

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**GUILDFORD HARBOUR HOTEL, 3 ALEXANDRA TERRACE,
HIGH STREET, GUILDFORD GUI 3DA**

ON

THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 2016
DAY ONE

Before:

Mr Colin Byrne, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
83 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0HW

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this public hearing on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries in the South East region. My name is Colin Byrne and I am an Assistant Commissioner of the Boundary Commission for England. I was appointed by the Commission to assist them in the task of making recommendations for new constituencies in the South East region. I am responsible for chairing the hearing today and tomorrow. I am also responsible, with my fellow Assistant Commissioners Alan Nisbett and Stephen Lawes, for analysing all the representations received about the initial proposals for this region. We will then make recommendations to the Commission as to whether or not those initial proposals should be revised.

I am assisted here today by members of the Commission staff led by Sam Hartley, who is sitting beside me. Sam will shortly provide an explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for new constituencies in this region. He will tell you how you can make written representations and he will deal with one or two administrative matters.

The hearing today is scheduled to last from 10 am until 8 pm. Tomorrow it is scheduled to run from 9 am until 5 pm. I can vary that timetable and I will take into account the fulsome attendance and the demand for opportunities to speak. I should point out that under the legislation that governs the Commission's review, each public hearing must be held over two days and cannot be extended into a third.

The purpose of this public hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals for the South East region. A number of people have already registered to speak and have been given a timeslot. If there is any free time during the day, which I anticipate there will be, I will invite anybody who has not registered but who would like to speak, to do so.

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

I will now hand over to Sam Hartley who will provide a brief explanation of the Commission's initial proposals in the South East region.

MR HARTLEY: Thank you, Colin. Good morning, everyone. As Colin mentioned, my name is Sam Hartley and I am Secretary to the Boundary Commission for England. I am responsible for supporting the commissioners in their role to recommend new parliamentary constituency boundaries. At this hearing I lead the team of staff

responsible for ensuring that the hearing runs smoothly. As Colin 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 Colin in carrying out his role. Please ask one of us outside of the hearing if you need any help or assistance.

I would like to talk now about the Commission's initial proposals for new constituency boundaries which were published on 13 September 2016. We use the European electoral regions as a template for the allocation of the 499 constituencies to which England is entitled, not including the two constituencies to be allocated to the Isle of Wight. This approach is permitted by the legislation and has been supported by previous public consultation. The approach does not prevent people from putting forward counter-proposals that include one or more constituencies being split between the region, but it is likely that compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade us to depart from the regional based approach we adopted in formulating our initial proposals.

In considering the composition of each region we noted that it might not be possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties. Therefore, we have grouped some local authority areas into sub regions. The Commission's proposals for the South East are for 83 constituencies, a reduction of one. Our proposals leave 15 of the existing constituencies unchanged. We propose only minor changes to a further 47 constituencies with two wards or fewer altered from the existing ones.

The rules that we work to state that we must allocate two constituencies to the Isle of Wight; neither of these constituencies is required to have an electorate that is within the requirements on the electoral size set out in the rules.

In Berkshire, two of the eight existing constituencies are unchanged, while four are changed by the transfer of just one ward.

In Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent and Medway, two of the 25 existing constituencies are unaltered and one is reconfigured slightly due to re-warding. A further four are altered only by the transfer of one ward.

In Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, one of the existing seven constituencies is unchanged.

In Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, three of the 18 existing constituencies are unaltered, while a further four are altered by the transfer of just one ward.

In the county of Oxfordshire, one of the six existing constituencies is unchanged, while one is changed by the transfer of just one ward.

In Surrey, five of the existing 11 constituencies are unaltered, while three of the remaining six are altered by the transfer of only one ward.

In West Sussex, one of the existing constituencies is unchanged and one is reconfigured slightly due to re-warding; a further five are changed only by the transfer of one ward.

We have proposed one constituency that contains electors from Brighton and Hove and East Sussex. It crosses the boundary on the south coast, combining the east of the City of Brighton and Hove with Newhaven and Seaford. We propose one constituency that contains electors from East Sussex and Kent. It crosses the boundary at the Weald, combining the towns of Crowborough and Tenterden. We further propose two constituencies that contain electors from Kent and Medway, one crosses the boundary at Higham, combining it with Rochester, and the other at Chatham, combining it with East and West Malling.

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

The scale of change in this review is significant and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period. We are consulting on our proposals until Monday 5 December so there is still time after this hearing for people to contribute in writing. There are also reference copies of the proposals present at this hearing and they are 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 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 record of the public hearings and, as you can see from the back, 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 will have an opportunity to comment on those representations. We expect this period to occur in the spring of next year. The publication of the hearing records and written representations include certain personal data of those who have made representations. I therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's data protection and privacy policy, a copy of which we have with us and which is also available on our website.

I have just a couple of points of housekeeping. There is no fire alarm due today, so if it goes off please use the exit on the right hand side or back through the double doors and through reception. The toilets are located outside and back towards reception on the right hand side of the bar. Please switch off all mobile phones or put them to silent.

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

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is tradition that we start with representations from the main political parties. A ballot has taken place somewhere in the country and the first representation is from Greg Cook of the Labour Party. For the benefit of people who have not been to the proceedings in the past, the representations will last approximately 30 minutes. We will take the Labour Party first, then the Liberal Democrats which will probably take us up to 11.15. We will then take a short break for coffee. Then we will hear the Conservative Party and the Green Party representations.

MR COOK: (Labour Party) Thank you very much indeed, Sir. To introduce myself, my name is Greg Cook and I am an official of the National Labour Party based at our head office in Victoria Street, SW1. I am making this submission on behalf of the National Labour Party and also the South East region of the Labour Party. It is being presented as an overall response to the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission following a detailed consultation process within the Labour Party involving all members of Parliament, Constituency Labour Parties and others in the region.

I am going to cover four main areas. Firstly, our views on the review process itself; secondly, on the statutory criteria; thirdly, on the policies of the Commission; then the bulk of the submission will obviously be on the initial proposals and we make a small number of counter-proposals to them which we will set out as part of that.

Dealing firstly with the review process itself, we welcome the initial proposals of the Commission and the clear and comprehensive way in which they have set those proposals out. While the Labour Party disagrees with some of them, and will be setting out some alternatives which we believe better fit the statutory criteria, we accept that in all cases they have fully considered the different options and explained the decisions which they have made. We also welcome the Commission's efforts to stimulate and encourage public participation in the process and to consult with the political parties on their policies and procedures. We are grateful in particular for the opportunity at this hearing to set out the views of the party on the Commission's initial proposals.

We note that under the terms of the Act the Commission may, in choosing between different schemes, take into account special geographical circumstances, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency, local government boundaries, the boundaries of existing constituencies and any local ties that will be broken by changes to constituencies.

It is self-evident that the Commission may not be able to respect all of these criteria or, indeed, in some places any of them in every part of this region while keeping the electorates of constituencies within the permissible range. We accept that in some areas the disruption to existing constituencies is likely to be substantial, that it may be difficult to respect local authority boundaries, and that local ties may be broken. Where the Labour Party puts forward alternative proposals to those of the Commission we do so on the basis that we believe them to be on balance more consistent with those statutory criteria. We note and accept that the electoral quota for the review is 74,769 and that all seats in the South East region, with the exception of the two in the Isle of Wight, must therefore have electorates of between 71,031 and 78,507.

In respect of the policies of the Commission as they have been described, we welcome the Commission's decision to use the European electoral regions as sub-national review areas for the purposes of their initial proposals. Were they not to do so, the review of constituencies in England would become much more complex with almost limitless options and the result would be that meaningful consultation and public participation would be much harder to achieve. We note that the electorate of the South East region, not including the Isle of Wight, at 6,067,475 gives an entitlement under the Sainte-Laguë

allocation to 81 seats with an average electorate of 74,907, which is 138 above the electoral quota.

We note the Commission's policy of using district and unitary wards as the smallest unit with which to build constituencies. We also note the Commission's remarks on this issue in their guidance which states that they recognise there may be exceptional and compelling circumstances that make it appropriate to divide a ward, but that no such proposal has been made in the South East region or anywhere else. The Labour Party supports the policy of the Commission in this respect and believes that any such proposal should be treated on its merits but within an assumption that whole wards and divisions should remain intact in the absence of those compelling and exceptional circumstances such as are described.

The Labour Party also notes the concept of the so-called "orphan ward" where one ward of a local authority is added to a constituency wholly or partly in another local authority. This is regarded by definition as undesirable. We accept that such arrangements are often anomalous and are clearly at odds with respect for local authority boundaries. However, we believe that a dogmatic policy, which considered that such arrangements are always undesirable, is not appropriate and that the addition of other wards just for the sake of not having a single ward in such a scenario is not necessarily to be preferred if it means that ties are broken and electors moved in that ward. We note that in this region in particular the Commission has been required to make a number of minor changes to constituencies in order to increase or reduce their electorates, some of which result in orphan ward arrangements. In most of these cases the Labour Party acknowledges that these arrangements are anomalous but we believe they are preferable to the wider scale changes which would be the alternative and which would, we believe, unnecessarily disturb more electors.

The Labour Party notes also that there is no requirement on the Commission to avoid the crossing of county boundaries as there used to be under the previous legislation. In this region the Commission has considered all the counties as separate review areas with the exception of East Sussex, including Brighton and Hove, and Kent, including Medway. We believe this is a sensible approach and obviously consistent with respect for local authority boundaries.

On the names of the constituencies, we note and support the Commission's policy on the names of constituencies. We are aware, however, of a tendency for the names of seats to become more complex and unwieldy, particularly as they increase in size, and would, as a matter of principle, resist that. Where a constituency is largely unchanged, we would

normally support the retention of the existing name. We will, however, consider all such proposals on their merits and taking account of local opinion.

We now set out our views on the initial proposals of the Commission in this region and an outline of some alternative proposals. We refer to the merits of proposals in terms of the statutory criteria. In this submission I do not go into details of the community ties and other relevant matters which underpin that, which we would anticipate will be amplified in the statements of individuals in the areas affected.

We note that the Commission proposes that the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex should all be allocated whole numbers of constituencies and that East Sussex and Kent should form another review area. The Labour Party supports this arrangement although we note that the average electorates of constituencies in Buckinghamshire and in Oxfordshire are in excess of 76,500 and that this therefore reduces the number of options and may result in more ties being broken. However, we do not believe there is any other grouping of councils which improves on these arrangements or any obvious advantage, including part of Buckinghamshire or Oxfordshire in a seat with part of Berkshire.

To take each review area in turn, firstly Berkshire, we note the electorate of the six authorities which comprise the county of Berkshire is 587,676 and that this gives a theoretical entitlement of 7.86 seats. We therefore support the allocation of eight whole seats. We do not wish to make any definitive counter-proposals for constituencies in Berkshire. We note that the Bracknell and Maidenhead constituencies are retained unchanged and the only change proposed to the Newbury constituency is the transfer of the Aldermaston ward to the Wokingham constituency. However, we do believe that the transfer of the Chalvey ward of Slough to the Windsor constituency is clearly unsatisfactory in removing part of the centre of the town of Slough and placing it in a constituency with which it has no affinity and from which it is largely cut off by the M4 motorway. We assume the Commission believes that they have no real alternative to this proposal and we recognise that it could only be recommended by dividing another town, such as Bracknell, or by dividing a ward. We will, however, consider any option that may be proposed and make our comments on that during the secondary consultation period. I do believe you will be hearing a submission from the Slough Constituency Labour Party on this matter.

We also note that the Commission proposes to increase the electorate of the Reading West constituency by the inclusion of the ward of Mapledurham. We welcome the retention of this seat otherwise unchanged. However, we do note that Mapledurham, while a Reading Borough ward, would be effectively a detached part within the proposed

constituency, lacking any road access to the rest of it and that its ties to the Thames ward would be broken. We do accept the addition of the Maiden Erlegh ward to the Reading East constituency is the logical way of enlarging that seat and once again we will consider and comment on any counter-proposals that others may make in this area which may address the shortcomings of the initial proposals.

On Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, we note the electorate of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes at 536,534 gives an entitlement to 7.18 constituencies. We support the allocation of seven whole seats. We also note that the electorate of the City of Milton Keynes at 186,933 means it can no longer have two whole constituencies and the two existing constituencies are both significantly above 80,000 electors. Therefore, part of the city must be included in the Buckingham constituency. We agree with the Commission that any proposal to include part of Bletchley in the Buckingham constituency would obviously divide Bletchley but also remove the main focal point in the south of Milton Keynes, a role which Bletchley has which is underlined by the new name which is proposed for the successor to the Milton Keynes South seat. We recognise there are many options for the combination of wards to be included in the Buckingham constituency and for the arrangement of two seats within Milton Keynes. We support the inclusion of the Stony Stratford ward in Buckingham constituency which we believe is a distinct community and which does include some rural areas. We believe there are many alternatives to the inclusion of the Wolverton ward which has strong ties to Bradwell. Again, we will consider all options that may be proposed and comment on them during the secondary consultation period. Again, I believe you will be hearing submissions from the Milton Keynes Labour Party on these matters.

We support the proposals for the Aylesbury constituency which is shaped as a consequence of the county and regional boundary in this area. We support the proposal to retain the Beaconsfield constituency unchanged and the amendments to the Chesham and Amersham and Wickham which we believe actually improve on the shapes of the existing constituencies.

In Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent and Medway, we support the Commission's decision to allocate 24 seats to this area which has an electorate of 1,793,352 and an entitlement to almost exactly 24 seats. We note that there must be at least one seat comprising parts of East Sussex in Kent and we support the proposed High Weald constituency which comprises similar small towns and rural areas. We do note that this seat will be made up of parts of four districts and five existing constituencies. However, we accept that it is an entirely new seat at the centre of the review area which includes parts of two counties and is, of its nature, bringing together what might be called leftover parts of other seats. We do believe, however, that it is likely to be a coherent

constituency. We agree with the Commission that the best way to enlarge the Hove constituency is by the addition of the Regency ward and that the ties of Regency to St Peters and North Lane make it logical also to include that ward in the constituency, thereby uniting much of central Brighton in the same seat as Hove and all their similar seafront communities. We also believe the Hove Park ward has ties to Withdean and, therefore, that the Brighton North constituency which would contain most of the inland parts of the City of Brighton and Hove is also a logical unit. We support also the Brighton East and Newhaven constituency which incorporates all the seafront wards and the Brighton Kemptown constituency and extends that to also include Newhaven and Seaford. We support the proposals to retain the Eastbourne constituency and Hastings and Rye effectively unchanged. We would oppose any counter-proposal to make changes to them. We also support the Lewes and Uckfield constituency which, whilst basically a new seat, does have clear local centres to which the rural areas have ties. We also additionally support the revised Bexhill and Battle which now includes the town of Hailsham.

We accept that the changes in this area mean that the Faversham and Mid Kent constituency must be abolished. We support the inclusion of the town of Faversham in a constituency with Canterbury. We also agree with the creation of a mainly urban Maidstone constituency, including particularly the wards of Shepway North and Shepway South. We would propose, however, that this constituency should also include the Park Wood ward, which has ties to the Shepway wards and is part of urban Maidstone, and that the Barming and Detling and Thurnham wards should be included instead in the Tonbridge and Weald constituency, which includes much of the rural part of Maidstone Borough. We also support the proposed Tunbridge Wells constituency and Sevenoaks.

We welcome the changes to Dartford which becomes coterminous with its borough. We note the number of consequential changes made to other seats in this area largely to increase their electorates. These include the transfer of Ash and New Ash Green, Hartley and Hodsoll Street, to Gravesham constituency, of Higham to Rochester and Strood and of Lordswood and Capstone to Gillingham and Rainham. We believe that as a result of these changes there are anomalous arrangements and that the Chatham and The Mallings constituency in particular is an awkward shape with the four Medway wards making up effectively a chain and the ties which those have with Lordswood and Capstone are broken. So, once again, while we are not putting forward any counter-proposals definitive of our own because there are no obvious ones that we have identified, certainly at this stage, we would obviously consider any others that others may bring forward which may address some of the awkward proposals which are made here.

We support the proposed Sittingbourne and Sheppey, which is unchanged, and the reduced Ashford constituency, including Saxon Shore and Folkestone and Hythe, which is coterminous with Shepway Borough. We also accept the Dover constituency, although we do believe some ties are broken by the transfer of the Aylesham and Eythorne and Shepherdswell wards to Canterbury and Faversham. We believe that the Thanet East and North Kent coastal seats are both sensible and combine similar areas.

In Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, once again we fully support the initial proposals for Hampshire while recognising that one seat must be abolished. We support the proposal that Basingstoke be unchanged and that Aldershot should comprise the borough of Rushmoor plus the two Church Crookham wards. We support the inclusion of the town of Alton in the North East Hampshire constituency and its replacement in East Hampshire with the town of Horndean and other areas of East Hampshire district. We support again the retention of Eastleigh and Gosport unchanged, the minor amendment to Fareham and also the proposed New Forest East, New Forest West, Test Valley, North West Hampshire and Winchester constituencies, as we do to the changes to the Portsmouth seats and the inclusion of the Nelson ward in Portsmouth South rather than Baffins which unites the dockyard area. We accept that Portsmouth North must include the Havant Borough wards of Purbrook and Stakes and that Havant must therefore include the three wards of Cowplain, Hart Plain and Waterloo. We welcome the allocation of two whole seats to the City of Southampton and on balance we agree that the initial proposals are the most sensible arrangement in uniting the centre of the city in one constituency.

We agree with the Commission's view on the Isle of Wight that, while it is not laid down in the legislation, they should as far as possible seek to balance the electorates of the two seats and therefore we support the initial proposals there as well.

We note the county of Oxfordshire with an electorate of 461,334 has a theoretical entitlement to 6.17 constituencies and we support the allocation of six whole seats. We believe that the initial proposals probably represent the only means of allocating six whole seats to this county without dividing any of the main towns. We would, however, make a counter-proposal to include the Jericho and Osney ward of the City of Oxford in Oxford East rather than the St Margaret's ward which we believe would thereby unite the centre of Oxford in the Oxford East seat. We acknowledge the Oxford West and Abingdon seat would be an unusual shape but in community terms we would argue that the ties in the centre and north of Oxford would be better reflected by that arrangement.

We note the county of Surrey with an electorate of 816,524 has a theoretical entitlement to 10.92 seats and we support the allocation of 11 seats. We support the proposal to

retain the Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, Reigate and South West Surrey constituencies unchanged. We note that minor changes are necessary to the other seats in order to increase the electorates of the Spelthorne and Runnymede and Weybridge constituencies and to reduce that of Esher and Walton. The proposal to include the wards of Chertsey St Ann's in Spelthorne clearly breaks ties within Chertsey but we accept that any other proposal is likely to be equally disruptive. We also regret that the Woking Borough and Surrey Heath district will, along with Runnymede Borough, under these proposals be divided between constituencies.

On West Sussex, we know that the county of West Sussex has an electorate of 598,549 and a theoretical entitlement to 8.01 constituencies. We support the allocation of eight. We support here the retention of the East Worthing and Shoreham constituency unchanged and the minimal change to Worthing West to reflect new ward boundaries. We also support the minor changes to the other seats with the exception of the inclusion of the ward of Copthorne and Worth in the Crawley constituency. This ward is separated from the town of Crawley by the M23 motorway and would, we believe, be an artificial addition to the seat. We propose instead that the Horsham district ward of Rusper and Colgate should be included in Crawley, which we believe has much stronger ties and looks towards the town and has several road links into it. Again, I believe you will be hearing from the Crawley Labour Party on that issue.

In summary, Sir, we support the vast bulk of what the Commission has proposed in their initial proposals. The details of all the constituencies where we make a definitive alternative proposal is set out in appendices A, B and C. We have three counter-proposals which affect six constituencies. However, we will consider, as I say, any counter-proposals which are made which address the breaking of ties which we have identified, especially in Slough, Reading, Milton Keynes, North Kent and in Surrey. We will also make a detailed written submission before 5 December. We reserve our position on all other proposals that may be made and will comment on them during the secondary consultation period. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. I would now ask whether there are any questions for clarification. Are there any points of clarification that anybody would like to ask? Can I ask you to give your name and address?

MR BEAMENT: (Green Party) Tom Beament. I live on the Fieldway in Ditchling. I just wanted to check that I had clear your proposals in relation to Brighton and Hove. It sounded as if you were not actually challenging any of the arrangements that have been proposed. Is that right?

MR COOK: That is right, yes. We are supporting the proposal in Brighton and Hove.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other questions for clarification? No. Thank you very much and thank you for sticking to your allotted time with great succinctness. Our second representation from a political party is from the Liberal Democrats.

CLLR HOUSE: (Liberal Democrat Party) Good morning. My name is Keith House. I am making this oral presentation on behalf of the Liberal Democrats in the South East, covering our party regions of South East and South Central. We will submit a full written representation before 5 December 2015. I am a member of the party's Federal Executive, council leader in Eastleigh.

We agree with the division of the region into the following sub-regions: Berkshire, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent and Medway, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, Surrey, West Sussex. I will give a regional overview, starting with Kent and Sussex.

In Kent we support the Commission's proposed seats of Canterbury and Faversham as well as Maidstone. We have reservations about some of the other proposed seats in Kent but do not offer a detailed alternative scheme at this time. We accept and support the Commission's proposals for West Sussex. In East Sussex we strongly support the initial proposals to make no change to the Eastbourne and Willingdon constituency. We will suggest some changes for seats in East Sussex.

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and the Isle of Wight. We agree with the Boundary Commission's proposals for Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. We will make a limited proposal to move some wards in Surrey in order to avoid splitting existing communities in Chertsey and in Byfleet at West Byfleet.

We wish to submit alternative proposals to those of the Boundary Commission for the counties of Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The Berkshire proposals are in some detail. We agree with the Commission's proposals that the county of Berkshire should retain eight MPs. We further agree with the Commission's proposals to not combine the county of Berkshire with any other local authority area. We are mindful of the restrictions imposed on the Commission and we respectfully submit that our proposals more strongly reflect community links while remaining within the legal constraints.

Starting with Newbury, we agree with the Commission's proposals for Newbury. The increase in electorate means that the wards in the existing seats have to change. We

agree that of the possible alternatives Aldermaston is the best ward to transfer out of the current Newbury constituency. In Reading, we submit that the remaining wards of West Berkshire have stronger links to Reading than they do to Wokingham. There are no public transport links from the villages in West Berkshire to Wokingham but there are bus and train services from those villages to Reading. We therefore submit that the remaining wards of West Berkshire be combined with some wards to create a Reading West county constituency. The wards in Reading Borough which remain should form a Reading East Borough constituency together with two of the Wokingham Borough council wards, Bulmershe and Whitegates and South Lake, that are currently in the Reading East constituency. Geographically that looks like that and the split of wards as here. (Indicating).

For Wokingham we note that all of the current parliamentary constituencies in the Wokingham Borough Council area include parts from neighbouring council areas. We note that the Boundary Commission proposals continue to split Wokingham Borough Council in this way. Our proposals mean that one seat is now entirely within Wokingham Borough Council. We note that the town of Woodley is currently unevenly split between two constituencies, Reading East and Maidenhead. We express reservations at the Boundary Commission's proposals to further split the town of Erleigh. We submit that the town of Erleigh is one of the three main towns within Wokingham Borough Council and should remain united within the Wokingham constituency. Finchampstead also has strong community links to Wokingham rather than to Bracknell. The main public transport links and main roads from Finchampstead go to Wokingham town, not to Bracknell. Finchampstead is part of Wokingham Borough Council. The built up areas of Finchampstead co-join Wokingham town. We therefore submit that Finchampstead should be part of Wokingham constituency geographically as this and the ward split here or within Wokingham Borough. (Indicating)

For Slough we note the Commission's initial proposals suggest moving Chalvey ward out of Slough Borough constituency. We note that Chalvey ward contains many of the key community facilities for the town of Slough, namely the police station, the courts and other administrative centres for the town. In our opinion, the only link to Windsor is the road out of slough. We acknowledge that boundary changes are required to the Slough constituency. We submit that Foxborough ward should be transferred to Windsor and Chalvey ward remain with Slough. Geographically as here and this ward combination. (Indicating)

For Windsor, as a result of our proposals various minor adjustments are suggested for the remaining Berkshire seats, these are as a result of the strict electorate criteria. We believe, however, that our proposals still take into account local community ties. We

propose that Foxborough ward be transferred from Slough to Windsor in the place of Chalvey ward, as previously discussed. This change means that Ascot ward and Bracknell Forest does not have sufficient electorate to enable Windsor constituency to meet quota. Therefore, we propose that Bray ward be transferred to Windsor and Ascot remain with Bracknell. This keeps the constituency boundary coterminous with the district boundary in the Ascot area as well as giving a better local fit. Windsor as such and these ward combinations (indicating).

For Bracknell, as previously discussed, Finchampstead has a strong community link with Wokingham and we propose that the two Finchampstead wards be transferred to Wokingham constituency. Bracknell then becomes as here with this ward split, primarily Bracknell Forest Borough (indicating).

For Maidenhead, the transfer of Bray ward to Windsor can be offset by more evenly splitting Woodley town so that two of the four Wokingham Borough Council wards are in Maidenhead constituency. We therefore propose transferring Loddon ward into Maidenhead and this ward split (indicating) Our conclusion for Berkshire is as here (indicating) We believe that this package represents a better community fit across each of the Berkshire constituencies.

All of our eight proposed constituencies are within quota and our proposals have a smaller standard deviation in the Boundary Commission's initial proposals, indicating a more equal distribution of electorates as well as improving community cohesive ties.

Moving on to Buckinghamshire, we are happy to support the Boundary Commission's initial proposals. We can find no other distribution of wards which remains within the legislation specification and continues to reflect the links between various local communities.

In East Sussex we strongly support the BCE's initial proposals to make no changes to Eastbourne and Willingdon. This respects community ties and keeps all of Eastbourne district in one constituency. We do, though, propose a name change for the Brighton East and Newhaven to Brighton East and Seahaven. The name Seahaven is already in use by, amongst others, the Sussex police, local radio and many businesses. It encompasses the towns of Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven. We will make a more detailed response in our final written submission.

For Hampshire, we are happy to support the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the county. While the inclusion of the Dun Valley ward of Test Valley district in the proposed New Forest East constituency is problematic in community terms, we recognise

that there are equal problems in including other wards to make up the shortfall. We support the Commission's proposals for Southampton, Eastleigh and Portsmouth districts. We support the idea of keeping Southampton contained within two constituencies which unites all of Southampton within two parliamentary constituencies for the first time in 30 years and retaining the existing Eastleigh constituency on its current boundaries. This maximises the amount of Eastleigh district within one constituency. We offer no objection to the proposed split between Portsmouth North and Portsmouth South constituencies and recognise that Nelson in Portsmouth South is the best combination and the Portsmouth North extension northwards into the Havant Borough includes the most appropriate Havant wards to make the constituency have a cohesive fit. Whilst there are some concerns over the way the initial proposals split the remainder of the county, none are serious enough to warrant a counter-proposal. For the Isle of Wight we note the law mandates that the island is split into two constituencies and with this constraint in mind we have no objections to the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the island.

Moving on to Oxfordshire there is a more complex scenario. We agree with the Commission's proposals that the county of Oxfordshire should retain six MPs. We further agree with the Commission's proposals to not combine the county of Oxfordshire with any other local authority areas. We are very mindful of the restrictions imposed on the Commission, but we respectfully submit that our proposals more strongly reflect community links while remaining within the legal constraints.

Our overview for Oxfordshire is that we have concerns over the proposed Henley and Thame constituency and over the way that Oxford City is split. We note the Commission has attempted to protect the unified nature of West Oxfordshire District Council. That is nothing to do with any by-election today. However, we submit that this causes problems around the rest of the county. We urge the Commission to revisit its proposals for the county of Oxfordshire to create more coherent constituencies.

I will start with Oxford. We wish to make two specific recommendations for the Oxford East and Oxford West and Abingdon constituencies. We agree that the wards selected to make up the two constituencies do form a natural set of communities. The proposed Oxford West and Abingdon constituency straddles four local authorities, Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City, while Oxford East remains entirely within Oxford City Council. We believe this seems disproportionate. We further note that the proposed Oxford West and Abingdon constituency only contains three wards from Oxford City, comprising just 12,518 electors from within Oxford. We submit that the wards to the west of the River Cherwell in Oxford form a more natural community and should together form part of the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency. We believe that the

South Oxfordshire wards of Garsington and Horspath, Sandford and the Wittenhams and Wheatley have a more natural affinity to Oxford East than they do to areas such as Kidlington or Cumnor. We therefore propose that the Oxford East constituency should comprise the selected communities within South Oxfordshire - Garsington and Horspath, Sandford and the Wittenhams and Wheatley wards - together with the wards in Oxford City that are east of the River Cherwell. We propose that the Carfax, Holywell, North and St Margaret wards of Oxford City are transferred to Oxford West and Abingdon. Our proposal more naturally reflects the barrier that the Rivers Cherwell and Thames create between the different communities and more fairly distributes the city of Oxford between the two constituencies. We also reduce the number of district councils that will be within the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency from four to three. Geographically as such, splitting Oxford not quite down the middle but a more even balance with both Oxford East and Oxford West, including some rural areas. The ward split as shown there (indicating). Oxford West, principally Oxford City and the Vale of White Horse, and Oxford East, primarily Oxford City with three wards from South Oxfordshire.

For Surrey, we accept the Commission's proposed seats of East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, Reigate and South West Surrey. We propose a very minor amendment in wards in the following seats in the initial proposals: Esher and Walton, Mole Valley, Runnymede and Weybridge, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath and Woking. This will move few voters and we believe will better reflect community ties than the initial proposals. This is where it gets complicated. The Commission's initial proposals around Chertsey, Byfleet and West Byfleet move five wards affecting six constituencies in order to achieve numerical equality. This proposal splits existing communities in Chertsey and in Byfleet, West Byfleet. Chertsey St Ann's has poor road links with Spelthorne. Byfleet has been in the Woking constituency since 1950 and links to the west lead it to Woking as its main town and administrative centre. The A245 Parvis Road is a major thoroughfare through Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford. There are no major links to town north. As of the changes to Woking County Division in 2013 and borough boundaries in 2016 Byfleet is part of the Byfleet County Division and the Byfleet and West Byfleet ward, which will be split between constituencies under the proposals. A strong local residents' association covering Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford, the Three Villages Residents' Association, represents local people across the area. Our proposal is to move Egham Hythe ward, 4,510 electors, from Runnymede and Weybridge into Spelthorne; move Chobham ward, 2,895 electors, from Surrey Heath to Runnymede and Weybridge; move Hersham South ward, 4,754 electors, from Esher and Walton to Runnymede and Weybridge; keep Byfleet, 5,344, with Woking as it is at present. This moves just three wards containing just over 12,000 electors compared to the five wards that move in the Commission's initial scheme. Egham ward has stronger road links with Spelthorne. Chobham is a distinct ward based on a town centre and can be a constituent part of a constituency looking

either east or west. Hershams South ward has very close ties with the wards in Runnymede and Weybridge and this has already been recognised by the Local Government Boundary Commission. Geographically this gets Surrey looking something like this (indicating).

We will give a more detailed response on each of these proposals in our full submission before 5 December. We thank the Commission for its time this morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Are there any questions of clarification? Do not forget to say who you are.

MR PRATT: (Conservative Party) I have two separate points of clarification. My name is Roger Pratt; I represent the Conservative Party. My first point for clarification relates to Berkshire. I believe the Commission moves four wards in Berkshire. Can you tell me how many wards you move in Berkshire from their current existing constituencies?

CLLR HOUSE: We can give this information at a later point.

MR PRATT: I think it would be helpful to put the number of wards on record. I could count them up but I would not completely count them up.

CLLR HOUSE: I am in exactly the same position.

MR PRATT: The second point of clarification is that you referred twice in your presentation to the Eastbourne and Willingdon constituency. Obviously the Commission calls it Eastbourne. Are you therefore proposing a name change in order to call it Eastbourne and Willingdon?

CLLR HOUSE: No, we are not. Thank you for the clarification on that point.

MR PRATT: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other questions anybody would like to ask? (No response) Thank you also for your timeliness. I want to consult whether we have coffee available now or whether it would make more sense to push on. I think we will push on. We have the Conservative Party representation.

MR PRATT: My name is Roger Pratt. I am the Boundary Review Director for the Conservative Party. This is a representation on behalf of the Conservative Party and the

South East region of the Conservatives. I would like to thank the Commission for all its work on the proposals.

In the South East we support the allocation of 83 seats to the South East, including two for the Isle of Wight, as they are required to do under the legislation. We support each of the Commission's groupings and the proposed allocation of grouping sub-regions as follows. That is a very sensible approach and it does mean in the South East that only one combination of counties is necessary, East Sussex and Kent. We fully support all those that are keeping them separate.

The basis of our proposals is based on the Rules for Redistribution of Seats and particularly the factors within the Rules for Redistribution of seats: geographical considerations, local government boundaries, boundaries of existing constituencies and any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies. Those are the things that govern any counter-proposals that we are going to put forward this morning.

We will also quote from two documents, one is the Revised Proposals Report from the Assistant Commissioners from the aborted review which I think, Sir, you were although not a leading Assistant Commissioner you were an Assistant Commissioner last time. We will quote on occasions where there are relevant issues from that and also we will look at the initial proposals document.

If we first of all look at the county of Berkshire, basically the Commission moves four wards in Berkshire and we believe that is the minimum change that is necessary in order to address the differential electorates in Reading and Newbury in particular. I think that is the minimum change you can do. We would oppose any much more major change for Berkshire.

We fully support the no change constituency of Bracknell. In terms of Newbury and the two Readings, we, like the Labour Party, support the Maiden Erlegh ward being included in the Reading East constituency. We do note, rather like the Labour Party, that the Mapledurham ward going from Reading East to Reading West is slightly anomalous, bearing in mind the fact that there are ties with other wards in Reading West and also there is no road access over the River Thames. Therefore, if an alternative between perhaps Newbury and the two Readings was available, again moving just one ward, we would look at it seriously, but at the moment we are supporting the Commission's proposals. We strongly support the Maidenhead constituency, including the ward of Bray which fits naturally with the Maidenhead constituency. As far as Slough and Windsor is concerned, we accept that one ward does have to move from Slough to Windsor. We

accept that the Chalvey ward from Slough is not perfect but I think it falls into a least worst option solution. We believe that ward is the least worst option in terms of Berkshire.

In Berkshire, in terms of the Wokingham constituency we instead propose that the seat be named Mid Berkshire. It includes more of West Berkshire and if you look at the constituency on a map, there is as much land mass of Wokingham in West Berkshire as it is in the Wokingham authority. We think Mid Berkshire is a better description of that particular constituency. As I say, the Commission has managed to move just four wards and we think moving four wards is the right principle in Berkshire. It links in with the Rules in terms of ensuring there is the minimum change from the existing constituencies. We think the Commission is correct in that case.

In Buckinghamshire, we support the Commission's proposals in their entirety for the Beaconsfield no change seat and for the Wycombe seat which is sensibly extended. In Buckinghamshire we support the Commission's composition of Chesham and Amersham, Milton Keynes Bletchley and Milton Keynes Newport Pagnell, but we think better names for those, which are a better description, would be Chiltern, Bletchley Park and Milton Keynes North East respectively. We put forward those alternative proposals.

In Buckinghamshire we do not support the Commission's proposals for the following seats. We make just one minor change between Aylesbury and Buckingham. However, what we do support in Buckingham is including the two Milton Keynes wards. We believe these are absolutely the right wards for Milton Keynes to include, that is Wolverton and Stony Stratford. I would refer to item 61 in the Commission's document where we do absolutely agree with them. We consider these two wards, Wolverton and Stony Stratford, the most appropriate to include in a cross-county constituency due to the communications links between the county and the borough. We did investigate whether to include wards from the Bletchley area in the Buckingham constituency, but considered this would be likely to divide the Bletchley area between constituencies. We totally agree with that, as the Boundary Commission has said, and we do believe those are the best wards, the wards that link best with Buckingham. It also ensures the least disruption to the two Milton Keynes seats because one ward comes from each of the seats; one ward comes from the northern seat and one ward comes from the southern seat, therefore it is the least disruptive option. In Buckingham we are proposing a very minor change. We are proposing basically to move the ward of Wingham one way and the ward of Waddesdon; it is a straight swap between the wards of Wingham and Waddesdon. It is interesting that in the initial proposals document at point 65 the Commission mentions a number of wards that it moves from Buckingham to Aylesbury but it does not mention the Wing ward which we think is a bit out on a limb. We accept that it looks slightly strange on a map but we do believe the Wing ward has far stronger ties to the rest of Buckingham

rather than the Waddesdon ward, so we restore ties between Wing and the remainder of the Buckingham constituency which are broken by the Commission's proposals, but noting that Wing looks north rather than to Aylesbury. We reflect local ties between Waddesdon and the town of Aylesbury. Waddesdon and Aylesbury have good communication links along the A41 and the Aylesbury Parkway railway station is on the border of Waddesdon and Riverside wards. I am not making this as a major point, but it does mean 125 fewer electors move from their existing constituency.

In East Sussex and Kent, in this sub-region we support the Commission's proposals in their entirety for the following seats: Ashford, Bexhill and Battle, Chatham and The Mallings. We think those are sensibly reconfigured seats in order to adjust to the quota requirements. Dartford sensibly becomes coterminous with the local authority, as does Folkestone and Hythe with the Shepway local authority. We fully support the proposed Gillingham and Rainham. Sir, you will have heard a lot evidence last time with regard to the Gillingham and Rainham constituency in support of this proposal, in effect, and I would quote from the report last time on AC58, page 19, where we say in terms of the Gillingham and Rainham seat: "We have also accepted the arguments for the transfer of the Lordswood and Capstone ward from Chatham and Aylesford to Gillingham and Rainham in order to make up numbers in the latter constituency. This is again contrary to the Commission's initial proposal. We have concluded that the transfer leads to the best configuration for the sub-region as a whole. The Gillingham and Rainham constituency that we recommend is accordingly the existing constituency with the addition of the single Lordswood and Capstone ward." That is exactly what the Commission has done this time and we fully support it. We support no change to the Hastings and Rye constituency and we support the cross-border constituency of High Weald. We would fully concur with the points made in the initial proposal document. We consider that the similarity of areas on both sides of the county boundary and the geographical nature of the Weald means that this was the most suitable place in which to create a constituency across the county boundary. We fully concur with that. That gives consequential changes to Lewes and Uckfield, which we support. There is no change for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. We believe that Tunbridge Wells is a logical change to that.

In East Sussex and Kent, we do not support the proposals for the Brighton East and Newhaven and Eastbourne constituency in terms of their names. We fully support their composition but we believe that Brighton East and Seahaven much better reflects all the areas along the coast. This was the proposal from the Liberal Democrats. We fully support that and note that this was a point made in the aborted review. We refer to point 134 on page 35, which says that "In Brighton East and Seahaven the name reflects the fact that the constituency that we recommend consists of the eastern portion of Brighton together with the coastal towns up to and including Newhaven and Seaford". In fact, it

includes more of Newhaven this time, which is sensible, but we think that Seahaven is a much better description. Unlike the Liberal Democrats, who talked about the Eastbourne and Willingdon constituency, who clearly do not support Willingdon in the name, we do support Willingdon in the name of Eastbourne. Willingdon is a separate area with Eastbourne and this recognises the residents in Willingdon. We would therefore name it Eastbourne and Willingdon.

In Eastbourne and Kent there are 11 constituencies - I will not list them all, they are all there - where we do not support the Commission's proposals. We propose an alternative configuration of both Brighton Pavilion and Hove and North Brighton. We are suggesting a seven ward swap in these constituencies which is linked there and is on the paperwork we have produced. That is what happens. Whatever combination you come up with in Brighton and Hove you have a sort of tail. We have put the tail the other way to the Commission which we think better reflects community links.

The advantages of this scheme are that it restores ties between Preston Park, St Peter's and North Lane, the Hanover and Elm Grove wards which are divided by the Commission proposals. We restore ties in West Blatchington which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We restore ties between the Hove Park, Westbourne and Wish wards which are divided by the Commission's proposals.

In West Kent we propose the following seats: Gravesham, basically the existing seat plus one ward rather than minus one and plus one. The existing seat respects Gravesham as a local authority. In Maidstone we would add two further wards to the Maidstone constituency. We have Rochester and Strood unchanged. Again, I would refer to the Assistant Commissioner's report last time on item 57, page 19. We therefore are also in favour and recommend a constituency which is unchanged from the existing Rochester and Strood. I cannot see why the Commission decided to add one Gravesham ward to Rochester and Strood; it just was not necessary and I am not sure quite why that happened. In Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Weald we propose less change. We are basically moving these six wards, the first four of which all go back to their existing constituencies so there is less change. The last two, although they are both in Faversham and Mid Kent - Faversham and Mid- Kent is effectively the seat that disappears - they are Maidstone wards and have much better links to Maidstone than they have to Tonbridge and we would put those in that Maidstone constituency. That is the Boundary Commission's proposal for West Kent; this is our alternative for that. (Indicating) Basically, we would add to the constituency the North Downs ward and the Leeds ward. You can see those much closer link to Maidstone there rather than to Tonbridge right out here. We also fully support the ward of Barming being included in the Maidstone constituency. Again, I would refer to item 97 of the Assistant Commissioner's report last

time. We do, however, recommend that Barming be included in the Maidstone constituency. It is on the western fringe of Maidstone and forms part of the unit of Maidstone Borough wards that are in the existing Maidstone and Weald constituency. This is to avoid the unnecessary breaking of local ties, so we do believe that ward makes absolute sense and we fully support its inclusion in the Maidstone constituency.

The advantages of our West Kent are that we restore local ties between Higham, Shoreham and Gravesend which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We restore local ties between Borough Green and Long Mill and Downs and Mereworth wards and the town of Tonbridge, which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We reflect local ties between Leeds and North Downs wards and the town of Maidstone. These two wards have no connection with Tonbridge although they are placed in the Tonbridge and Weald constituency under the Commission's proposals. We have one additional unchanged constituency, that is Rochester and Strood. The entire Gravesham local authority is contained within one seat, as is the case at the moment, rather than two under the Commission's proposals. The current Gravesham constituency is therefore retained intact with the addition of one ward. Two of the five constituencies are contained within one local authority rather than only one under the Commission's proposals and 16,214 fewer electors move from their existing constituency. It is far less disruptive than the Commission's proposals and has better local authority links.

In East Kent we propose the following seats: Canterbury and Faversham, Dover, East Kent Coastal and North Kent Coastal, a change of name there because we believe that if there is a North Kent Coastal you should have an East Kent Coastal. These are all less disruptive than the Commission's proposals. We therefore move five wards and all five wards are retained in their existing constituencies. So we move five wards to retain all of them in their existing constituencies. That was the Commission's plan and that is our alternative plan.

The advantages of this scheme are that we restore ties between Eythorne and Shepherdswell and the Lydden and Temple Ewell and Whitfield wards with the town of Dover, which are linked by rail and which have been in the same constituency for many years and which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We restore ties between Sandwich and the towns of Ramsgate and Broadstairs which are linked by rail and the A256 and which have been in the same constituency for many years, which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We restore ties between Garlinge and Westbrook and the town of Westgate-on-Sea, which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We restore far more closely the existing Dover and South Thanet constituencies which we rename North East Kent Coastal. All five wards involved in this counter-proposal move constituency under the Commission's proposals but are restored to their existing

constituency under the proposals. That means that 22,240 fewer electors move from their existing constituency. We think that is a big advantage of that scheme.

In Hampshire we fully support the Commission's proposals in their entirety for all the seats in Hampshire from the two Southamptons which are obviously a separate local authority, unitary authority, anyway. We do support what the Commission has done with Aldershot and note in item 263 in your Assistant Commissioner's report last time, which said that it was clear that at least one ward must be transferred to Aldershot and that none of the options is ideal. It was actually agreeing with our point in that it is better not to split towns and that the least worst option is to transfer the two Church Crookham wards. That is what the Commission has done this time in the initial proposals and we again think that is the best option. We fully support no change to Basingstoke. East Hampshire, all within the East Hampshire local authority. A minor change to Fareham. A minor change to Havant. New Forest East, New Forest West, a different configuration but a sensible configuration in terms of North East and North West Hampshire. We fully support the two Portsmouth constituencies, Portsmouth North and Portsmouth South. We note item 73 of the Commission's document on the initial proposals we proposed to include the Nelson ward in the Portsmouth constituency as we considered this results in more of Portsmouth Harbour being included in a single constituency but would welcome representations considering whether this or the Baffins ward more appropriately reflects this area. We agree with both the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party that the Commission has got the proposals absolutely right. They ensure that more of the Harbour is included and we fully support both Portsmouth constituencies and we support the Winchester constituency which now becomes all within the local authority of Winchester.

We support the Eastleigh, Gosport and Test Valley constituencies, Eastleigh and Gosport being no change, but we do think that there are more appropriate names for these constituencies to better reflect the constituency, so we propose Eastleigh, Hedge End and the Hamble. We suggest Gosport Peninsular. We do not think that Test Valley is an appropriate name because it is not all of Test Valley Local Authority; there is part of Test Valley Local Authority within the North West Hampshire constituency. The constituency is not made up all of Test Valley constituencies, it includes currently part of Eastleigh and Winchester and we think that probably Romsey is the most appropriate name, it is the name of the current constituency. Perhaps someone will come up with an alternative, but we do not think that Test Valley is appropriate.

That is Hampshire less Southampton and we agree effectively with the Commission's proposals in terms of that composition.

We do, however, propose an alternative in Southampton because we believe that there is a better alternative for the Southamptons and we therefore make some changes to that. It is absolutely right that the Commission has produced two constituencies in Southampton and we fully support that. However, we think there is a better configuration in Southampton. We therefore would change four wards in Southampton. We would basically put Bargate and Bevois into Itchen and Bassett and Swaythling, currently in the Romsey constituency, into Test. That is the proposal. You cannot really see the River Itchen on that diagram, but the River Itchen we think is a key factor, so we reflect the natural dividing line of the tidal River Itchen at its widest point below Windmill Bridge with one constituency to the west and one constituency to the east and north of the river. It has been anomalous that Bargate has been included in the Itchen constituency on the other side of the Itchen. There are really no significant ties with Bargate with Itchen, whereas there are strong ties between Bevois ward, Freemantle and Portswood ward which are divided by the Commission's proposals. We also restore Swaythling to the Southampton Itchen constituency which it was contained with until 2010. That is our alternative in Southampton.

In the Isle of Wight we fully support the proposals of the Commission. It is a sensible arrangement and we are not going to alter that.

In terms of Oxfordshire, we support the Commission's proposals in their entirety for the Banbury and Bicester seat, the Henley and Thame seat, the Oxford East seat, the Oxford West and Abingdon seat and the Witney seat, which is no change. We think that these arrangements are right, they are the minimum change you can come up with for Oxfordshire to ensure that the high electorates in Banbury and also in Wantage (which we will come to in a second) are addressed. It does mean you have some awkwardly shaped seats in terms of Henley and Thame, but we think that this is the least worst option and the least disruptive option for Oxfordshire and therefore we support it. We do think that the Wantage seat should be called Wantage and Didcot; we believe that that is a better description on the Wantage seat and that was a name that was agreed last time, despite the fact that Wantage did not change as a constituency. They recognised the fact that Didcot was a growing town, the largest town within the constituency, and therefore we think the name of Wantage and Didcot is right. That is Oxfordshire where we support the Commission's proposals.

In Surrey we support the Commission's proposals for the five constituencies where there is no change. We fully support those, but we do not support the Commission's proposals for the six constituencies where there are changes. We think it is not necessary to make as many changes. We propose the following seats and that includes Mole Valley as no change, Surrey Heath as no change and Woking as no change. So we have three more

no change constituencies. In terms of Surrey, we believe that there is too much unnecessary change and this is therefore why we would change this. We note that Bisley and Byfleet were both proposed for change last time and the Commission decided not to change them after discussion and after the Assistant Commissioner's report. In 345 and 356 in the Assistant Commissioner's report last time, the Commission proposed Bisley ward: "Clearly the Commission's proposals break ties with local authority and constituency. In terms of Byfleet, 331, Byfleet is a ward of the Borough of Woking so transfer to the Runnymede and Weybridge constituency reduces the degree of alignment with external local authority boundaries. It is also a departure from existing constituencies". We fully support that. In the report it talks about five changes to wards. We have actually got five changes to wards and we would disagree with all those five changes. We would just change two wards in Surrey. That is basically what we are going to do, suggest that there are two wards that change. The two wards that change are the Hersham South ward, which reduces the electorate in one constituency and increases the electorate in the other, and the Thorpe ward, which we believe is the least worst option. It is not an ideal solution. There is no ideal solution in Surrey to increasing the electorate in Spelthorne. It has always been difficult but we believe that that is the least worst, it is the least disruptive option. The advantage of the scheme is that we restore Chertsey St Anne's to the Runnymede and Weybridge constituency, thereby uniting the town of Chertsey, which is divided under the Commission's proposals. There are serious local ties in Chertsey which are broken. We restore ties between the villages of Bisley and West End, divided in the Commission's proposals and restore the ties between the town of Cobham and Stoke which is divided under the Commission's proposals. We restore ties between the towns of Byfleet and West Byfleet, divided in the Commission's proposals. We leave Mole Valley, Surrey Heath and Woking each as unchanged constituencies whereas the Commission's proposals alter all three. Under our proposals only two wards in the whole of Surrey move constituency. I notice the Liberals have got it down to three, we can beat that with two. Under our proposals only two wards in the whole of Surrey move constituency as opposed to five under the Commission's proposals. That means that no constituency is contained within three local authorities as opposed to three under the Commission's proposals and 11,177 fewer electors move from their existing constituency. We have suggested the Thorpe ward moving; we think that is the least worst option. You either have to move a Chertsey ward, which the Commission suggests, which breaks ties in Chertsey, or you have to move an Egham ward, which breaks ties in Egham, whereas Thorpe has fewer ties to break, it is separate between the two towns. We think that is the least worst option for Surrey and only two wards change.

In terms of West Sussex, we support the Commission in all eight constituencies with relatively minor change. In terms of Crawley, we fully support the proposal for the Copthorne and Worth ward coming in. We note that this was exactly the same issue that

the Commission looked at last time and the Commission in AC168 said that: "On the basis that retaining Rusper and Colgate in Horsham enables the links with the local authority to be preserved, including Copthorne and Worth in Crawley as proposed by the Commission", we agree with that entirely and think that is the best ward that is attached to Crawley and all the other constituencies, as I say, there is no change or minimum change and we support West Sussex.

Just a reminder of the rules which have been governing the proposals that I put forward to you this morning in terms of geographical considerations, local government boundaries, boundaries of existent constituencies and local ties. We propose considerably better local authority links, thus being more compliant with Rule 5(b). We move over 40,000 fewer electors than the Commission and restore many wards back to their existing constituencies. We also have four more no change constituencies than the Commission, so that is more compliant with Rule 5(c). We break fewer local ties, restoring ties, for example, in Aylesbury, Brighton and Hove, Gravesham, East Kent, Southampton and Surrey so that we are more compliant with Rule 5(d). We support the allocation of 83 constituencies in the South East but believe there is a much better scheme available, particularly in respect of Kent and Surrey. We will submit to the Commission before 5 December a comprehensive document outlining our rationale and whether we support the Commission or propose alternatives. We will take account of representations made at the public hearings and may, in the light of these, amend our submissions from those which we have outlined today. Thank you very much indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any questions of clarification?

MR BEAMENT: I am Tom Beament; I am the Green Party spokesman. You said that you restore local community ties in Brighton and Hove in terms of your proposal. One of the interesting things I note is that there is a ward, Central Hove, that you have in the Brighton Pavilion constituency as opposed to in a constituency which you name in part Hove. In fact, it is the only constituency that you are proposing that is called Hove. My feeling is that a ward named Central Hove is probably fairly central to Hove and therefore should be in a Hove constituency as opposed to a Brighton Pavilion constituency. Would you like to clarify how you justify the local ties argument in relation to that?

MR PRATT: I accept what you say. We had great difficulty with regard to Brighton and Hove because of the size of the wards and getting everything right in terms of the electorates. You could clearly do something different if you split a ward, but we do not think there are necessarily exceptional and compelling circumstances there to be able to split a ward and therefore, if you like, the least worst option was that. If somebody comes

up with an alternative in Brighton and Hove that is different from that, we will certainly look at it and decide whether to support it. We are certainly open to any changes in terms of names. Although we have put one ward with the name Hove back in Hove, we have taken Central Hove ward out. We accept that. We accept that it is not perfect but we think it is better than the Commission's proposals. We did have difficulty because you cannot just move two wards here and two wards there because the numbers do not add up.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for that.

MR KINGSWOOD: Peter Kingswood. I am an elector resident in the Royal County of Berkshire, hence one has an awareness of Chalvey's relationship to Slough but that can be the subject of later comment. Specifically on Roger Pratt's presentation, I have two points, one is a strategic one. Is it wards only that are used? There is no splitting of wards, if that can be confirmed. Regarding Buckinghamshire, the current ward of Chesham and Amersham is coterminous with the district of Chiltern but it is sensible having the two names of the town, it makes it specific, whereas Chiltern starts right at the Thames at Goring in Oxfordshire and runs all the way through several counties. I find it difficult to comprehend why change the name Chesham and Amersham, especially as the "must" clause in the guidance that the figures are within a 10% band and therefore hence that two wards come in from Wickham, Hughenden and Lacey Green, Speen and Hamdens. So please substantiate why cause confusion when confusion does not reign at the moment in the case of Chesham Amersham?

MR PRATT: Firstly, we do not split a ward in the South East. Like the Commission, we do not believe there are exceptional and compelling circumstances in the South East to do so, so we have not split a ward. In terms of Chiltern, that is what our people in Chesham and Amersham believe it should be called. I accept that currently it is coterminous and it does include two extra wards, that is accepted, but others will give evidence as to why we are suggesting the name Chiltern. I am not going to go into detail about that at the moment.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other questions? (No response) We will take a break and reconvene at 11.45 when we will come to the Green Party's presentation.

After a short break

Time noted: 11.45 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will now hear the representations from the Green Party.

MR BEAMENT: I am Tom Beament; I am the elections coordinator for Brighton and Hove Green Party. The report is for the whole of the South East Region but I hope you will forgive me if I spend most of my time concentrating on Brighton and Hove. This is obviously where the Green Party has the most interest but it is also where we feel that BCE has most clearly dropped the ball. I say that with great respect.

I will start by summarising the aims of the boundary review. I am pretty sure that everyone in the room is aware of these so I will race through them. The aim is to reduce the number of seats from 650 to 600 and in England that is from 533 to 501. The aim is to produce equal size constituencies, no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota. The figure is given there and so is the range. This is based on the electoral figures from the register from 1 December 2005 and it is excepting the Isle of Wight. There are the statutory factors, four of them. First, special geographical considerations; second, local government boundaries, local authority boundaries, wards and divisions; third, boundaries of existing constituencies; fourth, any local ties that would be broken by changes in the constituencies.

Wards are taken as the basic building blocks and where possible wards should be adjacent to each other and not detached, that is that it should be possible to travel from any particular ward to any other part of the constituency. Wards will not be split, that is where possible. We accept there are circumstances where wards are allowed to be split. You are not required to make all the constituencies as close as possible to the electoral quota because of factors one to four and also, you say, you are not obliged to shut your eyes entirely to the growth or decline of the electoral register that has occurred since the review date.

I am going to start off with a few challenges to the basis of the whole review. I know these cannot necessarily be taken into account but I will refer back to them. The biggest problem is with the use of the December 2015 register. As is well established, the electoral figures in that register are at a historic low relative to the potential number of voters due to the introduction of individual voter registration (henceforth IVR). Using Brighton and Hove, here is a graph based on the figures from Brighton and Hove Electoral Services. You can see that from December 2012 up until June 2014, which is the last register before the introduction of IVR, voter numbers remained pretty much the same. We have the introduction of IVR and within Brighton and Hove the numbers absolutely crash. Then we have June 2015, which is just after the general election, and the numbers soar back up again. Then we have the register that we are using, December 2015, and

they crash right back down again to the same kind of levels as December 2014. Then we have the figures with the EU referendum when they have gone right back up again. Analysis of these figures shows that IVR resulted in around 20,000 voters falling off the register except when there is a significant election or referendum which people want to register for. Twenty-thousand is about 10% of the electorate of Brighton and Hove. Given that Brighton and Hove roughly fits 2.5 seats, according to the Boundary Commission's South East Report, the figure of 20,000 equates to 8,000 per constituency and 8,000 is large enough to take a constituency from below the minimum of the range that the Boundary Commission is operating with to above the maximum of that range. I would suggest that this is a serious problem with the review, that the variations that we see in the electoral register take you right from the bottom of that range to over the top of it.

Moving on to our proposals for Brighton and Hove, these are the proposals that the Boundary Commission has put forward. The old Hove constituency loses the Hove Park ward and gains the Regency and SPNL wards to become Brighton Central and Hove. The old Brighton Pavilion constituency loses Regency and SPNL and gains Hove Park, Moulsecomb and Bevendean and Woodingdean to become Brighton North. The old Kemptown constituency loses Moulsecomb and Bevendean and Woodingdean and gains two Newhaven wards and five Seaford wards from the old Lewes constituency to become Brighton East and Newhaven.

In terms of electorates, the comparison between the proposed constituencies and the old constituencies can be seen in the table below. (Indicating) This is using the figures from that register on 1 December 2015. As you can see, the figures for the old constituency fall well below the minimum of the range, which is 71,301. However, to provide a context for these figures, here are the electorates for the three constituencies provided by Brighton and Hove Electoral Services. That is this bit here. Also here are the figures for the general election in May 2015. (Indicating) These are the figures for the electorate in the election. In brackets afterwards, calculated using BCE's figures, is the fall in the numbers between the general election and the register that is being used. This shows a huge drop in numbers on the electoral register between May 2015 and December 2015 which can be largely attributed to the effect of individual voter registration. The Brighton Pavilion seat was particularly badly affected, no doubt because it contains two universities and students are more likely to have fallen off the register. You can see the figure for Brighton Pavilion is a considerably larger fall. We would want to argue that since Brighton and Hove have been disproportionately affected by the use of the December 2015 register, the Boundary Commission should leave the seats as they are. If you add on all those missing voters they will actually soar up. In addition to the figures given for the drop in voter registration between May 2015 and December 2015, we can also cite evidence of a large increase from December 2015 to the register for the EU referendum

in June 2016. These are those figures. (Indicating) These figures show increases in the electorate for the existing constituencies as follows: Hove, part of Kempdown (not all of Kempdown falls within the Brighton and Hove district) and Pavilion again is considerably higher. It is unsurprising that these rises are very similar to those falls. I showed you the graph earlier on which illustrated the same point.

It is incontrovertible that the figures from the December 2015 figures that the Boundary Commission is working from are inaccurate and to different extents in different constituencies. You can see it illustrated here. (Indicating) As I said, this undermines the whole process and once the electorates are recalculated based on the current figures as we have them, it will be clear that the constituencies are already large enough by the range that BCE are using. Of course, we know that you cannot actually do that; you are compelled to use the old register, you cannot take account of the new.

However, because of the variation in the rises in electorate across constituencies, we feel that there is a moral argument that those seats, such as Brighton Pavilion, that have gained the most electors between December 2015 and the current register should, at the very least, be placed at the lower end of the range. There is also a self-interest argument because the Boundary Commission may look a little foolish when the electorate numbers surge way above their upper limits in certain constituencies but not in others. We hope that you will take this into consideration in not shutting your eyes to the change in the electoral register that has occurred since the review date.

While the figures from the December 2015 register show that the Boundary Commission, according to their brief, needs to change the make-up of the Brighton and Hove constituencies, they do not explain why the Boundary Commission has made the changes they have. I will remind you of these other criteria that are being used by the Boundary Commission. The first and third are fairly self-explanatory; the second refers, of course, to local authority boundaries and also ward boundaries. It is also of course true that the Boundary Commission seeks to avoid splitting wards wherever possible as they take them to be “generally indicative of areas which have broad community interests” i.e. strong local ties. Sadly, in many cases in Brighton, the wards are not indicative of local areas, they cut right through local communities. That is something I will be returning to. The Boundary Commission says they will only consider ward splitting options in circumstances where all the possible whole ward options would significantly cut across local ties (given that in Brighton that already happens with wards) and also where splitting a single ward may prevent a significant domino effect, namely that you have to move other wards in other constituencies and it ripples on.

The final factor of local ties, under which come matters of culture, history, socio-economics and other possible aspects of non-physical geography (which I shall henceforth call community ties) is the most important according to the Boundary Commission because effectively you admit in doing your calculations that you do not necessarily know about local ties and the point of these submissions is essentially to find out from local communities what those local communities ties are. However, we want to challenge the Boundary Commission on the idea that in Brighton and Hove they have not only respected local community ties but have attempted to preserve the existing constituencies or constituency boundaries. We agree that you have indeed respected local government boundaries as much as you can and given that, as I said, Brighton and Hove fits only 2.5 constituencies and West Sussex divides nearly perfectly into eight constituencies, so therefore you do not want to cross the West Sussex/East Sussex boundary, the only option to make up three constituencies is to extend east. Given the local geography, it makes sense to extend east along the coast to Newhaven and Seaford rather than to attempt to cross the Downs to Lewes. This explains the creation of the East Brighton and Newhaven constituency. It does not, however, justify what has been done to the Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies.

So far I have only looked at the proposals in terms of numbers, so let us now turn our attention to local community ties. We find it very hard to justify what can only be described as an act of vandalism, smashing up the historic seats of Brighton Pavilion by cutting out the heart of it. This is a seat which has existed for 65 years, that is almost three generations. There are a lot of people who actually identify as being part of the Brighton Pavilion seat, so taking what is essentially the heart of Brighton, Regency and SPNL wards and lumping them onto the side of Hove. It is harder still when, in the final report of the previous Boundary Review cycle in 2013, the Boundary Commission made a proposal that was far more sensitive to local community ties, preserving the seats of Brighton Pavilion and Hove with only minor changes and in which the electoral numbers actually fit better with the range that the Boundary Commission is operating with. In some ways that is not surprising because essentially the Boundary Commission was operating to almost exactly the same brief. The proposals in the Boundary Commission's final report of 2013 in terms of Brighton and Hove were as follows. The Hove constituency gained the Regency ward; the Brighton Pavilion constituency lost the Regency ward and gained the Moulsecoomb and Bevendean ward; the old Kemptown constituency lost Moulsecoomb and Bevendean ward and gained one Newhaven ward and five Seaford wards from the old Lewes constituency. On that proposal only one Newhaven constituency was split.

In terms of electorates, the comparison between the proposed constituencies and the constituencies from the 2013 report can be seen in [this](#) table. (Indicating) Note again

that these are based on the figures for the electoral register from 1 December 2015 and so I have called the 2013 seats remodelled because the 2013 review was based on a different electoral register. As can easily be seen, the figures for the 2013 seats better fit the range that the Boundary Commission is operating with. The lowest, Brighton Pavilion, is still higher than the lowest [here](#) and the highest [here](#) is still lower than the highest one [here](#). ([Indicating](#)) However, as I mentioned briefly before, I should note that there is one ward missing from the 2013 Brighton and Hove seats which is present in the 2016 seats. This is the Newhaven Valley ward with 2,554 electors and it would have to be rehomed back into the Lewes and Uckfield constituency which is proposed in both reviews and that is where it was in the 2013 review. While a relatively small ward, this would lead to the kind of domino effect that the Boundary Commission mentioned in relation to ward splitting.

The Brighton Pavilion constituency in this proposal is towards the lower end of the range, but I think given the figures I outlined earlier in terms of the electoral register we can see that Brighton Pavilion which has, I think uniquely in the South East region, two universities within the constituency, has been particularly badly affected by IVR, even within the area of Brighton and Hove itself badly affected by IVR. This, as I argued above, potentially justifies setting Brighton Pavilion at the lower end of the range. So far we have only compared these two proposals in terms of the numbers. Let us now turn our attention to local community ties.

We intend to present more evidence in terms of local community ties at the Brighton hearing, so this is really just a first sweep. We feel that the 2016 initial report proposal can be objected to on many such grounds, many local community ties grounds. The proposed Brighton North constituency will be primarily residential without any connection to the commercial centre of Brighton or the seafront. It is also true that the 2013 proposal would not have access to the seafront either. I will come back to that. Taking SPNL out of Brighton Pavilion and putting it into a largely Hove based constituency means putting Brighton Central Station in the same constituency as Hove Station, all the railway stations and the commercial centre in one and you have a whole set of essentially outlying areas in the other. Putting all of Regency into a largely Hove based constituency means putting the Lanes and Churchill Square into Hove. It is really part of central Brighton in many people's minds. I have to say that many people within Brighton and Hove desperately care about the distinction between Hove and Brighton. It does not mean an awful lot to me but it means a lot to other people and you may actually have annoyed them by proposing this. Of course, it is also true of the 2013 proposal that Regency went into Hove.

Taking Hove Park out of Hove and putting it into Brighton North means that Hove Park is no longer in a Hove based constituency and, as was mentioned to my counterpart in the Conservative party, anything with Hove in the name naturally looks as though it should be in Hove.

It is really with Woodingdean that I think there is the most problem. Putting Woodingdean into North Brighton fails on even the most basic grounds. Woodingdean is clearly a separate village which is only connected to Brighton by Warren Road, a road not all of which will be in the Brighton North constituency since part of it actually falls in the East Brighton ward, which is part of the East Brighton and Newhaven seat. The only other way of getting from Woodingdean to Brighton is to go out onto the A27 and that takes you into the Lewes Uckfield seat. Furthermore, Woodingdean clearly makes more sense as part of a constituency which includes not only East Brighton but other places going east along the coast. Their names are Rottingdean, Ovingdean and Saltdean, collectively known as the Deans. Again, the clue is in the name.

In addition to the numbers there are clearly a number of grounds on which the 2013 proposal is preferable to the 2016 proposal. These are in addition to the fact that the 2013 proposal preserves the existing Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies, albeit in a slightly altered form. However, by proposing a ward splitting variation on the 2013 proposal we can do even better. This proposal is the same as 2013 except that it retains the Regency polling district LZ within the Brighton Pavilion constituency and also moves two polling districts, EY and EZ, from the Queen's Park ward in the Kemptown or, as it will be, East Brighton and Seahaven or Newhaven constituency to Brighton Pavilion. Both of these are very much a matter of respecting local ties. As I mentioned, LZ contains The Lanes and Churchill Square, which are very much a part of Brighton rather than Hove. It also gives Brighton Pavilion some kind of access to the seafront, while moving EY and EZ reunites bits of the Queen's Park ward which are really part of the community of Hanover with the rest of that community in the Hanover and Elm Grove ward in Pavilion.

In terms of electorates, the comparison between the 2016 proposals and the constituencies with the ward splitting variation of the 2013 final report can be seen in the table below. (Indicating) This is obviously from the December 2015 register. You can see from this that the ward splitting variation gives us that set of figures which are all very close to the Boundary Commission's target of 74,769, with Pavilion just a little bit the lowest. Given these figures, it would be possible now to put Newhaven Valley back into the Brighton East and Seahaven or Newhaven seat as it is in the Boundary Commission's initial report of 2016 and which arguably makes sense because it does not involve dividing Newhaven up. That would bring the total in that constituency up to 77,483, which is a bit on the high side as the upper limit is 78,507, but it is still more than a thousand below that

upper limit and it would prevent knock-on effects into the rest of East Sussex, meaning that the rest of the Boundary Commission's 2016 proposals would be untouched by these changes in the Brighton and Hove constituency. I hope I have shown both on the local community ties point and also on the preventing knock-on domino effects that this ward splitting proposal is one that we hope you will seriously consider. We think it is the most sensitive proposal for Brighton and Hove.

Given the possibility of these options, it is kind of hard to understand why the Boundary Commission has put forward the proposal it has given, as I said, it fails to preserve the existing constituency or respect local community ties. However, someone in our party came up with a charitable explanation for why it is that you might have put forward the constituencies you have for Brighton and Hove. We know that for very good reason the Boundary Commission is treating East Sussex and Kent as a sub-region to do with West Sussex. Maybe if you started at the far east end of Kent and worked your way down towards Brighton, you might have ended up in a pretty tight corner and had to do something quite drastic in Brighton and Hove just to make the figures work. I do not know if that is how it actually happened but I would now like to present an argument for why, in the sub-region of East Sussex and Kent, you should start with Brighton and Hove and, in fact, Medway. This relates again to a point that my Conservative counterpart made. There is a real problem with the wards in Brighton and Hove in particular. They are enormous; they really are the largest wards. This is a table for the wards in the whole of the South East region. (Indicating) What I am showing you here are the largest wards, the top 25 ranked in order by electorates for the whole South East region. You will be able to see that six of the ten largest wards are in Brighton and Hove and ten of the top 15. In fact, 12 of the top 25 are in Brighton and Hove and of the rest ten are in Medway in the Gillingham and Rainham and the Rochester and Strood constituencies. It is only when you get down to number 22 that you find a ward outside of Brighton and Hove and Medway districts. If you are using wards as your basic building blocks, having larger wards makes things much harder. The 12 of the 21 wards that make up the Brighton and Hove district are all over 9,000 which will, as I mentioned earlier in relation to another argument, it will easily take you from well below the Boundary Commission's minimum of 71,301 to well over the maximum of 78,507. The same applies to those ten Medway wards. That means, of course, that moving just one ward can make a terrible mess. Maybe that is why making up really sensible and good constituencies in Brighton and Hove proved to be so tricky.

However, there is an obvious solution. In the East Sussex and Kent sub-region the way you should work is really to start with the constituencies in Brighton and Hove and Medway and then work out from them to the more rural constituencies where the ward

sizes tend to be much smaller and where it will be much easier to shift wards around in order to make the constituencies fit the appropriate range.

In terms of Brighton and Hove our counter-proposals in order of preference are to leave the current boundaries as they are; secondly, the ward splitting variation on the Boundary Commission's 2013 proposal; finally, the Boundary Commission's 2013 proposal. We know that you cannot accept one, we understand that this does not satisfy the rules which the Boundary Commission is operating on, but we wanted to make the point anyway. Two and three are variations on the same basic proposal, which is to go back to the constituencies as outlined in the final report of 2013. The advantage of going back to that proposal is that it was based on an extensive period of consultation, unlike this initial report. We also know that the Boundary Commission, we hope, would be willing to accept that 2013 proposal since they actually proposed it themselves. However, without the ward splitting option the 2013 proposal leads to quite a variation in constituency size, although comparable to the Boundary Commission's own 2016 proposal. The ward splitting option is much better in terms of respecting local community ties, as I said above, and it is better in terms of producing equal sized constituencies nearer to the Boundary Commission's target electoral quota. Adding the Newhaven Valley ward to the Brighton East or Newhaven Seahaven prevents knock-on effects.

That was an awful lot on Brighton and I am not entirely sure how I am doing for time; I suspect I am running out but I have nearly finished.

Outside of Brighton and Hove, my counterpart in Oxford would like to propose a change to the wards that move from Oxford West and Abingdon to Oxford East. He says that the Jericho and Osney ward is a much better fit with the rest of Oxford East than the north and the St Margaret's wards. This is consistent with travel patterns and the cultural differences between North Oxford and the rest. I notice that my Labour counterpart made pretty much the same point in relation to those constituencies. Unfortunately, I do not have any further details to give on this as my Oxford counterpart is rather preoccupied with the Witney by-election today. However, he will be presenting more detail at the Oxford hearing and you can rest assured that it will go into our final written report.

As for the rest of the South East region, my counterpart in the South East region Green Party tells me that there really are no further counter-proposals we wish to make. Obviously if that changes they will go into our final report.

Looking through the Boundary Commission's proposal, I would agree, given your brief I think you have done a great job except in the case of Brighton and Hove. I looked at West Sussex in particular where you proposed almost the same as you did in 2013 with

the one exception of moving one tiny ward from one constituency to another. Again, that does raise the question why in the case of Brighton and Hove you did not go with the same proposal as 2013, given the way the figures are. It was certainly what I was expecting you to do and was fairly surprised when you came up with the report that you did.

Finally, I have been quite critical in terms of the Boundary Commission in terms of what has been proposed in Brighton and Hove. I would say this is really only because I care a lot about this kind of thing. To be honest, I love what I recently heard a BBC reporter call “the mundane business of statistics and maps.” I think it really matters that we get the parliamentary constituencies right and in such a way that they respect local community ties and are as fair as possible in terms of constituency size. In these respects I think I am probably a kindred spirit with many people who work in the Boundary Commission. After all, you would not be attracted to that kind of job if you did not actually care about these kinds of things.

I will conclude by pointing out that our proposals are not solely based on narrow party interests but on a genuine concern for finding the right constituencies for Brighton and Hove and other places. In the initial report of 2011 from the previous boundary review cycle, the Boundary Commission proposed a seat called Brighton Pavilion and Hove which effectively gathered together all our strongest wards in the city. Had that proposal been implemented Caroline Lucas would have been returned to Parliament with one of the largest majorities in the country. If we were solely motivated by our own party interests we might well have been tempted to propose going back to that arrangement, but we have not because it failed to respect local community ties, in particular by lumping together bits of Brighton with bits of Hove.

The proposal in the 2013 final report, which superseded that initial report of 2011, was far more sensitive to local community ties and could be even more so with our ward splitting variation. It is not perfect for us. Losing the Regency ward from Brighton Pavilion will actually hurt Caroline’s prospects because it is one of our strongest wards in the city. Gaining the Moulsecoomb and Bevendean ward will not help as it has no history of electing Green councillors, but it is the best arrangement for Brighton and Hove and that is why we recommend it to the Boundary Commission. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Would anybody like to ask a question of clarification?

MR PRATT: You put up a number of electorate figures for different times.

MR BEAMENT: Yes.

MR PRATT: Were those parliamentary electorates, or local government electorates?

MR BEAMENT: They are a combination of the two. That is for the whole Brighton and Hove district (indicating). That is what those figures are.

MR PRATT: So those are local government figures.

MR BEAMENT: This is the overall electorate for Brighton and Hove district. They have also broken it down in terms of constituencies for us. The top figures are from the Boundary Commission. The next ones are from Brighton and Hove Electoral Services for the Brighton and Hove district but broken down into the constituencies. That is why, as I said, Brighton Kempdown is only a part because only a part of Brighton Kempdown falls within Brighton and Hove district.

MR PRATT: So it is combination of both because obviously it is parliamentary electorates. The other thing I wanted to just clarify, can you go to where you had the electorates if you had the ward splits?

MR BEAMENT: Yes.

MR PRATT: That is Brighton and East and Seahaven without Newhaven Valley, is that right?

MR BEAMENT: That is without Newhaven Valley, yes. I gave the figure, and I am quite happy to give it again, for adding Newhaven Valley onto that.

MR PRATT: Can I confirm that is 77,483?

MR BEAMENT: Yes.

MR PRATT: Assuming that is right, therefore those three electorates, including 77,483, should they add up to the electorates for Brighton Central and Hove, Brighton East and Newhaven and Brighton North?

MR BEAMENT: They should. If you take out that one and add in the figure that you quoted, which was 77,483, are you going to tell me my maths is wrong?

MR PRATT: It is not out massively but I think it is out. I wonder if you have used the correct polling district numbers when you have split wards.

MR BEAMENT: I think I have.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sure you can clarify that in your written submission.

MR BEAMENT: Yes, in our written proposal I will check those figures. Thank you for pointing that out to me.

MR PRATT: The numbers are on the Commission website.

MR BEAMENT: Yes, I have them. I may have made a mistake. I use a calculator; I may have just pressed the wrong button.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody else have a question?

MR HARRIS: (Green Party) Steve Harris representing the Green Party. I just wanted to pick up on the point that various other colleagues have made about the naming of the seats. Although we have not made a specific representation on that, I think I am right in saying, Tom, that we would be sympathetic to supporting the name of Seahaven rather than Newhaven.

MR BEAMENT: Yes. I realised I was running out of time so I was not going to pause. Yes, we are wholly supportive of the idea that the name of the Kemptown successor seat should be Brighton East and Seahaven. That seems to us a much better way.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed for your presentation. We now have a number of individuals who will want to make representations. The first is John Caton. Could you please start by confirming your name and address?

MR CATON: My name is John Caton, 9 Danes Way, Oxshott in the Esher and Walton constituency. I am the Chairman of Esher and Walton Conservative Association. What I want to do in the next few minutes is to focus on the recommendation made for Esher and Walton constituency, particularly the choice between Hersham South wards and Oxshott and Stoke d'Abernon wards being transferred.

Firstly, the Commission's initial proposal states clearly that of the 11 constituencies in Surrey, the only ones which fall outside the target electorates are Runnymede and Weybridge and Spelthorne which are too small, and Esher and Walton which is too large. Any desire for simplicity - which I imagine we all have to some degree - must suggest attempting to confine the changes to within those three constituencies.

Secondly, it is already the position that four Elmbridge wards fall within Runnymede and Weybridge. This complication of political administration, campaigning and citizen recognition has been managed successfully by both the affected associations and the borough councils for many years. The transfer of Hersham South ward from Esher and Walton to Runnymede and Weybridge being already contiguous with two of those four wards would be a relatively small and manageable change to the existing situation whilst rectifying much of the numerical anomaly in two of the three non-compliant constituencies.

The alternative transfer of Oxshott and Stoke d'Abernon wards to Mole Valley achieves much less at a much greater cost, thus it reduces the excess of Esher and Walton but does nothing to make up the deficiency of either Spelthorne or Runnymede and Weybridge. Those are left to rely for their rectification on further interference with other compliant constituencies. The Oxshott and Stoke d'Abernon option will mean that Elmbridge will have more complicated electoral dealings with three constituencies instead of the present one. It also means that, at a stroke, two county divisions in Elmbridge each have registers in both Esher and Walton and Mole Valley. The Surrey county divisions are already confusing for the electorate and the Oxshott and Stoke d'Abernon transfer would exacerbate the problem. The Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott division, which is already a somewhat forced amalgamation of three separate and distinct communities, would transcend two parliamentary constituencies, with the Oxshott portion in Mole Valley and the Claygate and Hinchley Wood portion in Esher and Walton.

The same argument applies to the Cobham division, which includes Downside and Stoke d'Abernon. Cobham and Downside, which are by far the most popular parts of the division, would sit within Esher and Walton, whereas Stoke d'Abernon would be in Mole Valley. It should also be remembered that Stoke d'Abernon has strong historic links and footpath and bridge links to Downside. Although Stoke d'Abernon has its own identity as a village, it is in effect an extension of Cobham. It has a Cobham postal address and Cobham railway station is located there. It makes no sense to split Stoke d'Abernon from Cobham and have the former in Mole Valley and the latter in Esher and Walton. There are no natural transport links between either Oxshott or Stoke d'Abernon and Mole Valley. Similarly, the recent Elmbridge Borough boundary changes increase the association of Oxshott with Cobham.

Essentially, I am saying that the transfer of Hersham South ward to Runnymede and Weybridge has the support of my association.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any questions for clarification? No. Thank you very much. The next person who has asked to speak is Michael Foulston.

MR FOULSTON: Thank you for allowing me to speak. I had not expected to be allowed to speak so I have not brought any notes. I am having to speak off the cuff, as it were, so please forgive the disjointed speech. The name is Foulston and I live in Dorking, Mole Valley. I am speaking as a member of the public but for the point of transparency I should say that since 2007 I have been a member of and since 2009 I have been the election agent for Mole Valley UK Independence Party. I have not been mandated by the party to speak so these are personal views.

I am going to confine myself to Mole Valley. I do welcome your suggestion about Send ward being transferred to Woking. I think that really does fit in so well. It has a Woking postal address. It means that if we are travelling from the main part of Mole Valley across we only go as far as the A3 in future; we will not be going over the A3 to get into Send. That really does fit in well.

However, if I may, I want to object to Stoke d'Abernon and Oxshott being transferred into Mole Valley. Six wards form the north of our district, the district council and the parliamentary constituency. The two Leatherheads wards, two in Fetcham and two in Bookham, fit so well. They are in the district council; they are in the parliamentary constituency. We have no connection whatsoever with Stoke d'Abernon and Oxshott. It does not fit in at all well. I appreciate you have to try and do a balance. I know what has happened, you have transferred one out and one in, but if there is any way we can find of not bringing Oxshott and Stoke d'Abernon into Mole Valley I certainly would be happy and I think there are others--- There is a gentleman at the back nodding. I do not think I am alone. That is it, thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

MR FOULSTON: I will take questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There are no questions.

MR FOULSTON: They are rather parochial views; I know it is only Mole Valley, but thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker is due to come at one o'clock so we have a bit of time if somebody else wanted to make a representation at this particular point.

MR SLEIGHT: My name is David Sleight. I was due to speak at 2.50 but I will go now. I represent the Wokingham Without ward as the Conservative and Wokingham Borough council. I am also a member of the Bracknell Conservative Association. First of all, the Bracknell Conservative Association fully supports the Commission's proposal to leave the Bracknell constituency unchanged.

I would like, if I may, to comment on the Labour counter-proposals suggested by Slough Borough Council to transfer the Crowthorne ward of Bracknell Forest Council to Windsor constituency so that the Chalvey ward can be retained in an unchanged Slough constituency. Crowthorne is a large ward geographically, comprising a large area of Swinley Forest to the east of the ward on the Windsor side and the Crowthorne settlement is concentrated at the west end of the ward at the remote end from Windsor. The village of Crowthorne is actually split between Wokingham Borough and Bracknell Forest Council along the line of a Roman road called the Devil's Highway, north Crowthorne being in the ward Wokingham Without and also the Wokingham Without Parish Council, with the south of the village being in Crowthorne parish. Crowthorne parish is also divided into two polling districts. Crowthorne South is the Wellington part of the Little Sandhurst and Wellington ward. The Slough proposal does not appear to recognise the split and therefore would divide Crowthorne parish between two constituencies. The local ties are entirely to Bracknell, Sandhurst out to Wokingham. Bus services run between Camberley and Bracknell through Crowthorne and we have a splendid service of three buses a day from Crowthorne to Wokingham. We have the railway station at the west end of the ward and actually the railway line forms a boundary of Crowthorne ward and Little Sandhurst and Wellington ward. The railway line is the North Downs Line going to Reading or to Gatwick Airport, so getting to Windsor by rail would involve two changes. Communication from Windsor by road is solely along the road which forms the northern boundary of Crowthorne ward and the southern boundary of the various Bracknell wards.

In summary, the suggestion of moving the Crowthorne ward to the Windsor constituency would introduce a very artificial shape to both Windsor and to the Bracknell constituencies. It would be relatively inaccessible to and from Windsor compared with the Chalvey ward which, of course, has direct links by road, rail and bus. Most of all, the

local ties are entirely with Bracknell and Sandhurst. I would therefore ask the Commissioners to reject this proposal by Slough Borough Council.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Does anybody have a point of clarification?

MR KINGSWOOD: Peter Kingswood. I live in Berkshire. I have to plead guilty to responsibility for the Crowthorne Sports Centre in the 1970s. When we go to Crowthorne Railway Station we walk through Wellington College and then into Edgeborough School. Occasionally our meetings might have the background noise either of Sandhurst rifle practice or, unfortunately, the siren going off at Broadmoor. Do I take it that you are representing Wokingham Without?

MR SLEIGHT: I represent Wokingham Without, that is correct.

MR KINGSWOOD: Sometimes known as St Seb. I know it is nothing to do directly with the meeting, but has Wokingham considered applying to the Local Government Commission to have the boundary in the Crowthorne area reviewed?

MR SLEIGHT: There is no proposal for a principal boundary review.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: This is not a matter for us.

MR KINGSWOOD: Of course.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You might want to have a chat outside the meeting.

MR KINGSWOOD: Yes, thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Is there anybody else who would like to take this particular opportunity to make a representation? If not, we will adjourn until one o'clock.

After a short break

Time noted: 1.00 pm

MR LAWRENCE: ([Audio starts here](#)) First of all, just on the numbers, I have looked into this and in our current East Hampshire I gather at the last election there were 72,600

electors, so it falls into your criteria which I gather are between 71,000 and 78,500 thousand. So East Hampshire as it stands fits your criteria, so “if it ain’t broke” why are you changing it and just drawing lines?

Alton is already in the East Hampshire District Council area. This has been the case since the reorganisation of the Local Government Bill of 1972. Alton Urban and Rural District Council ceased to exist in 1974 and we became part of East Hampshire, the administrative centre of which is Petersfield, although until this time we are still the biggest town in population in the district council area of East Hampshire. What I am trying to say is that the current East Hampshire constituency is more or less the East Hampshire District Council area which makes very logical sense. Alton, as a town, also has more affinity, I feel, to the south with Bordon, Petersfield and of course the South Downs National Park. A small amount of Alton, the actual electoral area of Alton, has a little bit of the South Downs National Park in it. Alton has no affinity, I would suggest, with Hart District Council because if Alton is included in this proposed North East Hampshire constituency, you are going to have a constituency where, whoever is the MP, is going to be dealing with two district councils, which seems a bit silly to me. As I reiterate again, we are more East Hampshire than we will ever be North East Hampshire. To me, you have just drawn the line and included it because we are only just in the very south of the proposed North East Hampshire constituency.

As I say, Alton and its area goes back well before 1974. It had its own district council, the Alton Urban and Rural District Council, which was swallowed up or taken over and joined to make the new East Hampshire District Council.

My main argument is particularly on the numbers, let alone anything else, and the fact that I feel that Alton is still the biggest town in the East Hampshire district area and should remain the biggest town in the East Hampshire parliamentary constituency because it already satisfies your criteria. I think that is all I have to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody have a point of clarification?

MR HARTLEY: Sam Hartley, I am Secretary to the Boundary Commission. If I could just help you out, Mr Lawrence, the current East Hampshire constituency is too small.

MR LAWRENCE: Not according to the numbers, is it? So you mean from a numbers perspective, electoral register numbers?

MR HARTLEY: Yes.

MR LAWRENCE: But it had 72,600 electors at the last parliamentary election.

MR HARTLEY: If you allow me to explain, the figures that the Boundary Commission must use are those from December 2015. Under the December 2015 register the East Hampshire constituency is just a shade over 70,000, so it is outside the range that we are permitted to recommend. I clarify for you because there is plenty of time for you to go away and look at the proposals and see if you can come up with an alternative that will help Colin and his colleagues?

MR LAWRENCE: In that case, can I do a supplementary on that one, please?

MR HARTLEY: Of course you can.

MR LAWRENCE: Bordon is having up to 10,000 new houses which is certainly going to boost in the future very soon - in fact the houses are being built - that 70,000, so we would come into the criteria. Also, Alton itself has four massive planning applications which have been approved and are going through as well. So we are having a lot of house building and we will be having more registered electors. Going forward we will certainly be within your criteria of more than 71,000 electors. I wish you to take that on board. We are a growing district area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will take on board all the representations that are made. Thank you very much for your representation. We are going to adjourn again until 2.30.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will resume our representations. We are going to kick off the afternoon's session with Ms Teresa Ward. Please announce who you are for the record and where you live. You then have ten minutes to make your representation.

MS WARD: Good afternoon. My name is Teresa Ward; I am a resident of Guildford. I would agree with the proposal to change the boundaries so that each parliamentary constituency has roughly the same number of constituents so that I am one of 75,000 rather than one of perhaps many other numbers with a distribution of different numbers around the UK. I appreciate that it would cause problems for various rural constituencies like Cumbria, where they have a population spread out, but in the event of equality and

fairness I think the Boundary Commission Review should consider changing the boundaries. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any questions? No. Thank you very much for that input. Mr Kingswood, do you want to make a representation at this moment in time?

MR KINGSWOOD: Later in the afternoon, if possible.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is fine. There is nobody new in the room so on that basis I adjourn until 3.30 when we will take stock as to whether anybody else has turned up. Thank you for your attendance.

MR HARTLEY: There is nobody booked in until 5.00 pm and then one at 6.00 pm.

After a short break

Time noted: 4.40 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Kingswood, the floor is yours. For the record would you say who you are and where you live.

MR KINGSWOOD: Peter Kingswood, a resident and elector in Berkshire, Windsor. Thank you for bringing up the Berkshire map. I will start off with an overview. If one looks at Berkshire it has an entitlement of eight. There are two constituencies that do make sense currently. In the west it is Newbury and in the north-east it is Slough. In the west, Newbury has, at each review, been shedding one or two wards because of the expansion of housing. At the other end, Slough, in the north-east, is up on a river terrace above the Thames, it is wholly urban; the only piece of it that is not in the current Slough seat is Colnbrook with Poyle, which is south of the M4 motorway. It is an orphan that has had to be detached, even in the days when the Commission was allowed much more flexibility. The remaining six constituencies since the mid-1990s have been altered rather on that ad hoc basis that electoral registration officers and chief executives, town clerks, "Let's move a ward here and move a ward there." That is the basis on which the Commission has come up with this initial proposal. The Commission, quite frankly, has had less than half a year, even using earlier historic information.

Frankly, my own mood is that in Reading there should be at least one seat that is wholly within Reading. One comes very close to that in the east with an electorate of just under 70,000, but it means that another 2,500 electors would have to be found in round terms. Those are comfortably in Shinfield North. Shinfield North is on the Reading side of the

motorway, so when you arrive at that part of Reading suburbs you get the surprise of a street that no longer has the Reading logo, it has the Wokingham logo. It is one of the peculiarities of boundaries. Next door to Reading is Wokingham and, quite sensibly, Mr Pratt earlier today said that it really lends itself to being called Mid-Berkshire. Its weakness is that Wokingham, the only major town, is at the far end. It is possible, if one accepts the idea of a Reading seat as described previously, to get a Wokingham seat wholly within the Wokingham district. That could help Bracknell constituency, but, as I am talking without notes, I will leave it at that regarding Bracknell and move on to Maidenhead.

If you have a Reading East that is generally a baker's dozen wards in a borough constituency, you then have to find somewhere that the Wokingham wards have to go. Whitegates and Bulmershe, which combines a piece of Erleigh Parish and a piece of Woodham Parish, would lend itself to be with the other Erleigh wards in a Wokingham constituency. That would leave the Woodley wards of South Lake and Loddon and they could join their coronation in Maidenhead. That would then allow the return to Windsor of the Bray ward. Up until 2010 Bray was part of Windsor constituency. The bulk of the electorate are south of the M4. Certainly its largest population centre, largest electorate, Holyport does look both to Maidenhead and Windsor. My friends in Holyport tell me that they tend to look more to Windsor by preference. Windsor's deficiency would be dealt with by the return of Bray, which has a clear boundary of the motorway except for the village of Bray which is north of the motorway. That would mean that Slough could be no change. Slough has the advantage over Maidenhead constituency that Slough is a borough constituency and therefore has a clearer identity, whereas the Maidenhead county constituency is a town and rural area and the suburb of Woodley.

I pause there. That was what my original presentation was going to be. Just before lunch we were told by the councillor from Wokingham Without that there would be a proposal from Slough Borough, if I heard correctly, to put Crowthorne into Windsor constituency. During the recess I have pushed the figures between Windsor constituency and Bracknell constituency. You can satisfy the Commission's "must", the requirements of having more electors than 71,031. I speak slowly for the scribe and if Mr Pratt wants to write down names. Windsor would return Chalvey to Slough. It would give three wards of Bracknell Forest to Bracknell County constituency; those wards are Winkfield and Cranbourne, Binfield with Warfield, and Warfield Harvest Ride. The first two are partly rural but certainly Warfield Harvest Ride is part of what is often known as Greater Urban Bracknell. How to compensate Windsor? We return to the name Crowthorne. Part of Crowthorne is in one of the four Sandhurst wards. If you add those five wards on you get an electorate of 76,015 on the published figures. Let us call it Windsor and Sandhurst.

The other part of the musical chairs, Bracknell, as said, Crowthorne and Sandhurst would be given to Windsor. Bracknell would gain the three wards that are in the area generally known as the northern parishes, so Ascot ward, Binfield with Warfield and Warfield Harvest Ride. That would give an electorate, using the Commission's figures, of 73,619. The Commission would have to run that through their mapping to see what Windsor and Sandhurst looks like.

I will wrap up on Berkshire. Should I go straight on to East Sussex or allow questions?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am happy to take any questions that anybody has about the proposal for Berkshire. (No response) We will move on to East Sussex.

MR KINGSWOOD: I will move on to East Sussex. If Mr Winter can pull up Sussex, can you zoom in a bit and move it along towards Kent? Thank you, that is wonderful. It is established and no one is disputing that East Sussex needs to be combined with Kent because that is how the figures come along. We had the discussion of Brighton and Hove and any arguments are basically within the envelope, not the perimeter of the envelope. The Eastbourne constituency and the Hastings and Rye constituency, the figures allow them to be no change and they are predominantly urban. That leaves us with the High Weald and the Low Weald. Starting in the Low Weald, the current Lewes constituency stretches across to the outskirts of Hailsham and Eastbourne and right to Polegate. One way to compensate would be to continue eastward to the coast at Pevensey so that there would be Lewes and Hailsham based on the Vale of Sussex. Currently it is Wealden, but the future name most likely is to be High Weald. It would consolidate the three towns of Uckfield, Heathfield and Crowborough into one area, whereas the weakness of the initial proposal has Crowborough and nothing of any substance all the way to Tenterden. The High Weald would need to go down the Rother Valley to get the necessary figures. There is a railway line that comes from Tunbridge Wells over in Kent through Frant, Wadhurst, and passes Robertsbridge on its way to the coast at St Leonards and Hastings. Those two wards, I think Ticehurst and Salehurst, would bring the figures up to within the limits. As I have mentioned, Heathfield would be with its other High Wealden urban settlements, Uckfield and Crowborough, Crowborough being the major one and it was until recently the dual centre for administration. It has now been sold off to Crowborough town, if I understand it correctly.

That leaves us with Bexhill. Bexhill could be the starting point for crossing over into Kent and it could have three districts, the Rother, the Ashford (which would be Tenterden, Isle of Oxney) and the eastern tail of the Tunbridge Wells district (Goudhurst through Cranbrook, Sissinghurst) a series of Wealden villages. That is the overview.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is helpful. No doubt you will expand of that in your written submission.

MR KINGSWOOD: Of course.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any questions? (No response) Thank you very much for those two proposals. We will adjourn for 15 minutes.

After a short break

Time noted: 6.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening. We have not been very busy this afternoon so we are delighted that you have come. The routine is that you have about ten minutes to talk to myself. I am the Assistant Commissioner who is leading and I have another colleague here. There are various colleagues from the Boundary Commission and there are two other members of the audience, so to speak, who will be interested in what you say. For formality reasons you have to go and stand at the lectern and say your name and address, because it is all being recorded. People will be interested in what you say and they will all have access to it in due course. If you need the help of any maps or anything then Roger can bring them up on the screen.

MR GORNIOK: Good evening, everybody. My name is Casper Gorniok. I am a resident of Normandy in Surrey, which is potentially affected by the boundary changes. In very, very simple terms, at the heart of my opinion, Normandy is part of a Woking constituency for parliamentary reasons but it is part of Guildford Borough Council for day-to-day. I have lived in the village now for about 34 years. The only time I have been away was when I was at university and then I lived in London.

My concern is simply that as a village and how we function and how we talk and how we interact, everything relates to Guildford. Woking is completely somewhere else. I would say probably 19 out of 20 visits will be to Guildford. It is the linkage and, as I say, the way people talk, where people go, how they think. I do not understand why we are linked to Woking, apart from is it boundary shuffling. To be absolutely frank, the area is so blue overall in terms of voting intention that we need to think about how people are living their lives day-to-day. Our interaction is with Guildford all the time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just to be clear, Normandy is part of Woking constituency?

MR GORNIOK: That is correct; politically, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But it has been for some time. Our proposals have not changed.

MR GORNIOK: Correct.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What you are advocating is that we take this opportunity to examine whether it should be part of the Guildford constituency rather than Woking.

MR GORNIOK: The beautiful idea would be that you have a centre and you have a radius. One of the things that has really surprised me is how far beyond Normandy there are other parts that belong to Guildford. I just find that very, very strange.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it possible to point out where Normandy is, Roger?

MR GORNIOK: Yes, that is it. We are about here. Greater Normandy, there it is. (Indicating)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just below the Hog's Back.

MR GORNIOK: That is right, we are just below the Hog's Back, up towards something called the Ash Ranges, which is a large military zone.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would anybody like to ask any questions for clarification? No. Thank you for coming in and making that point. You have until 5 December to make a written representation. You do not have to make a written representation, but if you want to add to what you have said today you have until 5 December.

MR GORNIOK: Am I allowed to ask, when did this originally get changed?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I do not know when the original Woking constituency was in this form. Would you know?

MR HARTLEY: It has been like that for some time.

MR GORNIOK: I appreciate it probably has been 40 years, maybe more.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think Woking constituency has been in existence since about 1950 and Normandy had been part of the Guildford Borough when it was created in 1974.

MR GORNIOK: I do not know if you looked at the whole map of England or something, how many borough councils and political constituencies are the same when you have outlying areas. As I say, we feel so distant from Woking in how things run day-to-day. In terms of character, Normandy is a village where people live a very long time. My mother has lived there since 1961 and we know lots of people in the village who have lived there 30 or 40 years. It is a very stable community whereas Woking - I have to phrase this so politically correctly - because it has quite a high migrant population I think it is very transient and the make-up of it alters a lot over time. In terms of character, I think Guildford is also very, very stable. There is a logic to put the two together.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Nobody else has any other questions. Thank you for that. Thank you very much for coming.

MR GORNIOK: Would you like me to put the word out in Normandy if people can comment?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is entirely up to you. Obviously the more representations we have, the better informed the work of the Commission is.

MR GORNIOK: Okay, will do. Thank you. Have a good evening.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. We do not have any other people booked in but as we have said we would be here until eight o'clock I think we should give until seven o'clock the opportunity for people to come and then if nobody has signed up at seven o'clock then we will adjourn for the day.

At 7.00 pm the hearing adjourned until 9.00 am on Friday 21 October 2016

B

MR BEAMENT, 13, 28, 29, 38, 39, 40

C

MR CATON, 40
MR COOK, 5, 13

F

MR FOULSTON, 41, 42

G

MR GORNIOK, 50, 51, 52

H

MR HARRIS, 40
MR HARTLEY, 2, 45, 46, 51
CLLR HOUSE, 13, 18

K

MR KINGSWOOD, 28, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49

L

MR LAWRENCE, 44, 45

P

MR PRATT, 18, 19, 28, 29, 38, 39

S

MR SLEIGHT, 42, 43, 44

T

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 2, 5, 12, 13, 18, 19, 28, 29, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51,
52

U

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER, 51

W

MS WARD, 46

