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To: [BCE SouthEast](#)
Cc: _____
Subject: Conservative Party response - second stage - South East
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Attachments: [Conservative Party - cover letter - South East.pdf](#)
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To whom it may concern,

Please find attached the Conservative Party's response to the second consultation stage for the South East, sent on behalf of Roger Pratt CBE, the Party's Boundary Review Manager.

Yours sincerely,

_____ **eviuw Assistant**
Conservative Campaign Headquarters, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4DP

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Conservative Campaign Headquarters
30 Millbank
London
SW1P 4DP

3rd April 2012

Boundary Commission for England
35 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BQ

Dear Sirs,

Second consultation period – South East Region

We have much pleasure in enclosing our response to the representations received during the first consultation period on the initial proposals for the South East Region.

Yours sincerely,


Boundary Review Manager

SOUTH EAST REGION

Submission of the Conservative Party regarding the responses to the initial proposals for the South East Region

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 We note that there are nearly 5,000 responses to the initial proposals for the South East Region. We note that the number of responses is the highest of the nine Regions in England.
- 1.2 We note that a very large number of the representations relate to the unpopularity of the proposals in Medway. In particular the second largest number of submissions from any existing constituency in the whole of England are from Gillingham and Rainham.
- 1.3 We also note an alternative suggestion for sub-regions in respect of East Sussex, Kent and West Sussex which we will address. Apart from in these three counties the Commission have treated individual counties as sub-regions and there seems to be general support for this approach.
- 1.4 We note very little opposition to the Commission's proposals in Berkshire and unanimous support from the three main parties.
- 1.5 We note there is some concern about the amount of disruption to the seats in Buckinghamshire which our proposals reduce.
- 1.6 We note the very considerable number of representations from East Sussex and Kent which represent about 70% of all the representations in the South East. We will propose alternatives which reduce disruption, break fewer local ties and better respect local government links.

- 1.7 We note that there are a number of representations from Hampshire but, bearing in mind the number of seats is being reduced by one, the level of representations is relatively low compared to other areas. We will look at a number of minor changes to restore local ties.
- 1.8 We note consensus between ourselves and Labour on a slight rearrangement to the Isle of Wight seats to respect local ties.
- 1.9 In Oxfordshire we note general opposition on two points: crossing the Thames to include Radley in a Henley seat and dividing Oxford city centre which we believe our proposals best address.
- 1.10 We note that although there are local objections, the Commission's proposals in Surrey limit disruption and we propose only one change to better respect local ties across the Thames in the north of the county.
- 1.11 We largely support the Commission's proposals in West Sussex which limit change but propose some minor changes to further minimise disruption.
- 1.12 We will use as our guiding principles when looking at other submissions the factors outlined in Rule 5 of the Rules for Redistribution of Seats – Schedule 2 to the Act.
- 1.13 In particular we will look at:
- a) Geographical factors;
 - b) Local Government boundaries;
 - c) Existing constituencies;
 - d) Local ties that are broken from existing constituencies.

1.14 We will now comment in detail on the various areas and our views on any alternative proposals that have been suggested.

2. GENERAL COMMENTS ON COUNTER-PROPOSALS

2.1 We note in the overview of the Liberal Democrat submission on page 1 they make one point on which we wish to comment.

2.2 The Liberal Democrats propose alternative sub-regions for Sussex and Kent consisting of what they describe as “historic Sussex” (East and West Sussex) and “historic Kent” (Kent). We have to point out in the terms of Rule 5 (1) b that it is the current Local Authorities including County boundaries that the Boundary Commission may take into account and not necessarily the historic County boundaries which ceased for administrative purposes nearly forty years ago. Sussex has been divided between East and West for administrative purposes since 1888.

2.3 We also note that although the Liberal Democrats state that their proposed sub-regions “avoids unnecessary change”. This is not the case in West Sussex where significant disruption is made to the existing constituencies. We note that only a minimal amount of change is necessary in West Sussex in order that the current constituencies can be adjusted to comply with Rule 2.

3. BERKSHIRE

- 3.1 We note that there is a great deal of support for eight constituencies containing the county of Berkshire although the number of responses has been very low in the county.
- 3.2 All three parties support the Commission's proposals here, which involve only the transfer of the Foxborough ward from Slough to Windsor. This is the least disruptive option and the majority of the Foxborough ward was in the Windsor seat until the 2010 General Election. The proposals leave all six of the Berkshire seats that were already within 5% of the electoral quota unchanged.
- 3.3 We believe there is an overwhelming case in terms of Rule 5 (1) c for the Commission's proposals in respect of Berkshire.
- 3.4 Although we note a small number of suggestions in favour of more radical change in Berkshire we do not support these as there is considerable support, including from both the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, for minimal change in Berkshire.

4. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

4.1 We note that there is general agreement that Buckinghamshire should retain seven constituencies as it currently has.

4.2 We note that the Liberal Democrats propose no change to the Commission's proposals in Buckinghamshire and that Labour propose no alternatives except for one ward swap in Milton Keynes.

4.3 In Milton Keynes, we believe that significant local ties between Bletchley and the city centre would be broken under the Commission's proposal to move both Eaton Manor and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford into the Buckingham seat. We believe that the Commission are right to propose the Eaton Manor ward but that strong ties would be broken through moving the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford ward into Buckingham. We note that the majority of responses from Milton Keynes object to Bletchley and/or Fenny Stratford not being part of a Milton Keynes seat, while the second largest number of responses object to Danesborough not forming part of a Milton Keynes South seat, both of which issues we address in our counter-proposal. For just some examples of representations see Representations 006262, 006639, 006702 and from the Chairman of the League of Friends of Bletchley Community Hospital, Representation 022251.

4.4 We would cite the evidence of the two Members of Parliament for Milton Keynes Mark Lancaster (013023) and in particular Iain Stewart (Day One, Milton Keynes hearing, 11.13am, Pages 4-7) who makes clear the ties between Bletchley, Fenny Stratford and Milton Keynes.

- 4.5 We share the concerns about moving Bletchley out of a Milton Keynes seat as it does form the second centre for services in Milton Keynes, and propose instead that the Whaddon ward which has ties with Buckingham including via an A-road be moved into the Buckingham seat instead.
- 4.6 In Buckinghamshire, there is some support for restoring ties between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough which were broken at the last review. However there is also opposition to the continued division of communities between Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens and Princes Risborough where there are strong local ties, and also ties between this ward and Aylesbury which would be broken under the proposals. We would cite in evidence for example Representations 022427 and 024358.
- 4.7 Similarly there is support for restoring ties between Bledlow and Bradenham and Princes Risborough for example Representation 021868.
- 4.8 We note support from the Stokenchurch area supporting their re-uniting with Wycombe, with which there are ties (see for example Representations 000165 and 000369)
- 4.9 We therefore would add only one ward, Stokenchurch, to the existing Wycombe constituency and we would add only one ward, Greater Hughenden, to the existing Chesham and Amersham constituency, in each case being much less disruptive than the Commission's proposals.
- 4.10 Like Labour and the Liberal Democrats we support the Beaconsfield constituency which is unchanged.

- 4.11 Our proposals much better respect the existing constituencies in Buckinghamshire, as we would retain 492,571 electors in their existing constituencies compared with 464,329 under the Commission's proposals, an improvement of 28,242. We note that the Labour proposals in fact move 1,662 electors more than the Commission. Our proposal is therefore much more compliant with Rule 5 (1) c than the alternatives.
- 4.12 In particular we note the positive effect in Milton Keynes, where under our proposals only four wards in the Milton Keynes unitary authority move constituency. Under the Commission's and Labour's proposals, six wards in Milton Keynes move constituencies. In all four cases this includes two Milton Keynes wards which move from a Milton Keynes seat to the Buckingham seat. As a result only 28,858 electors in Milton Keynes move under our proposals, compared with 46,120 under the Commission's proposals and 47,793 under Labour's.

5. EAST SUSSEX AND KENT

- 5.1 We note that there are a very large number of representations from Kent and East Sussex.
- 5.2 Around 70% of the representations throughout the South East come from this area.
- 5.3 We note a very large number of the representations relate to the Medway constituencies and overwhelmingly object to the proposals.
- 5.4 We note that the second largest number of representations relate to the proposed Lewes and Brighton East constituency. However although there are a lot of objections particularly from the Lewes area there are also more letters of support from the Brighton area for this constituency than there are in support of the Commission's proposals for anywhere else in the South East.
- 5.5 We note there are also a large number of representations from South Thanet relating to Sandwich and Little Stour and Ashstone overwhelmingly wanting these two wards to be retained in South Thanet.
- 5.6 We support the proposal of the Commission to link East Sussex and Kent and we note this is supported by the Labour Party, who refer to it as sensible, and ourselves.
- 5.7 We note that this linking has not aroused much criticism apart from the Liberal Democrats who have suggested linking East and West Sussex.
- 5.8 We will explain in section 10 on West Sussex why we do not support that linking as West Sussex can be reviewed alone with very little change to the constituencies there.

- 5.9 We support the composition of the Brighton and Hove North and Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies and note there is very little opposition and some support for these constituencies.
- 5.10 We note this includes the support of the Labour Party who says it recognizes the city as a whole and that Brighton and Hove North has strong internal communications.
- 5.11 It is only the Liberal Democrats who suggest change to these two constituencies which we strongly object to.
- 5.12 Their Hove constituency instead of comprising one unitary authority comprises two local authorities, so it is worse in relation to Rule 5 (1) b.
- 5.13 It also includes the Goldsmid ward in a Brighton Pavilion constituency so detaching it from Hove as wards to the North and the South of the Goldsmid ward would be included in Hove. So Central Hove and Brunswick and Adelaide wards to the south and Hove Park ward to the north would be included.
- 5.14 Goldsmid would in effect become a hole in the middle. It is a core Hove ward with strong ties to Central Hove and Brunswick and Adelaide wards including Hove railway station and the Hove County Cricket Ground.
- 5.15 We believe the Liberal Democrat Hove proposals to be especially flawed, breaching Rule 5 (1) b and d and proposing very badly shaped seats in Brighton Pavilion and Hove. Both the maps provided by the Liberal Democrats for Hove and Brighton Pavilion show how Goldsmid ward sticks out like a sore thumb.
- 5.16 We note there are a number of suggestions of name changes and we support them.

- 5.17 We note the evidence of Mike Weatherley the Member of Parliament for Hove at the Crawley Public Hearing (Day One, 11.39am, Pages 12-13 and Representation 004503).
- 5.18 We strongly support the proposed constituency of Lewes and Brighton East and believe this to be the only realistic alternative to address the low electorates in Brighton and Hove. We note the support of the Labour Party for this proposed constituency.
- 5.19 We appreciate there is very considerable opposition to the proposals from the Lewes constituency, however interestingly there is strong support for the proposals from the existing Brighton Kemptown constituency.
- 5.20 Brighton Kemptown needs to expand and the numbers mean it cannot expand to Newhaven and Seaford because the electorate would then be too large, therefore the only realistic way to do so is to include all of Lewes and the surrounding area.
- 5.21 The name of Lewes is retained as the county town in the name of the constituency and we believe the proposal is the least worst option.
- 5.22 We note the evidence of Simon Kirby the Member of Parliament for Brighton Kemptown at the Crawley Hearing (Day One, 11.27am, Pages 9-11 and Representation 007961).
- 5.23 We support as do the Labour Party the Uckfield constituency as again the least worst option. No communities are split as a result of this proposal and we think it will be a perfectly practical constituency based on the towns of Seaford and Uckfield.

- 5.24 We support, and there appears to be little opposition to, the Eastbourne constituency.
- 5.25 We support changes to the Bexhill constituency to include Battle rather than Heathfield.
- 5.26 We note the Liberal Democrats also retain Battle within the constituency and there have been a number of representations objecting to it not being included, see as examples Representations 003005 and 014182 and also the evidence of the Sedlescombe Parish Council (Representation 009295) as we would include the ward of Ewhurst and Sedlescombe as well as Battle in the Bexhill constituency.
- 5.27 We note the evidence of Greg Barker MP at the Maidstone hearing (Day Two, 9.15am, Pages 5-8).
- 5.28 We support, and there appears to be no opposition, to the Hastings and Rye constituency.
- 5.29 We support the principle of a cross-county constituency consisting of The Weald which we think has areas of commonality across the border. We note there is relatively little objection to the principle of this constituency which is supported by the Labour Party as well as ourselves.
- 5.30 We have said we would include Heathfield rather than Battle. We would also exclude Paddock Wood.
- 5.31 We note a number of residents in Paddock Wood ask that these two wards are retained in Tunbridge Wells, for example Representations 008841 and 015866 as well as Representation 015422 from Paddock Wood Town Council.

- 5.32 We note the objections voiced at the Maidstone Hearing to the inclusion of the Weald North ward in Tonbridge.
- 5.33 We appreciate that the ward would rather continue to be included in an Ashford seat.
- 5.34 However we think it would be preferable if they cannot be included in an Ashford seat, to be included with an Ashford ward to which they have ties – Biddenham – in a Weald constituency.
- 5.35 We certainly think that electors in the Weald North ward would think it very strange to be included in a constituency with Medway wards with which they have absolutely no connection but is the proposal of the Liberal Democrats.
- 5.36 We have said that we would retain the Paddock Wood wards in Tunbridge Wells for which there is popular support.
- 5.37 There is also concern in the Hildenborough ward about its inclusion in Tunbridge Wells rather than Tonbridge. We note Representations 001295 and 017079.
- 5.38 There is also concern about the inclusion in Tunbridge Wells rather than Sevenoaks of the Westerham and Crockham Hill ward. We note the evidence of the Westerham Town Partnership (Representation 017428).
- 5.39 By including Paddock Wood in Tunbridge Wells you can retain Hildenborough and Westerham and Crockham Hill in their existing constituencies of Tonbridge and Sevenoaks respectively.
- 5.40 We note the Liberal Democrats also retain these four wards in their existing constituencies.

- 5.41 We note the evidence of Michael Fallon MP (Day One, Maidstone hearing, 1.19pm, Pages 31-32).
- 5.42 We support the proposed changes to the Gravesend and Dartford constituencies and note this is supported by the Labour Party and there is little opposition to the proposals.
- 5.43 We note that the Liberal Democrats change these constituencies.
- 5.44 We think these proposals are worse than the Commission's and the wards they propose to add to Gravesend are very strange. In particular they split Snodland between two constituencies, breaking important local ties in contravention of Rule 5 (1) d.
- 5.45 We note that the proposals for Medway have attracted by far the most objections of anywhere in the South East, indeed one of the biggest objections anywhere in the country.
- 5.46 We note the very strong support for Rochester and Strood to remain unchanged, thus being most compliant with Rule 5 (1) c.
- 5.47 We also note the very large level of objections from the Hempstead and Wigmore ward at being excluded from their existing constituency of Gillingham and Rainham. We also note the representations from the Luton and Wayfield ward wishing to remain in their existing constituency of Chatham and Aylesford rather than being included in Gillingham and Rainham.
- 5.48 We note the evidence given by the Members of Parliament for Rochester and Strood and Gillingham and Rainham at the Maidstone Public Hearing, Mark

Reckless (Day One, 12.44pm, Pages 22-25) and Rehman Chishti (Day One, 11.19am, Pages 6-10).

- 5.49 We also note all the evidence at the Maidstone Hearing and the representations from many organisations and distinguished individuals from Medway about these changes.
- 5.50 Amongst many we would cite the former Labour Mayor of Medway, Cllr. Val Goulden (Day One, Maidstone hearing, 5.11pm, Pages 69-70), the former Bishop of Rochester (Representation 005001) and the Chief Superintendent of Police for North Kent and Medway (Representation 003685).
- 5.51 We think there is an overwhelming case for Rochester and Strood to remain unchanged, for Gillingham and Rainham to retain Hempstead and Wigmore, and for the Chatham constituency to retain Chatham Central and Luton and Wayfield.
- 5.52 Our counter-proposal achieves that and has beneficial effects in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.
- 5.53 It is perhaps not surprising that there is this outcry when part of Rochester is not included in the proposed Rochester seat and a large part of Chatham is not included in the Chatham and Aylesford seat.
- 5.54 We reject the Liberal Democrats proposal because as well as not addressing this important issue in Medway, it links the Medway wards proposed to be in Chatham and Aylesford, so including Hempstead and Wigmore over which there has been such an outcry, in an unwieldy seat including as we have referred to earlier the Ashford ward of Weald North.

- 5.55 We support, and there appears to be no objection to, the Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituency.
- 5.56 In respect of the Maidstone constituency we note some support for retaining the Barming ward in this constituency (for example Representation 019645) which we support. We note the Liberal Democrats would include it in a Maidstone constituency.
- 5.57 We note the Labour Party support the Maidstone constituency and the Liberal Democrats make major changes which we have referred to earlier.
- 5.58 We broadly support the constituency and concur with the evidence of Helen Grant the Member of Parliament for Maidstone and the Weald (Representation 022840).
- 5.59 We support the proposed Ashford constituency less the ward of Biddenden and note general support for the constituency apart from concern in North Weald ward referred to earlier.
- 5.60 We reject the proposals of the Labour Party to exclude the Charing, Downs North and Downs West wards. This would break ties between these wards and Ashford in contravention of Rule 5 (1) d.
- 5.61 We note that Shepway Council approve of the inclusion of Saxon Shore ward in Folkestone and Hythe.
- 5.62 We also note that the Liberal Democrats support the proposals for Folkestone and Hythe and Dover.
- 5.63 We appreciate the concern of those in the Elham and Stelling Minnis ward but believe it fits well with Dover.

- 5.64 We support the proposals of the Commission for Dover and reject the position of the Labour Party of including one Canterbury ward in the constituency.
- 5.65 This would mean that the Canterbury local authority would comprise three rather than two constituencies so it is worse under Rule 5 (1) b.
- 5.66 We note the evidence of Charles Elphicke the Member of Parliament for Dover (Day Two, Maidstone hearing, 12.45pm, Pages 36-38 and Representation 010701) and Richard Honey at the Maidstone Hearing (Day One, 4.39pm, Pages 62-66).
- 5.67 We note a lot of representations in respect of the South Thanet constituency and that most of them support the Sandwich ward being retained in South Thanet and call for the Little Stour and Ashstone ward to be retained in South Thanet as well.
- 5.68 In respect of Sandwich we note the very strong views of Sandwich Town Council that they should be retained in South Thanet (Representation 014602).
- 5.69 We also note many other representations from Sandwich who would oppose any suggestion of their exclusion from South Thanet, for just one example Representation 020338.
- 5.70 We note the representations from Little Stour and Ashstone who wish to be included in South Thanet not Herne Bay, for example Representations 015169 and 018815.
- 5.71 We therefore strongly oppose the Labour Party proposals which would clearly be very unpopular in Sandwich.
- 5.72 We believe like the Labour Party that the two wards go together. We believe however they should be in South Thanet where they are now so our proposals are

- better under Rule 5 (1) c. They are also better under Rule 5 (1) b as Dover district would include two constituencies rather than three and Herne Bay constituency would comprise of two local authorities rather than three.
- 5.73 We note that the Labour Party would put into South Thanet two wards of Margate but would break ties between these two wards of Garlinge and Westbrook with Westgate-on-Sea which is also part of Margate.
- 5.74 We believe our solution of including the Salmestone ward in Herne Bay is a better proposal.
- 5.75 We note the support for suggestions of a change of name to East Thanet and Sandwich for the Margate and Ramsgate seat which we support.
- 5.76 We note the representation of the two Thanet Members of Parliament, Roger Gale (Representation 004999) and Laura Sandys (Day One, Maidstone hearing, 4.25pm, Pages 58-61).
- 5.77 We also bring to your attention a mistake in the transcript of the Maidstone Public Hearing where it refers to Cllr. Michelle Fenner as a Conservative councillor; she is in fact a Labour councillor.
- 5.78 We support the proposed Canterbury constituency and note that a number of representations support Faversham being included in the name which we support. We note there is little local opposition to the constituency.
- 5.79 In Kent and East Sussex we therefore propose changes which move 48,325 fewer electors. We propose better local authority links and we break fewer ties.
- 5.80 Therefore we believe our proposals are better under Rule 5 (1) b, c and d.

5.81 We believe overall our proposals best meet the many representations that have been received regarding these constituencies.

6. HAMPSHIRE

- 6.1 We note that bearing in mind the reduction in Hampshire of one seat, the level of representations has been relatively low.
- 6.2 We note that no one existing constituency has received more than 100 representations from a postcode within that constituency.
- 6.3 We note that even in Surrey where the level of change has been minimal, two existing constituencies have received more than 100 representations.
- 6.4 We note in addition that quite a number of the representations are in support of the Commission's proposals and that in particular the proposals in East Hampshire appear to be popular.
- 6.5 Bearing in mind the relatively low level of objections and the degree of support for some of the proposals we see no good reason to radically alter the Commission's proposals.
- 6.6 We note that both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats make major changes to the Commission's proposals.
- 6.7 In the case of the Labour Party they change all but one of the proposals. In the case of the Liberal Democrats they change every single constituency.
- 6.8 We make minor changes to address the braking of local ties in Tadley, Fleet and Lyndhurst.
- 6.9 Other than that we support the Commission's proposals and leave the composition of twelve of the proposed constituencies unchanged.
- 6.10 We note that there are very few representations in respect of the two proposed New Forest constituencies.

- 6.11 In fact we note one representation from the New Forest which just used one word: „excellent’ (Representation 000368).
- 6.12 We note some concern comes from the Lyndhurst ward which we would include in New Forest East and Romsey rather than New Forest West. This is supported by New Forest District Council (Representation 021167).
- 6.13 We note that both Labour and the Liberal Democrats support this ward’s inclusion in New Forest East albeit under their more radical alternatives to the proposals.
- 6.14 We note the evidence of Julian Lewis, Member of Parliament for New Forest East, at the Portsmouth hearing (Day One, 12.38pm, Pages 20-23).
- 6.15 We believe that the addition of Romsey to New Forest East is a much better solution effectively recreating the Romsey and Waterside constituency that previously existed rather than including one or two isolated Test Valley wards.
- 6.16 We then support the proposed Southampton Test constituency. We believe this is a very well shaped constituency with the Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams ward linking together three wards on the northern border of Southampton.
- 6.17 We note there is some local opposition to this seat but it is relatively limited and there is also some support particularly from the Bassett ward for this proposed seat (see Representations 010383 and 016822 for example).
- 6.18 We also note the evidence of Cllr. Jeremy Moulton (Day One, Portsmouth hearing, 2.28pm, Pages 34-35) and Linda Norris (Day Two, Portsmouth hearing, 10.58am, Pages 13-15).
- 6.19 We then support the proposed Southampton Itchen seat which is a well-shaped constituency with the River Itchen as a common feature.

- 6.20 We think that this is an improvement on the current arrangement and that by inclusion of the Bevois ward with Bargate, the two wards on the western side of the Itchen are put together.
- 6.21 The two constituencies as proposed are well-shaped and the proposal to include the Swaythling ward rather than the Bassett ward not only does not reflect the wish of some residents of Bassett to be included in Southampton Test, it also makes for a much more awkwardly shaped seat.
- 6.22 We support the proposed Hedge End and Hamble seat which although it is a new seat has relatively speaking received less objection than may be expected and some support.
- 6.23 We support the consequent changes to Fareham and Horndean and note comments on the name. We would support the Commission's proposed name.
- 6.24 We note the evidence of the Leader of Fareham Council, Cllr. Sean Woodward (Day Two, Portsmouth hearing, 9.55am, Pages 7-8) who made clear that the decision of Fareham Council was unanimous amongst all 31 councillors, and of Mark Hoban MP (Day Two, Portsmouth hearing, 10.51am, Pages 11-12) broadly supporting the proposals for these two constituencies, but suggesting alternative names for Hedge End and Hamble.
- 6.25 On balance we support The Hamble but would have no objection to Hamble Valley.
- 6.26 We support the Gosport constituency unchanged. We note that both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats both make changes to this constituency which means it is worse under Rule 5 (1) c.

- 6.27 We support the Commission's proposals for the two Portsmouth constituencies.
- 6.28 The numbers mean that there has to be a reconfiguration of Portsmouth on an East-West basis rather than a North-South basis unless you split wards.
- 6.29 We do not support the Liberal Democrat proposal to split a ward. We do not think there are exceptional and compelling circumstances why a ward should be split when it is possible to have an acceptable arrangement of wards without doing so.
- 6.30 In addition splitting Baffins ward would break ties in Baffins in contravention of Rule 5 (1) d as was shown by Cllr. Jim Fleming in his evidence to the Portsmouth hearing (Day Two, 11.07am, Pages 16-20).
- 6.31 We do not accept the Labour Party alternative which takes St Jude into East and Fratton into West.
- 6.32 The proposal of the Commission makes much more logically shaped constituencies and the Labour alternative would make for odd-shaped seats. Fratton fits very well with the Baffins and Copnor wards.
- 6.33 St Jude on the other hand fits very well with St Thomas. There is a very poor boundary between the two wards and part of Southsea is in St Thomas so you would not unite Southsea in one constituency. The Labour Party therefore break ties between St Thomas and St Jude which means their proposal is worse under Rule 5 (1) d.
- 6.34 We note the evidence of Matthew Winnington (Day One, Portsmouth hearing, 11.07am, Pages 4-9) who though supporting the Liberal Democrat alternative said the Labour proposal made the position even worse in respect of the St Jude ward.

- 6.35 We note the evidence of Cllr. Jim Fleming referred to above, Penny Mordaunt the Member of Parliament for Portsmouth North (Day Two, Portsmouth hearing, 12.31pm, Pages 29-31) and Cllr. Donna Jones (Day Two, Portsmouth hearing, 4.11pm, Pages 53-57).
- 6.36 We support the proposals for the Havant constituency and note very little objection to the proposals.
- 6.37 We support the proposals for the East Hampshire constituency which is totally contained within one local authority thus being very compliant with Rule 5 (1) b.
- 6.38 We note this constituency has received a large number of representations and that nearly all of these are in favour of the proposal. The number of representations here in favour of the proposed constituency are more than the objections to nearly any of the other proposed constituencies in Hampshire. Just to take one example Representation 004682.
- 6.39 We note that both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats would change this constituency and make it worse under Rule 5 (1) b as the Labour Party would have the constituency comprising of two local authorities and the Liberal Democrats of three local authorities.
- 6.40 We note objection to the Fleet North ward being included in Aldershot which all parties oppose. See for example Representation 003413.
- 6.41 We note both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats split Yateley, albeit in a different way.
- 6.42 We think it is important that the three Yateley wards are kept together so that ties are not broken in breach of Rule 5 (1) d.

- 6.43 We would therefore alternatively include the separate and distinct community of Church Crookham in the Aldershot constituency.
- 6.44 We would also unite the three Tadley wards in one constituency and not break ties there as the Commission do.
- 6.45 We note that both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats unite Tadley as well as ourselves albeit in three different ways.
- 6.46 We note that the Labour Party proposals for North East Hampshire includes wards from three local authorities including one isolated Winchester ward. The Commission and our proposals have it comprising two local authorities thus being more compliant with Rule 5 (1) b.
- 6.47 In respect of North East Hampshire, we cite the evidence of Andrew Henderson (Day One, Portsmouth hearing, 5.49pm, Pages 61-63).
- 6.48 In respect of Basingstoke we note some support for the inclusion of Upton Grey and the Candovers in this seat as it was prior to 2010.
- 6.49 We note the Liberal Democrats support this proposal and believe it would find favour locally. We cite the evidence of the Member of Parliament for Basingstoke Maria Miller (Representation 021873).
- 6.50 We support the proposed North West Hampshire constituency except for the exclusion of the Bournemouth and Tadley North ward.
- 6.51 We note some support and little opposition to this proposed constituency except about the need to keep Tadley together in one seat.
- 6.52 We note support in Chilbolton for once again being included in North West Hampshire (Representation 014674).

- 6.53 We oppose the proposals of the Liberal Democrats and Labour for this seat.
- 6.54 The Liberal Democrats propose a seat comprising of three local authorities which is worse under Rule 5 (1) b. It is a North Hampshire seat which is an unwieldy seat stretching along the northern Hampshire border from Hook to Andover.
- 6.55 The Labour Party maintains the unsatisfactory fingers to the north and south of Basingstoke albeit that these are moved from North East Hampshire to North West Hampshire.
- 6.56 But they exclude the Test Valley wards of Anna, Amport and Penton Bellinger. These three wards all have strong ties to Andover which are maintained under the proposals and broken under the Labour proposals in contravention of Rule 5 (1) d.
- 6.57 We note the evidence of Sir George Young the Member of Parliament for North West Hampshire (Representation 022147).
- 6.58 We support the splitting of Eastleigh in the way the Commission has done and note relatively little opposition to this proposal.
- 6.59 We support the proposed Winchester constituency which is sensibly included entirely within the Winchester local authority. We note this has received some support and very little opposition.
- 6.60 We note the Liberal Democrats have the constituency including two local authorities this being worse under Rule 5 (1) b.
- 6.61 We believe therefore that the proposals of the Commission are broadly correct and have received relatively little opposition compared to other areas with much less change and in addition there is quite some support for the proposals.
- 6.62 We would commend our minor changes which better respect local ties.

- 6.63 We note that there is another counter-proposal from Lewis Baston (Representation 003370) for Hampshire.
- 6.64 Whilst we disagree with his proposals in respect of Southampton and Portsmouth for reasons we have given earlier we note he supports the concept of a Hamble seat and says that the formulae for Eastleigh proposed by the Commission makes considerable sense.
- 6.65 We also note he supports a number of constituencies and retains much of the structure of the Commission's proposals.
- 6.66 Whilst we much prefer the Commission's alternative, if the Commission is minded to make alterations we think this alternative is much less disruptive to the Commission's proposals than either the Labour and Liberal Democrats alternatives particularly with his suggested alternative of no change to East Hampshire. You could also still undertake our minor changes in North Hampshire with his plan.
- 6.67 We therefore strongly support the Commission's proposals with minor alterations but if the Commission were minded to make some major changes we believe the proposals of Lewis Baston are much more preferable to those of Labour or the Liberal Democrats.

7. ISLE OF WIGHT

- 7.1 We note some local opposition to the division of the Isle of Wight, some of which centres around the possibility of the Isle of Wight being linked with Hampshire in future. We note however Rule 6 (1) that states “There shall be two constituencies in the Isle of Wight.”
- 7.2 The legislation does not apply Rule 2 to the Isle of Wight seats but we agree with the Commission that it is within the spirit of the legislation to create two seats with electorates approximately equal to each other.
- 7.3 We note that we make a slight change to the Commission’s Isle of Wight North and Isle of Wight South seats in order to restore close ties in Ryde which the Commission break by placing the Havenstreet, Asheys and Haylands ward in the South seat while the rest of Ryde is in the North seat. We note some local support for our ward swap, and also that the Labour Party propose exactly the same North-South split as we do. We would cite the evidence of the Deputy Chairman of our Isle of Wight Association, Brian Ballard, at the Portsmouth Hearing (Day One, 12.56pm, Pages 25-26).
- 7.4 We reject the more comprehensive counter-proposal of the Liberal Democrats for a West-East split which is much more disruptive and creates a large and unwieldy Wight West seat.
- 7.5 We note some submissions (for example Representation 022825) referring to “North Wight” and “South Wight” and we would not be averse to name changes for the two Isle of Wight seats if alternatives found greater local favour.

8. OXFORDSHIRE

- 8.1 We note that there is general agreement that Oxfordshire should retain six constituencies as it currently has.
- 8.2 We note considerable concern and opposition to some of the proposed changes in Oxfordshire, particularly in relation to the proposal to move Radley into a Henley seat from which it is divided by the River Thames, and to divide the centre of Oxford between constituencies.
- 8.3 We note that the Liberal Democrats also oppose the decision to transfer Radley to a Henley seat and that there is significant local opposition including from Radley Parish Council (Representation 008120) and Abingdon Town Council (Representation 008124). There is considerable concern about the breaking of ties between Radley, Oxford and Abingdon. We would cite in evidence the representations of the Member of Parliament for Oxford West and Abingdon, Nicola Blackwood (Day Two, Portsmouth hearing, 12.41pm, Pages 31-36 and Representation 022366).
- 8.4 There is no road or pedestrian bridge between Radley and the South Oxfordshire district, and Radley would be the only Vale of White Horse ward in the proposed Henley seat. We therefore think there is an overwhelming case in terms of Rule 5 (1) a, b, c and d to retain Radley in the Oxford West and Abingdon seat.
- 8.5 We also note local opposition to dividing the Carfax and Holywell wards between constituencies including from the Liberal Democrat councillor for Carfax, Cllr. Antony Brett (Representation 000203). This proposal would divide the city centre of Oxford between constituencies.

- 8.6 We and the Liberal Democrats have different solutions to this issue. Whereas we add the North ward to the Oxford East seat, the Liberal Democrats add Carfax and Holywell into Oxford West and Abingdon. This is a more disruptive change and would represent the second transfer in a row for Carfax and Holywell which formed part of the Oxford West and Abingdon seat until 2010.
- 8.7 The Liberal Democrats propose to add Hinksey Park to Oxford East to compensate for the transfer of Carfax and Holywell to the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency. This itself has local opposition including from one of the Labour councillors for Hinksey Park Cllr. Oscar van Nooijen (Representation 021864) who notes the ties between Hinksey Park and east Oxford which would be broken.
- 8.8 We prefer our solution where one ward of Oxford, North, moves from the existing Oxford West and Abingdon seat to Oxford East. North is one of the three wards (Carfax and Holywell being the two others) in central Oxford which have significant numbers of colleges of Oxford University and with it a significant student population. We acknowledge there is one college in the St Margaret's ward but consider transferring St Margaret's to Oxford East would mean a greater degree of disruption to seats in Oxford. We also note that the Liberal Democrat submission omits one college (St Hilda's) in the St Mary's ward from the Oxford West and Abingdon seat, and while it would probably be impossible to unite the whole University in one seat without significant rearrangement, we believe it better complies with Rule 5 (1) b to keep Carfax, Holywell and North in one seat and to minimize disruption through the transfer of North into Oxford East.

- 8.9 We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Oxford East seat would take in four wards of the South Oxfordshire district into that seat. These wards have never formed part of an Oxford seat before and their transfer would mean no constituency would be entirely within the City of Oxford.
- 8.10 We also note that under the Liberal Democrats proposals, significant local ties are broken between Kidlington and Oxford by moving Kidlington into a Kidlington and Henley seat. This seat would be a very unwieldy seat, and significant disruption would be caused contrary to Rule 5 (1) c.
- 8.11 Significant local support exists for the Commission's proposal to retain all of the South Oxfordshire District east of the River Thames in the Henley constituency, particularly from the northern part of the District where there is explicit opposition to the area being placed in the proposed enlarged Oxford East constituency proposed by the Liberal Democrats, including from Sandford on Thames Parish Council (Representation 020552) and in the Berinsfield ward (Representation 025406).
- 8.12 We do not support the Liberal Democrat proposal to cross the Thames to include Crowmarsh in the Wantage seat. Although there is a bridge between Wallingford and Crowmarsh Gifford we believe there would be strong local opposition to altering the strongly recognisable boundary of the Wantage seat. We note the Commission propose that this seat is unchanged therefore complying very well with Rule 5 (1) c. This proposal would also mean very strangely-shaped seats of Kidlington and Henley and Wantage.

- 8.13 Although our counter-proposal would involve one ward (Hook Norton) of Cherwell being included in the Witney seat, which would then not be unchanged, the Witney seat has previously included part of the Cherwell district, and ties have been evidenced between Chipping Norton and Hook Norton in the representation of the Member of Parliament for Witney David Cameron (Representation 022319).
- 8.14 We note that there is strong support for the names Oxford West and Abingdon and Oxford East being retained, however the seats are configured, as opposed to the Commission's proposed Abingdon and Oxford North and Oxford. We note this name change has the support of the Liberal Democrats.

9. SURREY

- 9.1 We note that there is general agreement that Surrey should retain the eleven constituencies as it currently has.
- 9.2 The Commission propose to leave the Esher and Walton, Epsom and Ewell and South West Surrey seats unchanged and we note this has the support of all three parties.
- 9.3 Although we note some support for Spelthorne remaining a single constituency, therefore retaining the River Thames as the constituency boundary, it is not possible to accommodate this as the Spelthorne district with 71,211 electors is too small for one constituency and must include additional electors.
- 9.4 We note significant concern in Weybridge over the division of the town and over the fact that there is no bridge over the Thames between Weybridge and Spelthorne including from Elmbridge Borough Council (Representation 012170). There is some support and no opposition from Weybridge for Spelthorne to include Egham Hythe ward instead, as Egham has close links with Staines and the two towns are linked by the A308 over Staines Bridge. We agree with this ward swap to better reflect local ties across the Thames.
- 9.5 The Commission's proposals mean that there are a number of knock-on effects in Surrey which we will refer to in turn.
- 9.6 The Commission's proposal adds Byfleet to the Runnymede and Weybridge seat. There has been little local response on this issue. We note that Byfleet ward is divided from the rest of the Woking district by the M25.

- 9.7 The Commission propose to add Bisley to the Woking seat. The Surrey Heath seat would otherwise be left unchanged and we note this has attracted a very limited number of representations.
- 9.8 It is also proposed to add the Pilgrims ward to Woking and this has attracted a significant amount of local opposition. However, we note that to return Pilgrims to Guildford would mean Woking no longer complied with Rule 2 and that any alternative is likely to be much more disruptive of local ties.
- 9.9 Under the Liberal Democrat proposal the Pilgrims ward is included in the Surrey Heath seat and we believe that this would be more disruptive and that Pilgrims has closer links to Woking than it does to Surrey Heath. We would not be averse to an alternative which retained Pilgrims in Guildford if it was shown to be possible without causing significant disruption.
- 9.10 We note the submission of our Woking Constituency Association (Representation 008994) which states that as there will be 10,000 electors living to the west of Woking they would support a name change to Woking and West Surrey and we would not be averse to such a change.
- 9.11 Although there is also some opposition to the transfer of Ewhurst ward to the Mole Valley constituency, no alternative has been proposed. The Guildford seat has to lose some electors to Mole Valley in order to comply with Rule 2. Any alternative would involve either splitting the town of Guildford or dividing the Guildford seat into two detached parts. Therefore moving Ewhurst is the least worst option which enables minimum change and we support it.

- 9.12 The Guildford seat would consist of the current seat except for the Ewhurst and Pilgrims wards (we note an error in our original submission where we stated a different composition). The proposed seat therefore is entirely comprised of part of the current constituency and thus is very compliant with Rule 5 (1) c.
- 9.13 Again we note a significant amount of opposition in Chaldon to that ward being moved into the Reigate seat but we consider any alternative to resolve this problem would be more disruptive, and may also involve splitting the town of Horley which would break much more significant local ties than between Chaldon and Caterham.
- 9.14 We note therefore that the Commission move only six wards in Surrey thus being very compliant with Rule 5 (1) c. We would make only one change to the Commission's proposals to unite the town of Weybridge in the Runnymede and Weybridge seat and to ensure there is a road link over the Thames between Spelthorne and the one ward south of the Thames included in the Spelthorne seat.

10. WEST SUSSEX

- 10.1 We note that the electorates of the eight constituencies in West Sussex are such that five of them already comply with Rule 2 while the other three require only minor adjustments to comply with Rule 2. A minimum amount of change is required to bring each of these three constituencies within 5% of the electoral quota.
- 10.2 We note that the Labour Party support the allocation of eight seats to West Sussex and that they “accept that only minor changes are required” (Page 62). We also note that West Sussex County Council (Representation 22829) “welcomes the retention of eight MPs for West Sussex and that there are no proposals for crossing boundaries with neighbouring local authorities.”
- 10.3 The Liberal Democrats do not support the Commission’s proposed sub-regions for East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent and propose alternative sub-regions of East and West Sussex and Kent. We cannot however agree with their assertion that “this proposal makes fewer and less disruptive changes to current constituency arrangements”. In West Sussex a significant amount of disruption is caused including the division between seats of Burgess Hill, Littlehampton and Shoreham-by-Sea which is disruptive of local ties and less compliant with Rule 5 (1) d.
- 10.4 We note that the Labour submission proposes to add the Rusper and Colgate ward of Horsham to the Crawley seat instead of Copthorne and Worth. We believe that there are much stronger links between Rusper and Colgate ward and the town of Horsham than between Copthorne and Worth ward and Horsham. We also note

- that Copthorne forms an almost continuous urban area with Crawley with two A-roads linking the two towns, whereas the villages in Ruspur and Colgate ward do not and instead have strong ties to Horsham. This was shown in the evidence of the Member of Parliament for Crawley, Henry Smith, at the Crawley Public Hearing (Day One, 11.08am, Pages 4-5.)
- 10.5 This also involves the division of Horsham district between three constituencies rather than two under the proposals therefore being worse under Rule 5 (1) b.
- 10.6 The Liberal Democrats agree with us on keeping Bolney ward in the Mid Sussex seat. This has significant local support including from Mid Sussex District Council (Representation 16094), Bolney Parish Council (Representation 005725), Burgess Hill Town Council (Representation 007494) and Warninglid Residents Society (Representation 010048). We note that for Warninglid and Slaugham the Commission's proposals would mean having transferred from Horsham to Mid Sussex at the last election and to Arundel and South Downs at the next election.
- 10.7 The Liberal Democrats however move the Burgess Hill Victoria ward out of the Mid Sussex seat into Arundel and South Downs and so do not leave Mid Sussex unchanged. This proposal splits Burgess Hill, breaking significant local ties in this town which has its own town council. We do not believe that this complies well with Rule 5 (1) c and d and would have local opposition.
- 10.8 We support the Commission's decision to leave the two seats containing Worthing and Shoreham unchanged, being most compliant with Rule 5 (1) c. The Liberal Democrat proposal for Sussex involves significant disruption to the current seats in this area and we note that under their proposal Shoreham is

divided between seats, while Worthing continues to be divided but on a different alignment. We note the Commission's proposals for no change have the support of both Worthing Members of Parliament, Sir Peter Bottomley (Representation 012705) and Tim Loughton as shown in Representation 004344.

- 10.9 We note that the Commission make only slight change to the Chichester constituency by taking the Plaistow ward into Arundel and South Downs. This is the minimum change possible therefore being most compliant with Rule 5 (1) c. This has the support of Chichester District Council (Representation 020620). The Liberal Democrats propose to take the Boxgrove ward also into Arundel and South Downs. Ties have been evidenced in representations from Boxgrove ward (see for example Representations 004274 and 005782) between those villages and Midhurst and Chichester which would be broken under their proposals. In addition it would mean a very poorly shaped Chichester constituency with a hole in the middle between the north and the south of the seat. We would also cite against this the evidence of Bowen Wells, our Chichester Association Deputy Chairman, at the Portsmouth Public Hearing (Day One, 3.19pm, Pages 48-49).
- 10.10 We note the significant number of representations supporting Walberton being retained in the Arundel and South Downs seat and we would transfer this ward back to its current seat thus being more compliant with Rule 5 (1) c.
- 10.11 We therefore support this minimum change to the proposed Bognor Regis and Littlehampton seat but totally reject the Liberal Democrat proposals to exclude the Brookfield ward which has clear ties to the Beach ward and would mean that like Hove, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton would have a hole in it between the

Beach ward and the Wick with Toddington ward. This flawed Liberal Democrat proposal to split Littlehampton breaches Rule 5 (1) d.

- 10.12 We therefore broadly support the Commission's proposals which are very compliant with Rules 5 (1) c and d, moving only five wards in the whole of West Sussex. We would make minor changes moving two wards back to their existing constituencies, breaking fewer local ties and having one extra constituency unchanged. We reject the much more disruptive proposals of the Liberal Democrats which split Shoreham, Littlehampton and Burgess Hill and break local ties across the county.
- 10.13 The Commission have left two constituencies unchanged and we increase this to three. The Liberal Democrat proposal leaves no constituency in West Sussex unchanged. This is a serious worsening under Rule 5 (1) c.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 We believe overall our proposals best meet the requirements of Rule 5 of the Rules for the Redistribution of Seats – Schedule 2 to the Act.
- 11.2 We believe we improve the proposals under all four factors of Rule 5 by better respecting the Thames, improving local government links, moving fewer electors from their existing constituencies and breaking fewer local ties.
- 11.3 We have outlined our position with regard to the counter-proposals of the two other main parties and say both where we agree with them and where and why we disagree.
- 11.4 We commend our proposals to the Commission outlined in our final submission (Representation 025300).