

**Minutes of the Commissioners' consideration of ward splits and constituency names
22 May 2018**

Noted that the purpose of these discussions was to ensure reasonable consistency of approach across England on these issues.

Ward splits

North East (one) - split of Bede ward allows inclusion of Simonside and Rekondyke ward into South Shield constituency, where all whole ward alternatives would either disrupt settled constituencies to the south, or cause a domino effect of undesirable change into the middle of Gateshead.

South East (one) - split of ward allowed a more rational construction of the three Brighton constituencies, without splitting the Newhaven areas, and more rational construction of Bexhill and Battle, and Lewes and Uckfield constituencies, also avoiding a cross county constituency with Kent.

South West (one) - split of Coombe Hill ward allows return of Springbank ward to Cheltenham without having an entirely split Tewkesbury, and allowed some better solutions to be developed further south (e.g. returning Quedgeley to Gloucester).

West Midlands (three) - split of Greets Green and Lyng ward, Brierley Hill ward, and St Paul's ward addressed the common issue of large wards across West Midlands metropolitan area, minimised need to cross local council boundaries, and prevented an otherwise need to experience a radical domino effect of change across the whole metropolitan area and beyond.

Yorkshire and the Humber (three) - three split wards in Sheffield allowed a sensible configuration for the constituencies in Sheffield, had attracted support from the local MPs and both Conservative and Labour parties, prevented knock-on effects beyond Sheffield (only one remaining constituency that went outside Sheffield city boundaries) that then allowed avoidance of a cross-county constituency with North Yorkshire, which latter could therefore be treated as a sub-region on its own with closer to unchanged constituencies.

London (one) - there was a case to have a ward split in the Barnet/Enfield area, in order to try and retain something more like the existing Enfield Southgate, and retain the integrity of the Enfield, Edmonton and Tottenham constituencies, which were largely considered agreed following earlier consultation. The question was where exactly the ward split should be, due to conflicting evidence about what exactly was the extent of a unified Finchley community, the potential risk of removing East Barnet ward from its existing constituency, and the fact that a split of Oakleigh ward has not previously been consulted upon, with support also being expressed for the alternative revised proposal split of Brunswick Park. On balance, Commission determined that although Oakleigh wrd split had some attractions, it also carried some disadvantages and doubts, and as it had not had the opportunity to be consulted upon, the revised proposals should be retained, no least as that approach had been consulted on and had attracted some support.

Recognised that all these demonstrated exceptional and compelling cases, where both avoids a clear splitting of local ties, and enables a more optimal solution to be delivered across a wider area. Recognised that there were a number of requests that made a case on the 'not splitting local ties' basis, but were a very localised solution that did not produce wider benefits to neighbouring areas, and in many case actually drove a succession of negative domino effects in consequence.

Constituency names

Noted the Commissioners general concern to limit the overall length of names. They also noted that there had been very few representations in relation to designation of constituencies, suggesting that this was something that seemed to be of very little concern to respondents. Looked through the list of all names produced by the Secretariat, together with the reasons for those. Focused on a few that might be considered exceptions:

- Saffron Walden: contained a number of wards and 15-20,000 electors from Braintree, with no recognition of that authority. Agreed to stick with the name, as difficult to clearly establish what name should recognise the second authority.
- Derbyshire Dales: again contained Belper from Amber Valley, but no representations to reflect that area in the name.
- Sherwood: contained a substantial part of Gedling (particularly Arnold area), but no proposals received to give recognition to the area.
- Blaydon: large part of Newcastle in the constituency, but no representations to reflect that in the name, and no clear name to use if you did.
- Hyndburn: had part of Burnley, but no representations to add that into the name.
- Abingdon and Oxford North: contained part of three councils, including particularly significant centre of Kidlington from Cherwell, but this was in the equivalent existing constituency and not reflected, and no representations received to include it now.
- Christchurch: has expanded to take in more of East Dorset council area. Although majority of constituency is now East Dorset, there had been no representation to change the name to reflect this, and there appeared no clear name to do so if you did.
- Totnes: included 20-25,000 electors from Torbay, but is a largely unchanged constituency.
- Wells: includes parts of Mendip and Sedgemoor, but no representations had suggested an alternative name.
- Redditch: also included about 20,000 electors from Bromsgrove, but no representations to include recognition of latter in the name, and not clear what name you would use if you did.

- North Warwickshire: includes significant number of electors from Bedworth, but no representations to include recognition of that.

Commission agreed all these names, noting that they were justifiable exceptions to the general approach.