

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**AUDITORIUM, THE STOREY
MEETING HOUSE LANE, LANCASTER**

ON

**MONDAY 24 OCTOBER 2016
DAY ONE**

Before:

Mr Neil Ward, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

**Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
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Time noted: 10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you all had a nice weekend. I see some familiar faces and some new ones. Welcome to this the first day of the Lancaster public hearings on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the North West region.

My name is Neil Ward and I am an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission. I was appointed by the Commission to assist them in two ways really, first of all to chair these hearings, and I have chaired all the hearings in the North West, but also, together with my fellow Assistant Commissioners, Nicholas Elliott and Graham Clark, who are both here today, to analyse all the representations that we have received about the initial proposals in the region, whether we received them in these oral representations or in written representations, which can continue to be made until 5 December, and then presenting recommendations to the Commission as to whether we think the initial proposals should be revised in the light of the representations that we have received.

I should say at the outset that the Assistant Commissioners have had no hand in the drafting of the proposals; our role really is as an honest broker between considering the representations, considering the Boundary Commission's proposals and seeing whether we believe change is appropriate.

I am assisted here today by members of the Commission staff, led by Glenn Reed who is sitting beside me. Glenn will shortly provide an explanation of the Commission's position of their initial proposals for the new constituencies and he will explain about how to make written representations, and I am sure he will deal with one or two administrative matters.

We are scheduled to run today from 10.00 am until 8.00 pm, and we have speakers for most of the day, and tomorrow from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, so a fairly busy day. I do have the opportunity to be flexible in our timings but what I cannot do is extend the hearings into three days. It is a two-day hearing and it will finish tomorrow afternoon. At this point I will ask Glenn Reed to speak and then when I come back I will just explain a little bit about the process for the day.

MR REED: Good morning, everybody. Thank you very much, Neil. As Neil has mentioned, my name is Glenn Reed and I am a member of the Commission staff. I am responsible for supporting the Commissioners in their role to recommend new parliamentary constituency boundaries, and at this hearing I lead a team of staff responsible for ensuring that the hearing runs smoothly. As Neil has already stated, he will chair the hearing itself and it is his responsibility to run the hearing at his discretion

and also to take decisions about speakers, questioners and timing. My team and I are here today to support Neil in carrying out his role. Please ask any one of us outside the hearing if you need any help or assistance.

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

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

In considering the composition of each European electoral region we noted that it might not be possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties. We have therefore grouped some local authority areas into sub-regions. The number of constituencies allocated to each sub-region is determined by the number of the electorate in the combined local authorities. Consequently, it has been necessary to propose some constituencies that cross unitary authority boundaries or county boundaries.

As I mentioned previously, we have allocated 68 constituencies to the North West, which is a reduction of seven.

We propose that the Metropolitan Boroughs of Greater Manchester be combined in a sub-region with the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, the unitary authorities of Cheshire East and Chester West and Chester and the Boroughs of Halton and Warrington. We propose two constituencies that contain electorates from both Cheshire and Greater Manchester, Altrincham and Knutsford and also the towns of Bramhall and Poynton in two constituencies.

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

The statutory rules allow us to take into account local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. These include the external boundaries of local councils and their internal boundaries (known as "wards" or "electoral divisions").

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 we consider splitting a ward between constituencies and our initial proposals have not done 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. We are consulting our proposals until Monday 5 December, so there is still plenty of time after this hearing for people to contribute in writing. There are also reference copies of proposals present at this hearing and they are also available on our website and in a number of places of deposit around the region. Written representations can be made to us through our consultation website at www.bce2018.org.uk. I would urge everyone to submit a written representation to us by the deadline of 5 December.

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

The Commission is required to publish the record of the public hearings along with all the written representations after a four-week period during which members of the public have the opportunity to comment on those representations. We expect this period to occur during spring of next year. The publication of the hearing records and written representations will include certain personal data of those who have made representations. I therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's data protection and privacy policy, a copy of which we have with us and which is available on our website.

Before I hand you back to Neil I just want to briefly say that the ladies and gents are through the door to the left and straight on. We have been told that there are no planned fire drills today or tomorrow so if we do hear the fire alarm go off it means it is for real and we should evacuate by the nearest exit, you can see 'Exits' to my left. The assembly point is just in front of the castle. Thank you very much indeed and I will hand you back to Neil to begin the public hearing.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Glenn. Just a couple of reminders on process. These hearings are to allow people to make oral representations

about the initial proposals. It is not the place to debate with the Commission the relative merits of their proposals or indeed to debate with each other the relative merits of the proposals of individuals' representations, nor is it a place for cross-examining. Those who used to be involved in hearings on boundaries used to know that it was effectively a court hearing, an enquiry. These are not that, they are a place to give representations and for us as Assistant Commissioners to receive them. We will at the end of each representation provide the opportunity for any points of clarification either from myself or from anyone in the audience, but please do so through the Chair.

A number of people have already booked slots, we have got a fairly full morning of booked slots, and I will try to stick to the timings as best I can on those slots. We may need to be flexible particularly as the day goes on as the number of booked speakers change.

My aim is to give everyone who wishes to speak the opportunity to speak over these two days and whenever we have a gap I will provide an opportunity to see if anyone in the audience wishes to make any representations.

It is my experience so far that most of the people who present are pretty familiar with public speaking, but not everyone is and it is not so easy to stand up in a room with an eminent audience such as this and to make representations, so I hope we will all be as supportive as we can of anyone who is speaking irrespective of whether you share their views or not.

For those who like to plan the day, I am going to build in a number of breaks during the day. We have got a natural break at about 11.30 this morning. We will break for lunch at 1.30 pm until 2.30 pm and probably around 4 o'clock this afternoon we will fit in another break. Before we begin, are there any points on clarification, either points I have made or anything Glenn has made, any points Glenn has made? (No response)

No, okay we will begin the representations. Typically we allow ten minutes per person to make their representations. In practice, most people manage to get their points over well within that ten-minute period. If it runs much beyond that ten minutes then I will probably intervene to ask you to reach your conclusions. If we could begin I would like to invite David Morris to come forward and begin. As Glenn was saying, if you could give your name and address and begin your representation and at the end we will see if there are any points. Thank you very much.

Sam will put maps up and if you have a particular map you want to talk about it is easier if you give Sam the heads up as to which area you want to talk about.

MR MORRIS: (MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale) I am David Morris. I am the Member of Parliament for Morecambe and Lunesdale. I am here today to support the views of my constituents in Morecambe and Lunesdale and oppose the proposals put

forward by this Commission, which is to create a Morecambe and Lancaster seat and a North Lancashire seat.

I would firstly like to start by drawing the Commission to their own comments from the last Boundary review in 2011, in which the Commission decided that Morecambe and Lancaster do not fit together and proposed that Morecambe and Lunesdale should historically stay the same with the reintroduction and addition of the Lower Lune Valley Ward into the seat.

In the North West revised proposals 2011 on page 60 it states:

“AC354. We now examine the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency under the initial proposals. The initial proposals separated Morecambe from Lancaster, but it has been suggested that these towns should be combined, The Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats oppose this in their respective counter-proposals - in some isolation in our view.

“AC355. It is clear to us that to combine them would disrupt local ties and would fly in the face of the clearly expressed views of the local people, whose argument is a simple one: they are entirely different places. The Lancaster constituency was described to us as ‘urban and rural’, whereas Morecambe is ‘seaside and rural community’ (Preston public hearing, Day 2, p3). We note the presence also of the University of Lancaster in the Lancaster Constituency.

“AC356. We also observe that the existing constituency arrangement is the same as in the initial proposals, insofar as the two towns are already separated. We intend to respect the existing boundaries to this extent, whereas the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party would redraw them.

“AC357. We recognise that there will be three local authorities to deal with in our recommended Lancaster constituency. In our view, however, this is a small disadvantage when compared to the mismatch of the two towns and the significant disruption to surrounding constituencies that would ensue should Lancaster and Morecambe be combined. We are heartened to hear that although they share the same city council, meetings are held in both Lancaster and Morecambe (Preston public hearing, Day 1, p49). We also note a petition with 333 signatures (IP/025613) in support of the initial proposal.

“AC358. Therefore, we are persuaded to recommend the Commission’s proposed Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency, as set out in the initial proposals, for three main reasons. First, it keeps Morecambe and Lancaster separate. Second, it reduces disruption to local ties and largely reflects the existing constituency and, third, the only alteration to the current constituency reunites the Lower Lune Valley ward with the Upper Lune Valley ward, thus better representing local government boundaries. Ms

Emma Smith, a local Councillor from Morecambe, endorsed this referring us to the rural issues affecting the area. (Preston, public hearing, Day 1,p49).”

This proposal for a Morecambe and Lancaster seat has really upset the people in Morecambe and Lunesdale, and I am sure you will see this in the substantial written responses which are being submitted. People in Morecambe generally feel that these boundaries have been drawn by someone in London who has never been to our area and who has not taken into consideration other consultation periods to date.

Historically, Morecambe and Lancaster have always been separate and Morecambe and Lancaster never existed as the name of the seat. Looking as far back as the redistribution of Boundaries Act 1944, Morecambe and Lancaster have always been in separate constituencies.

In Morecambe there is still a lot of bad blood following the merger of the councils of Morecambe and Lancaster. This is the reason why the council has to meet in both Lancaster and Morecambe to this day. Indeed, the creation of the local political party of the MBIs are a direct result of this merger - MBI being the Morecambe Bay Independence Party - and the recent creation of a Morecambe Town Council still demonstrates the feeling of resentment towards Lancaster.

Any proposals to change this dual meeting over the years have led to fierce opposition and have been dropped as it has been seen as Lancaster absorbing Morecambe by stealth.

In Morecambe there is a universally held feeling that Lancaster takes all of Morecambe’s funding on a council level and that to support one area is always to the detriment of the other. I do not feel that one Member of Parliament would be able to support the differing needs of a student city and a seaside resort properly or effectively.

It is a real fear amongst constituents that following the opening of the link road Lancaster will try and take advantage of Morecambe’s economic prosperity to take any future funding for themselves. This may seem a little over the top, but I can assure you it is a universally held fear in Morecambe and its wider community as Morecambe has dramatically improved its fortunes in the recent years.

The main concern is that a merger with Lancaster would be detrimental to the regeneration of Morecambe as a seaside town. I think my favourite response so far was from a gentleman who said:

“I’m voting Lexit - exit from Lancaster.”

Similarly, the proposal for North Lancashire has also met opposition locally. To marry Carnforth, Silverdale, Warton, Kellet and the Upper Lune Valley with wards and areas of

the Ribble Valley and rural Preston is quite simply unworkable. This proposal has no centre to it and would lead to a representative being seen to be spread too thin in a vast constituency to the detriment of the other areas.

I believe that this representative would end up being Preston-centric and would not be able to represent Carnforth and the surrounding rural areas to the borders of Cumbria and Yorkshire effectively in such a large rural seat.

There are no real links between these areas and no one from the wards in my constituency has ever had the need to visit any of the other parts on any regular basis.

One of the responses I have had said:

“Carnforth should be linked with a large local town, not areas I never visit or have any dealings with.”

This view has been repeated across the whole community, not just in the rural areas of Morecambe and Lunesdale but also in the Ribble Valley. There are four councils in this proposed huge North Lancashire Constituency and the issues and problems faced by residents are completely different.

I do not think that a one-size-fits-all approach can be given this collective of rural areas. They are completely separate valleys, let alone communities, and should remain as such.

Counterproposal

I would now like to come to my suggestion for a counter proposal and I would like the support the Conservative Party’s counter-proposal for Lancashire to be taken into serious consideration.

I would like to see a proposal which keeps Morecambe and Lunesdale together in its entirety and adds two wards, Lower Lune Valley and Bulk, to ensure the number of electors fits within the specified boundaries criteria and becomes 71,400.

Firstly, I would like to draw the Commission’s attention to paragraph 31 of the Boundary Commission’s document for the initial proposals for new parliamentary constituencies in the North West.”

These are recent proposals. In this paragraph, the Commission state that:

“We decided that we could not maintain the separation of the towns in different constituencies, as this is the existing arrangement, because this would lead to a geographically huge constituency that would wrap around the City of Lancaster” and

“We would have preferred a solution that retained the university site within a constituency with Lancaster but, having carefully examined the alternatives, concluded that any other solution would result in greater division of the City of Lancaster.”

I believe that the Conservative Party’s proposal succeeds in being able to keep Morecambe and Lancaster separate, and puts the University back with central Lancaster, where it belongs.

It avoids a huge rural constituency which wraps around the centre of Lancaster, which is strangely exactly what these initial Boundary Commission proposals would like to avoid but unintentionally actually create.

The biggest rural area around a city in the country, in this case Lancaster...” that is what this would create

The Lower Lune Valley was an area the Boundary Commission proposed adding to Morecambe and Lunesdale in the last Boundary consultation, and in fact half of the ward was with Morecambe and Lunesdale up until as recently as 2010.

The Lune Valley is one community and the arbitrary distinction between the Upper and Lower Lune Valley is not a distinction that is made by local residents. There is currently a lot of confusion in places such as Claughton, Tatham and Wyre. These villages are a field distance outside Morecambe and Lunesdale and I am always getting casework letters which I have to redirect. This proposal will give them a cohesive representation in an enhanced Morecambe and Lunesdale, making up the figures that are needed for this Boundary Commission.

A major factor of why the Lower Lune Valley should be in Morecambe and Lunesdale is the M6 link road. This road is opening next week, and therefore will not be on your maps quite yet but is one of the biggest road building projects in the area that the area has seen in a generations.

The link road starts in the Lower Lune Valley at junction 34 of the M6 and cuts across all the way through to Heysham. This bypass was built so that you no longer have to go through Lancaster to get to Morecambe, which is even more reason why Morecambe should be separate from Lancaster.

The road will revolutionise the area and solidify Morecambe even further as a community separate from Lancaster. It makes total sense to keep the beginning, the middle and the end of the road in one parliamentary constituency.

The counter-proposal also brings in Bulk to Morecambe and Lunesdale. I have heard some arguments that Bulk is in the centre of Lancaster and I would argue that that is not correct. Bulk is only one of six wards in the Lancaster area, 18% to be precise of the

area known as Lancaster, and many of its parts have ties with other areas around them as it is on the outskirts.

There are many new developments at the Old Moor Hospital site at the north end of this ward. These homes see themselves very much on the outskirts of Lancaster and more in common with the rural areas of the Lower Lune Valley in which they border. You have probably seen them from the motorway as you have been driving in today.

In fact, I know of a number of constituents for Morecambe and Lunesdale who have moved from the Upper Lune Valley to this development and they still see and identify themselves as being in the valley rural area.

The areas of Newton and Ridge reflect the communities in Skerton on the other side of the river in Morecambe and Lunesdale and are equally the same distance outside of the centre of Lancaster. Skerton, geographically is content to be in Morecambe and Lunesdale. They complement each other on either side of the river.

Bringing in the link road again, in Bulk there is the Lansil Industrial Estate, it would make huge sense to link this area with the White Lund estate at the beginning of the Pike bypass and also link into the Port of Heysham as part of the Industrial Strategy for the area, which all benefit from connection to the port and connection to the M6 respectively. With this, the road network will also be married up into one constituency. I have already talked about the M6 link road, but also the roads to Morecambe, Caton Road, Greyhound Bridge and Owen Road will all be in Morecambe and Lunesdale. This means that none of the connection roads to Morecambe will be in Lancaster and give greater independence to the area.

A disruption of 11.4% of the current Lancaster and Fleetwood seat, and only two wards at that, will allow 100% of Morecambe and Lunesdale to stay unchanged in their historically recognised communities.

In conclusion, I hope that the large volume of individually written letters from constituents in Morecambe and Lunesdale will be taken into consideration by the Commission, and that these changes can be made to the proposals based on the strength of feeling of my communities. We would like to see a proposal which keeps our community together, and adds a further two wards, which is the most logical and least disruptive option for both Lancaster and Morecambe communities.

In reality, this would mean 89% of the proposed seat would be keeping the status quo; it would be Morecambe and Lunesdale.

Whilst I understand that the addition of the Bulk ward is being contested by the Labour Party, it is only one of six wards of the whole of Lancaster with most of that ward being

on the outskirts, and there on the outskirts new homes are being built to house a new addition to that community, mainly from the valleys.

It would be much better to add this ward and keep Morecambe and Lunesdale as a whole together rather than displacing 66,000 people in a hugely controversial and unpopular proposal.

To abolish our community with its unique historical identity would be a travesty, and I hope this Commission take note of this feeling by reading the substantially handwritten comments currently being submitted to this Commission. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I wonder if I could just ask you, and I am sure I will have the opportunity over the next three speakers to ask similar questions, can you just tell me where the dividing line between Lancaster and Morecambe is on a map? I cannot really find where the open space is. They look like they are the two pieces of land joining together. There is Skerton West, Westgate and Torrisholme and I am trying to find a gap somewhere.

MR MORRIS: The map does not make it very clear, but if you can think of anything north of the river as being in Morecambe and Lunesdale, so in effect if I may stand here so I can see it a little bit more clearly, and it is very dim, the boundary is the river going up into, as it currently stands, Yorkshire/Cumbria region, the Skerton area is north of the river. What was the rest of your question?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is Skerton in Morecambe or is Skerton in Lancaster?

MR MORRIS: Skerton is in Morecambe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So the river is the boundary, the natural boundary between these two opposed areas?

MR MORRIS: Yes. It is hard to explain this without actually a more clearer map, but where the link road starts is actually where the river gets the narrowest at the Halton end, which again is Morecambe and Lunesdale, so it marries up in effect the Bulk area into the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency and all of the industrial areas are in that area. The whole point of having a link road was to open the port, open up the industrial estates to get all the produce and GDP imports onto the M6 as quickly as possible.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. There is a clear gap between the university, is there not, and Scotforth East and West, for example?

MR MORRIS: Well, to my mind how can you have the University of Lancaster when it is outside Lancaster? Most of the populace that actually live at the university live in Scotforth I believe.

Now, this is not in my constituency but the whole point I am trying to make to the Commission is quite simply this: Morecambe and Lunesdale have been quite separate and succinct for reasons. That has actually been acknowledged before in this previous Boundary Commission.

The proposals that the Tory Party are putting forward, the Conservative Party, and the proposals that I am putting forward is the least disruption. You keep the majority, a huge majority of 89% of Morecambe and Lunesdale together and only take in a very small part of portion of Lancaster area. Actually it does mirror Skerton, because people in Skerton actually do see themselves as being in part of the north and Lunesdale configuration but they are just on the outskirts of Lancaster just like Bulk is.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no other points of clarification. Clarification, Mr Walsh?

MR WALSH: (Conservative Party) John Walsh, Conservative Party. Can I just take you back to paragraph 31 of the Commission's draft proposals which was published a few weeks ago? You mentioned that in your speech.

MR MORRIS: Yes.

MR WALSH: About the University and Scotforth rural ward. What you were saying as I understood it, and can you confirm, is that you agree with the Commission in the comments and observations about the desirability of University and Scotforth being a city ward but you disagree with their conclusions that it cannot be included and your proposals would be that that ward should be linked to the other Scotforth wards in the city?

MR MORRIS: Yes.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. Mr Morris, you mention the fact that there has been the merger of the councils and that this has resulted in animosity and that is why they sit in two different places. Could you tell me when the merger took place, please?

MR MORRIS: The merger took place approximately 25 to 30 years ago. Even more than that, 40 years ago, when I was a little boy.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Local government re-organisation 1974. Are there any other points of clarification? No. Thank you very much indeed, Mr Morris. Is Emma Smith available?

MISS EMMA SMITH: My name is Emma Smith. I live at 10 Eldon Grove, Heysham. I am here today to voice my opposition to the Boundary Commission's proposal to create a Morecambe and Lancaster seat and a North Lancashire seat. I am from Heysham and I have lived there my whole life. My family on my mum's side go back generations in Morecambe so I am all too aware of how unique Morecambe and Heysham are as an area and its specific needs.

In the last Boundary hearing I spoke in support of Morecambe and Lunesdale being kept together as I was then a councillor for Heysham South. I am no longer a Councillor but still wanted to speak today as a resident as I feel very strongly about my community and its heritage.

Speaking to people in the community over the last few weeks there has been a lot of anger about the proposal to put Morecambe and Lancaster together. People feel that someone in London has sat there with a calculator and redrawn the boundaries with no knowledge of the area and no consideration of comments made to the Commission in the past.

In fact, as this area's hearings are in Lancaster with none in Morecambe this has further upset people as they feel it is a done deal already as the Commission simply do not understand the division of the communities and it has actually put quite a lot of people off coming to the meeting, and hopefully they are going to write in as well.

I, however, am an optimist and I hope that making our case again today will make the Commission change their minds.

The division of Lancaster and Morecambe as two distinct and separate communities is not arbitrary but ingrained in the fabric of each community. My granddad, who is now well into his seventies, used to tell us stories of how, in his youth, lads from Morecambe would not venture into Lancaster alone for fear of being beaten up and vice versa and groups from each area would meet up on the border and fight.

At that time Morecambe was in its heyday and was much more prosperous than Lancaster and there was resentment of that. In the 1970s a decision was made to merge the council areas of Morecambe and Lancaster as one. The decision was heavily fought by the people of Morecambe and ultimately the view of the people was ignored and the merger went ahead. The sores from this still run deep in Morecambe and to this day the council has to meet in both Morecambe and Lancaster equally and any attempts to stop this over the years have been heavily opposed and abandoned.

The Morecambe Bay Independence formed as a political party as a result of the merger and I am sure you will also hear from them during this consultation.

In Morecambe there is still the feeling that, on a council level, Lancaster takes funding from Morecambe and does everything it can to stop it being able to succeed. From a personal point of view, the Morecambe and Lancaster divide was a real part of growing up. I used to swim competitively and as a Heysham child joined Carnforth Otters as my team whereas Lancashire children joined Lancaster City. Teams were picked on where you lived and Morecambe and Lunesdale children still attend Carnforth Otters to this day.

When I was 11 and it was time to choose secondary schools I chose to attend Lancaster Grammar School. When I applied Heysham and Morecambe were not in the catchment area, so girls from Morecambe had to achieve higher grades in their Eleven Plus to gain a place. The catchment area was Lancaster, Rural Lancaster, Wyre and into north Preston. Girls who lived in those areas could travel on a school bus, but those of us in Morecambe had to find our own way there on public transport.

These are just a few examples of these divisions in practice, but at its heart Lancaster is a city and Morecambe is a seaside town. It cannot possibly be allowed for Morecambe to become a suburb of Lancaster. If this happens Morecambe would suffer. An MP for both areas would have to take sides and prioritise. It is much easier to attract funding for a student city than for regeneration of a seaside town, so it is easy to see which would prosper and which would fail under these proposals.

The link road opening next week furthers Morecambe's independence by making Morecambe accessible from the motorway and solidifies its economic prosperity for the future.

The timing of the Commission's proposal for a Morecambe and Lancaster seat only fuels the feeling in my community that as soon as Morecambe gets something that will make it prosper Lancaster wants to take it back.

Having attended Lancaster University to study my degree I know how integral the university is to the town, and vice versa. Students generally live on campus in their first year and live in Lancaster in their second and third years. Students of all years socialise and often work in the centre of Lancaster and to split these two areas as the Commission has done so far is unworkable.

So, what is the alternative? I am fully aware of the Commission's mandatory guidelines of a minimum number of electors per seat and under these numbers I would like to support the Conservative Party's proposal for Lancashire. Their proposal keeps my community of Morecambe and Lunesdale fully together and recognises historical boundaries. The Conservative Party proposal adds Bulk ward and the Lower Lune

Valley to the current Morecambe and Lunesdale. Half of the Lower Lune Valley had already been with Morecambe and Lunesdale prior to 2010 as the ward was split in half.

The Lower Lune and Upper Lune Valley boundary is an arbitrary one and both see themselves as one community. The Lower Lune also hosts the start of the new M6 link road, so it would make sense to ensure all parts of the road appear in one constituency.

Bulk ward hosts the Lansil Industrial Estate next to the start of the link road and to marry this up with the Whitelands Industrial Estate would create cohesive benefits of the road going forward. Bulk ward is one-sixth of the wards that make up Lancaster, but only a very small part of the ward can be considered the outskirts of the centre of the city.

The areas of Newton and Ridge estates mirror Skerton on the other side of the river in terms of housing design and demographic. The new housing development at the Old Moor Hospital matches the rural areas in the Lower Lune Valley.

Not to forget also that this proposal marries up all of the roads to Morecambe in one constituency furthering its independence rather than shattering it in the initial proposals.

The Boundary Commission have said in their North West document that they want to avoid a large rural wrap around to Lancaster, but in the proposals before us that is exactly what they have just done. The Conservative Party's counter-proposal protects not just the community I have grown up in but historically recognised boundaries across the whole of Lancashire.

I hope the Commission will support this proposal and restore faith in Morecambe and Lunesdale that a body from London do respect their views and understand their recognised community links and boundaries.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I may as well ask the question early on: are there no organisations that tried to bring these two towns together other than separate them?

MISS EMMA SMITH: No, because if they tried to do it publically I think they would get lynched to be quite honest. If you genuinely went into Morecambe with a clipboard and said, "Would you like to go with Lancaster?" you would not find a single person that would say, "Yes", no matter what time of day you went and when you went because it is just not something that anybody wants to do. It is something that is under the surface just bubbling there the whole time, anything that happens in Morecambe.

For example, we have just recently got approval for the Frontierland Development on the front, which is going to put loads of big shops and restaurants and things, so that is happening, but there is also an development in Lancaster, Moor Lane, I cannot remember what it is called, but that is a similar development. Because the Morecambe

one has gone ahead first everyone in Lancaster was really annoyed because they were like, now Morecambe has got the better shopping than Lancaster and people are going to go there. Even everything like that contributes to this feeling of once Morecambe gets something Lancaster is annoyed and once Lancaster gets something Morecambe is annoyed and everyone just hates each other basically.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You learn something new every day. Although I am smiling I do not diminish the intensity of the feelings that are there, it is just new to me. It is not in the name Morecambe and Lancaster rather than Lancaster and Morecambe?

MISS EMMA SMITH: No, it is just putting them together. It does not matter which way round they go, people are really, really angry about these proposals.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am only asking that just in case it is not possible to find solutions as being asked for. Question at the front?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: (Conservative Party) Sir Robert Atkins representing the North West Conservatives. Can I just be clear about the road? There is the new link road which has been a prospect for years and those of us who drive up and down the M6 keep bumping into the road works, but that will actually feed the Port of Heysham and Morecambe?

MISS EMMA SMITH: Yes.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Other than incidentally, it does not affect Lancaster at all, is that right?

MISS EMMA SMITH: No, that is right. The start of the link road is at junction 34 and it is quite hard to see on this map. If you bring up the North Lancashire map, where the Lower Lune Valley ward crosses into Bulk, I will show you on the map. Here in this corner is just where the road starts, in the corner of this ward here, and it goes from there through Halton and right through into Morecambe and Heysham. It crosses over into Halton and then comes down through this area to the Port of Heysham, so it means traffic coming off the motorway does not even need to enter Lancaster at all to get through to Heysham Port.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Walsh?

MR WALSH: John Walsh, Conservative Party. Can I just come back to your university experience at Lancaster? Can you confirm, as I understand it you are saying that the university sees it very much as a whole the wards which contain university student first year students based on the campus would look to the city and not to the rural part of the Morecambe constituency?

MISS EMMA SMITH: Yes, I think that is definitely the case because obviously Lancaster University, it is in its name, it is part of Lancaster. There is not enough accommodation on campus for all the students to live on the university campus, so you might get a couple of second and third years and you get probably 80% of first years live on campus but the rest of the students live in the centre of Lancaster, so to split them it is basically saying, "You are in one you are in another" and it would just create complications. If something was going on at the university with funding or accommodation or anything like that it would mean that there would be two MPs basically dealing with one issue and it would get very complicated.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. In the interests of balance, Cat Smith, would you like to come forward and speak?

MS CAT SMITH: (MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood) Thank you. My name is Cat Smith, I am the Member of Parliament for the Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency. I am going to speak to three constituencies and the order that I might need them on the maps is the order of Blackpool North and Fleetwood first, then Lancaster and Morecambe and then North Lancashire.

I have served as the Member of Parliament for Lancaster and Fleetwood since May 2015. Lancashire and Fleetwood is quite a diverse seat. We have got the coastal town of Fleetwood, rural mostly farms and villages cross over Wyre, a similar demographic up in the Lune Valley and most of the city of Lancaster, including the two universities, currently sit in my seat. I will say that the proposed boundaries by the Commission make a lot more sense than the currency constituency boundaries where it takes me an hour and a half to drive across my constituency currently and is not contiguous by land, I have to drive through three other parliamentary constituencies to drive from Knott End to Fleetwood in my current constituency, so I will be speaking in support of the Commission's proposals for these three seats.

I have been on the record as speaking against the proposals in the press previously but that was specifically around the loss of two million electors and I believe that is a political issue which will be probably addressed in Parliament as an issue of legislation rather than proposals by the Commission, because, despite the slightly flawed missing of two million voters, I think the Commission's proposals actually make a lot of community sense.

I currently represent the town of Fleetwood, which is at the top of the map [here](#). This is where my main constituency office is based. It has been clear for a number of years that this town looks towards Blackpool in terms of where people access NHS services at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, where post-16 students study at the Blackpool and Flyde College and where many of my constituents work. Although Fleetwood does not have a

train service it is served by a regular tram service which runs directly through Cleveleys and into Blackpool and there are also regular bus services into Blackpool.

I will perhaps pre-empt something here by saying that although Fleetwood falls into the Wyre Borough I believe it has got far more in common with Blackpool than it does with the nearby town of Poulton-le-Flyde because whilst those towns are in the same district I believe they are demographically very different and there are very poor public transport links between the two. I would support the creation of this Blackpool North and Fleetwood seat.

Moving on to the Lancaster and Morecambe proposals, I currently represent the central and south parts of Lancaster as their MP. The two wards of Skerton currently sit in the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency, but I will disagree with the previous two speakers and say that Skerton very much is part of Lancaster. It is on the address and I think if you ask people in Skerton if they live in Lancaster they certainly would be saying, "Yes". I believe that the proposals put forward by the Commission are very good because they bring the entire urban area, like the Lancaster and Morecambe District if you will, into one constituency which I think is much easier to understand for people.

The people in Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham they all use the same public services, that is the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, which is the main hospital for accident and emergency and maternity services. Post-16 education outside school provision is delivered at the Lancashire and Morecambe College. Public transport links across this constituency are strong with regular bus services covering Heysham, Morecambe and Lancaster, as well as a railway service linking the two populations. Whilst Heysham, Morecambe and Lancaster all have very different and distinct identities, and I do not dispute that, they share far more in common with each other than they do with anywhere else in the area.

I would argue that Lancaster and Morecambe already share a parliamentary constituency. Since the 1997 elections, Skerton East and Skerton West have been part of the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency. This covers places like Scale Hall, the Vale and Skerton itself, and for nearly 20 years now have been part of that constituency. I would argue that the border between Lancaster and Morecambe has been crossed for a very long time now, so it is not exactly controversial to propose what the Commission have proposed. However, the current boundaries I think are very confusing and in any given week perhaps two or three of Mr Morris' constituents will contact me assuming that I am their MP as the Lancaster MP and in many ways what we do with the Wyre constituents we tend to bounce them backwards and forwards between. I think the proposals will be much clearer for people in the districts.

I think there will have to be a Lancaster and a Morecambe seat, I think that certainly been proposed by the previous two speakers as well by including Bulk in their

proposals, so I think it makes it best to make sure that is an easily understandable Lancaster and Morecambe seat using the urban boundaries as proposed.

The boundaries in this proposal share a district council, all within the boundaries of Lancaster City Council. There are two town halls in this district council, there is Lancaster town hall and Morecambe town hall. The Council does meet at both town halls and I believe that the full Council meetings take place at Morecambe town hall as it is the only one that seats all 60 of the city councillors as the chamber is not big enough in Lancaster. So, we already see a level of local government delivering effectively between the two towns - one town and one city.

There is a lot of community support for the Lancaster and Morecambe proposal as laid out by the Commission. I draw the Commission's attention to the website 1'MP.com which has more details, but has been started by local businessmen and community activists supporting the Commission's proposals.

From organisations like Wolfwood, which is a local animal charity, to HomeStart, our community notice boards are already full of organisations that already organise on these boundaries. As a local MP, I have recently met with organisations such as the Lancaster and Morecambe Hindu Society, the Lancaster and Morecambe Railusers Group, the Lancaster and Morecambe Parents Defending Education and the Lancaster and Morecambe Autistic Society.

There are, however, some other organisations which already recognise these boundaries, including Lancaster and Morecambe City of Sanctuary, Venture Matters Lancaster and Morecambe, Lancaster and Morecambe District and National Union of Teachers, Lancaster and Morecambe Peer Support, Lancaster and Morecambe Referee Society, Lancaster and Morecambe Athletics Club, NCT Lancaster and Morecambe, Cats Protection Lancaster and Morecambe Branch, Lancaster and Morecambe Police Cadets, Lancaster and Morecambe MS Society, Lancaster and Morecambe Dementia Community Forum, Parkinson's UK Lancaster and Morecambe Support Group, and there are many, many more. As I believe it is the case that the community is already ahead of the Commission and the parliamentary boundaries and is already working on these boundaries it is our chance to mirror those community links which are already well established.

The university of course, is not included in the Commission's proposal. I would like to see a proposal which did include the university, although having looked at the numbers myself I can see that there is a challenge unless it was to look seriously at dividing electoral divisions within a ward to pull out the campus itself. However, I think it is important to recognise that Lancaster University is an out of city campus, that is how it was designed, and the vast majority of students and as far as I am aware all the academics do live in Lancaster itself, so a Lancaster and Morecambe MP would have

an interest in being a good representative to the university whether or not it was included in the seat.

Moving on to North Lancashire, I have heard the criticism, but I disagree with it, which is about the size of this large rural seat, but given the reduction of the number of MPs from 650 to 600 and the already low numbers of electors in constituencies in this area I think it is just a fact that seats will have to get larger. I think the best way to have cohesive larger seats is to ensure that there is common ground amongst the people that live in them. This proposed seat of North Lancashire sees electors coming together from different rural areas, but they do have that rurality in common and, as someone who now represents a seat which is both urban and rural and coastal and city, I think having that common ground will make it much easier for a representative to be a good representative of that area.

I believe that the approach taken in Lancashire by the Boundary Commission has been one that reflects the long-held community ties and creates constituencies which brings together communities with similar interests and needs and I hope that the proposals outlined in the first draft are adopted and all our communities in Lancashire will be well served by them. I am happy to take some questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Can I just ask a question? Can you just clarify a bit more about the Skerton wards in terms of where they actually sit, are they Lancaster or in Morecambe?

MS CAT SMITH: I believe that Skerton is absolutely in Lancaster. If you address a letter to somebody in Skerton their address is Lancaster. In fact, I think Mr Morris's constituency address is in Lancaster, as when you get the freepost envelope which he has been sending out to his constituencies to put their replies in to the Boundary Commission's proposals, I have seen the envelope and it says, "David Morris MP", his office address "Lancaster LA1", I do not know the rest of the postcode. So, Skerton is actually part of Lancaster in terms of where you would address an envelope to, in terms of where people access supermarkets, where people look towards, I think that Skerton is indisputably part of Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But it sits north of the Lune?

MS CAT SMITH: Yes. Lancaster has always covered two sides of the river; like many cities it has a river running through the middle. Previously that has been used by the Commission to draw boundaries on a map but I do not think that reflects community ties. I do think that people in Skerton would view themselves as being Lancastrians.

MR WALSH: John Walsh representing the Conservative Party. Can I just pick up and clarify a point you made earlier. One of your concerns you made about your current constituency is it takes you one and a half hours to cross the constituency?

MS CAT SMITH: I think my main concern is it is not contiguous by land. If I am driving between Lancaster and Fleetwood or Fleetwood and Lancaster I have to drive through the Wyre and Preston North constituency, the Flyde constituency and the Blackpool and Cleveleys constituency, so I recognise that it needs to change.

MR WALSH: So distance is clearly a concern for a Member of Parliament in that sense?

MS CAT SMITH: I think it is more that it is not contiguous by land and there is no public transport links between.

MR WALSH: Public transport is important in your view as a Member of Parliament?

MS CAT SMITH: I think it is, yes, and the public transport links within the Lancaster and Morecambe seat are far better than any of the other seats in the area, certainly between Blackpool North and Fleetwood, that is the strongest public transport links. I imagine you are trying to suggest that the rural North Lancashire seat will struggle with public transport links but I think that is more of an indictment about the state of our public transport at the moment due to cuts to local government.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. It sounds like a cross examination going on there. Mr Morris?

MR MORRIS: Thank you. Hi, Cat. Before you mentioned that you believe that Skerton is in Lancaster yet it is firmly Morecambe and Lunesdale. The narrowest point of the river is actually between Bulk area and Skerton. You are saying that people ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is this going to be a question or is it a counter argument?

MR MORRIS: It is a question. Do you think that the people of Skerton, as you say, think they are in Lancaster but that they are in Morecambe and Lunesdale. What is the difference of Bulk going into Morecambe and Lunesdale in the same area with just a bit of water between them?

MS CAT SMITH: If I have understood your question correctly, David, yes I do think that people in Skerton view themselves as living in Lancaster, which is probably why so many contact my office on a weekly basis asking for support and casework. I think you would have the same problem if Bulk was to go into the Morecambe seat and people not recognising that they live in Morecambe when it is actually quite a long way away. You are talking about a seat in the conservative counter-proposal which goes all the way to the motorway by Bulk by the prison. I think that is absolutely unfeasible to call

that seat Morecambe, you are effectively creating another Lancaster and Morecambe seat on different boundaries which are more confusing.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I am going to move on now. Michael Mumford? I notice that you came in at the end of our initial presentation but if you are able to give your name and full address and then make your presentation.

MR MUMFORD: (Liberal Democrats) Michael Mumford, 6 Belle Vue Avenue, LA1 4DD. I am the chair of the Lancaster and Morecambe Liberal Democrats. We actually merged our constituency parties two years ago, somewhat before the Boundary Commission suggested that Lancaster and Morecambe should be put together, for very good reasons that they work together.

I want to start on a historical note, we have had quite a lot of history up to now, and tell a story. I went to visit a friend, a member indeed, in Warton. As we talked on his front doorstep he said, "There's Harry, he is about to marry a girl from Nether Kellet." I said, "What is odd about that?" He said, "Well, we do not mix with Nether Kellet. Warton is a Viking settlement, Nether Kellet is an Anglo Saxon settlement." These histories go back rather a long time. Of course, historically, Lancaster was a major manufacturing city. It was originally a sea port, it was a ship building port, indeed it was bigger than Liverpool at one stage. It then became a very major manufacturing city specialising in linoleum with two of the very largest linoleum works, indeed the two largest in the world, and a very high proportion of owner occupied housing. Bracketed with St Helens, this was the city with the largest proportion of owner occupied housing in Europe. The linoleum industry has long gone.

Morecambe's traditions were as a seaside resort. Heysham of course went back much earlier than Morecambe, it was a much, much earlier settlement than Morecambe settlement. The important point from my point of view is, whatever the histories are, the futures look rather different. Manufacturing has largely gone in terms of large numbers of employees from Lancaster and the seaside industry is supporting fewer and fewer people in the Morecambe area, although it is important and welcome.

The Liberal Democrats locally support the idea of bringing Lancaster and Morecambe urban areas into a single constituency. Historically they have been separate, but looking ahead they are going to become much more interdependent. There is already a great deal of traffic as people commute from one town to the other in the early morning and late afternoon.

One of the biggest difficulties of Lancastrians and Morecambrians working together is the difficulty of travelling along that Lancaster and Morecambe road past the Lancaster and Morecambe College.

The future, however, is looking rather different. The link road, which has been referred to, is an important development and is going to boost the economies very happily in Heysham and in Morecambe and it will incidentally boost the economy in Lancaster as well and it will make for much better travel between these areas.

The major employers in Lancaster and Morecambe at present are the health service, travel and the universities. There are two universities in Lancaster, there is the University of Lancaster and there is the University of Cumbria, Lancaster campus. There seems to be no great difficulty with the University of Cumbria having a campus in Lancaster and the names are pretty insignificant in that respect.

The particular point I want to draw attention to is one which all the previous speakers have referred to and that is separating out the University and Scotforth Rural ward as being part of North Lancashire rather than part of the Lancaster and Cumbria ward. It sits just on the boundary here.

I have an interest to declare here. I came here from Nairobi in 1972 to teach at the University of Lancaster and I did so until 1995. Then I worked on a part-time basis at the university and now I am in the process of setting up a company to make microfluidic chips for diagnostics and that is based at Lancaster University. I am working with a former student who got a first in engineering and then he did a PhD in physics and now works in the chemistry department. This is going to be a major contribution we believe. They are diagnostic chips which allow in a small portable of device blood samples to be taken from a patient with just a thumb prick. It can follow the patient as they move from one hospital ward to another. It will be very quick and easy and cheap to use and we think it has got a great future.

We are based at the university we will be part of the new science park up there. A lot of the strategic future of Lancaster and Morecambe depends upon science and technology. There are a lot of businesses in Lancaster and Morecambe which are science based. There are companies which are based on the oil industry, on the chemical industry, on physics, on batteries, and in our case it happens to be high tech microfluidics. It is not nanotechnology because we are not operating at the level of the individual molecule, but it is very, very small scale.

We work with a team of people from the University's Hospital of Morecambe Bay Trust, the pathologists there work very closely in our team. The head of the chemistry department is a member of our team. The Faculty of Health and Medicine at the university is very supportive and does a lot of work in developing reactors. It is a very important and typical part of the future development of the Lancaster and Morecambe area. This is where our future jobs and future earnings are likely to come from.

Excluding the university from the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency we think is an unfortunate mistake. We know that the Boundary Commission addressed the issue

quite specifically in their report and came to the view they have, we think that is a mistaken view. In terms of the numbers they quote, the number of electors in the University and Scotforth Rural ward is 2,065. Transferring that from the North Lancashire constituency into the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency leaves them both within the tolerable levels. It means Lancaster and Morecambe then becomes 75,000 and North Lancashire becomes 72,000.

We have to say that North Lancashire is likely to be a difficult constituency to manage because it is so spread out. On the other hand, before I was in Nairobi I was in Cardiganshire and that was one constituency and that was considerably larger than the new proposed North Lancashire constituency, and there are some very much larger ones in Scotland similarly. It is difficult but it is not impossible.

I have to say that I have members of the Liberal Democrats living in Silverdale who do not like the idea of becoming part of a constituency that stretches right down to the borders of Preston, and I have no doubt there are people in the Ribble Valley and the Wyre Valley who hold rather similar views. It is difficult but it is by no means impossible.

We do think, on the other hand, bringing together Lancaster and Morecambe there are traditional animosities, yes, accepted. There were between Warton and Nether Kellet and people laugh at those rather than take those seriously, and if you look at the future we think the important thing is to have Lancaster and Morecambe together, working together increasingly, sharing the transport links which are good within the constituency and developing industry for the future along high tech lines.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Just on a point of fact, it is possible to bring the University ward into the proposed Lancaster and Morecambe constituency easy enough but it needs to be offset if we take it out of North Lancaster because those numbers drop below the quota. It is currently 71,284 and if we take 2,000 out of it then it needs to be offset by an import.

MR MUMFORD: I am sorry, I had North Lancashire as 74,240? I am sorry I take that back, there needs to be some adjustment.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. It does not mean it is not possible if there needs to be an adjustment, a corresponding adjustment somewhere else.

MR MUMFORD: I am sorry, I picked up the figures wrongly from the report but I got it wrong.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mine is an observation now but I find it very helpful from all the people who have spoken so far to get this sense of community links both past and current and the way in which towns move and people relate to each other

so it is an enormously helpful contribution to me. Are there any points of clarification?
Mr Morris?

MR MORRIS: Hello, hi. Thanks very much for your presentation. You made great sway on the medical facilities in the area and say that it is all Lancaster based, but actually the Trust is all the way up into Cumbria. Would you like to see Cumbria merged in with Lancaster and Morecambe as well?

MR MUMFORD: No, the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust cover Morecambe Bay. I did not say that the health services were concentrated on Lancaster, the infirmary is certainly there but there are other important offshoots of the Trust. I do not want to see it extended into Cumbria, I think that the Lancaster and Morecambe seat looks as though it is quite sensibly composed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just as an observation in passing, there are people in Cumbria who would like to see Westmoreland restored.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. I have heard your point about University and Scotforth ward. I am just looking at the map and, unfamiliar with the geography, I notice to the north there is a Bolton and Slyne ward which is presently included within Lancaster and Morecambe constituency. If that ward were to move into the proposed North Lancaster constituencies I think the numbers might work, but what I do not know is the ties that Bolton and Slyne ward, which includes Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank, how they would feel about being included within a North Lancashire constituency.

MR MUMFORD: With respect, it is Bolton and Slyne. I think the people in Bolton and Slyne Ward would be pretty regretful to be excluded from Morecambe and Lancaster but then the people in Silverdale already are pretty unhappy about it. They see their ties as being much more with Lancaster than with Morecambe. There are going to be some people who are made unhappy. Whether Bolton and Slyne is the best one to shift into North Lancashire I am not certain. I think there would be some resistance, as I say, but there would be pretty well whatever you did.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you are proposing that University is included, and I am being supplemental, it helps us if there is an alternative and if written representations can be made that will help.

MR MUMFORD: Yes. My understanding of the figures was wrong. As you remember, I thought it could be done without falling outside the boundaries.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask a related question about Carnforth, Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank? Are they all similar towns?

MR MUMFORD: They are pretty different towns. Carnforth is a market town with a very strong history with the railway industry. Its patterns are changing. At the moment it is largely blighted by traffic problems because they need a new road to the south east to take a lot of the traffic away from the junction in the middle of the town, but it is largely a market town. I think they are rather unhappy about being bundled into North Lancashire rather than kept with Lancaster and Morecambe but, as I say, there are going to be some people who feel unhappy.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much I have no other points. Anyone else? (No response) Can I check whether Mr Paul Gardener is here at the moment? (No response) Mr Darren Clifford? (No response) No. In which case I see Mr Frank Demofetta is here.. It is a bit earlier than you were planning to speak, are you able to speak now? If there is no change I will probably take Mr Peter Moss as well afterwards.

CLLR DEMOFETTA: Yes. Good morning everybody. My name is Frank Demofetta, I am a Labour County Councillor for Preston Central North.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Please carry on with your presentation.

CLLR DEMOFETTA: (Labour Party) Thank you very much indeed. Historically I represent the Preston Central North, which includes not only wards in the current Preston constituency but also College ward, which is not in the current Preston constituency but has been in the county division for 12 years.

Part of the College ward, which will merge with Deepdale ward which is in the existing Preston constituency, therefore as you can see historically not only has Fulwood been closely associated with wards in Preston constituency but as the county councillor for the last 12 years and under the new proposal will represent areas outside of the current Preston constituency, it makes a great deal of sense to bring the wards of the part of the city of Preston closer together to make a single parliamentary constituency.

In the 1980s Preston had two seats north and south and more recently there are five wards that are proposed to join Preston that have been in Preston North and Wyre constituency and in addition to Ingol and Lea have been in Flyde.

I believe that the five northern wards logically fit better in Preston as it more closely reflects the Preston city council area. Personally, I feel that the way that you balance the county council seats only recently the proposal made by the Boundary Commission on the parliamentary seats makes sense. I will take any questions, Chairman.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any points anyone? (No response) What you are saying is you welcome the proposals?

CLLR DEMOFETTA: I am, yes. When I am looking at numbers, when we are looking at 73,000 in Preston and 56, it is obvious that there is a disparity there and in my perspective I am happy for it to be addressed and I am happy with the proposals Chairman, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I was just asking about the Lea ward it is in Flyde but it is part of the Preston borough territory or boundary?

CLLR DEMOFETTA: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you just give your full address for the record, please?

CLLR DEMOFETTA: I am sorry, I apologise for not giving it before. It is 53 Regent Drive, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3JB.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Peter Moss? Again, could you give your name and full address and presentation to follow?

CLLR MOSS: Thank you very much. I will not keep you too long. My name is Peter Moss, 501 Garstang Road, Broughton, Preston, PR3 5JA. I am a Preston city councillor representing Riversway ward, which is located in the heart of the Preston constituency and, as the name implies, it sits on the banks of the River Ribble.

I have lived in the north of Preston all my life and had the benefits of experiencing its close-knit communities for a similar time. The ward areas covering the north have always been part of the city but have never previously had an affiliation with Preston in terms of its parliamentary seat.

Historically, as we have already heard, the Preston seat was split in Preston North and Preston South until 1983, with some of the Preston City Council wards being included in the Flyde or Ribble Valley constituencies. The proposals by the Boundary Commission ensure that the more urban wards of Sharoe Green, Garrison, Cadley, College and Greyfriars are now included in what is geographically, financially, and dare I say it emotionally their natural home of Preston. As I have said, the Preston constituency for many years has not included wards in the north of the city but has included the southern areas of Bamber Bridge and Walton-le-Dale, neither of which are considered to be Preston or are indeed under Preston City Council. These wards have also switched between the Ribble Valley and South Ribble constituencies.

The current proposals for boundary changes are taking up the logical position of ensuring that the vast majority of wards in the Preston City Council area now come under one major unified parliamentary seat with only the more rural wards and Lea falling outside the new Preston constituency.

I appreciate that it is difficult to be completely coterminous with other administrative boundaries, so whilst I do not think that anyone would consider a motorway to be a natural boundary the proposals to have the M55 as a *de facto* northern boundary for the constituency provides a better fit for the urban north of Preston to be placed back in the city and allow the more rural area north of the motorway to be allocated elsewhere.

The Commission's proposals are finally allowing the residents of north Preston to return home. Knowing them as I do, I would suggest the majority of residents in Preston would therefore endorse the Commission's proposals that this not only enables the electoral quota to be achieved but is an improvement on the current arrangements. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any difficulties in the way in which it is currently split? I can see the cohesion argument which says it is the city of Preston?

CLLR MOSS: The people of north Preston consider themselves to be Prestonians and not part of some greater Wyre authority. They always have done and always will do consider themselves to be Prestonians and part of Preston.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any points of clarification anywhere? (No response) Thank you very much and thank you for speaking early. We have no planned speakers who are currently in the room. Is there anyone in the room who wishes to speak but has not put their name down to speak? Would you like to come up? No, no, you need to come up?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is just a question of whether you are going to be visiting any of these areas in dispute?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Certainly our predecessors went and visited areas and the answer is we do not know yet, but it is probable that we might want to go and see, particularly where there are boundaries drawn that are so-called natural boundaries but which one needs to see to believe whether they actually link or not link. Fleetwood was a good example earlier where one might go and see whether or not it is possible to go from one side of the estuary to the other without crossing through three constituencies, for example. We do not need to go to do that but that would be an example.

In which case, we will take a short break. I will not adjourn because if speakers turn up I will take them as and when they arrive, so feel free to relax or wander around. Thank you.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will just carry on now. Mr Mark Hendrick is here now so if you would like to come up and speak. If you could give your name and address and begin your representation at the end of which I or others may have points of clarification.

MR HENDRICK: (MP for Preston) Thank you very much, Chairman, and may I say what a pleasure it is to be present at these Boundary Commission hearings for the forthcoming proposed boundary changes for this part of the North West. My name is Mark Hendrick, I am the Member of Parliament for Preston, and my address is The Technology Centre, Marsh Lane, Preston, PR1 8UQ. Preston has never really been a seat that represents the majority of inner city and urban Preston wards.

In the past Preston was typically represented by a Preston North seat and a Preston South seat, it is very interesting to see at the proceedings today Sir Robert Atkins who historically represented one of those seats. In the early 1980s the seats sort of merged into one seat mainly through the depopulation of the inner city areas of Preston and there then emerged a single Preston seat but with other parts of Preston on the periphery falling into parts of other parliamentary seats. Whilst there has for around 30 years been a seat called Preston, some sections went off into other constituencies such as Flyde, which used to include the wards of Ingol and Lea, and many others on the north of Preston, mainly in Fulwood, went into Ribble Valley and more latterly the Wyre and Preston North seat.

The five wards that are proposed to come into the new Preston seat, as I said, were previously part of the old Ribble Valley seat and they are currently part of the Preston North and Wyre constituency. The new proposals I believe would rectify the situation, these more urban wards coming under the Preston constituency in the Boundary Commission proposals.

Ingol, which was previously in Flyde constituency, has already transferred into Preston in previous Boundary Commission proposals and changes. Realistically speaking, for those inner city and urban wards only Lea under those proposals would remain outside what would be I would say a more inner city type urban Preston constituency. It would produce what I would have said is a much more coherent constituency boundary.

However, Mr Chairman, I am not going to suggest that Lea ward comes into the new constituency; the elector numbers in the Boundary Commission's proposals are in my view already adequate.

I have lived in Preston for the last 23 years and in that time observed that Preston is made up of fairly coherent communities. Apart from the wards I have mentioned in other parts of Preston, the constituency has also included in the past wards from outside of Preston, although I have not objected to this in the past and I have been

honoured to serve and represent everyone within the constituency whatever those boundaries were. It did contain, for a number of years, Bamber Bridge and Walton-le-Dale, neither of which are in either Preston North or the Preston City Council area for local government. These wards are switched between the Ribble Valley constituency and South Ribble constituency as well as being in my former Preston constituency seat.

These current boundary proposals are taking up the logical position of ensuring that the vast majority of wards in Preston City Council areas towards the centre of Preston now come together to form a parliamentary seat with only rural wards and Lea falling outside the new proposed Preston constituency boundaries.

In conclusion then, Mr Chairman, the Boundary Commission proposals make a great deal of sense in terms of uniting communities, the geography, travel to work area and all being under one common local authority. It makes a great deal of sense to bring most of the wards with the city of Preston closer together to make a more unified parliamentary constituency and therefore, Mr Chairman, I would like to commend these proposals as they have been put forward by the Boundary Commission in their most recent proposals. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Hendrick. I have no points of clarification. Anyone in the room have a point? (No response) No, thank you very much indeed. Can I just check whether we have either Paul Gardner in the room or Mr Darren Clifford in the room? (No response) I will ask the question again, is there anyone in the room who is not booked to speak but who would like to speak at this time? (No response) In which case then I will go into an informal adjournment again and I will just sit here until a speaker may appear. Thank you very much.

After a short break

CLLR CLIFFORD: My name is Darren Clifford, my full address is 59 Norton Road, Heysham, which is in Morecambe, and that is Lancashire, LA13 1PF, but essentially I am here to speak on behalf of Morecambe Town Council. I am the Chair of Morecambe Town Council and we obviously discussed the Boundary Commission proposals at a special meeting that we had in September and I have been asked to come and talk to any counter-proposals that came forward at that meeting, and they are thus.

The overall proposals that we would like to put forward can be summarised very simply. We recognise that the Commission was compelled to use the December 2015 electoral numbers, but we are going to write to our parliamentarians and ask them through their good offices to speak other parliamentarians about adding the two million people that are allegedly off the roll at the moment. I am sure you have heard this many, many times going round the country.

Mathematically, my view on this is that if we added two million people to the electoral register it would merely change the level at which we had the proposals put. Other than the democratic disconnect that people might be arguing for I do not think that is going to change any key proposals that we are going to put forward as they are at the moment.

What we have said is that the December figures, which obviously you have got to take into account, have an issue so we will deal with those separately. We essentially wanted to put forward the case that people live in communities not constituencies - I am sure you have heard that one as well - and it would be a poor reflection of that if the Commission moved to expunge the distinctiveness of Morecambe as a constituency in the same generation that it lost its own council.

While Lancaster and Morecambe are represented by the same borough council - I am also a borough councillor as well and a county councillor - the distinctiveness of those two communities between city and coast is reflected not only in local plans but indeed the marketing strategies for both of those two places which are completely distinct. Lancaster has a tag line of small city big story, Morecambe is very much based around our relationship with the bay, and it is worth remembering that Morecambe the town is named after the bay not the other way around.

We also want to argue on behalf of our colleagues in Carnforth, who I understand are rebooking for later, Carnforth and Lancaster University are under the same borough but are seen as being able to split from the constituency that they presently exist in and the borough relationship therefore cannot be the basis by which we make the judgment.

What we would like to come forward with is that Morecambe and Lunesdale goes back to Morecambe and Lonsdale, to reflect the pre 1983 boundary and retains its distinct identity as a seaside town and community. Morecambe and Lonsdale existed until 1983 and incorporated Morecambe, Heysham, Carnforth and parts of the Ulverston rural district, including Grange. Our counter-proposal goes some way to addressing that. We do not believe it makes sense to merge the historic part of Lancaster city centre with the coastal community of Morecambe with its distinct heritage and Morecambe Bay perspective. Nor do we think it makes sense to allocate the market town of Carnforth into an almost exclusively rural seat arbitrarily.

Moreover, it makes little sense to no longer have Lancaster University within the boundaries of a constituency centered on the city of Lancaster. What we would want to do is take on new wards of Grange South, Grange North, Arnside and Beetham. This would reflect partially previous boundaries and is coterminous with the existing transport links as well as the existing Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which we share and a link, of course, between Warton and Arnside that is pretty strong as well.

What that would do, of course, and I am sure you are aware of this, as with all boundary reviews you make one change and there is a ripple effect right across the board.

Rather than the ripple that we would like to sort out emanating to the east of the county exclusively, what we would look to do is re-establish our links to south Cumbria because it is almost a spiritual home for Morecambe. Of course, South Cumbria used to be a part of Lancashire back in the good old days. We still think it is!

The ripple that we would propose is one that very much goes into the county of Cumbria. What we would do is the following: the existing wards of the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency with the additions of Grange South, Grange North, both from Westmorland and Lonsdale, as well as Arnside and Beetham from Westmorland and Lonsdale, and - this might be the controversial bit or more controversial - Bulk ward from the northern border of Lancaster would be added to the constituency of this new Morecambe and Lonsdale. That would give us a proposed elector count of 72,907.

Lancaster North and Lancashire North, which would effectively be the new seat to the east of us, would be the accepted wards from your proposals, plus the Lancaster city wards of Castle, John O'Gaunt, Marsh, Scotforth East and Scotforth West, Ellel, Lower Lune Valley, the University and Scotforth Rural. That would give the Lancaster and Lancashire North seat a count of 77,770.

Moving up to our colleagues in Cumbria, we obviously tread carefully on other counties' boundaries, and colleagues from Carnforth and myself have already met with other parish colleagues from Arnside and other areas. Westmorland and Lonsdale, the proposed new boundaries from the Commission would obviously be accepted but it would lose Grange South and Grange North and Arnside and Beetham wards to the new Morecambe and Lonsdale proposal, but it would take Mid Furness from Barrow and Ullswater. Shap and Askham wards from Penrith and Solway as well and that would give Westmorland and Lonsdale a new count of 71,953 on our figures.

Barrow, we would accept obviously the proposals from the Commission with the omission of the Furness wards to Westmorland and Lonsdale. That would then skip forward onto Penrith and Solway. We would obviously accept the Commission proposal but lose Ullswater, Shap and Askham to Westmorland and Lonsdale, so these are basically neighbouring wards between the two seats. Then Carlisle, which ultimately would be the top end of the ripple, we would accept the Commission's proposals, but the Dalston Ward at the bottom end of Carlisle would be lost to Penrith and Solway to make sure that all of the resulting seats met the criteria for the lower and upper end of the constituency boundaries.

That is, in summary, what we would like to counter propose, if that is even a real word. A few things are worth noting. The community rail partnership and the transport links in general are very much coterminous with Morecambe, Carnforth and around the Bay. The proposals reflect our shared perspective, which is reflected in the existence of Morecambe Bay Partnership, and future bids of a thing called the Coastal Communities Fund which are very much based on that.

The proposals reflect the link across the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and of course we understand that there is a mathematical formula here that needs to be applied here but this is exceedingly unusual for Morecambe town council, when these proposals were placed before us, there are four distinct political groups on Morecambe town council, it was passed unanimously. Highly unusual for us, says the Chair of Morecambe Town Council.

Those are basically our proposals back to you with a real sense that we think Lancaster and Morecambe are two exceedingly distinct brilliant places, Morecambe as a seaside town and Lancaster as a historic city with an emerging wonderful story from pre-Roman right up to the modern day, and we think those two stories do not meld quite as neatly together as the mathematics would have us believe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just let me check, are the council going to put in written proposals so that we can follow this?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes, we are.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I thought I heard someone earlier say that history goes back to the Viking times in Morecambe. This is turning into a Viking town in my view, now reclaiming Cumbria as part of Westmorland?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Absolutely, yes. They would argue that they are not Cumbrians, yes, indeed.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will not follow the whole of your trail round but I see the logic, once you start you cannot stop until you get to Carlisle in your particular case ---

CLLR CLIFFORD: Absolutely, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: --- in order to show the consequences of keeping Morecambe and Lancaster apart.

CLLR CLIFFORD: I think that is the key thing. You have to have an epicentre of all of the proposals, it is just how it works, and that ripple effect will inevitably end up somewhere.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The epicentre of your constituency would have been where, Carnforth?

CLLR CLIFFORD: The epicentre for us is very much the 30,000 people that we represent in and around the town of Morecambe, the distinct seaside part of it, the old

fishing villages that came about as part of the Victorian push for rail, which is why we exist in the first place. That is why we did not even have our own council until 1901, or at least a warrant for one.

We understand that if you start with massive cities like Liverpool and Manchester you inevitably are going to end up trying to solve the issue as you go north. The reason why we went the route that we went is very much about preserving the distinctiveness between Lancaster and Morecambe but also recognising that if we try to push west into West Cumbria that (a) the maths would not work and (b) that the sensitivities of the communities across in West Cumbria are very, very different and we would not ever assume to go that far.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will follow with this, because you have raised it, the travel time from one end of your constituency to the other, say from Heysham through to Grange-over-Sands or somewhere like that?

CLLR CLIFFORD: It depends on how good your public transport is, of course. That is one of the reasons why I was not on time this morning, I am afraid. The travel time between Morecambe and ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am thinking for a constituent coming to see their MP on a bus?

CLLR CLIFFORD: For a constituent on a bus, well we have just had loads of cuts to bus services so again it is difficult either way. It is very much like I am sure the MP for Lancaster has mentioned this, in fact I heard her on radio this morning talking about it, the disconnect between Fleetwood and Lancaster is fairly enormous when it comes to public transport. I would not say you would be able to jump onto a two way quite as easy as you would between Lancaster and Morecambe, for instance, but again it is the standard of that representation that matters and whether there is a shared set of values or not.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you just explain to me the reasoning behind claiming the Ward of Bulk into that?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes. It is almost doing a reverse twist on what happened in the 1980s, or actually early 1970s, in fact, if I go really back in history. The bottom end of Morecambe and Lunesdale is a ward called Overton. It used to be a part of the Lancaster seat, snaking around to the left-hand side there at the bottom of the map, because it was seen as being less central to the cause. All we have done is basically do the same thing at the top end of Bulk, which is not necessarily a part of the historic centre. It is about preserving the two historic centres as distinct areas really, that was the motivation behind that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: People in Bulk, would look where typically for their community links?

CLLR CLIFFORD: I think they would still look to Lancaster as a community link, as very much we would look to Morecambe and so would Carnforth and so would Overton these days. The problem with Lancaster and Morecambe is that the boundaries are quite fluid and of course Skerton only came into our constituency after 1992, if I remember right, so the boundaries have been historically fluid right through the piece to be honest.

Of course, the other thing, if I was being devil's advocate to our own proposals, is that the vastness of the Lancaster Rural North and City seat, when you look at 77,000 is at the top. I am sure colleagues in Ribble Valley would see that as an opportunity for them to try and preserve their distinctiveness as well. It is whether you put the way that people feel first or whether the maths work first and you have to come up with a compromise between the two, I am afraid, and that is what we have ended having to do, as you have of course.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: How do you think the people of Bulk ward would feel about being attached to that constituency of Morecambe and Lonsdale?

CLLR CLIFFORD: You would have to ask them! I am not a Bulk councillor, I am a councillor for a place called Harbour Ward, just up there, so I would not want to speak on behalf of any community that can speak for itself. This is the difficulty in your job I do not think anybody is going to be overly happy with everything. At the end of the day there is always going to be somebody who is going to be upset and that is just the reality of it. I do not argue that our proposals are perfect by any stretch in anybody's' imagination, but I do think that the big, if I may be so bold, the big weakness in the rural seat that is being put together for North Lancashire is this idea that the towns of Clitheroe and Carnforth can in some way have some kind of common purpose when they are so unbelievably far away from each other.

There also seems to be a kind of a sense of rural communities can only be represented together and I do not believe that is true either. During the period of Morecambe and Lonsdale and during the period when the other seat was Lancaster and Wyre, there have been rural communities attached to the urban cores of those seats for many, many years and I do not believe the rural communities have been let down in any way by any of the MPs that have tried to represent them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: As somebody that lives in the area I am struck that in order to avoid linking Lancaster and Morecambe we have created a massive movement around through two counties at least in order to try and solve a problem which is within two miles of each other.

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes, absolutely. You could say, and again this is not necessarily a personal opinion because I am speaking on behalf of our council, there are some people who would still believe that Lancaster and Morecambe are separated by more than the width of a river. I am quoting somebody else here, but the view in the council was that it was not a merger between Lancaster and Morecambe, but that it was a hostile takeover. That is the view from some people. I think that is very much predicated on the fact that after the 1972 review that came in in 1974 of local government that Morecambe lost its council and there are still quite a few people that are angry about that.

You can understand that, there are lots of communities right across the country, let alone Lancashire, where the local government changes did not quite reflect what they thought they did.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any points of clarification? Several.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Can you just reiterate, because I missed it when you said it, which were the Barrow or Furness wards that you wanted to adjust?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes, of course. Morecambe would add Grange South and Grange North as well as Arnside and Beetham, so that is basically four wards. On the map you would go up and left, basically, from the top end of the existing constituency. Westmorland and Lonsdale having lost Grange South, Grange North, Arnside and Beetham would then take Mid Furness ward from Barrow and Ullswater, the new seat, as well as Shap and Askham from Penrith and Solway, so Westmorland and Lonsdale would effectively do a left and an up.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Just to be clear, you are moving Mid Furness not Low Furness?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Mid, specifically Mid.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Mid not Low?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Furness would still be divided between two different constituencies?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes. That would not change with the new proposal and I know that is not perfect either.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Cat Smith, at the back. Just a reminder everyone please, can you please give addresses not just 'Conservative Party' because on the record you will find it says 'Unknown' each time so it is helpful for people who are reading these transcripts to understand where the intervention comes from.

MS CAT SMITH: Cat Smith, I have given my address at the front desk and for security reasons I have asked for it not to be published.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: House of Commons will do fine?

MS CAT SMITH: Yes. Cllr Clifford, you said that you were going to write to our parliamentarians and their offices around these two million missing voters. I just wondered if you could clarify which parliamentarians you would be writing to.

CLLR CLIFFORD: Well, you being one of them, obviously. We have been asked to write to all of the parliamentarians that would be affected by any of the counter-proposals that we have been asked to put forward by Morecambe Town Council, so it would be yourself, David Morris, Tim Farron, John Woodcock, and I am struggling to remember the other ones that are affected. Yes, Rory and John.

MS CAT SMITH: Sue Hayman presumably as well?

CLLR CLIFFORD: Yes. I think there is about seven or eight, but I think the clerk is doing that.

MS CAT SMITH: Thank you for clarifying that. My second question is you were talking about public transport links and you were talking about trains at one point. I wondered if I was to be stood at Morecambe station waiting for a train the chances are the train would come to Lancaster before one would come to Carnforth. I believe there is only one direct train to Carnforth a day from Morecambe whereas there are dozens and dozens into Lancaster. Would you therefore say that the public transport links are stronger into Lancaster than to Carnforth by train?

CLLR CLIFFORD: They are. I am not a shaper of transport policy, of course, but the trains between Lancaster and Morecambe are only one an hour. I do not think any of the public transport links are particularly a good case for one argument or another, because I do not think that public transport is particularly up to scratch whether you are on a bus or a train at all at the moment. I would like to see a lot better public transport right across the county, especially east to west by the way. A quick political point, rather than spending £50 billion getting somebody from Manchester to London 20 minutes quicker, I think we could probably invest in better transport between the Barrows and the Carlisles and the West Cumbrias of this world between Lancaster and Morecambe. That is merely a political point so I will not labour it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I can understand you would not. Just a reminder to everyone in the room that political points carry no weight.

CLLR CLIFFORD: Quite right too.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points of clarification? (No response)
No. Thank you. Our next speaker is not until 12.20 pm so why do we not take a break til 12.20 pm.

After a short break

Time noted 12.20 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Will you be ready to go when we start or are you just getting yourself ready? I will give you a moment or two.

CLLR EDWARDS: I am sure you probably want to get things moving as quickly as possible.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, I am relaxed. I just do not want to rush you so you do it when you are settled.

CLLR EDWARDS: No, you are all right, we can get cracking.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are going to resume now and it Mr Charlie Edwards who is going to speak. The position is, you are already at the podium, if you can give your name and full address and then make your representations after which either I or others may have points of clarification. We should not be putting you under a debate, people will be asking points on your presentation. Begin when you are ready.

CLLR EDWARDS: My name is Charles Edwards, I am based in Bare, and my address is 12 Ruskin Drive, Morecambe, LA4 6EZ, and I am a Conservative ward councillor for Bare ward, which is a district of Lancaster city council. I would like to speak in favour of the aforementioned alternative proposal that has been provided to keep Morecambe and Lunesdale as one constituency with the addition of the Bulk ward and Lower Lune Valley wards with the intention that the whole of the Caton Road can be part of the Lunesdale Constituency.

I believe merging Lancaster and Morecambe into one parliamentary constituency will create more problems than it solves and it will be to the long-term detriment to both communities. When working on a project on one side of the river Lune, it will open up accusations by the other of preferential treatment as it already does with Lancaster City Council. These are two distinct, beautiful and vibrant communities.

A little background into me, I am proud to have studied and now work in a business based at Lancaster University and yet I fell in love with Morecambe on my first ever visit, which was actually to the Carlton Nightclub, my very first week of student life. I am now proud to live in Morecambe and represent Bare ward at the north and east of Morecambe at district council level, but I really do have a foot in both camps. My motto in politics is that you have to love where you live and around here it is hard not to.

I have seen at firsthand the divide between the communities. It is no over-dramatisation to say the people of Morecambe and Lancaster historically have not always gotten along. We have a council that is at times universally hated by all residents because of its impossible task of trying and cater for two such distinct communities. We all know when you try to cater to everyone you end up catering to no one, and this proposal to merge Lancaster and Morecambe into one constituency is a powerful and a symbolic gesture that will say that Morecambe is inferior to Lancaster.

For anyone engaged in the political process locally we are lucky to have two MPs who fight on distinctly different issues, do not get me wrong, but we have a greater chance of success in the area knowing that two voices in Westminster are speaking for this community. One MP means we have half the choice, half the representation, and when you have an NHS Trust that has only just come out of special measures, two universities, an eroding coastline, a nuclear power station entering its decommissioning phase, a port and two totally yet separate yet thriving communities and economies and not to mention the various rural issues in the surrounding miles of inland country, we actually need all the representation we can get. We need two MPs.

These two constituencies in my eyes should be mixed, there should not just be one urban and one rural. While I appreciate that not every constituency in the UK can have a mix of both, I think it is healthy for our democracy. I think democracy would be a lot stronger if all MPs had to understand and represent both rural and urban issues. There are no farms in Jeremy Corbyn's constituency, for example, and there is only one high rise block of flats in David Cameron's old stomping ground in Witney. If you lump all urban voters into one area or lump all the rural voters into one area I think it is actually highly damaging for our long-term political process and would propagate a stark divide between urban and rural issues in both our communities and in Parliament and drive these communities further apart when right now we need to be working together.

Those are just my comments. I want to spend the rest of my time just sharing some of the correspondence I have received from my residents and comments that I have picked up when conducting general canvassing about this issue.

One of my members who lives in the centre of my ward on Bare Lane itself, specifically brought to my attention about the Morecambe promenade, this is her quote:

“If this new seat takes in all the Cockeram Sands, Glasson Dock, then it would double the amount of coastline one MP would have the time and energy to lobby for. We need two MPs on the case to make sure all of our coastline gets protected ...”, which I thought was a good point.

This is from a resident who owns a shop in the Arndale Centre, Morecambe:

“With all the new developments of shopping in Lancaster we need someone who will make the Arndale a priority to keep it open and to keep busy. Why would a Lancaster MP want to do that?”

Again, I think there is a real powerful energy from my residents which says that they utterly reject the idea that Morecambe is Lancaster in any way, shape or form. It was interesting to get the comments of one lady here who talks specifically about her daughter who lives in Skerton because I know the idea of Skerton being part of Lancaster is an issue that has divided a lot of people, and she has written here:

“Skerton has always been Morecambe, never Lancaster. It was Lancashire County Council who closed down Skerton High School, and look at what Lancaster City Council have done to Rylands Park, just awful. They care about Williamson Park only and my little granddaughters will just lose out to those who live in Lancaster. I am really worried about what it will do to the community spirit in Skerton.”

I asked her what she thought about Bulk being part of the new constituency, because Bulk is obviously very similar to Skerton in the sense that it is equally detached from Lancaster, and she said that it would make a lot of sense to actually have Bulk and Skerton together because they align closer with each other than they do with Lancaster, and she says:

“The people up in Newton feel the same as my daughter does, that Lancaster takes everything and leaves areas like theirs to crumble.”

I have one Lancaster resident who just simply wrote to me:

“Morecambe is awful.”

That was the only response I got, but maybe that gives an insight into the thinking of some Lancaster residents. Maybe the two communities are not aligned quite as much as these proposals would suggest.

Another one of my residents, and I could go on, I am going to be submitting all of these in writing as well:

“I do not see how Morecambe could survive as its own community though and that would be very sad.”

This one here, at the very tip of my ward is the shrimp roundabout which has a Toby Carvery, which you must go and visit later on this afternoon. It is a very awkward, midway part of where there are people who would put Lancaster on their postal address or they would put Morecambe on their postal address, and it is Lancaster Road, and one Lancaster Road resident wrote to me and said:

“I have always identified as living in Morecambe. I would rather take my teenage girl shopping in Preston than I would Lancaster. I was little when the councils amalgamated and my late father always used to say that that decision, to bring Morecambe into the purview of Lancaster City Council in the 1970s, changed Morecambe forever. The resort lost its identity and all the money was spent in Lancaster. I am not political at all and the only reason why I am writing to you because I am worried it will be worse if our MP is from Lancaster too.”

These are just some of the comments that I have received from my residents in Bare. For me it is an issue of communities and they want an MP that is from Morecambe that lives and loves and breathes Morecambe.

I would also like to contribute, if you do not mind, a statement about the exclusion of Lancaster University from the bulk of the Lancaster constituency, which I think is a really terrible idea because the city and university have to develop as one. Lancaster does not need to take Morecambe in, it needs to make sure that it has still got the university in, that is much more important, and having one MP for both is a vital way for this to happen. This would have a severe effect on the community as on campus students at the university would have a totally different form of parliamentary representation from those living off campus.

For most students at Lancaster the culture is you spend the first year living on the campus site up in ‘Legoland’. I work at one of the buildings there and it looks like the Starship Enterprise, you can see it from the motorway and you can probably see it from space. Most students live on campus in their first year and then they spend the rest of their time living in town in the city of Lancaster. From my own perspective, I used to be a parliamentary caseworker and if there were casework issues that lasted longer than one academic year, for example, or things like representation to fight for access to funding, dealing with student loan problems and things like that, for that individual resident from first year to second year, if they moved parliamentary constituency then they would have to probably start their whole case again. There would be a lack or a diminished right of appeal and that would negatively affect that student’s situation, maybe their financial situation and add impact on their entire academic career which then has a knock-on effect to the university and to the city.

As I say, I am a former parliamentary caseworker and in my experience when a resident moves the casework does not seamlessly move with it, there is no seamless transfer. It is of vital importance that it is a full-time job to have one MP for Lancaster and for Lancaster University, as students need access to someone to fight their corner. In our two communities unique little story, it actually needs two full-time MPs to fight our corner, so on behalf of the community I represent where I love, where I live, please, I would like you to think again about the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency. We need two MPs, Morecambe and Lunesdale and a Lancaster seat and I endorse the plans proposed in the session and hopefully they will be able to make that happen. I am happy to answer any questions anyone has.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, passionately put. You were arguing in a sense for the Conservative counter-proposals for a Morecambe and Lune Valley, is that how you would describe it?

CLLR EDWARDS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can you tell me what people in Upper Lune Valley ward would have in common with someone in, say, Heysham?

CLLR EDWARDS: Or in my area? I would say that what you have are communities and families that have lived in the area for generations and generations and generations, and while obviously the more urban areas are of a transient population what you find is that in the areas like the Lune Valley a lot of people who live here are those who their families have passed down from generation to generation these farms and things like that. I would say that what you find is the link between you will always get families that work together. I think it is like a migration that a lot of families have a link within the town of Morecambe and within obviously where they live in the Upper Lune Valley.

There is not as much of a link for Lancaster residents. As we know, Lancaster is a very transient population; a lot of people have migrated up here from afar. My voice is very much a voice of an alien in Morecambe whereas in Lancaster a southern accent is something you get all the time. The actual community families, families who are entrenched in this area, are much more likely to have stayed in the Morecambe and Lune Valley area or more north of the river. My experience is that those who have lived here longer, the communities that have lived here longer, usually tend to live from Skerton to Heysham.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You would not envisage someone living up in the Upper Lune being subordinate to the concerns of Morecambe rather than their local area, to compare and contrast with Morecambe and Lancaster where you were saying people are being subordinate to Lancaster?

CLLR EDWARDS: That is an interesting point. A village, for example, being subordinate to a slightly larger area is totally different to an entire town community being subordinate to another just ever so slightly different sized town. Whilst I understand your point, I do not think it quite really equates together. Morecambe's subordination would be a lot greater.

As I say, I represent an area called Bare, Bare in 1910 they wrote the Declaration of Independence from the town of Morecambe. This is an area that fiercely believes in their own selfgovernance. It is almost like a *Passport to Pimlico* situation that we have in Bare itself. The residents in the Upper Lune Valley, I think they certainly would identify more with Morecambe. Obviously, there is a lot more in terms of industry in Morecambe, I think more people would utilise the White Lund area and the Lansil Industrial Estate, and I think linking White Lund and Lansil would have huge ramifications as well to be able to come together as a joint proposal for an enterprise zone or something like that, whereas at the moment they are two separate industrial areas.

Yes, I think the interaction between the people in the Lune Valley with the industrial part of our district, which is Morecambe, it is the White Lund Industrial Estate, it is the port and the power station, will be far more than they would with the urban Lancaster city.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points of clarification?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner. Mr Edwards, you said you originally were based at the university, you went to the university at Lancaster, did you, and then you went to Morecambe? Do I understand also that you are living in Morecambe at the moment?

CLLR EDWARDS: Yes.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you also still working at the university?

CLLR EDWARDS: Yes, and I am very lucky to. Next week we have the grand opening of the M6 link road, which for many has been an absolute nightmare in terms of being stuck in traffic and all the rest of it as it is with major infrastructure projects like that, but for me that is going to take half an hour off my journey time and I will be able to use the motorway rather than going through the city of Lancaster which is, and has been for a very long time, at a standstill. Not because of the infrastructure project but because there is an archaic one-way system in Lancaster and I think if I could raise anything I would say that if you want a new project once this is over, if you want to come and sort out our traffic situation in Lancaster you are more than welcome to come and help.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You cannot entrust us with that. Any other points of clarification? (No response) In which case, thank you very much indeed. I will

check whether Mr Paul Gardner is here? (No response) No. Is Anne Lloyd-Davies here? (No response) Mr Stuart Lawson, would you be ready to speak? You are amongst friends here.

Mr Lawson, if you come up to the podium and give your name and full address for the record and then make whatever points of representation you wish to make.

MR LAWSON: It will not take long.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Those are the kind of notes I like. Make your representations and if there are any points of clarification I will give the opportunity for anyone to do so. People all know that it is not just professional speakers here, anyone may speak, and we are amongst friends and it is not about a partisan crowd here.

MR LAWSON: My name is Stuart Lawson. I live at 37 Derwent Road, which is, for those who know Lancaster, on the Freehold which is part of Bulk ward. I am coming really to object very strongly to the suggestion that Bulk ward, of which I am a member, is going to be or might be separated from the rest of Lancaster and put in with some rural area possibly going as far as Preston.

I have lived in Lancaster for a large part of my life. I was brought up in Skerton, which is in fact at the moment part of the Morecambe boundary for the MP of Morecambe. I then went to live in Bolton-le-Sands, and I went to school at Lancaster Royal Grammar School, so I have got quite a history going back in Lancaster and I now have lived on the Freehold for 13 years.

Throughout the whole of that time I have never known there to be any sort of animus between Lancastrians and Morecambrians. Lancastrians by tradition always see Morecambe as their place of entertainment. We used to go there obviously for the seaside, but we also used to go to the Pier Ballroom and the Winter Gardens, et cetera, the big swimming pools, and it was seen as an integral part of our lives there.

Similarly, people from Morecambe used to come to Lancaster Royal and I can never ever remember there being at Lancaster Royal any sort of criticism or rivalry saying, "Oh, you're a Morecambrian, you are from Morecambe, we are from Lancaster." It has always been a sense of community which has enveloped both areas, despite the fact that Morecambe and Lancaster had their own town halls. Nevertheless, we were part of that one community and saw ourselves as being part of that community.

I am really upset by the suggestion that we are now to be hived off from the rest of Lancaster. As I say, Skerton is already part of Morecambe despite their MP saying that Lancastrians and Morecambrians do not get on. He has already forgotten about something like a quarter of the city which is in his area when he says things like that, so

I think it is a great disservice to the people of Skerton that they should be treated in that way and I could see ourselves similarly being isolated. We are part of Lancaster, we are very, very keen on Lancaster, we are very proud of Lancaster, and to hive off one of the oldest parts, the Freehold, from the rest of Lancaster is absolutely disgusting, it is a disgusting idea.

The Freehold was set up in 1833 and has always been a part of Lancaster and a very important part providing a huge number of aldermen and councillors who work so hard for the progress of this city. I want to make my point very, very clearly that I want nothing to do with the idea of hiving us off from the rest of the city.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, that was very clear. Can you just explain to me as an outsider, the Freehold, explain to me what that is?

MR LAWSON: The Freehold was set up in 1833 by the Liberal Party, and it was one of the very first examples of Gerrymandering. The idea was if they gave freeholders the vote in the Freehold, they would vote for the Liberals. Huge numbers of people were coming in from the surrounding countryside and the Liberal Party bought two or three fields in this area and they said, "Right, anyone can build as many houses as they want on this area as long as the rateable value is such as to give them the vote" and I think it was more than £10 a year rateable value at the time. I live in one of those houses built in 1833. It goes back a long way.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The two wards of Skerton West and East, which I think you described as an integral part of Lancaster even though they sit north of the Lune, is that right?

MR LAWSON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would I, again as an outsider, if I travelled from the centre of Lancaster through Skerton into Morecambe would I be able to discern where I had passed out of Skerton and into Westgate or Torrisholme constituencies?

MR LAWSON: You probably would not be able to discern it, no. It is built up almost the whole of the way there is no green belt between the two.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Nicholas Elliott, Assistant Boundary Commissioner, just picking up the question that Neil Ward asked about Freehold. I am a lawyer and a freehold means to me a legal concept. Am I right in thinking that from your description "Freehold" describes a geographical feature of properties in that Bulk Ward?

MR LAWSON: It does, it does. If you look on the map of Lancaster you will see a square of houses or a rectangular of houses and you can see they are on a grid pattern, very obvious, running just below Williamson Park and that is where it is.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points? (No response) Thank you very much indeed. Is Anne Lloyd-Davies here? I know it is not necessarily part of what you have come to ask, I saw you disagreeing about the difference between Skerton and Morecambe so maybe at the end you could just enlighten me. If you could give your name and full address and then make whatever representations you wish.

MRS LLOYD-DAVIES: I came not expecting to speak so this is going to be very much off the cuff. My name is Anne Lloyd-Davies. I live on Bath Street in Lancaster, which is at the bottom end of where the previous speaker lives in the Freehold area of Lancaster, it is the bottom end of the boundary. I have lived in Lancaster for 30 years; I have always lived in that area. When I first moved to Lancaster in 1986 with my family, my family had been brought up in the local Lancaster schools et cetera and I worked within Lancaster city.

There is a very strong identity in the area in which I live of being a person who lives in Lancaster City. It is literally a five minute walk down into town across the canal into the centre of Lancaster, so one would consider oneself to be a Lancastrian and not somebody that would be living on the fringes. If you went up the hill about half a mile you will probably then go into the rural areas which will probably be more akin to Lunesdale and that particular area.

My objection when I saw it in the paper that Freehold, Bulk and Newton Bridge were actually going to be cut out of Lancaster was one of disbelief really because the whole part from Freehold, Newton Ridge, Bulk, it is all within the same sort of linear patch along the right-hand side of the Lancaster canal. Hugging the canal it is hugging one of the main arteries into the centre of the town and therefore all those people will consider themselves to be Lancastrians. In fact, the top end of Newton ends at the junction 34 of the boundary and then you will get on to the new highway into Heysham and that would take you out of Lancaster and into other parts of the area.

My other objection is that I have a friend who lives in Skerton just the other side of the river and we can practically wave at each other across from our houses and she has always been in the Morecambe constituency. Again, I find that quite strange because from where she lives it is literally five minutes across the river into the centre of town, why does she have to be considered to be part of a different area?

Lancaster is a very small city; it has a very strong identity. There are features within Lancaster that are historically important and culturally important and it seems strange to me that my side of the town, which will be hived off from Lancaster, actually contains the Grand Theatre, the Dukes and other landmarks, such as Williamson Park, that are

considered to be part of Lancaster, so I do find it quite incongruous that whoever has designed these boundary changes has probably just taken a slice into the cake without actually considering the local issues.

It is not just about cultural identity, about the regional identity. It is not just about drawing a line in the middle of a field and saying, "Right, you guys are now in a different area." It is bit like a postcode cake decision rather than with any local knowledge that has been made.

The issue about Skerton. If you are in Skerton there is Rylands Park, and Rylands Park and Torrisholme Road at the top end of Lancaster. If you were going up the A6 from Skerton, you would then be going into Slyne-with-Hest, you would then be going into Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth, all those areas which are off the A6. There is the boundary again which is the new Heysham link road which cuts right across the Beaumont area of the A6 in Lancaster which is leading into Heysham, which seems to be a sort of cut-off boundary between Lancaster city limits and Slyne-with-Hest and the rural areas.

On the left-hand side if you are looking at the map, if you look at Torrisholme Road you have got Rylands Park and then the road over Greyhound Bridge which takes you into Morecambe and then you have got Torrisholme and you eventually get to Morecambe. It seems miles away because it does take about 40 minutes to get from Lancaster to Morecambe in the rush hour, but on a bicycle you could do it in about 25 minutes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I understand your argument about keeping Bulk ward within Lancaster and that Bulk and Skerton are part of the communities all within Lancaster. Did you have a view on whether a constituency that includes both Lancaster and Morecambe, in other words the Boundary Commission proposals, do you have a view on whether you support that or were you more worried about keeping Lancaster intact?

MRS LLOYD-DAVIES: What I have just talked about is actually what I know about and I do not think I am actually qualified enough to talk about that, but if you were going to cut numbers of MPs down it would make sense, if you were going to encompass such an area maybe to have Lancaster and Morecambe, it is a bit controversial but it is a suggestion, you could have it as one area but not to hive off bits of Lancaster into Morecambe that have always been Lancaster. What the previous speaker was saying about Freehold and the charters, I do not really know much about that even though our house was built in 1884, but basically all the land and the properties are freehold, there are none of them leasehold, it is all freehold land.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is fine. Thank you. Let me check if anyone else has a view? (No response) My colleague Commissioner is now causing complications by introducing legal terms into this rather than historical localities. Thank you. I am grateful to you for contributing. Mr Damien Talbot, are you ready to speak

now, it is a little bit ahead of your booked time but if you are ready to speak that would be helpful.

CLLR TALBOT: I am Councillor Damian Talbot, home address Moorgate Bungalow, Pickup Bank, Darwen, BB3 3QQ, but I am speaking here as a Blackburn with Darwen councillor and the secretary to Kate Hollern, the MP for Blackburn, in respect of the Blackburn constituency. This will not take too long I can assure you, it is quite brief.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today and give a contribution in respect of these proposals. As I say, this will be quite brief. I am here to speak in support of the proposals that the Boundary Commission have set out and to set forward a number of basic points to emphasise the support. As I say I will be pretty brief.

I would also like to say as well that I was a candidate in the Fernhurst Ward a number of years ago and I am now a councillor for the Mill Hill ward, which is pretty much in the centre of the Blackburn constituency. It is my view that the proposal is logical and reflects the clear and geographical community ties of the constituency.

Blackburn is long established as the largest centre of population in east Lancashire and the administrative centre of the Blackburn with Darwen unitary authority. Blackburn has been a seat of a Member of Parliament continuously since 1832, which I think is the longest continuous seat in existence in the east Lancashire area. The constituency is predominantly urban in character and the existing wards all look to Blackburn to provide services and employment, and that includes the ward that is proposed to be added in, which is the Fernhurst ward from the Rossendale and Darwen constituency.

The community of Blackburn is very settled and many residents remain in the town for many generations.

The basic proposal of the Boundary Commission is to add the ward of Fernhurst, which is currently in the Rossendale and Darwen constituency, into the Blackburn constituency. Fernhurst itself is a newly created ward having been in existence for only 12 years. It has been established as a result of significant population growth in that area of the borough, predominantly by the creation of three housing estates, namely Oakdale, Oakenhurst Farm and Fernhurst Farm. The Fernhurst Farm estate is situated to the west of Blackburn Rovers Ewood Park football ground, just to the west of the A666. Up until the 2010 General Election this part of the Fernhurst ward was in the Blackburn constituency at a time when the Fernhurst ward was split across the two constituencies, as was the section of the ward which includes the houses and the streets off the main A666 just to the south of Ewood Park around the Branch Road area, that was also in the Blackburn constituency previously.

Both the Fernhurst and the Oakdale estates have been populated by electors predominantly moving from other parts of the Blackburn constituency. When we have

regular election canvassing sessions with both Rossendale and Darwen and Blackburn CLPs working together in this ward we have often found residents who were surprised to learn that they are actually in the Rossendale and Darwen constituency. Certainly from my experience, when the boundaries changed to move some of the ward into the Rossendale and Darwen constituency there were a number of residents who actually expressed a lot of concern that they were no longer in the Blackburn constituency and they wanted to kind of move back into the Blackburn constituency.

The village of Lower Darwen is the only long established community in Fernhurst, just to the south east of the ward there, and whilst it contains the name of Darwen in its title it has little else in common with the town of Darwen. Never formed part of the county borough of Darwen to my knowledge and it does not form part of the quite recently established Darwen Town Council area, which is the five wards of the town of Darwen to the south of the motorway. For local administration purposes, Blackburn with Darwen borough council has always classified Fernhurst Ward in the Blackburn south west neighbourhood district along with the wards of Ewood, Meadowhead, Mill Hill, the ward I represent, linked with Cressington which far better reflect its social and community character than the town of Darwen to the south.

A further point that I would add in support of the proposal is the existence of the M65 motorway which forms the southern boundary of the ward and makes a sensible boundary between the constituencies. In the criteria that the Commission used of geographic boundaries, it is not technically a geographic boundary but if you look to that area now it is forming a geographic boundary and there is very little development say in the south east, for instance, beyond the motorway and again in the south west and of course at present the motorway does form the boundary between the Rossendale and Darwen and Blackburn constituencies at Livesey with Pleasington, Higher Croft and at Queens Park in the east. Indeed, the wards of North Turton in Rossendale and Darwen and East Rural in Rossendale and Darwen were amended in 2010 to make the motorway the boundary at that point.

The only other point I would make is that Blackburn with Darwen council has passed a motion which actually supports both the Blackburn constituency proposal and the Rossendale and Darwen proposal, so if you have not already had a letter from Blackburn with Darwen council, you will receive one. That was all, thanks.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is a pointer to your left hand, a laser pointer. For the sake of those who do not have maps in the room exactly where you are now, you have the football ground in the corner of Ewood and the estates you were talking about were where?

CLLR TALBOT: Fernhurst estate is there, Oakdale estate is here and Oakenhurst Farm estate is there, so all this area here previously was in the Ewood ward and when the Fernhurst ward was split between the two constituencies this part was in the Blackburn

constituency. It is FE1, the polling district, and obviously it moved in 2010. The current Blackburn constituency goes up to there, that is where the boundary is. There are parts of Ewood ward and Meadowhead ward far more southerly than parts of Fernhurst ward that are in the Rossendale and Darwen constituency. Of course, Higher Croft at this side cuts right down there. I am an anorak on postcodes and there is a BB3 Darwen postal area, of which a large part of Higher Croft ward which is in Blackburn constituency is in. Likewise most of the Fernhurst ward has got a Blackburn postcode so I think a lot of people within Fernhurst consider themselves to be Blackburn residents.

As I say, I work in the MP's office in Blackburn and we often get people who live in the Oakdale estate, which is here - it perhaps proves they do not vote much because they obviously have not checked their ballot papers - they certainly regularly come to us for assistance because they believe they are in the Blackburn constituency, likewise the Fernhurst estate as well.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Points of clarification from the front here.

MR WALSH: John Walsh, Conservative Party, New Hall Lane, Bolton. Can you just clarify and confirm, I think you said the motorway forms the boundary for the whole of the southern stretch and, as I recall, that was part of the reorganisation of wards to make the motorway the boundary at the time?

CLLR TALBOT: Yes. In 2010 the motorway became the boundary, from this point down to here and here to here, but at the moment the boundary actually goes up to there and then down to there. The proposal basically is to move the boundary there. This is East Rural down here, which is Huddlesden, so a mainly rural ward, but some of this used to be Queens Park Ward and it was amended to move that into East Rural and to make that the boundary. Likewise, over here North Turton, which is in Tockholes, used to be in the Blackburn constituency and so the boundary was changed and that basically came down to here, that is what happened in 2010, but not in this section here in the middle where the boundary runs up to there. There was a lot of disagreement in 2004 over this and I think we have come all to an agreement over this. There is someone in the room who is there on the other side of the argument. The predecessor MP did not agree with this being in Blackburn but we all do now.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Fernhurst is currently in the Rossendale constituency?

CLLR TALBOT: Yes.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any other points anyone? (No response) (After a short pause) We are just consulting here over the chap I was waiting for earlier I see is in twice, so he may be due to arrive any moment. Again, I

have no other speakers and I do not think there is anyone in the room that has not taken up the opportunity previously to speak. I will just sit here and wait in the expectation that Mr Gardner will arrive and I will take representations when he arrives. He is due at ten past one, and after that I suspect we will break for lunch until 2.30pm.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon everyone, and Mr Paul Gardner has just arrived. Are you in a position when you are ready to speak or do you want a couple of minutes? I am happy to wait for a couple of minutes. While you are getting your bearings and before you get up, the form will be that you will come up to the podium, give your name and full address, because we are recording these representations as part of the public record, and then you will give your representations at the end of which I or others in the room may have points of clarification to seek, or we may not, and at the end of that you will be free to sit down and then we will probably break for lunch after your session. Feel free to start as and when it suits you.

CLLR GARDNER: Thank you. My name is Paul Gardner. I live at 4 Fern Bank, Carnforth, LA5 9PS. I am a town councillor in Carnforth and it is on their behalf that I wish to speak today and also following a public meeting that was held in Carnforth on 12 October.

I have attended Morecambe town council's meeting on 6 October where they discussed a counter-proposal. We are very concerned in Carnforth that we have been isolated right at the top of the area but excluded from a Lancaster and Morecambe seat. What we are concerned about is primarily what we see as a breaking up of a cohesive community by being sited with the Ribble Valley wards, the Wyre wards, and by two Preston wards, and really there is very little connection at all between those wards. Therefore, having attended Morecambe Town Council and listened to their counter-proposals from Cllr Darren Clifford, from whom you have already heard today, I took that proposal to the public meeting and also to Carnforth Town Council to ask whether that would be supported or whether there were any other alternatives.

I also had meetings with one of the local Conservative councillors in Carnforth in order to try and come up with an alternative, but I do not think there is one any better than the one produced by Morecambe Town Council in terms of having that cohesion and that sense of community along the coastal strip with the addition of Arnside and Grange should they make any representations and try to get a community feeling from there.

We do believe there is a connection. It is not as though there is no connection between the coastal strip on the east side of the coast and down into the Cumbria and it has previously been, as I understand, a constituency in the past. I recognise the criteria which the Boundary Commission have been set and certainly in terms of the restrictions, the statutory factors, then in terms of special geographic considerations in

the shape and the size and the accessibility it does seem to be a rather large constituency where there is no contact at the moment with the far east over on the Barnoldswick side of things, the Clitheroe side, and to go round the city conurbation, as it would become for the new constituency that is proposed with the city and Morecambe and Heysham, then really I guess we feel isolated from what we believe to be a common community.

We are a market town in Carnforth, just to the north of the community, it fits in nicely with the community. The proposed structure actually stops at Bolton-le-Sands, which is right next door to Carnforth. It is not as though we are isolated with green fields between us, we are not, we are all part of one area. There are considerations which I would ask you to look at again in there.

In terms of the local government boundaries then clearly we are part of the district of Lancaster. Our councillors sit on Lancaster City Council. I sat on Lancaster City Council myself up until last year, I have done eight years as a city councillor, and to put Lancaster and Morecambe together then I can honestly say there is a big difference between the thinking of what Morecambe wants and what Lancaster wants.

Sitting at the top you feel a little bit out of it anyway, so when you have got a split between Lancaster and Morecambe, to put them together as a parliamentary constituency I personally do not feel, and certainly the outcome of the meetings were that we do not feel that is the best structure to have.

Taking into consideration the boundaries of the existing constituency then we would certainly support the idea that the constituency be the current Morecambe and Lunesdale, plus, because of the number problems between 71,000 and 78,000, there is a requirement to juggle a little bit, and we can understand that, but we do feel part of that constituency as it is at this moment in time. As I say, the local ties that would be broken, we think are quite strong ties that we have at this moment in time. Whether it has been Carnforth and that area has been with Lancaster or whether it has been with Morecambe, we do feel a part of that and would feel isolated by the north Lancashire. Although a lot of the wards are east Lancashire, south Lancashire, not north Lancashire. I am not a Lancashire person but it does not sit nicely. That would be the contribution I would wish to make and to ask for a reconsideration of the proposals as they are at the moment.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just so I am clear, you are linking Carnforth in particular with Morecambe rather than Lancaster?

CLLR GARDNER: Yes, it is part of the existing constituency as it is at the moment and I think that coastal strip actually would be a nice, good cohesive community in itself. We are adding on the Arnside and Grange areas within the proposal, but I think as far as Carnforth is concerned then there is an ideal link in the railway in that it goes straight

through Carnforth into Silverdale, Arnside, Grange and down into the south Cumbria area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Leaving aside whether we stretch into Cumbria or not, would you be linking in your thinking that Silverdale, Warton, Carnforth and Millhead are all part of that coastal connected strip as it were?

CLLR GARDNER: Yes, it is all sitting on the shore, and Kellet as well which is linked into Carnforth, it is next door and part of our town really.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any points? (No response)

MR WALSH: John Walsh, Conservative Party. Can I just ask for my own clarification, I think I have got it right, the Carnforth, Millhead ward you are saying sits very closely with the Bolton-le-Sands area and very common and strong links there?

CLLR GARDNER: That is right, it is right next door. As Bolton-le-Sands ends Carnforth starts, so it is just a natural continuation of the A6.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any other points anyone wishes to raise? (No response) Thank you for coming along, very much appreciated. I think we may as well break for lunch now so we will meet again 2.30 pm.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome back. We are back fresh from our field trip to the River Lune. We have been to the River Lune, we have seen and we have crossed, *Shall we gather at the river?* It felt that sort of moment while we were there. We have a couple of speakers. Is Mr Anthony Cutter here? Mr Cutter, if you could come up to the podium and the way it works is if you could give your name and full address and make whatever representations you wish to make and then at the end of which either I or others may seek clarification on the points you make. Thank you.

MR CUTTER: Good afternoon. My name is Anthony Mark Cutter. I am currently resident at The Robert Gillow, 64 Market Street, Lancaster LA1 1HP, which is just next door, and in 48 hours' time I will move to Apothecary at 87 Penny Street, which is LA1 1XN, which are based at opposite ends of the main commercial district here in the city centre of Lancaster. I speak both as an independent member of the public although I should also say I am the Chair of the Improvements Sub Committee of the Lancaster Business Improvement District and I will be speaking from a business perspective as

well from a personal perspective and as a disability rights campaigner as a member of the Disability Hate Crime Network.

I have heard it argued that organisations within the political district of Lancaster and Morecambe do not operate on a Lancaster/Morecambe basis and I find this to be not entirely correct. I can name many charitable organisations and other groups that do function on that basis, but I can also name some who use words like “Lancaster” or “Morecambe” to denote where they might be physically based but who operate in a far wider basis. I have been doing a lot of work recently, for example, with homeless people and through my business - the two businesses I have just named are public houses - we have been providing food, over 600 plates of food per week, for those who need it on a free of charge basis alongside our business operations.

The people who are coming and making use of that food look like you and me and we do not make any judgments on who takes the food. We also have many homeless people coming and making use of the food and many people who would self-identify themselves as being stuck in food poverty.

Those people are coming from Lancaster, they are coming from Morecambe, Heysham and beyond. It seems to me that there is an artificial divide in the way that our parliamentary democracy represents us that does not reflect the way in which our political district, that is our city council, is designed.

My feeling is that the proposal to have a combined seat for Lancaster and Morecambe reflects the way in which people move around the district and reflects the way in which businesses operate within the district and reflects the way in which the social community and the infrastructure that exists outside of government actually works within this political district.

My strong feeling is that we should be looking at a combined seat that sees Lancaster and Morecambe put together. One of my colleagues in the Labour Party has said to me - and I am sure he will be here to argue this himself - “We do not want to see Morecambe treated as a dormitory for the city.” I said, “Well, that is not the case and it never has been the case nor should it be the case.” Actually we should be seeing the combined political district that we have at the city council level as one political parliamentary district so that when issues do arise that require responses from our elected officials, if we are accepting that we are going to have less elected officials one way or the other - there is a national move to reduce the number of parliamentarians - if we are accepting this as a given we actually should be setting up a situation where if you have an issue within the political district that requires intervention from your parliamentarian, we should be knowing who that parliamentarian is and it should be one person for the district.

I was at the meeting at the Ethical Small Traders Association two weeks ago at which Cat Smith, who is the MP at the moment for Lancaster and Fleetwood, spoke and she had to say at the beginning of the event which area do the businesses come from, they come from across the political district, and she said, "I have to remind you that I am only the MP for about one-third of the people in this room, so whilst I can talk to you and represent issues of business I am actually not the MP for most of you here."

That really brought home to me this idea that people in Lancaster and Morecambe work as businesses, as customers, as service users of charitable initiatives as one community. The main food bank for the area is in Morecambe, people travel from Lancaster to Morecambe and back. It is in fact the Lancaster MP who has arranged the transport service between the two, for example. We have one group of people and we should I think see ourselves joined together in one parliamentary constituency.

The thing that concerns me about the way the boundary is drawn, speaking as a businessman and I was also previously an academic and taught at the university for ten years, is to see the university in a different constituency from the main town. I appreciate there are some numbers issues to be drawn there, but I would ask the Commission to think very carefully about ways of linking together the major urban conurbation of Lancaster, Morecambe and the population of the university.

Very much the university sees itself as part of the town and not as a separate entity. There are big manoeuvres among the university itself to bring themselves into the city, things like the university in the city. They are actual reasonably major landowners in the city and it would seem slightly unusual to separate the two out. I would really argue for us to see within this area a political unity and a social unity that actually reflects the way in which people live their daily lives, the way in which businesses trade and the way in which charitable initiatives operate. To prevent me repeating myself I think that would be it. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Very helpful indeed. We have heard a lot of discussions about Lancaster and Morecambe. Can you illustrate a bit further, and particularly the way you did about the food bank, where groups operate socially across the divides, whether charitable or otherwise, and particularly those that might be based in Morecambe itself?

MR CUTTER: Certainly. As I indicated the main food bank for the area - there are a couple of smaller ones - is based in a Methodist church in Morecambe and people are referred from across the political district. In fact, I am a referee myself and I am based just here down the street. People then travel by bus across to the food bank on a Tuesday or a Friday, get their food and return home. We have put in place a system using the bus company - I cannot remember which bus company it is so I am not going to name the wrong one - whereby people actually get their travel covered and refunded at the food bank, which is quite an impressive system of us all working together.

There are at present two separate business improvement districts one for Lancaster and one for Morecambe, but the one in Morecambe was established with the assistance of members of the one in Lancaster and in fact there are some common board members between the two. This is an example of almost a redundant initiative where we could have one large one, but do not quote me on that really because I cannot say that my other members would agree.

Charities such as Wolfwood animal welfare charity operate extensively across the district. The Lancaster and District Homeless Association was based here not very far away in Edward Street, but the people who make use of its services are from all over the political district, anybody who is without a home attends there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any organisations which, in a sense, are founded in Morecambe, so based in Morecambe, which stretch outreach into Lancaster?

MR CUTTER: Yes. Many of the ones I have just mentioned, the food bank is the one that stuck in my head and I am struggling to think of others. For example, there are disability support groups and other organisations that are working in Morecambe and actually stretch out into Lancaster because that is where the client bases are.

It is easier for me to reflect on the ones that are based in Lancaster going that way because those are the ones that I tend to be stood next to, but it is very much the case we are seeing people coming from Morecambe to Lancaster and going from Lancaster from Morecambe. I think actually that unifying the district more so by having a single MP would also help us to do that because one MP will provide one voice and one amount of support to all of us in the political district and prevent a sense of "Our MP listens to us" or "Our MP doesn't", and hopefully we can have one salient voice.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Anyone have any points for clarification? (No response) That is very helpful indeed. Is Mr Roger Dennison here?

MR DENNISON: Good afternoon. My name is Roger Dennison. I am a parish councillor for Morecambe Town Council. I am member of the Morecambe Bay Independent Group. We did briefly have a look at this and I was charged on Sunday night with trying to make a brief presentation to yourselves as soon as we could.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Before you press on, Mr Dennison, do you think you could give your address as well?

MR DENNISON: Yes, my address is 38 Beaufort Road, Morecambe in Lancashire LA4 6TZ. The only point I could make is that certainly the proposals that have been put

forward by yourselves have strangely enough united a lot of political people in saying that they do not agree with you, but if I may I would just like to make a general presentation on what I think are the possible deficiencies and maybe improvements in the system.

Thanks for allowing me to make this presentation. Can we just start with a cautionary tale? Some two years ago, the Boundary Commission undertook a review of council ward boundaries and council representation within the Lancaster City Council. After representation, changes were made to ward boundaries and council representation and they have in general been accepted. However, changes to council representation in the district have caused significant resentment amongst voters in the Morecambe and Heysham area. Despite this area having a higher population than Lancaster, an existing council representative was transferred to the Lancaster University ward. This was based on previous methods of electoral representation where university students were registered en masse by the city council, a figure approaching 10,000 - that is including obviously the University of Cumbria as well which has its main base in Lancaster.

Representations were made which drew attention to the proposals by the Electoral Commission to alter the method of voter registration commencing in 2015/16 known as Individual Voter Registrations(IVR), which would require voters to select an area in which they were able to vote, a system designed to prevent fraud and ensure single and not multiple voting rights for an individual.

Following the implementation of this system the number of university based voters has fallen dramatically estimated between 50% and 75%. This has resulted in a significant democratic deficit in the Morecambe and Heysham area. We quote the above example as a clear warning that figures used to justify and identify parliamentary boundaries need to be rigorously scrutinised to ensure their verifiable empirical accuracy.

We now move to the current proposals before us. I must at this stage say that we agree in principle with other proposals being put to you by others today which separate Morecambe and Heysham and their surroundings from Lancaster. However, before detailing my concerns regarding the above I wish to make observations on the proposed North Lancashire constituency, I believe it is number 43 on the map in front of us. This appears to be a contrived constituency which combines rural areas to the north, east and south of Lancaster. It cannot be in any way described as a cohesive entity. In farming terms, for example, it moves from arable to significantly marginal hill farms, the south being dominated by a commuter belt serving British Aero Space and the Preston area. It has no significant population centres and, if adopted, given its vast geographical area is likely to be by virtue of its lack of clear community cohesiveness and orphan-like constituency.

The proposal for the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency appears equally to lack cohesiveness and logic. To exclude from Lancaster the University of Lancaster wards and its environs appears illogical given the major efforts by the city council and the university to work cooperatively together in a town and gown environment, sharing facilities such as the one we are in today and joint enterprises such as the proposed science park. Parliamentary representation will separate Lancaster from its university, with unknown effects and potentially serious consequences

We now move to the proposal to combine Lancaster with Morecambe removing traditional northern areas such as Carnforth and beyond. As I stated previously, we agree in principle with the separation to form a Morecambe and a Lonsdale constituency. We do, however, have some concerns over the inclusion of the Bulk ward in Lancaster which creates community cohesiveness problems as has been suggested and described above. Adoption of a southern expansion for the Lancaster constituency incorporating the university and its environs and the inclusion of Bulk ward in this expansion should help in balancing numbers.

We appreciate this would produce a reduction in the proposed Morecambe and Lonsdale ward and would suggest the absorption of coastal minor areas from the rural areas to the north and east of Lancaster. These have traditionally been combined in the former Lonsdale constituency and all share a commitment and close relationship with the Morecambe Bay area as a clear geographic area.

Historically, and especially now, existing relations between Heysham, Morecambe and the area to the north encompassing the Bay have significantly expanded and are now growing much stronger.

The Morecambe Bay Partnership and the combined working of the Cumbrian local authorities and north Lancashire with the National Grid on major infrastructural alterations to provide robust and environmentally acceptable power supplies between Carlisle, Heysham, Cumbria and the Lakes Peninsula are clear and developing examples.

Parliamentary representation should seek to enhance, expand and continue these cooperative community enterprises. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask a question? The Morecambe and Lune proposed constituency and the existing constituency includes, I think, the wards of Skerton West and Skerton East, which sit on the other bank of the Lune here.

MR DENNISON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have heard quite a lot today, not from you but from others, although they did cite the Morecambe Bay Independence Party as part of this.

MR DENNISON: Independent, do not confuse us with the other people from London, please.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I was going to say argument but it was I think animosity between Morecambe and Lancaster. How does that manifest itself in relation to the Skerton constituents in Lancashire?

MR DENNISON: I think the principle really is that the Skerton constituency has historically regarded itself as part of the area north of the River Lune. The River Lune is quite a clear and historically long existing boundary and really the major redevelopments that have occurred there, we actually did lose many, many years ago on Mainway the traditional Lancaster Port area where a lot of multi-storey flats was cut through but an awful lot of people have the same sort of problems, if you like, that chime in Poulton, the West End, and what have you.

The argument sometimes has been that once you cross the river there is a change of attitude. The concern that I put forward to you before regarding the previous very small scale Boundary Commission alterations is indicative of what can happen if the community (1) is not effectively consulted and (2) that perhaps actions by other bodies, such as we illustrated the Electoral Commission, alter the voting figures and you finish up with figures that perhaps you were working on originally that are not now as accurate as they were.

I do not feel that the principle of using basically for the Lancaster constituency --- This is one of the reasons why I said I do not feel putting a southern part of the Lancaster city in an altered ward is a particularly good idea because it does fly in the face of the same criticisms that I have put forward and said that you really do need to have an effective community area in that place and it should be one that people recognise, and people recognise a river. I was born in Skerton and finished up in Morecambe and that does seem to be, given that you visit the Bare Village Institute, as we get older I see more of the people who have migrated that way. I do not think there is a problem in that respect but there may be in other ways.

The only point I would say to you is that the suggestion to amalgamate, it seems to have united, certainly on the north of the river, grave concerns about what is seen as, and a previous guest has mentioned it, that people think it is just becoming a dormitory. That is a very strong perception and I think certainly the previous acts of the Boundary Commission, which did produce a strange effect, shall we say, that probably will be rectified over time but was seen as being quite negative. It has actually for all political parties, including all London based ones including UKIP, has been a feeling that, no, it

is a much better one to perhaps go with the robust historically clear area of the Lonsdale type constituency in going together. Certainly colleagues in the town council representing Carnforth I am sure will be equally vociferous that they are not happy with the proposals as they exist.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask a second question, which is linked to my first one? If, leaving aside parliamentary constituencies, you were making sure the towns and cities stayed together, if that was a principle to unite towns rather than not, where would you put Skerton East and Skerton West?

MR DENNISON: I think Skerton, because I have clearly indicated that because of the boundary, I do think they should be in the Lonsdale constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Putting aside constituencies, is it Morecambe or is it Lancaster that they are part of?

MR DENNISON: In postcode terms it is Lancaster but in actual combined terms, because there is no separation between Skerton and Torrisholme, Bare and the other constituencies around there, it is a much more, if you like, reasonable fit to presume that they would be in that area. Certainly from a postcode point of view they are put as being in Lancaster, but I do not believe that that is necessarily, because of the other comments I have made --- Really, the Lancaster boundary, I think it is imperative that it does include the university and particularly its environment wards because some of the work of the university has a significant effect in places such as Galgate on parking and a lot of other facets. I think if you do not include it the problem that you will get is you will get representation of an MP's point of view that actually is not connected with the Lancaster city's efforts to work very closely with the university, which would not be beneficial.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If I crossed the Lune here, just as a follow on so I understand, if I walked from the bridge ---

MR DENNISON: The Millennium Bridge?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, if I walked from there to Morecambe town centre, I am not saying I would.

MR DENNISON: It is a nice walk, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Hearing you talk a moment ago, would I not be able to discern a distinction between that side, those Lancaster postcodes, and all the way into Morecambe? Would it appear to me to be one town?

MR DENNISON: It would indeed because you would come to the college, which is adjoined in the middle, which forms the current boundary, but those boundaries designated by yourselves as the Boundary Commission have actually been moved and, if you will, there has been some movement of boundaries in Lancaster towards Morecambe, but I do not think that they form, in community terms - and I think this is what I am stressing - Morecambe/Heysham, that part of Skerton, and going to the rural areas and Carnforth beyond are pretty much the same points of view. I think the river is an inevitable consequence of that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, that is very helpful from my point of view. Any other points anyone would like to clarify? (No response). Thank you very much, Mr Dennison.

I am talking slowly because, Mr King, you have just arrived and you have booked yourself in for three o'clock. It so happens I have not got another speaker until three and I just wondered, if and when you are settled you would feel able to come and speak now? If you could come up to the podium and give your name and full address for the record and make your representations at the end of which there may be points of clarification from anyone in the room or myself.

MR KING: My name is Andrew King. My address is 67 Borrowdale Road, Lancaster LA1 3EU. If I could make a general point to start with, that is that the website makes it extremely unclear what is meant by coming to speak here. It is absolutely unclear whether you are going to be speaking to a large audience or whether you are going to be having a one-to-one with somebody. I would strongly recommend that that be improved because I think most members of the public will not have a clue what is involved in this.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: As it happens you are amongst friends here, so thank you for that. We are a small but friendly group.

MR KING: Right. I only went on the website a couple of hours ago and thought there are lots of vacancies this afternoon I will pop all along, because there are one or two issues here that just struck me as a long-term resident of Lancaster. I have lived here for over 40 years now and worked here and I think I have got a reasonable grasp of what makes this area tick and where our affinities are.

There are only four very simple points I want to make. Firstly, the existing constituency is and always has been a nonsense. I have lived here 40 years and in that time I do not think I have been to Fleetwood more than twice, so I am very pleased to see that you are proposing that link is ended because it never made any sense at all from a local point of view.

Therefore, the proposal that you are making to link Lancaster and Morecambe I would applaud, I think fundamentally this is sound. Whatever the differences between Lancaster and Morecambe they are very different places but they are, when all is said and done, twin towns, twin cities, and we have a very close affinity with Morecambe and I think that is a sensible move and creates a constituency that people will relate to. It would be nice to have a single MP representing both parts of this district.

However, there is one caveat to that and it is although I have read that you have seriously considered this, I would like to see the university included in Lancaster. Although I am not myself a member of the university, ever since we came to Lancaster the university has been an absolutely integral part of this city. I know many dozen probably university lecturers and teachers who live in Lancaster and to cut it off from Lancaster in this way, I understand why it is being done but I would ask you to reconsider that because the university is integral to Lancaster and I believe that should be reflected in the parliamentary constituency.

My final point is I understand that there has been a proposal put forward by one of the political parties to hive off a chunk of Lancaster to add it to the existing Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency. As I happen to live in the bit that is threatened with being hived off I would like to object very strongly to this proposal, which is total nonsense.

I have walked here today from my home in 15 minutes. I am in the centre of Lancaster in ten minutes. To suggest that we are in some way not part of Lancaster is almost unbelievable that this proposal has been made. I think the existing situation with various parts of Lancaster north of the river in the Morecambe constituency is bad enough, but the proposal to remove other bits of the city, including Freehold where I live, is just completely unacceptable and should not even be considered. That is all I have to say. More power to your elbow and I do hope that the new constituency more or less as it is but with the addition of the university actually comes to pass.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You were talking about the Bulk ward there?

MR KING: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: A general point, and you probably know this if you have been on the website, the Assistant Commissioners, of which there are three of us in the room at the moment, are appointed by the Boundary Commission to review the Boundary Commission proposals as honest brokers almost, so when you talk about 'you' and 'we'.

MR KING: I see.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is a distinction in the sense that there are the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission and we are considering the views of you and anyone else that makes representations to see whether we think the initial proposals should stand or should be recommended for revision by us.

MR KING: Thank you, that is a very useful clarification.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any points in the room anyone would wish to make? (No response) I am very grateful for you coming along today. Out of interest, were you expecting to speak one-to-one?

MR KING: I had no idea, but I do know that I have neighbours who are saying they dare not sign up because they do not know what they are letting themselves in for, so I can now go back and tell them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: When you go back feel free to tell them and encourage them if they wish to come along they are more than welcome. We have no current planned speaker and I can see looking round the room that there are not any planned speakers in this room. the next speaker is due at 3.30 pm so I am going to go into informal adjournment. I will wait here in case someone else arrives but otherwise feel free to mingle around or join us. Thank you.

After a short break

Time noted 3.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am sorry to have kept you. We have a couple of speakers now. For those who have just joined us, these are hearings to receive representations on the Boundary Commission's proposals for North West of England. I am Neil Ward. I have been appointed by Boundary Commission to chair these hearings across the whole of the North West and, with a couple of colleagues who are just out of the room at the moment, to consider all the representations received, whether oral today and tomorrow, or written and to look at whether we think it is appropriate to recommend revisions to the Boundary Commission's initial proposals that have been published and are available in map form.

The form is pretty simple, anyone who wants to speak comes up to the podium, introduces themselves with their name and full address and makes their representation, as a result of which there may be points of query but not debate amongst ourselves, so I might not be clear on a particular point and others may not, which we will ask you to answer and after that you can sit down. It is not a place for debate, it is not a place for cross-examination, it is just a place that people can give their proposals without fear or

favour of their thoughts. Is that is clear for those who have arrived? In which case, perhaps I can invite Wendy Dickinson?

MS DICKINSON: Well, this was not really what I was expecting but here we go. My name is Wendy Dickinson. I live at 44 Derby Road, in Skerton. I live on the other side of the river at the moment. I believe my boundary was changed back in 1987 and prior to that I was part of Lancaster. It really concerns me that the proposals that are being made to move Freehold, Bulk and the Ridge onto the other side to join me in Morecambe and Lunesdale is further eroding the city centre. I am not happy already. I live in Skerton and I would rather my representation be on the other side because I do not feel like I have anything in common with the people in my constituency. As such, I do not feel I have a voice in elections because I do not get the choice of representation of who I actually want to vote for. That is my concern, that this will further erode what has already started, so I would like to see Skerton, maybe Scale Hall, Rylands moved back into the city centre. We are within walking distance of the city centre, it is bonkers that we are part of Morecambe and Lunesdale.

I am going to keep it short and sweet, that is all I have got to say, ladies and gentlemen.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I might have a query for you.

MS DICKINSON: I was not expecting this!

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It might be short and sweet but none the worse for it. The Boundary Commission's proposal itself embraces Skerton and the two Skerton wards as part of a constituency which has Lancaster and Morecambe in the same constituency.

MS DICKINSON: But, it is not the whole of Lancaster as we understand it?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, it is the whole of Lancaster.

MS DICKINSON: From what I understand from what was published in the *Lancaster Guardian* it is splitting Lancaster down the middle?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I can explain. That is not the Boundary Commission proposal, that is a counter-proposal that has been tabled by, amongst others, the Conservative Party.

MS DICKINSON: I definitely do not agree with that one then.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We submit that would unite wards.

MS DICKINSON: But, do you split off another section of the city?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. It is not the proposals that are on the table. If I read it rightly you are saying you wish to keep Lancaster as a whole, including Bulk, Freehold, and including the two Skertons in one constituency?

MS DICKINSON: Yes, I would love to have Lancaster as a whole.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do you have a view who that would sit alongside?

MS DICKINSON: As in?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: As in Morecambe, Lancashire villages?

MS DICKINSON: It seems to me that the Morecambe and Lunesdale sits more happily on its own with the city centre going back towards what it used to be from what I understand. In 1987 I was 27, I was not necessarily politically inclined at that point but I suddenly noticed that I was not getting the choice when I was voting but I did not actually know why because I did not know it had been changed, but maybe that is because I was not very politically aware.

I would like to see the Lancaster city centre as a whole, not split as it is at the moment because at the moment it is split by the river but it seemed that the proposals that has been published in *The Guardian* is that it is proposed to split that even more but I really do not like that one. I would like to see it altogether as one.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is the river not a natural boundary between?

MS DICKINSON: No, I do not see it as a natural boundary because we walk from one side to the other. Everything that we do is in town. We do not go out to Morecambe. We might go as far as Asda or Lidl but we do not go. If we go to the Prom, like I have done today, we do it as a daily jaunt out, we go and cycle, but our business concerns are the city centre. That is where our banks are, that is where our night life is, that is where our theatres are, it is where our cinemas are, it is where our friends are. I have friends on Freehold, I am on the other side and we do not get to be in the same ward, it is crazy.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Maybe you could wave to your friends across the river?

MS DICKINSON: I do, but she is right up on the Ridge so I cannot wave to her. But it does seem silly we are not in the same voting area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: A point very well made. There may be some points for clarification. Name and full address, please?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Sir Robert Atkins, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. I was not quite clear what you were saying. Are you therefore content that the university should be outside this constituency as it is presently constituted by the Boundary Commission?

MS DICKINSON: To be honest, I have not considered the university. What I am concerned about is the city centre. The students are a very transient population, some of them, like me, stay and become citizens of the city, but many of them do not get caught by the witch's curse and they move on. To be honest, I am not as bothered about the university. What I want is my local people who stay here, work here and support the community here to be able to vote together.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: My second question is I do not understand when you said you do not have any choice at elections?

MS DICKINSON: I do not feel I have a valid choice is what I said.

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: In what respect?

MS DICKINSON: I do not feel I have a representation because whatever I vote I do not get a voice because I am in a minority, no matter what I vote I do not get heard. I have also made representations to my MP and just got back a bog standard letter which just said that if you are responding to one of these we are not - and I am paraphrasing of course - we are not actually going to give you a personal response because we are not bothered. That is what it felt like and, quite frankly, I do not want an MP like that. I want someone who takes the time to listen to me regardless of whether I am sending something in for a petition or whether I am petitioning them direct.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just check, do you feel disenfranchised in the way you were explaining there because the electoral system as a whole does not support you or because you live in Skerton?

MS DICKINSON: Both. I would like proportional representation as well.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We cannot solve that for you.

MS DICKINSON: I know you cannot sort that for me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If I leave aside the politics of it in that sense, do you still feel disenfranchised?

MS DICKINSON: Yes, because I do not feel like I am voting for my city, I feel like I am voting for that lot over there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points of clarification? (No response) No. Thank you very much indeed. I saw you earlier, if you want to speak could you say your name again?

MS McPHERSON: Yes, please.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You were here earlier.

MS McPHERSON: Patricia McPherson, 53 Newquay Road, LA1 5UZ. I am in support broadly of a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, but not if it were to take Lancaster University out of the constituency. I think the impact of the work of the university and the relationship between the city and Lancaster University is so strong that it does not make political, economical or social sense to me to separate them out. I feel strongly enough that I would rather have Lancaster University in a Lancaster constituency even if it meant we were not a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, which on the whole I do like the sound of.

I would like to support the points the lady before me made. I do not live in the Skerton constituency but I did. I was one of the people in 1987 who was put into a Morecambe constituency. I lived in one house for 25 years and I was in four different constituencies. When I was in the Morecambe constituency, as a Lancaster resident that is the least politically involved I have ever felt in the entirety of my life and I am now retired and I have taken a very active role and involvement in politics with a small 'p' throughout my life.

I worked in the Skerton area as a teacher, head teacher, governor and child protection officer. It is my view that none of the people I ever came across in a long career would have supported being outwith the Lancaster constituency. I think you said it better than me, your business is in Lancaster, that is where people go, and to go to Morecambe is a day out.

I think two more points. The floods last year showed us particularly clearly that a Lancaster MP for Lancaster actually rose to the occasion and helped the people. I think those poor people who were in a different constituency to me now, i.e. Morecambe and Lunesdale, and who experienced the floods were left really quite unsupported by their MP. That is not just my view, that was presented in the local paper, in the local media. It was really felt very strongly within the community.

My last point is - I do not know how true this is - the media keep reporting the fact that there are two million citizens not yet included in this Boundary Commission and I would

just urge the Commission to test that theory out and if it is true then clearly perhaps a little bit more boundary redrawing is required.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: On the last point, it is not something we can take account of. I have heard the argument but we are required by law, or the Boundary Commission is required by law, to use the last available electoral roll as and when they started this exercise, and that makes it the December 2015 roll, which some have argued, well it certainly was different from the previous roll and some will argue that there is still under-registration within that, but it is not something we can take account of. I am grateful for your other points. I have no particular points of clarification. Anyone else in the room? (No response) Thank you. Mr Smith?

MR PAUL SMITH: Mr Paul Smith, 90 Ullswater Road, Lancaster LA1 3PS. I support wholeheartedly the Boundary Commission's attempts to form a Lancaster and Morecambe constituency. I think that is far and away the best means of guaranteeing a good representation across both the city and its neighbouring town. I think it will lead to significant improvements in the representation of the area and the ability to have one MP to drive forward proposals across both centres.

I am aware of the counter-proposal that involves splitting Bulk. As a resident of Bulk I find it slightly preposterous my representation would be then tied to Morecambe and rural parts of Lancashire rather than the city centre I live 10 minutes' walk from.

The final comment I have is I do find it slightly unfortunate that the university is not included in the boundaries and I would suggest the Boundary Commission looks at swapping the University and Scotforth Rural perhaps with either the Overton or Bolton and Slyne areas.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you ambivalent about which of those?

MR PAUL SMITH: To be honest, I do not live in either of those areas. Obviously I visit both but I have no business or personal ties to either of them, it just strikes me given the university and that area clearly look to Lancaster in particular as their main attraction. Many of the people who work or study at the university live within Lancaster. It is something that may be worth considering, obviously depending on the representations from these two other areas.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Am I right in thinking that Overton is more of a peninsula almost as it comes down because the Lune estuary effectively cuts it off?

MR PAUL SMITH: You are right in thinking that, and in that sense it is perhaps not the best example. Bolton and Slyne, you could argue that certainly towards Bolton and Slyne perhaps consider Carnforth to be more of a neighbouring centre than Morecambe or Lancaster and their interests maybe better reflected there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any points anyone wishes to cover? (No response) Mr Smith, thank you very much. I have no further booked speakers in the room until 5 o'clock. There is an opportunity if anyone wants to speak who has not registered. I am looking round the room but no one seems to want to take the opportunity, so I am just going to sit and wait for the next speaker arrives. Feel free to join me and stay or move on as the case may be. Thank you very much.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back everyone. Can I invite Cllr Merry to come forward and speak. The form is, Sir, that you come up to the podium give your name and full address and then make your representation and then there may or may not be points of clarification at the end.

CLLR MERRY: I am John Merry, I am representing Salford City Council. We have a mayoral system in Salford and I am the deputy mayor of Salford and I am here at the request of the mayor to make representations about the nature of the constituencies surrounding Salford.

We are in support of the Boundary Commission proposals and opposed to alternatives that have been suggested to us. Last time you took two wards from Salford - I represent one of those particular wards - and combined them with some Manchester wards to form the Blackley and Broughton constituency. Obviously, after some initial misgivings, we have settled down and worked very effectively together and worked very effectively with the local MP.

We are in a situation now where Salford is the fastest growing area over the next five to ten years in the Greater Manchester area and I think it is likely that in future Boundary Commission reviews you will want to return to this particular subject when the full effects of that growth is actually known. At the moment we feel your particular recommendation takes account of the situation in Salford.

I recognise you have a different set of criteria from the ones which you have employed previously and I do understand the overriding need to ensure that the numbers in each constituency are within the small tolerances prescribed for you and, of course, your proposals did actually meet that particular need.

An alternative proposal I have seen suggested is that you move the boundary so that Irwell Riverside is incorporated with some of the Manchester wards and Broughton and Kersal. Whilst I recognise that the most important thing for you is to maintain numbers, it seems to me that you have also got a secondary responsibility that if you can do it within the numbers to take account of regional reasonable boundaries, and, of course, although the other side is on the other side of the Irwell, it has not got a great deal in

common with Blackley ward, for example, as has been proposed in one particular proposal and we would be very concerned about it. In particular, the ward of Irwell Riverside comprises much of the traditional heart of Salford. It comprises the cathedral, the old administrative centre and Chapel Street, and we think it fits more naturally with the constituency that you propose, which is basically the Salford and Eccles one and maintaining the Salford and Eccles boundary.

I am here, which is rather unusual for me, when I have attended a number of these, to express support for the Boundary Commission proposals. I recognise you have got a difficult job to do. I think within the confines of that you have done a very reasonable effort in terms of Greater Manchester and we believe your particular proposals should be supported.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no points on that. Are there any other points anyone might have? (No response) That was short and sweet. Thank you very much indeed for making the journey. My next planned speaker is Mr Michael Gibson at 5.30 pm, but if anyone does wish to speak we have an opportunity to take it now if you wish to. In which case, could you come up to the podium. Even for informal things, come up to the podium, state your name and address because it is part of the public record and please make any representations you wish to make and you wish us to take on board.

MR REECE: My name is David Reece, I live at 93 King Street.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sorry, your name?

MR REECE: David Reece, 93 King Street in the centre of Lancaster. I first came to Lancaster about 18 months ago. Initially I stayed with a friend in Morecambe, then I moved to Skerton, the other side of the river, where I lived for about a year and now I live in central Lancaster.

The essential point I want to make is very simple. Morecambe, I feel, is a different community with different characteristics than Lancaster, and Skerton, the area across the river from where we are now, is very much part of Lancaster. It is difficult to find evidence for that, an intuition formed from countless conversations, encounters with people, the feeling of a place.

One obvious point is people from Skerton work in Lancaster and travel to Lancaster for various cultural amenities, not least the many wonderful things that happen in this building. People from Morecambe, generally it is far more self-contained because transport is so difficult. Although we know the link road is being improved, so that may change, the situation up to now is that Morecambe is very much a self-contained community that leads a life separate from Lancaster.

The communication links from Morecambe tend to run further north towards Cumbria because of the difficulty of this road. Therefore, I would say it makes absolutely no sense to merge part of Lancaster with Morecambe whereas it makes tremendous sense to keep Skerton and the area around Skerton as part of Lancaster because that is a natural community. That is really all I have to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. To be clear, to keep Lancaster as a whole with the two Skerton wards as part of the city of Lancaster as it were?

MR REECE: Very much so.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Did you have a view whether or not, because the proposal on the table or the one you can see in the picture there, is for Morecambe and Lancaster to be in the same constituency, albeit however you describe it, it would make less of an issue. Do you support that proposal as such or have you given thought to that?

MR REECE: I was more aware of the proposal that would divide the city of Lancaster along the river, that divides it politically. There are quite important differences between Lancaster and Morecambe as communities.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points? (No response) Thank you very much for coming along and giving us your views. Do you want to speak? Again, could you give your name and full address and then make whatever points you wish to.

MR LAYFIELD: Good evening. My name is Elliott Layfield. I live at 22 Akeman Close, Morecambe LA3 3BP. I have looked at this information here now and I was grateful to the gentleman who answered my question. My question would initially be can these proposals be implemented by the Boundary Commission as a *fait accompli* or does it have to go to Parliament and he was able to enlighten me ultimately it will have to go to Parliament. It is taking into account that this is making quite a big change to Morecambe and Lunesdale and it probably would not, I do not think be, in our Member of Parliament's opinion, it would not be his preferred changes that are being made.

What I would say is that having looked at this it does numerically make a lot of sense in terms of evening out the sizes of the constituencies, so I would like to compliment the Boundary Commission on what they have done there.

Morecambe and Lunesdale, having living here most of my life, and Lancaster, it really is one geographical area and there is one community, so in my opinion they do not make any difference. Thank you very much. I broadly support what has been put here by the Boundary Commission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any points of clarification?

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Sir Robert Atkins, North West Conservatives, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. Just to confirm, you are happy with what has been proposed but what about the university? Do you want the university in or are you happy where it is at the moment?

MR LAYFIELD: The university is currently excluded, it is part of the northern Lancashire constituency. Having looked at that there, I view the northern Lancashire constituency, once they have got all the big conurbations sorted out and roughly the same size, it is just the left over wards and that sort of stuff. It does seem quite a peculiar constituency as is constituted and does not really have any geographical centre point. Garstang is its geographical centre.

Having the university out of it, most of the people who are resident at the university are students and they come and they go and there is always a very low turnout when they are at the universities, most people do tend either to keep themselves registered at their parents' address whilst they are studying. I would not have any objection to the university. The lines have to be drawn somewhere and they have to be done by wards. It makes a lot of sense to keep Lancaster altogether as opposed to try and divide bits of it off.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other points of clarification? No response. Thank you. In which case, I will take a couple of moments' breather but I will not adjourn because we may have another speaker soon. Thank you very much, everyone, so far.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Michael Gibson next. The form is if you come up to the podium, give your name and full address, and then feel free to say whatever it is you want us to take on board and then at the end of which there may or may not be points of clarification. Not a debate but someone may have a point.

MR GIBSON: A couple of things that are really simple.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry, your full name and address.

MR GIBSON: I beg your pardon, sorry. Michael Gibson and it is 74 Regent Street, Lancaster. The first point really it is very simple: I live in Lancaster so I am near Lancaster and Fleetwood and in the time that the parliamentary constituency was reorganised, it is about ten years ago roughly, I have been to Fleetwood once and that was bizarrely to do with one of my children who went to a party. In the last 24 hours I

have been to Morecambe three times, once for my business, once to see my family and once to play a game of football with my son. I travel between Morecambe and Lancaster all the time, I have got family there, I have got a business there, and it just a constant, we share so much. My father had a heart attack recently, he lives in Heysham and was sent to Lancaster Hospital. We share the same hospital.

For business people living locally, you want to go down to Manchester or Liverpool or London, which we are brilliantly connected for, you have to go to Lancaster. You have to get from Morecambe and Heysham train stations to Lancaster train station, which is essential to the whole business community both for Morecambe, Heysham and Lancaster.

You can go through an endless list about road problems that I had getting here today, it is a common problem for people from Morecambe and Lancaster. We have a very strange education system in Lancaster. We have two grammar schools, a girls and a boys, and we have a number of faith schools. Where those faith schools, Ripley, Our Lady's and the grammar schools take their children from locally is from Heysham, Morecambe and Lancaster, so they use the same road network to share those areas.

Obviously the role of a parliamentarian, our MP, is to actually deal with many of those common problems on a national stage, so when there is a debate about grammar schools the representation about Lancaster grammar schools, represents the whole area and represented by constituencies earmarked by the Boundary Commission.

The fundamental point is that we share so much and actually have one MP to address all those common issues and all those common problems just seems to me to make eminent sense. We, as people who live in Lancaster, have nothing in common at all with the needs of Fleetwood except perhaps that we share the same county council. Similarly, there is a big difference between the urban areas earmarked and the rural areas. The rural areas have their very own specific requirements and needs that are picked up. There are obviously exceptions, but by and large we share so much that we should have a shared MP.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask, you were saying how often you go to Fleetwood or how often you go to Morecambe. How often would you go the other way into the rural areas to the right here and the current constituency which is Morecambe and Lunesdale.

MR GIBSON: Incredibly rarely really. I drive through it on the motorway and that is pretty much about the only thing. I occasionally go up the Lune Valley for a bite to eat, other than that not a great deal. It is certainly not to do with the core elements of things that matter in terms of the economy or anything else; it is primarily passing through but occasionally to pop out for a spot of lunch like you would anywhere else.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I check if anyone else has any points?
(No response)

SIR ROBERT ATKINS: Sir Robert Atkins, North West Conservative, Manor House, Lancaster Road, Garstang PR3 1JA. The same question really. What are your thoughts, and you made the point about it making sense having a joint constituency, what about the university which is presently under Boundary Commission outside? How fundamental is that do you think?

MR GIBSON: You have two elements about the university. It would obviously be preferable if it was in there because I think the university matters a great deal to the Lancaster economy, but if you look at the actual voting constituency it is transient. By and large the vast majority of people in Lancaster in the University constituency are students who have no real affinity necessarily to Lancaster except that it was a place they went to university. A campus university do not have a particular interest really in the constituency as a whole, what they have as a whole is more of an interest in national politics, so those students would perhaps be reflective of a wider consideration about the nation as a whole rather than an individual constituency. While I would prefer it possibly to be in the constituency, obviously the University of Cumbria is the Lancaster campus, it does not make a great difference because the overwhelming population of that area is students.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is there a community of business interest between the university and Lancaster?

MR GIBSON: There is a real limit to that because on the actual campus at Lancaster there are some businesses who are based there but by and large they are national businesses who come and utilise the space at the university to connect themselves directly with the university. There is a business recently that has just set up there that had an office in Daresbury, Warrington, and rather make the commute because they are regularly coming up, and set up a satellite office at Lancaster.

Lancaster University does have a bigger outlook, it is a global top 200 university and we are very fortunate to have it in Lancaster. We obviously have got to limit the constituency in terms of the size of the population. It would have been nice to have it in there because we would like to try and draw the university more into the decision making of the Lancaster city area, but if that is the price because of the nature of the constituent members it does not really have that much of an effect.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any more points? (No response) Thank you very much. I am very grateful to you for coming along. Thank you. Now we have another natural gap in our proceedings and our next speaker is not until 7.30 pm, so I suggest we meet again at 7.25 pm.

After an adjournment

Time noted 7.25 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am Neil Ward. I am the Assistant commissioner. Can you hear me now?

MS BENSON: It seems strange because I am sitting over here and not sitting in front of you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Even more so because I am going to ask you in a minute if you could speak into that microphone over there because we are recording and filming all this for the public record and therefore this is what we have to do in order to make sure that every piece of evidence we need is available. The way it works is my role here is to both chair these meetings and with a couple of colleagues to take on board all the representations that are being made about the Boundary Commission proposals and decide whether or not we think in the light of all that any change should be recommended to it. We are hearing evidence from anyone who wishes to come along and present it. Sometimes there are 20 people in this room, sometimes there are two is the way it works. I am grateful to you for coming along and sorry we were adjourned at the time, we were not necessarily expecting anyone but we are always grateful to take evidence.

If you could give your name and full address and then say whatever representations you want to make.

MS BENSON: I also need to ask you some questions, if that is all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is possible it is all right, it depends on the nature of the question in a sense because this is a forum for receiving information than for the Boundary Commission to be in a debate, so it depends on the nature of the question.

MS BENSON: I am not in debate, I just had no idea that this was going on today, I only saw a notice on *Facebook* and I am wondering where you advertised to let everybody know you would be here. I see that this is the Conservative Party over here, so I am just wondering what ties you have with the Conservative Party.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I can answer all those questions. To answer your last question first, we have absolutely no ties with any political party whatsoever. The reason the Conservative Party happens to be here is because they are an interested party. Normally the Labour Party is here, the Liberal Party have been here today. Councillors come along, individual members of the public. This is an apolitical forum, it is not a political debate, although the outcome has a political interest

for the parties but not for us. The Boundary Commission are tasked by Parliament, not the government, they work for Parliament to try and come up with the best plans for how parliamentary constituencies should be divided up according to the law.

In answer to how it is advertised, it is certainly on websites, I have seen it in newspapers, it is on the news, in libraries, but quite how it gets out to everyone I do not know.

MS BENSON: That is why there is nobody here.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We have had people all day, so it is not that they are not here, they just come at different times.

MS BENSON: They are not here, are they, and if I had not come there would not be anybody here.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Not until half past seven.

MS BENSON: Hardly anybody knew this was going on.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I cannot do anything about that all, I do chair hearings and encourage people to give us information.

MS BENSON: You are going to have a better chance of people giving you information if everybody knows that it is on.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. Can I encourage you to give us some information then if you want to?

MS BENSON: What I am noticing with this map ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sorry, before you do could you just give us your name and address?

MS BENSON: My name is Grace Benson, I am at 1 Langdale Place.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Lancaster?

MS BENSON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Got a postcode?

MS BENSON: LA1 3NS. What I am noticing on this map here is I had understood the boundary was going to go through the centre of the city. It was in the local paper

recently that it would go right past the castle right through the centre of the city and that is not what I am seeing here.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is quite right, because these proposals here are the Boundary Commission's proposals, which subsumes the whole of Lancaster, but there are counter-proposals from various parties who suggest that the line should be drawn in different places and that might include, as now, using the Lune as a boundary, it might include having Bulk in or not in as an electoral ward.

MS BENSON: I live in Bulk so that is my interest really.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But it is not the proposals on the table here. They are proposals that other people have made as an alternative suggestion to the one of the Boundary Commission.

MS BENSON: So, this is not as it is now?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No.

MS BENSON: I am a bit confused then.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: This is the proposed next set of constituencies which we are consulting on and as a result of the consultation this might hold good or they might be changed according to the weight of argument on the basis of numbers, on the weight of community links, on ties, on geographical considerations, so there is a whole range of factors.

MS BENSON: What I want to know is why are you showing me this map if this is not the map that is current or the map that I have seen that divides the city? I am now confused.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Because this is the map which is being debated. This is the basis of the Boundary Commission's proposals for Lancashire and Morecambe constituency. Other people are coming up with ideas but they may or may not be persuasive in their arguments.

MS BENSON: Can you tell me how you have changed the boundary, the present boundary line?

MR REED: It is difficult to go into the actual detail between the two constituencies but what the Boundary Commission has aimed to do is look at the whole of Lancashire and to try and create constituencies that fall within a range of electorates between roughly 71,000 and 78,000, which the law requires us to do. The Commission have come up with proposals to include Morecambe and Lancaster together. The proposals that you

see there are what the Boundary Commission is proposing for Morecambe and Lancaster. The other parts of the current Lancaster and Wyre constituency go as far as Fleetwood, so we are changing that. Also Morecambe and Lune Valley, again that is the current constituency, we have changed the whole area. So these are our proposals for this particular area of Lancaster and Morecambe.

MS BENSON: From what I have read I see that there is nearly 76,000 in the boundary line now.

MR REED: In these proposals?

MS BENSON: No. This is the problem, is it not, you are showing me this map and you are saying there is another map and then we have got our present map which is slightly confusing me.

MR REED: I can give you those figures now. We have to base our proposals on the electorates as they were published on 1 December last year, the law requires that. Currently, the Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency has just short of 59,000 and the Morecambe and Lunesdale has 63,283, so both constituencies are well short of the requirement of 71,000 to 78,000.

MS BENSON: Does this legally have to come up to the 70,000-odd mark?

MR REED: Yes. Every constituency in the whole of the UK, apart from two island constituencies of Scotland and the Isle of Wight, all of them have to be within that roughly 71,000 to 78,000.

MS BENSON: The boundary lines have to change?

MR REED: Yes. Some constituencies are unchanged because the numbers work and what we are looking at others have changed considerably. We also are required to reduce the number of constituencies by 50, so some constituencies are disappearing.

MS BENSON: This is all served by one MP?

MR REED: One MP, yes.

MS BENSON: Because of the confusion of the maps I am not quite sure where we are, but what I do not want is the city split right down the middle. That would seem a really contentious kind, "We are having one kind of rights and you are having the other kind of rights and services" and I really do not think that is a good idea in any city.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Let me ask you then, because I understand that point, if the line was drawn down the Lune would that split the city?

MS BENSON: Of course, and it would also split us from Morecambe, would it not? We have bus services in common, we have all kinds of roadworks in common. I think anywhere that splits anywhere where there is a lot of residential properties is going to be a mistake.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is very helpful, that ties in with others.

MS BENSON: Am I done?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think you are unless there are any questions anyone else has. Do you have a question, Nick?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: My name is Nicholas Elliott. I am an Assistant Boundary Commissioner. I am working with Mr Ward on this. It is merely that other representations have been asked this question and they are not here. Do you have any view of the fact that the University ward and university area is excluded from this proposal?

MS BENSON: I had not understood that at all actually.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I tell you that under the Boundary Commission's proposals the area covered by the university is that it is proposed it should be excluded from the proposed constituencies because of numbers. I do not know whether you have any numbers elsewhere, I do not know whether you have any views on that or not?

MS BENSON: I would think that as the university is really part of our community then they should be included and if we already have numbers of 50,000 something and there is 20,000 up there it would seem correct to have the university integrated into the boundaries.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ELLIOT: Does your dog want to add anything to it?

MS BENSON: I am sorry?

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does your dog want to add anything to your representation?

MS BENSON: She is listening at present. She will come back next time and let you know.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed, Ms Benson. You did very well indeed, we appreciate it. We are still waiting for 7.30 so we will go back to where we were.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are very welcome. The position is we are taking representations from anyone, members of the public, councillors, MPs, on the Boundary Commission's proposals for constituencies in the North West of England and we happen to be sitting in Lancaster today but we have sat in four other locations across the North West. Anyone can speak. I am willing to hear any representations that can be made. The way in which it works is that if you have any views you think we would find helpful to have on board then I would ask you to go to the podium, give your name and full address, because it is part of the representations, and then give me your views on that position.

MR RILEY: I was not expecting it to be quite as formal as this.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. The reason it is formal is because we are taking representations and all representations will ultimately be made public and shared with everyone else so that people can see views what views have been expressed so they can then form their own views at a later stage for the consultation process. It is fairly relaxed in terms of how we do it. There are only eight and all bar two are people who are interested in hearing what you are saying. The other one is also interested in hearing what you say but he is not part of the Boundary Commission or Assistant Commissioners. We are happy to take on board any thoughts you may have structured or unstructured in that way.

MR RILEY: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: At the end of which we may or may not have any points of clarification, but you will not end up in a debate with people and we will not interrupt you when you are speaking.

MR RILEY: Good evening. My name is William Riley. I live on Havelock Street in the borough of Mary of Lancaster which falls into the John O'Gaunt ward. I am a Lancastrian and I have lived here all my life here in various parts of the city, including Skerton which I was very unhappy about losing from the constituency back in 1997 because I think there is a strong community cohesion between the city of Lancaster this side of the river and the city of Lancaster on the other side of the river, which includes Skerton. The Lune flows through Lancaster, it does not run alongside is the position that I am coming from.

I have some awareness of why these proposals have to be implemented; the Government wants to reduce to 600 MPs. I have some displeasure about the Boundary Commission not taking into account what I believe could be as many as two million voters who registered for the Euro elections. For me, I think those two million voters should be taken into account even if it means that the Boundary Commission have to look at these proposals again.

Coming down to the specifics of how it is going to affect the constituency that I live in, I think it is a good proposal. It is roughly contiguous with the city council boundary and I think there is a community of interest between the people of Morecambe and Lancaster and I think they deserve to have one MP. There is more local association with Morecambe than there was between Lancaster and Fleetwood.

I realise that the consequence of it is a huge rural constituency around the outside of it which would include parts of Lancaster which you would think should be included in the proposed Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, and I am thinking specifically of the university, I am thinking of Carnforth. The Boundary Commission have got to draw a line somewhere but I am generally in favour of Lancaster and Morecambe being included in the same constituency with the same MP. Sometimes you feel there is too much of a separation, perhaps in some cases too much of a rivalry between Lancaster and Morecambe and I think that is unhelpful. My view is generally, given the reservations I raised, I generally approve of the proposals and thank you for coming here to listen to me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Riley. I will check if anyone else has any points of clarification. (No response) I will just make a comment, if I may, because you raised this question of two million lost voters and some others have made the same point.

The issue is that the Boundary Commission are committed by law to taking a particular point in time by legislation and it has to be the last electoral roll prior to the start of their exercise to redraw the boundaries, which was earlier this year. That is determined by the period of the time required before the next election to have a lead in and get through all the stages and that meant they have to use the December 2015 electoral roll which I understand differed from May 2015, and is different again, if I believe what I read in the papers, from the voters registered for the Referendum, but it is an appointed time at which they are required by law to use, so that is why they have used it.

Probably it will have had a generalised effect, so maybe everywhere would have moved up and we will just be looking at different numbers, but who knows because we have not done the figures because it has no status with us, we are not allowed to.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Inaudible

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is not a Government issue at all, it is a Parliament issue. The Boundary Commission do not work for the Government, they work for Parliament direct for the Speaker of the House of Commons and it is Parliament or parties who decided what the access is for the 2011 Parliamentary Constituencies Act which requires them to use a particular set of circumstances and therefore it will not change this time around irrespective of the popular opinion. It is what it is it is set down in law the same way the numbers are determined by law.

Thank you for coming, very helpful, and your views were very helpful in the context of our discussions.

It looks like we are only hearing one speaker at a time but we have heard 20 people who have been speaking and another 20 tomorrow maybe more. It is a matter of timing because everyone can elect to come between 10 and 8 and tomorrow 9 and 5. Sometimes there is no one here and we have adjourned, but we reconvened rather than you miss out the opportunity to present. Sometimes we might have adjourned for the night and those who cannot give views can send them in, so there are different ways of doing so.

We are now in the same position, which is the next speaker is not due until 7.30 pm and it is 7.25 pm although I think I will stop walking up and down the stairs and I will sit here and wait.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do you want to speak? The form is if you come up to the podium give your name and full address and then feel free to say whatever it is you want us to take on board and then at the end of which there may or may not be points of clarification.

MR BEBBINGTON: My name is Phil Bebbington. Did you say you wanted my full address?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, please.

MR BEBBINGTON: I live at 51 High Road, Halton Lancaster and I have got really only two things to say. Firstly, having looked at the original proposals I think it is very disappointing that the residents of essentially part of Lancaster, that is Halton and places beyond which are still part of the city of Lancaster, have been lumped into a huge amorphous constituency which seems to be called Rural North Lancashire, or something, which to my mind bears no relation to where I call home and frankly I cannot see me having any connection or anybody in Halton or further up the Lune Valley having any connection with a constituency that seems to be centred on somewhere in the middle of nowhere near Pendle Hill. I think that is a very poor solution.

I realise that not everybody can have everything ,but that just seems plain wrong to me that we are just lumped with all sorts of people we have no connection to, where even at the moment the Lune Valley is a fairly connected place and so the current constituency is certainly an awful lot better than the one that is being proposed which we would have nothing in common with almost everybody in it.

I would also say I heard there have been some counter-proposals talking about moving bits of Lancaster, the city itself, into some other constituency with Morecambe and again I do not think that seems to make any sense. It seems to be very arbitrary to chop up the actual city itself just to suit somebody's whim that they would like to have a more winnable constituency.

From a personal point of view, the first point is the one that is most important to me. We have been moved from a largely rural constituency but one which is geographically connected to us and it is being proposed we are moved to somewhere utterly amorphous and will not have any connection to whatsoever.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are currently in Morecambe and Lune?

MR BEBBINGTON: We are currently in Morecambe and Lunesdale, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Halton, just given the proposals for Lancaster, and we have discussed quite a lot, Lancaster and Morecambe, does Halton look to Morecambe rather than Lancaster for example, or do you?

MR BEBBINGTON: I would say we look to Lancaster more than Morecambe. We spend plenty of time in Morecambe but really we are part of Lancaster. My family and I moved to Halton from Lancaster because it is very close to Lancaster, it is less than four miles away, it is readily accessible. It used to have a very good bus service until somebody decided that people in rural Lancashire do not need a bus service any more or libraries - one wonders what is next. No, we look to Lancaster I would say. We are probably 400 yards outside the proposed changed boundary for what is now showing as Lancaster and Morecambe, you can see Halton-with-Aughton on the map; we are just outside. My eldest son goes to school in Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is your home 400 yards give or take?

MR BEBBINGTON: No, my home is probably 800 yards from the edge of the village and the edge of the village is the boundary. Halton is a very small village. Most of the children of secondary school age go to school in Lancaster.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just so I understand, you disagree with the proposals to put you into North Lancashire, you do not have anything in common. The current constituency is much better than that but looking ahead, and there are various options on the table, Lancaster is a more natural association for you personally or for the village of Halton?

MR BEBBINGTON: I think for me personally I would tend to think the village is part of the city of Lancaster there is no argument about that. That is where my council tax bill comes from, it is where all our council tax bills come from. We are, whether we like it or not, an outpost of Lancaster. It is where we do most of our business, where I cycle to the station if I am going to work and it is where my son goes to school.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have no other points. Anyone else?

MR FINETTO: My name is Alex Finetto, 12 Clifton Park SK2 6LA, Stockport. You have talked about towns and villages looking to Lancaster. At present, Lancaster University is not within the proposal for a Lancaster constituency. Is that something you feel should be within a Lancaster constituency or is it neither here nor there?

MR BEBBINGTON: I think it should. I think it definitely should.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Bebbington, thank you very much indeed and we are grateful to you for taking the time to come along.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome to this hearing on the proposals that the Boundary Commission have made for the initial proposals for the North West of England. We have been taking loads of representations today and I understand you might have some views you wish us to hear. The form is if you could come up to the podium and use the microphone.

MRS MACKENZIE: It is not intimidating at all, is it?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are all friends in here. If you can give your name and full address and then please proceed.

MRS MACKENZIE: Do you need me to speak into this? My name is Desna Mackenzie. My address is 12 Greenfield Street, Lancaster LA1 3QE. I am a resident of Bulk ward, the smaller electoral ward in Lancaster. I have come to comment not specifically on the Boundary Commission's proposals for the two constituencies in the area but rather the Conservative Party. I understand they have put forward a counter-proposal that the Skerton ward and Bulk should be moved out of the Lancaster and

Wyre constituency and put with the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency. Have I got the general gist of it there?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is the general gist.

MRS MACKENZIE: If someone could clarify for me?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Not in relation to this particular set of proposals.

MRS MACKENZIE: It is a counter-proposal and that is what I would like to object to, if possible. As a resident of Bulk ward I cannot understand the reasoning behind wanting to move the Bulk ward in the Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency. I cannot speak for the Skerton wards because I do not live there and I have lived in this ward for a very long time, in Bulk ward.

Geographically it does not make any sense, the ward is on the south side of the river as most of the city of Lancaster is. My personal opinion and my observations of the community in the area is that we feel very much a part of Lancaster and not as connected to Morecambe and almost certainly not to the rural areas beyond Morecambe that form part of the wider Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency.

For instance, this evening I found out about this hearing and living close enough to the venue I ran all the way to be here in time for 8 o'clock. I could not have run to Morecambe in 15 minutes, so both from a geographical and a community identity perspective I think that the counter-proposal that is being put before you does not make any sense at all. It baffles me. It really baffles me. I just wanted to make that really clear.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You certainly have.

MRS MACKENZIE: Is there anything else that you want me to say about that? Are there any questions that you have got about my point of view or perspective?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No. I understand the position entirely in relation to Bulk and your proposition and where Bulk runs. Skerton West and East, do you have a view?

MRS MACKENZIE: I do not and I think it would make more sense to hear from residents of those two areas. I have to say, I literally found out about this hearing on a *Facebook* post within the last half an hour so I do not know how widely published this has been or how many people know about this. Certainly for people to get here from Skerton East or from the Skerton wards would be a little bit more time consuming

because they would have to cross the river and on foot it would take a while and in traffic it would take a lot longer.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Anyone else have any points?

MR FINETTO: Alex Finetto, Clifton Park Road, Stockport SK2 6LA. Given what you said about the River Lune, would you say that is kind of a natural boundary at the edge of the city of Lancaster?

MRS MACKENZIE: I would prefer not to comment because I do not want to prejudice from the people in the Skerton wards if they would still rather remain with the Lancaster constituency. Like I say, you have made an observation based on a map. The feelings of people who live in the city might be slightly different, so I would prefer not to answer that question because I am not sure if it would be constructive and it might prejudice the Boundary Commission's decisions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No problem, not a problem at all.

MR FINETTO: You may or may not be aware that the University of Lancaster is outside the proposed Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, is that something that you would like to see the university within the constituency?

MRS MACKENZIE: I was not aware of that and that does not make sense to me either, so I do have an objection to the Boundary Commission proposals. It would make a lot more sense for Lancaster University to remain within the constituency as far as I can tell. It is a huge provider of jobs locally and the economy of Lancaster city very much depends on the student population.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think that is all the points. You must have the record for being the keenness presenter to us given that you ran all the way in order to catch us, for which we are enormously grateful to you for taking the trouble to do so. That is partly why we are here, so that local people can come and tell us their views about community link is.

MRS MACKENZIE: Thank you, and I will make sure I share it on *Facebook* and maybe you will get more people tomorrow.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are here from 9 o'clock until 5 o'clock tomorrow, but no later than 5 o'clock tomorrow. I am debating whether other people are running behind you to get here before 8 o'clock. We will sit until 8 o'clock.

Adjourned until 9.00 am on Tuesday 25 October 2016

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