

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

SHEFFIELD TOWN HALL, PINSTONE STREET, SHEFFIELD S1 2HH

ON

MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2016
DAY ONE

Before:

Mr John Feavours, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

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Time noted: 10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Sheffield, to this public hearing on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries in Yorkshire and the Humber region.

My name is John Feavours and I am 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 the Yorkshire and the Humber region. I am responsible for chairing the hearing today and tomorrow, and I am also responsible, with my fellow Assistant Commissioner, Collette Rawnsley, who is here as well today, for analysing all of 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 Tim Bowden, who is sitting beside me. Tim will shortly provide an explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for new constituencies in this region. He will tell you how you can make written representations and he will deal with one or two administrative matters. The hearing today is scheduled to run from around 10 in the morning until 8 o'clock tonight, and tomorrow it is scheduled to run from 9 until 5.00 pm. I can vary that timetable and I will take into account the attendance and the demand for opportunities to speak. I should point out that under the legislation that governs the Commission's review, each public hearing must be held over two days and cannot be extended into a third.

The purpose of this public hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals for the Yorkshire and the Humber region. A number of people have already registered to speak and have been given a time slot, and I will invite them to speak at the appropriate time. If there is any time free 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 would like to stress that the purpose of this public hearing is for people to make oral representations about the initial proposals. The purpose is not to engage in a debate with the Commission about the proposals, nor is this hearing an opportunity for people to cross-examine other speakers during their presentation.

People may seek to put questions for clarification to the speakers, but they should do that through me as the Chair. I will now hand over to Tim who will provide a brief explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for Yorkshire and the Humber region.

MR BOWDEN: Thank you very much indeed, John, and good morning. As John has mentioned, my name is Tim Bowden, I am Head of Reviews at the Commission and I am a member of the Commission's secretariat 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 John has already stated, he will chair the hearing itself and it is his responsibility to run the hearing at his discretion and take decisions about speakers, questioners and timings. My team and I are here today to support John in carrying out his role, but please do ask one of us outside of the hearing if you require any help or assistance.

We use the European electoral regions as a template for the allocation of the 499 constituencies to which England is entitled. That does not include the two 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 counter-proposals that include one or more constituencies being split between the regions, but it is likely that compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade us to depart from the regional based approach we adopted in formulating our initial proposals.

I am now going to talk about the Commission's initial proposals for the Yorkshire and Humber region itself. So the region has been allocated 50 constituencies, a reduction of four from the current number. Our proposals leave three of the 54 existing constituencies unchanged. As it has not always been possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties in the Yorkshire and the Humber region, we have grouped some county and 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. We have proposed four constituencies that contain electors from North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. Two of these combine electors from North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, with both including wards of the district of Selby. The remaining two combine electors from West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, which include wards of the Borough of Barnsley, the Borough of Kirklees and the Borough of Wakefield.

In Humberside we have proposed a pattern of nine constituencies, which includes two that are completely unchanged. 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 the internal boundaries, known as wards or electoral divisions. We seek to avoid dividing wards between constituencies wherever possible. Wards are well defined and well understood units which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. We consider that any division of these units between constituencies would be likely to break local ties, disrupt political party organisations and cause difficulties for electoral registration and returning officers who are responsible for running elections.

It is our view that only in exceptional and compelling circumstances will splitting a ward between constituencies be justified, and our initial proposals do not do so. If an alternative scheme proposes to split wards, strong evidence and justification will need to be provided and the extent of such ward splitting should be kept to a minimum. The scale of change in this review is significant and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period.

We are consulting on our proposals until Monday 5 December, so there is still time after today for people to contribute in writing. There are also reference copies of the proposals present at this hearing and they are also available on our website and in a number of places of deposit around the region. You can make written representations to us through our consultation website at bce2018.org.uk. I do urge everyone to submit written representations to us before the deadline of 5 December.

Finally, I would like to remind all participants that this hearing is part of a public consultation, and when providing any evidence to the Commission you will be asked to provide us with your name and address.

The Commission is legally obliged to take a record of the public hearings, and, as you can see from the back of the room, 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 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 the spring of next year. The personal data of those who have made representations will obviously be included with those published materials. 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 is available also on our website.

Before handing back to John, as the Chair, to begin the public hearing, I am just going to do a bit of housekeeping. We are not expected to have any fire alarms today. The drill has already happened at 9.30 am this morning. Should a fire alarm go off, can you proceed through the exit behind you, so where I am pointing over in the back left-hand or right-hand corner of the room, and down the stairs and to the Peace Gardens, which is the meeting point. For toilet facilities, the ladies are through the same door and round the corner to your left, and for the gents it is through the same door and to your right.

Finally, if people have a mobile phone, can I ask that you switch it to silent or to vibrate. If you do want to take a call or message, we just ask if you could either go into the reception room at the front or through the rear of the room itself. I will now pass back over to John. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Tim. Now, we were due to kick off bang on 10 o'clock and that is what I would have done had we had people here ready to start. Why am I telling you that? I was a little bit late starting simply because I wanted to give people the opportunity to get here. I have a list of people who have booked slots to speak during today and tomorrow and I will follow that list so far as I can. There are some people in the room who were also at the Leeds hearing and I will say the same to you as I said to them: I make no apology whatsoever for repeating myself because if people come to the hearing during the day and do not know what the background is and what we are doing and how it is working, I think it is important that I help them understand what we are up to. So if you are sit there all day and you find yourself hearing the same thing over and over, that is just the way it is going to be, I am afraid, because that is the way I like to work.

On that basis, ladies, you came in just after I had started. Let me introduce myself. My name is John Feavour and I am one of the Assistant Commissioners responsible for listening to what is said today and for considering all of the written representations made to the Boundary Commission about Yorkshire and the Humber region, alongside Collette Rawnsley, who is my fellow Assistant Commissioner, and she is just to your right there this morning as well. We had some speakers booked in this morning. I notice, Sir, you came in through that door, so I do not know whether we have got your name on the registration sheet yet, so at some point - do not rush out to do it now - we would like to know who you are.

So how are we going to do this? When I have got speakers scheduled, I will invite you to come forward and come up to the lectern and tell us what you need to tell us. That is the way we are going to do it. Where there are gaps, I will tell you there is a gap. If that gap is more than about five minutes, the chances are I am going to turn the microphone off and we are all going to go for a cup of coffee. What I will not do, if it is a big gap, is have a big adjournment because we have publicised that the hearing is available all the way through until 8 o'clock tonight, and similarly tomorrow until 5.00 pm. I take the view that somebody can just turn up and speak, and if they just turn up and speak, it is unreasonable, in my view, that they need to wait too long, so if I have a break it will never be longer than an hour.

That said, I might come back at the end of that hour and open, and there is nobody else here, and then just adjourn again. I am just telling you this so you know how I am going to do things today and why I am doing it that way. So hopefully that makes sense.

Sir, can I just ask your name only because I do not know whether you are on my list?

CLLR SANGAR: It is Andrew Sangar.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Sangar, thank you. You are due for 11.20. Ladies, can I ask your names? (Response from the audience but inaudible) You

are both very welcome. You are not on my list to speak but if you want to you will be able to.

So the only person actually who is on the list this morning to speak at the moment is you, Sir. Now, you are not scheduled to speak until 11.20 but if you are in a position to speak now, I would be very happy to hear from you. He is getting up and coming this way, that is good. Well, if you would like to go the lectern then. As Tim mentioned in his little opening, everybody who comes forward to speak today, we need their name and their address, please. Sir, if you could start off with that for us and then when you are ready, tell us what we need to hear.

CLLR SANGAR: (Liberal Democratic Party) I am Andrew Sangar and I am speaking on behalf of Sheffield Liberal Democrats. My address is 15 Brooklands Avenue, Fulwood, Sheffield, S10 4GA. Thank you and thank you for that introduction. We accept that you have a difficult task ahead of you. There are some things that we would probably want to do if we were starting from a blank piece of paper and we had different electoral systems and what have you. We accept the regulations you are working to. The particular difficulty from a Sheffield point of view is the size of the wards, and we feel, therefore, in looking at this we are putting an additional proposal, a set of amendments that does break up one ward but only one ward because we take your guidance states to reduce the number of wards broken up as much as possible.

Before I start, in terms of our recommendations, I think the deep frustration we have and it is shared across the Sheffield political parties is we have just been through a Council Boundary Review and we are very frustrated that we are not able to use the current wards that we have just fought an election on, and we have all made political rearrangements in terms of the new wards and, whatever happens under this Boundary Commission's set of proposals, we are going to have parliamentary changes on the old wards for the next five years. We find that frustrating, but we accept that we have to live with that.

So to proceed, your proposals feel to us as if they have started in Doncaster and worked towards Sheffield, whereas if you started in Sheffield and moved towards Doncaster you could have got a different result, but we accept the point that you want a regional result and you do not want us to go into the East Midlands region, so our proposals will not do that.

We feel that we need to amend the Sheffield Hallam and Stocksbridge seats to remove Beauchief and Greenhill ward and replace it with Ecclesall ward. Dore and Totley, Ecclesall ward and Fulwood have many cross-community economic and geographic links and they have been together in a constituency for at least the past 30 years. Wherever you draw the boundary between those three wards is difficult and you are going to cross community ties, so we feel that those three wards naturally belong together.

In most of the boundary processes I have been through - this is my third parliamentary and I have been through two local government boundaries - we have tried to use the hard boundary of the railway line between Sheffield and London as a constituency boundary as a boundary we use to make up ward boundaries, and we feel moving Beauchief and Greenhill into the Hallam and Stocksbridge seat is not a good fit.

Clearly, in order for that to work we need to do two other things. The first thing, because clearly just swapping those two wards is not enough, we also then need to add the numbers to Sheffield Central and we would do that by bringing Nether Edge ward back in. Nether Edge ward is a ward that has been in Sheffield Central constituency for the past two general elections. In terms of the boundaries we have just been through on a council perspective, there is a close community link, particularly in the Hunter's Bar area, but wherever you draw the line between Broomhill and Nether Edge, these are urban areas and Broomhill and Nether Edge, the boundary is blurred and clearly we have just moved that boundary from a council perspective and we feel that Nether Edge belongs better in Central.

With the numbers and with the 5% margin, that is not sufficient. If we just move those three wards back effectively to where they have been that is not enough and, to get within your 5%, we need to do something else. What we are proposing, therefore, is to go for a ward split. We are proposing the ward split to be Fulwood and for the two polling districts NB and NC to move from Fulwood into the Sheffield Central constituency.

Now, NB and NC are very different in nature to both the rest of Fulwood ward and the rest of Hallam and Stocksbridge constituency. I speak as a Fulwood councillor. Though I am clearly speaking on behalf of Sheffield Liberal Democrats, I speak as a councillor for the ward since 2004. NB and NC represent largely the halls owned by the University of Sheffield and they provide accommodation to first year undergraduate students. Sheffield University is a great university and the students come from across the United Kingdom and further afield, but these students are only on the electoral register for the eight months that they are there and then they move on. And where do they move to? Predominantly they move to Broomhill ward or they move to Crookes ward, and in your proposals both Broomhill and Crookes ward are in the Sheffield Central constituency, and we feel that it therefore makes sense to have the student halls in the same constituency, so for the three or four years of their undergraduate studies they will be in the same constituency.

It would also make sense from a wider community point in terms of the new proposed Sheffield Central that is already there in terms of Broomhill and Walkley and Crookes and we are proposing Nether Edge, and the City ward itself. That would be a concentration of undergraduates and postgraduate students from both the University of

Sheffield and Sheffield Central, and we feel that that is a natural community in terms of when you are a student your relationships with a city are different to older residents.

We feel that that makes sense and say it makes sense in the community ties and for the students and it works with your numbers.

I have not talked about this just --- Those are our proposals. Let us just go back through them and I particularly need to talk about the SH proposals. We are proposing Beauchief and Greenhill moving back into Heeley.

The main road that goes from Sheffield city centre to the south of Sheffield is the A61. It runs through Woodseats, Chesterfield Road and then Meadowhead. That is a road that is used by all the residents whether they are currently in Graves Park ward or Beauchief and Greenhill Road. It is all the same, the S8 postcode. If you look at the Places of Worship, they will go across. Graves Park itself is the main, it is the largest park in Sheffield but residents from both those two wards use it. Wherever you draw the line between Beauchief and Greenhill and Graves feels artificial, and I know when the Local Government Commission drew the line back in 2003 we knew it was very much that area required two wards and it was semi-artificial where you drew the line. In our boundary changes we have just had a little bit going one way and a little bit going the other way in terms of those two wards. They belong together and we feel they belong together at a constituency level. Once again, the north western boundary of that is the railway line or the River Sheaf and the railway line is a slightly harder line because you cannot cross the railway in the way you can rivers these days.

So, we feel Beauchief and Greenhill belong with Graves Park and therefore they both belong with Sheffield South or Sheffield Heeley. I should say at this time we would rather, our other amendment would be to go back to the old names of Sheffield Heeley rather than Sheffield South and go back to the Sheffield Central name.

We feel very strongly that Beauchief and Greenhill and Graves Park belong together, lots of community ties. Nether Edge and Central, talked about it a bit and I am sure lots of other people will make that case. As I say, the Hunter's Bar area, the Sharrow Vale area, I know the farmers' market is at Sharrow Vale, the boundary is completely artificial. There is one row of terraces on one side of the road and you have just put ward boundaries, put constituency boundaries wherever and it does not feel right. So I feel there are very, very strong reasons for Nether Edge to stay within Central.

I could talk a lot about Ecclesall and Dore and this idea of your proposals do not feel right for Ecclesall. As I say, Ecclesall has been connected to both Fulwood ward and Dore and Totley for a long time. Once again, if you were to separate Dore and Totley how do you get from Dore and Totley to the rest of the proposed Hallam and Stocksbridge constituency, and both Abbeydale Road South and Ecclesall Road South,

which are the two key roads that run through Ecclesall ward, they connect Dore, if you like, with Fulwood?

If you are not talking about the minor roads and the moors, the two main roads through Ecclesall connect Ecclesall and then you can get on to Fulwood. We feel that taking Ecclesall in to Central does not make any sort of community sense. I could talk at length about whether it is facilities that are currently in Dore and Totley, the Abbeydale Sports Club is a very good example where, because I know members of my family have been there from Fulwood, it is not unusual for other Fulwood residents to use that facility. Lots of people in Ecclesall use it, lots of people in Dore and Totley use it, and so it is clearly a commutative role.

In our written submission we have talked about St Williams Catholic Church, which is on the border of Ecclesall and Nether Edge but clearly used by people of Fulwood. There are lots of links between Ecclesall and Fulwood. Clearly parts of Fulwood is in S11 and therefore Sheffield, so from a postcode perspective it reaches out to the Greystones and Highcliffe community. Clearly, one of the things that we are doing at the moment is arguing about the difficulty of a school walking route very much across the Porter Valley. The links that Fulwood and Ecclesall have are very great. We are separated by the Porter Brook, which is a green finger, but there are a number of routes across that and the communities work across that very well, separated by parkland, and we feel that the communities of Fulwood and Ecclesall work, you know, are linked on many levels, as are the communities of Ecclesall and Dore and Totley.

Just to reiterate, with these proposals we are asking for a name change and we are moving for three wards and a part of a ward. So the wards we are moving, just to reiterate, just so we can all be clear, we are moving Beauchief and Greenhill out of the proposed Hallam and Stocksbridge and back into Sheffield South, and we are moving Nether Edge from Sheffield South into Sheffield Central, and to make Ecclesall from Central back to Sheffield Hallam, and the way to make them work is to move two polling districts from Fulwood ward, two student hall wards NB and NC from Fulwood into Sheffield Central. Those are our proposals. Thank you very much for hearing me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Sangar, thank you. Just before you move on, one thing I have also done after everybody has spoken, in Leeds, and I will continue to do it in Sheffield, Northallerton and Hull, once a speaker has finished what they want to say is ask anybody out there is there any clarification that you would like to ask based on what Mr Sangar has said. (No response) I see no hands. Mr Sangar, thank you very much indeed.

CLLR SANGAR: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just to check how my bookings list is shaping up, I do not think we have Mr May. Mr Harston, you are here but you would like

to speak tomorrow, I believe. We do not have Mr Carrington and we do not have Mrs Dare.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next booked slot is Mrs Dare at 11.10, which is half an hour away. Do not feel shy; if you want to come and have a go up here and say what you think, please feel free to do so. If you are booked later on today or tomorrow and you want to come and have a go now, that does not preclude you from coming back and having another go tomorrow, or we can have a coffee break and come back in about 25 minutes. (No response) Right, well we will do that then. I am using that clock up there, by the way, because it seems to me that that is pretty close to time. So if the next slot is booked for 11.10, that is what time I will come back and we will reconvene then.

Thank you very much.

After a short break

Time noted: 11.10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back, everybody. Apart from you two ladies in the front, everybody else has heard this, so I am really talking to you. No, no, do not apologise, absolutely do not. They know I am going to say it again because I told them I was going to say it again.

So my name is John Feavoyour. I am an Assistant Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for England and it is my responsibility, together with my fellow Assistant Commissioner, Collette Rawnsley, who is just behind you this morning, to consider all of the written representations about Yorkshire and the Humber region and also everything that is said at the hearings in Leeds last week, Sheffield today and tomorrow, Northallerton and Hull next week.

So what are we doing? We are taking all that evidence and when people come up to speak we ask them to come up to this scary lectern up here to my left, because we are videoing everything. We have to do a transcript of everything that is said, which in due course will go online on the Boundary Commission's website. So for those people who have got access to the Internet, they can see what everybody else has said. The purpose of that is, you know, if you can do it at home or if you need to go into the library, whatever you do, if that is what you choose to, you can see what everybody else has said and you can then make comments on the counter-proposals or anything else that anybody else has said.

I am running a sort of a programme today because I have got a list of people that I have booked in to speak. So I am assuming that one of you is Mrs Dare? Hi, good morning. In a moment I am going to ask you to come up here, tell us who you are and where you live, and then tell us what it is that you have got to say. At the end of it I will turn to

everybody else and see if there is anything they want you to clarify, if there is anything you have said that does not quite make sense to them.

Theoretically, you are supposed to have ten minutes, but on the basis that I have got nobody else booked until 1 o'clock, you can have as long as you like. So when you are ready, Mrs Dare, if you would like to come up, park yourself behind that lectern, tell us who you are and where you live, and then when you are ready off you go.

MRS DARE: Hello. My name is Mrs Janice Dare and I live in Waterthorpe, Sheffield. I found out about this Commission via my daughter, so I was annoyed. I have lived in Sheffield for 35 years. I do not wish to be part of Rotherham. I wish to be represented as a Sheffield constituent - I cannot say it!

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We know what you mean.

MRS DARE: Right. I also got annoyed when I looked online - I am lucky, I am online – “Details to view proposals - Kiveton Park Library,” and I am thinking, “I have driven through, I know roughly where Kiveton is”, so I looked it up. It takes half an hour by bus and the buses are one an hour. I live five minutes from a library. Why could it not have been in Crystal Peaks as well as Kiveton, because there are a lot of older people around my area that are not on the internet but do go to the library and they do go to Crystal Peaks because it is a big shopping mall. That was one black point for the Commission. They obviously do not know, but just being one small library not for this size of the area. It is the other side of the motorway as well. Basically, I do not think this is right and I want to stay a Sheffield constituent. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That was very clear. Thank you very much. Let us just check. Do we need to check anything of that?

MS EAGERS: (Inaudible)

MRS DARE: Waterthorpe, yes, because we come under Mosborough.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry to interrupt. If you remember, we have to get everything everybody has said on the tape, okay? So when Matt gives you the microphone tell us what your name is and then ask your question.

MS EAGERS: Right. My name is Sue Eagers. I live in Mosborough. I have really only come today to see if you have got information.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is okay.

MS EAGERS: Because it is like you with your daughter, me with my son, I would not have known anything of this. I did not even realise that Waterthorpe was included. Is it the whole of the Mosborough ward?

MRS DARE: Yes.

MS EAGERS: Right, okay.

MRS DARE: And Beighton.

MS EAGERS: Yes. I do not understand. I feel as if I am being shoved out of Sheffield. I do not know if you get that impression.

MRS DARE: I do.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, let me try and help you.

MS EAGERS: Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Because Mrs Dare is here to say what her views are.

MS EAGERS: Fine.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are asking questions which I think are really more for me.

MS EAGERS: Yes, I just needed to know the area really.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will answer those questions.

MS EAGERS: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you quite happy with what Mrs Dare has said?

MS EAGERS: Yes, thank you, I am in agreement.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Dare, thank you very much indeed.

MRS DARE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it a point of clarification?

MR HARSTON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So your name and then the question.

MR HARSTON: My name is Jonathan Harston. I just want to ask Mrs Dare, do you feel that the motorway is a very strong eastern boundary to where you are?

MRS DARE: Yes.

MR HARSTON: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am not quite sure that was clarification but it is on record now anyway so we have got it. Thank you, Mrs Dare.

MRS DARE: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So let me just try and help. You were beginning to ask some questions about who was involved and a number of other things. The other folk in the room already know, we have got a list, but the next person on the list is not until 1 o'clock, so I am going to adjourn again in a moment, unless anybody else wants to come up here and put their views on record.

Particularly for your information, being as you have asked the question and I think it is part of my responsibility to help you understand the process that is going on, the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, which of course I know you all know word perfect, is a piece of legislation that sets down what the Boundary Commissions - England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - have to do from time to time, and all of the detail is in there if you were ever minded to go and read that particular piece of legislation. There is an easier version. It is not the legislation, but it is a guide to what has to happen. Tim, I think these guides are available.

MR BOWDEN: I think we probably have spares.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. If you want one of these we will let you have one of these, so you can take it away and you can have a read if you like. There are some musts in there and there is some flexibility in there. The must is this one: Parliament decided a little while ago that all the constituencies in the country would in future be roughly the same size, so at the moment there are constituencies in the country which have got around about 55,000?

MR BOWDEN: Between about 55,000 and about 92,000 electors in.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So the thinking was, "Is it right that you get one MP for 55,000 people here and one MP for 95,000 people here?" Well, whether

you agree with that or whether you do not, Parliament decided that it was all going to be roughly the same size. I know what the numbers are because I have got it in my copy of the guide. So what they did, they took all of the registered electors in the country and they decided there would not be 650 MPs, the way there are now, there will be 600. Not 599, not 601 - 600.

It got a bit complicated at the edges because Shetland and the Orkneys have got their own and the Western Isles have got their own and the Isle of Wight, so that is four gone, so there are 596 left. So you take all the registered electors in the country, you divide it by 596 and what have you got left - 74,769. That is the electoral quota that every constituency in the country has to be at that level, plus or minus 5%. You are never going to remember these numbers but I will say them anyway and then they go on the record and it is all in this book and you can have a copy.

We have to get everyone between 71,031 and 78,507. When I say it is a must, as an Assistant Commissioner I cannot vary from that. Every constituency has to be that size. For Yorkshire and the Humber, what does that mean? It means at the moment you have got 54 constituencies; when we are finished you will have 50. There is no way we can do anything about that, so somewhere along the line there has got to be four less. We have got to find a way of joining that together.

These initial proposals that are on the maps and in the books, this up [here](#), are the initial proposals developed by the Boundary Commission staff to try and meet the numbers piece. And as far as we can, and in fact there are none in the initial proposals, there are no boundaries that split wards, okay? One of the particular challenges for us with Sheffield is the size of the wards, because if you look at that number, 74,000, with the size of some of the wards in Sheffield, three of them together is not enough, four of them together is too many. So we have got to find a way of creating new parliamentary constituencies that fit that number, and that is the challenge. The purposes of these hearings is to hear from people, Mrs Dare, exactly like you, to help us understand what that means locally, because it is no good us looking at a map and thinking, "Well, if we draw the line here that will be about right." We need to hear from people like you. So I am really pleased that you have come along today to tell us what you think about it because it means that Collette and I, when we go back to sit down and work out, well, what can we change, we have to think, "Well, what did Mrs Dare say, so can we do that?" We will do our best to try and meet everybody's needs, but of course you will be saying one thing, somebody else will be saying something else; councillors will come along and say what they think; MPs will say what they think, and we have got the task of trying to work out a plan that fits the rules.

That is just by way of a bit of background so you know where it has come from. We will do our best with the staff outside to let you go away with some information, if you want it. I know you are not all on line. The dominant tools, if I can use that expression, for working out what the art of the possible is online. In previous Commissions it was all

done with this sort of stuff, which is very difficult to manipulate and try and work out options.

On the Boundary Commission's website, if you were able to get access to it or some of your friends and relations can and want to have a look and see what you can do, you can get down to [here](#). I will just ask, it is good practice for Tim to do this. I will just ask Tim. Which is your current ward, Mrs Dare? Say that again. Sheffield South East? So we can zoom in on that.

MRS DARE: I can see Beighton.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The point of just putting this up for you for now is to show you that this is available to people who have got access to the internet. You can say, "Well, how many people live in this ward, how many people live in this ward." Remember what I said, we are absolutely stuck on what the numbers need to add up like. The problem we have got is if we change one piece here, it has what is called a ripple effect, so if you take a ward out of one constituency, you have then got to find a ward from somewhere else to go into it to make the numbers add up again. Does that make sense?

MRS DARE: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So that is what we are trying to do, but I commend this to you, if you can find somewhere to have a look at it. I also just finish with this: this consultation period finishes on 5 December, okay? So although the hearings are in Yorkshire and the Humber this week, last week and next week, the consultation period itself goes on to 5 December, so if you or your friends or anybody else wants to have a look at this and you want to put a submission in, the fact that they did not come today does not matter, they can still write to us and we will have their thoughts on paper and we can try and take that into account. Is that okay?

MRS DARE: That is fine.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. Well, thank you very much again for coming today. As I think, folks, you heard me say, the next scheduled speaker is at 1 o'clock.

CLLR HANRAHAN: Can I speak?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, that has pre-empted my next invitation.

CLLR HANRAHAN (Liberal Democrat Party): Sorry.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, that is absolutely fine. It is Mr Hanrahan, I believe?

CLLR HANRAHAN: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to come and tell us what you would like to tell us now. Mr Hanrahan, you have heard what I have said before, so if you could give us your name and address and then tell us what you would like to us hear please.

CLLR HANRAHAN: I am Adam Hanrahan, 26 Spring House Road, S10 1LT. I am a Liberal Democratic Councillor for Crookes and Crosspool. Well, that is the new name for it, but on yours the old ward was called Crookes ward, and there have been some slight variations in there with the new ward boundaries. Sorry, I am freakishly tall so --- That is now verbatim, I am really glad!

I think I would like to start off by saying that having just completed a three-year geography degree and spending much of my time looking at maps, I think the Commission has done a good job with difficult guidelines and rules on constituency sizes, you know, the plus and minus 5% is clearly a very difficult rule in which to work around. I think, on the whole, across the region and in Sheffield you have done a good job.

I think what I would like to start off by doing is talking about my own ward, Crookes and Crosspool. I think the move of it moving in to Sheffield Central and West, as it is kind of deemed on your suggested boundary, is on the whole a good one. I am a student and I live in the Steel Bank part of Crookes and Crosspool, and I naturally look towards the centre of the city. You know, the university is there; I am a postgraduate student now. It is where I do my shopping, it is where I come to work in the Town Hall, so it is often where I look towards things. I do not often look out towards the more suburban Ecclesall or Fulwood sides.

So I think that the inclusion of that in a Central and West constituency is a good one because I also think it is a good idea to have a constituency which does represent, you know, as many of the students of Sheffield as can possibly be. There are approximately 55,000 students in Sheffield on the whole, and I think it is a good idea for them to be concentrated in a constituency to really give them a voice in the city and really have one MP which is predominantly responsible for student concerns within the city, and as that is where the university and the students union are both located in Central and West, I think that would be a good idea to have the majority of the students concentrated there as well.

In terms of the broader changes to Sheffield, some of the minor amendments that I think are a good idea, it would be the movement of, as Cllr Sangar was saying earlier, B and

G, Nether Edge and Ecclesall, that rotation back to where they were previously so that you have Nether Edge becoming part of Central and West. Again there is a significant number of students that live there, predominantly from Sheffield Hallam University, and so again sticking with what I was saying earlier about having that predominantly student constituency.

Moving Beauchief and Greenhill back into Sheffield Heeley - Sheffield South, as it is on your suggested boundaries - just to keep that predominantly historical connection there. I know that a lot of the boundaries between B and G and Graves Park are very kind of porous and people move across them. It is not a particularly hard boundary in the way that some of the other ones are. It is quite permeable, people move across it. You would not really notice much difference; there are no real geographical barriers to that.

Then the movement of Ecclesall back from your suggested placement of it in Central and West into Sheffield Hallam and Stocksbridge, because I think it has got incredibly close links with Fulwood, of course that is also required to have constituencies which do give you a plus or minus 5%, which is obviously the most important thing.

I think I would like to echo Cllr Sangar's remarks earlier as well about the splitting of the two polling districts in Fulwood. I think it is important. I know that it is something that the Commission is not entirely looking to do, but I think it is helpful in the long run. (a), it does give that student constituency in Sheffield Central and West, and I know that when I lived in Endcliffe village, the wider village, in my first year, I did not go, you know, towards the further bits of Fulwood; I did not look out into the suburb. I went into Broomhill to do my shopping, I went into Walkley, I went into Nether Edge. Those were the areas that I was kind of focused in and that was where I was going to university. I do think there is that strong community bond there.

Particularly, you know, I lived in Fulwood in my first year and then I moved up to Crookes in my second year and I have stayed there ever since. I think that is the journey that a lot of students do take. I do think it would be good for students' continuity to have that continuity representation because, I mean, if there had been a general election in my first year I would have voted in one constituency and then immediately a few months afterwards moved into another one, in which I had had no say on who represented me. I think it is a good thing, as I said earlier, for there to be a significant student concentration in Central and West.

So the splitting off of those polling districts, which are, as we say, predominantly student focused in Fulwood would allow for that. Of course, having the Commission's suggestions be formed on the old ward boundaries means that as a point of necessity Sheffield political parties are going to have to deal with having parliamentary and ward boundaries which are not coterminous. You know, that can be seen in a few different places already in just the way it is. I mean, Crookes and Crosspool has changed. If Crookes and Crosspool were not to be a part of Central and West, that would cause

issues as to where boundaries are between the parliamentary constituency and the ward boundary between places like Crookes and Broomhill.

So I think it is important, and I think there are a range of things which suggest that. I think that the council accepts the way that Ecclesall, Dore and Fulwood have been grouped together historically; they part of the same Local Area Partnership here, which works together in the different parts of the city. Ecclesall, Dore and Fulwood are very closely linked and work together and pool money and resources in that way. And the same I know happens with Beauchief and Greenhill and Graves Park and Gleadless Valley, and that area in the south of the city, they are also part of the same Local Area Partnership, and also pool resources to do things which perhaps they would not be able to do otherwise individually.

I think that probably concludes, except to say that I would agree again that it would be a good idea to keep Sheffield South and Sheffield Heeley, and Sheffield Central and West, as it is for you, renamed as Sheffield Central, just because I think there are some quite historical ties. I think the people of Sheffield Heeley essentially do feel that strong historical and socio-cultural attachment to the name of Heeley, I think is quite a strong pull to them. With Sheffield Central and West, I think that if you accepted the amendment that I have suggested to you then Sheffield Central remains a more perhaps accurate geographical place name for it. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Anybody wish to ask any points of clarification from what Mr Hanrahan has said? Oh, my Assistant Commissioner colleague wants to ask, so you have got to concentrate on this one.

CLLR HANRAHAN: Oh ---

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Not at all. Thank you very much for that. I just wondered if you could reiterate which of the areas were in the Local Area Partnerships, so I can make sure my notes are correct.

CLLR HANRAHAN: Yeah, sure. The Local Area Partnerships which are involved in the amendment that I was suggesting is, there is the South West Local Area Partnership, which comprises Dore, Ecclesall, so these are on the new ward boundaries, of course. as well, so Dore, Ecclesall, Fulwood, Crookes and Crosspool. I think that is it. Yeah, sorry, I am looking to my colleague over there who chairs the LAP and who will correct me if I am wrong. In Sheffield South the Local Area Partnership is Graves Park, Gleadless Valley, B and G, and Arbourthorne? Richmond? And Nether Edge. Sorry, I beg your pardon, it is not the Local Area Partnership that I am involved with so it is a bit more difficult, but I hope that clears that up for you.

THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other points of clarification? (No response) Mr Hanrahan, thank you very much indeed.

CLLR HANRAHAN: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Unless I rush into another adjournment, I am going to check this time, anybody else want to have a go whilst we are here? (No response) No.

I am just sort of thinking forward. I am scheduled to adjourn for lunch at 1.30, and you will recall that I said earlier that we will not adjourn for more than an hour at any point. The next speaker is due at 1 o'clock, so I will stick to what I said earlier - we will come back in an hour but it may be in an hour's time that all we are doing is putting it off until 1 o'clock again, but I am just really concerned that if somebody does come in I do not want them waiting more than an hour, I do not think that would be reasonable. I will come back at 12.30. Thank you.

After a short break

Time noted: 1.22 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Some time ago I said I would come back at about 1 o'clock because we had got another person booked in who could see us then but that person did not come up in the eventuality. It has now just gone 1.20. I would normally adjourn for lunch for an hour at 1.30; I intend to adjourn now. I will come back again at 2.30. Just so we are shaping people's expectations, for the list for the rest of the day we have people booked in at 4.30, 5.00, and 5.30. Those are the only other bookings for this afternoon. I make no apology for repeating what I said earlier, I think if I leave it more than an hour before coming back and somebody turns up, then it is unreasonable to ask them to wait longer than that.

So we will hear anybody who comes along when they turn up; that will be fine. If nobody else turns up, then I will come back at 2.30, we will check that. We will then go to 3.30, and then our booking at 4.30 and so on. I am just sharing that with you so you can perhaps make your own arrangements for what you can best employ your time doing this afternoon. So until 2.30, it is lunchtime. Thank you.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 4.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, everybody. Welcome back to a resumption of the hearing on Day One in Sheffield. Just to remind us where we got to, we adjourned for lunch just before 1.30; we came back at 2.30 but there were no

speakers present so I adjourned again until 3.30. The same thing happened at 3.30; we are now at 4.30, and our next scheduled speaker has arrived. I have said hello to Vicky Seddon, Vicky you said to call to you, if you are happy with that.

MS SEDDON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Vicky. This lot over here have heard this but it is important that you know as well. My name is John Feavyour. I am an Assistant Commissioner with the Boundary Commission for England, and together with my colleague, Collette Rawnsley - I nearly forgot her name then, I would have been in trouble, would I not - we are responsible for having a look at all of the representations made to us, made to the Commission about Yorkshire and the Humber region, whether that be oral representations last week, this week or next week, and all the written stuff as well, and then deciding whether and to what extent we need to make representations to the Commission as to whether the initial proposals need to be changed, thrown away, start again or whatever.

So, because of that we are recording everything; you and I mentioned that earlier, so we are all on video and recorded in here, and I am asking everybody to give their name and address before they start. If you are ready, would you like to come up to the lectern? As I say, start with your name and address and then tell us what you want us to hear. Thank you.

MS SEDDON: Thank you for that introduction. Is it picking up all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MS SEDDON: Yes. My name is Vicky Seddon. I live in Sheffield at 39B Westbourne Road, Sheffield, S10 2QT, that is in Broomhill and that is in the Central constituency.

There are some points at issue which I understand have been forced on the Commission but which are so damaging, in my opinion, to our democracy that I wish to have my opposition to them put on record, and I hope that if other people voice the same concerns the Commission will feel that it should include this when it makes its next report so that Parliament is informed of that general real public concern. I am not going to go on forever about it; I am just going to make three points.

One is that in seeking to equalize the size of constituencies, which is obviously a good thing, the plus or minus 5% that is being worked to is too tight to enable community boundaries, natural community boundaries, to be respected, and so I think the provision that you were given to have to work to was unhelpful. The other suggestions for either 7.5% or even 10%, plus or minus, would, in my opinion, have been both acceptable and much more helpful in terms of respecting the natural community boundaries. That is the first point.

Then there is the point about whether the proposal should be based on the number of registered voters or on the size of population that is eligible to vote. Communities of high mobility, for example, where there are areas with lots of rental properties, often city centres or student areas, show the lowest registration rates. Should they be less well represented on that basis? That is very pertinent in particular in Sheffield Central, which is my constituency, which has the highest student population of any constituency in the whole country. And, of course, because of when the individual voter registration was brought in, which is a positive thing, the way it was brought in meant that many people did drop off the register, and so that whole thing about insisting it to be registered voters at a time when there is this kind of volatility in who is registered is unhelpful, and I think they should be doing much more about making sure that the individual voter registration works properly rather than people being allowed to just slip away and not be registered. Like I say, the fact that those people will still live in those areas and they will still want help from their MP, yeah, they will have less of their MP because there is more of them who are not taken account of. So I think that was a second kind of point of principle.

The third one is that these proposals are based on those voters registered by December 2015, and, of course, since then we have had the EU referendum and we have had a lot more people registering because it was something they wanted to get involved in. So the figures that it is being based on are not the most up-to-date figures for registration and, again, that is an undermining of democracy because those new registrations are not being taken into account.

So those are the three points of principle, but I know it is not the Boundary Commission's fault; they have been imposed on them by the Act of Parliament, but I did want to make that point.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MS SEDDON: Two further general points before I move on to the specific things I want to say is that for me the extent to which community boundaries should be honoured is really important because that whole thing of does it make sense to people, is it coherent, and whether it is natural boundaries, ward boundaries or local authority boundaries, that those should be respected. As you will see when I come on later on, I do not think that in the case of the proposals for Sheffield, which is what I am talking about really, they have not been respected and that is one of the reasons why I am quite critical of the proposals that are being made.

The second one is not such a factually based one but is highly important, I think, in that we know from following the referendum we have a sharply divided country. Certainly in Sheffield, the west and the east voted very differently, and there is a report of high tension in some parts of the communities. We have had the race hatred, the anti-immigrant, and so is this the right time, just when things are difficult and everybody is

trying to work hard to contain that, and in particular when a lot of parliamentary time is having to be given to, whatever Mrs May thinks, she will find she has to give quite a lot of parliamentary time to working through the consequences of the referendum, is that the right time to be making these changes in reducing the number of MPs at a time when their workload will be even higher and there will be a smaller number of them to do more work? That is kind of another general point.

On the specific proposals for Sheffield, currently we have five and a half seats, the half being a shared one with areas in the Barnsley local authority. The figures that are currently being used for the proposals for Sheffield, yeah, show that we should have 5.1 seats. That seems quite straightforward to me, just allocate five seats to Sheffield. But that is not what the proposals are. What the proposals are is three seats which are shared with other local authorities and just two which are wholly within Sheffield. So it does not meet the criterion of honouring natural community boundaries, but also, and I cannot quite work out, and perhaps somebody here can help me, how the figures do work out because if Sheffield is entitled to 5.1 but three of them have had sways with other people, which means it reduces the amount that Sheffield has got, how can that work out arithmetically?

However, constituencies that cover more than one local authority means a lot more work for the MP in dealing with casework and issues which concern him or her within the constituency because they have to deal with different practices, different officers, different systems, different processes, different cultures within those local authorities. So if you have got one local authority to deal with, that is one thing, but if you have got two to deal with it doubles that workload. And if you have got three local authorities, which one of these proposals has got three local authorities in it, how on earth do you manage that workload? It is impossible.

The shape of two of the constituencies, that is Sheffield Central and West, and Sheffield Hallam and Stocksbridge, are very off. Sheffield Hallam and Stocksbridge is very long and thin. It stretches enormously north and south. In Sheffield Central and West, it has got this very odd shape like [this](#), and anybody looking at it just says, "What? What are they doing? What are they playing at?" I have to say that one of the things I am very concerned about is the current mood of populace anti-politics, you know, they are all the same, they are all rubbish, it is all a conspiracy. If anybody looks at the map and the proposals, it just gives people ammunition to say, "What is going on here? Why have they done something that just looks so difficult and awkward?" and I think it helps to give people ammunition to think there is some kind of conspiracy, something unpleasant going on.

Now, I am sure the Boundary Commission is not trying to do that, but nevertheless how it looks is quite important, and I think particularly at the moment that that is a very important thing to bear in mind, that it is not just what you have done and what you think, but how it looks to the ordinary person who is not necessarily involved to the

same degree as you are in the detail. I really think that that needs, you know, that whole thing about Sheffield is entitled to five, why haven't we got five, why are we sharing three of them with other local authorities? It does not look good, it looks funny, and I think that that is something that you really need to take on board quite carefully.

The last point I want to make is related to the whole thing about the plus or minus 5%. That is quite small, and I know there has been some future proofing built in to the proposals, but nevertheless change can happen. Are we going to be here in five years' time and have to go through the same process again and change the boundaries again because they set it up with such a tight margin in terms of good changes? So, long term, how it looks, sensibleness, the effectiveness of MPs trying to represent people within different local authorities, those are the points I want to make to you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Are there any points of clarity anybody would ask Vicky about what she has just said? (No response) Vicky, thank you very much indeed.

MS SEDDON: Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Let me just say this by way of additional comment if I may. The Assistant Commissioners that the Boundary Commission has engaged to do these considerations, Collette and myself in terms of Yorkshire and the Humber, clearly we are of the Commission but we are actually independent of the initial proposals. Why do I say that? So we are not wedded to them in any more way than we are of anybody else's proposals. You asked a couple of questions in your commentary, which I do not propose to defend but I do propose just to mention a couple of things, not only because you have raised them but because it has come up before. One of the challenges that we have is that, to play back some of what you said, if we were only interested in Sheffield we could take Sheffield divided by five and say, "Thank you very much" and crack on. But of course we are not, we are looking at the whole of Yorkshire and the Humber, which of itself we have to reduce from 54 constituencies to 50 constituencies, and the only - and it is the only - immovable object within the legislation is the electoral quota. So, whichever way we carve it, we have to find a way of making every constituency the same number of electors.

I know you made reference to population, noted, but we have to comply with the legislation. It has already been pointed out to us, and Collette and I have noticed, Sheffield presents some challenges in terms of the sizes of the wards, because, of course, if you have large wards where three of them together is not enough for an electoral quota but four of them together is too many, then you end up having to do some fairly creative things, if I could put it that way, to get the numbers to work. The whole point of having these hearings and inviting comments is to try and find ways of getting through that. I am very grateful for you taking the time to come today, and I would only finish by saying that for your information or anybody else who is taking an

interest who you may be in contact with, the consultation period runs until 5 December, and anybody who wants to make representation through the website, and the details are on the notice board over there, on the wall, opposite you, do get in touch with us because representations made in writing will carry as much weight as you coming along today. We do want to hear from people if they have ideas about how we might go about preserving the electoral quota and nevertheless ending up with constituencies that you think are better suited for Sheffield.

Thank you very much.

I do not think we have anyone else ready just at the moment. The next speaker is scheduled for 5 o'clock.

MR HARSTON: Can I ask a question.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You can ask me anything you like.

MR HARSTON: (Inaudible)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, that is just my fault. I am going to give you a microphone because we need to be recorded. If you would like to give your name

MR HARSTON: Hello. My name is Jonathan Harston, asking a point of clarification. Is it true that this review process is now set in law to occur every five years?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think I know the answer to this but I know he knows the answer to it, so I will let Tim answer that.

MR BOWDEN: Yes, the answer to that is yes. There is this review, obviously, currently going on, which would come in for elections in 2020, it is called "The 2018 Review," and then, based on the current law, there will be a further review in five years' time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: This was not billed as a question and answer session but I am quite happy to deal with that. If there is nothing else, we will just stand down for a few minutes and give the next speaker a chance to arrive and start again at 5 o'clock. Thanks.

After a short break

Time noted: 5.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon again. It is 5.30, resuming day one of the Boundary Commission for England's hearings

in Sheffield. It is now 5.30. We were here a little while ago and I adjourned until 5 o'clock. I had anticipated a speaker coming then, who, in the event, did not come so we did not resume. There has been nothing since; it is now 5.30. We have two speakers scheduled in for now. I think we have Mr Shahid Ali and we have Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed.

Gentlemen, the other people in the room have heard what I am going to say but I make no apology for repeating it because it is important that you know. My name is John Feavoyour. I am an Assistant Commissioner with the Boundary Commission for England and it is my responsibility, together with my colleague, Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, who is just to your right, to consider all of the representations made in relation to the Yorkshire and the Humber region, whether those representations be written through the Boundary Commission's website or indeed any oral representations made today.

As part of the process, everything that is received will subsequently be published, including a verbatim record of today's proceedings. The process that we are using is when I ask you to come up to the lectern in a moment I shall ask you to give your name and address and then go on to tell us what it is that you would like us to be aware of. That way the recording can be transcribed in due course.

Once you have finished your own pieces, I will just check with anybody else present whether they need you to clarify anything. It is not an opportunity to cross-examine or argue or any of that. That might have been a party to a previous review but this review is not that way inclined, it is only about listening to what you have got to say. So without further ado, Mr Shahid Ali, can I ask you to come up, please? To the lectern, Sir, yes please, and, as I said, if you could give your name and address and then in your own time.

MR ALI: Thank you. My name is Shahid Ali, 46 Milton Road, Sheffield, S7. That is in Nether Edge.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR ALI: I was born in Nether Edge. I have lived there 37 years of my life. I am a community activist in the area and also a Chair of the South Sheffield Community Empowerment Project that works along the Abbeydale Corridor from Sharrow and Nether Edge.

I have looked upon proposed changes put forward by the Boundary Commission and I am deeply unhappy with the proposal to split the council ward of Sharrow and Nether Edge in two, where I have developed close working relationships with diverse communities around common issues which affect all along London Road and Abbeydale Road.

The Nether Edge community is based in the south of the city and it falls out of Sheffield as you move out of the city centre down Abbeydale Road. This road links the areas of Sharrow on one side and Millhouses on the other. It has developed a distinctive culture along the corridor, in Nether Edge with its sprawl of antique shops, innovative cafes, restaurants and delightful hidden gems - small quirky shops, I mean. The community is closely linked to Sharrow and Millhouses, often with relatives in those areas and children living in all three areas attending schools across the different areas. So, for example, you could live in Sharrow and your child could be attending a school in Nether Edge. You could be living in Nether Edge and your child could be attending a school in Millhouses, the Cardinal Junior School, or the Holt House Infants School there.

This exercise has not taken into regard the historic communities that reside there and it should have been focused, entirely focused, on Nether Edge and its residents and their needs, and unfortunately I do not think they have been taken into consideration.

Also, in Sharrow, so on the boundary of Sharrow and Nether Edge, literally a street apart, a multi-million pound mosque, a place of worship, was developed over a number of years by the communities of Nether Edge and Sharrow, with a large Muslim population that lives in Nether Edge and actually attends the mosque. The mosque is on Wolseley Road itself and it attends that mosque. Over the years we have had great relationships with the Member of Parliament, who has attended the mosque to give information to do his big conversations with the community, very successfully engaged with a large BME population, especially from the Muslim community, and even from the non-Muslim community as well because it is used as a focal point in the area of the council ward of Nether Edge and Sharrow.

Nether Edge has a rich history of the strong community identity, but that does not seem to have been taken into consideration, unfortunately. The new ward would alienate the area from the rest of the ward, in my view. It is essential that Nether Edge is a coherent settlement in the boundary review, something that is completely missing in these proposals. There is a natural boundary of the railway line which clearly differentiates it from the new proposed ward. So if you look at the new ward, you have got Nether Edge sticking out and the natural council boundary line is the railway line that cuts across. (Indicating)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Have we got one of these over there? There should be one on there. If you press that round one at the top of the laser pointer you can point at it and you can tell me where you are talking about.

MR ALI: I cannot actually --- Can we zoom in a bit more?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR ALI: A bit more?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR ALI: You see the railway line? (Indicating)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: This one here?

MR ALI: Yeah, the black line there. So that is the natural boundary actually. That is a railway line which has no --- Is there a laser?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There should be. Is it not working?

MR ALI: Oh, there it is.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR ALI: There actually is not any housing stock along this side.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR ALI: Basically, all along here from this side onwards is where all the housing area is and where the population is. That is literally cut off from the rest of this ward by the railway line. It has a few crossover points. In reality, we do not really mix with the communities other side of that railway. Our main focus is communities in Sharrow, in Ecclesall, going up to Millhouses. The new ward would destroy these close working relationships we have with places like Sharrow and alienate the distinctive cultural community that has developed in the Nether Edge area, and could really have a divisive effect on our community's representation in Parliament.

Historically, last year there were some really serious issues along Abbeydale Road, London road area, especially pertaining to bonfire night. The work that has gone in over the last year has gone across Sharrow and Nether Edge, you know, coming together as a ward, as a single council ward, and working on those issues together because the anti-social behaviour issues are common between the two.

Now, if we were to split those areas up, then the issues would permeate between the two but it would be the responsibility of two different Members of Parliament to look into the same issue, which does not really make sense. We have more in common with people in Sharrow and the Central ward and going around Broom Hall, you have got Ecclesall. You know, that is where we travel, that is where we work, well, we work anywhere, but that is where we send our children to school. My child goes to Hunter's Bar, which is just off Ecclesall, and I live in Nether Edge.

As a whole community, not the BME ethnic community but as a whole community, we do not really mix on this side of that railway line, and that, for me, is a very big detriment to us as a community in Nether Edge. My suggestion would be that Nether Edge is left with Sharrow in the Central ward. I have had a quick look and I have seen that Ecclesall and Beauchief and Greenhill have been sort of moved around, and I would suggest that they move back around, that Beauchief and Greenhill can go to Sheffield South, Ecclesall is moved back to Hallam and Nether Edge is put back into the Central ward. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Ali, thank you very much indeed. Are there any points of clarification anybody wants to ask at all? (No response) No, thank you. Mr Ali, thank you very much indeed.

MR ALI: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask Mr Shaffaq Mohammed, would you like to come up, please, and as before, if you could give us your name and address first and then in your own time, Sir.

CLLR MOHAMMED: (Liberal Democratic Party) Okay. My name is Shaffaq Mohammed and I am a resident at 28 Norborough Road, Sheffield, S9 1SG.

I have been a city councillor in this city since 2004. Previously I represented Broomhill ward, and more recently, for the last two years I have been the councillor for Ecclesall ward. So I want to talk about Ecclesall ward in particular. Ecclesall ward historically has had close ties with the communities of Whirlow and also Nether Green, and the submission, the proposals that we see in front of us will take away those ties. You may well get some, you know, submissions from local community groups. I have already had representations both from Ecclesall forum and the Carterknowle and Millhouses Group, who are not happy with the way things are and think it is odd that Nether Edge is going to be prised away in to Sheffield South, and then, kind of Ecclesall is lumped in with the proposed Central and West constituency.

They think it is the most natural fit with the communities in Nether Green which are in Fulwood ward and Whirlow, which are in Dore and Topley and, you know, prior to the boundary changes this year, elements of Ecclesall ward that Parkhead were in Ecclesall and now have gone into Dore and Topley ward, and it is just a matter of which side of the street you are. You know, the boundary is not as clear, whereas, I think I support the submission from Mr Ali that the railway line, as on the map, there from Nether Edge is a very solid boundary; the communities have always looked at each face, each other and in a sense Beauchief and Greenhill, I would say, as a whole always historically been in the Heeley constituency - it faces that way.

Similar to what Mr Ali has suggested, I would say that you need to put Central, the Nether Edge back into Central and West, put Beauchief and Greenhill back into Sheffield South, and put Ecclesall back into Hallam and Stocksbridge. That may require some minor changes elsewhere because I am mindful that the Sheffield wards are rather big and I would suggest that the only way forward would be for some minor local polling districts to be moved as opposed to whole ward boundaries. The reason I say that is places like Sheffield and Leeds have, you know, big wards compared to some of the other wards you are probably looking at in North Yorkshire and elsewhere. I would say that given that we have already just recently changed our ward boundaries you are working on the old stuff anyway, so naturally there is not as much community ties there, and clearly there are lots of people that have questioned the shape of Nether Edge, the way Nether Edge has been, because I want to make a representation on behalf of Nether Edge because I have got lots of relatives there.

Shahid Ali spoke about the Mosque, the £4 million investment that was wholly on donations from the local Muslim community in Sheffield, of which I count myself in and my family members that live in Nether Edge, Sharrow. Again, it is one single street and on one side of it, you know, you are going to be in Sheffield South, the other side you are going to be in Sheffield Central and West, and it just does not make sense when you have just got such a natural boundary there which is a railway line.

I would argue because of the issues that there are those similar communities that reside in what we would term now as Nether Edge and Sharrow, it is families that are going to be split. There is not that much connection with the areas of Heeley, Graves Park or Beauchief with Nether Edge. You know, Nether Edge has always just been lumped on because it just seems to be the odd ward. I think this is a chance to kind of keep it together. Historically, Sheffield Central constituency, not just the most recent change, but previously, it has always been together, Nether Edge, Sharrow, Broom Hall have always been within Sheffield Central, and it seems on this occasion - I know you have got numbers to match up - actually we will argue that communities are going to be affected here. I think on this occasion I think the views of communities should matter more than the numbers, and I think, you know, there are possibilities of one or two minor polling districts being moved from one or two wards and I would strongly support those suggestions, and I suspect they were made this morning by Andy Sangar, who has spoken to me about the changes. I just want to mention that I am a Liberal Democrat councillor, I did not do that in the beginning. That will be my submission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Councillor. Any points of clarification? (No response) Perhaps I can just ask one from myself. I heard you say that we might need to go to polling districts to - my words, not yours - "fix the numbers", but I think that was what you were alluding to.

CLLR MOHAMMED: Yeah.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I clarify, are you inviting us to split wards in order to be able to do that?

CLLR MOHAMMED: I am inviting you to have a look at Fullwood ward in particular. Given that I used to be a councillor in Broomhill, there is a group called "Be Best," I do not know if they have made a submission or not, they are looking at a local plan and "Be Best" covers --- Can you zoom in a bit? Right, keep going. You can see Broomhill ward there. (Indicating) Can you see where Endcliffe --- Just zoom back out again. Right, can you see where it says "Endcliffe Crescent"?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

CLLR MOHAMMED: That area is the student village, so I was councillor in that area. Historically that has been where all the students are based, at Endcliffe and Ranmoor. Those students never face west. They have very little contact with people in Fulwood, Lodge Moor, they always look towards Broomhill. In a sense, the community group there, "Be Best" are developing a local plan in which the boundary is that and Ranmoor village and Endcliffe village are in their plan. That has already been submitted. I think there was going to be some consultation. Given I am not a councillor there anymore I am not totally up to speed, but when I was there and I was supporting "Be Best's" submission, that area was in, and I just think it is a natural fit to put that back in with Sheffield Central and West, or whatever the name is going to be. I would say just keep it as Sheffield Central because that is what it is known as.

Similarly, given that you are changing Crookes ward, which is another student dominated ward, into Sheffield Central, it just makes a natural fit. In that case, I think the numbers should stack up. There may be, you know, one constituency a couple of thousand less than some of the others, but I think that is the fix without causing more disruption across the South Yorkshire region, which is not that I want to do. Clearly, others might come in and argue that but I think from our point of view of trying to get Nether Edge, Ecclesall and Beauchief into what I would say are their natural communities, that is the fix that I suggest you take up.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed, Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed.

I am just going to say a couple of words, particularly for the last two speakers, because the other folk in here have heard this before, but I think it is worthwhile just repeating. You will have heard me say earlier that Collette and I have to consider all the considerations made in the Yorkshire and the Humber region, whether written submissions or orally today, last week in Leeds, we are in Northallerton later this week, and then in Hull. The consultation is open until 5 December. Numerous people have expressed to us their frustrations around the electoral quota, the numbers that we have

to work to. I just want to remind you that that is the one thing we cannot do anything about. It is an absolute, it is a must in the act; we cannot shift from those numbers.

Other things in the act we have to have regard to. That is more flexible. Why am I just reminding you both of this now? Because the consultation is open until 5 December, I would invite you to have a look at our guidance and have a look at the website, and if there is anything else you can help us with in terms of thinking through that, please do not ask us to change the numbers because we cannot change the numbers. But if you can come up with proposals that mean the numbers do what the act requires us to do and suggests ways forward, then we would be very, very pleased to hear from you. I will just leave you with that. The website details are on the sign.

With that, I think we are about, coming up to 5.50. We have no more speakers booked again today so I propose to adjourn for an hour. I will come back at 6.50; if there is nobody here by seven o'clock, then I propose, unless anybody makes representations to me at that point, to close the hearing for the day. We did publicise that we were going to go on until 8 o'clock and I have made it clear all the way through the day that I will never adjourn for longer than an hour in case somebody turns up and I did not feel it was appropriate for them to wait longer than an hour. In actual fact, there has been nobody turn up today on spec and therefore if I do not get anybody before 7 o'clock, I am going to call it the end of the day for today's hearing; we are back again tomorrow from 9 until 5. I will stand down now. I will come back at 6.50 and if there is nobody else here by 7, then we will call that a day. Thank you very much.

After a break

Time noted: 6.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening. My name is John Feavoyour. I am an Assistant Commissioner with the Boundary Commission for England and it is my responsibility, together with my colleague, Assistant Commissioner Collette Rawnsley, who is just to your right, to consider all of the representations made in relation to the Yorkshire and the Humber region. When I say "representations", that means all the written stuff that comes in via the website and any oral representations that are made either at Leeds last week, here at Sheffield, Northallerton or Hull next week. We will do that at the end of the consultation period, which runs until 5 December. So anything that you have to say today will also go on the record, as it were, and we are videoing proceedings in order that a verbatim transcript can be made of all of that, which probably by next spring will be on the Boundary Commission's website, so anybody else who wants to see what counter-proposals or comments we have had can have a look at those and can comment on those as well in due course, if that is what they want to do. Because we are videoing it, when people come up to say what they want to say, I ask you to give your name and address and then share with us

what your views are. So, at your convenience, if you would like to pop up for us, and, as I say, name and address and then off you go.

MR DAVIS: Have I got a time limit?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, Sir.

MR DAVIS: Thank you. Is this on?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is.

MR DAVIS: My name is Roger Davis and I live at 61 Charnley Avenue. At the moment that comes within the Ecclesall ward, but I believe that you are working on the old boundaries, are you not, for the changes?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is correct.

MR DAVIS: I have been in Sheffield all my life, I might say, so I am very intimate with the rolling hills, the topography and what rivers we do have, none of which are navigable, but nevertheless they can make useful boundary marks.

We have a difficulty, of course, with the topography of Sheffield, with the road system, and we have had pretty compact areas with good road systems in the past for the constituencies. Now, I understand, of course, that the constituencies are going to be much bigger or at least bigger anyway because of the reduction in the number of constituencies of the whole country.

My feeling is that there is very little connection not only between the centre of the new proposal in Hallam but also, of course, even more so with the south and the north ends of the city. There are not any good connections, nor is there a history of these being bound together. The history, of course, shows Ecclesall as an important member of the Hallam constituency, and although Stannington is a new one, this does stretch it, I know, further north, but it is taking an even bigger leap going further north into Penistone East, a lot of rural areas, which will, of course, make it difficult in terms of the population. There is a very, very good link between both Dore and Ecclesall as far as the road system is concerned, both on the west and the east of Ecclesall, we have got roads that connect up between Dore and Totley. After that, there is no real good connection between any of those points that go further north. Indeed, there are main roads right in the centre that cut right across it and cut across any form of community that exists further north.

I think we have always focused on communities, and while it is difficult, I agree, in trying to put boundaries in certain places, because there have to be lines drawn somewhere, I just thought that the elongation was not really what we would be used to in Sheffield.

Ecclesall, for example, could be put back in, and I know --- The other thing is I recognise the knock-on effects, so we would have to then say, "Well, where would the, you know, the population balance be." You have included Beauchief and Greenhill in that boundary there, which is not currently part of the Hallam constituency, so there is a big, a reasonable population there that could be taken out. In fact, it would more or less balance with Ecclesall. Looking at the historical communities that we have now, well, historical communities which still exist, I should say, to this day, I would like to see those kept together. Although, as I say, I do not mind going out to Penistone East or Stocksbridge for walks and so on, it is not actually a community I can relate to. All the shopping, all the churches, all the road systems link that area together as a cohesive area, as a cohesive group. Is there anything you want to put to me?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, Sir. This is really the opportunity for you to put your views on the record.

MR DAVIS: I see.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: In fact, it is specifically not for me to defend the initial proposals.

MR DAVIS: No.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: And, indeed, I am not wedded to them. I was not part of putting them together.

MR DAVIS: Right.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But it is my responsibility, together with Collette, to listen to what local people have got to say and try and understand from your commentary the extent to which the initial proposals make sense or, in fact, do not make sense and what your thoughts are as to what else we might consider.

MR DAVIS: Yes. I do not think there is much of a community with Stocksbridge. On the other hand, I understand you have got a problem and there has to be a line drawn somewhere. Whilst I think that Stocksbridge and Upper Don in normal times with the normal constituencies would be stretching it a little bit, I recognise that we may have to agree, you know, that that has to be so. But I think that there has to be a consideration of other facets. I think Penistone East is really stretching the community style too far, and the topography, the road system, everything is, there is no connections. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Davis, thank you very much indeed.

MR DAVIS: Cheers.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just as you step down, I will just finish with this, as far as you are concerned. Thank you. As I said whilst you were speaking a moment ago, our key issue really for coming to Sheffield is to hear from the likes of yourself, to try and better understand how these things match together.

I mentioned to you earlier than the consultation runs until 5 December. I repeat that and I would refer you to our website, the Boundary Commission website, and the details are on the notice board there, because the only thing that is a must in the legislation is the electoral quota. We cannot change that number, you know, and it is all on the guidance.

MR DAVIS: I understand.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So please do not ask us to change that; we cannot.

MR DAVIS: No. From the start I understood your problem

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Absolutely, but the point I am going to make is if, as you alluded to when you were speaking, if you have ideas around how we can re-draw the lines but preserve the numbers, we want to hear from you. Now you have put that on record so we have got that. If at any time between now and 5 December you want to reinforce that or you want to others who you know or whatever to make their comments, please do so through the website. Collette and I will have a think about that and try and work it out.

The other issue which I will mention, because I think is important, it is a specific issue for Sheffield: your wards in Sheffield are of a particular size, such that three of those wards typically is not big enough, four of them, typically, is too many. So we have got to find a way of doing that, and if you can see, if we fix one bit over here, it may actually have a knock-on effect further on.

MR DAVIS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is the challenge and it is for us to try and work that out. We will take account of what you said and I am very grateful for you coming along this evening.

MR DAVIS: I understand, you know, what you say, really because I understand that there are problems but I do not think they are insurmountable.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: And that is the challenge for Collette and I in the winter.

MR DAVIS: Right. Thank you very much. Can I just make it clear, up to 5 December I can submit online, is it?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Correct. Absolutely right.

MR DAVIS: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR DAVIS: Thank you very much for listening to me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, not at all.

MR DAVIS: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Not so much for you, but for the record, I adjourned this hearing just before 6 o'clock and I said we would come back at 7; you have come along at 6.30 and I have taken your evidence straightaway. For the point of anybody saying why did I not wait until 7, the people who were here earlier on, who I said I was going to adjourn until 7, have left and indicated to me on doing so that they had no intention of returning. So I therefore took a view that there was nothing to be lost by taking your evidence straightaway. We are now at 6.45. We will stay until 7 and if nobody else comes we will adjourn for the day. Mr. Davis, thank you very much indeed.

MR DAVIS: Can I just say thank you very much for the way that you have taken me straightaway. These things are difficult and challenging for us being the constituents of these areas, so if we could get to a situation where we can then make some agreement. Just the size of the task that you have got, the size of the constituency, I think, you know, you have got a very big challenge, but thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will do our best. Thank you, Sir.

MR DAVIS: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Well, this is the end of Day One in Sheffield. It is 7 o'clock in the evening. There is nobody waiting to speak. We have had one person arrive during the day, on spec, who we have heard from, and other than that, there are no more bookings. I therefore propose to adjourn until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you very much. Good night.

The hearing adjourned at 7.00 pm until 9.00 am on Tuesday 18 October 2016

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