

**Minutes of the Commissioners' decision meeting for final recommendations on the  
Eastern region  
19 April 2018**

**Present**

Mr Justice Andrew Nicol, Deputy Chair  
David Elvin QC, Commissioner  
Neil Pringle, Commissioner  
Sam Hartley, Secretary to the Commission  
Tony Bellringer, Deputy Secretary to the Commission  
Tim Bowden, Head of Reviews  
Bibi Burahee, Review Manager (Eastern)  
Glenn Reed, Review Manager

**Overview**

The Commissioners noted the overview information from the paper presented by the Secretariat.

Commissioners agreed there was no justification to change the sub-regions.

The review team presented the proposed final recommendations for each sub-region to the commissioners. It was noted that these proposals had been agreed following briefings and discussions with the lead commissioner for the region, David Elvin QC.

The commissioners noted the presentation, and in particular the following points of contention.

**Cambridgeshire/Hertfordshire/Norfolk**

Remains much opposition to the cross-county constituency between NE Herts and S Cambs. Was evidence (including from site visit) of links between Meldreth and Melbourn wards, and connectedness of both to the town of Royston. Noted widespread disruption of Heidi Allen MP counter-proposal, particularly to changing the majority of sub-regions, but support of Conservative party and others for revised proposals. Commission agreed the revised proposal constituency should be retained.

North of Cambridge, from a site visit it did appear that the bulk of Milton ward was more rural in nature than the rest of Cambridge constituency. Revised proposals coterminosity of Cambridge constituency with local authority has gained support, so should be retained.

Commissioners noted the campaign to have 'St Neots' before 'Huntingdon' in the constituency name, but felt the evidence was insufficient to support this.

Had received some response from northern Orton wards that they should be part of Peterborough, but did not agree that there was sufficient evidence to the make changes, given disruption that would be caused elsewhere.

Thetford and Downham Market had attracted some opposition, particularly that it was a cross-county constituency, but counter proposal from local authority would create knock-on effects in neighbouring constituencies, so not supported

Norwich constituencies had been opposed by the Conservatives, but did not feel there was any strong or convincing evidence for their counter-proposal.

Agreed Broadland name should also recognise Fakenham from North Norfolk authority.

Most contentious issue in Herts was composition of Watford, especially Carpender's Park ward inclusion and consequential exclusion of Woodside ward. Many responses to revised proposals actually urged return to initial proposals, but also suggested Leavesden should be included in Watford. Liberal Democrat counter-proposal would have knock-on effects on four other constituencies with little evidence, so was not supported.

Did not feel there was sufficient evidence to warrant shifting Great Amwell ward from Broxbourne constituency to Hertford and Stortford constituency, so not agreed.

The Commissioners agreed all other recommendations from the paper in this area of the Eastern region.

### **Essex**

Noted significant improvement of revised proposals, in terms of more constituencies close to existing and/or local authority boundaries. Castle Point was a difficult issue still, but cannot identify a better solution.

The Commissioners agreed all other recommendations from the paper in this area of the Eastern region.

### **Bedfordshire**

Concerns raised about configuration of the Luton constituencies, but the major parties have supported it, and no viable alternative solutions have been put forward, so revised proposals should be retained.

Mix of opposition and support received for the inclusion of Kempston Rural ward with Bedford. Noted revised proposal did allow Barton-le-Clay ward to remain in its existing constituency. Agreed to retain revised proposal.

The Commissioners agreed all other recommendations from the paper in this area of the Eastern region.

### **Suffolk**

Revised proposals had attracted support, but also some opposition to the reconfigured Ipswich constituency. The Assistant Commissioner site visit had informed the revised

proposals, and there was not convincing evidence to overturn that, so revised proposal should be retained. Agreed to the table recommendation that the constituency name should just be 'Central Suffolk'.

The Commissioners agreed all other recommendations from the paper in this area of the Eastern region.