

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**PROCEEDINGS**

AT THE

**2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND**

HELD AT

**ALDERSGATE ROOM, CENTRAL HALL WESTMINSTER,  
STOREY'S GATE, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, SW1H 9NH**

ON

**TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2016**  
**DAY TWO**

Before:

**Mr Howard Simmons, The Lead Assistant Commissioner**

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Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP  
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At 9.00 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome to the second day of the hearing. For those who do not know, my name is Howard Simmons and I am one of the Assistant Commissioners chairing the session in London and Sam is the Lead Officer from the Boundary Commission who is supporting us.

MR HARTLEY: I will take the opportunity to remind new visitors that we are recording today. We are required to take a record of the public hearings. As you see, there is a video recording which will be published alongside all the other representations in the spring of next year.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I believe our first two speakers are present. Ms Jemal, would you like to come forward to the podium and would you begin by giving your name and address, please.

CLLR JEMAL: (Enfield Council) Thank you and good morning. My name is Jansev Jemal and my address is 11 Rendlesham Road, Enfield, EN2 0TS. Enfield, for those who do not know, is in North London. I am an Enfield girl born and raised and at various points in my life have resided in each of the three constituencies that make up the London Borough of Enfield. For the last maybe two-and-a-half years I have been a local councillor in the borough representing the Labour Party. As part of my council duties, I chair a standing committee on electoral review which looks at preparations for elections and reviewing successes learning points for the future. We also look at the Boundary Commission reviews and will lead on a council submission to the process separately.

My comments pick up on thoughts from all of these aspects of my life. Our committee met last week and when we sat down together to compare notes on the proposals, what was striking is the feeling that across all the councillors, irrespective of political party, is that what we were looking at was the result of a numbers exercise and we were. We recognise that you are set a task based on reducing the number of constituencies and ensuring that each constituency was no smaller or larger than the set parameters laid out in the document. What seems to be missing is the importance of cultural connections and we felt in particular transport links as well and I am sure that once the initial statistical modelling exercise happens, there is an attempt to factor some of these into account but local knowledge may be limited.

To give you one particular example from Enfield, there is one particular ward called Ponders End. It currently sits in the Edmonton constituency. It used to be part of Enfield North. Geographically, it constitutes part of a stretch of the Hertford Road which is quite an iconic road which you really would not want to get stuck on in rush hour. Along with other wards in Enfield North including my own of Southbury, it is just a whole

series of them across the Hertford Road which is a long, continuous road. The fit is so natural that it actually had cross-party support at the meeting that it belonged there. It is not what the Commission have proposed this time round. The Commission have proposed instead that the ward called Grange would go into Enfield North. Grange has a far more natural fit in terms of both location and culturally with Bush Hill Park which also now resides in Edmonton.

A second area on which there is cross-party support is the consternation at the loss of Enfield Southgate. I am sure we are not alone in terms of areas about this and I know that there is a need to reduce the number of constituencies but, as one of the outer London boroughs, our population is growing. It has been growing since the cut-off point that you have been working to and it will continue to grow over the next few years. I sit on the Planning Committee as well and we passed a development in the summer of 10,000 houses in an area called Meridian Water in Edmonton to be built over the next 20 years. Now that that has been given the go ahead, I might not have a crystal ball but if the Borough of Enfield goes down to two constituencies, either next time or the time after that when we review these, we are going to have to end up looking at breaking up one or two constituencies because they become exceptionally large and this is where, in terms of population growth, yes, to an extent there is population growth everywhere, but I think the outer London boroughs are far more susceptible to that because we are seeing an outward drift because it is not as expensive either to rent or to buy as it might be more centrally.

As far as retaining the three seats in Enfield and making this work within the remit that you have been set, the Labour Party proposals would actually look at a solution for that and I would refer you those which I understand have already been presented.

I wanted to end by giving an anecdotal story of my parents. My parents are not political but they talk to me about what I do in terms of the Council and they heard the Boundary Commission adverts on the radio that had come on. They asked me about it and they said, "Why are we having to go through all of this again?" because their ward is a ward which once upon a time was in Enfield Southgate, it then, after the last review, got moved into Enfield North and they joked with me, "I'm sure we'll end up in Edmonton now" and because of where they are, that is just not going to happen and, if they are going to end up anywhere, it is going to be somewhere else but not in Edmonton. I explained to them that there is a need to review from time to time but I think that, in terms of the wider public, they get to know their local administrators, whether it is their constituency ... In terms of their ward, I think some people will have a greater, lesser understanding of wards, but they get to know their constituency and their council and all of these things have a bearing on that. In terms of the need for review, I think we are quite short-termist in this country generally and I would like to see us try and take a longer term perspective. I appreciate that might be difficult given the parameters that the Boundary Commission have.

Thank you that is all I wanted to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very helpful insight. Are there any questions for clarification? In which case, thank you very much for your submission. Next, Mary Macleod.

MS MACLEOD: Good morning. I am Mary Macleod from 26 Kinnoul Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8NQ. I am also the former Member of Parliament for Brentford and Isleworth.

Thank you for allowing me the time this morning to respond to your extensive work on the Boundary Commission's proposals for London. As the former Member of Parliament for Brentford and Isleworth, I want to thank you for all that you have done because I know that it is not an easy task doing those proposals and they are very complex. Naturally, I reviewed your proposals for the Brentford and Chiswick constituency with great interest. As someone who has walked every street in the old constituency many times and worked on local community campaigns for years, I have a good sense of what local residents feel about the area. Today, I want to say a few words to strongly support your draft proposals as I believe they deliver some very important outcomes. I do believe the boundary proposals do create a fairer democracy and a much stronger community in West London.

I briefly want to mention about the fairer democracy because I have seen on some local websites that these proposals are unfair. I had a very large constituency as a MP which I was naturally very proud to represent for five years in Parliament. However, with the demographic changes in the capital, this review is really necessary and important to allow constituents to be heard in a fair way through their elected representatives. My former constituency was one of the largest constituencies and the proposed changes will bring it in line with the average. As much as I thoroughly enjoyed representing the people in Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath, which are Hounslow wards, and Hounslow South – it was a real honour to do that – the number of total constituents exceeded most other constituencies and even though my excellent staff got through the 22,500 pieces of casework and resolved so many local issues over five years, it does take long hours and commitment when you in essence have the same parliamentary budget as anyone else and you have 20,000 more residents than some other constituencies. I do believe that this very, very strongly creates a fairer democracy.

More importantly, to the actual specific proposals themselves. First of all, it does create one stronger Chiswick community. The three wards, Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards are at the moment in the one constituency. The additional ward you proposed, Southfield, has always been a key part of the Chiswick local community and I think it is an excellent idea to bring it within the boundary. Chiswick Homefields and Chiswick Riverside, both are clearly part of the Chiswick community because they have Chiswick in their name. Turnham Green

is, I think, a really important essential part of that Chiswick hub. It is right at the heart of Chiswick High Road geographically, at the centre of all the Chiswick community events, whether that be street stalls or school fairs on the green; it has within it key Chiswick community facilities for Chiswick residents. Whether it is the Chiswick library, the Chiswick health centre, the Chiswick police station or the Chiswick Town Hall, all of those community facilities are in the Turnham Green ward and these serve the Chiswick people. People in the Turnham Green ward largely have a Chiswick W4 postcode, so they are very much Chiswick and, if you asked anyone in Turnham Green where they lived, they would not say "Turnham Green", they would say "Chiswick".

The other ward as part of the Chiswick community is Southfield ward which is a new addition and I believe that to include that within the Chiswick constituency makes complete sense as it always felt quite strange why it was not included in the other Chiswick wards for the parliamentary constituency. I bought my first ever flat in this ward in 1991 I think it was and felt I was buying in Chiswick because it was a W4 postcode and I used either the Turnham Green or the Chiswick Park Tube Station. Interestingly enough, the Chiswick W4.com, which is an excellent website, says about elections, "Chiswick, covered by four local government wards ...". So, the local community all see Chiswick as being those four wards and the four wards being Chiswick Homefields, Riverside, Turnham Green and Southfield.

Southfield ward events are advertised in the local Chiswick press like the *Chiswick Herald*, and I think what the proposals here do is reunite Chiswick as one and make it an even stronger Chiswick community. The new proposals with the Southfield ward also combine a conservation area. Bedford Park is a conservation area and it unites Bedford Park together. Before, for some reason, half of Bedford Park was elsewhere. This again combines that together. The Bedford Park Society is a very, very strong residents' association which again unites the residents in that area. Thus, it makes real sense for Bedford Park to be re-united in the Southfield ward as part of the new constituency.

In that area, just beside Bedford Park and Southfield ward is Turnham Green Tube Station and it is really at the crossroads between some of the Chiswick wards. Riverside naturally is below because it is by the river, but you have Homefields on one side of it, you have the Southfield ward on another angle of the tube station and then you have Turnham Green ward. It is all a real hub around there and that is where you find many of the Chiswick events. They are brilliant events – if you have not been, I would encourage you to go – like the Chiswick Boot Festival and the Bedford Park Festival. They all take place right beside Turnham Green Tube Station for Chiswick residents. I think that Chiswick proposal is really strong.

Secondly, I want to talk about retaining the Isleworth and Osterley heritage in your proposals. I think it is really important that Osterley, Isleworth and Syon wards do stay together within the constituency boundaries as you have proposed. All are very much

seen as part of Isleworth in West London. You have Osterley Park at the top which creates a geographic natural boundary. Ninety-nine per cent of the residents live below the park and the entrance to the park is on Jersey Road in the Osterley ward at the south part of the park. Thus, it makes sense that that part of Osterley comes within the Isleworth environment. In fact, if you ask people in Osterley where they lived, they would probably say that they lived in either Osterley or Isleworth; they are used interchangeably. You see it very visibly on the Sky Headquarters' website. Sky have on their website their Osterley office as is headed and then underneath it has the address with Isleworth as part of the postcode. Osterley and Isleworth are used interchangeably in the society and business around that area. I do think it is really important to keep that Isleworth, Osterley and with the Syon link to it because, again, in Syon, people do not necessarily say they live in Syon, they say they live in Isleworth. Again, it is a really strong hub that you have created there between Osterley, Isleworth and Syon.

Just on the Brentford link, strengthening that Brentford link, Brentford now also has alongside it the Northfield ward community and, over the years, the Northfield ward and the Brentford ward have done more and more together and just beside Boston Manor ward as well. A good example of this is the Brentford Festival where before it used to be in Boston Park and now it is in Blondin Park which is in the Northfield ward. The Brentford and Northfield community is very close in that area and they use the facilities from each other's wards. Interestingly enough, on Wikipedia, it said that the "Brentford Festival, a local town fair, has been held in Brentford every September since 1900" although, on the organiser's website, it says that it is in its eleventh year. I am not quite sure which is true but whichever is true, the history is there and Northfield ward for me is a good addition to the constituency in strengthening that Brentford link.

On the Hounslow bit of the ward, as I say, it now moves over to Feltham and Hounslow. I think it does make sense to put the Hounslow wards together. Hounslow is very much seen as one community and there was always a massive crossover between the Members of Parliament within Hounslow; we were constantly almost on a day basis telling each other we were in each other's wards because things within Hounslow, whether you are visiting one of the mosques, the Gurdwara, the police station, the Civic Centre, they are all in a Hounslow hub and around Hounslow and people move around Hounslow in their daily lives a lot and it feels very much as one community.

In summary, I want to say that I feel what you have managed to achieve here is to create three very distinct communities as part of these proposals which strengthen the cultural and geographic links that they already have. Firstly, you have the Chiswick: Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside, Turnham Green and Southfield, the whole of Chiswick wards all come together now which I think is a real positive to strengthening that Chiswick community. Then you have the hub of Brentford and Northfield and then you have the Osterley/Isleworth/Syon hub. It has created three very, very good, strong community hubs in West London and something that I think does overall create a much

fairer democracy and a stronger community overall in the Brentford and Chiswick constituency proposals. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Are there any matters for clarification? In that case, thank you for that. It is pleasing if some of the proposals do hit the mark, as they say. Clearly, we are going to have to do harder in Enfield, are we not?

Is Mr Mark Higton here? Would you like to come forward, sir, and introduce yourself by name and address at the beginning, please.

MR HIGTON: Hello. My name is Mark Higton and I live at Braybrook Street in Old Oak ward in Hammersmith. I am 40 years of age and I have actually lived in Hammersmith and Fulham for over 20 years; I bought my first property in Munster ward in 1997 and then I ended up moving to Old Oak in 2005. I have lived in North Hammersmith for a good part of the last ten-or-so years although my family originally moved to West London from Virginia in 1794; we have lived in North Kensington and in North Hammersmith since that period. The family has owned about 18 different properties over the last 100 years in North Kensington and in Hammersmith.

The reason why I am here to speak today is that first of all I would like to support the Boundary Commission's proposals for the creation of a Hammersmith and Fulham seat. I would secondly like to support the Boundary Commission's proposals for the K&C seat. I oppose the Boundary Commission's proposals for the creation of twinning three of the wards in North Hammersmith with Ealing and moving the old Oak ward to Brent. I oppose the Lib Dem's proposals which I think concur with the Boundary Commission and Labour's proposals in terms of splitting up the four Hammersmith wards and allocating them along with North Kensington and North Westminster. I believe these are ill conceived. I support the idea of keeping all four wards together as I mentioned and I believe it would be historically more appropriate for these seats to be paired or twinned with Willesden.

My chief reasons for supporting the proposals for a Hammersmith and Fulham seat is that the new boundary size inevitably means that a new boundary for the seat must be drawn and there are some natural limitations with Fulham and that is a river. It would therefore be better that the new seat combines a greater part of what was the old Hammersmith South seat and Hammersmith North seat, not only because of the Council's boundary but because these seats that have been chosen have largely been developed simultaneously over the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the expansion of the railway southward to the river which means that there is a lot of common ground for those people living in these areas.

For a similar reason I support that K&C remain together and be allowed to have a cosept. I think the merits of creating a new seat that combines the four northern

Hammersmith seats and the North Kensington seat and the North Westminster seat is an artificial one. I think the only reason why anyone might suggest this is because of the actual boundaries: the A40 and the railways. Although this, I think, largely entraps a large number of the population within those confines which they have mainly been trying to resolve for many years with various tunnel solutions, etc. I think actually creating a seat that will put all these together with one parliamentary MP would not help or aid those individuals at all and it would deprive them of historical links to the north and to the south of traditional areas such as in Westminster North, Maida Vale and other sorts of areas where there is common ground.

I reject the idea of moving Askew, Wormholt and White City and Shepherd's Bush to Ealing and separating them from Old Oak. My chief reason for this is those four wards have always been grouped together and largely developed together having historically largely been agricultural lands with the Uxbridge Road and Shepherd's Bush Green forming a hub where a lot of the produce was actually always locally sold. Commoners in Willesden, in North Kensington and Hammersmith North always had rights to have their animals forage over the winter and it was only the stalling of the Central Line which was developing westward which meant a lot of this land was not simultaneously developed with the land further south in the borough. Having said that, Old Oak ward itself has always been the largest ward in the borough; its name has changed a number of times since the 1900s; it used to be called Wormwood Scrubs and then there was a separate ward called College Park and Latimer, and Latimer included some land relating to the Latimer Road and Holland Park. There was a council boundary change at one point which then meant that those lands going east of Shepherd's Bush Road and Scrubs Lane then became part of K&C. Whilst there are some historical relationships between North Kensington and North Hammersmith, these are relatively limited. As I was saying, Old Oak ward itself has always been the largest of the wards and it used to include Uxbridge Road, it used to include Shepherd's Bush Green and actually what is now known as Shepherd's Bush Green ward used to be called St Stephen's. The relevance of St Stephen's ward and Shepherd's Bush is an important one; it is because when the land was being developed in the 1850s onwards, all of this land was church land; it was owned by Kensington diocese. As such, a lot of the churches in the north of the ward are all linked with the church of St Stephen's and that has always had great historical links with Kensington. That brings us on to Old Oak itself and its relationship with what is today the Wormholt and White City ward, Askew ward and also with what is known today as Shepherd's Bush ward.

As I mentioned, the Church of England had been trying to develop the north of the borough for many, many years and this generally had failed because the extension of the super loop for the Circle Line stalled in around 1895 and that saw the funding for the Central Line expanding westward also failing at this time. The Church of England wanted to make the area get more recognition and become more profitable. There was a goods station until 1940 in Old Oak called originally Wormwood Scrubs and St Quinton's. That provided a large amount of employment for the people locally. The



Church of England in 1900 deliberately donated a lot of their lands for the White City Exhibition Centres and for creation of ornamental gardens et cetera deliberately to make the area more pleasant for those parishes slightly to the south which was called St Stephen's ward which some people might refer to as Shepherd's Bush ward or the boundaries (not entirely accurate) and also with Askew. That meant that for around 10/15 years they actually had the exhibition lands there. That made a lot of the actual trains in other areas more profitable train lines and that meant that the extension of the Central Line was then possible after 1908. Because of that, a lot of tourism et cetera was brought to the area. That meant that the Old Oak Estate was created in 1907 and when the Church drew up the plans to create the Old Oak Estate, there were two or three phases. The first phase was a phase to start from 1907 to around 1914 but that was delayed by the war until about 1919 and then there was a second phase to extend the estate further south and east and that created the North Wormholt ward which is generally known as Flowers Estate. When they originally drew up these plans, the actual roads were all mapped out at the time. The roads in the area were not created in 1907 or then in 1924; a lot of the roads in the planning had all been done in advance following a lot of traditional routes. Thus, there were already strong connections between what is Old Oak and Shepherd's Bush today and also with Askew. It has to be remembered that a lot of commoners would take their animals on to what was Wormholt which was later developed into the Flowers Estate and also subsequently the White City area which developed in the 1950s after the war.

I know that some people will talk about boundaries and about the ward not being joined up, about having weak links and other sorts of things, but I think historically if you look at the development of the ward, the Church's original plans and how these have come out, whilst White City itself does significantly change the way in which the area is generally represented and the way in which people characterise it, there are a lot of strong local connections to the areas. As for Old Oak itself, when you talk to some people on the edge of Holland Park and talk to some other individuals in their eighties or nineties who actually live on Uxbridge Road, they will say, "I live in Old Oak ward" because it was not until the 1950s when that change occurred.

I believe it would be a bad thing for the area if Old Oak were separated from Shepherd's Bush and also from Askew given that I think people in the area identify more with Shepherd's Bush than they would do with Ealing. I think if you ask people in Old Oak where they are, they would prefer the seats to be kept together. In terms of Willesden, we have always had boundaries along the Harrow Road or actually slightly north of the Harrow Road and a lot of the employment has always been via the goods yard and the goods station that used to exist and I think that with the Old Oak development going forward which is taking place in the next 10/15 years, some people may know that that will see a significant development; we will have around 14,000 to 25,000 houses in the north of Hammersmith being developed. It is likely that the Hammersmith population in the south will probably decrease in certain areas, in the north will increase, and that is why I think that keeping the seats largely together so that

it is represented by one Member of Parliament who understands those people who are unemployed. The four wards, I must point out, have some of the highest levels of deprivation and illiteracy in the country – that is Askew, Wormholt and White City, and Old Oak. If you look at the actual schools, we share boundaries; so people in Askew go to two schools: one in Old Oak and one in Wormholt which is on the boundary with Old Oak. If you actually look at the schools, a lot of those people's children in Askew, particularly towards the north of the ward, will be attending schools in Old Oak or actually in Wormholt. For those reasons and the fact that when we hold events, there is an organisation called the Big Local that is in White City and they organise a lot of events in Old Oak and also in Askew and the area goes down to areas of Shepherd's Bush which would be considered in the Shepherd's Bush ward but actually fall really within the historical Wormholt boundary and, when I talk about the historical Wormholt boundary, that is the Old Oak boundary from around 1900. As I say, keeping the four wards together I believe is the best thing for the local area. I believe they have stronger links through the railways and other sorts of things with the north of the borough rather more than the east.

For instance in Ealing, if you look at the development of East Acton ward, although the train station was renamed East Acton in Old Oak, East Acton ward itself is to the west of the four northern wards and to Old Oak and that was developed very late. Fairway and all those developments were developed in the 1950s well after the demarcation of the A40. Thus, whilst some people in the north east of Acton may actually utilise some of the shopping centre and everything else like that in Old Oak, in Askew and Shepherd's Bush et cetera, the relationships they have with us are probably stronger but if you look at the demarcation line below the A40 and also around Poet's Corner, they identify far more strongly with ... My cousin Olivia lives in Poet's Corner and if you said to her, "Where do you identify with? Do you identify with Askew or do you identify with any other areas?" generally they would not. I think the Askew Road is a natural boundary and I think that should be respected.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very helpful. Are there any points for clarification? Thank you.

Is there anyone else present who wishes to make a representation? If not, our next booked speaker is at 9.50 and I shall adjourn until then. Thank you very much, indeed.

Time Noted: 9.33 am

After a short break

Time Noted: 9.50 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, I believe our next speaker is Siobhan Aarons who has just walked in the door and will be straight on. Come up to the lectern and would you start by giving your name and address.

MS AARONS: I am Siobhan Aarons and I am in SE1 around Elephant and Castle. In the Boundary Review, we will have a new ward from Lambeth coming into Bermondsey and Old Southwark. This is quite a positive thing for the northern part of our constituency to link up the whole of the South Bank area together under a single MP rather than it being split between two different MPs, particularly with the growth of new developments up in that area, the number of transport issues we have, we need a single, central voice, an MP who will be able to take into account all of the various interests that there are up there. Overall, that will be quite a positive thing for us.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is very helpful. May I clarify, are you speaking in a personal capacity or do you represent an organisation or community?

MS AARONS: Totally personally. It is just because I live right where that boundary change will be effective; I kind of look north across the South Bank if you see what I mean. For me personally, I think by joining up that whole area under an MP means that you can take into account all of the different interests and things but we will have a single voice at least in the House of Commons and representing us and also bringing in our local hospital into the area, etc.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, indeed. Are there any points for clarification? Thank you.

Time Noted: 9.53 am

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we can reconvene now. I believe next is Liz Mammatt. Welcome and I believe you wanted to speak a little bit early, so would you like to come on now? Would you start by introducing yourself by name and address, please.

MISS MAMMATT: (Feltham and Heston Conservative Association) Good morning, ladies and gentleman. I am Liz Mammatt, the Chairman of Feltham and Heston Conservative Association in Feltham and, to put on the record, I do know the Chairman in another capacity in Hounslow.

Feltham and Heston support the Boundary Commission's recommendations. The electorates of the two constituencies of Feltham and Heston and Brentford and

Isleworth are above the tolerance levels and the proposals rectifying this configuring three constituencies, namely Feltham and Hounslow, Southall and Heston, and Brentford and Chiswick. The rationalisation with one co-terminus borough, namely Ealing, simplifies administration. The wards therein are linked by arterial roads, public transport, communities past and present and topography.

Arterial roads: The two main arterial roads are the A4 and the A30 and they form a natural division for the proposed new constituencies.

Feltham and Hounslow: The seven current Feltham and Hounslow wards are south of Heathrow Airport and, including Hounslow West, are all south of the A30 and the A4. The three current B&I wards, Brentford and Isleworth, are likewise all south of the A4.

The proposed Southall and Heston: The four current Feltham and Heston wards are predominantly north of the A30 and A4 and the five Ealing wards are north of the A30 and A4. All basically to the north of Heathrow Airport and in fact some roads in Heston East and Heston West are already denominated Southall.

#### Public transport

Buses: Feltham and Hounslow: Many bus routes interlink all the wards with each other and Hounslow itself, some ten (I will not enumerate them all but they are on the list).

Southall and Heston: Route 111 connects Heston Central, Heston East, Heston West and Cranford. The 102 links Heston, Norwood Green and Southall. The 482 and the H32 connect Heston with Southall. The 105 connects Cranford and Southall. My apologies for any I have missed; I have tried not to.

The Underground: Feltham and Hounslow: The Piccadilly Line runs from Hatton Cross Station in close proximity to Bedfont to the stations of Hounslow West, Hounslow Central and Hounslow East. Buses 90, 203, 285, 490, H25 and H26 link the Feltham wards to Hatton Cross through to the three Hounslow stations.

Southall and Heston: The 111 links Cranford and the Heston wards to Hounslow East Station on the Piccadilly Line.

The Mainline: Feltham and Hounslow: The trains from Feltham to Waterloo have a loop line to Hounslow mainline station and with Southall and Heston there are some four buses which connect the Cranford and Heston ward to Southall main station.

Communities: Prior to 1965, the year of the creation of the GLC and the London Borough of Hounslow, the area was tripartite with three councils, namely Feltham Urban District Council, Heston and Isleworth Metropolitan Borough Council and Brentford and Chiswick Metropolitan Council which then asked for the present

Southfield, the same postcode of W4 as Chiswick and Northfield ward to be added to the constituency.

Then Feltham and Hounslow comprised Bedfont, Feltham North, Feltham West, Hanworth Park and Hanworth. Heston and Isleworth included Heston Central, East and West as well as Cranford.

That is the past. Now let us link it to the current situation. In Hounslow there are currently five Area Forums and they are named thus: one is Bedfont, Feltham and Hanworth; the second is Central Hounslow consisting of Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath and Hounslow South; these comprise the proposed constituency of Feltham and Hounslow; the third of these groups is Heston and Cranford and these comprise the proposed constituency of Southall and Heston and I should mention that Heston Residents' Association which has some several hundred members focuses on Heston and Cranford; the fourth Area Forum is Isleworth and Brentford; and the fifth is Chiswick and these comprise the proposed constituency of Brentford and Chiswick.

Topography: Feltham and Heston has many open spaces: Bedfont Lakes Country Park, Hanworth Park, Hounslow Heath and Hounslow Urban Farm. The Southall and Heston proposed constituency is more urban and residential apart from, for example, Cranford Park.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, the Boundary Commission's proposals for the London Borough of Hounslow should be accepted as they align with just one contiguous borough, the electorate numerically, arterial roads, public transport, communities past as well as present and topography. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any matters for clarification? Thank you very much, indeed.

We have some scheduled speakers later in the morning and I suggest that we adjourn now until 11.15.

After a short break

Time Noted: 11.15 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we reconvene and we have our next speaker, Mr Stephen Hammond. Welcome, sir. Would you go to the lectern and introduce yourself by way of name and address to begin, please.

MR STEPHEN HAMMOND: (MP for Wimbledon) Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Hammond; I am the Member of Parliament for Wimbledon. My business address is the House of Commons and I live at 92 Vineyard Hill Road, SW19 7JJ.

I am grateful for this opportunity to appear before you today. I consider this not just as my personal response to the consultation as a Member of Parliament but as a representative of the views expressed to me from numerous Residents' Associations and meetings that I have been to in the last month on this particular matter and the many letters and emails that I have received so far.

The Boundary Commission's current proposals for the Wimbledon constituency are disappointing and detrimental. Beyond the numerical mandatory criteria, the Boundary Commission have set out four criteria by which they seek to take account in undertaking the review. The first is size, shape and accessibility. If one looks at the proposed Merton and Wimbledon Central seat, clearly it fails on shape. Cricket Green and Ravensbury wards stick out oddly from the side of the constituency. It also fails on accessibility as it is impossible to quickly and sensibly get from, for instance, Cricket Green to West Barnes. Secondly, if one looks at the criteria of existing local government boundaries, under current proposals, the London Borough of Merton moves from having two Members of Parliament to five. I understand you heard strong representations on this point yesterday with the likely difficulties for both the local council but, more importantly, for the quality of representation. Thirdly, the criteria of the boundaries of existing constituencies. The seats created from the current Wimbledon constituency take almost no account of the previous boundaries. Fourthly, local ties. The Boundary Commission's proposals have effectively ripped Wimbledon apart and to the same extent ripped Mitcham apart. It destroys community interest and cohesion by removing Wimbledon Village and Wimbledon Park and adding them to the new Wimbledon Common and Putney constituency. Thus, by the very own criteria by which the Boundary Commission set themselves, the Central Wimbledon and Merton seat fails significantly against those criteria.

Moreover, any seat called Merton and Wimbledon Central or Wimbledon Central and Merton is bizarre. Why? Firstly, why Wimbledon Central? Whilst it indicates the presence of the town centre made up of Dundonald, Trinity, Hillside and Abbey wards, it fails to take any account of Raynes Park, Motspur Park, West Barnes, Morden or indeed the newly added parts of the Mitcham and Morden constituency Colliers Wood and Cricket Green which, for instance, is a key part of the Mitcham Town Centre. Moreover, I can only conclude that the Boundary Commission have not really understood very much about this part of London for whilst there is a Merton Park and there is indeed a Merton Abbey, there is no place called Merton. The borough's title was merely a historic convenience to link together the disparate centres of Wimbledon and Mitcham into one administrative unit back in the 1960s.

Locally, there is widespread concern and upset at the proposal to do away with a single Wimbledon seat which has existed in various forms since 1885. Wimbledon is a key local centre and a key transport hub for the whole of the South London area, a vibrant town centre and a unique suburban village which is known all over the world. The

current Wimbledon constituency is remarkably cohesive in terms of where residents live, where they go for shopping, leisure and public transport. For me as a Member of Parliament, it means that I am able to represent and understand the issues raised by residents as they are mostly self-contained within the constituency. For example, the biggest issue facing Wimbledon at the moment is the possibility of Crossrail 2. This affects Wimbledon Park, the north of my seat, where they plan to construct a depot, Abbey, Trinity, Hillside and Dundonald wards, town centre wards which will see the effects of construction around the station, Raynes Park which will have a new station constructed and West Barnes ward where level crossings will have to be closed to allow travel. Furthermore, whilst there may be no Crossrail 2 construction in Wimbledon Village, most Village commuters travel from Wimbledon Station in the town centre and they, of course, will be directly affected. These issues are interlinked. Any change to the configuration at Wimbledon Station will have knock-on effects up and down the line and across the constituency.

I am able to represent and inform all residents in relation to Crossrail 2 much more effectively given that they impact across my constituency but also given the fact that the constituency is self-contained. That would not be the case under new boundaries and would represent a serious decrease in the quality of representation for local residents. That is just one of the issues out of a number of issues I work on where I see the benefit of a cohesive community.

To discuss Wimbledon Village specifically, residents here do not look to Putney to the north at all. There are very few interests of shared concern and shared community interest. Indeed, most residents in Wimbledon Village are physically separated from the residents in the current constituency by both the Common and the A3 road. Almost all local residents do not believe that Wimbledon stops on Wimbledon Hill Road. Instead, they see the Village and Wimbledon Town Centre as a natural continuum. The current proposals will lead to a completely arbitrary break somewhere on Wimbledon Hill Road split across the Ridgway with the north side being in Putney and the south side being in Wimbledon. All the residents of this area strongly identify with the current Wimbledon constituency very specifically because they are physically in Wimbledon and almost all of them have little or no interaction with Putney.

Whilst I accept the previous Boundary Commission's proposals in 2013 put Wimbledon Park into the Putney constituency, this is equally incongruous. I live in the Wimbledon Park ward for instance in the NB polling district on Vineyard Hill Road. That polling district is literally a stone's throw, or at least a decent golf shot, away from the town centre and previously was in Wimbledon Village ward. Nobody in Wimbledon Park looks to Putney. They may look to Earlsfield and Tooting possibly or maybe even Wandsworth but definitely not Putney. I hope that the Boundary Commission will take account of what the Chairman of AFC Wimbledon said to you yesterday in his evidence. After a long struggle, AFC Wimbledon will soon be returning home to Wimbledon which, under these current proposals, would be in Putney. If one looks at the Wimbledon Park

ward, it stretches from Wimbledon Park itself all the way down the Haydons Road into South Wimbledon showing that it is intrinsically part of Wimbledon.

I have noted also the justification by the Commissioners for a Wimbledon and Putney seat and ripping Wimbledon Village out of Wimbledon. Partly they cite the fact that you would unite the whole of Wimbledon Common into one seat. Firstly, this is under a clear misapprehension for there is not just one Common, there are two Commons. The official name is Wimbledon and Putney Commons; they are governed by conservators elected by residents in both Wimbledon and Putney. The Commons themselves are indeed enjoyed by residents across the whole of both constituencies, not just the immediate areas and, if you look at it, physically, the Commons are in fact a barrier between residential zones, not uniting factors, which I think makes the proposal to cite it as an uniting factor perverse. Moreover, I think it shows a lack of local knowledge and community interest. Equally, in the attempt to use uniting the Common, or so-called Common, into the Wimbledon and Putney constituency and therefore taking Wimbledon Village out, if one looks to the other end of the new constituency, the Boundary Commissioners have chosen to use completely the reverse logic where, in creating the new Wimbledon Central and Merton seat, they completely split Mitcham Common. This is an extraordinary use of logic.

Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon Village identify strongly with the rest of Wimbledon. They are replaced in the current proposals by Colliers Wood, Lavender Fields, Ravensbury and Cricket Green wards, all of which have little or no community interest or identification with Wimbledon and, if you look at the map closely, it is fairly obvious why. Most of those residential areas of those four wards from the current Mitcham and Morden constituency are separated from the rest of Wimbledon by the River Wandle, Wandle Valley Park, the Sainsbury's Super Store industrial site, the Deer Park industrial site, Morden Hall Park and Merantun Way. Residents of Lavender Fields, Ravensbury and Cricket Green are integral parts of Mitcham. They see that as their centre of gravity and not as any part of the existing or indeed proposed Wimbledon constituency. Hence, in previous revised proposals, the Boundary Commission themselves were convinced that Mitcham Town Centre and indeed Mitcham and its wider area should remain united, but now they have chosen to split them under their current proposals. I also understand there was considerable evidence to this effect yesterday.

The proposed Wimbledon Central and Merton constituency lacks the cohesive network of transport links which the current Wimbledon constituency benefits from. There are a number of different transport links through the width and the breadth of the constituency. For instance, Motspur Park in the West Barnes wards to the south west and Raynes Park connect to Wimbledon Town Centre via South West Trains and bus links. Thameslink connects to South Merton in Morden and indeed in the Merton Park ward to Wimbledon Chase and Wimbledon Town Centre. The Northern Line connects Morden to South Wimbledon and the District Line connects Wimbledon Town Centre of Wimbledon Park. There are fewer transport links between the heart of Wimbledon and



Merton, Lavender Fields, Ravensbury and Cricket Green and indeed to travel across the new proposed Merton and Wimbledon Central seat from Cricket Green to West Barnes would actually mean having to leave the newly created constituency at Mitcham Common in the Cricket Green ward and travel through two other constituencies to actually get to West Barnes in the south west of the newly proposed constituency.

In the months since the Boundary Commission have released their plans, I have attended a number of local public meetings to discuss these proposals and nobody I have spoken to or indeed has agreed to make representations or indeed written to me or emailed me agrees with them. The current constituency arrangements in the London Borough of Merton have natural centres of focus and community interest which the new proposals take no account of. I believe that the Chamber of Commerce yesterday made the point to you that, for local businesses, the current arrangements are superior to the proposals that are currently set out and work well.

Whilst some see Wimbledon as a rich, leafy suburb, the reality is that is a parody. Wimbledon has wealth, like in Wimbledon Village; it has 1930s suburbias where young families live, like in Cannon Hill and in Merton Park and in Wimbledon Park, but it also does have some areas of poverty and deprivation like a number of housing estates in my constituency mainly in the Abbey constituency but, amongst all of this, the current Wimbledon constituency is a remarkably cohesive set of ten wards with overlapping community focal points which are self-contained within the constituency. All ten look to Wimbledon Town Centre to some degree given that it is a major local hub for transport, shopping and leisure. Indeed, residents from across the constituency will most likely travel through Wimbledon Station every day on their commute, but we also have Morden Town Centre to which residents in Abbey, Merton Park and Canon Hill wards will also look. Additionally, there is Raynes Park High Street and Motspur Park village which the residents in West Barnes, Raynes Park and parts of the town centre wards of Hillside and Dundonald look to.

The current Wimbledon constituency contains the vast majority of the SW19 postcode. It is the most famous postcode in this country and indeed for many in the world and the brand of Wimbledon itself stands out. Many landmarks across the Wimbledon area contribute to that. The All England Tennis Club for sure, but equally the theatre, the park, the Village, the town centre, the Nelson Hospital, Wimbledon Hockey Club, the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club and of course AFC's return. The people of Wimbledon believe and I believe that Wimbledon's community is best served when it is united in a single parliamentary constituency with a single MP who can champion the brand and the community.

I believe that the proposals need to be rethought. I think if the Boundary Commission accept that, on their own logic as I set out at the beginning and their own criteria which

I set out at the beginning, their current proposal fails then an urgent re-examination is required.

As to alternatives, there is one immediate alternative which, based even on the Boundary Commission's proposal, would be an improvement, which would be to add Earlsfield ward to the Wimbledon Common and Putney ward from the Tooting constituency, to add Colliers Wood to the Tooting constituency from Merton and Wimbledon Central, and to add Village to Merton and Wimbledon Central from Wimbledon Common and Putney. All of these would remain within your mandatory quota numerically, but equally Colliers Wood residents, as I have mentioned before, do look to Tooting; Wimbledon Village is part of Wimbledon and its residents regard themselves as part of Wimbledon; Earlsfield is residentially continuous with Putney and indeed as I made the point earlier, the Boundary Commission themselves recognised that point in their previous revised proposals. This makes Putney comprise of the same number of wards as proposed under the Boundary Commission's revised proposals, but it would also significantly improve, not completely remedy in any way but significantly improve, the divided community links which are likely under these proposals.

I note also yesterday that the Liberal Democrat and Labour Parties have laid down alternative proposals and I wish to reserve the right to comment on those alternatives and potentially introduce new alternatives in a rather fuller written submission than the short ten minutes I am allowed today. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That was most helpful. Are there any points for clarification? In which case, thank you very much, indeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will adjourn now until 2.00 when our next scheduled speakers arrive.

Time noted: 11.31 am

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2.00 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to this afternoon's session and our first speaker is Mr Andrew Foster. Please, come forward to use the lectern and would you introduce yourself by name and address, please.

MR FOSTER: (Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham Conservatives) Hello. My name is Andrew Foster. I live at Flat 1, 320 Earl's Court Road, SW5 9BQ. That is in the constituency of Kensington actually towards the bottom of the current Kensington constituency and my ward of Earl's Court ward borders the Chelsea and Fulham

constituency on two sides. I am the Deputy Chairman of Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham Conservatives. This is a federation which is responsible politically for the Conservative Party for the two constituencies of Kensington and Chelsea and Fulham, as they are currently both aligned.

I am speaking today in support of the current proposals from the Boundary Commission as they relate specifically to Kensington and Chelsea and the proposed Hammersmith and Fulham constituencies. I do know that our party is making other submissions with regard to other parts of London; these comments relate only to the area with which I am involved which is Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham. The Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham Association will be making a more detailed submission in writing; I have not brought that document today; that will be with you very shortly. Also, my comments particularly you will find are more skewed towards the south west of the current Kensington and Chelsea Borough area as they relate to the RBKC Kensington and Chelsea boundary with the Hammersmith and Fulham Council areas and the way that those constituencies are aligned.

Very briefly, reflecting local authority boundaries we think is important. We are impressed with the way in which the current proposals sit, the proposed two new constituencies of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham, within the local authority boundary areas. The proposed Kensington and Chelsea constituency exactly reflects the RBKC Borough boundary. All K&C wards are within the new constituency, none outside. We feel that this is very helpful indeed, both administratively and culturally. The inclusion of the Fulham wards with the majority of the Hammersmith wards places the new Hammersmith and Fulham constituency entirely within the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, although there are some wards which are not Hammersmith wards which are not in that proposed new constituency. The proposals elegantly and with logical simplicity create two constituencies that each reflects their respective borough's administrative boundaries.

Obviously, there are some changes, particularly radical changes, to the current Chelsea and Fulham constituency. That constituency has existed in its current form since 2010. While it has been a successful and I believe well-represented constituency, it is probably fair to say that both the areas of Fulham and Chelsea continue to be two separate areas in respect of their geography and the local ties in each area. Prior to 2010, Chelsea and the majority of Kensington formed one constituency, as did Fulham and large parts of Hammersmith. While the current proposals do split the current Chelsea and Fulham seat, they return the constituency areas to an arrangement more similar to those that existed only six years ago and which prior to 2010 had existed I believe since 1997.

We feel that local ties are very important in the ways that constituencies are arranged. The current constituency boundaries include three wards that are split between the

Kensington and Chelsea and Fulham constituencies. These are all within the RBKC Kensington and Chelsea Council area. This arrangement we feel is suboptimal and the constituency boundaries are I believe not well understood by the residents in the three wards that are affected and those are Redcliffe ward, Brompton & Hans Town ward and Stanley ward. Brompton & Hans Town is split roughly 50/50 between our two constituencies. In Redcliffe and Stanley there are small areas that just go off into the other constituency for some reason. We feel that the new proposals neatly get away from the split wards in both the proposed new constituencies. We feel that this can only be beneficial to the sense of community identity so far as it relates to political boundaries.

I have extensive experience of doorstep canvassing across Kensington and Chelsea areas as well as some experience in Fulham. I have found time and again that when talking to residents, they see themselves as either part of Kensington and Chelsea or as part of Hammersmith and Fulham. I found many residents in Kensington who had not actually realised that Chelsea is not part of the same constituency as they are in. I found many residents in Chelsea who probably identifying the constituency boundaries do not understand the logic or reasoning for the pairing of Chelsea and Fulham and likewise some in Fulham too. This is not to say that they particularly have said to me that this is a bad thing, it is just they had not really understood the reason for it or feel that there is any connection between the two.

In particular, I live in Earl's Court. As I mentioned earlier, this is towards the bottom area of the current Kensington constituency and I live right at the bottom of Earl's Court, so I look over Chelsea and Fulham in one area where the Old Brompton Road forms the boundary and across that boundary is Redcliffe ward which is primarily in Chelsea and Fulham. I have found that many people who live in Redcliffe think of themselves as living in Earl's Court. Earl's Court is one of those wards where the name of the ward actually ties in with the name of the area that people think they live in, which is not usual in our borough I must say. People often in Redcliffe think of themselves as living in Earl's Court; they do not identify that they live in a separate constituency and they actually live in Chelsea and Fulham. Is this a problem? It is a surprise to many people.

I have also had some involvement with the Earl's Court Business Group; this is a group which was set up to focus on ways to improve the commercial environment in the Earl's Court area, particularly following the closure of the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre. The business community of Earl's Court of course does not just comprise the Earl's Court Road area; it crosses the Old Brompton Road into Chelsea and the business area certainly crosses both constituencies and to some degree that has created a bit of an unjoined feeling with how that group has sought support and response from elected officials. Of course, school catchment areas, health centres and community groups tend to flow in their respective council areas across the Kensington and Chelsea area and the Hammersmith and Fulham area rather than following the current constituency

boundaries. We will be making more detailed comment about that in our written representation.

The current geographical boundaries. The boundary goes basically down the railway between Kensington and Hammersmith followed also by the A3220. People know it as the Warwick Road in Earl's Court and slightly north. They form a tight boundary together between Hammersmith and Kensington. Farther to the south, the railway line and the main road diverge and the Brompton Cemetery and the Stamford Bridge football ground both provide areas of non-residential space which form a natural boundary between Chelsea and Fulham. Is this a problem? It certainly separates the two areas and while we are not saying that the Chelsea and Fulham constituency has been a problem, we feel that the more natural relationship is between Chelsea and Kensington and Fulham and Hammersmith. To the south of the 308, which is the King's Road or New King's Road, the railway line runs through the Lots Road area, a similar area of residential no man's land to some degree although it is now being redeveloped in a lot of areas. While crossing the Kensington, Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham boundary is easy along the whole length of the border, it is only along the main roads – you have to go down the King's Road or down the Fulham Road. The smaller residential streets do not interweave between the two council areas except possibly in North Kensington where there are some exceptions to that. For the most part, the developed residential areas on both sides of the borough boundary and the boundary of the proposed new constituencies are contiguous within each borough. Conversely, there are a far greater flow of roads and involvement between Chelsea and Kensington going north/south in those areas split only by the main road – you might live either side of the Fulham Road and you feel part of the same community that exists the other side of the road. We feel that it is far more integrated. Again, Chelsea and Fulham has not been a problem. We feel that there is a greater logic of Kensington and Chelsea and Fulham and Hammersmith both in terms of the way that the geography works and the way that people see themselves in terms of where they live, who their neighbours, the sorts of services and facilities upon which they rely in their day-to-day life.

Our initial understanding is that the Liberal Democrats are also supportive of the proposed new Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham constituencies. Certainly my ward in Earl's Court is split between Conservative and Liberal Democrat councillors; so we welcome that as well.

I am quite happy to answer any questions on this brief summary. As I mentioned earlier, detailed submissions will be made shortly.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is most helpful. Are there any points for clarification?

LORD HAYWARD: Just clarifying, you referred to split wards and I think you are referring here to the re-warding that has taken place in Kensington and Chelsea.

MR FOSTER: This was re-warding that took place prior to the 2014 Local Council Elections. I cannot remember whether there were split wards or whether they are in the same places, but, yes, those are all Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council wards, three of them, one split halfway and the other two in a very funny little way.

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

Is Louraine Winson here? Please, come forward and would you introduce yourself by name and address, please.

MS WINSON: My name is Louraine Winson and I live in Enfield at 43 Orchard Crescent, EN1 3NS. I am not so sure how much all these boundary changes are a done deal. I do not think they are particularly fair the way they have been done and they do not take into consideration a lot of the new registered voters that happened earlier this year with the EU election. They discriminate mainly against Labour MPs and it seems to be that it is the Labour MPs who are paying the highest price. One of the reasons for cutting down on MPs I understand is finance and yet we see how many new peerages have just been created, 500-odd. It does not seem to be much of a savings for Parliament when peerages are created. I would like to see any Tory MPs who ultimately lose their seats. What actually happens to them? Are they going to be offered peerages? If so, where is the saving? Is it all going to happen on the one side?

I think times are hard for many, many people and traditionally it is most people in Labour boroughs who are struggling. Those people will need more representation not less in the future and by cutting down the Labour MPs it is going to put a lot more strain on people and a lot more problems are not going to be dealt with.

One of the proposals for Enfield I believe is that Grange Park is going to be part of the new constituency. I do not think it is a good addition. Grange Park is traditionally a wealthier area; they have fewer problems and, personally, I do not feel that I can have anything that is much in common with them. If there have to be boundary changes, I would rather see Grange Park stay where it is and the changes happen so that we take in more of the north of the borough.

As I say, I do not think these changes are fair and I cannot see any justification for them especially as it discriminates far more against Labour MPs than it does Tory MPs.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: May I clarify, apart from the generalised comments you have made about unfairness, the issue you particularly have in Enfield is the proposal around Grange Park ward and you are arguing that you would like it to remain as part of the existing constituency.

MS WINSON: I do not want to see Grange Park as part of the Enfield constituency. I would rather, if changes have to be made, for us to have more northern parts in, Potters Bar, somewhere like that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any points for clarification? Thank you very much.

We are due a speaker who has not yet arrived. Perhaps we will have a five-minute adjournment in the hope they will turn up.

Time Noted: 2.17 pm

After a short break

Time Noted: 2.25 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we can reconvene now. I think our next speaker has arrived and, if you are ready, Andrew Slaughter, would you like to come to the lectern, please, and would you introduce yourself by way of name and address to start with.

MR ANDY SLAUGHTER: (MP for Hammersmith) My name is Andy Slaughter and I am the MP for Hammersmith. My business address is House of Commons, London SW1 0AA. I think in these times of increased security I will leave it at that.

I will not take very much of your time; I simply want to make representations principally around Hammersmith and Fulham, not surprisingly. Obviously, with the constraints of the current scheme, any proposal has knock-on effects probably across the whole of North London. I have not endeavoured to produce or adopt a scheme of that magnitude but I have looked at and I have spoken to one of my neighbouring MPs, Karen Buck, who is going to give evidence shortly and we have looked at this in the context of Central London as we both represent Central London seats. Our proposals are also the ones which have been put forward by the Labour Party yesterday as regards, as I say, to Central London and we will just say that we are flattered that they have adopted our proposals and hope the Boundary Commission will follow suit as well.

May I firstly say what I think is problematic about the current proposal, why we think this is an improvement and then deal with two very specific local issues in relation to two wards. The current proposal by the Commission as regards the Hammersmith and Fulham borough is to divide it between three parliamentary constituencies. We totally accept that Hammersmith, unlike Kensington, under the new rules cannot justify two parliamentary seats; it can justify one, another seat, so there has to be some crossing of boundary at some point. At the moment, that is done pretty logically and

effectively because of the bend of the Thames to the south and you can only really cross from South Fulham into Kensington, so there is currently a seat at Chelsea and Fulham and the rest of the borough my own seat of Hammersmith. The proposal now is to divide the borough into three, as I say. Firstly, there is an interruption at the Goldhawk Road which divides Shepherd's Bush from Hammersmith, which is not ideal because they are continuous communities and increasingly communities of which there is no barrier. I think if you went back 20 years you would say there was a more distinct barrier around that point, but through demographic changes in terms of the property market and other things, it is a seamless border now and it works very well as the current seat, but more problematic is the creation of the orphan ward with College Park and Old Oak which is taking a single ward, which I know is something the Commission try to avoid in most circumstances, and attaching it to another constituency, in this case a new constituency of Willesden with which it has no particular links. I will say a little bit more about the particular ward in a moment, but it is not so much the division into three because I understand that, with the constraints on the Commission, they are having to do all sorts of acrobatics but this particular division into three is not a helpful one.

Looking more widely at Central London, as you will see when I go on to describe our proposal, it looks at the three Central London boroughs plus the City as one within a sectoral boundary which I thought the Commission in an ideal world would respect – I know there are other sectoral boundaries, two in North London and in South London as well – and that Central London is seen as the smallest but nevertheless a logical division. What the current proposal does is it has boroughs bleeding all over the place: Shepherd's Bush goes into Ealing; Westminster goes into Camden and also into Brent. That may all be as a result of what probably seemed an attractive initial proposal of making Kensington a single borough, which sadly has only happened because of the decline in the electorate at Kensington due to poor registration and other factors, but nevertheless a knock-on effect from doing that with Kensington means that, as far as Westminster and Hammersmith are concerned, they lose all their shape and MPs will end up representing a number of different boroughs. I think in the case of the current South Westminster seat it will go not only into City of London but into Camden as well which it has not particular linkages with.

To go on to why we think it is better for Central London to stay together, increasingly the three boroughs – they are known as a tri-borough – share a large number of services, officers and matters of that kind. I am not always a supporter of the tri-borough because sometimes you end up with polices in one borough which are not ideal compared with other boroughs but, where it has worked, it has been sharing administrative and management posts and services and procurement. Effectively, in many aspects, the three boroughs of Westminster, Kensington and Hammersmith work together. They are together in West Central as part of the GLA sub-regions and, although there clearly are other links, nobody has their links just in one way in London, we have other links with West London and elsewhere, but, generally speaking, we think of ourselves as part of Central London and look to those other boroughs as well. The



proposal which we have put forward – I have a map but I think you have already had the map for the Labour Party proposal and I have the list of wards as well but I think you are familiar with that and obviously I will put all this in writing as part of my written submission – would simply take Hammersmith and add one ward, which is the Fulham Broadway ward, on to that. Minimal change and I emphasise that I think the big advantage of what we are proposing is that it is the least disruptive change in relation to current borough constituency boundaries. With Hammersmith, exactly the same ten wards as now plus the one Fulham Broadway ward added on. As far as Chelsea and Fulham is concerned, again, as it is now with the subtraction of Fulham Broadway and adding on some more Kensington wards; so really just an extension and the bulk of the constituency staying as it is now. I will not trespass too much on what Karen may want to say except to say that linking North Westminster and North Kensington is something which has been done before; they are similar communities; they have been in the same parliamentary seat before and I think, importantly, although Kensington borough would have three MPs representing it, it would have a MP representing North Kensington along with a similar community, it would have a MP representing South Kensington and Chelsea which is a very homogenous area, and the two wards which stick out in that little bulge of Kensington at the bottom, which are effectively Central London wards, would become part of a South Westminster seat. You only have to look at the map to see that it looks very neat and logical. Certainly all the new proposed constituencies are well within the constraint; they are not pushing at the edges of the 71,000 or 78,000. They are similar sizes and they look good on the map, but that is a sign of the fact that they reflect established communities in that way and, as I say, have minimal change from what previously was the case.

Just two specific points dealing with, if you like, the two individual wards in Hammersmith. Adding on Fulham Broadway, the one additional ward at the end, makes a lot of logical sense. I can declare a personal interest in that that is the area I grew up in. North End Road Market is where I used to shop – I live in Shepherd's Bush now. North End Road Market, which is a famous old street market, is in the Fulham Broadway ward and is used by people from my constituency at the moment. It is simply crossing Lillie Road which is an ordinary pedestrian road. There are lots of community links there and it leads down into the Fulham Broadway area and most of the people in the south of my constituency now will use public services in Fulham. For example, there is a major outcry at the moment over the closure of the police station in Fulham even though we have stations in Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush because the people who live in the north end Fulham Reach wards, my constituency, by their very name think of themselves as living in Fulham. It is the old Metropolitan Borough of Fulham and there is a link there. On that crossroads, the North End Road/Lillie Road crossroads, there is a major local authority or housing association estate on each of the four corners and a lot of family and other ties between them. The two, the Star Road Estates and the West Kensington Estates, which are currently in my constituency, are linked closely with the Clem Attlee Estates and Peabody Estates which are on the other side. Again, it is a very continuous and homogenous constituency running down into

Fulham Broadway. It makes entire and logical sense and I think it would be a very sensible linkage in that way.

In most big public and indeed private projects over the last 20 years, whether it was the £45 million investment scheme in North Fulham, the Fulham New Deal, under the Labour Government in the late 1990s, they went to exactly those wards: North End ward but also to Fulham Broadway ward because that was seen as an area of deprivation which needed regeneration. Similarly now, the opportunity area does go into Kensington as well, part of the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, but the majority is either in that North End or into Fulham Broadway wards and most of the major proposals for residential development and other schemes for the area fit into those two wards and there is, as I say, a seamless boundary.

Finally, in relation to Old Oak, this is the most distressing part of the current proposal because there is somewhere that is absolutely firmly part of Shepherd's Bush; that is not just my opinion that has been reiterated by the residents of College Park and Old Oak. There is a small area to the north of Wormwood Scrubs known as College Park which is residentially close to Brent but, from 30 years ago when there was a formal ballot to during the last Boundary Review when I conducted a ballot of people living in that area, overwhelmingly – I mean overwhelmingly by three or four to one – people who live in that area consider themselves part of Hammersmith and Fulham. That is even more obvious with the community south of Wormwood Scrubs, the Old Oak Estate, North Wormholt Estate, White City Close, all of the housing around there all consider that they are part of Shepherd's Bush and Hammersmith and Fulham and I know that they would feel severely aggrieved if they were moved for these purposes to join up with a constituency, all of which was in London Borough of Brent. We have HS2 and Crossrail; major development, the Mail(?) Development Corporation, all going on in that ward at the moment. It is all connected to regeneration in Hammersmith generally. The southern boundary of the ward goes across Westway, includes White City Station, and you cannot tell at that point which ward you are in/which area you are in but you know you are in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and it would be quite bizarre if, in the course of walking up Wood Lane and turning left and right, you ended up crossing two or three times from, in this case, an Ealing constituency into a Brent constituency when in fact all the time you are in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

I cannot emphasise enough, understanding the problems/the pressures the Boundary Commission have, just how illogical that proposal is and any proposal, whether it is minor or others that come up, I think really does need to, if it can, address that issue. I know that it is a difficult issue because College Park and Old Oak is a two-member ward and it is difficult to fit it into the template without having lots of ramifications, but I think we have done that as far as Central London is concerned and, therefore, I hope that this submission, for that and the other reasons I have given, will be looked upon favourably. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any matters for clarification? In which case, thank you very much, indeed.

MR ANDY SLAUGHTER: Do you need my ward list or map?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be most helpful. (Same handed) Karen, would you like to come forward and introduce yourself.

MS KAREN BUCK: (MP for Westminster North) My name is Karen Buck; I am the Member of Parliament for Westminster North and my address is House of Commons, London SW1 0AA.

Andy has set out a broad case that he and I had discussed and I will not repeat all of the things that he has said but the proposal that has been put forward by the Labour Party, with which I agree, accepts the fact that constituency sizes within the constraints that we are now operating must cross borough boundaries and we were able to look at a proposal that built on what was the Regent's Park and Kensington North constituency between 1997 and 2010 with the difference of only one ward, Lancaster Gate, which returns to where it used to be in the Cities of London and Westminster South. That was not only a well-functioning constituency boundary in those years but also that in itself was a health service boundary, Paddington and North Kensington, in the days of the health authorities going back to the 1980s and it reflects the fact that in a number of important service areas, those boundaries related to each other and made sense in terms of patterns of particularly healthcare and authority that drew from the population that used St Mary's Hospital and St Giles Hospital.

In addition to reflecting the history, the point that I would also like to make is that it does seem to me that it is quite important for a constituency where it must cross borough boundaries to do so with as much as possible an equality of ward make-up within that constituency and it is far better for the interests of the residents who are represented that a constituency draws on, in this case, five wards in North Kensington and wards in North Westminster rather than two wards from Brent which would be brought in to the Westminster seat under the Boundary Commission's proposals. It does actually enable a greater amount of time to be spent representing the interests of the constituents.

Andy has set out the key point about Kensington, Hammersmith and Westminster forming part of the tri-borough. That is absolutely right and a number of the key services that residents draw on relate now to the configuration that spans three local authority areas. In particular, education is an arrangement within tri-borough; adult services; children's services are now increasingly based in one or other of those three local authorities and being able to work to represent the interests of constituents by relating to local authority areas that are within the constituency is far easier and more productive than doing so in wards that lay outside and that have a different local

authority. Other services also very much reflect the pattern of the North Westminster and North Kensington area including the pattern of clinical commissioning group services for primary care which cross those two boundaries in North Westminster between Queen's Park and North Kensington.

There are and always have been considerable flows of population to and fro across the Kensington and Westminster boundaries particularly schools and primary care services as I have already mentioned. In Bayswater, St Mary of the Angels draws a large number of its pupils from North Kensington; in Queen's Park a number of pupils will cross over the Halfpenny Steps across the canal into North Kensington to go to St Mary's or Middle Row Schools. Those patterns are well established and there are also other historical communalities between those areas. Obviously, Notting Hill Carnival is a very good example. The Notting Hill Carnival route is almost entirely enclosed within the two areas of North Kensington and North Westminster and is an issue of equal concern across those areas. There are a number of housing providers that span the Kensington and Westminster boundary and people move backwards and forwards between providers such as Octavia Housing and Network Stadium Housing. Historically, it has always been a question relating to those flows and to the service providers in those two different areas.

It seems to be a pattern that seems to reflect a common social and demographic interest between North Kensington and North Westminster in both arrears. Arabic is now the second language. There are strong patterns of worship with a major mosque, the Al Manaar Mosque, that stands on the boundary between Kensington and North Westminster. Those patterns would also be reflected within this constituency.

I feel, like Andy, it makes a great deal of sense to construct a constituency that stays within the tri area that reflects a long-held historical pattern of movement and of service delivery. Thus, I would endorse the proposal that we have put forward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very clear and very helpful. Are there any matters for clarification?

LORD HAYWARD: Given that Kensington and Chelsea is only entitled to 1.02 seats, may I clarify that the proposal you are supporting splits the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea into three different parliamentary seats?

MS KAREN BUCK: It does. It suggests that the five wards in North Kensington are attached to the wards in North Westminster. Traditionally, when it was Regent's Park and Kensington North and when I represented that, it was divided into two constituencies and that worked well. Yes, it does.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, indeed. Mr Mark Betteridge, would you like to come forward and introduce yourself by name and address, please.

MR BETTERIDGE: My name is Mr Mark Betteridge; I am a resident of the Mitcham and Morden constituency and my address is 26 Courtney Road, London SW19 2ED. Thank you for having me along today.

The places we call home, the communities we live in, the people who share our daily lives all influence who we are and what we do and, for me, it is a profound importance of the town and people of Mitcham in my life that have motivated me to make this representation here today. I have to say that I am hugely disappointed in the proposals of the Boundary Commission for the constituency of Mitcham and Morden. In my view, if these are allowed to pass without amendment, the effect will be to destroy a longstanding and relevant constituency that appropriately covers a distinct, identifiable community. Such an act would undermine the direct connection that exists between local people and our parliamentary representative. The intention of stating my opposition to these proposals is not to resist change. I understand fully that you have been set the task of reducing the number of constituencies from 650 to 600 and making significant change is inevitable. However, I object to the way the Commission have chosen to tackle this for my constituency because I believe it does not meet your own criteria for making this decision. Clearly, you have to ensure that every new constituency has roughly the same number of electors – that is accepted – but your terms of reference mean that you must also consider other factors and, in particular, any proposals made should reflect local ties. It is here that I feel your proposals are flawed for the town, community and people of Mitcham.

I have a life-long relationship with Mitcham. I was born here, went to school and grew up here. As a teenager I played for Mitcham Cricket Club and follow our local football team, Tooting and Mitcham United. Later on, I became a local councillor in Lavender Fields, the same ward I was born in, and rose to be Deputy Leader of the London Borough of Merton (I have since retired from that post). I remain a governor at Liberty Primary School where I attended in the 1970s and I continue to live in the constituency. My personal journey through life has Mitcham running right through it. The place has its own identity that is now part of me. It is why I feel so passionately about these proposals because, for me, they casually disregard the town of Mitcham and its people. Instead of being valued as important stakeholders in the process, it seems we are made to feel like second-class citizens.

Mitcham is a largely working class town. It does not have the affluence of some of its near neighbours. Instead, it thrives on a strong sense of community. People from all parts of the world come together here with longstanding residents to give Mitcham its own very peculiar and particular identity. For example, it is home to one of the largest Ghanaian populations outside Africa and many Tamil people have fled here over the

years fleeing the conflict in Sri Lanka to make this place their home. My family have lived in Mitcham for over 50 years and we remain proud to call it our home.

At present, Mitcham is represented by one MP. This arrangement correctly recognises the size of the town, its history and particular identity that runs through life here. Under the current proposals, this would be radically changed and Mitcham would now be represented by three MPs with residents reallocated to fall within Tooting, Streatham and Mitcham, and Merton and Wimbledon constituencies. I cannot see how such a dramatic shift will do anything other than dilute the voice of people living here. Instead of being a priority for a MP who is focused on our town and our people, I feel that we will be an afterthought for representatives whose constituencies contain much larger population centres. That is extremely bad news for a place like Mitcham which has pressing socio-economic needs. Instead of being relegated to the back of the queue, our community deserves and should expect someone who will put them first when fighting for their interests.

The situation gets even worse when looking at the impact on Mitcham Town Centre which, under the current proposals, is split directly right down the middle. Residents living on either side of the main London Road which passes through the centre of Mitcham will now find themselves in wholly different constituencies. The two main greens of Mitcham will no longer be in the same constituency with Mitcham Fair Green now falling within Streatham and Mitcham and Mitcham Cricket Green falling within Merton and Wimbledon Central.

The proposed changes even disrupt how we honour our fallen heroes. Mitcham's Royal British Legion will now have to march from their base in the newly created Streatham and Mitcham constituency to the very Mitcham War Memorial which will now be in the Merton and Wimbledon constituency, a couple of hundred metres up the road. Putting aside the woeful symbolism of this arrangement, can anyone tell me and our local Royal British Legion which MP will attend this important annual event, please? Is it likely that any MP will turn up at Mitcham when they have memorials in other population centres in the new constituencies which will rightly demand their presence also? It very much feels as though Mitcham on Remembrance Sunday will be at the back of the queue.

The same disconnect between place and constituency can be seen with the effect on our local sports clubs. Instead of being in Mitcham, both Mitcham Cricket Club, which is one of the oldest if not the oldest cricket club in the world, and our golf club will now be sited in the new Merton and Wimbledon Central constituency, which also will now host Tooting and Mitcham United Football Club. A sports club or a local team are nothing if they do not represent an area of community. By moving them out of Mitcham, these proposals fail the Commission's own test of reflecting local ties. It does seem that other towns and communities are not facing the same dissection that confronts Mitcham where we are effectively being sliced down our very middle. It makes local people ask

why Mitcham is being singled out for this treatment. A feeling of unfairness pervades, something that cannot be good for future engagement with the democratic process.

As mentioned, I do fully appreciate that change is required but, to succeed, it must respect the identities of communities and places such as Mitcham. Simply drawing crude lines on a map to meet the new numeric requirement will not do. That is why your own criteria require the consideration of local ties and, on this test, I am afraid these proposals fail us in Mitcham. I urge the Commission to reconsider its proposals. Please, take a step back and refrain from dividing our town into three different constituencies. As I say, we do appreciate that change needs to be made but, at the very least, please, abandon the ill-conceived proposal to split our town centre right down the middle into two. Please, think again and this time put Mitcham, our community and local people at the heart of any proposal for the future. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any matters for clarification? In which case, thank you very much, indeed.

Mary Curtin and George Pegler, would you like to speak now? I understand that you want to speak together. Would you like to come forward and introduce yourselves by your names and addresses when you start, please.

MRS CURTIN: (Friends in St Helier) My name is Mary Curtin and I live in Bishopsford Road, Morden, which is in the Mitcham and Morden constituency, Ravensbury ward for the Council.

MR PEGLER: I am George Pegler and I live in Carlingford Road in Morden; I have lived there in the same house all my life for 74 years.

MRS CURTIN: I moved to Morden in the early 1980s after my husband became unwell as we needed to downsize. Once we moved to Morden in 1984, my husband's condition became worse. He had a major stroke and was hospitalised in St Helier for months. I gave up work to care for my husband and soon realised we were both confined at home 24 hours, seven days a week, as there was nowhere to go. I am originally a qualified registered mental nurse and I understood how bad this was for both of us. It gave me the impetus to set up a weekly coffee morning for Morden residents in a similar situation and I called it Friends in St Helier as most of the residents had been patients at the hospital. Over two decades we are known locally to residents in Morden as FISH.

FISH is now a thriving local organisation that helps prevent elderly residents being hospitalised or having to leave their homes for full-time residential care. We keep elderly people alert and mobile and offer them friendship. We also offer a break for partners where their husband or wife is suffering dementia or other mental ill health. Many of our senior citizens live on their own but a number also live with families and our

service allows them to go to work. We have four lunch and activity clubs across Morden on four days a week, Monday through Thursday. On Fridays we do home visits with help with shopping, medication, etc, and make sure our clients are coping at home. We also organise outings and holidays. I also keep the original coffee morning going that I set up for my husband. Altogether we look after 200 senior residents each week. The clubs are throughout Morden and residents can go on any day or days that suit them. They can also go to any venue. Our guests and volunteers do not differentiate; they just see themselves as Morden residents helping and being with other Morden residents.

One of our members, Mr Pegler, who is here today, is a retired police officer and attends our club in Lower Morden. He is a very popular gentleman and I shall be a very unpopular lady today because he has quite a few ladies who he brings to and from his club and there will be some green-eyed monsters around today, I think, because I have his attention today! He is here today to show you that I am not here to speak for myself but on behalf of all our clients and their families.

Our clubs operate from St George's Central Road, that is in St. Helier ward, Langstone Close in St. Helier ward, the Oaks at Cannon Hill Lane in Cannon Hill ward and Morden Park Baptist Church which is in Lower Morden ward. Just over half our clients are from St. Helier and Lower Morden and the rest are split equally between Cannon Hill, Merton Park and Ravensbury. Ravensbury is part-Mitcham and part-Morden and we also take a few clients from Mitcham, but we do not or have never taken a resident from Sutton or have any connection with that area.

The Boundary Commission's proposals are a complete nightmare for us for the following reasons. We are just holding on to our funding of £29,000 per annum from London Borough of Merton as most of their grant internally has been cut by Central Government. I know you will say to me that putting two wards into the Sutton and Cheam in the Borough of Sutton where the majority of our clients do not live will not make any difference. You are right in theory but wrong in practice. Let me take you through a practical example. It was recently proposed to abolish the small grant FISH receives for our organisation. Our MP for Mitcham and Morden led a successful campaign against this decision. Under your proposal, this could not happen as a MP cannot take up issues of voters in another parliamentary constituency. There are strict rules about this. If it happened now, the money would be lost. Your proposal would have massive consequences. It would dilute representation and reduce its effectiveness; it is out of sight is out of mind when it comes to looking after vulnerable elderly people especially when there is no money about and your proposals would make it so much worse.

Older people and their families need to know their MP and so does FISH. London is a scary place for the elderly and I ask you not to make it more so. Our clients have complex multidisciplinary issues which just get worse as we live longer. We deal with



matters about housing, adaptations, personal finance and health on a daily basis. We frequently need to involve our MP who understands Merton Local Authority and especially Merton CCG. It is not just the borough you expect the new MP to deal with but also the CCG. Morden is a proper longstanding town with a heart and a community especially for the elderly. You will rip out its heart if you put Lower Morden and St. Helier wards into Sutton. I have now lived in Morden for over two decades and have never had a connection with Sutton or would look in that direction for social activities or shopping.

It is hard to see this on a map. Please, come down and look at our area as you have cut a town in half for no good reason. For example, residents like me under your proposals going to Morden Tube would walk from Wimbledon Merton, through Sutton constituencies and back into Wimbledon Merton to get to the station. You have just driven a wedge right through a town and have left us with nothing including our name. I do understand that you have to make larger seats while adhering to the following three guidelines: respecting parliamentary boundaries, respecting borough boundaries, respecting community ties. You have hit the jackpot in Morden by breaking all three to get your proposal to work. I appreciate that you may need to break one rule but all three is too much.

If it were me, I would unite Morden and cross the boundary into Wimbledon but not Sutton. This way, you bring all the Morden wards together of Ravensbury, St. Helier, Lower Morden, Cannon Hill and Merton Park. We can still stay with Mitcham where we have longstanding networks, friendships and a hub in Vestry Hall, Mitcham, which brings all the local groups together. A good example of this is that Morrisons in Mitcham give us all the food for our Morden senior citizens' party. We receive no support from Sutton. Mitcham business see Morden as part of the same community.

I really appreciate you giving me the time to speak today. I am more than happy to offer you lunch at any of our clubs if you come to see Morden, which I hope you do. Our cook is very good and everything is made fresh each day. Thank you and, please, think again. It takes decades to build a community and only minutes and a pen to destroy it. Mr Pegler would now like to say a few words.

MR PEGLER: I would like to talk for a few minutes about the club that Mary was talking about, FISH. As I said, I have lived in Morden for 74 years. I lost my wife ten years ago and obviously became very secluded and lonely on my own. I am involved with my local church and I sit on a couple of police committees. Once Mary got this club going, there is a fantastic camaraderie in Morden and although these clubs all meet in different places, we all get together on various occasions and particularly when they organise holidays, Christmas parties and things like that and it gives us people who are widowed – there are many, many of us in that club – the chance to meet each other and get together. I really cannot say enough about Mary and thank her from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to get out and meet these other people. I am not

secluded anymore; I have lots and lots of friends. I am in a very, very fortunate position, as Mary was saying earlier on, in that I do drive and I have a car, and there are many people who cannot get to those meetings unless people like me pick them up and take them there and I know from personal experience that those people get exactly the same out of the club as I do. I would hate to see that through any changes those clubs are unable to function because they mean a great, great deal to many, many people in the Morden and Mitcham area. Thank you for the time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I thank you both very much, indeed. Several people are arriving and I suggest that we have a ten-minute break to allow people to come in and get themselves organised and then we can take them in a group. We will recess for ten minutes.

Time Noted: 3.07 pm

After a short adjournment

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ann Oldroyd, would you like to come forward to the lectern and introduce yourself by name and address, please.

MS OLDROYD: My name is Ann Oldroyd; I live at 5B Clive Road in London, SW19 2JA. I actually live in Colliers Wood on the northern borders of Mitcham close to Lavender Fields, the famous Lavender Fields of Mitcham. I have lived in the Mitcham area for 25 years now and I am very interested in local history and the local community and that is why I have come to give evidence today.

I want to start by acknowledging the Commission's work on this. I realise that it is a massively difficult job that you have to do and I appreciate that the overriding driver is reducing the number of constituencies and therefore increasing the number of voters within parliamentary constituencies. Thus, electoral numbers are key. I completely understand that. I also understand the rationale to keep council wards intact and to use those as building blocks for constituencies. That seems sensible to me and I do want to say that I think the Commission's Report and the materials you have given – the interactive website – are all great, really well set out and this is a very good process, but I will come to my big "but" and that is that I think the substance of these proposals, particularly what the Commission have called the South Thames sub-region of London, are flawed and particularly in respect of Mitcham and Morden, the parliamentary constituency where I live, I think these proposals are egregiously wrong and that is what I want to speak about now.

I do not think these proposals are fair to the people of Mitcham and I really do not think that the Commission have followed due process, by their own definition, the process you have chosen in coming up with them. I think there is circumstantial evidence that the Commission may have treated Mitcham badly because we are not a particularly

fashionable or affluent area of London and I will give you an example of that. Before I do that, I will say that the Commission say in their own guidance document that its guiding principles are those at Rule 5 of Schedule 2 of the 1986 Act and that you will specifically take into account the four factors listed in the statute: special geographical considerations; local government boundaries; boundaries of existing constituencies; and, fourthly, local ties that would be broken if constituencies were split up. In the case of Mitcham and Morden, I think the Commission have completely put those guiding principles in the bin and I will give you an example: the carve-up of Mitcham Common, the ancient Mitcham Common, and Mitcham's historic town centre. Mitcham Common has existed since feudal times; so you can imagine my surprise and how choked I was when I read paragraph 54 of the Commission's Report that talks about Wimbledon Common. You give yourselves a bit of a pat on the back, Commission, for keeping the historical Wimbledon Common wholly in one constituency. Well, this is part of the circumstantial evidence I am talking about: the contrast between how you have treated Wimbledon on one hand, affluent Wimbledon, fashionable Wimbledon, and the way that Mitcham Common has been unceremoniously carved up. The Prime Minister said very recently that Britain should not be just for the privileged few but it should be for everyone. It seems to me one rule for affluent Wimbledon and another rule for Mitcham, more deprived, less fashionable. Those guiding principles also talk about preserving historical existing constituencies. Mitcham has been part of the same parliamentary seat for 100 years since just before the end of the First World War. These proposals are going to split this historic constituency and also the historic Parish of Mitcham which I believe has existed since the 13<sup>th</sup> century up I think into four separate bits. My understanding is Colliers Ward, where I live, is part of that historic parish. You are going to be dividing the London Borough of Merton which is, I have to say, one of the smallest boroughs of Merton, into five separate parliamentary constituencies.

I move on to my next point really which is that I think this is a threat to proper parliamentary representation. The risk of splitting a borough like this up into five bits makes no sense to me. This is the great parliamentary democracy and our MPs are directly elected by local communities and I really believe that the Commission's job was to recognise those communities. The upshot of this is that there is a grave risk to inequality and a risk of democratic deficit in the Mitcham area. The risk will be that there is a tiny bit of the London Borough of Merton in four of the five larger constituencies and I think that the local MP in question for those other seats, the four of those seats, will simply focus on the bigger boroughs that they represent. They will have little regard for the little bit of Merton in their constituency. I think that is a worry if you happen to live in that little bit of Merton. My own part of the Mitcham ward and constituency is going to be swallowed up into – your proposal is for the Wimbledon dominance – Merton and Wimbledon seat. I will say a little more in a moment on how I feel about being put in with Wimbledon because I do not really look to Wimbledon culturally. Merton is one of the smallest and most deprived boroughs in London, as

I have said, especially the Mitcham part of it and to carve it up like this into five bits and leave other boroughs intact seems to me to be wholly unfair and disproportionate.

You have this seat called Streatham and Mitcham, one of the new seats that is created with a piece of Mitcham in it but, actually, that is a really small bit of Mitcham; it is the smallest bit of Mitcham you are moving. It seems bizarre that you have decided to call it Streatham and Mitcham. Again, this completely adds to my impression that Mitcham was at the back of the queue when it came to fairness.

I have a few things to say about the historical cultural and social links, as I said. I have talked about the way that Colliers Wood has been part of the historic Church Parish of Mitcham since the 1200s. To carve Colliers Wood off in the way that you have I think is to disregard some of those historic links and the sort of cultural ties that a resident like me has for Mitcham where I have a lot of friends. Under the proposals, Colliers Wood and I think Lavender Fields, Cricket Green and Ravensbury wards are going to be moved into this new constituency of Merton and Wimbledon, but I have more in common with Mitcham than I do with Wimbledon. You are going to cut Mitcham High Street into two; that is where I do my shopping. Whenever I attend church which I admit is not often, I tend to walk round the back and cut across Figge's Marsh at the back of Colliers Wood and walk through to St Barnabas Church in the Parish of Mitcham. I can also walk to pubs like the Gardeners Arms where I am occasionally to be seen on a weekend to socialise with some of my friends. I want to live in a parliamentary seat that recognises those cultural ties, to be honest with you, and to have a good local MP who can give this community in which I live his or her full attention.

I have been trying to think about alternatives. For me, keeping the community of Mitcham together strikes me as a pre-requisite and I think your 2011/2012 proposals actually did that and I am not quite sure why you changed from those. I will continue to give it some thought; I know that there is some time still to contribute to the consultation.

To sum up, I have said how I think it is unfair to Mitcham. I think it is tantamount to discrimination on social grounds, I will be honest. The proposal does not follow the Commission's own guiding principles and, if implemented, I think it could cause quite horrific harm to community cohesion, the sense of identity and that we might not get proper and viable representation in Parliament. I think that is a real risk. Thank you. Do I need to take questions?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. I am just to check if there are any points for clarification? Thank you. That was very helpful. You say you want to give it some further thought and, please, do. I understand clearly the issues you are raising of concern but what we desperately need are proposals to how we can mitigate and overcome those issues.

MS OLDROYD: I hope you will take into account what I have said about the existing proposals. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, indeed. Monica Tulloch, would you come forward and speak from the lectern and would you start by introducing yourself by your name and your address, please.

MS TULLOCH: Good afternoon. My name is Monica Tulloch. My address is 25 Kings Road, Mitcham. I moved into that borough about 25 years ago now and I have been very active in the community. I currently live in the Figge's Marsh ward where I am involved in running a pensioners' dance group in Figge's Marsh ward. I also volunteer twice weekly in a local Mitcham primary school; that is where my great grandson attended; he is now at secondary school. I am also involved in a charitable organisation based in Mitcham.

I am here today to express my opposition to the Boundary Commission's plans to abolish my constituency of Mitcham and Morden. I recognise that Merton Council will remain in its present form, but I suggest that you underestimate the impact of your proposal for the Mitcham and Morden constituency and on local people. I live in Figge's Marsh ward and your proposal is to put me in the Lambeth constituency based in Streatham. Virtually all of the new seat will be made up of Lambeth wards and we in Figge's Marsh will be put at the tail end of the seat. The MP will represent constituents who are overwhelmingly from the Lambeth borough, so the idea that we will take a big role in his or her thinking is just not realistic.

MPs are supposed to represent communities, but if communities are carved up to make new constituencies, how can they do that? Take, for instance, in March 2015, the exercise classes which I am part of was being evicted from the centre where we were based. We were able to call on our Mitcham and Morden MP who helped us find alternative accommodation and eventually financial support from Merton Council. Everything was sorted out very quickly because our group was central to the interest of our local MP. Under your proposals, would an MP have acted with such attention when we are only a small part of their seat? I do not think so.

You call the new seat Streatham and Mitcham, but Mitcham is taken apart with important parts not in the seat at all. Mitcham is a community and I am a member of various local groups and we have been helped by our Mitcham and Morden MP in various important ways over the years. Mitcham is a strong community with a long history and these plans brush us away. Adding Mitcham to a constituency's name proves nothing if most of Mitcham is scattered elsewhere. Under the current plans, we would have to make our case to an MP who is already overstretched with problems say, for instance, in Lambeth. They have problems of their own. We have our local MP who has a finger on the pulse and would know exactly what to do when issues do arise. For instance, I am now 73 years of age. I have retired and am living in the Borough of

Mitcham and Morden. I feel settled. I feel secure but, with these plans, I do not feel that way at all. I would like their assurance that the issues that affect my life will be dealt with seriously, but the current proposal will mean that my neighbours and I will have to convince five MPs in the future, all of them having a minority of Mitcham and Morden wards in their constituency. Anyone who lives in Mitcham knows that Mitcham is a strong and vibrant community. It would seem only natural to have one MP. There would be one MP speaking up for the whole of Mitcham. It seems ludicrous to me that we now have three MPs covering parts of our town. I would implore you, please, think again and keep Mitcham together. Thank you for giving me this opportunity of speaking.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for your submission. Are there any points of clarification? In that case, thank you.

Daisy-Rose Srblin, would you come to the lectern and just introduce yourself by name and address, please.

MS SRBLIN: I am speaking on behalf of Lieutenant Commander Patrick Lyster-Todd; I am reading out a statement from him; he wanted to be here today but is unwell. I will give you his address: 12 A The Sanctuary, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5NX.

“My name is Patrick Lyster-Todd; I am a retired Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander having served as a career executive branch officer for 20 years including active service in Northern Ireland leaving early to look after a dying partner. For the last 14 years I have lived on the Waddon Estate of the Haig Housing Trust within the Upper Morden conservation area. While I speak as just one voice from our local community, I also believe I speak too for many with whom I work and live. I sit on the board of the local health watch as a member of the Management Committee of the Haig Housing Trust, Morden having a high veterans’ population, on the local Clinical Commissioning Group’s Patient Engagement Group, as a Secretary of the local LGBT+ Forum, not to mention being the Community Engagement Director for the large voluntary organisation, Pride in London. I submit four main points:

1. History: Morden together with the surrounding area that makes up the current parliamentary constituency, especially Mitcham, is a historic community that spans many centuries. Close to where I live is the parish church of Morden, St Lawrence Church, Grade I listed, that is one of the three ancient parishes of London. Saxon in origin, an even older burial ground lies just to the rear. Within its churchyard lie Commonwealth war graves, commissions, marker stones to six of Morden sons and daughters who lost their lives in serving their country and who were returned home either in death or to die. A short distance across the constituency lies the remnants of Merton Abbey dissolved by Henry VIII and sold off though later to find fame as the home of William Morris and the Arts & Crafts movement. Liberty fabrics found their home here too and, even during the

Second World War, the craft factories adapted their machinery and instead turned out gun turrets for Blenheim fighter bombers.

Another local resident who lived on the banks of the River Wandle which lies across the heart of this ancient constituency area was arguably one of the country's greatest warriors, Lord Horatio Nelson. In a life also given to service for his country, Nelson's fleeting visits to his home in our constituency area were always, as he put it, "To paradise Merton".

2. Community: Our constituency is also one of the most disadvantaged communities in a wealthy capital. This provides us with an impetus to all work together. We have in our midst one of the most successful, vibrant and hardworking voluntary sector councils in London. This community adhesion owes as much to our MP and her work in support of many minority groups, Tamils and Ghanaians, Ghurkhas and their families, who live in increasing numbers on the Haig Military Estate in Morden, the Ahmadiyya community centred on South Morden, many hardworking Polish families, as much as it does to our largely overlapping single London borough. For all our relative poverty, we are both a diverse and cohesive community with one of the lowest rates of recorded hate crime across the whole of London. I submit therefore that maintaining the general shape of our constituency is vital in order to prevent our many communities from being split and many positive ties broken. It will certainly affect my own voluntary and community work as many of the organisations I support follow constituency and not necessarily borough boundaries.
3. Cutting across existing boundaries: Unlike most of the rest of London where the many boundary changes you have reported upon impact through numerous but still relatively minor ward adjustments, we in Morden and Mitcham are, I believe, one of only two constituencies where the changes will cut across more than three boroughs. I appreciate enormously the difficulty of the task set to the Commission in reducing the number of constituencies in London from 73 to 68, yet I find it difficult to square off, even looking at the numerical constraints and the five per cent margin that you have, that with 68 constituencies and only 32 boroughs, you are still not able to graft one that retains the central area of Morden and Mitcham. Most other boroughs have just one or two constituencies that overlap while ours will have four. We lose Morden in its entirety while Wimbledon will now have two constituencies with that word in its title and Mitcham gets added through our three most easterly wards to the new constituency of Streatham and Mitcham even though the bulk of the town of Mitcham does not even lie in this new constituency. I submit that for most of my fellow citizens this is confusing, destructive and will drive a divide, not one but many, across a vibrant community that arguably deserves to be protected above most.

4. The political dimension: There is, in closing, one final dimension that sits rather as the elephant in the room and I beg your patience in my mentioning this to you. Your proposals divide up the strongly Labour constituency to leave nothing by giving four wards to a new Merton and Wimbledon constituency that will be conservative, two wards to a new Sutton and Cheam constituency that will also be conservative, three to the new Streatham and Mitcham and one to Tooting, neither of which will affect their current voting balance. A largely labour constituency disappears forever and the majority of this working class area loses any ability to be represented by someone who, some may argue, will have their interests more fully at heart.

Yours faithfully,  
Lieutenant Commander Patrick Lyster-Todd.”

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, indeed. Is it possible to have a copy of the submission?

MS SRBLIN: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be most helpful. Thank you very much.

Father David Penolds, would you like to come to the lectern and give your name and address, please.

FATHER PENOLDS: My name is Father David Penolds. I live at The Vicarage, 11 Vicarage Gardens, Mitcham, CR4 3BL. I have the privilege of being the Vicar of the historic Parish of St Peter & St Paul, Mitcham and preside at its wonderful regency church completed in 1821 universally known as Mitcham Parish Church. The parish church located in Church Street, or Church Road as it is now, can trace its origins back to actual mentions of the “Church of Mitham”, without a “c”, in documentation of 1259 AD when the advalson(?) of the living was granted by Baldwin de Redvers to the Convent of St Mary Overie, now Southwark Cathedral, but it also mentions the Parish of Mitcham go back to even earlier to records of 1171 when Henry de Blois, the Bishop of Winchester in whose diocese we once were, evidenced our prior historical presence. We can name all but one or two of our known vicars rolling back to Hugh de Guildford who was instituted in July 1291 and, indeed, there are references to the community of Mitcham even earlier in some documents of Chertsey Abbey dating back from 675 and 725. We can also claim archaeological evidence of one of Britain’s largest Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. We have been there as an identity for some time. Our registers now held in the Surrey archives in Woking go back to the reign of Henry VIII, this Act being reinforced by the fact that one of the monuments in the present church but from the former building commemorates the death in 1583 of a local resident, Thomas Pinner



Esq, Chief Clerk Controller to our late renowned sovereign, Lady Queen Elizabeth. I speak to you at length about our parish history to emphasise the whole sense of Mitcham as a distinct village, town, an entity in its own right, and as a historic and proud entity and I can confidently say that the parish church exists at the centre of Mitcham's heart for many residents of the local community even to this day. This community of Mitchamites, which has a strong, independent and proud identity, is, I strongly contend, being greatly compromised by the current boundary change proposals.

The distinct out of London rural area centred around Mitcham in times past was frequented by Sir Walter Raleigh and the poet and cleric John Donne and many other respectable city merchants and government officials including cavaliers, East Indian merchants, Huguenot émigrés, but is now under threat of having its sense of identity being blown asunder and a single proud location being divided and splintered within the boundaries of three new parliamentary constituencies.

More recently, the Church of England, through having a grouping known as the Mitcham Group Ministry, has sought over a number of years to unite Mitcham and bring it together in the sense of civic pride and pastoral care and co-operation. This initiative was developed partly in response to the parish priests recognising the sense of unity of the location of Mitcham even though the Church of England provided more priests to meet the pastoral needs of the densely populated areas of Mitcham which expanded dramatically from late Victorian and Edwardian times onwards cocooning the heritage and conservation areas in the centre. Churches Together in Mitcham is also a strong and vibrant ecumenical organisation within our CR4 postcode community.

I am sure we, the Parish of Mitcham, and the current parish ministry arrangements close by would find it curious and indeed difficult to have to refer to parliamentary representatives sometimes to the north of their parish, sometimes to the east and sometimes to the west if these plans go ahead. With potentially varying opinions of different representatives, how could we expect our Mitcham issues to be properly addressed and represented on the wider political canvas? There will be no united centralised concept of Mitcham left. Mitcham would be divided between Streatham and Mitcham, Merton and Wimbledon Central and Tooting, and Morden, I note, gets lost into Sutton and Cheam losing any sense of identity for itself at all.

I can testify to the strength of feeling that Mitcham people feel towards their town. I was surprised on my arrival in the parish by the fact that Mitcham is not just another London suburb but a really distinct town location in Surrey with a real and positive sense of identity which people proudly claim.

In relation to the home borough that we have, the London Borough of Merton, the new arrangements will clearly bring an even more splintered approach to representation now with potentially five MPs being responsible for bits of the borough whereas two very successfully represent the more logical areas of Mitcham and Morden, and Wimbledon,

Raynes Park, Motspur Park and Morden at present. I have reason to understand – and I have discussed this with some people – that, in Wimbledon, they also are disquieted by the proposed changes and I would suggest the Boundary Commission’s own guidelines on community interest and cohesion have simply been disregarded and not been followed. Fundamental to all our protests and concerns are the fact that logical geographical boundaries and cohesive communities are being sacrificed for the sake of numerical expediency.

Other issues of concern which I wish to raise are specifically the problem of the split Mitcham Common. There will be no single MP to represent this most important and significant piece of common land which is both an important ecological parcel of land and a very significant leisure resource for the whole Mitcham community. Also, residents of Lavender, Ravensbury and Cricket Green wards, in which I reside, are quite definitely parts of Mitcham to which they identify and look as their centre of gravity. The River Wandle and other major roads and topographical features encourage this. They just do not relate directly to Wimbledon as suggested in the proposed new constituency arrangements where they would be co-joined. If the Boundary Commission are particularly interested in hearing from affected residents with regard to local ties that are impacted by these proposals, please, bear in mind my submission and everything I have said.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the harm that will be caused by the split. There will be no sense of Mitcham being an entity of its own anymore. There will be no sense of the community coming together because we will be drawn in all directions spun out like a centrifuge in other directions, quite often probably to actually support other people’s issues.

I understand that in previous proposals the Boundary Commission were convinced that Mitcham Town Centre should be united, but the town is now split under the current proposals with, as far as I can see, no rhyme or reason and with potentially catastrophic consequences. In the words of the psalmist “please hear our cry”.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, indeed. Ms McDonagh, are you ready? Please, come forward.

MS SIOBHAIN McDONAGH: (MP for Mitcham and Morden) My name is Siobhain McDonagh; I am the MP for Mitcham and Morden. I was born, brought up and have always lived in the constituency which I represent and therefore you can imagine that that is an enormous privilege and I have loved every single day of representing my home, both as a councillor where I was a councillor for Colliers Wood ward from 1982 to 1998 and as the MP since 1997. It was not quite an easy journey; I did manage to lose the constituency in 1987 and 1992, finally winning in 1997. I appreciate that I have more days of representation behind me than I have in front of me and I am not here in order to ask you to move round bits of my constituency in order to suit me or my political

career. I am here because I believe with all my heart that these proposals will disadvantage a community that is already beset by many problems and issues. By breaking Mitcham and Morden into four, the community that exists there is broken asunder.

When I do my Friday advice surgery, I always make the mistake of saying to the constituent, "Where do you live?" What I mean is, "What is your address?" The answer to the question, "Where do you live?" invariably is "Mitcham" or "Morden" and I am going, "No, no, no, your address". Clearly, that says that those people have a sense of identity about where they live. This is not a political construct; it is a town and people identify as living there. The same cannot be said for the London Borough of Merton. That is a political construct put together in 1965. There is very little that unites Wimbledon or Mitcham and Morden. People in Mitcham and Morden feel that they are the poor relation of that borough and they believe that Wimbledon gets the best. For those people interested in the boundaries, to read that Wimbledon Village should be put into the Putney constituency because Wimbledon Common should stay together but have no similar reference to Mitcham Common, you do not need to be a conspiracist to believe that perhaps both ends of the borough, as usual, are not being treated equally.

I wanted to have a look at what the size of the bits of Mitcham and Morden that are split up would be in their home constituency should the proposals go ahead. If we look at Graveney, Graveney is going to be an orphan ward placed in the constituency of Tooting. Graveney takes its name from the River Graveney which traditionally marked the boundaries between the Parishes of Mitcham and Tooting as it still does today though this will be ignored under these proposals. Graveney will be a small ward in comparison to the others in Tooting; Graveney ward has 5,900 electors while the average ward size in Tooting is 9,800. Graveney will represent only an eighth of the Tooting constituency. The problems in Graveney at the moment relate to street drinking by groups of older men, principally from Eastern Europe, and younger men who are Tamils. Only last week I had a large community meeting with the police attempting to address this. The major issues of street drinking will be something that the people of Graveney will look to Merton Police Service and Merton Licensing to resolve, but seven-eighths of the constituency in which they will be placed will look to Wandsworth. The longest standing councillor for this ward is Cllr Linda Kirby who has been the councillor for 30 years: 30 years a Graveney councillor, 30 years in the constituency of Mitcham and Morden. She has two friends who live in the same street in Graveney: Geraldine Stanford who represents the neighbouring ward of Figge's Marsh, and Judy Saunders who represents Cricket Green wards. For most of those 30 years, all three have represented neighbouring wards in the same constituency. They will now be representing neighbouring wards in three different constituencies, namely Tooting for Linda, Streatham and Mitcham for Geraldine and Wimbledon and Merton for Judy.

If we look at Figge's March, Longthornton and Pollards Hill moving into the Streatham and Mitcham constituency, these three wards, which form one half of Mitcham, will only

represent 28 per cent of all electors in this new constituency. The other 72 per cent will be based within the London Borough of Lambeth. How likely is it that that 28 per cent will be the focus of the Member of Parliament for that constituency? Figge's Marsh, Longthornton and Pollards Hill feel themselves a part of the same place as the three wards, Cricket Green, Lavender Fields, Colliers Wood and Ravensbury, that will now be part of Merton and Wimbledon. Those constituencies will also not represent even half of the new constituency and believe that their neighbours, Wimbledon, will get more influence and interest anyway.

These wards have really significant problems. A contributor to the Boundary Commission only yesterday suggested that we should not mix up inner and outer London constituencies. I believe that that does not recognise what has happened to poverty and deprivation in London. If you look at the Trust for London, you see that the average family in poverty ten years ago lived in inner London, in social housing and was on benefits. The average family today lives in outer London, is in work and in private rented accommodation and, most of that community in the current constituency of Mitcham and Morden live in Figge's Marsh, in Lavender, in Cricket Green and in Pollards Hill. They have a community of interest that requires representation but, by being split up, they will have even less of a voice than they currently have. If we move to Morden and see that Ravensbury will be in Wimbledon and Merton, while Lower Morden and St. Helier will be in Sutton and Cheam. We have already heard from Friends in St. Helier how there is a large pensioner population who get their services from Merton but will be part of a constituency based in the Borough of Sutton where they will represent only 18 per cent of electors. These are real issues about what goes to the heart of being a MP.

If we look at the National Health Service, at no point during the last almost 20 years that I have been the MP has there ever been somebody from Mitcham and Morden who has been on the CCG, its predecessor the PCT, either St Helier or St George's Boards. People are not represented. In many cases, I am the only voice that argues for those areas. I am not suggesting that public bodies mean to favour one area over another, but that is just how life works and whoever the MP is and whatever party they come from, they will represent who the bulk of the people who live in their constituency are and I believe that these current proposed boundaries prevent that from being effectively done for the people who need it most who are currently living in Mitcham and Morden. I could quote the Common, I could quote the Cricket Green, I could quote the War Memorial but I am just here to say that people need to be represented. It is what keeps the glue of our politics together and even in times of great turbulence like we are going through at the moment, many people in their area know who their MP is and believe that their MP will represent them. These boundary proposals will make that harder to believe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for that. Are there any points for clarification?

LORD HAYWARD: I would like to ask you the question of which I gave you prior notice just to clarify in the interests of accuracy, particularly in relation to comments that were made yesterday by Cllr Alambritis, who I know has indicated that he did not intend to make the specific assertion, and that is that Merton is in fact jointly the seventh smallest borough in London rather than the smallest.

MS SIOBHAIN McDONAGH: I completely accept that. It still makes it quite small, does it not? It is quite small to have five MPs.

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

There are two further speakers who are scheduled to attend before 5.00 and I suggest that we take a ten-minute recess now and re-assemble in ten minutes.

After a short break

Time Noted: 4.50 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we can reconvene. Our last scheduled speaker has arrived. Would you come forward, Mr Kanodia, and use the lectern and, by way of introduction, would you say your name and address at the beginning, please.

MR KANODIA: Hi. My name is Kush Kanodia and I am a resident in Chelsea in London. I wanted to discuss your proposals in relation to the current boundaries Fulham and Chelsea, one boundary, and the proposal is to make it Chelsea and Kensington. Our current MP is Greg Hands. I think it will be beneficial to the local area because the residents in my part of Chelsea from Lots Road Village support the proposal for Crossrail 2 and our local MP, Greg Hands, is currently supporting the Fulham residents but not the Chelsea residents. There is a big divergence of opinion within the local residents of Chelsea compared to the local residents of Fulham. I do not think he has been able to fully appreciate the concerns of the Chelsea residents. Even though the site for Crossrail 2 is safeguarded within Chelsea, he is proposing a non-safeguarded site within Fulham and it has been quite a challenge for the local residents and I think that is a very good example of how your proposed boundary changes would help the local residents of Kensington and Chelsea.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very helpful. That is a clear illustration of how there may be benefits arising. Are there any points of clarification? Thank you very much, indeed.

That was our last scheduled speaker and I think we can draw the proceedings to a close. Thank you for your attendance. These have been two quite interesting days.

Thank you very much and good luck to those of you who are going on to other sessions elsewhere.

At 4.52 pm the hearing concluded

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