for this constituency?

CLLR HOOTON: No.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points? (None). Thank you very much, Mr Hooton.

CLLR HOOTON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I see a number of new faces in the room. You are very welcome. Thank you for coming along. I just wonder whether any of you are hoping to speak. Yes? Are you already booked in?

CLLR COOPER: (Northwich Town Council) I am, yes.

MR REED: Is it Mr Bowden?

CLLR COOPER: No. Andrew Cooper from Northwich Town Council.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Because of the way the bookings move ahead, do you think you are able to speak now? Would you like to speak now?

CLLR COOPER: I am happy to speak now.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Perfect. So it is Mr Andrew Cooper?

CLLR COOPER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. What I will ask you to do is give your name and full address and then you can proceed with your presentation.

CLLR COOPER: Thank you. Do you need me to start off with my name and so on?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Your name and full address, if you would not mind, please.

CLLR COOPER: My name is Andrew Cooper. My full address is 97 Hartford Road, Davenham, Northwich.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Please proceed.

CLLR COOPER: Thank you. I am speaking tonight on behalf of Northwich Town Council. In making this submission we have considered the effects of the proposals made by the Boundary Commission on Northwich civil parish, the surrounding Northwich urban area and on Mid Cheshire more generally, together with the counter-proposals made by the two main political parties. This document that I have provided and what I am talking about tonight sets out our own counter-proposal that we believe is a better fit to the statutory criteria and, most importantly, will provide the best and most effective representation for the people of Northwich.

Northwich currently has the dubious distinction of being split between three parliamentary constituencies. The eastern side of town, covering the parishes of Lostock Gralam, Rudheath and part of Northwich, is in Tatton constituency. The parishes of Hartford, Weaverham, Kingsmead and the rest of Northwich are in Weaver Vale. The parish of Davenham with Whatcroft is included in Eddisbury. This highly undesirable situation results in confusion amongst residents over who exactly

their MP is and compromises the ability of the MP to speak for and represent the whole town. It is our strong view that the whole civil parish of Northwich, along with the parishes of Weaverham, Hartford, Kingsmead, Davenham with Whatcroft, Rudheath and Lostock Gralam should be in a single parliamentary constituency.

The Boundary Commission proposals significantly alter the boundaries in Mid Cheshire following the removal of Tatton. We acknowledge that the Boundary Commission proposal reduces the number of parliamentary constituencies covering the Northwich urban area by one, but we are unable to support the proposal due to the separation of Weaverham from Northwich. Additionally, we consider that the inclusion of Malpas, Audlem, Wrenbury and Bunbury in a constituency with Northwich is highly artificial, not least due to the lack of any significant roads between the two areas within the constituency and the total lack of bus routes. We entirely reject the Conservative Party's counter-proposal to split the civil parish of Northwich by including the Hartford and Greenbank ward in Weaver Vale. We invite the Commission to do the same. It is time to put an end to this idea that it is acceptable to treat Northwich as the leftovers of Cheshire and allow parts of the town to be split over several constituencies for organisational or partisan convenience. We consider that the natural and obvious constituency in Mid Cheshire would unite the three salt towns of Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich into a single constituency. With the reduction in the number of constituencies overall, and therefore the increase in the average size of a constituency, there is a unique opportunity for this to happen.

We refer to this constituency as Mid Cheshire, but really you could call it a number of things. Our counter-proposal shown on the map can be divided into two parts: Part A is the inclusion of Middlewich ward in Mid Cheshire in exchange for the inclusion of Audlem, Wrenbury and Bunbury into Congleton; Part B is the inclusion of Malpas in Weaver Vale in exchange for the inclusion of Weaverham civil parish in Mid Cheshire. The justification for the Middlewich, Audlem, Bunbury and Wrenbury swap is as follows.

Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich form a triangle in Mid Cheshire and have long been established as a clearly defined community through a shared history of salt extraction and processing. In recent years the regeneration of the three towns has been tied together through the Mid Cheshire Development Board, which promotes the economic development of the area. In the Boundary Commission proposals, Middlewich is surrounded on three sides by the Eddisbury and Northwich constituency. Including Middlewich with Northwich and Winsford not only makes geographical sense but produces a more compact and clearly defined constituency with a shared history and future.

The key employment centres in the area are at Road One Industrial Estate in Winsford and Gadbrook Park in Northwich, both of which employ many people from Middlewich.

Catholic children from Middlewich attend St Nick's High School in Northwich, whilst children in FE would attend either Sir John Deane's in Northwich or Mid Cheshire College in either Northwich or Winsford. Many children in Winsford attend Middlewich High School.

Many of the key transport links from Middlewich run to Northwich and Winsford. Middlewich residents have long been running a campaign to reopen the railway link between Middlewich and Northwich and construct a new station at Gadbrook Park to improve these links.

Including Audlem, Bunbury and Wrenbury with the Congleton constituency produces a similar shaped constituency to the Boundary Commission's proposal for Eddisbury and Northwich but improves upon it by providing a coherent rural constituency covering only Cheshire East unitary authority wards.

The justification for the Malpas/Weaverham swap is as follows.

Malpas is the southernmost Cheshire West and Chester ward. In the Boundary Commission's proposal it is orphaned, adjacent only to Cheshire East wards. It would be more logical to group Malpas with its neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester wards, Tattenhall and Farndon. The main transport link in Malpas is the A41 which runs north/south between Chester and Whitchurch. There are no major roads into neighbouring Wrenbury. Malpas is served by the 41 and 41A buses which also run between Chester and Whitchurch via Tattenhall. There are no bus routes to Northwich or Winsford from Malpas. The secondary school serving the area is Bishop Heber High School in Malpas itself. The catchment area for the school covers all of Malpas and the vast majority of Tattenhall and Farndon.

Weaverham civil parish is part of the larger Weaver and Cuddington three-member ward. Weaver and Cuddington is a somewhat artificial construct, uniting a number of disparate villages along the Weaver Valley all the way up to Runcorn. The presence of a small number of large three-member wards in this part of rural Cheshire has given the Boundary Commission less flexibility than in other parts of the borough with smaller, single-member wards. In the forthcoming Cheshire West and Chester local government boundary review the council proposed at its budget meeting in February 2015, I think, that this problem be resolved by creating single-member wards across the borough. Weaverham is both historically and contemporarily associated with Northwich as is reflected in it being in the same constituency as Northwich now rather than in Eddisbury with Cuddington. Weaverham expanded hugely during the 20th century, in part due to construction of houses for ICI workers from Northwich. It is for all intents and purposes part of the urban form of Northwich. Weaverham is served by two buses: the 1, which is the Northwich-Weaverham circular, and the 48, which runs between Northwich and Frodsham. There are no buses to Cuddington. We believe that the strength of the local ties between Weaverham and Northwich meets the exceptional and compelling circumstances required to split the ward in this way.

In conclusion, the opportunity to create a single constituency for Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich, providing for a single representative advocating for these towns, is too good to miss. We believe that in creating a more coherent, compact constituency in this way, as well as resolving the anomaly of Malpas, Audlem, Wrenbury and Bunbury being included with Northwich and Winsford, it provides a configuration that is a better fit with the statutory criteria and will provide better, more effective representation for Mid Cheshire. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I know you have given us copies of your written material, but I will check. Did you do your sums and do they all add up?

CLLR COOPER: I did. I can give you the numbers. The proposed Mid Cheshire constituency is 72,362. The proposed Weaver Vale is 71,923. The proposed Congleton is 72,077. They are all within the defined range. There may be some small errors in that because I could not get the electorate for Weaverham parish for December 2015, so it is the up to date electorate, but it would only be out by a hundred or so, I would think.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Weaverham parish. Okay. Can I throw it open for any queries?

MR PRATT: (Conservative Party) Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party. Can I just check that you are splitting a ward in order to achieve this?

CLLR COOPER: Yes.

MR PRATT: The ward you are splitting is ---?

CLLR COOPER: Weaver and Cuddington ward.

MR PRATT: Weaver and Cuddington. So basically Weaverham goes one way and Cuddington goes the other?

CLLR COOPER: Yes. Weaver and Cuddington is a three-member ward that goes from the Halton border to Sandiway and Cuddington in the south. It is a long, thin ward. Weaverham is in the centre of it. So the Dutton portion of the ward would stay where it is and the Sandiway and Cuddington portion of the ward would stay where it is.

MR PRATT: Have you been able to say which polling districts would be included?

CLLR COOPER: It is the three polling districts that make up Weaverham parish. I do not have them. Off the top of my head I think it might be MG3, MG4 and MG5, but I am not certain.

MR PRATT: Okay. The Boundary Commission has, I think, provided the electorates for those. Obviously one would have to check whether the electorates/polling districts added up correctly.

CLLR COOPER: Quite.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points that anyone would like to clarify in relation to that presentation? Could you just state your name and address?

CLLR BOWDEN: (Northwich Town Council) Yes. Derek Bowden, 14 Lodge Lane, Hartford, Northwich. I am a member of Northwich Town Council and have worked with Cllr Cooper in producing this submission. We have been in informal discussion with councils in Middlewich and in Winsford. They have their cycle of meetings and so they have not been able to have a council meeting to discuss this and to make a formal representation to you, but all the indicators that we have had from informal links through the town clerks and through various councillors are that Middlewich and Winsford would see this as a distinct benefit, but that cannot be formalised until they meet and they are able to pass resolutions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I will take that as a presentation, as it were, because it was a supportive presentation rather than a query. Thank you very much. Very helpful. Are there any other points that anyone would like to raise? (None). Thank you very much. I see the house is filling up. Mr Chris Matheson, are you ready to speak?

MR MATHESON: (Member of Parliament for the City of Chester) I am indeed, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Please come forward. If you could give your name and address and then please begin.

MR MATHESON: Thank you, Mr Ward. My name is Chris Matheson. I am the Member of Parliament for the City of Chester. I live in Hewitt Street, Hoole, Chester, and my office is at 25 Castle Street, Chester CH1.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Please carry on.

MR MATHESON: I am pleased to come along and make a couple of comments about the Boundary Commission's proposals. I am very pleased that the Commission has largely kept intact the City of Chester constituency. I had fears previously that it was not going to be. In particular, I am pleased that split wards have largely been removed or adjusted from what is currently the circumstances and therefore certain anomalies or difficulties have been ironed out. I welcome that.

There is a proposal from the Labour Party to include the ward of Elton in the city. I welcome that. Elton was part of historic Chester originally and there would be a historic fit - and I believe probably a community fit as well - to bring Elton in.

Mr Ward, I do find myself in the rather unusual position of taking issue with one of the proposals by the Labour Party, which I ought to point out, which is that I do not support the removal of Huntington and Dodleston ward from the City of Chester. I am very keen to keep the City of Chester ward together and I do believe that we should make every effort to do that. As I say, it is an unusual position. I can understand why it has happened - because of numbers. I know that the Boundary Commissioners are working to very tight instructions that have been issued from Government, but that would be my position. Thank you, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Can I just ask for a point of clarification? Did I hear you say that Elton ward has traditionally been linked to the City of Chester?

MR MATHESON: It was traditionally part of the old City of Chester - not necessarily the constituency more recently, but it was part of the historic city - and there are certainly links between the ward and the city and the ward and the constituency. I think it was probably one or two boundary reviews ago that it was moved out of the city, but there is a historic link.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Let me open it to the floor. Are there any other queries from anyone?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: : Have you done the mathematics as to the consequences of your proposal?

MR MATHESON: I have not actually, no. I am looking at it from the position of trying to keep that constituency together. I am clear that the parameters that have been set by the Government for the boundaries do place a very tight restriction on the Boundary Commission in terms of numbers and that numbers trump every other consideration, but I have not done the numbers. My concern is mostly to keep that historic City of Chester constituency as intact as possible, and certainly bring in those historic parts such as Elton, but making the other changes as well that I have mentioned.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: : Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. The addition of Elton does result in a constituency of 77,152.

MR MATHESON: Indeed, Sir, if that is the case.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: In keeping Dodleston and Huntington.

MR MATHESON: Yes. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Thank you for coming along.

MR MATHESON: Thank you, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have a number of other speakers, some of whom were booked in, so I might see if they are available. Miss Lauren Cassidy, are you able to speak now?

CLLR LAUREN CASSIDY: (Norton North ward) Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Please come on up. Again, as with previous speakers, if you can give your name and full address and then please begin.

CLLR LAUREN CASSIDY: Okay. Lauren Cassidy. My full address is 20 Adlington Road, Runcorn. I am here as a local councillor in the Norton North ward which falls within Halton Borough Council and also falls within Weaver Vale constituency.

I would like to support in the main the proposals that were made by the Labour Party earlier this week for Weaver Vale, which is essentially to retain its current identity and those links that we have between Runcorn, Frodsham and Helsby and up through into Northwich. The towns of Runcorn and Northwich are at the extremities and have long links which stretch back right through to ICI being a major employer and the chemical works.

On the other side, which I would not like to support, I would like to put a counter-proposal forward, which would be in the Runcorn side where we clearly need to lose one ward into Halton. I think the Boundary Commission proposed that to be Halton Lea and the Labour Party proposes it to be Beechwood ward. I would suggest that Windmill Hill would be the best fit to move into Halton. Up until, I think, 2010, Halton Castle was part of Weaver Vale constituency. It was taken and moved into Halton constituency. Halton Castle is coterminous with Windmill Hill. Windmill Hill has around 1,000 voters which would clearly make up what was needed in Halton for it to be a viable constituency, which it currently would not quite be. I would suggest that is the most coterminous ward than anything in Halton. Halton Lea should remain within Weaver Vale. As I see it, it certainly has stronger links to the wards in Runcorn that fall within Weaver Vale than the wards in Runcorn that fall within Halton constituency. The majority of people, for example, who will do their shopping within Halton Lea ward are from the new town, and the new town wards primarily fall within Weaver Vale constituency. The main shopping area for Halton constituency on the Runcorn side would be Runcorn town centre and that certainly is not used by anybody in Halton Lea. In terms of Beechwood being proposed, we are a bit disappointed and would therefore like to propose Windmill Hill instead. I think that makes sense.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. Thank you very much. Can I just check whether anyone in the room has any points that they wish to clarify in relation to that presentation? (None). It seems not. Thank you very much indeed. Thanks for coming. Is Mrs Sandra Cassidy here? Thank you.

MRS SANDRA CASSIDY: My name is Sandra Cassidy. My address is 20 Adlington Road, Runcorn. I'm a member of the public.

I've looked closely at the information that you've circulated with regard to the changes to the boundary. I'm really disappointed at some of the proposals that the Boundary Commission have come up with. I look at my constituency and look at my community and when I look at the community and the way you've stretched it right across towards Wales, it's almost like: "Runcorn is totally irrelevant. Let's just shove it in here or shove a bit there". When I look at the reasons for it and I look at Derek Twigg's constituency of Halton -- and you can look at the numbers that you're told each constituency should hold. I can understand that you need to take something from Runcorn, but when you actually look at Runcorn, the number Derek needs is very, very small. So when you look at all the wards that are contained within Runcorn, I would support that Windmill Hill is moved because it is only a small ward and it's also coterminous with Castlefields or Halton Castle. In fact, if you look at Halton Castle and you look at Windmill Hill, the actual split of the ward is one street, so half the road goes to one ward and the other half falls into the other one.

There's definite ties between Frodsham and this side of Runcorn - the new town. People shop in Frodsham, they go to the market in Frodsham and they often go out to eat and socialise in Frodsham. Runcorn itself, being an old ICI depot, almost does have strong ties also with the rest of that part of Cheshire.

I haven't got a speech. I've just come from work. All I would say is I would prefer that most of our community is kept together. We've been put together with Northwich and with Frodsham for a long time and there's ties there now. You're just almost like breaking them ties by removing part of the constituency. Okay. That's all I have to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Thank you for taking the time to come from work.

MRS CASSIDY: You're welcome.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are the better for it. Does anyone have any points or queries? (None). I am therefore very grateful. Thank you.

MRS CASSIDY: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Looking around the room, I have at least three potential speakers. Let me just check between them. Mr Derek Bowden, do you want to speak further?

MR BOWDEN: No, thank you. I have made my contribution.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I have both Ellen Cargill and David Cargill. Would you both like to talk? In whichever order you prefer, please come forward. Again, if you could give your name and full address, please, and then please say what you wish to.

CLLR DAVID CARGILL: (Norton South ward) My name is David Cargill. I live at 41 Haywood Crescent WA7 6NA - Runcorn. I am a councillor at Halton. I would like to speak really not to support the Boundary Commission's submission but to seek some alteration to that and mainly speak also in support of what Lauren Cassidy has said.

There are points I want to make here because there were some comments within the Boundary Commission's document which referred to trying to avoid urban areas latching on/being merged with rural areas and I would like to say that I think people should know that Halton itself is 97 per cent urban so it very difficult not to move some of those wards, I understand, to the rural areas.

What is important also is the fact that we do have a new town. It is very important for residents and community cohesion not to be split and merged. I would also make the point that the suggestion Halton Lea comes out and Beechwood -- Halton Lea is a key part of that cohesion. It is the main shopping area in that new town, which was built in the late '60s, and lots of new families have come in there, settled down and tried to work together. The more they get split, the more community cohesion is stretched.

Also, I would contend that the bus services within Halton itself are fine but they are not so good moving out really to the outlying areas and that is the difficulty. It is important, particularly for people who come from the new town, to try to hold those particular areas within the new town together and we see the current proposals as not being conducive to community cohesion at all. That, I think, is the main point that I particularly wanted to make. I think it is important that we all understand that there is a new town there.

The other thing as well is that Halton is also a member now - and an active member - in the Liverpool city region. We like to maintain as many political ties as possible with our colleagues who are in Halton and who will do the major part of the work and we do not like to be really left out of what is going on. When people come together and formulate plans and it means within the Halton constituency, that means we do not get any part of that input. We feel really on the outside. We would really like to be involved.

We realise that because of the numbers game we cannot all be Halton, but we do end up in different areas. We are in Weaver Vale now. We have also been in Warrington South. Whenever there is a movement of something, one or two or three

or four of our wards get moved off elsewhere. It is not good for us and sometimes we think: "Well, maybe somebody else should have a turn within that area of being particularly moved out".

I think I have basically said all that I wanted to say. I am happy to answer any questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Can I ask from the floor whether there are any points?

CLLR ELLEN CARGILL: (Halton Castle ward) I would like to come up and say a few words.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you just give me a moment, I will certainly call you up. So there are no points of clarification. Thank you very much indeed.

CLLR DAVID CARGILL: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are always grateful for a lot more local community input into these discussions to help us get a real flavour. Thank you. Again, if you could give your name and address.

CLLR ELLEN CARGILL: My name is Ellen Cargill. I live at 41 Haywood Crescent, Runcorn WA7 6NA. I am a councillor on Halton Borough Council and my ward is Halton Castle.

In 2010, Halton Castle was taken out of Weaver Vale and put into Halton. I am in a cleft stick really because I live in Weaver Vale but my ward is in Halton Castle. Initially it was in Weaver Vale and I did feel at the time it was the wrong thing to do. The problem that we have now is that you want to take further wards out of our constituency. The Weaver Vale constituency is a good constituency. We have good contacts. We go into Frodsham and Helsby, Kingsley and Northwich to socialise and to keep the political picture clear. I have to say initially Runcorn, Frodsham and Helsby were one constituency. When we came to live in Runcorn as a new town in 1975 we lived in the Runcorn constituency which took in Frodsham and Helsby. That has not changed. We still have good contacts with Frodsham and Helsby.

We do not like the idea of Runcorn being swapped about here, there and everywhere. As Dave said, we were in Runcorn, then we went to Warrington South and then we went to Weaver Vale, which we have accepted all along the way. Now you are trying to take more wards away from us and we do not think it is right. I know we have to lose one ward and we think that Windmill Hill, which is the smallest ward --- It latches on to Halton Castle, which is my ward. It is split on one road of all the new houses that are being built now for Windmill Hill. There is only one road that is in Halton Castle. The rest of the houses that are being built are going to be in Windmill Hill. That is the reason why we thought Windmill Hill would

be better, rather than any of the other wards, to be taken away. It is the smallest ward. It fits in with Halton nicely, it being with Halton Castle ward as well. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mrs Cargill. Are there any points of clarification that anyone wishes to seek? (None). Thank you very much indeed.

CLLR ELLEN CARGILL: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I think that completes all the names I have on my list. Is there anyone in the room who has not spoken who would like to speak on any point at all in relation to the proposals?

CLLR ELLEN CARGILL: Can I just say that the Halton CLP supports what we are saying about Windmill Hill going to them? They have written a letter, I understand.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. So we have no current planned speakers. Is anyone here aware of whether there is anyone else likely to be coming along this evening? (No response). In which case what I will probably do, rather than you all sitting here staring at me and me staring at you, is adjourn for another 20 minutes, if I may, just to see if anyone else comes along. If not then I will probably close the hearing for the day and anyone who is available and wishes to can join us again tomorrow. So just before 7.40 pm I will take another check. Thank you very much.

After an adjournment

Time noted: 7.40 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: As I promised, we have resumed at 7.40 pm, but no other visitors have arrived and I suspect it is not likely now given that we have waited. Thank you all for coming today. Thank you to those who have made contributions. I am very grateful indeed for that. We will consider those alongside all the other evidence and other representations that we are receiving. The next set of representations arrive tomorrow and we will resume at 9.00 am tomorrow morning, with luck with some people in the room. Our first speaker is, I think, booked for 9.30 am tomorrow morning. We will see how we go. Until then, thank you very much. Thank you for coming.

At 7.41 pm the hearing adjourned until
9.00 am on Friday 14 October 2016

B

MR BARTON, 6, 8, 9, 10
CLLR BOWDEN, 31, 35

C

CLLR DAVID CARGILL, 35, 36
CLLR ELLEN CARGILL, 36, 37
CLLR LAUREN CASSIDY, 33
MRS CASSIDY, 34
MS COLLINS, 10, 11, 12
CLLR COOPER, 27, 30, 31
MR CROWE, 5, 6

G

DR GARMAN, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20

H

MR MARK HOLLAND, 12, 14, 15
CLLR HOOTON, 25, 26
CLLR HOULBROOK, 20, 23

J

MR JACKSON, 23, 24

L

MR LARGAN, 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23

M

MR CHRIS MATHESON MP, 31, 32, 33

P

MR PRATT, 30, 31

R

MR REED, 3, 27

T

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 12, 26, 32
THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33,
34, 35, 36, 37

U

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER, 8, 15, 32

W

DR WALSH, 12, 18