



**BCE/2021/5th meeting**

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**Notice of meeting**

The presence of Commissioners is requested at a meeting to be held at 08.30 on 14 September 2021. The meeting will be held virtually.

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome and minutes of the last meeting (PL)
2. 2023 Review - initial consultation proposals update (est 15 minutes) - **Paper 1** (TBe)
3. 2023 Review - public hearings (est 20 minutes) - **Paper 2** (WT)
4. Any other business

**Close (09.45)**

**Tim Bowden**  
**Secretary to the Commission**

## **Minutes of the fourth meeting of 2021 of the Boundary Commission for England, held on 21 May 2021**

Sir Justice Peter Lane (Deputy Chair)  
Colin Byrne (Commissioner)  
Sarah Hamilton (Commissioner)  
Tim Bowden (Secretary to the Commission)  
Tony Bellringer (Secretariat)  
Wotey Tannoh (Secretariat)  
Tiasha Martin (Secretariat)  
Emma Irwin (Secretariat)  
Daniel McKeon (Secretariat)

### **1. Welcome and minutes of the last meeting**

1.1 The draft minutes of the Commission meeting on the 22nd and 23rd of March 2021 were agreed by members of the Commission.

### **2. Paper 1: Review Programme Update**

#### *Budget*

2.1 Mr Bowden noted that the Commission's budget for 2021-22 matches with its original bid as part of the spending review

#### *Communications*

2.2 Mr Bowden noted that work has begun on implementing the communications strategy, particularly the creative and advertising elements.

#### *Accommodation*

2.3 Mr Bowden noted that the Boundary Commission had now returned to their main office space, after the end of the maintenance work to the building. There will be a presence by Boundary Commission staff in the office in the build up to and throughout the period after the publication of initial proposals. Measures are in place to support safe working in the office during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### *Risk Register*

2.4 Mr Bowden noted that the scores on the risk register have remained static during the period. He noted that this is likely to decrease in the next quarter after the publication of the initial proposals.

#### *Technology*

2.5 Commissioner Mr Byrne asked the Secretariat if there had been any progress in the exploration of virtual public hearings.

2.6 Mr Bowden noted that this is being looked at currently by the Secretariat, with different possibilities and systems being considered. A report for the Commissioners will be presented in the summer.

### **3. Paper 2: Initial Proposals**

3.1 Mr Bowden noted the work done in drafting and quality assuring initial proposal documents by the Commissioners and members of the Secretariat. These proposal documents have now been sent for printing.

3.2 Mr Bowden updated the Commissioners on the protocol for the distribution of initial proposals to Members of Parliament on the 7th of June 2021

3.3 Mr Bowden updated the Commissioners on the protocol for the distribution of initial proposals to the media. The Commissioners agreed upon the timescale outlined in the paper.

3.4 Mr Bowden and Ms Irwin presented the Commissioners with the prospective newspaper advert for the Boundary Commission for publication on the 8th of June 2021. Commissioners agreed upon the presentation and wording of the advert.

### **4. Paper 3: Equality Impact Assessment**

4.1 Commissioners considered the Equality Impact Assessment put forward by the Secretariat.

4.2 Commissioners suggested that the Commission take legal advice in regards to the Equality Impact Assessment, alongside other matters it may wish to take advice on. Commissioners will provide the Secretariat with any changes to the draft Assessment..

### **5. Paper 4: Communications Paper**

5.1 Ms Irwin noted the approach to accessibility the Boundary Commission for England would be taking in regards to consultation materials via the Commission's website and in hardcopy.

5.2 Commissioners noted the detailed approach of the paper and it's clarity in regards to accessibility and agreed the approach in the paper.

5.3 Commissioner Mr Byrne noted that the Boundary Commission for Wales has an "Easy to Read" guide on their website and asked if the Secretariat could consider a similar document. Deputy Chair Sir Justice Lane also endorsed this, though noted that this document should be for the main guide only and not for the nine sub-regions proposals. Mr Bowden stated that the Secretariat would explore the possibility of creating a similar guide.

### **6. Assistant Commissioners Recruitment**

6.1 Mr Bowden noted that the interview process for the Assistant Commissioners has now concluded.

6.2 Commissioners approved the eighteen candidates proposed by the Secretariat, and asked that when writing to the Cabinet Office asking to appoint these candidates it would be courteous to copy the correspondence to the Speaker of the House of Commons as Chair of the Commission.

## **7. Consultation Portal**

7.1 Mr Bellringer provided a demonstration of the Boundary Commissions consultation portal, which will go online in conjunction with the initial proposals on 8 June 2021.

7.2 Mr Bellringer noted that Commissioners will also be offered further familiarisation with the system in the coming months.

## **8. Any other business**

8.1 Mr Bowden noted that the next Commission meeting will be held in September, though further updates will be given during the consultation period.

## BCE/2021/5th meeting/Paper 1

### 2023 Review initial proposals consultation update

1. The statutory period of consultation on the Commission's initial proposals concluded on 2 August 2021. This brief paper provides some top level information about the responses received and the operation of the online consultation portal as the main medium for the consultation process.

#### Summary of recommendations

2. You note:
  - The number of representations received during the initial proposals consultation
  - The main issue areas in each of the nine regions of England
  - The use of the consultation portal during the initial proposals consultation

#### Number and distribution of representations

3. Representations received by email and in hard copy during the consultation period are continuing to be logged into the database backend of the consultation portal, but as at 3 September the total number of representations received was **34,135**. This significantly exceeds the equivalent figure for the 2018 Review, which was 17,611 written representations.
4. In terms of a regional breakdown, logged representations are continuing to be checked and tagged accurately to the region to which they relate (so numbers below may change), but as at 3 September the breakdown is as follows:

Region	Number of responses (% of all single region-specific responses)	Share of England constituencies in 2023 Review
East Midlands	2,475 (7.3%)	9%
Eastern	3,781 (11.2%)	11%

London	6,213 (18.4%)	14%
North East	1,586 (4.7%)	5%
North West	4,933 (14.6%)	13%
South East	5,388 (16.0%)	17%
South West	3,505 (10.4%)	11%
West Midlands	3,921 (11.6%)	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,976 (5.9%)	10%
'General' responses (i.e. comments not related to an actual proposal)	357 (-)	-

5. Over 95% of responses were submitted directly to the consultation portal. The table below provides a breakdown of response method as at 3 September.

Response method	Portal	Email	Letter
Number	32,724 (95.9%)	1,040 (3.0%)	371 (1.1%)

### Main issues and areas generating responses

6. Commissioners were provided through the consultation period with a summary of the main issues emerging in responses, and the locations they related to. **Annex A** is the most recent update to that. It does not purport to cover every view submitted during the consultation - merely give an initial flavour of those proposals that have generated the most responses in each region. This list has helped to inform potential locations for public hearings during the secondary consultation.

### Operation of the consultation portal

7. The online consultation portal went live to the public without any issues on 8 June and was available continuously for viewing proposals and submitting responses until the end of 2 August, at which point the ability to submit responses through it was turned off. It remains available for initial proposals to be viewed.
8. There were 306,436 'sessions' on the portal during the consultation period, mostly from unique users (1.27 sessions per user). Average number of page views per session was 2.28. Results of a feedback survey completed by over 1470 individuals who had completed the whole 'journey' of viewing the proposals and then submitting a response generated the following results:
  - 89% had not previously used the service
  - 66% rated the overall experience positively (87% neutral or better)
  - 67% found it easy or very easy to find what they were looking for (90% neutral or better)
  - 70% found it easy or very easy to understand the information we presented (92% neutral or better)
  - 80% found it easy or very easy to submit their response through the portal (94% neutral or better)
9. Detailed comments from the portal survey, staff users of the portal, and the content of support calls from members of the public calling for assistance to use the portal, have all been analysed and synthesized into a number of potential system enhancements, which have been sent to the supplier to assess the feasibility and likely cost to implement. Having received that information, such enhancements as are then approved will be taken forward with the supplier for implementation in time for the start of the secondary consultation period.

### **Forward plan for processing consultation responses**

10. The Review staff are now working towards the following broad timetable for the period up until the planned start of the secondary consultation period:
  - By the end of September, complete the basic logging of all responses into the portal database (allowing finalisation of the figures above);

- In October and November, finalise detailed metadata tagging and appropriate redactions of responses in the database, and perform checks to ensure consistency of approach across teams and regions;
  - Through December and January, model in the Commission's constituency builder software all specific counter proposals received in consultation responses.
11. From late October onwards, the Review staff will also be engaging with the appointed Assistant Commissioners to brief them on their regions and ensure they have a good understanding of the regional issues and the Commission's initial proposals before the secondary consultation and public hearings commence. It is not proposed to discuss qualitatively with Assistant Commissioners any of the responses to the initial proposals before the conclusion of the secondary consultation process, so as to help maintain their objectivity through that process



## Annex A - Initial proposals consultation main emerging issues - as at 3 September

Table below sets out such emerging themes as we have been able to detect from responses received and considered so far. It represents the position as at 3 September, indicates where 'hot-spots' are, and consequently the broad areas that have informed where public hearings could be held during the secondary consultation stage.

Sub-region	Local area, proposed constituency(s)	Nature of feedback received (Negative, Positive, Mixed, and basic details). <b>Broad</b> indication of number and type (individual or standard letter/petition) of responses seen so far on the issue (few, tens, hundred(s), thousand).
<b><u>East Midlands</u></b>		
Lincolnshire and Rutland	Rutland and Stamford	Mixed feedback for the change. Mainly positive from residents in Rutland and Stamford, and mainly negative from the Melton area. Approx. 120 reps
Nottinghamshire	Nottingham North and Kimberley and Broxtowe	Negative feedback for crossing the unitary authority from Nottingham to the Kimberley area. Approx. 150+ reps
Nottinghamshire	Ashfield and Mansfield	Negative feedback for Grange Farm and Brick Kiln wards in the Ashfield constituency. Approx. 100+ reps
Leicestershire	Leicester West and Glenfield	Negative feedback for crossing the unitary authority from Leicester to the Glenfield area. Opposition to the Belgrave ward from Leicester East in the Leicester West constituency, including one petition with approx. 2000 signatures. Approx. 150+ reps
Leicestershire	Leicester East and Leicester	Negative feedback for Spinney Hills ward in the Leicester East constituency. Comments

	South	usually also link to objections for the changes to the Belgrave ward. Approx. 100+ reps
Northamptonshire	Wellingborough	Various issues - areas that are not included in W'boro constituency that ought to be (Irthlingborough and Finedon), and areas that are included that ought not be (Raunds) Approx. 200 reps
Derbyshire	Ilkeston and Long Eaton	Opposition to renaming a mostly unchanged constituency. Approx. 400 reps
<b><u>Eastern</u></b>		
Cambridgeshire	Cambridge BC	Combination of positive and (mostly) negative regarding Trumpington being included . Approx. 600+ reps
Cambridgeshire	St Neots CC / South Cambridgeshire CC	Mixed responses, with both positive and negative feedback. A lot of comment over names, with those near St Neots very happy, and those in South Cambs local authority not so happy. 23 different naming options suggested for St Neots, including West / South / North / Central Cambs all suggested as names, highlighting difficulty. Approx. 200 reps.
Cambridgeshire	Peterborough	Late surge in Peterborough reps, caused by a campaign suggesting Peterborough 'needs 2 MPs'. Approx. 700+ reps. Peterborough currently unchanged apart from rewarding
Essex and Suffolk	Colchester CC Harwich and North Essex CC	Negative feedback regarding Lexden/Prettygate wards in particular not being included in Colchester. Approx. 700+ reps (largest in Eastern, one of largest in country).
Essex and Suffolk	Castle Point CC / Southend West BC	As expected, some negative responses from those in West Leigh. Approx. 330+ reps.

Suffolk	Ipswich North and Stowmarket	Negative. Some arguments along the lines that if Norwich can be divided into 2 constituencies, so should Ipswich (unchanged in initial proposals). Approx. 100 reps.
Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire	Hitchin CC / Harpenden and Berkhamsted CC	Generally positive feedback regarding the new configuration. Minimal reps (< 100).
Bedfordshire	Luton South and South Bedfordshire	Negative. People in villages are unhappy being paired with Luton. Approx. 100+ reps.
Norfolk	Great Yarmouth CC / North Norfolk CC	People unhappy with the two wards moving into Great Yarmouth, but some happy with Fakenham being re-included in North Norfolk. Approx. 100+ reps.
<b><u>London</u></b>		
North East London	Romford BC - Emerson Park ward	<b>2,000+ reps (mixture)</b> Two directly opposing views - both support and opposition to Emerson Park being moved from Hornchurch & Upminster to Romford. c650 reps in support and c920 reps in opposition (individual, letter-writing campaigns, online form) plus a petition of 935 signatures in opposition.
North Central and North West London	Chelsea area: Fulham and Chelsea West BC / Westminster and Chelsea East BC	<b>c800 reps (individual)</b> Negative - residents of Chelsea strongly opposed to the area being divided between two constituencies.
North Central and North West London	Kensington and Westbourne BC	<b>c750 reps (individual)</b> Negative - opposition to South Kensington area being divided between three constituencies. Also opposition to three north Westminster wards ('Westbourne' area) being included in this constituency.
North Central	Brentford and	<b>c350 reps (individual)</b>

and North West London	Isleworth BC - Whitton ward	Negative - residents of Whitton ward (currently in Twickenham BC, Richmond) strongly oppose being included in a Hounslow-based constituency. Also opposition to division of the Whitton community, since part would be in Brentford and Isleworth, and part remaining in Twickenham.
South East London	Eltham and Chislehurst BC	<b>c325 reps (individual)</b> Negative - opposition from residents of Chislehurst who say they have nothing in common with Eltham, the two areas being very different. Chislehurst is more connected with Bromley, or even Sidcup.
South Central and South West London	West Norwood area: Norwood BC	<b>c300 reps (individual)</b> Negative - residents of West Norwood (spanning Knight's Hill, Gipsy Hill, Thurlow Park wards) oppose the division of their community and the 'loss' of the existing Dulwich & West Norwood BC. Also oppose being linked with Croydon.
South Central and South West London	Wimbledon BC	<b>c230 reps (individual)</b> Negative - opposition to two Kingston wards (Old Malden area) being included in Wimbledon, as residents have no ties to Wimbledon. Also objections to Cannon Hill ward being moved from Wimbledon to Mitcham and Morden.
North Central and North West London	Hammersmith and Chiswick BC	<b>c200 reps (individual)</b> Positive - good local support for Chiswick being grouped with Hammersmith rather than Brentford and Isleworth.
North Central and North West London	Tottenham BC	<b>c200 reps (individual)</b> Negative - opposition to inclusion of two Hackney wards in Tottenham. Opposition also to West Green ward (which largely identifies as Tottenham) being taken out of the constituency.
South East	Bromley BC -	<b>c180 reps (individual)</b>

London	Petts Wood and Knoll ward	Negative - strong local opposition to Petts Wood and Knoll ward being moved from Orpington to Bromley, since the ward runs right up to Orpington High Street and very much identifies as Orpington.
North Central and North West London	Kenton and Wembley West BC	<b>c180 reps (individual)</b> Negative - residents of the two Kenton wards, in Harrow, oppose being included in a Brent-based constituency.
North Central and North West London	Southall BC	<b>c125 reps (individual)</b> Negative - strong opposition to losing 'Ealing' from the name of this constituency, when it would include more of central Ealing area than currently.
South Central and South West London	Norwood BC - Woodside ward	<b>c120 reps (individual) plus petition of 115 signatures</b> Negative - residents of Woodside ward in Croydon feel that they should remain in the same constituency as Addiscombe West ward. These two wards both sit south of the railway line and have much in common. Doesn't make sense for Woodside to join a northern grouping.
South Central and South West London	Camberwell area: Vauxhall and Camberwell BC / Peckham BC	<b>c80 reps (individual) plus online petition (810 signatures)</b> Negative - opposition to Camberwell being divided between two constituencies.
<b><u>North East</u></b>		
Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland	Berwick and Morpeth	Positive - Happy with the inclusion of Morpeth as another rural market town with similar identities. Negative (30 reps)- Some are unhappy with the Longhorsley ward not being included.
Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland	Hexham - Callerton & Throckley ward (orphan ward)	Negative (40) - Residents who identify as being part of the city are unhappy at being included in a rural constituency.

Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland	Whitley Bay and Cramlington	Negative (200 reps) - Whitley Bay residents are unhappy about being paired with Cramlington as they feel they don't share the same coastal / local ties and it crosses the LA boundary with Northumberland.
County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland	Jarrow and Sunderland West	Negative (100 res) - Residents of Jarrow oppose any affiliation with West Sunderland and vice versa. They are concerned that the constituency crosses the River Wear and that they have distinct identities.
County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland	City of Durham	<p>Positive (30 reps) - Surprisingly electors from Houghton have responded positively to being included in a County Durham constituency. One even cited 1974 as the date they never should have left County Durham, and many others feel the same. Also numerous negative reps from those who have been excluded from the City of Durham to the West and South.</p> <p>Negative (70 reps) - In contrast, electors from the three wards adjacent to the West of the city of Durham are unhappy that they have not been included in the city of Durham constituency. Instead the wards of Brandon, Deerness and Esh and Witton Gilbert are part of Bishop Auckland and North West Durham instead.</p>
County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland	Seaham and Peterlee	Negative (70 reps) - Unhappy that the Doxford ward isn't included in a Sunderland constituency, and is instead a County Durham 'orphan ward'
Tees Valley	Middlesbrough / Stockton West	Negative (100 reps)- Objection to split of Thornaby between two constituencies.
Tees Valley	Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	Negative (100 reps) - Electors are unhappy that Markse-by-the-Sea and New Markse have been moved from the coastal Redcar constituency and paired with the city of Middlesbrough. Strong sentiment that

		Saltburn should be paired with Markse for the same reasons.
Tees Valley	Stockton West	Negative (20 reps) - Hurworth and Middleton St. George (2 separate wards) residents have more affiliation with Darlington, not Stockton.
<b><u>North West</u></b>		
North West region		Very considerable opposition across the board, but remarkably few counter-proposals received (< 10 received across whole region)
Cumbria and Lancashire	Cumbria (as a whole)	Lots of negative comment (approx 500+ reps) - largely due to the need to cross into Lancashire, thereby dividing South Lakeland LA. Also issues with the extensions of Copeland east into S Lakeland, and Kendal north into Eden.
Cumbria and Lancashire	Ribble Valley CC / Hyndburn CC	Approx 350+ reps. Issues around not including the villages of Whalley, Billington and Langho in the Ribble Valley proper
Cumbria and Lancashire	Blackburn	Blackburn South and Lower Darwen Ward has been included in Blackburn. Significant opposition (approx 270 reps)
Cumbria and Lancashire	West Pennine Moors CC, Burnley and Bacup CC, Chorley CC	Residents are unhappy with Rossendale being divided. Nobody a fan of West Pennine Moors. Existing issues of no good transport links between Rossendale and Darwen highlighted. Those in Chorley unhappy at being added to West Pennine Moors (approx 600+ reps)
Cumbria and Lancashire, Cheshire and Merseyside	Southport CC	Complaints that Ainsdale is no longer in the constituency. More complaints that it is now urban and rural, and that bits of West Lancs are in the constituency (approx 150 reps)
Cheshire and	Chester North	Wholly negative (approx 600 reps) - dislike

Merseyside	and Neston CC, South Cheshire CC	any split of the city of Chester. We use the River Dee to divide the city.
Cheshire and Merseyside	Liverpool Norris Green BC, & all of the Liverpool area -	Liverpool Norris Green (formerly Walton) causing many problems. (approx 270 reps). The loss of Walton as a name is the reason behind the vast majority of the reps here. As is the extension into Sefton Wavertree.
Cheshire and Merseyside	Widnes and Halewood CC	Some complaints about the cross-county constituency, especially from Halewood (Merseyside) being linked with Widnes (Cheshire). Many reps are off the mark (talking about councils, provision of services etc). Fewer than 100 reps
Greater Manchester	Makerfield BC, Leigh South and Atherton BC	Proposals perceived as dividing both Ashton in Makerfield and Leigh. Hugely unpopular with approx 1400+ reps received, not counting petitions.
Greater Manchester	Middleton (Heywood CC, Manchester Blackley BC)	Opposition to the division of Middleton in our proposals. Loss of Middleton name is also a major issue. Approx 150 reps received.
<b>South East</b>		
Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey	Reigate	Negative - South Park & Woodhatch residents feel attached to Reigate and do not identify with Dorking/Horley. <b>~200 reps.</b>
Kent	Gillingham and Rainham	Positive - petition shows there is overwhelming support of a wholly unchanged constituency. <b>Petition with &gt;150 signatures</b>
Kent	Weald of Kent	Mostly positive - support from local residents for the constituency with a consistent rural character <b>~30 reps</b>
Sussex	Arundel and	Negative - Residents of the rural



	Littlehampton	Pulborough, Coldwaltham & Amberley ward are unhappy at being paired with large coastal towns. Amberley is 19 miles away, so they are unhappy at it being included in the Shoreham constituency. <b>&gt;300 reps and petition with several hundred signatures</b>
Sussex	Hove and Brighton West	Negative - Backlash as the constituency does not contain any part of Brighton. <b>~60 reps</b>
Sussex	Chichester	Negative- Residents do not want the Manhood Peninsula split, with half in Bognor Regis. <b>&gt;200 reps.</b>
Oxfordshire	Bicester	Negative- Villages outside Witney (incl Eynsham, North Leigh) feel more connected to the town than Bicester. <b>&gt;100 reps</b>
Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey	Reading Wokingham	Mixed- Mostly support for Earley and Woodley seat and Wokingham seat, mostly opposition for Mid Berkshire seat. <b>~250 reps</b>
Buckinghamshire	Milton Keynes	Negative- opposition to a Buckingham and Bletchley seat which crosses the boundary with MK. <b>&gt;30 reps</b>
Isle of Wight	Isle of Wight	Mixed- more support for two distinct seats but a desire to leave Newport undivided, with locals disputing the divisive nature of the river Medina. <b>&gt;50 reps</b>
Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey	Elmbridge	Negative- Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon towns split despite continuous built-up suburban area, as well as shared community ties. <b>&gt;100 reps</b>
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire	Mostly negative - opposition to the Princes Risborough constituency which sprawls across the west of Bucks. Particularly unpopular is the inclusion of Berryfields, Hyde Heath, and areas of the Chilterns. <b>~150 reps</b>
Berkshire,	Wealden	Negative - opposition to separation of

Hampshire and Surrey		Hartfield (East Grinstead and Uckfield) from Withyham (Hailsham and Crowborough). Support for renaming Hailsham and Crowborough as "Sussex Weald". <b>~100 reps</b>
<b><u>South West</u></b>		
Gloucestershire	Cheltenham	Negative - significant opposition to the moving of the Springbank ward to a Tewkesbury constituency. Approx 250+ reps received
Gloucestershire	Gloucester	400+ reps opposing inclusion of Gloucester wards (Elmbridge, Barnwood and Longlevens) in Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire	Stroud/The Cotswolds	Mixed, approx 300 reps. Some support, but increasing opposition to the inclusion of the Chalford ward in The Cotswolds constituency.
Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire	Cirencester and North Wiltshire	Predominantly negative- a lot of people (from The Cotswolds) unhappy about the cross-county constituency and name. Approx 130 reps
Wiltshire	Melksham and Devizes/East Wiltshire	Approx 300 reps in opposition were received late in the consultation. The reps claim our proposals will divide the town of Devizes between 3 constituencies: all of the built up area of the town of Devizes is actually contained within 3 wards, all of which are in our proposed Melksham and Devizes constituency, although if extending outwards 20-30 miles it could be said this wider area is divided between 3. Also, almost all of the reps come from Pewsey ward, claiming our proposals would split them from the rest of Devizes.
South Gloucestershire	Filton and Bradley Stoke, Kingswood	< 100 reps. Relatively minor opposition to the proposal to include Emersons Green in the Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency (from Kingswood, which no longer exists). Mixed support and opposition to loss of

		Kingswood constituency.
Bristol		Substantial support and very limited opposition to the proposals for all 5 Bristol constituencies
Bath and North East Somerset	Keynsham	Roughly equal support and opposition (approx 50 reps) to proposals for Keynsham area
Devon	Totnes	300+ reps. Predominantly negative, but the overwhelming issue concerns proposals to rename the constituency as South Devon
Devon	Taunton/Tiverton and Minehead	Some opposition to the composition of the two constituencies and the name of the latter. Concerns over the separation of Taunton from Bridgwater. Approx 150 reps
Devon	Newton Abbot	Support for our initial proposal; however, a suggested name change of the Newton Abbot constituency to "Teignbridge" has been suggested in nearly all communications.
Exeter	Exeter BC	Negative - All reps (approx 500) received in Exeter oppose the inclusion of wards, especially Priory ward, in the neighbouring Exmouth constituency. Figure does not include petitions
Plymouth	Peverall ward	> 100 reps received. Mixed, but support for the division of the Peverell ward probably outweighs opposition.
Dorset	South Dorset	Predominantly negative - Opposition against the plans to include the Upwey and Broadwey ward in West Dorset. It is felt that this divides the town of Weymouth. Up to 100 reps.
Dorset	North Dorset	Negative. Very considerable opposition (up to 500 of reps) to the inclusion of the Chalk Valleys ward (which includes Cerne Abbas and Piddletrenthide) in the North Dorset

		constituency rather than West Dorset
Cornwall	Truro and Falmouth/Camborne and Redruth/St Austell and Newquay	Negative Approx 70 reps. Opposition to the inclusion of the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward in Camborne and Redruth, and the division of the clay mines area.
<b><u>West Midlands</u></b>		
Staffordshire and the Black Country	Tamworth	Negative - opposition to Whittington & Streethay's inclusion in Tamworth CC. <b>~500 reps</b>
Staffordshire and the Black Country	Checkley	Negative - opposition to Checkley's inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent South CC. <b>~180 reps</b>
Worcestershire	Kidderminster	Negative - opposition to Wyre Forest to Kidderminster name change. <b>~160 reps</b>
Birmingham and Solihull	Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood	Negative - opposition to cross boundary constituency with Birmingham. <b>~230 reps</b>
Birmingham and Solihull	Elmdon and Silhill	Negative - opposition to Elmdon and Silhill wards being moved out of Solihull constituency into Meriden constituency. <i>Since have received almost equal number of positive reps regarding these wards and their new constituency</i> <b>~40 reps</b>
Shropshire	The Wrekin	Negative - Opposition to the name change (The Wrekin to Newport and Wellington). <b>~100 reps</b>
Black Country and Staffordshire	Loggerheads, Maer and Whitmore	Negative - Opposition to the inclusion of the two southernmost Newcastle-under-Lyme wards in the Stafford constituency. <b>~40 reps</b>
Herefordshire	Stoney Street	Negative - Opposition to the inclusion of Stoney Street in North Herefordshire CC. <b>~30 reps.</b>
Birmingham and	Sutton Coldfield	Positive - Support for our proposed Sutton

Solihull		Coldfield constituency. <b>~30 reps + petition</b>
Black Country and Staffordshire	Aldridge	Negative - Opposition to the division of Aldridge between constituencies. <b>~170 reps</b>
Black Country and Staffordshire	Stone and Great Wyrley	Negative - opposition to the Stone and Great Wyrley constituency. <b>~150 reps</b>
Black Country and Staffordshire	St Pauls ward, Rowley ward and Wednesbury North	Negative - opposition to the inclusion of Smethwick ward (St Pauls) in a West Brom constituency, opposition to Rowley inclusion in Smethwick constituency, opposition to 'division' of Wednesbury <b>&gt;500 reps</b>
Birmingham and Solihull	Aston and Lozells wards	Negative - Aston and Lozells supposedly belong in Perry Barr, Kingstanding and Oscott belong in Erdington. <b>&gt;200 reps</b>
Shropshire	Priorslee Ward	Support for BCE proposal, in opposition to counter proposal of Telford and Wrekin council to transfer Priorslee ward to Newport and Wellington. <b>~80 reps</b>
Warwickshire	Budbrooke ward	Negative - Opposition to Budbrooke's transfer from Warwick and Leamington to Kenilworth and Southam <b>~50 reps</b>
<b><u>Yorkshire and the Humber</u></b>		
Humberside and South Yorkshire	Kingston upon Hull East and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	Negative. Strong opposition to extending constituencies both east and west beyond the Hull LA boundary, due to the addition of wealthy rural areas with urban. Lots of reference to referendum where 96.5% voted to remain separate to Hull Council. Limited letter writing campaign about keeping SW Holderness separate from Hull. <b>~200+ reps</b>
Humberside and South Yorkshire	Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes and South	Negative. Most objections concern Cleethorpes being in the same constituency as Grimsby. Also, objection to the exclusion

	Humber	of the Scartho ward from the constituency. Opposition to 'South Humber' name. ~100 reps
Humberside and South Yorkshire	Rawmarsh and Conisbrough and Rother Valley	Negative. Objections to the inclusion of the Bramley and Ravenhill ward in the Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency instead of Rother Valley. Bramley is split due to rewarding. Not a significant issue. ~30+ reps
South Yorkshire	All constituencies	Positive. Remarkably few objections to proposals in this county.
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Batley and Hipperholme	Negative. Opposition to inclusion of Hipperholme with Kirklees constituency, and exclusion of Heckmondwike from Batley.~170+ reps
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Leeds North West	Positive - numerous supporting Yeadon, Rawdon etc. being within one constituency. Not a significant number of reps.
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Selby	Objection to the inclusion of Kippax and Methley ward in the Selby constituency. Not as significant as first anticipated.~50 reps
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Dewsbury	Negative. Objects to Kirkheaton being removed from Huddersfield and grouped with Dewsbury (due to splitting Dalton ward). Less substantial issue than first anticipated.~30 reps
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Wakefield	Negative. Opposition to Rothwell being in Wakefield constituency (although there is also some support for arrangement). Also some support, referencing better links than existing Elmet and Rothwell constituency. ~60 reps
North Yorkshire	Wetherby and	Negative. Range of issues. Mainly that it is

and West Yorkshire	Easingwold	too large and groups areas that are vastly different. Also removes small villages from what they see as their most closely linked town (Harrogate, Thirsk etc.). Opposition to parts of existing Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency (in particular Claro ward) going into new W&E. ~100+ reps
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Leeds East	Opposition to dividing Gipton and Harehills ward. Very ethnically diverse ward, and split would lose a large section of the BAME community. Also aggrieved that they are the only ward being divided in Leeds. Not very many reps, but lots of well considered and detailed reps, often on behalf of organisations. ~40 reps
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Thirsk and Malton/Richmond (Yorks)	Opposition to Bedale being added to Thirsk and Malton. Little in common, and more closely linked to Northallerton. ~40 reps
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	Headingley	Range of issues. Most received later in consultation so haven't yet analysed. ~40 reps
<b>General</b>		
	Support for the review	Positive - numerous representations received supporting the general principle of the review, "overdue", expressing general support for our proposals etc.
	Opposition to the review	Negative - people expressing opposition to the review/making accusations of gerrymandering. Mostly a collection of complaints that are outside the scope of the Review (number of MPs, opposing FPTP system, supporting widening/tightening the permitted range etc.)
	Portal	Mixed - a small minority of respondents have

		written in to complain about the user friendliness of the portal, or to request more information
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## **BCE/2021/5th meeting/Paper 2**

### **2023 Review - Public hearings**

1. This paper provides a background and policy overview of our proposal and recommendations for the delivery of the public hearing during the secondary consultation in spring 2022.

### **Summary of recommendations**

2. The Secretariat makes the following recommendations:
  - You hold 30/31 physical public hearings
  - Each hearing runs for two consecutive days
  - The timings of each hearing are day one 10am-8pm and day two 9am-5pm
  - Lead Assistant Commissioners chair the hearings
  - Those wanting to give evidence are invited to book 10mins speaking slots
  - Qualifying political parties will each have 30mins to make a presentation at the beginning of each lead hearing
  - All hearings are recorded, live streamed and a written transcript produced
  - As part of a trial, nine hearings (one in each region) are hybrid hearings which allow for virtual participation.

### **Background and overview**

3. At the 2018 review, the Parliamentary Constituencies Act required public hearings to be held during the initial consultation period. The Act made detailed provision for these public hearings, but left a number of matters within the discretion of the Boundary Commission and those who chair the public hearings. While the 2020 Act has changed during which consultation the public hearings will now take place (now the secondary consultation), it did not make any other changes to the quantity or organisation of public hearings. Schedule 2A to the Act which is in regard to public hearings is provided at annex A
4. The public hearings were held physically in locations in respective regions, with people giving evidence being physically present. Below are the key administrative arrangements at the last review, many which are still pertinent for the 2023 Review:
  - **Chair of the hearings:** Assistant Commissioners, the 'lead' Assistant Commissioner for each region acted as the statutory chairs of the hearings. They were ultimately responsible for running the hearing on the day within the legislative framework and Commission's guidance;
  - **Running of a hearing:** These were expressly run on a largely 'inquisitorial' basis, with any questions of clarification directed through the Chair (i.e. no

direct challenges to the person giving evidence), rather than the more confrontational 'adversarial' basis. This was expressly to put more hesitant speakers more at their ease, and was generally welcomed.

- **Arrangements for attending a hearing:** Attendees were strongly encouraged (though not required) to pre-book 10mins slots (via phone or eventbrite online) if they wished to speak at a hearing, both to ease administration and to avoid potential disappointment. This system worked very well.
- **Presentation:** Presenters were encouraged to make available their presentation beforehand, and advised that support for visual aids would be made available wherever possible.
- **Recording of the hearings:** Legally the Commission must produce a record of the hearing and has done this by producing (via a supplier) a verbatim transcript. In addition, for the 2018 Review a video recording was taken of every hearing. The video recording was published on YouTube (at the subsequent consultation period), and the transcript was included for equal consideration alongside all written representations from that region.

### Physical public hearings

5. This section of the paper sets out a number of recommendations for your consideration for delivering a **physical hearing ('in-person')** as outlined in the 'Act':
  - The number and location (subject to availability of suitable venues) of the hearings in each region (the Secretariat's recommendations are listed at **Annex B**);
  - That the Assistant Commissioners, to act as the statutory Chairs of the hearings;
  - That hearings in a region are clustered together in time, where possible, to help build focus and attract media interest in a region;
  - That the Chair would ultimately be responsible for running the hearing on the day, but would be expected to do so within the Commission's framework and guidance;
  - That each hearing should last the full two days allowed under the Act, with the first day advertised as starting around 10am and finishing at 8pm, and the second day advertised as 9am-5pm, but with the flexibility to run beyond 5pm if necessary, or close before 5pm if very poorly attended. The hearings would be weekdays only. This is all dependent on your agreement with the proposal to hold 'virtual' hearings alongside the in person hearing.
  - Presentations at hearings should be in short prescribed time periods (10 minutes), which would need to be booked in advance if the individual wished to ensure they were able to speak. Individuals not

booking in advance may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the Chair, with the assumption that they would be accommodated if there was space;

- Questioning at hearings should be restricted to questions of clarification and should be directed through the Chair, i.e. should not be in the adversarial style of direct 'cross-examination' of another's representations;
- A verbatim transcript and video recording should be taken of every hearing, which would then be included for equal consideration alongside all written representations from that region.
- That the first day of the hearings in each region be designated a 'lead hearing', with the four qualifying political parties each being given the opportunity of a 30 minute slot to present their overall 'whole-region view', allowing them to focus on the local area at subsequent hearings in that region.

6. The Commission met with the political parties on 26 November 2020, to discuss with them the proposals for physical public hearings. Many of the points above were touched on in that meeting, and the Secretariat's recommendations are in line with what was proposed and agreed with the parties.

### **Consideration and recommendations**

7. You are invited to consider and agree to the individual recommendations highlighted in bold below.

#### Number, location and dates of public hearings

8. Unlike in previous reviews, for the 2023 Review, the precise number and location of public hearings in each region can be determined specifically in relation to the nature of the responses received to the consultation on the initial proposals.
9. Based on the responses received on the initial proposals, the Secretariat considers between 30-31 hearings should be convened for the 2023 Review. This is a reduction of five/six from previous reviews at which 36 hearings have been held. It might be possible to hold as few as 29 hearings across England, however this can only be achieved by reducing the number of hearings further in particular regions. The location and number of hearings at each region are targeted to areas where there is particular contention over the proposals and cases being made for competing alternate proposals. For some regions this would mean a significantly lower number of hearings in comparison to the electors/ proposed constituencies. This may create a perception issue for the Commission, i.e we recommend not holding a hearing in Cornwall, because the number of representations received at approximately 50 is far less than those in other areas within the South West region. We will however, ensure that the venues for the hearings in each region are centrally located and are easily accessible by public transport. There are no particular issues of significant complexity or controversy in regions allocated less than the maximum number

of hearings that have not already been taken into account in the proposed allocation. With a limited resource, the most effective deployment of that resource is to target our efforts towards those areas where there are issues. **We therefore recommend that the Commission approve the number and location of public hearings proposed in Annex B.**

10. The Commission in the meeting on 26 November 2020 with political parties committed to publish the details of the quantity and location of public hearings after the conclusion of the initial proposals consultation. The Secretariat recognises that such early notification can help stakeholders with logistical arrangements to ensure they are able to engage with the consultation. We will make all endeavours to source and secure appropriate venues, commencing as soon as Commissioners agree the locations, and will aim to provide the information, either directly just to key stakeholders (e.g. the political party representatives), or to widely publish the information on our website and social media. Overall, **we recommend wide publication of the final details of public hearing arrangements at the earliest opportunity once all venues have been secured [and the date of the launch of the secondary consultation has been confirmed].**
11. Also of relevance under this heading is the question of when to start the public hearings. We propose the first week of the hearings would commence on the Monday or Tuesday, the day of the launch of the secondary consultation. If we started on the Monday this would ensure that we have two hearings in the first week of consultation rather than one. We would also recommend having the hearings on Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday (to allow travel time between hearings in the same region for Assistant Commissioner Chairs, staff, and key stakeholders). **We recommend that you agree the hearings be held on Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday.**

#### Timing of hearings

12. As with the last review we propose there should be a **full two days for every hearing, with 10am – 8pm (with lunch adjournment) on the first day, and 9am – 5pm regular hours (with lunch adjournment) on the second day.** This offers the maximum flexibility for people to be able to attend on either of the two days. Although you may want to consider altering these timings if you agree to the proposals later in this paper relating to hybrid hearings.
13. For resource reasons, **we recommend that each hearing should be held on two consecutive days,** (this would avoid the additional costs of duplicate travel or extended subsistence). Given the limited staff and Assistant Commissioner resources are allocated by region, we further recommend that although hearings will need to run in tandem in separate regions, **hearings in the same region should not overlap.** As in past reviews, we should also avoid clashes of 'lead' regional hearings (see below), though it may not be possible to also avoid clashes with hearings in the other parts of England.
14. We do not intend to hold any hearings at weekends, as this would present the Commission with serious resource issues, due to the greatly restricted

availability and increased cost of using staff and Assistant Commissioners at the weekend.

15. Members of the public wishing to speak at the hearings can do so in the evening. We will also reinforce the message that it is not necessary to attend a hearing in order to make their views known, i.e. a written representation would carry equal weight. Accordingly, **we recommend that hearings should be held only on weekdays.** (Having a virtual hearing would offer those with a strong desire to speak at a hearing the opportunity to do so virtually).

### Chairs

16. In the 2018 Review, the designated 'lead' Assistant Commissioner chaired the hearings in their region. We expect the other Assistant Commissioner for that region to attend only the lead hearing and be available to step in to chair if required. **We recommend that the designated 'lead' Assistant Commissioners chairs all of the hearings in their region.**
17. As in previous reviews, **we recommend the Commission issue all Assistant Commissioners with detailed guidance, in addition to that prescribed in the Act, on how the public hearings should be run.** This will help to ensure that the public hearing experience is consistent across the whole of England. If the Commissioners agree, the Secretariat will provide a draft of such guidance for their approval by correspondence following the meeting.

### Presentations

18. We propose an online booking system for stakeholders, including members of the public to book speaking/ presentation slots in advance of the hearing. The booking facility will be advertised wherever information about the hearings is presented. The pre-booking system for a hearing will close two days before the hearing, but it will remain possible for an individual to attend and request to speak on the day, subject to the Chair's agreement. **We recommend the same broad arrangements used at the last review for pre-booking to attend a hearing be put in place for this review.** The pre-booking system for those wishing to speak or present virtually at a hearing will close two days before the hearing, to enable the Secretariat to assist with the administration of the hearing.
19. We propose a 10 minutes presentation slot: should a presenter feel they need more time, they will be able to request two slots. There is a need to emphasise the value of 'short sharp contributions.' **We recommend that you agree to the proposed 10 minutes presentation slot, with an advance booking system available, but flexibility to accommodate 'on the day' speakers wherever possible.**
20. There is a statutory requirement that each hearing commence with a description of the proposals. As with the approach for the 2018 Review, **we recommend that the initial presentation be given by the senior member of the Secretariat Team, and should be relatively brief, setting out the overall**

**picture for the region and focusing on those key points where there is believed to be the greatest likelihood of complexity or controversy (as well as outlining how to make a written representation).**

### Questioning

21. As in the last review, we suggest taking the approach that questions should be of clarification only, and directed through the Chair, to avoid adversarial 'cross-examination', which potential speakers may otherwise find intimidating. **We therefore recommend that this approach again be followed.**

### Transcripts

22. We propose a video/ audio recording of every hearing, which will then be transcribed at a later date to be included for equal consideration alongside all written representations from that region. **We recommend that visual aids used at a presentation be appended to the relevant transcript.** The Act requires that the record of the hearing be published after the end of the overall consultation period. In order to reinforce their equivalent weight and status, **we recommend that the transcripts be published at the same time as the written representations, at the start of the consultation on the revised proposals.**

### Lead hearings

23. As at the last review, we propose the first hearing in a region be designated a 'lead' hearing, at which each qualifying political party can give a 'whole region' view on the proposals and any variation they would wish to see (as described above). It should be noted that the concept of a 'lead' regional hearing had some value as a promotional opportunity, i.e. encouraging media interest and therefore public awareness and interest in the region generally, which then provided a boost to take-up of speaking slots in subsequent hearings in the region. Accordingly, **we recommend that a system of 'lead hearings' again be utilised.** The proposed location of the lead hearings are shown in bold on **Annex B.**

### Next Steps

24. Following decisions taken above, the Secretariat will:
- Map out the final matrix of dates and locations of hearings;
  - Book appropriate venues; and
  - Draft guidance for the Assistant Commissioner Chairs on the procedure for the public hearings. This draft guidance is likely to be worked up, for Commissioners' approval.

**Hybrid hearings (where stakeholders, including the public can choose whether to attend in person or remotely)**

## Background and overview

25. This part of the paper outlines the hybrid approach to the public hearings for the 2023 Review, enabling attendees to have the opportunity to join the hearings virtually to complement the 'in person' hearing outlined above.
26. As outlined in the background paragraphs in the previous section, while public hearings are currently required by law to be physically held at a venue in each region, we have actively explored how to make them as accessible as possible, including the possibilities for supplementing a physical hearing with remote, live viewing and/ or participation: this work was being undertaken in any event, but is particularly relevant in the context of any potential changes to COVID-19 restrictions.
27. On investigating the various possibilities of delivering this, we have identified two options which could be incorporated into the 'in-person' hearings. In addition to the administrative process outlined above for the 'physical' hearings.
28. The two options that have been identified are:
  - a. **Option one** - Full hybrid public hearings that would allow for virtual attendees to participate at **any of the hearing locations within the region**; and
  - b. **Option two** - Partial hybrid public hearings that would allow for virtual attendees to participate **only at single hearing within the region**.
29. Regardless of the agreed option, we will endeavour to ensure that all the public hearings are live streamed via our YouTube platform to enable those wishing to solely observe can watch the hearings from anywhere.
30. The virtual hearing will form part of the physical hearing. The Assistant Commissioners will chair the hearings, those wishing to present are expected to pre-book speaking slots. These will be delivered using an online meeting platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom which will enable attendees to participate remotely, and allow those wishing to present. The logistics and costs for both options will be delivered alongside that of the 'in person' hearing as outlined above.

## Option one

31. For this option, the full hybrid public hearings would allow for virtual attendees to watch and/ or participate at **all** of the hearing locations within the region.
32. Having full hybrid hearing across all the hearing locations would allow for,

- People in remote areas of England to participate without having to travel to a hearing location. For example if the Commission decides not to hold a hearing in Cornwall then people in the area can watch/participate virtually
- Potential to expand the audience base to people who otherwise may not have attended hearing or participated (a recent survey conducted by the Local Government Association (LGA) indicates that virtual hearings have increased participation).
- Potential to increase media engagement. This might encourage the media interest in the whole region rather than the 'lead', and therefore public awareness and interest in the region generally, which may provide a boost to take-up of speaking slots in the region.
- Flexibility of re-watching presentations/ speakers: Virtual and live streaming will allow for members of the public to view content on demand. It will drive the possibility of longer-term engagement opportunities with stakeholders
- Audience can also reshare the key takeaways of these presentations on their own social media platforms, driving engagement through continuous dialogue. This is a great way for BCE to boost their visibility and awareness of the review on social media.

33. However this option presents a number of challenges such as:

- Logistically managing the physical hearing and virtual hearing parallel to each other, balancing the number of online speakers with physical speakers and mitigating attendees who join the hearing to solely cause disruption.
- In addition to this, we must consider the connectivity bandwidth of all venues to enable a virtual hearing to run successfully, without technical difficulties due to broadband issues.
- It is important to note that although this option will allow attendees to contribute remotely, this option will incur a higher cost to deliver at all the hearing locations, and will require the Secretariat to procure software to enable the level of functionality that we require.

## **Option two**

34. For this option, the partial hybrid public hearings would allow for virtual attendees to watch and/ or participate only at one hearing within each region.

35. In addition to the benefits outlined in option one, having a hybrid hearing, in each region, would be:

- Logistically manageable for the secretariat to deliver. I.e. the physical hearing and virtual hearing run simultaneously at nine locations.
- Running just nine virtual hearings will cost considerably less to deliver.

36. However this option presents a number of challenges such as:



- Members of the public and political parties questioning the Commission's approach to only holding a single hybrid hearing within the region rather than at all the locations.
  - There is also a risk of those people who were unable to connect virtually, not being able to have the opportunity to participate or attend the hearing due to the partial hybridity. For example, people who are unable to connect to the virtual hearing will no longer have the opportunity to participate in a hearing within the region (unless willing to travel). They can of course still submit a written representation during the consultation period.
37. If pursuing option two, the Commission will also want to consider whether the virtual hearing should take place at the lead hearings in each of the nine regions or another hearing in the region. The lead hearings are generally the best attended and busiest in terms of secretariat resources. Having the hybrid hearing at another hearing potentially allows the lead and hybrid hearing to be marketed separately.

### **Consideration and recommendations**

38. You are invited to consider and agree to the recommendation below.
39. The Secretariat **recommends that you agree to option two, having one hybrid hearing in each of the nine regions**. Holding partial hybrid public hearings would allow for virtual attendees to watch and/ or participate at one hearing in each region. The Secretariat recommends that the hybrid hearing should not take place on the days of the lead hearing. However, we do recommend that perhaps the second of each hearing in the region should be classified as the hybrid hearing. This would ensure a consistent approach across the country and is likely to assist in publicising the hearings.
40. This is a new approach that would enable flexibility should any of the aforementioned risks arise. This partial hybrid approach will enable attendees or participants who wish to present will have the opportunity to attend 'in person' at a location within the region.
41. The Secretariat considers this provides for a significant trial of hybrid hearings which would provide for learning opportunities and provide the Commission with relevant information to determine their success and whether it should be implemented more widely at future reviews.

### **Risks and mitigation**

42. Given the risks we have identified above for both options, we have considered these and will:
- **Connectivity:** In order to mitigate against connectivity issues the Secretariat will ensure that the selected platform will also allowed attendees to dial into the call, giving them the minimum opportunity to participate at the hearing if they had wifi issues in rural not spots i.e an area that has no broadband

Internet or 3G mobile phone coverage, or where this is very slow and unreliable.

- In the event of disruption to the meeting due to foul language or abuse, the Assistant Commissioner or BCE staff will be able to remove people from the virtual hearing.
- To maximise control, there will be a limited number of available tickets for those who join virtually. All attendees will be placed on mute until it is their scheduled time to speak.
- We convene a meeting with the qualifying political parties to outline the Commission approach to hybrid hearings.

### Next Steps

43. Following decisions taken above, the Commission will:
- Seek legal advice from the Cabinet Office lawyers again on delivering hybrid public hearings now the approach has been scoped;
  - Work with our colleagues in Crown Commercial Service and Chief Digital Information Office to procure a supplier who is able to meet our needs within our allocated budget to deliver the AV;
  - Ensure potential venues can support our needs; and
  - Draft guidance for remote users: a video conferencing user guide and code of conduct for the public hearings. This draft guidance will be shared with you, along with the Assistant Commissioners' Guide for your approval.

## **Annex A - Public Hearings - SCHEDULE 2A to the Act**

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS ABOUT BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS**

#### ***Purpose of hearings***

1. The purpose of a public hearing is to enable representations to be made about any of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.

#### ***Number of hearings***

2. (1) In relation to any particular report under section 3(1)(a) of this Act –
  - a) the Boundary Commission for England shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in each English region;
  - b) the Boundary Commission for Scotland shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Scotland
  - c) the Boundary Commission for Wales shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Wales
  - d) the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Northern Ireland.
- (2) The public hearings in an English region shall be concerned with proposals for that region, and shall between them cover the whole region.
- (3) The public hearings in Scotland shall be concerned with proposals for Scotland, and shall between them cover the whole of Scotland.
- (4) The public hearings in Wales shall be concerned with proposals for Wales, and shall between them cover the whole of Wales.
- (5) The public hearings in Northern Ireland shall be concerned with proposals for Northern Ireland, and shall between them cover the whole of Northern Ireland.

#### ***Chair of hearing***

3. For each public hearing the Boundary Commission concerned shall appoint a person to chair the hearing.

#### ***Length of hearings***

4. A public hearing shall be completed within two days.

#### ***Procedure at hearings***

5. It is for the chair of each public hearing to determine the procedure that is to govern that hearing.

6. The chair shall make arrangements for a public hearing to begin with an explanation of -
  - a) the proposals with which the hearing is concerned;
  - b) how written representations about the proposals may be made (as mentioned in section 5(1)(a), (4)(b), **(4B)(b)**, or (5)(c) of this Act).
7. (1) The chair of a public hearing must allow representations to be made –
  - (a) by each qualifying party;
  - (b) by any other persons (whether individuals or organisations) considered by the chair to have an interest in any of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.

Paragraph (b) above has effect subject to sub-paragraph (3)(b) below.

- (2) The chair may restrict the amount of time allowed for representations –
  - a) by qualifying parties, and
  - b) by other persons, and need not allow the same amount to each.
- (3) The chair may determine –
  - (a) the order in which representations are made, and
  - (b) if necessary because of shortage of time, which of those wishing to make representations are not allowed to do so, in whatever way the chair decides.
8. (1) The chair may put questions, or allow questions to be put, to a person present at the hearing.
- (2) If questions are allowed to be put, the chair may regulate the manner of questioning or restrict the number of questions a person may ask.

### *Interpretation*

9. In this Schedule –
  - “the chair” means the person appointed under paragraph 3 above;
  - “English region” means an electoral region specified in Schedule 1 to the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 (ignoring paragraph 2(2) of that Schedule and references to Gibraltar) as it has effect on the day referred to in rule 5(2) of Schedule 2 to this Act;
  - “public hearing” means a hearing under **section 5(4)(c)** of this Act;
  - “qualifying party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act 2000 and either –

- (a) Has at least one Member of the House of Commons representing a constituency in the region, or (as the case may be) the part of the United Kingdom, in which the hearing is held, or
- (b) Received at least 10% of the votes cast in that region or part in the most recent parliamentary general election.

## Annex B - Number & location of hearings

Region	Proposed no of hearings	Proposed locations of the hearings	Proposed no. of constituencies	Proposed no of consts. per hearing
Eastern	3	<b>Cambridge</b> Ipswich Southend	61	20
East Midlands	3	<b>Nottingham</b> Leicester Northampton	47	16
London	5	<b>Westminster</b> Ealing Eltham Hornchurch Tooting	75	15
North East	2	<b>Sunderland /Newcastle Upon Tyne</b> Middlesborough	27	14
North West	5	<b>Manchester</b> Chester Kendal Liverpool Preston	73	15
South East	4	<b>Crawley</b> Ashford Reading Portsmouth	91	23
South West	4	<b>Exeter</b> Bath Dorchester Gloucester	58	15
West Midlands	2/3	<b>Birmingham</b> Stafford Worcester/Warwick	57	29/19
Yorks & The Humber	2	<b>Leeds</b> Hull	54	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 (31)</b>		543	174

**Bold** = Proposed location for lead hearings

