

## MINUTES OF THE DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSIONERS ON THE REVISED PROPOSALS FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS REGION - 11 July 2017

### **Present**

Mr Justice Nicol, Deputy Chair  
David Elvin QC, Commissioner  
Neil Pringle, Commissioner  
Scott Handley, Assistant Commissioner (East Midlands region)  
Sam Hartley, Secretary to the Commission  
Tony Bellringer, Deputy Secretary to the Commission  
Tim Bowden, Head of Reviews  
Sam Amponsah, Review Manager (East Midlands region)  
Alex Newton, Review Officer (East Midlands region)

Apologies were received from Ashraf Khan, Assistant Commissioner (East Midlands region)

Mr Handley presented the evidence and the recommendations to the Commissioners.

### **Overview**

Assistant Commissioners were recommending 19 changes from the initial proposals (one of which was a name change only) – 43% of the total number of constituencies in the region. Their recommendations would also increase the number of constituencies with wards from a single local authority (and decrease the number with wards from three). There had been a significant amount of agreement with the initial proposals across the region, but had also been some significant hotspots, though these latter had tended to be very localised.

### **Derbyshire**

In Derbyshire, a number of small adjustments to the initial proposals had been put forward by the Conservatives, Labour had suggested slightly more amendments (but still relatively minor) and the Liberal Democrats almost wholly agreed with initial proposals.

There had been opposition to the proposed division of Dronfield, and to Barrow on Trent transferring to South Derbyshire. There had also been consensus support for reinstating a North East Derbyshire constituency, which the initial proposals had split between three councils. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommended a revised constituency coterminous with the council, which allowed the reunification of Dronfield, whilst also making Bolsover constituency coterminous with the council. They were not persuaded of the case to include three additional wards into High Peak constituency, as it would no longer be coterminous with the local authority. There had been difficulty reconciling Derbyshire Dales, Amber Valley, and the

City of Derby constituencies (particularly Allestree ward). The Assistant Commissioners certainly felt it would be wrong to include Allestree with the Dales: the former was a very urban ward whilst the latter was a very rural constituency. The only realistic alternative appeared to be to transfer the town of Belper into the Derbyshire Dales constituency: after they visited the area, it did feel like it would be a preferable alternative, as Belper was a small mill town rather than a heavily urbanised area. The split of Derby city seemed to be reasonably accepted at consultation, but the Assistant Commissioners did recommend name changes to 'East' and 'West'.

### **Lincolnshire**

In Lincolnshire, meeting the numerical requirements needed very little change to existing constituencies, and there had accordingly been very little in the way of numbers of responses/discontent at initial proposals consultation. The only significant concern expressed was the allocation of wards south of Lincoln to the city constituency. A site visit strongly supported the view that Hykeham and Waddington West wards were a suburban extension of Lincoln, whereas wards south east and east of the city were very much more rural in nature. The Assistant Commissioners therefore support retention of the initial proposals.

### **Nottinghamshire**

In Nottinghamshire, the electorates of the city constituencies are all much too small, so there needs to be a significant amount of change. Lots of representations had been received objecting to the proposed transfer of Bilborough to Broxtowe constituency. There had also been strong opposition to transferring East Bridgford to a Nottingham constituency, claiming closer ties to Newark and Bingham, and the Assistant Commissioners felt reasonable evidence had been produced to support that. They recommended Ollerton and Boughton wards transfer to Sherwood constituency: they did not consider that the bottleneck between the north and south of the constituency would be a serious issue, as there are communication links and nothing much residential in the actual bottleneck.

### **Leicestershire**

There had been general support for the proposals in the urban areas of Leicestershire, but some ward by ward opposition in some mostly more suburban and rural wards. Representations had stated that Shepshed wards associate with Loughborough rather than NW Leics, and wards south of the proposed southern boundary of NW Leics should be included in that constituency (rather than in Bosworth, as proposed). Those changes would see NW Leics returned to its existing composition, and Bosworth constituency coterminous with the local authority area. This approach, as put forward by the Liberal Democrats, had received general support in the consultation and was recommended by the Assistant Commissioners.

### **Northamptonshire**

Northamptonshire has some constituencies that are significantly outside the permitted electorate range. The Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded by the evidence put forward to retain the existing composition of Wellingborough constituency (even though there were a number of such representations), as to do so would require significant and unnecessary disruption to Corby. They did recommend that Wollaston and Bozeat wards should transfer back to Wellingborough, but not Finedon. They also recommended a reshuffling of wards in Northampton South and South Northamptonshire to establish a clearer distinction between an urban former and rural latter.

### **Commissioner deliberations**

Commissioners agreed the recommendations in respect of wards south of Lincoln. They endorsed the aim of bringing constituencies in line with council boundaries, where this could also respect the other statutory factors. They noted that the inclusion of Belper in Derbyshire Dales would perhaps not be expected, but were persuaded of the case in favour of doing so, agreeing that Belper had far greater similarities to Matlock and Bakewell than Allestree would. They agreed with the renaming of the Derby City constituencies.

Commissioners agreed the recommendations for Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.