

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**MUSIC ROOM, THE ASSEMBLY HOUSE, THEATRE STREET,
NORWICH, NR2 1RQ**

ON

**FRIDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2016
DAY TWO**

Before:

Ms Sarah Hamilton, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

**Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
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THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Norwich. My name is Sarah Hamilton and I am Lead Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for England.

We are here for two days for a public hearing in relation to the Commission's initial proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries in the Eastern region. For people who were not in the room yesterday, we are inviting members of the public to come up and speak to us regarding their views. We will be taking notes and taking away with us everything that is said. Just to let you know that all proceedings are being recorded.

In addition to coming today, we are inviting people to send their comments in online or write to us. All information can be found on the website bce2018.org.uk.

Perhaps I could ask our first speaker this morning, Mr John Ward, to come up to the front. Mr Ward, if you could just give your full name and address for the record?

MR WARD: (Thorpe St Andrew Conservative Branch) John Martin Ward, 15 White Farm Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 0BP. I am here today as Vice Chairman of Thorpe St Andrew Conservative Branch, to represent my own and their views.

We are very concerned at the proposal to include Wensum in Norwich North constituency. We have no connections to Wensum. We feel it would be much better to put Taverham and Drayton in with Norwich North. We have historic links to Taverham and Drayton. They run the same system, with parishes, districts and county, whereas the city does not have parishes.

If Wensum goes in, it would make Norwich North a very marginal constituency, which could be lost to the Conservatives, I think.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Ward, just to let you know that, issues regarding marginal seats and any political issues, the Commissioners cannot take those into account. What we can take into account is existing boundaries in terms of local ties and community ties.

MR WARD: We have very great connections with Taverham and Drayton. A lot of the councillors are on Broadland, the same as we are and we have close social and friendly ties. It is really all I have to say. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. We ask if anyone in the audience has any questions of clarification. Are there any questions? No. Many thanks and thanks for coming today.

As we do not have any other speakers booked in, I will now adjourn for an hour and we will come back at 10.10 am.

Time noted: 10.10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, everyone. Welcome back to Norwich on day two of our public hearing. It is now 10.10. We do not have anyone booked in until 11 o'clock, so I will adjourn until 11.

Time noted; 11 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning and welcome back to day two of the public hearings in Norwich. We are continuing this morning with listening to members of the public providing their representations on the Commission's initial proposals.

I understand we have Mr Turkmen. If you would like to come up to the front, Mr Turkmen and if you could start by giving us your full name and address when you start to speak? Just to let you know that the proceedings are being filmed this morning.

MR TURKMEN: (Broadland Conservative Association) Good morning. My name is Hal Turkmen and I live in Aylsham at 83 Cawston Road, and I am a resident and also a local businessman; so I live and work in Aylsham for the last 13 years.

I am also a trustee of the local Aylsham Older People's Association, which is supporting the community with meals on wheels and venues for the elderly in Aylsham. I am also a member of Broadland Conservative Association.

I start with the conclusion. I am here to oppose the Boundary Commission's proposals and support the counter-proposals, in order to keep Aylsham within its current borders and not move to North Norfolk constituency.

There are several reasons for that. I promise you that none are political; it is all basic stuff. One is the local smaller wards will be immensely negatively affected by Aylsham moving its borders. These little wards, like Buxton and Hevingham, rely on the Aylsham community quite a lot. It is inevitable that when you move and change borders in rural areas you will always end up with this sort of situation. That is understandable; but, when you look at the overall picture, these little communities are quite attached to its main central focus, Aylsham centre.

The second point I would like to make is Broadland versus North Norfolk constituency versus local authorities. This is going to create a hell of a mess. Our Broadland constituency and North Norfolk constituency is a humungous area. It covers from west to east. Of course, that is okay because most of the areas in between are rural areas. However, when you have the Broadland District Council already operating in Aylsham, it is going to be very difficult to adjust that to make that area belong to the North Norfolk constituency.

My third point makes it more important why this is problematic. Aylsham is the largest in area geographically and, I think, population-wise in Broadland, and we are proposing to move that to North Norfolk. I would have thought the Boundary Commission proposals should be more incremental, more smaller areas, to achieve the aims of the Commission, rather than making large, big chunks of areas move from one area into another. That is going to affect a lot of people businesswise, the associations that work within Aylsham. Really, I would have thought it would be much better to look at the counter-proposals you have in hand and make the changes incremental, as small as possible, so that you affect less population, less areas, rather than one big community like Aylsham.

I think the three different segments I have just mentioned are good enough for me to oppose the current proposals. I am therefore asking the Boundary Commission review to consider the counter-proposals presented to you earlier, making the alternative, smaller changes, to suit the purpose of the Commission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Do we have any questions of clarification? Could you give your name, please, for the record?

MR PAWSEY: Alan Pawsey. I wonder, could you confirm what your alternative proposals are, instead of Aylsham?

MR TURKMEN: I do not have the great details but I have a list, if you would like me to present that to you in a minute. I could do that. As you know, the Commission has an aim to achieve a certain number of people in the constituency and that is the reason we are doing all these changes. We have done a proposal, which still keeps Aylsham within the Broadland constituency and brings the total to 71,456. The area that we included here is from Hermitage to Lincoln, Necton, Upper Wensum, right up to Wroxham and Lancaster North, et cetera. But I have this list for you to have a look.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. The counter-proposals by the Conservative Party have already been submitted and they will be published on the website in due course. That should be in the spring, so that everyone will have a look at them.

MR TURKMEN: Yes, but my main aim here is to make sure that the proposal is affecting a large area, a very large population and there is a lot of conflict between the local authorities, et cetera. So, making that simpler for the people of Broadland and Norfolk, I think we should propose smaller changes, and I think that is the way to go.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Turkmen, thank you very much for coming this morning. We will adjourn until 12.10 pm

Time noted: 12.10 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome back to Norwich on day two. It is now 12.10. We do not have any speakers booked in at the moment, so I will adjourn until 12.50 and reconvene then.

Time noted: 12.50 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome back to Norwich on day two of the public hearing. It is now 12.50. As we do not have any speakers booked, I will now adjourn until after lunch at 2 pm.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2.15 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to day two of the public hearing in Norwich. It is now 2.15 pm. We have a speaker whose name is Claudette Bannock. Ms Bannock, if you would like to stand at the front and, when you start speaking, perhaps you could just give your name and address for the record. As you are aware, everything is being filmed this afternoon.

MS BANNOCK: (Broadland Conservative Group) Good afternoon, everyone. I am Claudette Bannock. I am district councillor for Taverham South and my address is 78 Sandy Lane, Taverham, NR8 6JT.

I am here today to speak against the proposed boundary changes that were announced last week. I have been a member of the party for as long as I can remember – since I was 17, at any rate. In that time, Taverham and Drayton – although I am not speaking necessarily for Drayton – have been in about seven different constituencies. First of all we were in Central Norwich; then we were moved to North Norfolk; from North Norfolk we went into Mid Norfolk. When we were in Mid Norfolk we were told that we were going into Norwich North. We were in Norwich North, I think, for one or two elections. We have gone back into Broadland now for two elections, and we are now being told that we are going to go back into Norwich North.

There are several reasons why we do not want to go back into Norwich North. One, we are a rural seat. We do not want to be connected with Norwich North. We have always been very happy to be a rural seat and I really think that the only reason the Conservative Party want us in Norwich North is to keep that seat Conservative for Norwich North. That is one of the reasons I do not want to stay.

One of the other reasons is the actual Norwich North party really are very unfriendly. That might not seem a reason to a lot of people, but when they are so unfriendly – we are not connected with them in any way. Meetings would take place in Norwich and I just do not want to be there. Several people I have spoken to will not come up and say this, of course, but they do not want to be in Norwich North again. We have

had it once and now we do feel that we have changed constituencies seven times, and people just do not know where they are. Even now, some people think we are in Norwich North. They do not realise. They say, "Oh, the MP is so-and-so". Well it is not. They just do not know who the MP is, which I find is rather strange.

I would like to think that Norwich North does not have Taverham and Drayton in their area – we have no connections – and we keep in Taverham and Drayton.

Before I finish, many people have said that if we go back into Norwich North they will not be voting at all. Whatever their political things are, they will not bother to go and vote because they just do not know and they do not feel connected in any way.

The MP has about 72,000 people in his constituency, as it just stands at the moment; but it seems to me as if they want to take one bit of it away and then take another bit, like Taverham and Drayton, away, and then go and take someone else's bit – I do not know if it is south-west Norfolk or... – it is just carving the whole thing up and I feel it is too disjointed. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Do we have any questions from the audience for clarification? No. Thank you for your time. Everything that people are telling us, we will go away and consider it and see whether we can come up with different proposals, if we think they are appropriate.

We do not have any other speakers booked, so I will adjourn for an hour and we will come back at 3.20 pm

Time noted: 3.20 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome back to Norwich on day two of the public hearing. It is now 3.20. We do not have any speakers booked, so I am going to adjourn until 4 pm.

Time noted: 4 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, it is now 4 o'clock on day two of the public hearing in Norwich. We do not have any more speakers booked in today, so I will close for today and we will be in Luton on Monday at 10 o'clock. Thank you.

The hearing concluded.

B

MS BANNOCK, 5

P

MR PAWSEY, 4

T

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
MR TURKMEN, 3, 4

W

MR WARD, 2