

**Minutes of the Commissioners' decision meeting for final recommendations on the
North East region
21 May 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
Donna Smith, Review Manager

Overview

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

All respondents said revised proposals were improvement on the initial proposals. Conservatives supported all 25 constituencies. Labour supported some areas, but opposed in other areas, such as for Durham. Lib Dems also proposed changes to revised proposals, particularly in the Durham area.

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.

Northumberland sub region

Paul Tinnion counter proposal to avoid having orphan ward of Burnopfield and Dipton in Blaydon impacted on an additional six constituencies, so was not desirable. Adrian Bailey counter proposal also produced a large amount of domino effect disruption on constituencies, so was not accepted.

County Durham sub region

Significant opposition to Durham being included in a constituency that stretched to the coast, but again all alternatives that were proposed would cause significant domino disruption.

Cleveland sub-region

Revised proposals generally supported in this area, though Lib Dems did suggest a move of Ormesby ward to East Cleveland and Redcar, but there was little strong evidence to support this.

Tyneside sub-region

Simonside and Rekondyke ward allocation had been a significant issue. Had raised the possibility of splitting a ward in the revised proposals, but had asked for evidence on the issue. Responses had indeed provided a wealth of strong evidence to support a ward split in the Bede ward, so agreed to implement that. This prevented a need to otherwise have knock on changes flow west into Gateshead.

Name changes

Agreed North Durham, as that was existing name, and Chester-le-Street was already in that existing constituency.

Agreed Gateshead, as it included the whole of the Gateshead urban area (as opposed to the wider borough), so no need to add 'West'.