

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**THE ELLIOTT ROOM, BISHOP GROSSETESTE COLLEGE, NEWPORT,
LINCOLN LN1 3DY**

ON

THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2016
DAY ONE

Before:

Mr Scott Handley JP, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

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

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning. Welcome to this public hearing on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for the parliamentary constituency boundaries in the East Midlands region. My name is Scott Handley. I am an Assistant Commissioner of the Boundary Commission for England. I was appointed by the Commission to assist them in their task of making recommendations for new constituencies in this region. I will be chairing the hearing today and tomorrow. I am responsible, together with my fellow Assistant Commissioner Mr Ashraf Khan, who is not in attendance today, for analysing the representations received about the initial proposals for this region and then presenting recommendations to the Commission as to whether or not those initial proposals should be revised.

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

The hearing today is scheduled to run from 10 am this morning until 8 pm. Tomorrow it is scheduled to run from 9 am until 5 pm in the afternoon. I can vary that timetable and I will take into account attendance and demand for opportunities to speak. The Commission's review must not go over two days and it cannot be extended into a third hearing.

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals for the region. A number of people have already registered to speak and been given a time slot and I will invite them to speak at the appropriate time. If people arrive early and are willing to speak early, we will do that too. If there is any free time during the day or at the end of the day, then I will invite anyone who has not registered but who would like to speak to do so.

I must stress that the purpose of this hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals. It is not to engage in a debate with the Commission about the proposals, nor is the hearing an opportunity for people to cross-examine other speakers during their presentation. I will generally accept questions put to speakers, if they clarify their position.

I will now hand over to Glenn, who will provide a brief explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for the East Midlands region.

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

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

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

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

The Commission's proposals for the East Midlands region are for 44 constituencies, which is a reduction of two. Our proposals leave seven of the existing constituencies unchanged.

In Lincolnshire, two of the existing seven constituencies are unchanged, while two constituencies are changed due to changes to local government ward boundaries. More substantial change is required, however, in other parts of the region.

In Derbyshire, we propose that the City of Derby and the county of Derbyshire be grouped to form a sub-region. We have proposed three constituencies that include wards from both authorities. In Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire it has been necessary to propose two constituencies that cross county boundaries. We have proposed one constituency that contains electors from both Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, which combines the towns of Daventry and Lutterworth, and another that contains electors from both Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, combining the town of Loughborough and the southern part of Rushcliffe borough.

The statutory rules allow us to take into account local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. These include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal divisions, known as "wards" or "electoral divisions". We seek to avoid dividing wards between constituencies wherever possible. Wards are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas that have a broad community of interest. We consider that any division of these units between constituencies would be likely to break local ties, disrupt political party

organisations and cause difficulties for electoral registration and returning officers who are responsible for running elections. It is our view that only in exceptional and compelling circumstances will splitting a ward between constituencies be justified and our initial proposals do not do so. If an alternative scheme proposes to split wards, strong evidence and justification will need to be provided and the extent of such ward-splitting should be kept to a minimum.

The scale of change in this review is significant and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period. We are consulting on our proposals until 5 December 2016, so there is still plenty of time after the hearing for people to contribute in writing. There are also reference copies of the proposals present at this hearing and they are available on our website and in a number of places of deposit around the region. Written representations can be made to us through our consultation website at www.bce2018.org.uk. I would urge everyone to submit written representations to us before the deadline of 5 December.

Finally, I would like to remind all participants that this hearing is part of a public consultation and you will be asked to provide us with your name and address if you wish to make an oral representation. The Commission is legally obliged to take a record of the public hearings and, as you can see, we are taking a video recording from which we will create a verbatim transcript. The Commission is required to publish the record of the public hearing, along with all other written representations, for a four-week period during which members of the public have an opportunity to comment on those representations. We expect this period to occur during spring next year. The publication of the hearing records and written representations will include certain personal data of those who have made representations. I therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's data protection and privacy policy, a copy of which we have with us and which is also available on our website.

Before I hand you back to Scott, I would like to inform you that there are no planned fire tests during the two days that we are here in Lincoln, so if we do hear the fire alarm we are to evacuate by the nearest exit, which are the doors behind you. Beyond the wall there is a grassy area and that will be the assembly point. At this stage I will hand you back to Scott to begin the public hearing, and thank you for your attendance today.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will move to the first person who is registered to speak and that is Mr Mark Spencer.

MR SPENCER: (MP for Sherwood) Thank you, Mr Handley. I am delighted to be here to talk about the Sherwood constituency ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you give your name and address?

MR SPENCER: I am sorry. Mark Spencer, Member of Parliament for Sherwood. My address would be the House of Commons.

I would like to talk about the proposed boundary changes to the Sherwood constituency. In general, I broadly support the proposed changes that the Boundary Commission is suggesting. There are a number of changes, of course, to the existing boundary. I suppose I should address the four major ones that you have proposed.

First, I would say that the loss of Hucknall is quite a dramatic change to Sherwood and it is quite difficult to be objective. As a sitting Member of Parliament, you do develop an emotional attachment to parts of your constituency and Hucknall has been where my constituency office is. So there is an emotional wrench in the loss of Hucknall to Broxtowe, but of course I understand the arguments for doing that in terms of being able to make Nottinghamshire work as a county.

One of the benefits, I suppose, of losing Hucknall is that Sherwood then moves to a position where there are two district councils rather than three, which is an advantage in terms of the number of district councils a Member of Parliament has to deal with.

Further north, the other change, I suppose, is the loss of Ollerton to Newark. Again, I understand the reasons for doing that and I think there are arguments to say that the people of Ollerton do recognise Newark as an affiliate and as neighbours. Clearly, Ollerton is already within Newark and Sherwood District Council. A number of jobs are available to people in Newark and people do commute on a regular basis from Ollerton to the Newark area. In fact, the Ollerton and District Economic Forum has now set up a minibus service to move people from Ollerton to large employers in the Newark area because of that regular commute.

It is also worth saying that a number of pupils from the Ollerton area also travel to the Tuxford school and vice versa, coming backwards and forwards, despite there being a secondary school within Ollerton itself.

Moving down to the east, a number of villages are coming into Sherwood. Again, I would support that simply because the county ward of Dover Beck used to be split and is now being wholly put back together, which again really helps in terms of my constituents, who are often confused as to which council they are under, which councillor represents the area, and which ones I am dealing with.

There are also some fairly strong ties to those villages into the Sherwood area. For example, if you were a pupil at Lowdham Primary School, you are a feeder school for Colonel Frank Seely in Calverton; so those communities do affiliate to those villages already within Sherwood. In fact, under previous boundaries those villages were in Sherwood originally. Epperstone, Lowdham, Gunthorpe and Gonalston were in Sherwood originally, so some people would feel as though they are coming back home, back to Sherwood.

The other dramatic change, I suppose, is the inclusion of some of those areas of Arnold in the south – I am talking about Coppice, Ernehale, Plains, Woodthorpe. Again, they are within Gedling Borough Council, which already covers a large part of the constituency in terms of Newstead Abbey, Calverton and those other areas in the south.

Broadly, to summarise, I would support what the Boundary Commission are doing. I think there are some very strong arguments to see how that works. All in all, it is very difficult to criticise and improve it without having a knock-on effect elsewhere.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. One point, just for my own information really. You mention Ollerton moving out as being okay. Edwinstowe stays in the area. Are there links between Ollerton and Edwinstowe?

MR SPENCER: I think there are links amongst all of those villages. Also Kirton, further north; Meden Vale, which is the former home of the Welbeck Colliery. You could make arguments all around those areas, but you end up with a seat that is three times the size if you continue to follow those links; so you have to draw a line on the map somewhere.

It is worth saying that, clearly, 30 years ago when the collieries existed, those ties would have been much stronger. I think the world has moved on. Essentially, lots of those villages within Sherwood have become commuter villages, with people buying houses in former colliery villages to get on the housing ladder; but they look to employment elsewhere, so particularly the towns of Mansfield, Newark, Worksop, Sheffield, Nottingham. They are the areas that people are commuting to, so they look out of the area in terms of where they commute to.

I think that Ollerton's strong links to Newark exist not only because of education and employment but also Newark Hospital – people often prefer to travel there rather than to King's Mill.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any queries on that submission? In that case, thank you very much.

I will call now Cllr Ben Bradley.

CLLR BRADLEY: Cllr Ben Bradley. I am a councillor in Hucknall. Do you want my address as well?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, please.

CLLR BRADLEY: It is 20 Frances Grove, Hucknall. I want to talk about Sherwood and also Broxtowe to an extent, Sherwood being my existing constituency and Broxtowe the one it is proposed is moved into. I will start with Sherwood because you have got it up on the screen.

I largely concur with what Mark Spencer said. I think it is worth reiterating the connections between Ollerton and Newark. With regard to the previous question about Edwinstowe, I think Edwinstowe and Clipstone look to Mansfield as opposed to Newark. If you were to write the full postal address for those places, it is Ollerton/Newark but it is Edwinstowe/Mansfield. Ollerton also has a Newark postcode and a Newark phone number, whereas Edwinstowe again has Mansfield. So you can quite clearly make those divisions; they already exist.

Coming further down, again as Mr Spencer says, Dover Beck ward all coming into one makes it much clearer in terms of who represents who, I think. There is also a lot of agricultural and big business connection between the areas. A lot of people own land across what is the existing Sherwood border, which would bring it all under one.

I also think those areas – just pointing to the addition of Arnold – would look to Arnold as their main shopping centre and for facilities and amenities there. If you live in Lowdham, for example, I think, to be honest, there is very little need or reason to visit Newark, because you have got Arnold and the City of Nottingham on your doorstep; so I do not see that connection as going to Newark in the same way.

Obviously, regarding Hucknall coming out, it makes practical sense for me, in that if you look at the make-up of the existing Sherwood constituency, which is possibly around rural areas or coalfield sites, you could make those arguments. I do not think Hucknall is still in that place as much as it is a former coalfield; it has moved on and the demographics have changed much more than some of the other areas. I think it has much more of a connection now with the kind of greater Nottingham commuter suburbs around through Broxtowe, like your Giltbrook or Kimberley, even all the way down to Beeston and all of those areas around the outskirts of the city, more so than it does the rural areas in the Sherwood constituency. So it makes perfect sense to me to put that into Broxtowe.

Regarding Broxtowe as well, there is more of a connection there with Hucknall; so I am quite happy to move into Broxtowe and I think the two fit together. My only concern about the Broxtowe constituency, where again I would largely support what the Commission has done overall, is the inclusion of Bilborough from the city. As Mark alluded to, it complicates things to have more authorities to deal with as a Member of Parliament, especially, with the city/county divide, very different authorities that work in very different ways, one being unitary. I think that would complicate things. I also think that Bilborough does not have the same commuter demographic perhaps as the rest of Broxtowe, simply because they are already in the city; so it is a different type of person, a different lifestyle perhaps to the rest of the Broxtowe constituency.

I think that it would make more sense to leave Bilborough in Nottingham city and instead to keep hold of Chilwell and Toton in the south, which are in the existing Broxtowe borough, and obviously you are then changing less in terms of percentage

of people moving between constituencies. Also, I think they have more of a connection as commuter areas within the existing Broxtowe constituency.

To summarise, I totally support the Commission's proposals for Sherwood, for the reasons I have explained, and also largely for Broxtowe, apart from I think it would make more sense to leave Bilborough in the City of Nottingham and instead to bring Toton and Chilwell back into Broxtowe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. We have a query.

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. When you speak about bringing Toton and Chilwell into the Broxtowe constituency, are you talking about the whole of Toton and Chilwell or are you talking about two of the three wards that form the whole of Toton and part of Chilwell, leaving the Attenborough and Chilwell East ward in the Nottingham seat?

CLLR BRADLEY: I think it may well make sense to leave that in the Nottingham seat. I forget, off the top of my head, which boundary it is but I think the two wards make almost exactly identical numbers to the Bilborough ward that I am talking about removing, and to bring the two wards over would work better in terms of making the numbers work.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, I see that. Thank you very much.

After a short break

Time noted: 11.20 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning. We will reconvene the hearing. If I can call Mr David Astill to speak, please, and if you would like to come up to speak? (An unidentified speaker off microphone) We have both of you down. So you are not speaking? Fine. Mr Upton then, please. If you could give your name and address before you speak, please?

CLLR UPTON: I am Cllr Roger Upton. I am with Rushcliffe Borough Council. I am the cabinet member with responsibility for the environment portfolio. I am a resident of Radcliffe-on-Trent, which is a small village in the Rushcliffe borough. I live at 23 Oaktree Avenue, Radcliffe-on-Trent NG12 1AD.

I am speaking on behalf of David Astill, the Chairman of the Rushcliffe Conservative Association and myself. Our submission is fairly short. Two points really. The first is the key point: the proposed changes to the names of the area currently comprising the parliamentary constituency of Rushcliffe.

We have no objection to the southern part of the Rushcliffe constituency being part of the new constituency called "Loughborough and Rushcliffe South". We are quite content with that. We address our comments to the northern part of the current

Rushcliffe constituency. We feel quite strongly that the description of Rushcliffe should stay, rather than being called “West Bridgford,” and we propose that it be “Rushcliffe North”.

The reasons for that, briefly, are that, while we appreciate that West Bridgford is the largest urban conurbation in the proposed new constituency, the major part of the constituency is in fact rural and consists of villages and hamlets, which we believe have no natural social or economic ties to the West Bridgford urban area. Indeed, the name Rushcliffe will continue to be very important to the residents of the present constituency after the proposed changes have taken place, because Rushcliffe Borough Council will still be the local authority to which they will pay their council tax and have other services delivered. So it is all about the historical aspect of the name Rushcliffe. Indeed, I think it was a wapentake in the Saxon era, so Rushcliffe is very much known to the residents locally, and I would dare to say nationally.

As I say, without repeating – quite content for it to be used in the new Loughborough and Rushcliffe South, and we would move for it to be incorporated in a new name – instead of “West Bridgford” call it “Rushcliffe North”.

That is our main submission. The second one is some more minor changes to the areas to be included in the proposed new constituency.

First, the village of Newton we feel should be included with the village of East Bridgford in the new Rushcliffe North constituency, because they do share close education, social and other local ties. Until quite recently the villages were one parish council called Shelford and Newton and, from the education perspective, the children at Newton go to East Bridgford Primary School, which is just down the hill. So we believe there are strong local ties in that sense, historically and currently, where it would be better to take Newton out of the Newark constituency and put it into your proposed West Bridgford/our proposed Rushcliffe North.

The second and final point we would make is the villages of Normanton-on-the-Wolds and Plumtree, not far from Keyworth on the map. We feel they should be included with the village of Keyworth in the new Loughborough and Rushcliffe South constituency. There are similar local ties but perhaps stronger ones than for Newton. They have the doctor’s, the health centre, in Keyworth, which the majority of those parishioners would go to. They certainly go there for their shopping in Keyworth. There is the Keyworth leisure centre and swimming pools, and a whole host of local ties just down the road; so it seems to us to be more sense to put them in with Loughborough and Rushcliffe South rather than the proposal to keep them in the West Bridgford or our proposed Rushcliffe North.

That really is the summation of our proposals.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just to clarify, I think that Keyworth is already in the proposed Loughborough and Rushcliffe South.

CLLR UPTON: It is. We would like to put the villages of Normanton-on-the-Wolds and Plumtree in with it. I think they are currently being proposed in West Bridgford or what we would term Rushcliffe North. There is a local tie. It seems wrong to break it across that boundary.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be Tollerton ward.

CLLR UPTON: Yes, Tollerton ward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The other one you mentioned in the north ---

CLLR UPTON: Newton and Shelford, yes. Newton village is ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is in the proposed West Bridgford constituency.

CLLR UPTON: Is it? I thought it was in Newark. It is that little enclave. If it is, all well and good.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, that is in.

CLLR UPTON: We slipped up there. My apologies. That is good news.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Finally on the name, you are content with "Loughborough and Rushcliffe South".

CLLR UPTON: We are indeed, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But you would not see "West Bridgford and Rushcliffe North"?

CLLR UPTON: Well, we think that could be a little bit divisive. We have Clifton, which is a large urban area not far from West Bridgford. Why choose "West Bridgford" ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The current proposal is "West Bridgford" for the name of that constituency.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Off microphone) ...not very keen on that. They do like Rushcliffe. People like living in Rushcliffe ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry. If you are going to speak, could you give your name?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Off microphone) I am sorry.

CLLR UPTON: There is a conflict about it. We have an East Bridgford and we have a West Bridgford. I think it is better that we stick with just "Rushcliffe North" rather than focus on West Bridgford to the exclusion of East Bridgford and other large villages in the area. There is Radcliffe, Ruddington, Keyworth and ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: And the people in West Bridgford, you feel, would be happy being "Rushcliffe"?

CLLR UPTON: They are very content with being Rushcliffe.

MR REED: Because it is recording and it will be transcribed, any comments made from the floor will need to be through the microphone.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do you have a query?

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. Am I right in thinking that what you are suggesting is that the ward of Tollerton should be split, with the two villages you mention going to the southern constituency?

CLLR UPTON: That is correct.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is due at 1.20. In case anybody turns up ahead of that, we will adjourn until 12.45.

After a short break

Time noted: 12.45 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon. We reconvene the hearing now and we will hear from Ms Victoria Atkins. If you could give your name and address before you speak, please?

MS ATKINS: (MP for Louth and Horncastle) I am Victoria Atkins. I am the Member of Parliament for Louth and Horncastle and my address is c/o The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

My statement is as follows. I support in its entirety the reduction of the House of Commons from 650 to 600 Members of Parliament. I am wholly content with the electoral statistics being used by the Commission in the calculation of median numbers for constituencies. I wish to express my support and thanks to the Boundary Commission for its proposals for the east of the county of Lincolnshire on geographical and demographical grounds.

Currently, the parish of Stickford is alone among the other parishes in Halton Hologate ward in being outside the constituency of Louth and Horncastle. I welcome

the proposal that it be rejoined to its parent ward and included in the Louth and Horncastle constituency.

The proposal will take the size of the electorate in Louth and Horncastle from 74,617 voters to 75,022 voters, which places it in the middle of the Boundary Commission's electoral range. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for your presentation.

MS ATKINS: I have a hard copy of my statement. I have not signed it, I am sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Perhaps you would sign it. Thank you very much.

We have no more speakers registered until after lunch, so we will adjourn until 2.30.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon. We will make a start again. I would like to call Cllr Jenny Bokor to speak first. If you would like to come up and if you would give your name and address before you speak, please?

CLLR BOKOR: My name is Cllr Jenny Bokor and I live at 3 Rectory Close, Wymeswold, Leicestershire LE12 6UL.

I am here today to put some perspective and an objection to the BCE proposal to move the Wolds ward in the Loughborough constituency to the Charnwood constituency.

I am the borough councillor for the Wolds ward, which is the most northern rural ward of the existing Loughborough constituency and is geographically attached to Loughborough town centre, as the Wolds boundary goes right up to Loughborough railway station – see the attached map.

I think your proposal for a new Loughborough and Rushcliffe South constituency makes sense, except for moving the Wolds ward into Charnwood. Our main service centres are in Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar and East Leake for shopping, schools, doctors, dentists and social events and entertainment.

If we were to be in the new Loughborough and Rushcliffe South constituency, this would include all of our service centres. Our residents do not go to Leicester for these services and some residents in Cotes, Hoton and Burton on the Wolds often walk or cycle into Loughborough. Historically, Loughborough is the market town for

all the farmers in the Wolds; so moving us to Charnwood would not respect these local ties.

First, the numbers. The proposed LRS constituency would have an electorate of just over 73,000, which together with the Wolds of 2,486 would give 75,560, which is the midrange of the required band. Removing the Wolds from the Charnwood constituency would reduce it from 72,294 to 69,808, but if the areas of Sileby West and Mountsorrel Castle were added back – which would make sense, as the rest of Sileby is proposed to now be in the Charnwood constituency and the remainder of Mountsorrel is already in Charnwood constituency – this would add 1,746, to give a total of 71,554. However, 4,500 new homes are due to be built in the Charnwood constituency over the next five to ten years at Thurmaston, potentially creating at least 10,000 new voters. Two hundred of these homes are due to start in the summer of next year, so any shortfall in Charnwood numbers that you would see will soon be made up. You can see our local plan for that information.

The Wolds has no affinity with the Charnwood constituency, which provides none of the service centre provisions as its main focus is more towards Leicester, whereas the Wolds has a close affinity with the area of Rushcliffe South and Loughborough itself. The only buses we have come from Nottingham down the A60 and from Melton Mowbray on the A6006 and A60, arriving at Loughborough railway station; so all our transport links are to the north. These buses are well used, both by adults and schoolchildren. We have no transport links to the south of Loughborough or into Leicester. It would make much more sense to add the rest of Sileby and Mountsorrel into the Charnwood constituency, since both villages have direct bus links into Leicester.

If I could use myself as an example, I have lived in the Wolds for 30 years. My doctor's is in East Leake. My three children were born at Queen's Medical, Nottingham. All three went to junior school in East Leake and then Loughborough. My hairdresser is in East Leake. My dentist is in Loughborough. My one son lives and works outside of Nottingham. My daughter went to Loughborough University. I shop in Nottingham; I food shop in Loughborough. So I have personally no affiliation with Leicester or the south side of Loughborough, and that is replicated throughout the Wolds.

I hope this has helped and that you will consider my proposal.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So that I can be clear about it, you are moving the Wolds into Loughborough and Rushcliffe South? That is your proposal?

CLLR BOKOR: We are currently in Loughborough.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, but going into the new constituency?

CLLR BOKOR: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you moving both of the southern wards back into Charnwood?

CLLR BOKOR: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Barrow and Quorn.

CLLR BOKOR: Sileby and Mountsorrel. This is Sileby, part of which you are proposing to put into Charnwood anyway. (indicating)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, so Barrow and Sileby West ward.

CLLR BOKOR: Barrow and Sileby, and I am suggesting that you put the rest of Sileby in as well, and also Mountsorrel.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you just go back to the microphone, so that we make sure we pick it up?

CLLR BOKOR: I am sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: In the short term – I have not checked the numbers at the moment – if you made that move just as it is, do the numbers for both the constituencies fall within the required value?

CLLR BOKOR: Yes. I will leave a copy of this for you, so you can check the numbers. As I said, your proposed Loughborough and Rushcliffe South has just over 73,000 but, if we stay with Loughborough, we would add 2,486 to that, giving 75,560, which is midrange of your required band. Okay?

If you take us out of Charnwood, which is in your proposal, this would reduce it to 69,808; but if you put the areas of Sileby West and Mountsorrel Castle back in, this would come back up to 71,554. However, you need to take into account that there are 4,500 new homes being built at Thurmaston, which is somewhere around here. (indicating) If you add two adults in 4,500 homes, you will have at least 9,000 new voters, which you would then add to your 71,554 over the next ten years.

I am not saying it is going to happen next year, but your proposals do not even come in for two years, do they, until 2018? By that time there will be some of those new homes built.

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

MR FOX: (Off microphone) Alan Fox from the Liberal Democrats. I want to be clear. You are proposing to split two wards here: Barrow and Sileby West wards and the Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle wards. Is that correct?

CLLR BOKOR: Yes, because that part of it is in the proposal anyway; so all I am saying is you put all of Sileby in. Yes, that would split Sileby and Barrow and Quorn and Mountsorrel.

MR FOX: (Off microphone) Can I just be clear about your priority here. First, your main priority is the Wolds ward should remain in ---

CLLR BOKOR: In Loughborough.

MR FOX: (Off microphone) ...in Loughborough, and you are saying that it has strong links with the Nottinghamshire wards that are coming into the cross-county constituency.

CLLR BOKOR: Yes, which I have demonstrated with my own personal situation – and that is replicated across the Wolds.

MR FOX: (Off microphone) And your second reason for proposing it is to avoid the splits to the two villages, Mountsorrel and Sileby. Is that correct?

CLLR BOKOR: Yes. I think they should be kept together, those two villages, Mountsorrel and Sileby.

MR FOX: (Off microphone) It would be useful for us to actually have copies of what you have shown to the Assistant Commissioner, if you do have more copies. Have you seen the alternative proposal from the Liberal Democrats, which does all of that without splitting wards?

CLLR BOKOR: Okay. I have not. But I think it is important that we give the Commission some options to look at. I am happy as long as the Wolds stays with Loughborough, because it is physically attached to Loughborough. This is Loughborough. (indicating)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is okay. I have got that.

CLLR BOKOR: This is Loughborough here. (indicating) Do you see that boundary here?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

CLLR BOKOR: That is Loughborough railway station. We go right up to the boundary of Loughborough. We are the most northern ward at the moment of Loughborough. To split us off and put us with people down here in the south – we have no affiliation there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I had not appreciated that you were wanting to split those wards. Let me just repeat this.

Barrow and Sibley West ward – you are not proposing all of that to move, only a proportion of it?

CLLR BOKOR: Yes. The area of Sibley West and Mountsorrel Castle, if they were added back into Charnwood instead of being in Loughborough ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I understand. It is a little confusing for me because the ward names – I am trying to work out what you mean. We have one ward, Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle ward, with 5,400 electors.

CLLR BOKOR: Yes, that is right.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are not suggesting all of that moves?

CLLR BOKOR: No. The Mountsorrel Castle bit, so that it stays with the rest of Mountsorrel.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So Barrow upon Sour is not moving?

CLLR BOKOR: No. That would stay in with Loughborough. Because, again, the other half of the village that do not go to East Leake doctors, dentists and schools go to Barrow for doctors, dentists and schools.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Without a ward split the numbers would not work, would they?

CLLR BOKOR: No. Is that all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. Are there any other queries? Thank you for speaking.

CLLR BOKOR: I am sorry if I was a bit nervous.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, it is fine.

CLLR BOKOR: I am not used to it. Would you like a copy of my statement here now?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, please. (Same handed) Thank you.

CLLR BOKOR: The only thing it does not have is the example of my situation.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, that is fine. Thank you.

CLLR BOKOR: I think my statement is fairly clear.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will now ask Mr Michael Hudson to speak. If you could give your name and address before you speak, please?

MR HUDSON: I am Michael Hudson. My address is 64 Hollywell Road, Lincoln LN5 9DA.

I am here in the capacity as a member of the public. I am addressing the location of Waddington West ward in the constituencies. I think everyone can see where it is on the map. I have lived there for nearly 40 years. I have been a parish councillor; I have been a district councillor. In that time, Waddington West has been separated and put in a different constituency from Waddington East. The constituency which both wards have been placed in has varied from time to time.

As a former parish councillor, I have to say it was really a nuisance that the parish had to deal with two MPs. It was equally a nuisance, but not critical of course, that the district council had to deal with two MPs. Quite often, when there was a cross-parish, cross-boundary issue, you might get a different response from different MPs, which makes it very difficult for the local representatives to act properly.

The other point that has been made is that in the past, when there was the last boundary review, it was said there was an affinity between North Hykeham and Waddington West. I am here to refute that. The only physical link between the two is one footbridge and one very busy road. If you were to ask anyone in Waddington West were they in North Hykeham, I think you would almost certainly get the answer "no". They would definitely say they are not part of North Hykeham.

To reinforce that separateness from North Hykeham, I am currently involved in an arts project run by Arts NK. They have three projects running simultaneously, linked or funded by the Heritage Lottery scheme. One is for Wellingore, a small village; one is for North Hykeham; the other is for Waddington, which is deliberately covering both wards, East and West.

The other point is that I know the wards have switched between constituencies and I know that people have found it confusing. They just do not know which area they are in, and I think that causes a lack of identity with the MP and a lack of engagement. As Waddington West is currently within the Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency, I think it would be best to keep it linked to Sleaford because that is what people understand and can easily engage with.

The other point I would make is the name. I think you proposed that the Sleaford constituency be called "Sleaford". Is that correct?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR HUDSON: I fully endorse that because, as somebody who is active in the Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency, it is an absolute pain to write such a rigmarole of a name, and it does not identify the constituency. If you consider on that map, there are far more places than Sleaford and North Hykeham; so the new constituency should be named after its largest town, and that is simply Sleaford.

I think that concludes everything I have to say. These are my arguments for keeping Waddington West linked to Sleaford, as it is today.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is with North Hykeham.

MR HUDSON: It is in your proposal. You have included it with North Hykeham in the Lincoln constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But at the present time it is in with Sleaford.

MR HUDSON: Right now it is in the Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. It is to keep those the same.

It is not the area that you have come to speak about but are there any similar issues with Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East?

MR HUDSON: As it stands, I think Waddington East would probably not like to be – I cannot really speak for that, because it is not an area I know too well. Bracebridge Heath I will not say anything about because I do not live there, but I think there is this irritation that East and West wards of Waddington are split between parliamentary constituencies. It is not a great block to administration but it is a barrier to political engagement. It is an extra irritation when dealing with cross-boundary issues.

As I have argued with Arts NK, which is an organisation based in Sleaford, they clearly see Waddington as one entity and North Hykeham as another.

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

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. Waddington West is physically attached to Lincoln, is it not, in the same way that North Hykeham is?

MR HUDSON: Yes, I will concede that. But my point is not its identity with Lincoln, because if you look at that map that argument of attachment to Lincoln applies to Skellingthorpe. It applies to many, many other areas. The point I am making is its current identity and its lack of affinity with North Hykeham.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

I will ask Mr Karl McCartney to speak, please.

MR McCARTNEY: Karl McCartney, Member of Parliament for Lincoln. I will just go through a brief script and then I will talk about some of the counterarguments that were put forward after ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry. Just for formality, could you state the address?

MR McCARTNEY: House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA.

I welcome the case of a level playing field across both the country and the county of Lincolnshire. Given that Lincoln had one of the smallest electorates in our county the last time there was a consultation on the parliamentary constituency boundaries, increasing the size of the Lincoln constituency is common sense and will ensure there are approximately the same number of voters in each constituency across Lincolnshire, and eventually the country.

My view on the actual proposals and how they affect our city is that they could be a lot simpler, however, and less disruptive to existing communities. I will touch on some of the comments made by the previous speaker in a second.

Whilst I would of course gladly welcome North Hykeham into the Lincoln constituency, and then represent those constituents as well as all others, as I have done since 2010, I believe a fairer solution would be for the ward of Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East to be retained and for Waddington West to join Waddington East; and the Heighington and Washingborough wards, including the village of Canwick, which used to be part of the seat, to be added to the Lincoln parliamentary constituency. This is simpler than moving the whole of North Hykeham into Lincoln and moving Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East out to a new seat, to be called just "Sleaford" – if people get their way.

This neat solution that I propose to the mathematical machinations of the Boundary Commission also has the beauty of retaining the historical link and the name of the Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency to the south of Lincoln, but it would also mean uniting the village of Waddington and geographically, by looking at a map – although you would need to go a little bit further to the east – it would be a good fit, too.

My alternative would also mean moving only 7,304 electors between constituencies, rather than the 19,958 – very near 20,000 – that the Boundary Commission are proposing.

Whatever your decisions are, I would like to see Waddington, East and West, put together because I think it has been an anomaly that needs to be righted. Obviously I would like to see them within part of my constituency because I think, like Skellingthorpe, Bracebridge and Bracebridge Heath have links to Lincoln, it would

retain the historical nature of the constituency I am lucky enough and honoured enough to represent.

Before there are any questions, perhaps I could just go through some of the arguments that were put forward last time and how things have changed.

My argument is that Bracebridge Heath, Waddington East and Waddington West are located close to Lincoln and should remain as part of the constituency. Although you might say that of North Hykeham, historically North Hykeham has been linked with Sleaford.

There are various patches of what currently – in fact some of them have already been developed on but are currently blank spaces on your map. They are going to link, even more so, those areas – Bracebridge Heath, Waddington – to Lincoln, and around Canwick as well; and certainly last time the Boundary Commission looked at the changes that were being proposed, the Eastern Bypass was still not confirmed. It is confirmed now. The contract has been let. It will be built.

With an Eastern Bypass coming round roughly where the C and D area of Lincoln is on the very right-hand side of your map – coming down, around Canwick and then around Bracebridge Heath and through Waddington – that will be another natural boundary (okay, man-made but natural as you look on a map) and it would encompass part of the Lincoln constituency, I would say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Which side of Washingborough would that bypass be?

MR McCARTNEY: It will come quite close to Washingborough. Because your map does not actually go to the ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I have a map here. Is it to the east or west of Washingborough?

MR McCARTNEY: To the west.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So Washingborough is inside the bypass on the Lincoln side?

MR McCARTNEY: No, outside, on the east side of that overhead bypass – but will be linked, obviously, directly to it.

One of the other things that I mentioned last time, which was discounted, was the fact that RAF Waddington has a very proud and historic link to the City of Lincoln; in fact, probably even more so now than it did five or six years ago, and is now one of the busiest airbases in the country. That is obviously something that I, as the MP, would like to maintain.

Potentially, probably the last thing I would like to bring up before answering any questions you might have is the historical nature of Lincoln. It is a constituency that has had the same name of Lincoln constituency since the 13th century; so that makes it the oldest constituency, not just in this country but in the world. If you decide to stick it with North Hykeham, I know that the people of North Hykeham, or those on the town council et cetera, will want to see it renamed as “Lincoln and North Hykeham” – and you will be opening another can of worms. I just leave it there. I would like to see it retain its historical link and continue being the oldest continual constituency in the world.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Notwithstanding the can of worms related to the name, how do you think North Hykeham would feel if it was linked to Lincoln from the administrative point of view and sharing an MP?

MR McCARTNEY: I would hope that they would not have a problem with me being their MP instead of Stephen Phillips, but Stephen Phillips and I are agreed on what I have just spoken to you about now, as of the Conservative Party both locally and nationally. It is something that we think is a better fit.

Mr Phillips – I am obviously not speaking for him but we have had conversations – is very happy to continue representing North Hykeham and Sleaford. There are already those strong links because it forms a major part of the North Kesteven District Council.

Would I have a problem with it? No, I would not. I just think that there is a better fit, rather than switching 20,000 people when actually a much easier and simpler option, and one that fits ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But is it right to say that, from a local ties point of view, bringing Hykeham into Lincoln of itself would not cause difficulties?

MR McCARTNEY: I think potentially it could because, as I say, it forms a major part of North Kesteven District Council and will continue to do so. Actually, lots of people in North Hykeham do not consider themselves to be Lincolnians. I know that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just one other point. In your proposal you bring Washingborough into Lincoln.

MR McCARTNEY: Yes. Washingborough and Heighington ward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But Branston not?

MR McCARTNEY: No. Your job as the Boundary Commission is to come up with the right figures. I think that if you look at the alternative proposal I have put forward, there is a 400'ish difference between your proposal and the proposal that we as the Conservative Party, and myself as the local Member of Parliament, have put forward.

So you could but I do not think there is any need to, unless you felt that you wanted to rejig the figures even further.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Putting aside the figures, is there in essence anything different in terms of ties between Washingborough and Lincoln and Branston? Do they look in a similar way or is it the numbers that led you to pick ---

MR McCARTNEY: It is the numbers. Also the geographical location and the fact that Washingborough and Heighington are just to the south-east of what is essentially – if you take out ward changes there and follow that broad black line, take it round Bracebridge Heath, the whole of Waddington and take it up to include Canwick, Washingborough and Heighington – it becomes a more natural circle perhaps than what you are proposing, as one way I have looked at it; but it does not have to look pretty on a map, obviously. You look at all sorts of constituencies and they have got all sorts of funny shapes.

I would say that maybe the people of Washingborough and Heighington would be happy that the Lincoln constituency would then contain the sewage works that deals with all the sewage for Lincoln – but who knows?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any queries on that? If you could give your name before you speak, please?

MR HUDSON: Michael Hudson. Are you aware that Liberal Democrat Cllr John Marriott, who has represented North Hykeham for God knows how long – perhaps 20 or 30 years – is a regular columnist in the *Lincolnshire Echo*?

MR McCARTNEY: I am well aware that he writes a number of letters quite regularly to the *Lincolnshire Echo*. I would not call him a regular columnist. And the fact that he represents a different party than me, for a portion of North Hykeham that is not in my constituency, means that I probably do not agree with everything he has to say; but, then again, I might agree with some things, depending on what his views on the Boundary Commission are.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What is the point of clarification you are seeking?

MR HUDSON: The point of clarification I am making here is the identity between North Hykeham and Lincoln. I am aware that there are people in North Hykeham who will argue that it should be separate. I think, given the shape of the constituency that you have, you have a compact constituency with natural routes into the centre.

I think that the *Lincolnshire Echo* is a newspaper that has a strong circulation within the city and it receives many, many letters from Cllr Marriott – to such an extent that I would almost call him a regular columnist.

MR McCARTNEY: I would just counter that and say that there are an awful lot of people who live and work in Lincoln, and Washingborough and Heighington have that natural link because they do live and work in the locality; that I am saying it should be a lot simpler to put together, rather than moving 20,000 people between two constituencies, rather than an easier sum of 7,000.

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. Mr McCartney, I looked on your website this morning and see that you say, "There is also a case for a small change in the proposed Lincoln constituency where it would seem sensible to make the A46 and A158 the north and north-eastern boundary of the city constituency, therefore including Millbank Drive and Eastholm and associated areas within Lincoln, rather than these areas (which have a relatively small number of electors) being within the Gainsborough constituency, as they are now. I will be making my alternative solution clear to the Boundary Commission both in a written submission and will be requesting the opportunity of presenting this alternative change to them when they have their consultation event in Lincoln in early November this year."

Have you changed your mind since you posted that?

MR McCARTNEY: No, not at all. But as you have just referred to, the fact is there is a very small number of potential constituents of mine that currently are Edward Leigh's, up to the north of the seat up here and along that road there and in that area there. (indicating) And actually I wanted to deal with the major changes that potentially might take place here.

I have brought it up at every level that I can, including when local boundaries are looked at, and everybody seems to pass the buck. But you are exactly right: it seems very silly that there are people who live here who would say that they live in Lincoln. They are inside that main arterial road but actually they are probably in the Gainsborough constituency. I know the Gainsborough constituency is here, in Cherry Willingham, and that limits it for all of Edward Leigh's patch. But the fact is in one person's case they live in a house where the boundary actually cuts their house in half. So it is silly; it should be changed.

I am not sure it is in your power because everyone will say, "It's local government boundaries," but somebody at some point has to make a decision that that boundary, instead of being jagged, should follow the line of the road. It would just seem sensible.

You are right, but I did not pick it up now because obviously there are – I am not going to say more contentious, but there is a bigger issue at hand. I have not changed my mind. It is in my submission, which will be published and which I have made already to the Boundary Commission. But thank you very much for bringing it up.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: In that case, thank you very much for your time.

We have no more scheduled speakers for today's hearing. In case people do turn up, we will adjourn until 4 o'clock and consider the matter again then.

After a short break

Time noted: 4.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There are no current attenders wanting to speak at the hearing, so we will adjourn until 6 o'clock.

Time noted: 6 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No further speakers have attended. Nobody is booked to speak. We will adjourn until 6.30, when we will consider closing the hearing for the day.

Time noted: 6.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is 6.30. There are no more attenders who have arrived, so we will close the hearing until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Adjourned until 9 am on Friday 4 November 2016

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