



Boundary Commission for England - meeting of 22 May 2018

Commission paper outlining ward splits

Overview

1. The Commission has traditionally sought to avoid the division of wards between constituencies, recognising their importance in reflecting community ties and to aid the efficient running of elections.
2. At the outset of the 2018 Boundary Review the Commission outlined its approach to when it would consider splitting a ward between constituencies. The *Guide to the 2018 Review of Parliamentary constituencies* states:

'In a few cases there may be exceptional and compelling circumstances - having regard to to the specific factors identified in Rule 5 - that may make it appropriate to divide a ward. Strong evidence and justification will need to be provided in any constituency scheme that proposes to split a ward, and the number of splits should be kept to an absolute minimum. Examples of circumstances in which the BCE might propose splitting a ward could include:

- a) where all possible 'whole ward' options in an area would significantly cut across local ties; or

b) where splitting a single ward may prevent a significant ‘domino effect’ of otherwise unnecessary change to a chain of constituencies in order to meet the electorate totals requirement.

3. In circumstances where the Commission decided to split a ward it outlined the method for doing so in the Guide:

‘Where the BCE does accept the need to split a ward, it will seek to do so along the boundaries of the polling districts that form part of that ward.’

Initial proposals, consultation on initial proposals and secondary consultation

4. In formulating the initial proposals the Commission did not propose to split any wards between constituencies. In some cases the Commission noted the limited options available by not splitting wards but considered it did not have the evidence, at that stage, to recommend any splits.
5. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals and secondary consultation the Commission received a large number of suggestions for unique ward splits. Over 130 wards were suggested that could be split when configuring a pattern of constituencies. Split-ward proposals were suggested in every region.

Revised proposals and revised proposal consultation

6. In formulating the revised proposals assistant commissioners considered the evidence for these ward splits and whether the bar of exceptional and compelling circumstances had been met to recommend ward splits as part of the revised proposals.
7. Having considered the evidence and recommendations from the assistant commissioners, our revised proposals contained the following number of ward splits across the country:

Region	Number of ward splits included in the revised proposals
London	1
South West	1
West Midlands	3
Yorkshire and the Humber	3
Total	8

8. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals the Commission again received representations which proposed ward splits. Some of these repeated previous arguments, whereas some submitted new counter-proposals.

Final recommendations

9. As part of its final recommendations, the Commission has agreed to the following number of ward splits:

Region	Number of ward splits included in the final recommendations
London	1
North East	1
South East	1
South West	1
West Midlands	3
Yorkshire and the Humber	3
Total	10

10. Below are the details on the ward splits in each region and the rationale why these have met the exceptional and compelling test:

Region	Constituencies	Wards split under final recommendations	Rationale for ward splits
London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chipping Barnet and Finchley • Enfield Southgate and East Barnet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oakleigh (nb - new proposed ward; was Brunswick ward in the revised proposals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects evidence of community ties in the Enfield Southgate area that were broken by our initial proposals • Reflects the evidence in representations that seek to avoid dividing Finchley between constituencies • Avoids the domino effect on other constituencies which have been supported
North East (new proposal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jarrow • South Shields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bede 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects evidence of community ties in the Simonside and Rekendyke area that were broken by our initial proposals • Allows solution to that issue without a significant knock-on effect into Sunderland/Washington areas • Evidence also received that the ward split would not break community ties in Bede ward
South East (new proposal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brighton Pavilion • Brighton Kemptown and Seahaven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen's Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects evidence of community ties in the Newhaven area that were broken by our revised proposals

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects evidence about the importance of the seafront being included in the Brighton Pavilion constituency • Avoids domino effect on other constituencies and provides for a pattern closer to the existing constituencies in the wider area • Reduces the number of county crossings
South West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest of Dean • Tewkesbury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coombe Hill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects evidence of community ties in the Cheltenham area that were broken by our initial proposals • Avoids domino effect on other constituencies • Ensures the Tewkesbury constituency is continuous as would otherwise be in detached parts
West Midlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dudley • Stourbridge • Darlaston and Tipton • West Bromwich • Warley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet Green and Lyng • St Pauls • Brierley Hill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the number of constituencies crossing local authority boundaries • Reflects community ties evidence • Better reflects existing constituencies • Avoids domino effect on other constituencies and provides for different sub-regions in the region
Yorkshire and the Humber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheffield Central • Sheffield Hallam • Sheffield North and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burngreave • Central • Crookes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better reflects existing constituencies • Avoids domino effect on other constituencies and provides for different sub-regions in the

	<div>Ecclesfield</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sheffield South• Sheffield South East		<div>region</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduces the number of constituencies crossing local authority boundaries
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