

**Minutes of the Commissioners' decision meeting for final recommendations on the
North West region
22 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
Sam Amponsah, Review Manager
Alex Newton, Review Officer

Overview

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

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, Neil Pringle.

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

Cumbria sub region

Has never been particularly contentious, and physical geography drives much of the decisions here, with just a ward and name change in West Cumbria, which was supported at revised proposals, so no further change.

Lancashire sub region

Lots of objections to proposed Lancaster and Morecambe, mostly on basis of distinct identities of the two towns. North Lancashire criticised for the size and number of councils this took in, and Pendle and Ribble Valley still a very elongated constituency. Although North Lancashire is large, it is nowhere near the statutory maximum geographic size, and is just driven by sparse population in the area. Considered the Conservative counter-proposals, but did not consider persuasive evidence to have been provided in favour of this alternative.

Changes at revised proposals for South Ribble, Fylde, Accrington and Chorley were supported. Recognise that division of Poulton-le-Fylde is undesirable, but difficult to see a viable alternative that doesn't disrupt elsewhere.

Merseyside sub region

Largely uncontentious region, with little new raised at revised proposals consultation, so no further changes.

Wirral sub region

Nothing really contentious other than name of western Wirral proposed constituency (see below), so no further boundary changes.

Cheshire sub region

Significant opposition to a number of areas at initial proposals had seen much change at revised proposals. Crewe residents felt Audlem ward would be better in Eddisbury constituency, though no representations received from the ward itself. New Macclesfield constituency had proven popular, with some representations also suggesting Knutsford should go into that constituency.

Considered Adrian Bailey alternative for Eddisbury, which aimed to re-unite Northwich, but was a radical reconfiguration at this stage of the review, creating more change than revised proposals, so not accepted. Felt there was no strong evidence to move Audlem, so left as per revised proposals.

Greater Manchester sub region

Most change (and therefore concerns) through the review had been from north east and south east of the area, with central and western areas being largely uncontentious.

Oldham changes at revised proposals were welcomed, though name received some criticism (see below). Considered a counter proposal from Stephen Lees, which was not without merit, but was felt to be too radical to recommend without having been consulted on, and one of the suggested constituencies would contain wards from three councils. Recognised concern raised about inclusion of southern wards in proposed Stretford and Urmston, but no better alternative put forward.

Counter proposals put forward for three Stockport constituencies by Jonathan Stainsby and Terry Largan. Disagreed with first Stainsby proposal, as Commissioners felt Heald Green should clearly remain with Cheadle. Second Stainsby proposal did not give enough justification to support the proposed split ward. Felt Terry Largan alternative had merit, as united the Heatons (an issue that had been raised since initial proposals) and kept Heald Green with Cheadle: agreed to accept this.

Name changes

Agreed Oldham North, and Oldham South and Droylsden, as recognised main parts of relevant councils.

Agreed Stockport East and Denton, and Stockport West and Cheadle, as recognised new orientation of constituencies with new accepted boundaries.

Agreed Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge, to recognise distinct identity of latter town.

Agreed Wirral West and Bebington, to reflect greater local support for such a name.

Agreed Hyndburn, as limited change to this existing constituency, and support locally for retention of this name.