

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

STERLING SUITE, ASPIRE, 2 INFIRMARY STREET, LEEDS LS1 2JP

ON

FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER 2016

DAY TWO

Before:

Mr John Feavours, the Lead Assistant Commissioner

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

Time noted: 9.15 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning everybody. Welcome to Leeds. My name is John Feavoyour. I am the Assistant Commissioner responsible for chairing the hearing yesterday and today and, together with my colleague Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, responsible for listening to all the representations, looking at the submissions that we have had and making representations to the Boundary Commission as to whether there should be any changes to the initial proposals.

It is just coming up to 9.15 am on Friday morning. We were due to start at 9.00 am, but it did not seem to me that there was any point in starting bang on 9.00 am when there was nobody here. We now have three speakers here and so I propose to start moving through the schedule. People have been given timeslots which I will try to adhere to as much as I can, but if we make progress ahead of that then I will invite people to come forward if you are here and we will take what you have to say then. If I call you and you are not ready and you have a timeslot later then please do not feel any difficulty in saying "Actually, I'm waiting for some colleagues" or whatever and we will do that as well.

Do we have Scott Benton here? Scott, would you like to come up? Whilst Scott is just getting himself ready, I am going to ask him to speak from the lectern on your right. Just a reminder for everybody that the proceedings today are being video-recorded. We are required to make a full record of everything that is said. When you come forward, I would like you to start by giving your name and home address in order that we can put that down on the record and then I will invite you to speak for about ten minutes. I will be quite flexible on that, but clearly double that length of time and I may intervene in the interests of allowing everybody a say. So without further ado, Cllr Benton, when you are ready, name and address and then off you go, please.

CLLR BENTON: (Brighouse ward) Thank you very much. Good morning everybody. My name is Cllr Scott Benton. I am leader of the Conservative group on Calderdale Council and also deputy chairman of the Halifax Conservative Association.

Since the Boundary Commission's initial proposals were released I have spoken to many members of the public from across Calderdale in relation to the proposals for our area. Nearly all of those whom I have spoken to have expressed concern at the way in which longstanding local ties and community links would be adversely affected by these proposals. As such, I have examined the various options for parliamentary boundaries within our local area, seeking to preserve our community ties whilst also meeting the Boundary Commission's core criteria with regard to electorate size. This research has demonstrated that, due to the geographical alignment of wards within Calderdale and the comparatively large ward electorates, there are only six options available for creating two constituencies which meet the Commission's criteria with regard to electorate size. Although the

Boundary Commission has indeed proposed one of these six options, I am here to argue that this option does not properly meet other criteria with regard to geography, transport and community links. Furthermore, I will argue that there is only one of the potential six options which fits the same criteria and which would be broadly acceptable to people throughout the region of Calderdale.

I turn first then to the current proposals. During their representation yesterday the Labour Party stated that these proposals arguably maximise the disruption within Halifax and Calder Valley and see the town of Halifax divided. For once the Labour Party and I can agree on something. Saying that the current proposals bring substantial change is an understatement. Halifax loses half of its current wards and is split in two, whilst the Calder Valley becomes an unnatural and illogical combination of separate wards and communities. Both constituencies become unrecognisable from their current form and, although the name of Halifax constituency lives on, by dividing the town in two the Commission is effectively breaking up a proud and historic constituency which has remained largely unchanged for the last 100 years.

In addition to this, the current proposal breaks up existing community ties and identities. The wards of Skircoat, Illingworth and Mixenden and Warley contain communities which have always been part of the Halifax constituency and to which local people have an affinity. Strong community ties and a sense of identity inextricably link local people to relate to Halifax as an economic, retail and cultural centre. The transport and communication links of these three wards are all based upon them being integral parts of the town of Halifax. These three wards sit uncomfortably outside of Halifax and to separate them from their traditional constituency is completely nonsensical.

Furthermore, many of these communities have little in common with the parts of the Calder Valley with which they have been paired. The transport connections between Illingworth and Greetland, for example, are poor as there are few natural links or connections between these communities, which are separated by geography and the topography of the Pennines.

So whilst the proposed Halifax constituency loses half of its wards - communities which identify with Halifax and which fit naturally within that constituency - it gains communities that have absolutely no affinity whatsoever with Halifax and which certainly do not want to be included within that constituency. Towns such as Brighouse and Elland exist in their own right. They have their own distinct identity and sit comfortably outside of Halifax. There is absolutely no reason to include these communities within Halifax at the expense of those wards which naturally form part of that town.

The current Boundary Commission proposals then sever historic links, break up local ties and produce two peculiar constituencies which are an irrational combination of very different communities. If there is one thing that local people

agree upon across our district, it is that these proposals are unacceptable as they currently stand.

However, as stated earlier, the boundaries can indeed be amended in a way which better reflects the Commission's own criteria on geography, community ties and transport links. Crucially, the counter-proposal which I will now outline also creates far fewer changes with the current arrangements, with over 70 per cent of electors staying where they are compared to just under 53 per cent under the Boundary Commission proposal.

Our counter-proposal for an Upper Calder constituency retains the historic nucleus of Halifax, which retains six of its current eight wards. As such, this protects the community and cultural links within that town which would be lost under the Boundary Commission proposal. Those communities which identify with Halifax, and which for geographical and transport reasons could not be feasibly detached from one another, are thus retained in the same constituency. The major flaw of the BCE proposal, i.e. that it splits Halifax in half, is avoided. The wards of Todmorden, Calder and Luddendenfoot, which collectively form an area known locally as the Upper Calder Valley, are added to the six wards of Halifax to complete this new constituency. These three wards form a distinct geographical area on their own and it is important that they are kept together, which this proposal achieves. In linking both Halifax and the Upper Calder Valley together, this proposal forms a constituency which has excellent road links - the A646 is a backbone of Calderdale and connects the towns and villages of the Upper Valley with Halifax - and rail links, with regular services on the Calder Valley line between the four stations in the Upper Calder Valley and Halifax, providing an important commuter link for local people. In addition to this, there are also strong community, cultural and historic ties between the Upper Valley and Halifax - they share the local authority, a local hospital, a local newspaper, the schools and colleges are interlinked and much of the area utilises the same postcode and telephone area code. People within the Upper Calder Valley tend to gravitate towards Halifax as a local economic, commercial and retail centre and many businesses and voluntary groups span across both areas.

The counter-proposal for Upper Calder then creates a naturally-shaped geographical constituency which maintains logical and clear links between each of the constituent wards. It keeps the two communities, the town of Halifax and the Upper Calder Valley, together in their entirety but also joins them up to create a constituency which has natural ties. All parts of the constituency are accessible from one another and are served by existing transport links. Our counter-proposal also ensures that the communities in the Lower Calder Valley are not broken up. Distinct areas, such as Brighouse, Elland, Sowerby Bridge, Northowram and Queensbury, maintain their own identities and ties and are combined together to create a naturally-shaped constituency which meanders around the town of Halifax. This proposed constituency forms continuous and logical links between all of the nine constituent wards, maintaining good transport links and accessibility from one part of the constituency to the other. Although local government boundary is

crossed between Calderdale and Bradford, this is necessary to avoid breaking up individual wards within the Calderdale area and has in principle been accepted by the Boundary Commission as a viable option in both this review and the last. This constituency retains local ties between the towns of East Calderdale and retains more wards from the current Calder Valley constituency than the Boundary Commission proposal, thus creating substantially less disruption than the existing arrangements.

In summary then, this counter-proposal seeks to demonstrate that there is a more suitable option for dividing up the wards within Calderdale than the Boundary Commission has proposed. In particular, this proposal evidences stronger community and cultural ties and better transport and geographical links. This counter-proposal, as I have already stated, also creates fewer changes with the current arrangements, as not as many wards are transferred between each constituency, and over 70 per cent of voters stay where they are. It retains the nucleus of a historic Halifax constituency whilst leaving most of Calder Valley as it is at present. This counter-proposal has the support of the Conservative Party within Calderdale but, far more importantly than that, I firmly believe that it is by far the strongest of the six possible options that are available to the Commission for the Calderdale area and that it is best placed to command the support of local people from across the different towns and villages within Calderdale.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Cllr Benton, thank you very much. Just before you stand down from the lectern, and for everybody else's interests, what I have been doing thus far when a speaker has finished, and will continue to do, is just check with everybody in the audience to see whether there are any matters of clarification that you would like to put to the speaker, through me, before that person moves on. I need to emphasise that it is about matters of clarification and not about challenging any of the proposals themselves because that is a matter for myself and my colleague, Collette Rawnsley, to have a look at after we have listened to what everybody has to say. With that caveat, are there any matters of clarification from anybody? (None). It would appear, Cllr Benton, that you have been very clear. Thank you very much indeed.

CLLR BENTON: Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are welcome. Just to reiterate, when everybody has finished, all of the material will be transcribed. It will be available on the Boundary Commission website in due course. Collette Rawnsley and I will be considering what everybody has said before making further representations to the Commission about any changes that may or may not need to take place.

I then propose to move to the next scheduled slot, which is Mr Craig Whittaker. Is Mr Whittaker here? Thank you, Sir. If you would like to come forward. You may have missed my initial remarks. I know you were slightly delayed this morning. Just for your information, when anybody comes up to the lectern I ask them to give their

full name and address and then go on and give us their ten-minute presentation. So when you are ready, carry on.

MR WHITTAKER: (MP for Calder Valley) My name is Craig Whittaker. I am the MP for the Calder Valley. My home address is 1 The Orchards, Brighouse HD7 3NZ.

Good morning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you this morning about the proposed changes, particularly in Calderdale. I must say that I am quite excited about the review because in Calderdale's case it is the first opportunity in 33 years to rectify issues particularly around community links. We have looked at the new proposals from a different perspective, rather than just a political perspective. I can say this with confidence because, no matter which way you cut the pie in Calderdale, there is only ever about 4,000 votes in it from both seats. That is why I say that we have looked at it from a very different perspective.

We are quite excited about being able to finally link up those communities which are currently split from each other, or indeed join communities that have much in common. The Calder Valley, for example, has communities which are 22 miles apart currently with nothing in common. Constituents in Todmorden or Hebden Bridge would never naturally venture to Brighouse, Elland or Hipperholme and Lightcliffe. Similarly, Ripponden is cut off from its postal town of Sowerby Bridge currently. This is a great opportunity to fix that. Under the current Boundary Commission proposals, almost 50 per cent of constituents move into a new constituency. Our proposals would see around 30 per cent only.

We appreciate that the electoral size in Calderdale, where the borough is to be considered in isolation from the rest of the region, would be very low and so we accept the proposal to add a ward from Bradford into Calderdale to better equalise the electorates in this area. However, a much better fit with regard to community links would be Queensbury instead of Royds. I say this because Queensbury is only three miles from the centre of Halifax, compared to six from the centre of Bradford, and it has traditional ties with Calderdale. In 1974, when it was abolished, it used to be the Queensbury and Shelf Urban District. If you speak with people in Queensbury, they still consider themselves to be part of Calderdale rather than Bradford. If Queensbury were to be substituted for Royds, the proposals in South and West Bradford and the Spen area would still be viable as Royds is very similar in numbers and it would slot into the natural flow of that constituency as well. I will say, however, that if the Commission did not feel this would fit then we are happy with the overall Calderdale boundary which includes Royds in the initial proposal, if that was deemed to be the case. But like I said, Queensbury from a community links point of view would be a better option.

Accepting the external boundary for the rest of Calderdale, as I said earlier, through our counter-proposals we are in the exciting position of having finally a much better fit when it comes to those community links, transport links, schools and colleges, and even where people traditionally shop and enjoy night-time economy too. If you take the Boundary Commission's numbers criterion, there are only six options available

where they all fit together for both parliamentary seats - that is if we accept the current overall Boundary Commission boundaries for the whole of Calderdale. When you look in depth at the six options, there is only one that stands out by a mile when you are talking about those community links, transport links, schools, colleges, and even where traditionally people shop or enjoy night-time economy too. That is a proposal that we have submitted to you as part of our proposal.

The Calder Valley is currently made up of several deep-sided valleys whose communities are very different and distinct, and in some cases it is never the twain shall meet. As a consequence, we are currently a very disparate mix of five very different towns whose communities do not have a great deal in common and which are cut off from each other with very high-sided valleys. Those very separate townships currently are Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Elland, Brighouse and Ripponden and they are in the Upper Calder Valley where we have Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Luddendenfoot wards. The Ryburn Valley of course is very separate at present, covering the town of Ripponden, and Elland and Greetland and Stainland wards sit nicely as they currently are. Then we have the Lower Calder Valley, which is Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme and Lightcliffe wards.

So how do the proposals in front of you help rectify this issue? Well, currently in the Calder Valley, for Ryburn ward, which covers the villages of Ripponden and Rishworth and some hamlets as well, and a very large rural part of the constituency, the main transport link is the A58 road. It is called the Rochdale and Halifax Roads. In one direction you go to Lancashire, to the town of Rochdale, and the other to Sowerby Bridge, which is currently in the constituency of Halifax. Ryburn ward shares the same postcode as Sowerby Bridge and, if you live in Ripponden or Rishworth, the next part of your address is Sowerby Bridge, although Sowerby Bridge is currently in the Halifax constituency. Our new proposal links these two areas back together without those in Ryburn ward having to travel out of the constituency to travel to other parts of it.

Elland, Greetland and Stainland naturally sit together, as they do currently, by linking Sowerby Bridge back into the constituency and linking the constituency in a natural flow. Those who live in areas around Elland would use Elland town centre for their weekly shopping requirements but would naturally go to Sowerby Bridge for the night-time economy, where there are lots of pubs and restaurants and entertainment.

Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme and Lightcliffe wards already have a strong community link. I am sure I do not have to mention to you the Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band, which is world famous.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You betray a generation!

MR WHITTAKER: Shopping is primarily done in Brighouse, being the second largest town in Calderdale. Bringing in Northowram and Shelf along with Queensbury would link in perfectly with the current three wards as they currently link

via the A644 main road, which is also called the Brighouse Road, and that runs directly from Queensbury through Northowram and Shelf and into Brighouse as well.

So under our new proposals we would see much stronger community links, taking the five current disparate towns which are currently in Calder Valley but making them three distinct areas with very strong transport links between the three areas. Changes to the current Calder Valley would mean losing Todmorden, Calder and Luddendenfoot wards but gaining Sowerby Bridge, Northowram and Shelf, and of course Queensbury, if that is what you deem to be suitable.

For the current Halifax constituency, the Boundary Commission's proposal would see the traditional seat of Halifax literally cut in half - it would lose four of its eight traditional wards - with very little community cohesion and transport links too. It does not make sense to lose Skircoat, Illingworth and Mixenden or Warley. Skircoat is without question a town centre suburb of Halifax. Illingworth and Mixenden have very strong links with Ovenden, which stays in the Boundary Commission's proposals, and they also have those very strong links to Halifax. To split them would mean even less in common with Calder Valley. The same applies to Warley, too. Our proposals would see Halifax lose Sowerby Bridge, which currently has little ties to the Halifax town centre and very much competes against Halifax because it has stronger links to the Calder Valley. Northowram and Shelf also leaves Halifax and fits nicely into transport and community links with Brighouse, as I have already said, and what is currently the Upper Calder Valley links perfectly into the town of Halifax via the A646 which runs from Todmorden, through Hebden Bridge and Luddendenfoot on the bottom of the valley, directly into Halifax town centre.

As well as this, the Calderdale train line runs from Halifax, through Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, Todmorden and Walsden, and terminates in Manchester. These are very strong transport links which enable these townships to travel directly between Halifax for both the day and the night-time economy. It gives a much stronger link and gels these towns together by being one constituency.

Changes to the current Halifax constituency then: they would lose Northowram and Shelf, as well as Sowerby Bridge, but gain Todmorden, Calder and Luddendenfoot. This is why we say the proposal is the strongest of the six possible options within the boundary as proposed by the Boundary Commission.

In conclusion, the counter-proposal that we are advocating creates fewer changes than the Boundary Commission proposals, with 70 per cent of residents staying in their current constituency. It does not break up community ties and local identities such as the current Boundary Commission proposals do. It proposes two constituencies which each have good transport links between them, linking up local communities in a logical and rational way, and corrects many of the local anomalies and issues which have existed since the last substantial boundary changes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Can I just check, are there any points of clarification that anybody needs? (None). Mr Whittaker, thank you very much indeed.

MR WHITTAKER: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Next on my order is Mr George Robinson. Is Mr Robinson here? Would you like to come forward, Sir, please?

MR ROBINSON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So when you are ready, your name and address, please, and then off you go.

MR ROBINSON: Fantastic. My name is George Robinson and I live at Elm House, St Giles Road, Lightcliffe HX3 8BN. I'd like to thank the Boundary Commission for allowing me to come and speak to you today.

I would like to mainly build off what Cllr Benton and Mr Whittaker said for the Calder Valley and mainly prove from a community perspective why the bottom wards there - you can see Calder Valley, you can see Elland ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Robinson, if it may help, there is a little pointer. When you walk away from the lectern we cannot record you.

MR ROBINSON: All right. Sure. I will probably turn the thing off! How Elland ward, Rastrick ward and then Brighouse, Hipperholme you have there and Queensbury up there -- why those should be part of the Lower Valley constituency.

I am the deputy chair (political) of the Calder Valley Conservative Association, I was also the Elland local candidate in the 2016 local elections, but I'm not here on a political basis. I live in the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward. You can laugh all you like, Sir, but I live in the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward. I was a former karate student in Northowram and Shelf. I was a brass band player in the Elland ward for Elland Silver Band. I also went to school in the Brighouse ward. So therefore I feel I'm in a good position to comment on these proposals from a community perspective.

What I'm here to say is that all of the wards - Elland, Rastrick, Brighouse, Northowram, Hipperholme and Queensbury - are fundamentally linked together. What this Boundary Commission proposal does is it doesn't only provide change but it provides an opportunity to link these wards, which is a fantastic thing for the community.

So what are the issues with the current proposals? Under the current proposal Brighouse, Hipperholme, Rastrick and Elland enter Halifax. These wards are

independent of Halifax and their communities would strongly resent being linked with the inner Halifax wards. When I was a candidate in Elland, one of the common themes on the doorstep was: "Why is funding being centralised in Halifax and not our ward?" The attention in Elland was insurmountable. It's unbelievable. I feel that at an age when voter apathy is so low it's kind of putting salt into the wound to say: "We're going to put you as part of Halifax and that's the end of it".

Added to this, as a Hipperholme and Lightcliffe resident with experiences in Brighouse and Rastrick wards I can say that our wards don't have anything in common with Halifax. If I go shopping I go to Brighouse. I got the train here this morning. I didn't get the train from Halifax. I got the train from Brighouse. Therefore, with regret, the current proposal, in my opinion, lacks transport links and it also lacks the community feel of the wards.

Added to this, in the current proposal only 53 per cent of constituents remain in their current constituency. Under this counter-proposal 70 per cent of constituents will remain in their current constituency with their MP. So yes, basically the counter-proposal, if you like, matches the current community, the current transport links, the current infrastructure, as well as historic ties. Anyway, let's stop beating about the bush and let's get on to the counter-proposal.

So the counter-proposal forms two constituencies, one Lower Valley constituency and then the other Upper Valley constituency. Keeping Brighouse, Hipperholme, Northowram and Queensbury in the Lower Valley constituency makes sense. They have so much more that unifies them than that which divides them. But don't just take it from me. I'm going to use a few examples. One of my friends who I used to work with, a lovely lady called Sally, lives in Hipperholme and she actually has her own business in the Hipperholme ward. She used to work in Keelham, which is past Queensbury. To get to work, she would hop in her car, a quick 15-minute journey to Keelham, and she would go right through the A644, which goes right through Brighouse, Hipperholme, Northowram and Queensbury ward, go right through there, at work in 15 minutes. Another one of my friends called Kirsty owns a beauty salon in the Hipperholme ward again. She actually lives in Shelf. To get to her place of work she goes down the A644, straight to work, probably a journey of about ten minutes. Finally, my grandparents live in the Northowram ward. Now I just hop in my car, taking again the A644 straight up to Northowram, and I'm with them in about ten minutes, but before I could drive I quite simply hopped on the bus. The bus is the 571 and it goes from the end of my road straight up to their house. Not a problem. This shows that the road network and also the transport links are fundamental for the wards. They need to be linked.

Further to the road network and then obviously transport links we have the schools in the area. I think this is a fundamental point. The Rastrick Academy catchment area links Rastrick and Brighouse together - so that is from the lower half (indicating). The Brighouse High School catchment area links parts of Rastrick with Brighouse and also Hipperholme and a bit of Northowram. The Lightcliffe Academy links part of

Brighouse, Hipperholme, Northowram and then a bit of Queensbury as well. They are all wards that interlink.

So we have spoken about the road network, the transport links, the school catchment areas. What else? I don't know if we've got any history boffins in the room today - I'm not sure - but in the Domesday Book, believe it or not, Elland was called Elant. Rastrick was in the Domesday Book. Unfortunately Brighouse misses out. I have to be very careful as we've got a Brighouse councillor in the room! Hipperholme is in the Domesday Book and so is Queensbury in the Domesday Book. Believe it or not, no part of Halifax is in the Domesday Book. Halifax ceases to exist in the Domesday Book.

Added to that as well - sorry, there are so many points here on why these wards are interconnected - Queensbury and Shelf formed an urban district council and this was going until 1974. That goes to show why Queensbury and then Shelf link together.

Finally, Queensbury can be removed from the proposal without any complications for Bradford West. Queensbury can easily be replaced by the Royds ward which continues to make Bradford West a feasible option.

So therefore, to summarise, this counter-proposal enables Lower Valley to retain our historical and community ties whilst complementing the existing road network, transport links and school catchment areas. I have looked in depth at the numbers and they all stack up. For the constituents, I think it would be a marvellous thing for all the wards to remain intact given the transport links, the school catchment areas, historic ties, et cetera. Thank you for allowing me to come and speak to you today.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Robinson. Any points of clarification from anybody in the room? (None). Mr Robinson, thank you very much indeed.

Just a reminder from me - and I make no apology for repeating myself, as I will do throughout the day, because people are coming and going and I want to make sure everybody understands the process - today is about me listening to what people have to say. We capture all of that. It will all be written up and will be available on the Commission's website in due course. At that point there will be an opportunity for anybody to comment on the counter-proposals. For example, Mr Robinson has just put some of his ideas on record. There will be the opportunity in due course to say what you think of those counter-proposals and we will take account of those views as well in due course. As I say, I make no apology for repeating that, which I will do during the day.

The next speaker on my list is Cllr Howard Blagbrough. Is Cllr Blagbrough here? Thank you. You have heard what I have said all the way through. When you are ready, name and address and off you go.

CLLR BLAGBROUGH: (Brighouse) Good morning. My name is Howard Blagbrough. I am a Conservative councillor for Brighouse and I serve on Calderdale Council. My address is 19 Woodview Grove, Brighouse HD6 2EH.

First of all, I wish to back my colleagues who have already spoken, or will be speaking, on our counter-proposals to the boundary changes in Calderdale. I appreciate what a difficult task and challenge you are facing in terms of rearranging boundaries and juggling numbers. I am here today to try to encourage you to accept our counter-proposals, which I believe take into consideration the views of a number of residents who align themselves to a particular constituency historically. The current Boundary Commission proposals and changes put forward are quite radical in terms of causing disruption and therefore our counter-proposal not only achieves the right outcomes in terms of meeting the objectives of the Boundary Commission but also softens the blow in terms of acceptability with residents in the area.

Looking on the map, together with numbers, I can fully understand how you have reached your proposals. However, in reality Calderdale, in my view, is unique. The communities that make up our area have particular links and identities which help them prosper and have helped in their survival in difficult times such as recession. The current Boundary Commission proposals effectively split Calderdale down the middle and break up traditional small village towns and links which will be lost for ever. Your current proposal does not take into account the community links, transport links or the historical identities of the people and places of Calderdale. People from Brighouse have no links with the residents and communities of North Halifax, for instance.

One of the challenging roles as a Member of Parliament is to be accessible to all. The proposal does not help in more ways than one. Over a period of time residents get to know their Member of Parliament as they build up a relationship. This is a two-way process. Our proposals ensure that less people would have to change constituencies - 42,314 or 29.6 per cent of electors affected, as opposed to 67,396 or 47 per cent - than in your current Boundary Commission proposals. The counter-proposal would in effect have a better impact on residents as there would only be three new wards added to the Lower Calder ward including Northowram and Shelf, Queensbury and Sowerby Bridge, all of which have their own identity, and the market towns are Brighouse, Elland and surrounding areas. Including Ryburn and Sowerby Bridge in our counter-proposal as per the community links avoids the current confusion from the point of view of the resident as to who to contact when they need help and assistance.

Over the last few weeks I have been speaking with a large number of residents on the doorstep with reference to the proposed changes to the parliamentary boundaries. Every person I have spoken to is outraged with the thought that Brighouse would form part of Halifax. All the communities forming part of the counter-proposal have very much their unique identity and are very well matched in terms of people wanting to maintain their own independence yet supporting each other. People love to say that they live in Brighouse as it is very much a village town

and has its own identity. Brighouse also has more in common with Elland than Halifax. Businesses also choose to locate in and identify themselves with the small village towns such as Brighouse. Sainsbury even chose to have a village store as a superstore. Residents from Northowram and Shelf already choose to shop in Brighouse because of the closer transport links and the fact that the town is often more manageable than Halifax centre, which is spread out. People like to associate themselves as part of a constituency. I can assure you that people in Brighouse do not want to be part of Halifax as proposed in your outline. There is a natural link historically between Brighouse, Hipperholme, Rastrick and Elland, all small market towns.

Traders from the Brighouse Business Initiative have been struggling to obtain help and assistance from Halifax but have been successful in attracting the largest number of tourists to the area for their 1940s weekends. Members of this group are working with neighbouring areas like Elland to regenerate their town and remain independent from Halifax. The counter-proposal would maintain, rather than diminish, their identities.

The revised proposals put forward make perfect sense in reference to affecting a reduced number of residents having to change constituencies - 29.6 per cent as opposed to 47 per cent. There is change and there is change. As councillors, we already struggle at times to engage and encourage residents to vote in elections. The current proposal disenfranchises the electorate even more as it has no sense of belonging to a place. I hear from residents on a regular basis complaining about the perceived lack of funding provided by Halifax and their view that Brighouse loses out. This is clearly their perception. However, I can assure you that residents do not want to lose their HD6 postcode and will therefore certainly not want to vote for the Member of Parliament of Halifax. Residents were recently up in arms when they lost their community fire station locally. I can assure you that voting for a Halifax MP in Brighouse would cause even further conflict. Change affects people in many ways. Often it is the fear of change. The new counter-proposals alleviate issues such as this and help prevent people presuming and saying: "This is just the start of things to come. The next thing, they'll be getting rid of our local libraries". So often it is the perception. The counter-proposals help by subtle change in such a way that people can relate to the areas which could be included in the plan. Change needs to be manageable and should be sold in such a way that it is more positive and beneficial to all. I would therefore request that you take into account the voters, who are key to a successful democracy.

There is a strong argument which suggests that the current Boundary Commission proposals would not help Halifax in terms of losing areas such as Illingworth, Skircoat and Warley, all of which have defined themselves as part of Halifax historically. If you are not careful, the current decline in Halifax will continue. The current Boundary Commission proposals in effect split Halifax into two. Imagine a resident in Skircoat Green contacting their Calder Valley MP about traffic going into Halifax. Would you rename Halifax Royal Infirmary, for instance, if it would be in Calder Valley?

Breaking up communities who have close historic links, as you are currently proposing, diminishes all hard work taken in those places over a number of years. Often this work is hidden. Within a short space of time in the area as a councillor you get to meet a core group of volunteers. You realise that these people are valuable assets and are an essential part of society. Volunteers have affinity and close links with smaller village communities. Our counter-proposal helps to continue these bonds, which have a positive outcome for all around. For instance, BASH, a local charity which helps homeless in Brighouse and surrounding areas, having spoken with the chair last week, their remit would have to change and it would make their role more challenging because the proposals would have a direct impact on such things as networking and would therefore have a domino effect.

Our new counter-proposal enhances links in the community network. For instance, Northowram and Shelf are already in the same police neighbourhood team. To continue to try reducing crime we need to ensure that these links continue to grow and not be separated. This is a strong argument why Northowram and Shelf should be included within Brighouse. Policing is just one example. We need to consider the effect changes to boundaries will have on other services. The counter-proposal makes wonderful sense in continuing to keep communities together and helping them feel inclusive rather than exclusive.

As we are fully aware, transport links are key to all communities. The revised proposal encompasses this to a large extent and draws the communities closer together. These communities already have existing transport links in terms of the M62 and A644, which draws in the Queensbury area directly, yet another reason why Queensbury, Northowram and Shelf should be included with Brighouse.

We must not forget about our links with the community schools. A large number of pupils in the Northowram and Shelf area attend Hipperholme Grammar, Lightcliffe Academy and Brighouse High. It makes perfect sense if we are to engage with young people to ensure that they can eventually have a vote in the areas they live in and attend school in. School places and feeder schools are a fine example and provides clear evidence why Northowram should be included in the new Lower Calder ward as outlined in our counter-proposals.

I would urge you to consider the revised proposals, which in my view appear to be very sensible, actually draw similar communities together and promote democracy by helping members of parliament be more accountable to their residents as the travel distance is a lot shorter. Thank you for your time today.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Any clarification? I am not seeing any hands. Cllr Blagbrough, thank you very much indeed.

CLLR BLAGBROUGH: Thank you very much indeed. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The next on my list is Mr Jeremy Cuss. Is Mr Cuss here?

MR CUSS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Cuss, I believe you were here yesterday. You have heard my preamble and so I think you know the routine.

MR CUSS: I do.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Sir. So at your convenience, name and address and then off you go.

MR CUSS: (Colne Valley Constituency Labour Party) My name is Jeremy Cuss. I live at 14 Scape View, Golcar, Huddersfield HD7 4DH. I am here representing the Colne Valley Constituency Labour Party.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just bear with us, Mr Cuss, for one moment.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Cuss has a presentation. We are just loading it up for him.

MR CUSS: I do not need to spend any time on this because we have all heard this so many times. There is no contest about this. We are starting with this and in today's forum there is nothing to be contested there.

Within Kirklees there are 3.95 average constituencies. We have always believed that the accountability of MPs could be improved if the local government boundary and the MP constituency boundaries are the same, which is the current situation. We were slightly surprised that the Boundary Commissioners did not actually choose to keep four constituencies within Kirklees.

Colne Valley, as you will have seen in the draft review, is the largest constituency in Yorkshire and the Humber. Taking one ward from Colne Valley and splitting it between Huddersfield and Colne Valley would actually allow four constituencies within Kirklees that all are greater than or equal to 95 per cent of the average constituency size across England. We believe that Lindley ward is the correct one to split and it is the one, as you already know, that the BCE is proposing to move to Huddersfield. Do not worry if you cannot read the details there. It hasn't come out quite right, has it? It hasn't displayed quite right. The information that is hidden by the map there actually says that splitting Lindley ward like that would actually give a Colne Valley constituency which is 95.2 per cent and a Huddersfield constituency which is 95 per cent of the average size.

I have worked out three options. This is only option 1. Option 2 is another split of Lindley ward. Option 3 was a split of Lindley ward and Denby Dale ward, which would give four Kirklees constituencies which are all about the same size. However,

all my hard work was overtaken by the Boundary Commissioners on 13 September, when they decided that they were not going to split any wards and they would come up with a solution that did not do that, even where there were communities of interest.

So these are the proposals for Kirklees. The Colne Valley Constituency Labour Party is saying: "Okay, if you are not going to split wards then the Boundary Commissioners' proposals seem acceptable. They will work. They will give us five constituencies that are a part of Kirklees. All of them seem to make sense to us". They are far better than the proposals that were brought in 2011, where Kirklees was split up into six constituencies and Crosland Moor was put into Huddersfield instead of Lindley. I do not need to go over the figures - they are the ones from the Boundary Commissioners' document.

So what we see there is the addition of Penistone West into the Colne Valley constituency. This is a picture taken from the Boundary Commission's draft review. You can see the Penistone West ward down at the bottom of Colne Valley there. All the built-up area in Penistone village itself is actually in the West ward. Although it is called Penistone East and Penistone West, all the houses in Penistone village are in Penistone West and so you are not actually dividing the village.

There are good rail links between Huddersfield, Crosland Moor, Holme Valley North and Penistone, with a train station in Penistone. There are seven good roads linking Penistone West with Holme Valley South, which is the adjoining ward.

I was very pleased when I attended yesterday to find that the Tories, Liberal Democrats and ourselves, the Labour Party, all agreed with the Boundary Commissioners' proposals. None of them said that it was wrong. They were all happy with Penistone West going into the Colne Valley constituency.

So then I want to justify what the Boundary Commissioners have done, which is to move Lindley ward into Huddersfield constituency. You can see there the proposed arrangement and you can see the positions of Lindley ward and Crosland Moor and Netherton ward. You cannot see the major roads, but there are two main roads going through Lindley, the A640 and A629, which go directly into the centre of Huddersfield and they do not go into the rest of the Colne Valley. So the major transport links from Lindley - and that is whether it is car transport or bus transport - go into the centre of Huddersfield. They do not go into any of the rest of the Colne Valley. That is the position. Also, Lindley contains Huddersfield New College and Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, more links into the centre of Huddersfield. The alternative Crosland Moor and Netherton, which was chosen by the BCE in 2011 and regrettably by the Tories this year, is a much worse solution because the road links through Crosland Moor link in to Golcar and Colne Valley along the A62 and, on the B6108, down to Holme Valley North and also the rail link from Lockwood in the Crosland Moor ward, through Brockholes and Honley, in Holme Valley North, and going down to Penistone in Penistone West. So

all of these are good reasons why Crosland Moor and Netherton should be left in the Colne Valley constituency. More than that, the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward acts as a link between the Colne Valley and the Holme Valley. It is the lynchpin in the middle. So that is why we should leave it as the Boundary Commissioners have proposed.

Last night I was e-mailed by Greg Cook, who you will remember made the presentation yesterday on behalf of the Labour Party, who brought another factor to introduce to you. He said the only reason in his eyes why the Boundary Commissioners had chosen to move Crosland Moor and Netherton in 2011 rather than Lindley into Huddersfield was because at that time, with the plus or minus five per cent and Lindley ward being a bigger ward than Crosland Moor, Huddersfield would have been greater than five per cent above the average if Lindley had been moved rather than Crosland Moor. I said I would pass that on as another reason why there is a difference between the 2011 position and the 2016 position.

So in conclusion, the Labour Party would prefer, at least the local Labour Party would prefer, the boundaries to be kept within Kirklees, but we accept that that is probably not going to happen, and if that is not going to happen because you do not want to split a ward then we are very happy with the BCE proposals for the Kirklees constituencies. Last night I was e-mailed by the secretary of Huddersfield Labour Party saying that Huddersfield was also equally happy with the proposals. I already have the authority of the Colne Valley Labour Party to say that it is happy with the proposals. We do not really have any contest about Penistone West. Everybody seems to agree on that. We just have to say that Crosland Moor is a far better fit in Colne Valley than Lindley is and that Lindley is the ward that should be moved into Huddersfield. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Cuss. Any points of clarification? Could you wait just a moment, Mr Cuss?

LORD HAYWARD: Lord Hayward. I am just interested by your first comment about splitting Lindley ward. This is genuinely for clarification. When you were considering that option, were you considering specific polling districts? Mr Cuss has responded with a nod to say "Yes".

MR CUSS: That was a "Yes"!

LORD HAYWARD: Thank you. Could you just clarify which polling districts you were thinking of splitting and in which directions?

MR CUSS: There are three options. I would be delighted to give you a copy of this and you can read option 1 yourself. I can provide you with options 2 and 3 and I can provide that for the Boundary Commissioners if they were to have a change of mind, but I suspect they are not going to.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We would nevertheless like to know what you have been thinking about, so if you can provide us with that ---

MR CUSS: I will gladly give you options 1, 2 and 3. Option 3 was the one that I preferred, but it split two wards. It split Denby Dale and Lindley, but it gave nice clean lines and roughly equal constituency sizes for the four Kirklees constituencies.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What I would say -- you are quite right to note that the starting point for the initial proposals was not splitting wards, and that remains the position in the absence of compelling reasons to do so, but if you have those reasons then we would like to see what they are in order that we can then make a judgment as to whether or not they are compelling. Does that make sense?

MR CUSS: It does. Obviously it would have a knock-on effect.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We understand that, but if you do not give us the information then we cannot consider it. That is the point.

MR CUSS: All right. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. I have allowed you to sit down. Was there anything else, anybody? (No response). Okay. We are running pretty much to time. I am grateful to you all for keeping to your rough ten-minute slots. The next person on my list is Mrs Geraldine Carter. Is Mrs Carter here? Thank you very much. Mrs Carter, good morning.

MRS CARTER: Good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I saw that you came when I was doing my preamble earlier. It was just before you arrived. Everybody who comes forward, name and address, and then, when you are ready, off you go.

MRS CARTER: Geraldine Carter, Spring Cottage, 24 Spring Street, Ripponden. I am a councillor for the Ryburn ward, as you can see sat there. I think it is fair to say that I can bring a bit of a different perspective to what my colleagues have said previously and just add a little bit to it. I am currently the deputy mayor of Calderdale, but I have been the mayor of Calderdale. I guess the other thing to say is that, the age I am, I have spent 30 years in the Halifax constituency and 36 years in the Calder Valley constituency, so I think I understand a little bit about both constituencies.

What I would like to emphasise really is sense of place. People in the North of England, I really do feel, have a sense of place. My colleague earlier mentioned things about the Domesday Book. Well, he missed Sowerby off that Domesday Book bit. Sowerby was originally in the Domesday Book as well. It makes sense that we keep Sowerby and Sowerby Bridge, which was in the Domesday Book, connected to the rest of the area that was in the Domesday Book.

Of course the Halifax area was not even thought of then. Halifax just did not exist. It was a lot later that it became a municipal borough.

I think really what I am trying to say is that the Boundary Commission's proposals really are going to have one heck of an impact on the lives of the people of both areas, and actually the people of Halifax are going to suffer quite a lot if the wards are split, as you are intending to do, between the two constituencies. It does not make sense. The main residential area of Halifax, which is Skircoat ward, always was the main residential area of Halifax. That was the area when I was young where all the wealthy lived. Still to a certain degree now do a lot of the most influential people in Halifax still live in that area. To take them away from Halifax is a bit of a pointless exercise because that is where they naturally gravitate to: Halifax. They are part of Halifax.

I think Halifax needs to keep its own identity. We need to try to get away from what happened in 1974. I know it sounds a long time ago, but people still talk about 1974. 1974 had a big impact on people's lives in Calderdale, when Calderdale became the metropolitan borough and all the West Riding towns on the outside were then linked with Halifax. All of us on the outside of Halifax were all West Riding so we were all urban district boroughs in our own right. Halifax was the one on its own. Now we seem to be trying to split it again. It makes it even more difficult for the people to actually feel a sense of place. I think it is important we try to get this right. Then in 1983 we had the issue that Sowerby Bridge was taken away from Sowerby. The constituency of Sowerby was put there in 1885 and existed until 1983. In 1983 Sowerby Bridge was taken away, which seems quite illogical really.

As a child I lived in Ripponden and we travelled, Sowerby Bridge, Ripponden --- Sowerby Bridge was our main shopping area. We had shops in Ripponden. We also had the first Co-operative. Do not listen to Rochdale! The first Co-operative was in Ripponden. We have a blue plaque that says so.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are not going to resolve that today!

MRS CARTER: So Rochdale did not have the first Co-op. But we also had the Sowerby Bridge Industrial Society which linked both places as well. Historically all the old roads actually linked with Elland. Our roads in Ripponden link directly. We have a Tour Road that links directly with Elland. So it is the other connection with that area.

So actually your proposals really do give me a little bit of disquiet - in fact it is a lot of disquiet - because I think we really need to try when we do boundary changes not to make such a wholesale change, which I think this is going to do, and affect people's lives a lot. I think for the last few years people have felt unhappy in lots of ways and I think this could make it even worse. Splitting communities up is not a helpful way forward and I do not think it will work. We need to try to look at the best proposals to keep us working together, councillors particularly. Bring Queensbury back into the fold because Queensbury was originally with Shelf in the urban district days and so it

brings them back into the fold, with their natural gravitas to Halifax as opposed to Bradford, and then we will all be back together again and hopefully we will all be very happy because we are all back in our sense of place.

My concerns are that we need to put our counter-proposal for the Lower and Upper Calder --- I really would put that to you as being the best way forward. We do not link with Todmorden in any way, shape or form. The Pennines sit in the middle of it and sit in the way. There is not even a road that takes us directly to Todmorden. It is not a natural link for us. We have more linkage with Lancashire than we have with Todmorden, believe it or not, because it is easier to get to.

So I think what I am trying to say is if we could keep Ripponden and Sowerby Bridge together, which gives us that natural link around as you can --- How do I work this thing? Do I press it like that? Can anybody see that? No. Keep the natural link between the Ryburn ward, Greetland and Stainland, Elland and all around the outside, where we automatically go, because that is the sort of way that you would go from Ripponden and Sowerby Bridge. We do not naturally go this way. We do not naturally go around here. It takes too long. You naturally go this way around and go round this way to get to wherever you are going. If you are going into this area, if you are going Leeds way, you always come round this way. If you go to Huddersfield you link that way. Halifax is not that much of a link that we would use. Sowerby Bridge takes us round then into Brighouse. There are roads that link us round this way and so it is a lot easier way to link.

So my plea would be, please, for the Boundary Commission to look at the counter-proposal. I think for a sense of place for the people of Halifax and the people of Calder Valley, as we are now, the sense of place would be a lot better if we did the counter-proposals. It would be less upheaval. It would be easier for us to manage as local politicians, and for the MPs as well, because it would be easier for them to get from A to B. I think overall it has to be to the benefit of the people that actually live there. Yes, it is nice to say that messing about with boundaries really does not affect anybody and it does not really matter which constituency you are in. I suppose it does not really, but it does when it is such a big, big change to take half of Halifax, as a municipal borough - as it was intended, going back in history - away from its natural boundaries. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are very welcome. Any questions of clarification for Mrs Carter? (None). Mrs Carter, thank you very much indeed. You might be able to help me a little more. I have Mr Andrew Carter. I do not know if he is ---

MRS CARTER: He is not here. I am not related to him! But I do know him. He is from Leeds.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am just looking down my list. You will recall that I said earlier that if we had a gap and people were here and ready to go then we would carry on. I think Judith Cummins is here. Are you ready to go?

MRS CUMMINS: I am.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can we have you next then, please? Mrs Cummins, you will have missed my preamble before. I am asking everybody who comes forward to give their name and address when they come up. We are being recorded and all of the evidence that we hear will be transcribed and available for public viewing later on. So if you could start with that and then off you go.

MRS JUDITH CUMMINS (Member of Parliament for Bradford South): Thank you very much. My name is Judith Cummins. I am the Member of Parliament for Bradford South. My office address is 29 Manor Row BD1, but I am a resident in Bradford South.

In opening, I begin by offering my thanks to the Commission for the opportunity to speak here today. Equally, I take this opportunity to thank local residents who have come along to speak, many finding time during the ordinary working week which is never an easy task. I am sure that everyone, including myself, is immensely grateful for the valuable contributions to this important process.

My constituents tell me that their local communities have a strong and distinct identity and that this sense of identity resonates with Bradford. They tell me that, whilst proud to be Yorkshire men and women, they are first and foremost, above all else, proud to be Bradfordians. Today I am going to largely focus on those proud Bradfordians of Wyke, Wibsey, Tong and Royds who are at risk of being represented in Westminster by a non-Bradford MP.

My constituents rightly highlight the best of their communities, what makes them unique, but also the challenges they face, which equally makes them distinct. Although proud of our local community and proud of our city, many recognise that Bradford faces complex challenges. Parts of Bradford, and in particular Bradford South, are amongst the most deprived in the country. This is regrettably true, whether it be below average health outcomes, below average employment opportunities or below average performance in educational attainment across the city's school system.

The City of Bradford is the fastest growing major city in the UK, with a population of over 528,000 people. Indeed, it boasts one of the youngest populations of any city in the UK, with 24 per cent of the population being under 16 years of age compared to just 19 per cent nationally. In simple numbers, by 2024 the population is forecast to increase to 565,000, with the working age population increasing by 24,000 to 353,000 people. Very soon, Bradford will be overtaking Sheffield in population.

These widespread challenges and the fast-growing nature of our local communities do not weaken the strong sense of identity and pride in the city - quite the opposite: it strengthens it.

In my time as Member of Parliament, the golden thread has been the unquenchable optimism and the sheer determination of local people to improve their city. This optimism and determination to improve our city means that they demand strong representation from their Member of Parliament. Their interests and their needs, in their view, should and must be heard, not only as a voice within the Yorkshire region but as a collective voice in the country at large. They expect their voice to be heard loudly in Westminster. They demand and deserve a strong political identity, but the draft proposals substantially weaken the political identity of Bradford South and its local communities and undoubtedly weakens the lines of democratic accountability that local people so highly value. In the short time that I have, I want to offer some further evidence of the basis of Bradford South's strong sense of local identity and why the current draft proposals serve to both weaken them and the lines of democratic accountability associated with this Bradfordian identity.

In Bradford South, many of the local communities boast local histories which reach back through the centuries. The communities in the wards of Wibsey, Wyke, Tong and Royds were part of the historical parish of Bradford. They have never had a link to the Halifax parish. These areas have always been found under Bradford on Ordnance Survey maps. These areas have always been included in Bradford trade directories dating back to the early 1800s. These areas have been on the Bradford exchange since modern telephone numbers began. Their men bravely fought as members of the Bradford Pals in World War 1.

Some ten years ago, to symbolically recognise the history and cohesiveness of these local communities, Bradford Council established a number of urban villages, many of which reside within Bradford South. These urban villages, which span at times multiple local government wards, were in part established to support the development and implementation of local action plans. These local action plans, which were to be overseen and owned by these local communities, have helped residents to strengthen the fabric of their natural community ties. Two strong examples are the Wibsey urban village, which extends across the three wards of Wibsey, Royds and Great Horton, and also the Low Moor urban village that covers parts of Wyke, Wibsey and Royds wards. In these local communities, decades of cross-ward collaboration have been in play which has transcended invisible local government boundaries. Under the current draft proposals these local communities would be split across the constituencies of Halifax, Spen and Bradford West. In the ward of Wibsey, residents can readily walk into their own city centre of Bradford. As a ward, Wibsey has no boundary with Kirklees. The urban village of Wibsey spreads across the wards of Royds, Great Horton and Wibsey. Residents walk home, to work or to school across these ward boundaries. The reason for this is that the urban village of Wibsey is a coherent local community which transcends multiple ward boundaries.

As an MP, I hold regular surgeries. At present, public transport routes sit comfortably within parliamentary boundaries. Under the current draft proposals, access by public transport would become increasingly more difficult. Current public transport routes would require many local residents to travel first to Bradford city centre before then travelling on to Leeds or Halifax.

The M606 is the main transport artery into Bradford and is bordered to its east and west by the Euroway Trading Estate. It is a crucial element of Bradford's transport infrastructure. The trading estate is the lynchpin of the local economy. Under the current draft proposals its economic importance is simply not recognised, as one half of the Euroway Trading Estate in Tong ward would be an orphan ward in a Leeds-based constituency and the remaining half in the Wyke ward would be in the Kirklees constituency. At a time when central government is seeking to rebalance the UK economy with projects such as HS2, HS3 and the Northern Powerhouse, political representation championing the value of such critical economic infrastructure should be strengthened, not weakened, as is the case under these draft proposals.

One of the great cultural symbols of Bradford, the Bradford Bulls Rugby League club, draws crowds from across the city. Odsal, in the Wyke ward, is its historic home since it first played in that stadium back in 1934 - a match against Huddersfield. It being moved out of Bradford into a non-Bradford constituency not only weakens the voice of this sporting treasure but symbolically weakens the identity of Bradford and Bradford South arguably more than any other. The same is true of Bradford Park Avenue Football Club, which under the proposals is moved into a Halifax constituency. The local ties and community links of these clubs are undeniable and clear. The clue is in their names.

The last time this process was run a Bradford South and Cleckheaton constituency was proposed. Many people in Cleckheaton objected, stating that they had no affinity with Bradford South. Their voices were heard and as a result constituency borders were redrawn. They were right then and they are right now. The community links between Spennings and Bradford are weak. I respectfully suggest that the Commission listens to the many voices of the people of Bradford South and Spennings and seriously considers proposals that preserve the identity of both constituencies. I would also urge the Commission to reflect on the current draft proposals. What is beyond doubt is that the people of Bradford South have a strong and distinct Bradfordian identity forged by years of cultural, economic and community ties that are reflected in the infrastructure of both the city and the constituency. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mrs Cummins. Can I just check -- any points of clarification? I do have one at the back. I know you spoke earlier, Sir, but if you could give your name for the recording and then put your question, please.

MR WHITTAKER: Craig Whittaker, MP for the Calder Valley. Judith, just a point of clarity, if I could. You did not mention Queensbury in your presentation. I cannot

predict what the Boundary Commission is going to do, but would you agree with us that if the broader boundary of Calderdale -- that Queensbury would be a better suit than Royds, if indeed that is the direction the Commission went down?

MRS CUMMINS: The reason I did not mention Queensbury is that Queensbury at current is not intended to move from the boundaries. What I would say is that I would of course defend my constituency of Bradford South remaining intact.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Any other points for clarification? (None). Mrs Cummins, thank you very much indeed.

MRS CUMMINS: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am still looking for an Andrew Carter who is on my list. (After a short pause) If he is not here, the next speaker is scheduled for 11.00 am and so we will take a coffee break and come back just before 11.00 am, please. Thank you very much.

Time noted: 10.35 am

After an adjournment

Time noted: 11.00 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back to those of you who were here earlier on. Good morning to some new arrivals. For the purposes of those people who were not here earlier on, my name is John Feavoyour. I am an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for England. It is my responsibility to chair the hearings in Leeds and elsewhere in Yorkshire and the Humber region, to listen to those representations and also consider all the written representations that come in to the Commission in this consultation period in order to then decide what representations to make to the Commission about whether the initial proposals should be changed or not. We have been hearing from people yesterday and this morning. I have a list of people who are booked into slots and we are working our way through that list. The next person that I have on the list is Greg Mulholland. Mr Mulholland, would you like to come forward? Whilst you are coming up to the lectern, I will just mention that everybody who comes to speak to us has to give their name and address, please, before then speaking. We are being recorded so that we can capture everything that is being said. A transcript of the recording will be available on the Commission website in due course. So with that, Mr Mulholland, if you could let us know who you are and where you are from and then off you go.

MR MULHOLLAND: (MP for Leeds North West) Greg Mulholland MP, MP for Leeds North West, House of Commons/Holt Park, whichever address you choose. Both are publicly available. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak. By way of introduction, I think it is important to say that I, like many MPs,

believe that the overall boundary review is flawed because of the decision by the Government to reduce the number of MPs at a time when they are increasing the unelected House of Lords, which is, democratically, completely unacceptable, but we accept that that has been proposed. We also accept that there is a need to better equalise constituencies. We fully accept that the Boundary Commission has to do the difficult job of coming up with 600 constituencies.

I am only going to talk about Leeds today - I will not be commenting wider than that - but I think in the difficult circumstances of having to come up with 600 constituencies nationally within the parameters set that within Leeds the Boundary Commission has done a very good job. In particular, the proposals have kept the majority of constituencies largely intact and have kept the historic seats of Leeds Central, Leeds North East and Leeds North West particularly, which are long-established constituencies.

I think the proposals this time recognise that there is a very important need to link some of the outer areas of Leeds with inner areas. That is clearly crucial, otherwise you get a division between outer areas and inner areas. Clearly I am on one level individually disappointed that Headingley has been taken out of the Leeds North West constituency, but nevertheless the Leeds North West constituency and the Leeds North East constituency have been retained. They are very important corridors. It is very important to keep those links together.

I think it is also pleasing that the Boundary Commission has managed to do the proposals in Leeds without splitting wards, which clearly is where possible a better way of doing it because it keeps councillors and MPs able to work together within their constituency areas rather than having split wards, which if possible should be avoided. There will clearly always be difficult decisions in terms of where you cross boundaries between local authorities. I think again it is a particularly positive part of the overall proposals that there are far fewer changes than previously was suggested. Clearly there have to be some changes and I think the inclusion of Tong in the Pudsey constituency makes sense in terms of those communities - if you have to cross those local authority boundaries. In terms of Leeds, in the end, if you look at the shape of the current Pudsey constituency, which has always been a very odd constituency and one that does not make a lot of sense geographically, clearly when you look at the proximity of Guiseley and Rawdon ward, I can see why the Boundary Commission has decided that that is the ward that needs to go in. Again, I would make it clear that I would rather this was not happening and that there was no need to do that, but on the basis that it has to happen somewhere that seems to be a more realistic way than some other suggestions.

There are very strong links between Horsforth and Cookridge and clearly the proposal for the current Leeds North West brings those together. Currently we have this rather odd situation where Horsforth station has one station platform in Horsforth and in Pudsey and one in Leeds North West. This would unite those and bring together that particular community. Clearly Horsforth is, and always has been, a Leeds town in the north west of the city. There is a lot of sense in bringing it into a

Leeds North West constituency. Very importantly, it keeps the links between Otley and Pool-in-Wharfedale, Arlington and Bramhope and Adel and Wharfedale, which has always been a crucial part of the argument. Crucially, it also keeps Cookridge united, with Cookridge currently being split between the two wards of Weetwood and Adel and Wharfedale. It is vitally important that both LS16 as an area and Cookridge specifically are kept in one parliamentary constituency, which this does.

I will be putting in a written submission as well. I am outlining some of the key arguments. The only other thing I think to say is that, now that we have had sight of proposals from other parties, having had a look at the proposals being put forward by the Conservative Party for the Leeds area, considering the criticism of the overall boundary changes -- and that actually the whole principle is based on seeking actually to gerrymander and to increase a Conservative majority, which it is predicted to do. For the Conservatives in Leeds to then come forward with so nakedly geographically preposterous a proposal as they have for the very simple and obvious fact of trying to create a safe seat in North Leeds is something that cannot be taken seriously. The simple fact is that if the Conservatives believe that this boundary change overall is the right thing - and they say that they do and they say that this is right and should go through - then they should accept that and not seek to gerrymander the boundaries in Leeds, as their proposal very clearly does. They are talking about ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Mulholland, I think you are fully aware of how little notice we take of party politics in our role and, of course, of the limited value in your commentary on it.

MR MULHOLLAND: I think it is very important to put that on the record.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are very welcome to do so.

MR MULHOLLAND: It would be wrong to split Cookridge. It would be absurd to have a seat with Idle and Thackley going all the way to Alwoodley. There are no links between Alwoodley, Otley and Yeadon and Idle and Thackley. It would be not only geographically nonsensical but also absolutely impossible to argue from a community perspective. Worse than that, it would be, frankly, social engineering to have an area simply of the most affluent suburbs in Leeds. That is not an acceptable way to approach parliamentary representation.

So to conclude, it is a difficult job - a very difficult job - that you have had. I firmly do not believe that we should be seeing this reduction in the number of MPs. It takes MPs slightly further from their constituencies by having more constituents to serve, a larger area, which clearly makes it harder to be as local and to serve all those areas quite as closely as we do now. But on the basis of having to do this, I think the Boundary Commission has done a very good job in difficult circumstances. It is important to keep those historic constituencies and it is vital to keep the links between key communities, which on the whole, within the proposals for most of Leeds, I think the Boundary Commission has done.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Just before you step down, I have been asking anybody in the audience if they have any matters of clarification in relation to anything you have said. I stress that - just clarification. I will just check to see if there are any. No hands are going up. Mr Mulholland, thank you very much indeed. The next person on my list is Cllr Rosie Watson. Cllr Watson, are you here?

CLLR WATSON: (Wyke ward) Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to come forward, please? Cllr Watson, I spotted when you came in. You missed my earlier comments. Everybody who comes to speak to us today, I ask them for their name and address before kicking off. Everything will be transcribed. We are all on video so that people get the chance to see exactly what you have said and what we have thought about in due course. So if you could start with that. In your own time, off you go.

CLLR WATSON: (Wyke ward) My name is Cllr Rosie Watson. I live at 99 Fenby Avenue, Bradford BD4 8RA.

I am Rosie Watson and I am a councillor in the Wyke ward in Bradford South. I would like to speak today about the feeling of the people of Wyke and the need to retain Wyke ward in Bradford.

Wyke is made up of a good number of areas. It has Lower Wyke, which borders Brighouse, Low Moor, Oakenshaw, Odsal, Delph Hill and Wyke village itself, which is quite a crucial bit that sort of sits in the middle. All these areas have been part of Bradford since its incorporation and so it is difficult for the people who live there to see how we can be linked with the Spen constituency. There is a clear boundary dividing Kirklees from Bradford which is the M62. There is already an anomaly of having part of the Bradford village of Oakenshaw split with Kirklees. The people of Bradford would prefer to see that corrected by having it brought into Wyke at a future point to make it easier. People I have spoken to cannot believe that Wyke could be linked with Spen, especially as in the last boundary review the people of Cleckheaton were quite clear that they did not want to be linked with Bradford South.

Just over ten years ago Bradford Council established a number of urban villages, which were built on real communities and local identities. This proposal splits one of those urban villages. The urban villages were established to support development and implementation of local action plans and they work really well. Low Moor as a community does not just exist within the Wyke ward. Much of Low Moor is in the Royds and Wibsey ward, not Wyke. This was recognised in the urban village and plans were drawn up and delivered with the input of councillors and people from all three wards. If the proposals from the Boundary Commission come into force, this community would become represented by different MPs whose base would not be in

Bradford. Splitting these wards will cause great disruption to the quality of representation that people of Bradford South receive.

One thing to know, and you may already know, is that the Wyke ward is proud to be the home of Bradford Bulls. Again, if the proposals are implemented, the Bulls would be represented on a national stage by an MP who will be predominantly Kirklees focused. This jars with me and everyone else in Bradford that I have spoken to - not just in South.

Wyke ward itself runs down the west side of the M606, one of the main gateways to Bradford. On the opposite side is Tong ward. It borders at the other side of the M606, straddling either side of the M606 across both Tong and Wyke ward. Across both of them is the Euroway Trading Estate. Under the current proposals Tong would be put to Pudsey, so it would be Leeds, and Wyke would go to Kirklees. The trading estate would be split across two boundaries. The Euroway Trading Estate is an important part of Bradford's industrial base. The thought of it being half represented by Leeds and half by Kirklees I find a little bit depressing. The Euroway goes on to Rooley Lane which, once you get across there, would be going into Bradford. It is very difficult to see where it sits.

I honestly believe that this area needs to be properly championed and supported by a Bradford MP. We do accept that we have to lose an MP - the statistics show us that we are due 4.2 - even though as the fastest growing city in the UK we may soon need an additional one. Most people know that Bradford has the youngest population in the country and in Europe. None of these people are actually covered by this. We do not like the idea of being parcelled up to solve problems elsewhere. Bradford South would go partly to Halifax, partly to Kirklees and partially to Leeds. None of it would be Bradford. We believe Bradford and Spen want to stay as Batley and Spen (*sic*). The Boundary Commission could maybe refocus its work on creating four constituencies in Bradford that keep the maximum number of Bradford voters within Bradford. That is the ideal for the people of Bradford South.

To conclude, I would reiterate that Wyke ward has no real affinity with Spen. I grew up in Drighlington, which is the other side of the M606, and that was Spen at one time. That is still separated from Birkenshaw, which is the next village to it, in these proposals. It makes more sense to put Drighlington into Spen. Wyke is a Bradford ward, proud to be a Bradford ward, and would like to stay in Bradford, please. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Cllr Watson, can I just check with everybody to see if there are any points of clarification that people need from you? (None). There are not. Thank you very much indeed.

CLLR WATSON: I have a map of the urban village if anybody wants one.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It would be great if you could leave that map so that we can have a copy of it.

CLLR WATSON: Thank you. (Same handed).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thanks very much indeed. Ladies and gentlemen, we are waiting for our next speaker and so I am just going to stand down for ten minutes. We will resume when they arrive. Thank you.

Time noted: 11.20 am

After an adjournment

Time noted: 11.30 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, I am ready to recommence. We have just had a short adjournment whilst waiting for the next scheduled speakers to arrive.

For the benefit of those people who have just arrived, my name is John Feavour and I am an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for England. It is my responsibility to chair the hearing here today and also the other hearings for Yorkshire and the Humber, to listen to what you have to say and also, alongside my fellow Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, to consider all of the representations that are made to the Boundary Commission from your region and decide whether or not to make representations to the Commission as to whether any of the initial proposals should be changed. To help us do that, we are recording everything that happens today so that we can capture everything that you say and we can properly think about that in due course. All of what you say will be published on the Commission's website in due course.

The way things are working is that when I call your name I will ask you to come forward to the lectern at the front so we can get a good sight of you and hear what you have to say, I will ask you to give your name and address and then ask you to say what you have brought along this morning. At the end of your comments I will just check with everybody in the audience to see if there are any matters that require clarification. This is not about having a go at you or challenging what you have to say - that is for me and Collette to think about - but it is just to check whether there is anything that needs to be clarified. I have a list of names that I am going to go through but, just for the avoidance of doubt, if you are not on my list and you want to say something today, please let us know. We have time and we can fit you in.

So we will go down to the next on the list. Do we have Mr Tom Hughes here? Mr Hughes, would you like to come forward, please? So when you are ready, your name and address and then off you go.

MR HUGHES: Good morning everybody. My name is Tom Hughes and my address is 38 Dawson Lane, Bradford BD4 6JD. I've come to speak as a resident of the Tong ward, which is currently part of the Bradford South constituency. In the draft

proposals that we've received from the Commission so far, that constituency would be completely abolished and instead where I live in Tong ward would go to become part of the new Pudsey ward, which I think also would contain Armley, Bramley, Calverley and Pudsey itself.

I'm quite happy to say I'm a proud Yorkshire man, as I'm sure many people in this ward are - and most of the people from Leeds - but first and foremost I do consider myself a proud Bradfordian (indicating). I don't know if you've visited Bradford recently, or as part of the work that you're doing, but it's a city that's on the up. It's a city that's engaging people locally and nationally in a way that I probably don't think it has since it was famous for wool during the Industrial Revolution. I want to see my hometown thrive and continue to do so, to carry on making progress and see every single one of us that lives and works there properly served by vital local services. If we take a huge portion of South Bradford, my ward included, and then divide that amongst lots of different national representatives across a number of wards, I think Bradford's progress could slow down and stall.

As a resident of the Tong ward I do really value having a strong Bradford-based voice representing me at the national level, not just representing me but also my neighbouring communities that also comprise Bradford South, because a lot of those would also go to different non-Bradford wards where a section of communities that share local affinities and a lot of local issues --- Having a Bradford South MP that can work wholly in Bradford communities and on Bradford issues as it is now means that we have somebody we can contact really easily, somebody we can lobby really easily, about the issues that affect us in Bradford. If my ward is moved to a mainly Leeds focused constituency, I'm concerned that my voice and the voice of my friends and family who live in Tong will be less important when weighed against the more numerous needs of the new Leeds constituency. I don't think that a new MP in this constituency, with the best will in the world, could possibly give the same weight to our needs as Bradford residents that a Bradford-based MP could do. So this for me risks Tong's voice in particular being drowned.

I'm not much of a mathematician, but the justification for this for Tong seems to be mostly mathematical as opposed to for any real community convenience. I understand that there are some really precise constraints on what the Commission has to have for each new constituency. I think it's between 71,000 and 78,500.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Indeed.

MR HUGHES: When viewed against some of the other larger wards that would make up the new constituency, which are about 15,000 each, Tong with its 10,000 can slot in there really nicely to kind of make this new Pudsey constituency, but in doing so I don't think that convenience takes into account the ward's geography, its transport or any of its civic affinity with Bradford. For example, when I've looked at the proposal with family and friends, we've noticed that Tong is the ward surrounding Leeds that reaches the closest back into the centre of Bradford. In the Tong ward

itself, which you can see there, there is little population on the east side. It is all focused entirely - mostly perhaps - in Tong village itself on the west side. These core estates are part of Bradford. Dudley Hill and Bierley, where I'm from, we're about two miles away, which is about five minutes on the bus, from Bradford city centre. To then take that representation away and have us have to go to Leeds or Armley to go to speak to our MP is that journey into Bradford and then another train and a bus then out into Leeds.

Tong's voice, I think, has always been quite vocal, especially in Bradford, and the tiny village of Tong, just on the east side there, after which the entire ward is named, has also usually been loud in these kinds of matters itself. In the 1960s, when the Boundary Commission proposed that Tong village should become part of Leeds, it did vote quite loudly and quite clearly that it would much rather stay in Bradford.

Tong itself shares a lot of affinity with other neighbouring wards. We have the Euroway Industrial Estate which is just by the M606 there, which is one of the main arteries into Bradford, and that's an estate that's split between two wards: Tong and Wyke. There are about a hundred local businesses that operate from there. Looking at the plans, it doesn't seem very sensible to me. If any of these companies need to work together to lobby on any kind of issue with their MP, one on my side, despite being a Bradford company, would have to lobby a Pudsey MP and the other would be lobbying the MP for the new Spen constituency.

Finally, it's just a plea to ask you to please consider safeguarding the voice of the Tong residents of my ward and of Bradford South as a whole. Please don't press ahead with these proposals because it risks our voices - our very strong, proud Bradford voices - being silenced comparatively against those of Leeds. I know that in these proposals the Commission has decided to keep wards whole when coming up with its plans, but I think in a few cases you can maybe divide along civic or community ties within wards in order to ensure that everyone is best represented. I'd be all for that if it were to save Tong ward. So please keep Bradford Bradford.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Hughes, thank you. Are there any points that anybody wishes to ask for clarification on from what Mr Hughes has said? (None). Mr Hughes, thank you very much indeed.

MR HUGHES: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The next name on my running order is Mr Andy Walsh. Is Mr Walsh here? Would you like to come forward, Mr Walsh, please? If you could start with your name and address and then tell us what you need to tell us. Thank you very much.

MR WALSH: My name is Andy Walsh and I run a small Bradford-based charity in the heart of Royds ward. I'll use that as my address if that's okay. Is that okay?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR WALSH: Sandale Community Development Trust is a growing Bradford-based charity that delivers a wide range of valuable and much-needed community provision across the Bradford district, but primarily we work in Woodside and Buttershaw - that's where we're based - in the Royds ward. We have buildings in Holme Wood, which is in Tong ward.

Since 2008 we have worked closely with a broad range of communities in Bradford South and we have been successful in forming great relationships with different organisations throughout Bradford South. This has been done by a lot of hard graft, a lot of long hours, but mostly through providing a range of valuable services that are available to each and every resident within the community and for the local community. To give you an idea, we offer youth clubs, outreach work for young people, trips, we do stuff to stop isolation with older people and we run job clubs throughout the ward. Sandale Trust in the day-to-day increases the capacity for local communities, stops isolation and empowers local residents to have a voice in their local communities.

So you ask "Why [am I] here today?" That's easy. The strong progress made by Sandale has only been possible by being easily able to work with our local members of parliament and our local councillors and other local partners, plus local people, making the case to support our work. Our local council and our local MP all cover the same geographical area. That is key. It means that we all pull together in the same direction, all speaking with one voice, wanting to improve our local community. By splitting Royds from Wibsey and Great Horton, the rest of Bradford South, and putting us with Halifax, it will put our strong work at jeopardy. Lobbying local councillors and the local MP will become a hundred times harder in these different proposals - if the proposals go ahead - as we won't have a dedicated local MP. Why? Because Royds will be represented by a Halifax MP, Wibsey will be represented by a Spen MP and Great Horton will be represented by a Bradford MP. We will no longer all be pulling in the same direction, nor speaking with one voice, on behalf of the local community of Bradford South.

I and the community I serve are very alarmed at the proposal of Royds ward being moved into the Halifax constituency. The very proposal of this in my community centre in the heart of Buttershaw is bizarre. People who work with us rarely, if ever, go into Halifax. If they want to do so, there is a really bad bus service. They would not be able to get representation. I know people from Wibsey ward very rarely go to Cleckheaton or Birstall. It is just really strange that the proposal moves Wibsey into the proposed Spen constituency. Royds ward would be put into a Halifax constituency that is clearly divided by a large green belt that includes Judy Woods and a few small villages. It seems that we have been moved to Halifax to keep within the numbers of voters set by the Government. It would be better to divide fewer wards if this keeps Bradford together. The Commissioners should strive not to break up the communities. That's it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Walsh. Just before you go down, is any clarification needed by anybody on what Mr Walsh has said? (None). Mr Walsh, thank you very much indeed.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The next person on my list is Mrs Leah Bentley. Is Mrs Bentley here? (After a short pause) Mrs Bentley, we are trying to video everything and, bless you, in your wheelchair you are too low. Can we move you a bit further over? Is that okay?

MRS BENTLEY: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Walsh is coming back to help. It is a little bit like being at a wedding. We have to do what the photographer tells us! (After a short pause) Okay. So when you are ready, if you can give us your name and address - the microphone is turned on, you do not need to do anything with that - and then off you go with what you want us to hear.

MRS BENTLEY: Hello. I'm Leah Bentley, 25 Maxwell Road, Buttershaw, Bradford. I live on the Buttershaw Estate, as I've just said. I've been involved in community work since I was 24 years old. I was one of the youngest councillors on Bradford Council. So I understand from that aspect of it and I also understand from the community. It's communities and challenges and it's identity.

We have in Royds Bradford Northern, we have Bradford Bulls and we also have a really thriving community. Each individual estate is like their own. They are all individual. However, they all identify with being from Bradford and that's a strong community. The redrawn parliamentary constituencies that are proposed will be a disaster for Bradford and will isolate some of the most deprived communities of our city. Bradford has some real challenges and it needs political representation that is fully focused on Bradford and its communities. The proposed plan does the exact opposite of that. It cuts right into the heart of Bradford's population and many of its most deprived communities. It cuts them into three new constituencies that by their very nature face away from Bradford.

As I've said, I live in Buttershaw. In many respects you cannot get much more Bradford than that. It's a Bradford landmark, as I've already said, a large community of social housing, like Holme Wood or Manningham. If you say Buttershaw, everyone in Buttershaw would say Bradford. They wouldn't say Halifax. In the 2004 reorganisation of the council wards in Bradford, Buttershaw was joined with Woodside, a smaller but similar community, with big parts of Wibsey, Low Moor and Horton Bank Top, to form the Royds ward. All of these communities are Bradford through and through, but in the plans that are proposed we will end up in the constituency of Halifax. We don't have a Halifax identity. It takes three buses to get from Buttershaw to Halifax and it's not easily accessible if you're disabled like I am.

There is a natural divide between Bradford and Halifax of green hills and woodlands. If it's Halifax, it's bound to have a Halifax "bend", if you like, for want of a better word. They have their own way of dealing with things. They have their own councils. They're very much village people. It's very much smaller. It's not the same as Bradford. Many of their social services, et cetera, are a little bit behind Bradford. Bradford is at the forefront of many different things that have happened. It's difficult to imagine how we in Buttershaw could feel part of such an arrangement when all of our history, infrastructure and identity is Bradford based.

There are practical reasons, too. I have a disability and it is difficult, as I say, to get around. I'm not alone in this regard. Health problems are one of the most problems people in Buttershaw and Woodside face (*sic*). We're at the bottom rung in terms of health and disability score. We're in the 0-5 per cent range of the 20 most deprived. All of our health services, social care and support networks are Bradford based. It's totally different from Halifax. They have different ways, as I say, of running it. So if we needed help and support from our MP then getting to Halifax would be difficult. Halifax may as well be another county.

In recent times Buttershaw has had its ups and downs as a community. It has grown stronger and continues to do so with the social support and community organisations working effectively with local structures, politicians and the community. Carving us out of Bradford's network of political representation and taking us into Halifax would jeopardise all of that. Buttershaw has a Bradford identity. We know it, we understand it and we love it. We also know that a Bradford-based and focused MP will be able to serve our community better.

I urge you to scrap these plans you have for Buttershaw and Bradford. These are real practical and community reasons to keep Buttershaw in Bradford, for Bradford, and to have Bradford-focused constituencies. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any matters that anybody would like to clarify on anything that Mrs Bentley has said? (None). Thank you very much indeed. The next person on my list is Mr Mark Eastwood. Is Mr Eastwood here?

MR EASTWOOD: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Sir. I think you have only just arrived and so you perhaps did not hear what I had to say earlier on. We are recording all of the proceedings.

MR EASTWOOD: That's fine.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: All of that will be published in due course so that everybody can see what was said. As part of that, can you start by giving us your name and address? When you are ready, off you go.

MR EASTWOOD: So it's Mark Eastwood, 20 Moor Park Lane, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR EASTWOOD: I am making this representation as constituency chairman on behalf of Dewsbury County Conservative Association, which incorporates Dewsbury East, West and South, Mirfield, Denby Dale and Kirkburton wards, in support of the recommendations made in the draft boundary review proposals. The Association supports your proposals on the following basis.

- With an electorate of 77,167, the numbers fall within the parameters of 71,031 and 78,507 set for constituency sizes within the review which supports the minimal changes you have proposed for the Dewsbury constituency.

- In terms of continuity, your proposals give communities within the constituency a long term sense of belonging and identity, whereas in the past this has not been the case due to regular major shifts in the constituency boundaries.

- In terms of transport links, all parts of the constituency have access to either the M1 in the south or the M62 in the north, with Emley Moor being the central point. With this in mind, and with all points being easily accessed, it makes sense for the constituency boundaries to remain as they are.

- The constituency takes in Mirfield Town Council and Kirkburton and Denby Dale Parish Councils. With the potential for Dewsbury to adopt its own town council in the future, it makes sense that these areas, these town councils and parishes, are kept within the boundaries proposed by yourselves.

- The constituency holds three major colleges: Shelley College, which has a catchment of Kirkburton and Denby Dale, plus Mirfield Free Grammar School and Kirklees College, which is the Dewsbury campus, which both have a catchment of Mirfield and Dewsbury. Again, this fits neatly within the existing boundaries that you are proposing.

- It is very positive for communities that the constituency is so diverse in terms of two parts of the constituency being rural, as in Kirkburton and Denby Dale, one part semi-rural, being Mirfield, and Dewsbury, being mainly urban, with a large ethnic minority population. By keeping the boundaries as they are, it promotes greater understanding between different communities in terms of diversity which can only be a good thing going forward.

Finally, the one and only alteration I could possibly suggest is that the constituency may look at having a name change as currently the name Dewsbury is really only representative of half of this constituency, which could possibly alienate the other three named wards of Mirfield, Kirkburton and Denby Dale. The Association has not yet come up with a suitable alternative name but will be submitting new suggestions

before the end of this public consultation period in a separate representation. That concludes the Dewsbury County Conservative Association representation to the Boundary Commission. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any points of clarification that anybody would like to ask? (None). Mr Eastwood, thank you very much indeed.

MR EASTWOOD: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Eastwood mentioned at the end of his comments there that he would be making a written suggestion about name change. Can I take that a bit broader? For anybody who is interested, this consultation period is open until 5 December, so at any time between now and 5 December you can still contact the Boundary Commission with any of your thoughts, ideas or proposals in order that, after that, my colleagues and I can have a look at what you have to say and think about how we might make suggestions for changes. Today is not the only time you have to tell us how you are feeling. You have until 5 December to let us know. After that, and probably sometime in the spring - if you can imagine how much material there is going to be when we type up everything that everybody has said - all of that will be available for you to have a look at and see what everybody else has said as well. I make no apology for repeating that because I know some people are coming and going during the inquiry as we sit during the day and I want you all to be fully aware of the opportunities that exist for you to contribute to this consultation period.

Now then, I move down my list. As I said to some of you earlier, we have a sort of running order - people have been booked into slots - but you can always ask me and I will find some space to fit you in if you have not previously registered. I think we have Mr Myers here. Would you like to come forward, Sir? Mr Myers, you have heard some of what I have said and so I think you know the routine by now. When you are ready, if you can give us your full name and your address and then tell us what you would like us to hear.

MR MYERS: Neil David Myers, 317 Thornton Road, Thornton, Bradford. The idea that an MP from Halifax, Spen Valley or Leeds can represent truly people from Bradford just doesn't ring true to me. I think all Bradfordians should be represented by MPs from the city. Why Bradford has once again been chosen to lose an MP when it's one of the fastest growing cities in the UK simply makes no sense. In a few years' time they're talking about the city could have a population of 550,000. I think at the moment it's about 530,000. It's one of the major UK cities, yet under these proposals it will only have four MPs and only two of those will actually have the name Bradford in it. I wasn't going to talk today so I'm going to make this quick. The idea for me is that Bradford should be represented by three MPs. The outlying areas should be represented by MPs from Shipley and Keighley. To cut that down to four simply makes no sense. Basically that's all I've got to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Myers. Do we need any clarification on that? (No response). We do not. Mr Myers, thank you very much indeed for stepping up this morning.

MR MYERS: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: According to my list I have one more person booked in for this morning: Richard O'Callaghan. Is Mr O'Callaghan here? Would you like to come forward, Sir? Mr O'Callaghan, I do not know whether you heard my preamble before, but we like you to give your name and your address before you start. Everything is being recorded so that we can write this up afterwards. Just before you start, we are going to warm the machine up again so that everybody can see the map that you are talking about. (After a short pause) Can we zoom in a little bit more? I think you want to talk to us about Horsforth ward.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: Horsforth and Guiseley and Rawdon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: Thank you. Richard O'Callaghan, 5 Well Close, Rawdon, Leeds. I'm a member of Rawdon Parish Council. I'm here today to speak on behalf of the Council in respect of the parliamentary constituencies.

Rawdon is a village in North West Leeds with a parliamentary electorate of over 5,000. It has a strong sense of community, as evidenced by the establishment of our parish council four years ago at the request of local residents. The initial proposals of the Boundary Commission would see our village split between the Leeds North West and Shipley constituencies, two constituencies which predominantly relate to two different cities: Leeds and Bradford. Rawdon Parish Council believes that this situation is unacceptable. It is a reversion to a time when our village was split between the current Leeds North West and Pudsey constituencies, a problem the previous review of parliamentary boundaries acknowledged and addressed when it transferred the whole village into the current Pudsey constituency. The problem for Rawdon, as you can see with this map, is that it is currently divided between two Leeds City Council wards.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you use that little gadget that is on there and press the round button on the top, you can point at the screen and tell us what you are talking about. That little laser pen. Just point it at the screen and it will be a little laser. That is it.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: There we are. Yes, it's split between two Leeds City Council wards. So if I can sketch the boundary for the parish of Rawdon, it goes like this. So as you can see, this bit is in the Guiseley and Rawdon Leeds City Council ward and this bit is in the Horsforth ward. This is a situation which the Parish Council is currently trying to change with its submission to the ongoing electoral review of Leeds City Council, but for today's purposes we would just remind the

Boundary Commission that it has the power to split wards and it should use that power to keep communities together. Rawdon will not be the only community affected in this way because of the large three-member wards in Leeds City Council. Given the significant population growth projected in Leeds in the years ahead, ward splitting is at some point inevitable, we believe, and provides the best way to produce constituencies at this point that will be sustainable for a longer term.

Rawdon Parish Council does have three specific requests to inform your revised proposals:

(1) Rawdon must be retained within a single parliamentary constituency. There is no natural division of our village and it is important for us that we have a single voice to represent our interests.

(2) The constituency into which Rawdon falls must be wholly Leeds facing, i.e. contain only Leeds City Council wards. Rawdon has been a part of Leeds since 1973, and prior to that it formed the district of Aireborough with Guiseley and Yeadon. Earlier still it came under the parish of Guiseley for centuries, out of which the Aireborough and Horsforth districts were formed in the age of modern municipal government. It has never been a part of Bradford, nor does it have any historic or actual links with the city.

(3) The constituency within which Rawdon is included should be the same constituency within which the rest of Aireborough, with which we have the closest links, and which, as I say, Guiseley and Rawdon are also included. Our links with those towns are not just historic, centuries old, but are relevant to today. These three communities share schools and other amenities, such as shopping and restaurants, socialising amenities, and they are linked, as you can see, by [this](#) - the A65 - which is the main commuter route to Leeds for all our areas. They are also demographically similar.

That is all I wanted to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just clarify? A moment ago I thought I heard you say that the three that you wanted in the same constituency --- I thought I heard you say Rawdon twice and Guiseley. Which are the three?

MR O'CALLAGHAN: The three are Rawdon with Guiseley and Yeadon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yeadon. You did not say Yeadon.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: Sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is what I wanted you to clarify, but I wanted you to say it rather than me to suggest it. So that is fine. Thank you. That

has clarified that for me. Is there any other clarification from anybody else? Can I have a microphone at the front, please?

LORD HAYWARD: Can I just ask you ---?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can you just state your name? I am sorry. It is just for the tape.

LORD HAYWARD: Lord Hayward. My apologies. You said you were asking for consideration of split wards. Have you looked at the polling districts of Horsforth/Rawdon and, if you have, could you identify the polling districts you are actually referring to? Thank you.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: Absolutely. I have provided a map. That is a map of the Horsforth ward of Leeds City Council. It also shows the polling districts in neighbouring Guiseley and Rawdon. I have highlighted what basically makes up the village of Rawdon from those two City Council wards.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We might be able to help you. We can put the polling districts on your map by the wonders of modern technology.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: Here we are. So the polling districts which make up the village of Rawdon are HOA, HOF, GRG and GRH. It's quite deceptive. You have a Guiseley and Rawdon ward and a Horsforth ward, which makes it sound as though the Horsforth ward just has a few streets in Rawdon in it when it doesn't. It's almost half the village and includes our Town Street, which has our church and one of our two primary schools in it, and a large electorate.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. There was another point of clarification.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was going to ask the same question as Lord Hayward asked.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I like it when everybody is on the same page. Are there any other points of clarification that anybody else would like to ask? (None). Mr O'Callaghan, thank you very much indeed for coming over this morning.

MR O'CALLAGHAN: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, that actually completes all of the list for this morning, but I will repeat my offer. If there is anybody who has not spoken who would like to share any thoughts with us, do not be shy. Come and talk to us. We are not scary. Well, maybe I am! I do not mean to be. Sam says that he is not scary! All right. That is enough frivolity for the morning. We do not have any more speakers booked now until 2.00 pm. Normally

I would not adjourn for longer than about an hour, but it is not much longer, and so I will come back at 1.45 pm. If anybody else has turned up in the meantime, we can then slot them in before the formal list, which is due to start at 2.00 pm this afternoon. We will adjourn until then. Thank you.

Time noted: 12.30 pm

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 1.45 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon everybody. I said before lunch that we would come back at 1.45 pm and see if anybody was ready to go. I believe we have Mr Robert Jacques in the room. Mr Jacques, would you like to come forward? You missed my preamble. In summary, I am the Assistant Commissioner responsible for listening to representations about Yorkshire and the Humber region. We are recording everything today. Before you start I would like you to announce your name and your address for the purposes of the record and then set off and tell us what you would like us to hear.

MR JACQUES: My name is Robert Jacques. I live at 34 Station Road, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5NR. Just before I start, I'm a Horsforth Town councillor for Brownberrie ward, which is equivalent to the polling district HOB, but I'm not actually speaking on behalf of the Town Council as a corporate body. I'm speaking as an individual. I am a Liberal Democrat. I'm going to talk a lot about Cookridge and Holt Park. I'm going to talk about Holt Park. For your help, that is polling district AWD. When I'm talking about Cookridge, I'm talking about polling districts AWA and AWC. Although they are two polling districts, they are one community.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will probably just put that up there so that when you are talking about them I can see what you are referring to.

MR JACQUES: So Cookridge is at the moment in Adel and Wharfedale ward. So HOB at the top is my ward. When I talk about AWC, that is up there. AWA is further up there. So AWA and AWC are effectively one community called Cookridge. They are two polling districts, but that's just for logistical reasons and so that people don't have to chomp up hills, et cetera.

I'm here basically to welcome the conclusions of the Boundary Commission's report with respect to Leeds, especially Leeds North West and the implications this has for Horsforth. It's always been strange to live in a part of North West Leeds that is not in the constituency called Leeds North West. For many Horsforth residents like myself, the split with Cookridge is quite strange and has caused difficulties. To show one bizarre example: Horsforth train station. One platform is at present in the Pudsey constituency and one is in Leeds North West. If there is a problem with it, if a constituent comes to me, I have to ask: "Which platform are you talking about?"

It's crazy. Cookridge children go to schools in Horsforth. Horsforth children go to Ralph Thoresby High School in Holt Park. Residents in Cookridge use the Town Street, which is the main shopping arcade in Horsforth. Likewise, they use Morrisons. Likewise, Horsforth residents go and use the Asda up in Holt Park.

Businesses are on Low Lane, which is pretty much the first road in my block of HOB - Brownberrie ward. It is the one that literally runs along the boundary. It's got lots of office blocks and it's linked very closely with the office blocks that run up the ring roads, which are in Weetwood ward. It would be helpful if one MP represented all those businesses and also the customers and the employees. The major leisure centre for Horsforth is the Holt Park Active up in Holt Park. Again, it would be helpful if one MP was representing that pretty important area of leisure facilities.

Basically, I'm arguing that the communities of Horsforth, Cookridge and Holt Park are extremely closely linked in economic, education, transport and cultural terms and that the artificial split between them should be erased and I'm glad that the Boundary Commission has suggested this.

I also like the Boundary Commission decision to link Horsforth and Otley. Both towns have strong and similar cultural identities. They both have town councils, farmers' markets, brass band concerts and real ale. They're effectively Yorkshire market towns and they've got a lot in common. They also have important transport communal interests, particularly the roads of the A66 and the A658 which are vital to both communities. In terms of future transport, there's much talk at the moment of that area and whether Leeds Bradford Airport should have essentially a different transport network to it. That's going to obviously affect both of those communities greatly. Going on to Leeds Bradford Airport, the communities that are most affected by it, either through transport, congestion or through just businesses and employees living in these areas, are Horsforth, Otley, Cookridge and Yeadon. It's great that all of those would be in one constituency.

I'm in the north of Horsforth. In the south there's a link with Kirkstall that is pretty much just as strong. I don't live there so maybe for me it's not --- In terms of the south of Horsforth, Horsforth students go to Abbey Grange, which is in Kirkstall ward. Lots of Horsforth residents walk up Butcher Hill to catch buses from Kirkstall. One really strange thing is that Horsforth Road is in one constituency yet Horsforth itself is in another. That is just crazy and bizarre. So linking Horsforth and Kirkstall is a really important thing; likewise, I believe, Weetwood and Kirkstall.

The link with Weetwood for Horsforth is also important. First of all, there has long been a suggestion of creating a new Horsforth Woodside railway station. It's midway down the railway link. That would again pretty much have the same problem that Horsforth station has of an MP representing each side of it, which is just illogical. The ring road is the key transport hub and that links Weetwood and Horsforth. It takes two minutes to get into the heart of Weetwood ward from Horsforth, so obviously there are lots of communal links there.

The recommendations for Horsforth make much more sense than the current arrangements. Horsforth is on a different railway line to Guiseley. For many residents, Guiseley is a fair trek. Actually getting to Guiseley takes a surprisingly long time because the road is quite congested so people just don't really go to Guiseley. Guiseley is next to Menston and Burley in Wharfedale. They seem a much better fit for Guiseley.

In terms of Calverley and Farsley, they are geographically simply much further from Horsforth than Kirkstall or Weetwood and certainly Cookridge and Holt Park, so in those terms it just makes more sense that Horsforth is shifted into the Leeds North West constituency. There's relatively few communal links between Pudsey and Calverley and Farsley and Horsforth.

I believe therefore the retention of Leeds North West is really important. The addition of Horsforth and Kirkstall, I believe, is a recommendation the Commission should finalise as it offers a cohesive, community-orientated constituency.

I would also like to say that the Commission's recommendations for Leeds as a whole make a lot of sense. The retention of the historic seats of Leeds Central, East, North East and North West mean disruption is kept to a minimum and communities continue to be well aligned. For example, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill moving into Leeds East again makes sense. I like the fact that you've not split wards because Leeds wards particularly are based on community. They're well structured around communities already and so actually splitting wards would be splitting communities. So I think that's something that's very successful. So overall, yes, I hope you finalise these proposals for Leeds.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Jacques. Does anybody have any questions of clarification at all? (None). Mr Jacques, thank you very much indeed. Ladies and gentlemen, our next speaker is not booked until 2.30 pm. I am going to stand down for half an hour and we will come back then.

Time noted: 1.55 pm

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon again, ladies and gentlemen. We are resuming our hearing for Yorkshire and the Humber region. Ms Noor, good afternoon. You are next on the list. For your information, my name is John Feavours. I am the Assistant Commissioner charged with chairing this hearing and also, together with my colleague Collette Rawnsley, considering all of the representations made by people, either in person here yesterday and today, elsewhere in the region or in writing. People have up until 5 December to submit their views to the Boundary Commission and we will take account of all of those.

You are next on my list. If you would like to come forward for me, please. Whilst you are coming up, I will just say this. We are recording everything so that we have details of what everybody has said. In due course, what people have said will be published on the website. We are asking people to give their name and address before they start so we know where those views have come from. So if you could speak and just tell us what your name is, where you live, and then off you go.

MS NOOR: So my full name is Ghulam Fatima Noor, but I've been called Fatima since childhood so I prefer to be called Fatima. I'm from the Great Horton area, which is in Bradford South. Do you need the full address?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, please.

MS NOOR: It's Henna Close BD7 4AJ.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MS NOOR: Hello everyone. As I've said, my name is Fatima. As a young person, I like to keep myself active and therefore I go to the local gym which is in Great Horton. I like going shopping, which also happens to be in the Great Horton area. I'm sure everyone's heard of Tesco's, the supermarket. All my friends and family live in the Great Horton area like me, but in the part that is in the Great Horton ward, not the Great Horton that is in Royds. Royds ward is completely Bradford, from the Wibsey area of Royds, to the Buttershaw Estate and my area of Great Horton.

My family, friends and neighbours are so frustrated and angry that there seems to be no reason for linking Royds with Halifax. It is almost impossible to untangle the communities of Royds, Wibsey and Great Horton, yet they will be represented by three different MPs.

I have no community link whatsoever with Halifax and I'm so confused as to why it is acceptable that my home, my family's homes and my neighbours' homes, right in the heart of the Bradford district, could be represented by presumably a predominantly Halifax-based constituency MP. The people I talk to every day in the Royds ward have no affinity with Halifax. Looking both on a map and in reality at the landscape, it is clearly divided by a green belt that includes Judy Woods and some few small villages.

The people from Wibsey ward would also have little cause to go to Cleckheaton or Birstall as congestion and public transport, for example, makes it difficult to get there and back in a timely fashion, and that is why I cannot seem to understand the sense of moving Wibsey, which is situated so close to the city centre of Bradford, into the new proposed Spennings constituency.

Growing up, Wibsey has always been seen to be part of the links that make up the cultural, economic and historic communities of Bradford city centre. If you ask the

people where I live who do they think Wibsey has more of an affinity with, Bradford or Spennings Valley, I am confident that all of them would say Bradford because they are proud of their city, my city, our city. This just sums up the strength of feeling and pride that Bradfordians like me have for the area where we live and that surrounds where we live.

Bradford might get a bad press, I agree, but I'm proud to be from Bradford and to be represented by an MP who understands what makes our community special. She gets that it's the people that define the communities and understands that it's important to say we are proud to be from the City of Bradford. I am not from Halifax, Calderdale, Leeds or the Spennings Valley. I am from Bradford, simple Bradford. It is on the up and me, my friends and family want to be part of shaping it as it continues on its path to be the fastest growing city in the UK. To do that, we need to preserve our Bradford identity and the communities that make up this Bradford identity.

I spent most of my childhood in the streets of Royds, Great Horton and Wibsey, and dividing up these areas and basically sending them to other places, whether it be Halifax or the Spennings Valley, you are dividing up Bradford, dividing up people's sense of identity and telling people like me that my street, my ward and my city is not as important as someone else's. So to sum up, we all suggest Bradford South should be kept as one.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Does anybody wish to ask Fatima to clear anything? I would be very surprised if you did because I thought it was very clear what she was trying to say. (No response). Fatima, thank you very much for taking the time and coming over. Can I just remind you of what I said at the outset? This consultation period is open until 5 December. It is great to hear from people who come and talk, as you have done. When you go back to your friends and family, please tell them of the fact that it is open until 5 December.

MS NOOR: Definitely.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If anybody wishes to say anything about whether they agree or disagree with the initial proposals, any contributions that are made through the website will be looked at just the same as what you have had to say today. It is then a matter for myself and my colleague to look at those representations and decide if we can make any proposals to meet or otherwise what you have had to say. Thank you very much.

MS NOOR: That's fine. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are expecting another speaker in the next few minutes. We will just give them a few moments.

(After a pause) The next speaker has just arrived. We will just give her a moment to organise her thoughts. I make no apology for repeating what I have told other people. You were not here and so I am going to tell you what I have said to

everybody else. My name is John Feavvour. I am an Assistant Commissioner with the Boundary Commission for England. It is my responsibility, along with fellow Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, to listen to everything that people have had to say to us yesterday and today and throughout Yorkshire and the Humber region and also to look at all of the representations that have been made to the Boundary Commission through its website. That consultation is open until 5 December, so anything that is said today, or indeed up to 5 December, forms part of what Collette and I have to have a look at before deciding whether to make representations to the Commission as to whether the initial proposals - and I am sure you will mention what you think about them today - should be changed or otherwise.

Everybody who comes to speak to us is recorded so that we can transcribe everything that is said and that will be put on the website later. In order to facilitate that, can I invite you to come up to the lectern to talk to us this afternoon, please? Because we are recording everything and attributing it to what people have said, start by giving us your name and your address and then tell us what you want us to hear.

MS MASHKOOR: So first of all, I'm Bakhtawar Mashkoor. I'm from the south of Bradford and I live at 4 Henna Close BD7 4AJ. I'm here today to basically tell you what I think of this boundary review and hopefully get you to change your mind about this boundary review.

So as the proposal is, the south of Bradford is going to be split into different areas. I don't feel this proposal should go forward because I love where I live. I'm an active community member and, with my friends, I help keep the streets clean and tidy. I consider that I'm a proud Bradfordian because I live in Bradford and I agree with what Bradford stands for. However, with this proposal I feel it's something that's being taken away from me, and others as well, because from what I've looked into with the proposal it seems that Bradford is being split into different areas, such as Leeds, Halifax and Kirklees, and with my part of Bradford it's going into Halifax. I feel that's something that I wouldn't be able to digest really because I live in Bradford. I've been a part of Bradford for a long time. I wake up, I do things, and I do it because I'm part of Bradford and it's part of me. Just thinking that one day I'm going to become part of Halifax just doesn't sit right. Being from Bradford, all you do, everything you do, is related to Bradford. I'm in Bradford, I do this, I do that. I've never felt the need to go into Halifax or anything. Most of my stuff has been related to Bradford. Just being part of a Halifax constituency, there's going to be a need to go into Halifax and I don't feel that there is any need to go to Halifax. There are no links with Halifax.

The people me and my friends speak to have been very hurt and angry with this proposal because, being part of Bradford, we know that we are being represented by someone who is part of Bradford and we know our concerns will be dealt with accordingly as well. However, this thought of us being represented by the MP of Halifax, I don't feel it's right because the job of the --- Understandably, the Halifax MP will represent the people of Halifax because they have a longstanding

relationship with them and they've known them for a long time. Just giving them a part of Bradford is going to be something new and it's going to be a whole new process of getting to know the people. There's going to be lots of backwards and forwards meetings, communications, to let them know: "I'm the new MP of Halifax. I'm going to be representing you". It's kind of like people --- It's giving them something new. People will be very reluctant. Any issues you have, you can approach your MP to resolve those, but giving them the option of being part of Halifax --- You're going to have to go to the Halifax MP. First of all, they would be reluctant to go to them anyway, and then this thought of "Oh, is it going to be all right? Are they going to understand where I'm coming from?" because, first of all, they're not part of us, we are becoming part of them, so it is going to take time adjusting to it, and I think it's going to be a lot difficult (*sic*) for the Halifax MP as well because they have such a huge responsibility. They have their own Halifax constituents and people to represent basically. Giving them a little part of Bradford, it's going to take some time. They're going to have to invest their time into understanding the people and the complexities of Bradford.

So I feel Bradford needs its own MP. Bradford is a growing city. It's multicultural as well. It's going to need more MPs in the future. Just splitting up Bradford into different areas is not the way to go forward because this is getting rid of our identity. We have been living in Bradford. We are part of Bradford. We identify ourselves with Bradford. Just being part of Halifax is going to be like "Well, okay, one day I'm waking up and I'm part of Halifax" because you are still part of Bradford but you're known as part of Halifax because you're living where you used to but then just being referred to as part of Halifax doesn't really sit right. It doesn't. It's not mentally welcome.

The area I'm from is Royds, so that's obviously made up of Wibsey, Buttershaw, Low Moor and Great Horton. Great Horton has people from Great Horton as well as part of Wibsey as well. Wibsey is a large area. A way has to be found to keep these places together, otherwise one day we'll be in a Halifax constituency and us having to go down the road to buy our daily groceries will be going down to Bradford. It just doesn't sit right. Just walking up to Wibsey Park is five minutes from home. Going there to basically just feed the ducks or whatever I know I'm going to Wibsey and it's part of Bradford, but if this proposal goes forward then I'm not going to Wibsey; I'm going to Spen. So it's something that wouldn't be very welcoming because, first of all, you've got rid of our community where we live, our identity, and just being part of something else --- It's like you have not thought about what people will think, how they will feel, the impact on people. We've done well in communities. We know the people and we refer to ourselves as part of Bradford. We meet people and we know that we are part of Bradford. Just meeting other people after this proposal, they're going to be like "Oh, well I'm not part of Bradford any more. I'm from Spen". "Oh, I'm from Halifax". It's just something that I don't think is very feasible and it's not going to sit right with us. My neighbours and residents of Royds are immensely proud that we call Bradford our home. It's home to the iconic Bradford Park Avenue Football Club, which was founded in Bradford in 1907. So it has no cultural or historic affinity with Halifax.

I don't see any point of any part of Bradford being related to Halifax because, as I said previously as well, it's just ripping us of our identity, so we can't really say to anyone "Well, we're Bradfordians" any more because Bradford South doesn't exist any more. If this proposal goes forward then this will happen with other parts of Bradford as well so, all in all, Bradford will cease to exist. So yes, you're ripping us of our identity and then going forward a lot of people are going to be identity-less, I guess. Because we now at the moment call ourselves proud Bradfordians. Going forward, what will we call ourselves? I don't know. We can't call ourselves "Well, I'm a proud person from Halifax" because well, first of all, we don't live in Halifax, it's got a different postcode to Bradford, so why should we be part of Halifax?

With regard to working with MPs, we want to work with an MP that is hardworking, understanding and dedicated to Bradford, someone who understands the challenges that Bradfordians face on a daily basis, and who is dedicated to nurturing and promoting Bradford's status as the fastest growing city in the UK. The proposal moves Royds from the heart of the City of Bradford and it makes it a mere outlier in the proposed Halifax constituency. The people of South Bradford, like myself, feel like we are getting a raw deal and this dismantling of part of the city will just confirm this disbelief.

At the very least, Royds ward should remain together with Wibsey and Great Horton wards as part of a Bradford constituency to preserve its strong and historical cultural links. I see most days in The Telegraph and Argus the good work that we and our MPs are doing with this constituency, between the council, the MP and Bradford voluntary organisations, to sensitively build the strength of some of the most vulnerable communities and I am concerned that this will be seriously harmed by having Royds represented by a Halifax MP, Wibsey by a Spen MP and Great Horton by a Bradford MP because ultimately we are one. We are part of Bradford. We should therefore be represented as one part of Bradford and not split up between other parts, where, as I mentioned, we'll be referred to as Halifax, Spen and Bradford. So I urge you to look again at your proposals to find ways to keep more of Bradford together.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ms Mashkoor, thank you very much indeed. Does anybody wish to ask any points of clarification on that? (No response). Thank you very much indeed for coming across.

MS MASHKOOR: Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we have two more speakers booked in this afternoon, starting at 3.50 pm. We will come back again at 3.50 pm. Can I just give you notice now that, in the absence of anybody else saying that they want to come and speak to us, I intend to take the two speakers at 3.50 pm and 4.00 pm and we will then adjourn for the day. If you do not think that that is a good idea or you wish to petition me otherwise, please speak up

when I get to that point and we will stay a little longer, but in the absence of anybody else being here we will probably finish then. Thanks very much.

Time noted: 3.20 pm

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 3.50 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back, all, or whatever the appropriate greeting is after a little break. We just had an adjournment because there was a gap in presenters. We have two more gentlemen listed to speak on the agenda at the moment and I have just received an indication that there may be somebody else coming at 4.30 pm. We will move on and take the next two presenters.

Gentlemen, you have just walked into the room. Everybody else has heard this before. I make no apology whatsoever for repeating it for them, but it is important that you know. My name is John Feavoyour. I am an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for England and, along with my fellow Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, it is our responsibility to listen to everything that is being said here in Leeds yesterday and today, and also at the other public hearings in Yorkshire and the Humber region, and also to consider all of the written representations which are being sent to the Commission through its website. This consultation period is open until 5 December and we will consider everything that is both said to us or written in about the initial proposals for this region before deciding on whether to make representations to the Commission as to whether those proposals should be changed and, if so, what that might look like. Along the way, all of the evidence will be published so that everybody can see it. All the written material coming in will go online in due course and everything that is said at these hearings will be transcribed and also be published online. To help people understand who has said what, what we are asking people to do when they come forward to the lectern to say what they want to say is to start by giving their name and address and then go on to let us know what they think. So that is just by way of introduction. You are very welcome, both of you. Can I start with Mr Ryan Glenton, please? So in your own time, Mr Glenton, if you can give us your full name, your address, and then tell us what it is that you want us to hear.

MR GLENTON: My name is Ryan Glenton. I live at 162 Brownroyd Hill Road in Wibsey ward in Bradford. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Commission. Thanks for giving me the time to speak, first and foremost, but I feel so aggrieved with the issue that is to hand I felt the need to come here today to at least make my point heard, even if it's in vain.

I'm a resident of the Wibsey ward. I've been a resident of Bradford South all my life through different areas. As it's illustrated here on your screen here, I live right in the centre, right in the middle of the Wibsey ward, and this is one of the wards that's

going to be affected if the proposals go ahead. The proposals actually determine that this ward is going to be split necessarily into three different ones, going into three different local areas, all of which I understand. Yes, because we have some sort of boundaries with them or some sort of local connections with them, and from a distance, or from an administrative view that you've done yourself, it may make some sort of sense to do so, but Bradford, as you know, has probably got one of the youngest populations in the country - by far actually, figure wise. We already have a problem representing the diversity and the youth and the youth aspect of this city as it is. It's well known the broad spectrum of cultures in Bradford, the wide demographic that we have. There's already a struggle presently, I think, to represent them in a fair way, especially in Parliament, and to now take away another MP and to then bring them all into conjunction under an MP that they have little or no access to, particularly from Wibsey ---

The proposals say that we'd then be adopted by the Batley and Spen constituency. A round trip from where I live in Wibsey to Batley and Spen, you're talking about something I'd say close to 20 miles - a round trip. The access to that for some people that maybe do not have the sort of means that I have, not have the same abilities that I have physically, is non-existent. They're not going to have access to democracy. There's little or no access to democracy for a lot of people anyway in real terms. I mean, your local councillor surgery is still going to exist, I understand that, but the access to democracy if you want to speak to your MP regarding something that's pertinent to you and pertinent to the area is going to be non-existent. You're going to have to go to Batley and Spen. Somebody that's aged or disabled is going to have to get probably on a bus into Batley and Spen. If you want to speak at, say, I don't know, a CLP meeting or something like that, most of the things are going to be non-relevant to you, non-relevant to any of your family, more than likely, none of it that you know. It's going to take, I'd imagine, generations probably to make new links, when we already have links in the community in Bradford - Bradford South - pre-war more than likely, particularly with your family, particularly with the area. Bradford's a very old city. There are longstanding links. People in Bradford South -- I imagine if you ask people probably my age and a little older, their parents lived there, their grandparents lived there, et cetera. We've already been slightly displaced, I would have said, with the infrastructure change that we had due to the M606 that goes right through the middle of Bradford South.

Actually, that brings me on to another point. We have a gateway there. There's a few trading estates and they're actually a massive income generator for the Bradford South district. I understand that those are then displaced as part of this shake-up. Things have changed around there and it's quite ambiguous as to what the plans would be - the way it's been explained to me, anyway. I don't know what the truth is behind that. That is obviously going to change the economic scene in Bradford South but also, I'd imagine, job security, et cetera. There might be some ambiguity there and employers might then pull the plug on things that they wouldn't normally do.

Like I say, it goes without saying that the family links with the area, I'd imagine, are damaged somewhat if we are to be displaced. We've already gone through the longstanding links logistically, but there are people I know whose families are spread out in the area - obviously only a square mile or so - but if you then drive a wedge between them I'd imagine politically it can already make a small divide larger than it already is.

I understand that you've had a long time to propose this, you've put a lot of thought into it, and it makes sense from a political standpoint for a lot of people, particularly with like the same amount in each area - I understand some sort of sense behind that - but to put this burden on such a key area in Bradford, Bradford South, and a longstanding place with a lot of history, is, I feel, unconstitutional and undemocratic actually. Bradford South is going to take the burden for most of Bradford. It's going to be split up and I feel that it's too much of a burden for this one area to carry. I feel that there should be a separate proposal or an alternative at least proposed that's less of a burden on one key area. I feel it's, like I say, undemocratic particularly, but most of all unconstitutional, I think. In retrospect, when I look at it objectively, without taking my own personal example, when you look at it like that, even somebody that's not from the area, it can be argued that it kills the area democratically. Thanks for listening to me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. What I have been doing after anybody has spoken is just checking to make sure if there are any points of clarification that anybody wants to make about anything said.

MR GLENTON: Yes, feel free.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is not. Let me make one then. Not for you but anybody really. In fact, thank you very much. I will talk to everybody. You can go and sit back down. Thanks very much indeed, Mr Glenton.

MR GLENTON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Glenton in his comments there said something like, if I can remember it rightly: "It might make sense from a political standpoint". I just want to use the opportunity to make the point here that the Boundary Commission is entirely non-political. It is owned by Parliament, if you like, not by Government. The initial proposals are exactly that: they are initial proposals. I am obviously engaged by the Boundary Commission because I am an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission, but you may be interested to know that I had no part at all in putting together the initial proposals and so I am not wedded to them in any way more than I am to any other proposals. My job is to listen to what people think about those proposals and then, alongside my fellow Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, who I mentioned earlier, we have to decide the extent to which we then say to the Commission itself that these initial proposals are right or wrong and what needs to change as a result. I do not know whether that helps just put into perspective where my role is and what I have to do.

All of this, if you want to revisit it, is included in a publication which has been put together by the Boundary Commission for England called *A Guide to the 2018 Review*. You may say: "Well, hang on, John, it's 2016, not 2018". It is called the 2018 review because that is when it has to report to Parliament. All of this work that we are doing now goes into a process which comes out of the sausage machine, if you like, in 2018. That is why it is called the 2018 review. I commend this Guide to everybody who has made representations because, in it, it reminds people of what the "rules" are, if you like. Why am I saying that to you? Because it is built on some legislation which has some things which we just cannot change. The biggest one of those is a thing called the electoral quota. It is about making sure that all of the constituencies are broadly the same size. There are some numbers in the Guide that say what that needs to be. The website has all this information. You can go on the website and it will tell you how many people are in every ward and all that sort of thing so you can do your own whatever and come up with some proposals if that is what you think you should do. This is important. The electoral quota cannot be changed. It is enacted in law. Whatever proposals you come up with, I cannot do anything about that. I have to come up with proposals that make the numbers work; end of discussion. The things that we can take into consideration are also included in the Guide. It is things like some of the things we have heard about today and yesterday from all of the representatives. It is things about community ties. It is things about existing ward boundaries and, and, and. I am not going to go through all of it because it is all in [here](#).

So although we are coming towards the end of the hearing in Leeds in a moment, it is not the end of the consultation period. The consultation on the initial proposals goes on until 5 December. Everything that comes to the Commission after the hearings through the website will also receive my attention and Collette's attention whilst we work out the extent to which we want to change or otherwise those proposals.

I was going to say that at the end, but when you mentioned earlier on, Mr Glendon, about a political standpoint --- I cannot emphasise this enough. I am absolutely apolitical. I have my judgment. I have not even looked to see what politics is going on. I have to comply with the Act, which is about those constituency sizes and some of the other things in the Rules, which are there for you to read if you want to, with a view to making any more proposals if you think that is helpful. All right. That is enough from me. In fact it is probably too much from me. I just got a bit carried away there.

We have the next one on the list which is Mr Phillip Green (*sic*). Mr Green, would you like to come forward, please? Mr Green, you have heard the route now, so if you would like to give us your name and address and then tell us what you would like us to hear, please.

MR GREENAWAY: All right. My name is Phillip Greenaway. I live in Wibsey. I live at 36 Elmfield Drive.

I've lived in Wibsey all my life. I'm not somebody who normally comes to this sort of thing. The reason why it's sort of stirred emotion in me to come here is when I do believe something's not right --- I understand about politics evolving and the constituency boundaries have got to change, and I understand that they might have to change, but I'd like them to move with also a bit of common sense involved because sometimes you get somebody with a graph and then you get a political sociologist who goes: "Right. Well, I've got a load of numbers here..." "Right. Okay. Well, I've got this map and I've got these numbers". You go: "Right. What can we do? Shall we look at each one in a micro state or a macro?" "No, we'll just look at them all as one and then we'll just put this number in and we'll just do it like that". It's okay when two people are agreeing about the same thing and talking about the same thing, but then they don't take in the human condition. Do you know what I mean? It's not just about boundaries. It's not about constituencies. It's about like common sense.

Bradford has had decades and decades of misery and communities in-fighting. I've always said I'm proud to live in Bradford, but most people, if you ask them, they'll say "Oh, I live in Pudsey" or "I live in Leeds". People don't say they're from Bradford, whereas now people are starting to say: "Well, actually, you know what, I'm proud to live in Bradford". Do you know what I mean? The city centre is now under regeneration. When people think about Bradford, they think about serial killers, they think about the fire and they think about the race riots - and then race riots, then communities, all them people, we're all still living there. Do you know what I mean? It was only sort of ten years ago when all this tinder evolved into what I'd call riot and violence, where a lot of people went to prison for a long, long time, but the three Bradford MPs all worked together. This is what I like about them. They worked together to try to forge some community links, to try to get people talking, to try to get people so we're all from the same place and we've got the same aspirations.

I'm in Wibsey. I take my kids to my school. I'm like the home management consultant, or home man, or whatever you want to call me. So I leave my house and I'm in Spen Valley constituency, which I will be, which is nothing to do with me. It's got no ties with my community and my identity or any common sense. Do you know what I mean? I walk my kids to school. If I've got a problem with the school, I've then got to talk to the Halifax MP about that. If I walk up the road and I go to the gym, which is only another 500 yards, I'm then in Bradford West. I'm thinking: "Hang on a minute. I just want to speak to one MP. I want one MP to speak for me". When each general election comes along, all the pamphlets come from the door. I'm not apolitical, but I always keep an open mind. Do you know what I mean? So I see what the MPs are saying to me and then I decide who I'm going to vote for. So when they come through, that MP's got to have that local emotional attachment so it gets me involved, I think: "Right, this person, whichever party they represent, they're best suited for me and my family's needs". Do you know what I mean? All that would be lost. All that would be lost.

I mean, Spen Valley has got --- They don't even speak like us. They speak more broader and they speak more twangier. The thing about it is the MP who's going to come in for the deceased Jo Cox, her identity will be to help the Spen Valley district. It's got nothing to do with Wibsey because Wibsey is part of Bradford South, Bradford South is part of Bradford. Do you know what I mean?

I get the rhetoric when they go "Right. Okay. Well, it's about saving money". Okay. Yes, I understand we've got to save money, but then I look at it and in Bradford South there's nine doctors' surgeries and in them nine doctors' surgeries they've got eight registered doctors and each doctor is on £65,000. That is the same salary as what one MP earns. I'm like: "Right. Okay. So that don't really sort of..." And then I sort of look at there's 300 people going into the House of Lords and they're unelected but they're getting salaries and expenses. I'm thinking: "Well, can't we just have one MP for Bradford South?" I'm not asking for a lot. I'm not asking for you to change the world. I'm just looking for a bit of common sense. You go down, you go past --- Obviously you won't know Bradford South, but it's sort of like ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I do.

MR GREENAWAY: Right. Okay. There's a boundary. You get to Shelf and then there's sort of fields, there's like a gap, and then you're regarded as you're from Halifax. Do you know what I mean? So common sense is the boundary goes there. When you go down to Wyke, there's sort of like the M62, then there's loads of fields, and then you go to a different district. But you're just muddling. It's going to muddle everything up.

I try to keep my hand in what's happening in politics because I believe in it. I believe in the sort of political process and I believe that we can all change the world a little bit, bit by bit, but a lot of people I know, they're that disassociated with politics. They're just about getting it. They're just about to start thinking about what politics are all about and how actually it affects them on a day-to-day basis. With this, they'll go: "Right. Well, you know what, the MPs..." Because all they'll do, if they just read sort of like --- You know, not a broadsheet newspaper but sort of a low-end newspaper, let's just say. They'll go: "Right. So really they don't care about me. They don't care about the man in the street".

I understand it's 70,000, but then I think there's over 2,000,000 people who've joined the electoral roll since this idea got formulated and none of that's been taken into account. I just think Bradford South is quite a big area and there's one MP, whoever he or she may be, representing that area. So if I've got a problem, or say Bradford South's got a problem, then I'd like to think that that MP will then go to either the local council or Westminster and act for my community, whereas if somebody's in Spen Valley and in Wibsey, I'm like "Well, they haven't really got my interests at heart". It's not because a person might not be good at their job. It's just you can't do so much with one person, can you? Do you know what I mean?

I look at it and you've got Wibsey and there's a roundabout and you can take a step each way. If you're that way you're in Halifax, that way you're going to be Spen Valley, which is Cleckheaton, and you go that way and you're in Bradford West. It just doesn't make sense. Put Google Maps on or something and look how the boundary is.

I sort of understand about things and I sort of get it a little bit, whereas the man in the street or the woman in the street will just be going: "What? What's happening?" I'm trying to tell my friends and people I know about this and they just think it's like some sort of joke, like somebody's made it up, and I'm like: "No, it's actually happening". They go: "Ah, it's not really happening". "Well, yes, it's going to be part of Spen Valley". "Spen Valley? That's Cleckheaton and Batley. Why are we with them?" Then you try to explain to them and it doesn't make any sense.

Bradford is a beautiful city. Every city is a beautiful city. There's a real identity there. It's trying to forge new links, trying to make a community, look out for each other. Slowly and surely, it's getting its feet and it's actually becoming a nice place to live. I love Bradford anyway, but it's becoming a nice place to live. Companies are starting to come to Bradford. They're starting to think about Bradford [inaudible] dream about it and it's becoming a reality. Do you know what I mean? Straightaway they think about this and they go: "Well, is Bradford really coming back?" "No, it's not. It's just split in half". People who I know might go: "Right. Well, you know, I'm glad I'm going to be in Spen Valley because I don't want to be in Bradford anyway". You should be saying "No, [you] live in Bradford", "[You] live in Wibsey", "[You] live in Bradford South", because that's technically -- well, not technically -- where you live: Bradford South. You don't live in Spen Valley. You don't live in Halifax. You don't live in Bradford West. Trying to explain to somebody about it, it just doesn't make sense.

I hope I've come across. I've tried to just keep it calm and not sort of "f-and-jeff", but I'm just really passionate about it. It's going to affect not just me but my kids. Do you know what I mean? When my kids grow up and that, I'll have to explain to them that, you know, "I were about at the time and I didn't do owt about it to try change what was going down". I hope the Commissioners take on board some input what people who are passionate, who care, are saying. I know something's got to happen, but just a bit of common sense and maybe the boundary stops at Shelf and the boundary stops at Wyke. Then the man in the street goes: "Yes, there's a bit of common sense there". So hopefully, maybe, a bit of common sense will come out. I'm not saying that the Electoral Commission/the Boundary Commission is not common sense. I'm just saying it doesn't look like common sense from my point of view.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I do not think you could have put it any more eloquently. Thank you very much indeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think we are getting towards the end of the day. I was fed some duff information by our friend on the front row who suggested that somebody

else might be coming along at 4.30 pm. It turns out that that is not the case. We have taken evidence all day yesterday and today. We have not had anybody else come in to say that they want to speak this afternoon and so, although we said that we would be here until 5.00 pm, I do not propose to sit here listening to nothing between now and then. I am therefore going to bring the hearing in Leeds to a close - unless anybody particularly wants to take issue with that. That is your invitation to say so. (No response). In which case the hearing in Leeds is now closed.

The evidence in relation to Yorkshire and the Humber will continue. We are in Sheffield on Monday and Tuesday. We are in Northallerton on Thursday and Friday. We are then up in Kingston upon Hull on the following Monday and Tuesday.

You have heard me say this before, but I am going to say it again. This consultation period is open until 5 December, so if you think of anything else, you want to remind yourself of what the rules are about, go onto the website.

MR HARTLEY: It is up there. It is www.BCE2018.org.uk.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The reason I am inviting you to do that is because there is a lot of material on there. You can see what the sizes of the wards are, you can have a play with them yourself, and, importantly, you can see where the rules are. We have heard a lot of excellent material over the last couple of days. There is a great deal for Collette and I to have a think about, which we will do with our very, very best endeavours, to try to work out what is the right thing for Yorkshire and the Humber. Thank you very much, everybody, for coming along. Thank you also to the staff for looking after us, for videoing and for doing all the administration and everything. We are up in other parts of Yorkshire and the Humber later on. You are very welcome to join us there if you want to, but I am sure we will see people from that local area. Thanks very much. Good night.

Time noted: 4.10 pm

B

MRS BENTLEY, 33
CLLR BENTON, 2, 5
CLLR BLAGBROUGH, 12, 14

C

MRS CARTER, 18, 19, 20
MRS JUDITH CUMMINS MP, 21, 24
MR CUSS, 15, 17, 18

E

MR EASTWOOD, 34, 35, 36

G

MR GREENAWAY, 51, 53
MR GLENTON, 48, 50

H

MR HARTLEY, 55
MR HUGHES, 29, 30, 31

J

MR JACQUES, 40

L

LORD HAYWARD, 17, 39

M

MS MASHKOOR, 45, 47
MR MULHOLLAND, 24, 26
MR MYERS, 36, 37

N

MS NOOR, 43, 44

O

MR O'CALLAGHAN, 37, 38, 39

R

MR ROBINSON, 9

T

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36,
37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 50, 53, 54, 55

U

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER, 15, 39

W

MR WALSH, 31, 32, 33
CLLR WATSON, 27, 28, 29
MR WHITTAKER, 6, 8, 9, 24