

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

**2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN
ENGLAND**

HELD AT

The Carriageworks Theatre, Leeds

ON

**MONDAY 10 MARCH 2022
DAY 1**

Before:

Paul Wiles CB, Lead Assistant Commissioner

PAUL WILES: Welcome to this hearing of the Boundary Commission for England to discuss the initial proposals for the Yorkshire and Humber region. I think I've introduced myself to most of you, but my name's Paul Wiles. I'm an assistant commissioner of the Boundary Commission for England, and I was appointed to assist them in the task of making recommendations for the new constituencies in Yorkshire and Humber. I'm responsible for chairing the hearing today and tomorrow, and I'm also responsible with my fellow assistant commissioner, Suzanne McCarthy, for analysing all the representations received about those initial proposals for this region and then presenting recommendations to the Commission as to whether or not those initial proposals should be revised. I'm assisted here today by various members of the Commission staff but particularly by Tony Bellringer, who's sat on my left.

Tony will shortly provide a brief extra explanation of the Commission's initial proposals for the new constituency in the region. Tony will then tell you how you can make written representations and will deal with one or two administrative matters. The hearing today is scheduled to run from now, 10:00, until 20:00 this evening, and tomorrow, it's scheduled to run from 9:00 to 17:00. I can vary that timetable, and I will take into account the attendance and the demand for opportunities to speak. I should point out that under the legislation that governs the Commission's work, each public hearing must be held over two days and cannot be extended into a third day. The purpose of this public hearing is to allow people to make oral representations about the initial proposals for Yorkshire and the Humber region and also the comments we've so far received on them, which have been published on the Commission's consultation portal. I look forward to hearing your views today. A number of people have already registered to speak and have been given a time slot, and I will invite them to speak at the appropriate time. If there is any free time during the day or at the end of the day, then I will invite anyone who hasn't registered but who would like to speak to do so.

I need to stress that the purpose of this public hearing is for people to make oral representations. The purpose is not to engage in a debate with the Commission about the proposals, nor is this hearing an opportunity for people to cross-examine other speakers during their presentations. However, people may ask and put questions for clarification to speakers, but I'd be grateful if you did that through me as the chair. I will, at the end of each presentation, ask if anybody wishes for any further clarification. Let me now hand over to Tony, who'll provide a brief explanation of the Commission's initial proposals.

TONY BELLRINGER: Thank you very much, and good morning. As Paul has mentioned, my name is Tony Bellringer, and I'm a member of the Commission staff. I'm responsible for supporting the Commissioners in their role to recommend new parliamentary constituency boundaries, and at this hearing, I lead the team of staff responsible for ensuring that the hearing runs smoothly. As the chair has already stated, they will chair the hearing itself, and it is their responsibility to run the hearing at their discretion and take decisions about speakers, questioners, and timings. My team and I are here today to support them in carrying out their role. Please ask one of us outside of the hearing if you need any help or assistance. I encourage all attendees to wear a mask throughout the hearing, but please do remove it while you

are speaking during your presentation slot. We also encourage you to practise social distancing during the day and have provided hand sanitizer around the venue.

If you have coronavirus-related symptoms or development during the day, we ask you to leave the hearing and follow public health advice. I would like to talk now about the Commission's initial proposals for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, which were published on 8th June 2021. The Commission's proposals for this region are for 54 constituencies, the same as the existing number of constituencies. Our proposals leave two of the existing constituencies wholly unchanged and 13 changed only to realign with local government boundaries that have changed. The 2023 review of parliamentary constituencies was formally launched in January 2021, and we held our first public consultation on the initial proposals between 8th June and 2nd August, receiving over 34,400 representations in total. The Commission is required to ensure that the number of electors in each constituency is roughly the same; in doing so, the number of constituencies in England will increase from 533 to 543.

We are undertaking an independent review of all constituency boundaries in England, and we'll present our final recommendations to Parliament by July 2023. We use the English regions as a template for the allocation of the 543 constituencies to which England is entitled, including the two constituencies to be allocated to the Isle of Wight. This approach is permitted by the legislation and has been supported by previous consultation. This approach does not prevent anyone from putting forward counter-proposals that include one or more constituencies being split between the regions, but it is likely that compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade us to depart from the regional-based approach we adopted in formulating our initial proposals. The statutory rules allow us to take into account local government boundaries as they existed on or were in prospect on 1st December 2020. These include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal boundaries, known as wards or electoral divisions.

Wards are well-defined and well-understood units which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. We have therefore sought to avoid dividing wards between constituencies wherever possible but, in a small number of cases, have done so in order to better reflect the statutory factors. The scale of change in this review is significant, and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period. We are consulting on our proposals until Monday 4th April. There is still time after this hearing for people to contribute in writing. There are reference copies of the proposals presented at this hearing, and they are also available to view on our easy-to-use consultation website, [BCEreviews.org.uk](https://www.bcelections.org.uk). You can provide a written representation to us directly through this website and give feedback on anything, from where the proposed new boundaries are to the names of the constituencies.

We attach just as much significance to representations made orally at public hearings as those made in writing via letter, email or through our website. I do urge everyone to submit written representations to us by the deadline of 4th April, as we will not be able to consider representations received after that date. Finally, I would like to remind all participants that this hearing is part of a public consultation, and you will be asked to confirm your name and town if you make an oral representation. The

Commission is legally obliged to take a record of the public hearings, and as you can see, we are taking a video recording, which will be made available online on our YouTube channel shortly after the hearing. After the secondary consultation, we will publish a verbatim transcript of the whole public hearing and publish all the responses we have received via our consultation portal, email or letter throughout the consultation period.

These may not be published until the commencement of the revised proposal's consultation. The publication of the hearing records and written representations include certain personal data of those who have made representations. I therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's data protection and privacy policy, a copy of which we have with us and which is also available on our website. We aren't expecting any fire alarms today, but if the fire alarm sounds, then please follow the team to the assembly area. At this stage, I thank you for your attendance today, and will now hand you back to Paul to begin the hearing.

PAUL WILES: Thank you, Tony. I think, as you know, this morning, we are going to be listening to presentations from the political parties who are able to give that. Could I therefore ask, first of all, Roger Pratt. Roger, just for the record, would you just give your name and explain who you're representing?

During this presentation, you are modifying something that was in your written submission. I'd be very grateful if you could flag that for us.

ROGER PRATT: Of course. My name is Roger Pratt. I'm the boundary review director for the Conservative Party. Thank you very much, indeed, and a particular thanks to the Commission for all their work on this particular process. In terms of Yorkshire and the Humber, the presentation complements our submission at the initial consultation stage, reference 85514. It should be read in conjunction with that. Just a reminder about how we judge the Commission proposals, our proposals and any counter-proposals is on the basis of the rules and, in particular, local government boundaries, boundaries of existing constituencies and local ties.

We support the allocation of 54 seats to Yorkshire and the Humber region. We note it is obviously the same as the number of constituencies at the moment, but there clearly needs to be a fairly major change despite that fact. We do not support the Commission's groupings into sub-regions. We have a slightly different proposal for the sub-region. We use South Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, allocating 17 constituencies, and North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, East Riding and Kingston upon Hull of 37. A reminder that Humberside does not exist anymore. It's much more relevant to deal with the four local authorities, and in fact, the Commission do exactly the same as that in reality. Just to show the regions, those are our regions. The difference you'll notice is that we actually divide by the Humber estuary.

We use the Humber as our boundary, and then, we have North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire and West Yorkshire as one cohesive unit. We note the Commission, in their booklet at paragraphs 25, 27 and 37, talk about the geography of the Humber estuary. It is quite important, and we think it makes a natural boundary in terms of the regions that we are using. Within the Commission's North Yorkshire and West

Yorkshire, Bradford and York are allocated a whole number of seats, and we do exactly the same. We allocate Bradford and York those numbers of seats and don't change those constituencies. If we look firstly at South Yorkshire and North and North East Lincolnshire, we think it makes a lot of sense. Sheffield and Barnsley can then be linked together; Rotherham and Doncaster can then be linked together with the Isle of Axholme.

And we think the proposals are very sensible, and we support 14 of the commission constituencies. We note widespread support in Barnsley and quite a considerable support in Sheffield, for example. In terms of Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, we think it's a very logical constituency, which is supported by the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. It keeps the vast majority of Cleethorpes and Grimsby together. We note there were some suggestions that you should swap the Haverstoe and Scartho wards, but that doesn't work in terms of the electoral numbers. There are some representations, 62190 and others, which do a counter-proposal with Cleethorpes and the villages, and Immingham and Great Grimsby. We do not think that's an improvement on the proposals because it splits Grimsby in a far poorer way than the Commission do, which keeps the vast majority of Grimsby together.

We would note in terms of Penistone and Stocksbridge, the Member of Parliament 64872, there's no change. Indeed, in Scunthorpe, note Holly Mumby-Croft, the Member of Parliament 65438, supporting that. We think that the proposals in Lincolnshire are logical. We note the support of North East Lincolnshire Council 74580 and North Lincolnshire Labour Group 79525. We think those constituencies are logical, and we support them. We make one change in terms of the name. We think South Humber is not an appropriate name or a lot of representations on this. We have suggested Northern Lincolnshire, but we're not wedded to that. We note that Andrew Percy and others make alternative suggestions, and we'd be quite happy with a suggestion that would cover the area and had general support but did not include the Humber – it's the Humber factor that I think is the problem. We also note the support for the constituencies from Martin Vickers, the Member of Parliament for Cleethorpes in 72231, but he also supports an alternative name.

The only constituencies we make a minor change in are Rotherham and Rother Valley. We basically move the Rother Valley ward or put the Rother Valley ward, which is that ward there, into Rotherham rather than Rother Valley. It is a split ward, where some electors are in Rotherham and some electors are in Rother Valley, and we notice the Member of Parliament for Rother Valley's representations at 69858 and 69848. We note that Rotherham actually has an electorate at the bottom of the scale. It's a constituency which is not even one over. It is actually the bottom of the possible numbers, 69,724. And we believe it's right to increase it, but we really believe this because we think the ward's ties are more to Rotherham than they are to Rother Vale. We note there are a number of representations about this, including 80668, 69974, 76520, 84428 and 70127.

Because the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats use this overall sub-region, we'll deal with their proposals for North and North East Lincolnshire and also East Yorkshire. The Labour Party note that the urban area of Hull effectively spreads into the suburbs, which lie within East Riding of Yorkshire. While this may be true to the west, it is not too true to the north or east. Labour have all three whole seats

crossing the East Yorkshire boundary into the East Riding, whereas the Commission have two such seats, and we have just one. They state there is logic in considering this wider urban area as a whole rather than being concerned primarily with respecting the boundaries between local authorities, but this approach very poorly complies with rule 5(1)(b).

And I would particularly draw your attention, sir, to representation 83750, which is from the Hull City Council. It says in the letter from the leader of the council, Councillor Hale, there was political consensus between Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory representatives regarding points 1–3 below, and they give three points. I'd particularly like to draw your attention to point 2, where it says on the eastern side of the city, there are towns and villages which are more distinct from the city of Hull. South West Holderness is a collection of rural towns and villages whose character is much more like the rest of Holderness than it is east Hull, which is overwhelmingly urban in character. That view is supported by all three parties on Hull City Council.

The Liberal Democrats propose two identical constituencies to us. We're grateful for that. Both their Beverley and Holderness seat and their Hull East seat are exactly the same as our proposals, and they're similar in terms of bringing Willerby and Kirk Ella into the western seat. As they state about Kingston upon Hull, we believe the boundary should only be crossed on one side, the west, where there are genuine and obvious ties across the border. We agree with this statement, but they have two constituencies crossing the boundary, whereas we have only one. Basically, I'll come back to our advantages in the region that we put it in. In terms of North, West and East Yorkshire, in this sub-region, we support the Commission's proposals in their entirety for these 12 seats.

I just draw your attention to Colne Valley because there are some representations that suggest that Lindley ward should be included in Colne Valley rather than Crosland Moor and Netherton. We disagree with that, and in fact, if you took the whole of Lindley ward again, you would be out in terms of the quota. There are some suggestions to split the Lindley ward. We think there is no justification whatsoever to split the Lindley ward when you have a perfectly acceptable alternative with regard to Crosland Moor and Netherton. You've got an easy alternative. You use that rather than splitting the Lindley ward, and indeed, in representation 71670, they support Crosland Moor and Netherton going into Huddersfield, and they say it's much better. They live in Thornton Lodge, which is part of the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward and show their links with Huddersfield.

In terms of Shipley, we'd like to just show there's no change to Shipley, but there's an awful lot of support in the representations for Shipley. We also note the support for Ossett and Denby Dale, and we think there's quite a lot of support for there. I'd just instance a few of the representations in support: 61536, 60326, 58336, 76862, 68851, 81751, 58336, 82028, 58222, 53516, 83664 and, indeed, the Member of Parliament 85493. We note some of those suggest different names, but they all support the composition of Ossett and Denby Dale, as has been suggested. We support the Keighley constituency, which is no change, but there are a lot of representations about the name of Keighley being Keighley and Ilkley. In fact, there are more representations than from any other constituency within Yorkshire – 257 representations. I think the next most is about 160 something.

We think there is an overwhelming case from the representations for Ilkley to be included in the name, and we note the Member of Parliament, Robbie Moore, representation at 75768. This is basically where we support in West Yorkshire the commission, and we do not support the Commission proposals for the following seats. I won't go through each of them. There are 24 of them in total, but I'll come back to a number to talk about particular issues. So those are 16, then a further eight on that slide. These is our alternatives. Again, 16 on the one slide and eight on the other slide.

So this is our alternative. I don't know how easy it is to see the different colours on that map, but this is our alternative. I'd just like to highlight one or two of the issues. We reorganise Thirsk and Malton quite considerably. We make it much less disruptive. It's a much better shape. If you look at the shape of the Commission's proposed Thirsk and Malton, it's very thin, going from Bedale in one end of the constituency, right up to Filey on the coast, with less of the area around Easingwold and so on. It's a much better shape. We would particularly note Kevin Hollinrake, the Member of Parliament's representation at 73692.

We also note that Thirsk and Malton Labour Party object to the proposals. They object to the proposed constituency of Easingwold and Wetherby at 83033. We note the much less change in the Bridlington and Beverley and Holderness seats, and we note also we think what is a very robust constituency is the constituency of Selby and Goole that we have proposed. Taking the two Goole wards on one side of the Humber and linking it with Goole, we think that's a very robust constituency, a lot of links between Selby and Goole. We particularly draw your attention to the representation from the Member of Parliament for Brigg and Goole, Andrew Percy, 70162, and bearing in mind that, effectively, it is his constituency that is dismembered, I think it's a particular representation which I'd ask you to take count of and note particularly. He supports Selby and Goole, as do representations 85445 and 85413.

So the advantages of our proposal, the Commission proposed to add South West Holderness to a Hull constituency. This was proposed at a previous review and successfully opposed. It breaks ties in Holderness, which we restore. There are many objections to this constituency, and I would refer you to paragraph 43 in the Boundary Commission's proposals. We recognise that our proposals result in South West Holderness becoming an orphan ward and is has a considerably more rural character than the wards within the Kingston upon Hull authority. We totally agree, and that's why we move it back into an East Yorkshire-based constituency. We notice that the Commission talk about links with Hedon. Hedon Town Council in 85536 make clear their objections as do representations 67513, 62698, 64684, 71077, 69403, 76438, 72533, 85213, 84540, 84057 and many others as well.

Our Beverley and Holderness seat is the current seat less one ward, as we've said, as the Liberal Democrats are, and 34,213 fewer electors move constituency compared to the Commission's proposal, so it's much better under rule 51©. We note the proposal of the representation from the Member of Parliament Graham Stuart at 84499. We also moved Driffield and Rural back into the Bridlington constituency; again, 11,841 electors return to their existing constituency. We note the Member of Parliament, Greg Knight's representation at 84499. We also note

representations 83007, 67381 and 67371. We've removed two Scarborough wards from Thirsk and Morton, reducing the seat to two local authorities compared to three under the Commission proposals. As I've said, we think that makes Thirsk and Morton a much better-shaped, much better-linked seat than the Commission proposals. The Commission proposed a full local authority, whether it be an Easingwold seat. There are only presently two such seats in England, and one of these is reduced to three under the initial proposals.

We do not have a four local authority seat. We get rid of a four local authority seat, and we noticed the very large number of objections to this particular seat. We note in the Commission's booklet at paragraph 52, this was an especially challenging area in which to construct Parliamentary constituencies or construct constituencies that satisfactorily reflect the statutory factors, and as such, we particularly welcome during the public consultation any representations with alternative arrangements. We have indeed proposed that, and we note – I won't go through all the number of representations that oppose it, probably take all of my time - but just a few examples: 59540, 56654, 72026, 78349, 83166, 81914, 62815, 77845, 78723, 53743 and 55828.

We restore Bedale ward to Richmond, restoring its strong ties to Morton-on-Swale and Northallerton. Again, there are a lot of objections to this, a lot of calls for this. We note 59005, 62836, 64397, 67997, 84846, 56191 and, particularly, Crakehall and Langthorne Parish Council, which is within the Bedale ward 68034. We restore Bishop Monkton & Newby ward to Skipton and Ripon, restoring its ties to Ripon. Julian Smith, the Member of Parliament who supports that at 71246. We also include the Claro ward in Harrogate and Knaresborough; 60% of the electors in this current split ward in Harrogate and Knaresborough, and there are many representations from Claro, again, partly objecting to Wetherby and Easingwold and also asking to be returned to Harrogate: 72560, 72515, 72190, 69779, 69144, 85310, 78315, 77873, 75304, 74703, 73626, 73050 and 72628. Instead of a Wetherby and Easingwold seat crossing the Leeds/North Yorkshire border, we have a Leeds North and Wharfedale seat with better communication links along the A658. Both Leeds and Harrogate have ward names which reference Wharfedale, and rather than a four local authority seat, we have it as a two local authority seat with Harrogate and Leeds, so those two local authorities.

We link Morley with Rothwell rather than with Middleton Park; that returns 18,704 electors from Middleton Park. We put it back in Leeds Central, where it is, or where the vast majority of it is and we return that number of electors. Rothwell has previously been linked with Morley in a constituency. We joined together the four wards in south Leeds linked by the M62, the Robin Hood part of Ardsley & Robin Hood has particularly strong links to Rothwell. There are a lot of representations from Middleton – some objecting to Rothwell being linked, some people objecting to Rothwell being linked with Wakefield, some objecting to Middleton, and others suggesting that it's better to link with Rothwell. I just, again, cite a few of them: 81534, 79856, 79229, 55501, 58053, 76096, 59915, 68440, 66714 and 59954.

We restore the Horsforth ward to Pudsey, restoring 18,238 electors to their current constituency, and in the next paragraph, sir, this is where I would actually amend what we have put: *restore* should be *retain*. We retain the Cross Gates & Whinmoor

and Killingbeck & Seacroft wards: rather than to it should be in their existing constituency, because we continue with that, but currently, that is the position. We include the whole of the split ward of Gipton & Harehills in this seat; so 8,501 electors return. We notice Labour also do that, and Labour actually split Burmantofts from Richmond Hill, which we include it all. A lot of objections to Gipton & Harehills being split and not being in Leeds East, not least from the Labour Member of Parliament in 85477 – also, 85443, 85482, 85497, 85434, 82003 and 71993. We create an Elmet seat containing just two local authorities in place of the commission's Wetherby and Easingwold contained within four; we restore to the constituency Garforth & Swillington plus Temple Newsam, which is a split ward with a small part in Elmet. As a result of that, 16,658 electors returned to their constituency, and I particularly draw your attention to representation 71205 from the Member of Parliament for Elmet, Alec Shelbrooke.

We agree with the Labour Party that Rastrick is a more appropriate ward to be added to a Huddersfield constituency than Hipperholme and Lightcliffe, which has very few links. Again, this should change it: it should be Kirklees rather than Huddersfield because clearly, it doesn't link with Huddersfield. It links with Kirklees. Both of us split Heckmondwike but in a different way. We believe Hipperholme and Lightcliffe – there's a lot of objections to that. It causes too much disruption to Halifax and Calder Valley with a very poor-shaped Halifax seat. Again, the objections include 85508, 81479, 80144, 73535, 74784, 83445, 84489, 55704, 67921 and 79437. I'd also mention at this point that the way we do it is we create a Spen Valley constituency, and there are a lot of objections to Spen not being in a name and they're not being a Spen Valley constituency. A number of these actually say they haven't got any links with Batley, and they actually quite like the idea of a Spen Valley constituency. I'd just refer to 71879, 62433, 62289 and 59451.

We note that the Labour Party retain Halifax unchanged, and Calder Valley just changed by the reduction of the Rastrick ward. We have a slightly different proposal. We both restore the two seats in Calderdale more closely to their current composition, and we both add Rastrick to the Huddersfield constituency. We note Craig Whittaker, who's the Member of Parliament for Calder Valley's representation at 67169. We also note quite a bit of support for our alternative Calder Valley and Halifax in 74936, 85516, 69918, 69351, 69274, 85527, 69908, 86127 and 65938. I pointed out earlier that the Ossett and Denby Dale constituency that is proposed by the Commission has got a lot of support. Labour would actually split the town of Ossett between two constituencies, breaking ties there.

The Liberal Democrats object to the Commission's Wetherby and Easingwold, as we do, and eliminate a full local authority seat. However, they do so creating two constituencies, Selby and Easingwold, and Wetherby and Eggborough, which are strangely shaped and have poor connectivity. They state of Wetherby and Eggborough, connectivity issues in and around our proposed constituency are not perfect. We believe this to be an understatement.

Finally, sir, just a reminder of the rules for redistribution of seats which we have tried to apply to our particular proposals in Kingston upon Hull and East Yorkshire. The changes proposed by the Commission are extensive, and we believe that we have improved them. In particular, we retain far more electors in their current constituency,

thus being more compliant with rule 5(1)(c), as we have only one constituency between Hull and East Yorkshire and two constituencies totally within Hull. Also, as far as that's concerned with 5(1)(b), in North Yorkshire, we've managed to reduce the number of electors changing constituencies, improve the links with local authorities, eliminating a cross-border constituency consisting of four local authorities and restore local ties. Our proposals there are better in terms of rules 5(1)(b), (c) and (d). In West Yorkshire, we've returned many electors to their existing constituency and restored many local ties, thus improving the position in respect of rules 5(1)(c) and (d).

Thank you very much, indeed, sir. We will submit to the Commission before 4th April a comprehensive document outlining whether we support the Commission or propose alternatives. In addition to our first state's document and this presentation, we will also more fully address the various counter-proposals and representations made by others. We'll take account of representations made at the public hearings, and we reserve the right to amend our submission from the position which we have outlined in our original document. Thank you very much, indeed.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Roger. You've covered an awful lot of ground there in the time. Are there any points of clarification that people would like to put through me to Roger?

TONY BELLRINGER: Roger, can I just clarify, I think you said you are proposing to move the Rother Vale ward from Rother Valley to Rotherham. Are you, though, still supporting the retention of the name Rother Valley for that constituency?

ROGER PRATT: Yes. I don't think there's any suggestion of a change to that name. I think the Member of Parliament is appearing at a later stage during I think it's this hearing, I think tomorrow, and he may have a view on it. As far as I'm concerned, it's Rother Valley. It's the same.

PAUL WILES: Good question. Thank you, Roger. We now will move on to Martin Hemingway for the Green Party. Dr Hemingway, when you get a chance. For the record, can you just give your name and who you are representing? Please start when you're ready.

MARTIN HEMINGWAY: Martin Hemingway, Yorkshire and Humber regional Green Party, Green Party of England and Wales. I'm not going to be holding the hearing up, I anticipate, by the full length of time allocated to me. One of the reasons for that is that we have no staff in the region to work in detail on the thing so, while we have specific things that we have concerns about, we also agree with a large part of what's being proposed by the Commission and don't anticipate spending time on that. The second reason is that unfortunately, we are not in the position where we want to gerrymander constituency boundaries for our own perceived short-term electoral advantage because, at the moment, we're not in that position. That again means that there will be fewer proposed alterations to what's being offered

The regional Green Party welcome the retention of the number of constituencies currently represented in the House of Commons. We are pleased to note that the region retains those 54 constituencies, and we welcome most of the

recommendations made for the region. Overall, we're quite happy with the bulk of the proposals being made. We do, however, have some proposals of others we wish to support. We have some of the decisions we wish to highlight our support for, and we have a small number of changes we would also wish to propose. Overall, it's a supportive statement. There are specifically two of the Liberal Democrats' proposals that we wish to formally support, and one of ours is also supported by the Labour Party, but in their initial presentation, they had no solution. To that, we propose a solution.

For Sheffield, we support the proposal to move Manor Castle from Sheffield Central to Sheffield Heeley. At the moment, it's separated by the ring road and the railway line from the rest of the constituency, and those represent an important psychological barrier. It makes absolute sense, just as it didn't make sense on the last review to move Sheffield's Manor Castle into Sheffield Central. We're pleased that that's been reversed and that Manor Castle is moving out. We're very supportive of that particular change in relation to the Sheffield one. Any barriers between Sheffield Heeley and Manor Castle are insignificant. With relation to Hull and East Riding, we wish to support the Liberal Democrat proposals for Hull and East Riding, which propose alterations that significantly reduce changes to existing constituency boundaries, and they're the ones that have the least effect on existing constituencies and retain most of the existing structure.

And we believe that although it involves splitting a ward, that the compensation that is gained in terms of retaining constituencies elsewhere in what is going to be a local authority region of Hull and East Riding outweigh that the splitting of the one ward. We support their proposals as they are presented and will be presented, I anticipate later. We understand the reasons for the proposal to move Filey from Thirsk and Malton into a constituency that's otherwise entirely in East Riding in terms of the geographical proximity of the two, but also, we've long expressed concern about that hugely long constituency running through Thirsk and Malton. However, we don't think that moving it, creating a constituency that crosses the boundary into what's shortly to be the North Yorkshire combined authority, justifies that change. We're opposed to that particular proposal from the Conservative Party to move Filey into a proposed Bridlington constituency. Overall, we regard the Liberal Democrat proposals as a reasonable alternative arrangement for Hull and East Riding.

To move on to Wetherby and Easingwold, again, like everybody, we flagged up our concerns about this. It appeared to us as a complete nonsense to be doing what was proposed. The best thing that could be said of it was that we could return the name of Vale of York to a constituency that covered the southern part of the Vale of York. That was, as far as I could see, the only advantage to it. We could not, at that time, offer a solution; we've tried various manipulations, but we support the Liberal Democrats' proposal as a reasonable way of doing it with the least disruption to the other proposals from the Boundary Commission. Yes, a ward that runs from Selby to Eggborough is a long ward, but at the same time, it makes more sense than the two proposals currently for Selby and for Wetherby and Easingwold.

So the suggestion that Wetherby and Easingwold should be split, so we've got the horizontal division with the Selby one to the south and the Wetherby one to the north. To us that makes the least bad sense in a corner where it's quite clearly

difficult to manage the changes, and we recognise the difficulties the Boundary Commission must have had in that particular chunk of the region. Again, we do support the division between Wetherby and Eggborough, and Selby and Easingwold. We would like specifically to welcome the redesignation of Dewsbury as a borough constituency for obvious reasons for us as a relatively poor party. We would rather have a one with a lower cut-off on spending.

Colne Valley. This has been referred to, and there is very strong feeling in the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward that it should remain part of the Colne Valley constituency. Almost all of the representations that came in from there made that point. There was a particularly significant one from the Scout's Association at 79919, although we don't quite follow all of their argument in there in what we are proposing. The Lindley ward is much less part of the Colne Valley constituency. It's perceived the Lindley ward is much more part of Huddersfield itself. To just move Crosland Moor and Netherton, of course, would leave Colne Valley below the required lower number, and to move LD05 from Crosland Moor and Netherton by itself would still not bring the constituency up to the required number. LD05 is the one with the stronger links. LD02 has links with Colne Valley – not as strong as those from LD05, and moving it would actually change the numbers – but it makes more sense to have LD05 in a new Colne Valley constituency. What we'd like to propose is the move of LD02 and LD05 from the Lindley ward together with the return of the holder of the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward to the Colne Valley constituency. That would then leave us with two constituencies, one of 74,000 and the other one of 74,000, which seems like quite a reasonable outcome from the suggestions that we're making. We've got two of almost exactly the same size, and in terms of what's being proposed there and this has been proposed by others – in particular, there's 71204: it would be better to split Lindley and leave Crosland Moor and Netherton where it is, 67374: rather than move Crosland Moor and Netherton. The Lindley ward should be split. There are a number of those ones that were wanting to retain Crosland Moor and Netherton within Colne Valley and have also proposed the split of Lindley Valley, though have not identified what particular parts would split, although Golcar was referred to in one of them.

In relation to Farnley & Wortley, we welcome most of what's happening in Leeds and aren't bothering out about it particularly. There was a concern raised by our three councillors in the Farnley & Wortley ward in the current Leeds West constituency that it made more sense to link Armley with Farnley & Wortley and thus with a proposed Pudsey constituency rather than Bramley & Stanningley. On the other side, of course, the Stanningley end of Bramley & Stanningley is closer to Pudsey, but the Bramley end is closer to Kirkstall, which is part of the proposed Headingley constituency. It's a problem I'm familiar with. My mother was born in Wortley and then moved the family up the hill into Armley. They essentially crossed the road really. They are contiguous, there are very close links between the two areas. We are proposing the Armley ward be included in the proposed Pudsey constituency instead of Bramley & Stanningley, which would then move to the proposed Headingley constituency. In terms of numbers, it makes no difference, but our feeling is that in terms of maintaining local ties, it's better to have Armley with Wortley rather than Bramley. It's, as I say, something that's been flagged up particularly, and we've had councillors there for getting on for 25 years, as the swap wouldn't affect the numerical viability of either of the two constituencies.

In conclusion, we'd like to thank the Boundary Commission for their work and its recognition for the historic links and community links within the region. We accept the bulk of the proposals made by the Boundary Commission. Our own observations above would only affect the composition of five specific ones, and in the case of only two of these would there be significant changes to the boundaries proposed, changes in which we are in agreement with the proposals of the Liberal Democrat party, which they will be outlining in more detail later. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed, Martin. As I did last time, has anybody got any questions of clarification they would like to put to Martin? All right, thank you very much indeed. We now turn to Tom Adams on behalf of the Labour Party. For the record, would you start by giving your name and who you represent, Tom, and then please do start when you're ready.

THOMAS ADAMS: Hi, my name's Tom Adams. I'm an official of the Labour Party. This submission is made on behalf of the national executive committee of the Labour Party and the Yorkshire and Humber region of the Labour Party. It's an overall response to the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission, which follows an extensive consultation process which is carried out within the Labour Party involving all Members of Parliament, elective representatives and local layer parties and is complementary to our written submission, which is number 79525, of which some written copies are available. As an official base in London, I'm obviously not qualified to speak in detail on community ties in all parts of the region, therefore, this statement this morning will make the party's outline case in Yorkshire and the Humber and will depend upon the evidence of others who have made written submissions and who will be addressing the hearings later today to make arguments in support of our counter-proposals. I'll just be covering the review process, the statutory criteria and the policies of the Commission and then moving on to talk about our views on the initial proposals and the counter-proposals.

The Labour Party welcomes the initial proposals of the Commission. While we disagree with some of them and, in some cases, make alternative proposals which we believe better fit the statutory criteria, which we will touch upon in a minute, we accept the Commission have fully considered the different options and explained the decisions they've made. We also welcome the Commission's efforts to stimulate and encourage public participation in the process and to consult with political parties on their policies and procedures. The Labour Party will, of course, engage constructively with the process in Yorkshire and Humber, as we've done in all parts of England, Scotland and Wales, and assist the Commission with their deliberations. To that end, we thank the Commission for the opportunity to set out our views this morning, where we will also present our counter-proposals. We are aware that there've been a great number of counter-proposals made for this region. We will refer to some of these this morning, but we'll reserve our more detailed comments on these for our written submission, which we'll make before the end of this consultation process.

Touching on the rules, as others have already said this morning, obviously, our analysis of the initial proposals and counter-proposals is done purely within the statutory rules, as put out on the screen here. In terms of just the use of regions, we welcome the Commission's decision, once again, to use the standard regions in

England as sub-national view areas. Despite them no longer being in use in European elections, they do remain the most widely accepted administrative regions in England, and were they to be set aside things would become much more complex with almost limitless options. We would certainly not support any proposal which sought to include any constituency containing parts of Yorkshire and Humber region and parts of any other region. I think there is actually at least one this time that I remember seeing that proposed it go into bits of the East Midlands.

In terms of the rules, we know this is the first review to be carried out under the terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020, which fixes the size of House of Commons at 650 and adds one more protected constituency. The criteria which the Commission may take into account in choosing between the different schemes remain largely unchanged, which are those on the screen: special geographic circumstances, local government boundaries, some prospective boundaries, the boundaries of existing constituencies, any local ties which were broken by changes to constituencies and any inconveniences attendant on such changes. We set out our views on the rules of the Commission are working to in our written representation during the initial consultation, and we would refer in particular to the comments on how adherence to local government boundaries should be measured

In terms of the policies of the Commission, we agree with the Commission that there is merit in continuing the practice of using counties as review areas, noting that under the new rules of requirement for every constituency to have an electorate within 5% of the quota means that some counties can no longer sustain whole numbers of seats and will therefore need to be paired or grouped with others. Counties are, obviously, mostly local authorities in their own right, and therefore, the Commission may take account of them anyway as one of their criteria and they're also likely to reflect existing community ties. We know the Commission's policy of using district and unity wards as the smallest unit of which to build constituencies. We note the Commission's remarks on this issue in their guide to the review, which state the Commission recognise that there may be circumstances where splitting a ward would be necessary to achieve a scheme of constituencies which better meets the rule 5 criteria and that such split ward proposals have been made in most of the English regions and that some have been proposed in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

We support the policy of the Commission on this point but do believe that any individual proposal needs to be treated on its merit with an assumption that whole wards should remain intact in the absence of compelling and exceptional circumstances. We believe that the use of wards and divisions as building blocks is an important means of making the process orderly and accessible. While it might result in some rigidity and limit the Commission's options or inhibit their ability to respect community ties, were a ward to be disregarded entirely, then the process of public engagement and consultation to put together counter-proposals will become much more complex and almost impossible. If wards and divisions are assumed not to be divided, we believe it is right that any proposal to divide them should be truly exceptional and that such a proposal must demonstrably result in much greater adherence to statute criteria.

If proposals were to be adopted where that was not the case, then it might be asked why the Commission hadn't put forward split ward proposals all over the place. On orphan wards, the Labour Party notes the Commission refer explicitly in their guide to the concept of the orphan ward, where one ward of a local authority is added to a constituency wholly or partly in another local authority, and this is regarded by definition as undesirable. We accept that such arrangements are often anomalous and clearly at odds with respect for local government boundaries. However, we believe that dogmatic policy in this respect is not appropriate and that the addition of other wards just for the sake of not having a single ward in such a scenario is not necessarily to be preferred if it means that ties might be broken or more electors moved.

In terms of names, we note and support the Commission's policy on the names and designations of constituencies. We also note that despite their policy of not amending the name of a constituency which is wholly or largely unchanged, the Commission have, in fact, opposed a number of such amendments – in some cases, dispensing of constituency names that derive from local government names or which have been used for many decades. We don't hold fixed views on the issue of names. Where a constituency is largely unchanged we would normally support the retention of that name, but we will consider all proposals on their merits and take account of local opinion. Our comments on the names of constituencies we will largely reserve for our written representation later in the process, but we do make one specific comment on the name of one seat, which I'll do later.

In terms of the review areas, moving on to Yorkshire and Humber specifically, we note that with an electorate of 3,966,500, the Yorkshire and Humber region is entitled to 54 seats, which is no change from the current allocation, but nonetheless, some significant change in some areas is still necessary. We know that the county of North Yorkshire cannot sustain a whole number of constituencies and must be placed in a review area with another county. Furthermore, the four unitary authorities, which comprise the former county of Humberside, in which it previously formed a review area, clearly could not be allocated a whole number of seats without the division of several wards and a high level of disruption than is otherwise necessary. We therefore agree with the Commission in identifying that the city of Kingston upon Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire should be a review area with an allocation of six seats and that the unitary authorities of North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, which could be described as South Humberside, should form a review area with South Yorkshire.

We also agree with the Commission that the City of York continue to be allocated two whole seats, which then requires that North Yorkshire must be paired with in a review area with West Yorkshire. We note that not only do the seat entitlements fit very conveniently into these groupings, we believe they're geographically sensible and do not believe any proposal to alter these review areas would bring any merits.

In terms of a summary of our views on the initial proposals, we support the initial proposals in South Yorkshire and the South Humberside area. We will make some more comments on that in a minute. We support much of what is proposed in North and West Yorkshire, but do make two separate counter-proposals, which affect the seats wholly or partly in Kirklees and Calderdale and some of the City of Leeds. We

broadly do not support the initial proposals in Kingston upon Hull and East Riding, and we make a counter-proposal in that area which affects four of the six seats.

Talking about South Yorkshire and South Humberside first, we accept that this review area is effectively losing a seat through the creation of the Doncaster East and Axholme constituency as a successor to Don Valley, leaving just three seats wholly within South Humberside. We support the proposals in South Humberside but do regret that all of the existing Great Grimsby constituency is not contained within a single constituency due to the exclusion of the Scartho ward. We note there are several representations objecting to its omission and one proposal from the Grimsby Labour Party, 77446, notes that the Scartho ward could swap with Haverstoe. The numbers for this, however, do not quite add up, but as is noted in our written submission, we draw the Commission's attention to the fact that it would be possible to split the Haverstoe ward to allow all of Scartho to remain within Great Grimsby, and this would also avoid dividing the village of Humberston. While we do not formally make a counter-proposal to that effect, we would like to draw the Commission's attention to that particular proposal put forward mostly by others.

We welcome the fact that the Commission have managed to preserve the seats in South Yorkshire with relatively minor change – in some cases, simply to adjust for new ward boundaries. We therefore support the proposals, including the amendments to the two seats wholly in Barnsley, which bring the two Dearne wards into a Barnsley South constituency, along with Kingston and Cudworth, and North East included in Barnsley North and, as has already been mentioned earlier, there have been quite a few submissions in support of the proposals in Barnsley. In Sheffield, we regret the transfer of the Manor Castle ward from Sheffield Central, of which it has been an integral part, but otherwise, we recognise that the proposals result in minimum change and that any proposal to retain Manor Castle in Sheffield Central is likely to be highly disruptive and require splitting multiple wards. We note that one ward does have to be split in Sheffield, and it's obvious that this should be Richmond, which is already split. The proposal by the Commission respects the existing constituency boundary.

In Doncaster and Rotherham, we broadly accept these proposals, with Conisbrough and Edlington & Warmsworth replacing the Dearne wards in the current Wentworth and Dearne constituency. While on the whole, we are reserving our comments on the constituency names to our written submission, we would urge that the well-recognised name of Wentworth remains as part of the name of this constituency. This is supported in more details provided by the current MP John Healey in his submission 70356, to which we would draw the Commission's attention.

Moving on to York, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, we fully support the allocation of two whole seats to the City of York and the Commission's minimum change proposal in York. We note that there must be at least one constituency shared between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, and we agree that the least disruptive place for this to be concentrated is in the current Elmet and Rothwell constituency given that the town of Wetherby will fit reasonably comfortably into a seat comprising rural areas and market towns. We recognise, however, the Commission's difficulties in keeping the electorate of the Selby constituency within 5% of the electorate quota were it to remain wholly in North Yorkshire and that it

would require either considerable change to existing seats or very awkward constituency shapes. We therefore support the initial proposals for the Kippax & Methley ward for the city of Leeds to be included in the Selby constituency, with the Wetherby and Easingwold seat also including two Leeds wards. Within North Yorkshire, we support the consequential changes which reduce the size of the existing constituencies, with Harrogate and Knaresborough becoming a more compact, almost entirely urban seat, Bedale being transferred to Thirsk and Malton, and Scarborough and Whitby being unchanged.

In Bradford, we welcome the continued allocation of five whole constituencies and the minimum change to three of these constituencies. While in general supporting the policy of adhering to whole wards, we do believe there may be some circumstances here where the Commission might be justified in considering the transfer of one polling district from Bradford East to Bradford South as being less disruptive to existing constituencies and respecting ties in the Wibsey area. For example, the Commission could split the Little Horton ward, which would allow them to propose an even more minimum change scheme than has already been proposed in Bradford. Again, while not formally making a counter-proposal to that effect, we would draw the Commission's attention to that possibility, and I believe it has been supported by some other submissions

In Calderdale, again, we note the Commission is proposing significant change, with five wards changing constituencies despite the fact the council area retains an entitlement of two constituencies and one could remain unchanged. The initial proposal has created an unwieldy seat by transferring Hipperholme and Lightcliffe to the Batley and Spen seat with which it has very few, if any, ties, while breaking the ties of Batley to Heckmondwike and necessitating a change of a constituency name. There are a number of submissions objecting to the link of Batley with Hipperholme, for example, 52052, which describes them as, and I quote, 'two entirely distinct communities that don't match at all'. We therefore wish to make a counter-proposal which would retain the Halifax constituency unchanged while reducing the electorate of the Calder Valley constituency through the transfer of the Rastrick ward to Huddersfield. Rather than split the Dalton ward, we propose that the electorate of the Batley and Spen constituency should be reduced by the transfer of two polling districts of Heckmondwike to Dewsbury, respecting the ties which Central Heckmondwike has with Batley. Dewsbury would also include the neighbouring town of Ossett, while the whole of the Dalton ward would be retained in Huddersfield. But the Almondbury ward would be included in a Horbury and Denby Dale seat. Several submissions oppose removing Heckmondwike from a Batley seat, for example, 60423 and 67938. We also note that our Rastrick in Huddersfield counter-proposal is suggested by several others, including by the Conservatives this morning, though to be clear we have a slightly separate scheme of seats elsewhere, and our proposal is supported by the Halifax MP Holly Lynch in 73792. We do also believe that the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward has strong ties to the Colne Valley constituency which are broken by the initial proposals, and actually, the Lindley ward better belongs as part of the urban Huddersfield seat. This could only be achieved by splitting the Lindley ward, but given we believe there are considerable advantages in terms of local ties, we would ask the Commission to consider this. We note there have been representations about the ties between Crosland Moor and Netherton and Colne Valley, for example, in 67377, 71083 and 85163, some of which also include

support for splitting Lindley ward, for example in 67374. We also note that this was supported by the Green Party earlier this morning.

With the exception of the amendment to the Ossett ward, we fully support the proposals for the City of Wakefield. In Leeds, we know that the Commission have completely reconfigured the three constituencies in the west of the city in order to create a whole ward solution and that they believe their proposals may better affect local ties, even though they are making major changes. We are concerned, however, by the proposals in the east of the city and, in particular, division of the long-established and coherent Gipton & Harehills ward, which has a lengthy history of being in the Leeds East constituency. There are a large number of representations objecting to the division of this ward, for example, 64686, 70374 and 74845, and I believe Roger from the Conservatives listed several more earlier this morning.

The latter of which, 74845, that I mentioned is a joint letter from the three Gipton & Harehills councillors. We therefore wish to make some amendments to the proposals for the City of Leeds which would retain the Gipton & Harehills ward within Leeds East, which would also include Roundhay. The Adel & Wharfedale ward would then be included in Leeds North East with Weetwood in a Leeds North West seat, along with Otley & Yeadon, Guiseley & Rawdon and Horsforth. The Pudsey constituency would be as in the initial proposals, but we would suggest a revised Leeds Central seat, comprising Armley, Headingley, Kirkstall and Little London & Woodhouse. Garforth & Swillington and Temple Newsam would be in a Leeds South East seat, along with Beeston & Holbeck and Hunslet & Riverside. The Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward would be divided between Leeds East and Leeds South East, but we argue this is a much more understandable split, with the A564 road forming the boundary, than the proposed split under the initial proposals in Gipton & Harehills. We draw the Commission's attention to the fact that our proposals are supported by a number of submissions, for example, 85477 from Richard Burgon MP, 81954 from Rachel Reeves MP and 75091.

You can see this is our counter-proposal in Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield, as set up, which is the same as in our written submission, and this is our Leeds counter-proposal that I just alluded to. We have considered the many counter-proposals which we made in North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, and we'll comment on them in more detail in our written representation. As noted, some of them also propose that a Rastrick ward should be added to Huddersfield and that Heckmondwike should be the ward which is split Kirklees, which is in line with our counter-proposal, even though some of the other counter-proposals have slightly different schemes overall. We note that the Conservative Party in 85514 make a radical counter-proposal which would leave five constituencies wholly within the county of North Yorkshire and another five which would only contain parts of the county. Three of those would be shared with West Yorkshire. We believe that this shows excessive disregard for local authority boundaries, with the Leeds North and Wharfedale seat in particular lacking any coherence between its different parts.

The proposal also creates a new configuration of seats within Calderdale despite there being no numerical requirement for this, and we believe this is directly at odds with the stipulations in the rules concerning respect for existing constituencies. The proposal also breaks ties within Halifax, with the Illingworth and Mixenden ward

effectively being a detached part under their proposals with no road access between that ward and the rest of the constituency without leaving it. The inclusion of the Dalton ward in their proposed Spen Valley constituency means that the seat stretches almost into Huddersfield town centre and includes the Huddersfield football stadium, for example, and that area has very few ties to the wards in the north of the Kirklees local authority while simultaneously dividing those wards with their ties they have with Batley. We're certain therefore not to support this counter-proposal, and we reject the assertion made this morning that our two schemes were equivalent in terms of their respect for the existing constituencies in Calderdale. We believe that our proposal in Calderdale is very respectful of the existing constituencies in Calderdale, but their scheme is not. The Liberal Democrat counter-proposal provides for just one seat shared between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire while sympathising the objective. We do not support the counter-proposal, as the two seats would combine areas which we believe have little affinity and ties are broken between Selby and the community itself.

Moving on to Kingston upon Hull and East Riding, we note that East Riding has a very high average ward electorate, which means that there are few options for whole ward configurations available, and this is compounded by the shape of the Pocklington Provincial and Wolds Weighton wards, which must be in the same constituency. We also note that all three constituencies in the City of Kingston upon Hull have electorates well below the lower 5% threshold, which means there must be significant change.

We agree with the broad approach taken by the Commission, which recognises that the urban area of Hull effectively spreads into the suburbs, which lie within the East Riding of Yorkshire local authority. This led in the 1997 review to the inclusion of the town of Hessle in the Hull West constituency, which has worked well since. We believe there is logic in considering the wider urban area as a whole rather than being concerned primarily with respecting the boundaries between the local authorities; the Commission have therefore extended Hull East to include the South West Holderness ward, including the town of Hedon, which has ties to the city, and have added two further East Riding wards to the Hull West constituency. While broadly accepting this approach, we believe the inclusion of the rural South Hunsley ward goes well beyond the Kingston upon Hull urban area and should be properly contained within the Goole and Haltemprice constituency.

Much more appropriate, we believe, would be the inclusion of the village of Cottingham with a Hull seat, whose two wards share continuous residential development with the north of Hull. We would therefore propose that Cottingham should be included in the Kingston upon Hull North constituency and that rather than South Hunsley, the Kingston upon Hull West constituency should contain the wards of Avenue, Central and Bricknell, which all have close ties with each other. A further amendment would be that the riverfront and docklands communities of the city of Hull to be largely united in the same constituency through the transfer of St Andrew's & Docklands ward to Kingston upon Hull East, with the Sutton ward transferred to Kingston upon Hull North. We believe this counter-proposal provides for much better-shaped constituencies and reflects the wider ties of the whole of the urban area of Hull to its hinterland and suburbs. We note that an identical scheme has been submitted in submission 81676 and that it is supported by Emma Hardy MP in

submission 75273. Otherwise, we support the initial proposals in the two remaining constituencies in this area, Beverley and The Wolds, and Bridlington and Holderness, and just on the screen, that is the map and the ward list of our counter-proposal in this area.

We accept there are no ideal solutions in this area, and we again have considered the other proposals which are being made. We do not agree with that of the Conservative Party, which would have two constituencies shared between East Riding of Yorkshire and parts of North Yorkshire. Not only does this break ties in the areas affected, it effectively creates one large review area comprising North Humberside, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire which disregards local authority boundaries. The constituencies concerns would comprise parts of the unity authority as well as what are currently two-tier district and county areas. Furthermore, the proposal would include Cottingham, which we believe has the strongest ties of any part of the East Riding of Yorkshire in a huge rural seat rather than a seat with Hull, which we believe will make more sense and better respect local ties. We note that several of the proposals do include Cottingham in a Hull North seat, even though their overall scheme in this area might be slightly different, for example, 85165. We believe there is more merit in the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal, and the shape of the Wolds Weighton ward may justify splitting it. We welcome the acceptance that Kingston upon Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire should be considered as one unit, but we believe the counter-proposal does have some weaknesses in that we don't believe that the Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency should stretch as far as South Hunsley, with which it has few ties.

Just touching again on names before I finish, we would normally support keeping constituency names unchanged, where the seat does not change or only has minimum change. We do, however, as mentioned, support the retention of the name Wentworth, at least as part of the constituency name for what the Commission has proposed to be called Rawmarsh and Conisbrough. We will make more detailed representation on names in our written submission.

By way of summary, we support the initial proposals broadly in South Yorkshire and South Humberside, but I draw the Commission's attention to the points I made about a couple of areas, especially Great Grimsby. We support the initial proposals in York, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, with the exception of our counter-proposals in Kirklees, in Calderdale and in the City of Leeds. We make a counter-proposal in East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull, affecting four of the six seats.

We wish to thank the Commission once again for the opportunity to address the hearing this morning. We will be represented at all of the hearings in the region and look forward to hearing all of the representations that will be made. We will, of course, make a written submission at the end of this process, which will detail in further detail our views on the counter-proposals of others, and a copy of what I've been going through this morning will be sent to the Commission staff to aid a transcription. Obviously, I'm very happy to take any questions of clarification.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Tom. Can I ask if anybody wishes to ask questions of clarification through me? Yes, Roger.

ROGER PRATT: Thank you very much. Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party. I just wanted to clarify through you, chairman, the fact that you referred to, but did not formally support, three different split ward proposals, one in Bradford, one in Grimsby and one in Colne Valley, and you referred earlier to split wards: if they really are split wards, they had to be truly exceptional circumstances. I wonder if you could clarify in those three whether there are truly exceptional circumstances.

THOMAS ADAMS: I think what I'd say on that is that when we raised all of those points in our initial written submission, we obviously hadn't seen the responses to the consultation yet. We were going to be guided by what others had said and the strength of community feeling in those areas and be guided by what the submissions have been. We note that in particular, in Crosland Moor and Netherton, there have been a significant number of submissions raising the local ties that we've broken, and by not being in the Colne Valley constituency, in terms of our sort of formal final view on those ward splits, I think we would set those out in our written submission at the end of the process.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Thank you, Roger. Any further questions of clarification?

TONY BELLRINGER: Could I just clarify the split ward that you were discussing in the Colne Valley? Was that the same as proposed by the Green Party?

THOMAS ADAMS: Yes.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. We now turn to Dave McCobb on behalf of the Liberal Democrats. Dave, can you, for the record, give your name and who you represent and then start when you are ready.

DAVE MCCOBB: Thank you very much. I'm Dave McCobb. I'm the UK director of field campaigns for Liberal Democrats. I'm also a local councillor in the City of Kingston upon Hull, representing Beverley and then Beverley & Newland ward since 2002. Firstly, this representation is on behalf of the Liberal Democrats in the Yorkshire and Humber region and on behalf of the UK Liberal Democrats.

I won't go into any extensive detail on the points raised here, as others have already extensively covered it, other than to say that where we've made changes – and for the most part, we are proposing quite limited counter-proposals to the Boundary Commission's proposals because we are overall quite supportive of the work the Commission has done in Yorkshire and Humber – the changes we are proposing are specifically to, in our view, better reflect the rules that have been set out by the Commission. Again, we agree with wards being the principal building blocks of constituencies, and our counter-proposals respect that, and we propose just one additional ward split that prevents considerable disruption to existing constituencies and where other options would involve significant knock-on disruption so that it better meets the criteria set out on the previous slide, which I'll go into in more detail afterwards. Again, no need to comment on that.

In terms of Yorkshire and Humber, we support the Commission's decision to split Yorkshire and Humber into two sub-regions, one for Humberside and South

Yorkshire and one for North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. We feel that that allows greater flexibility in creating constituencies that best meet the criteria in the region. We note the very tight geography of North Lincolnshire and feel that, in particular, North Lincolnshire is sensible to be linked with South Yorkshire in the way that the Conservative Party submission described. Unlike the Conservative Party submission, we feel that the logical thing is then to treat Hull and the East Riding as a sub-region in itself, as do the Labour Party and the Greens and the Commission, and specifically support the allocation of six seats to the area covered entirely by Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Overall, as I said earlier, we want to commend the Commission for the work in Yorkshire and Humber. We feel that the Commission's done a very good job of creating constituencies that meet the criteria, respect local ties and minimise disruption for the most part, and we support at this stage 46 of the 54 constituencies proposed by the Commission. Obviously, like everybody else here, we do reserve the right to listen throughout the process of these hearings to make and to adjust our plans accordingly due to the representations we hear both from other parties and from members of the public. We produce counter-proposals for just eight seats which are fundamentally attempting to address two problems in the overall scheme, which I'll talk through and which we've set out in our submission, which has been published.

We agree, as I've already said, with the Commission, with Labour and the Conservatives and the Green Party that it is correct to link South Yorkshire with North Lincolnshire for the purposes of the review, and we agree with the Commission, with Labour, the Conservatives and, as we've heard today, from the Green Party that it is sensible to split Richmond ward in Sheffield in order to avoid unnecessary cross-border constituencies and to avoid unnecessary disruption to existing constituencies within Sheffield. Richmond ward is already split; simply continuing to have a split in Richmond ward avoids the need for complex knock-on problems across the rest of South Yorkshire, and we support that. We also support the logic of linking Doncaster with the Isle of Axholme in that South Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire belt.

We support the Commission's proposals in full for South Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire as set out. As I've already said, we note that the Conservative Party supports South Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire like us with simply one proposed ward swap, and we note the Labour Party also supports South Yorkshire as proposed with a number of regrets. Today, we've heard from the Green Party that they also support South Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire. It feels that there is a rare outbreak of consensus across the political parties and also, from reading most of the submissions from members of the public, that there is just a degree of consensus that with that block of seats, the best possible job has been done with caveats around names of a couple of seats that we may come back to later or with caveats about the one ward swap proposed by the Conservative Party, which we will look at further. But at this time being, we're not minded to amend our support for South Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire as a block.

Like the Green Party, we actually think that the transfer of Manor Castle ward out of Sheffield Central makes the resulting Sheffield Central constituency a more coherent

and logical constituency with commonalities of communities of interest within the constituency, and whilst having sympathy with the point the Labour Party made about the disruption to existing constituencies, on balance, we feel that having a more coherent and demographically consistent constituency in Sheffield Central outweighs the moving of that ward from out of Sheffield Central.

We support the Commission's proposals for North and West Yorkshire. Like Labour Party, we agree with the Commission's proposal to link North and West Yorkshire for the purpose of the review. I understand from today's submission the Green Party also do that. We strongly disagree, as we heard from the Labour Party as well, with the Conservative counter-proposal to link North and East Yorkshire. Their counter-proposal creates two wholly unnecessary cross-county seats when there are much better alternatives available, and like colleagues in the Labour Party and the Greens, we strongly support the allocation of six seats to the block that is Hull and the East Riding for it to be treated almost as sub-region in its own right. There is absolutely no need to cross the border between East Yorkshire and North Yorkshire.

We support the Commission's proposals for North and West Yorkshire in full. We reserve the right to listen to some of the individual feedback from residents at these and future hearings and do note concerns – in particular, in parts of Calderdale and Kirklees – about some very specific ward issues. Reviewing these plans overall, we tried to focus our efforts on those things where we just felt that the criteria really weren't being met, and in particular, the constituencies of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold simply didn't make sense in that – and you recognise this yourselves in the documentation - that those two cross-county North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire constituencies are less than ideal in many ways.

The proposed Wetherby and Easingwold seat contains parts of four local authority areas, and that will be exceptionally difficult for anyone to represent and for political parties to campaign in, and the proposed Selby seat leaves an orphan ward in from Leeds. We attempted to tackle this by taking those two constituencies as a block to minimise unnecessary knock-on to surrounding seats by completely redrawing that map and attempted to move wards within those two seats to reduce by one the number of constituencies that would cross county boundaries and the number of seats that crossed multiple local authorities. Our counter-proposal is set out in our submission. We accept that just as the initial proposals have pluses and minuses, so does our counter-proposal, but we feel, on balance, that taking those two constituencies as a single unit without tends to cause knock-ons. This configuration is more sensible than having something that crosses four local authority areas.

In particular, we'd like to highlight that we strongly support the Commission's proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency. I'm pleased to hear support for that from the Labour Party today as well. We disagree with the Conservative counter-proposal that would add rural wards back onto the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency from the one proposed by the Commission. The rural wards that the Commission rightly proposes to move out of the current Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency are rural in character and different from Harrogate town and Knaresborough town. We think that the constituency that's been proposed by the Commission, which has a Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency, which is the town of Harrogate and the town of Knaresborough with no surrounding rural

villages attached, is the right one and is similar to the seat that existed prior to the 2010 general election, which was actually a more coherent and consistent constituency than the subsequent one.

Firstly, I'd like to put on record thanks to the Green Party for supporting in full our counter-proposal for Hull and the East Riding. We agree with the Commission and with the Labour Party and with the Green Party that Hull and the East Riding should be treated as a unit containing six seats. As I've said, we strongly disagree with the Conservative counter-proposal to link parts of East Riding with North Yorkshire; that simply isn't necessary and unnecessarily crosses the county and local authority barriers. I guess we'd also note that the submissions from both Labour, Conservatives and ourselves and today from the Greens everybody accepts - I think that within the whole scheme for Yorkshire and Humber - probably the bit that everybody accepts the most doesn't work is the arrangement around Hull and the East Riding, and we've attempted to focus our efforts on trying to fix that given the level of disagreement with the Commission's proposals across parties and with the level of public submissions.

I want to flag that our counter-proposals minimise changes to the existing constituencies in Hull and the East Riding compared to the proposals that have been put forward by the Commission. We've estimated that our counter-proposals will retain about 80% of electors in their current or a direct successor constituency, with just 20% moving to a different constituency, and that is considerably more consistent with current boundaries than the proposals put forward by, I think, anybody else. The Commission's proposal would see 48% of electors put in a different or a new constituency than the one they currently are, which we just don't feel is necessary when there is a solution that would be much more consistent with existing constituencies and with natural ties. Some notes and areas of consensus between the different representations you've heard today: we do agree with the Conservative Party that the Beverley and Holderness constituency should be retained as close to its current boundaries as possible, and we do feel that South West Holderness in particular should not be attached to the east Hull constituency.

I'll come onto that in a second. We know that Labour's proposed Goole and Haltemprice constituency is very similar to our proposed Boothferry and South Hunsley constituency, with a couple of minor amendments. We note that the Conservatives are also suggesting linking Pocklington Provincial with Howden and Howdenshire. There is an element of consensus around some key themes, albeit multiple schemes for how we solve this problem.

Addressing first the Hull East constituency, like the Conservatives, we think that South West Holderness should not be linked with East Hull. It's very different in character. The letter that you received from the three political parties represented on Hull City Council explicitly states that, you've had representations from the town council in Howden which explicitly states there that they feel that they are a fundamentally different type of community to the urban area of east Hull. Unlike the villages to the west of the city, there is a green belt gap on the east of the city. You leave Hull, there is some green space, and then you get to the towns of Hedon and Preston and the village of Thorngumbald. When you leave Hull to the west, you travel up a residential street, and at some point, it stops being Hull and starts being

the East Riding. It is very clear that if you're going to cross the Hull boundary anywhere – and we all accept that you have to have seats that meet this criteria – it should be to the west of the city and definitely not to the east of the constituency. Our counter-proposals on that side also retain the vast majority of the former borough of Holderness in one constituency, with the unfortunate exception of North Holderness, which has to move into a constituency to the north to meet the quota.

Therefore, our solution is that the Hull East constituency should move westwards into other parts of the Bransholme estate. The Bransholme estate was one of Europe's biggest council states when it was built. It currently straddles North Carr, West Carr and Sutton wards in Kingston upon Hull. It is already split between two constituencies. Moving North Carr in with Sutton in East Hull would unite much more of the Bransholme estate in one constituency and be a much more coherent constituency. I'll come in a second to talk about the natural geography of Hull in terms of the overhead rail lines and its arterial roots. That minimises change to existing constituencies because everybody who is currently in the East Hull constituency would remain in the East Hull constituency with the addition of people from the North Carr ward.

That means that the North Hull constituency in turn could remain predominantly unchanged in our counter-proposals for the north Hull constituency. All of the existing Hull North constituency, minus North Carr ward, would remain in our proposed Hull North and Cottingham seat. This is a similar proposal, although there's some important distinctions from the one proposed by the Labour Party because like them, we recognise that Cottingham is physically attached to the north-west of the city and has a commonality of interest with northern Hull. Unfortunately, the proposal from the Labour Party moves the Bricknell ward out of Hull North, and Bricknell is the ward that has the road links to Cottingham. So Cottingham Road and Bricknell Avenue, which are currently split between Hull and the village of Cottingham, run through the Bricknell ward after which it's named. If you're going to include Cottingham with a Hull North seat, which is sensible to do, you need to include Bricknell ward because the Bricknell Avenue, after which it's named, runs through it into Cottingham. Similarly, it shouldn't be a surprise that the boundary between the Bricknell ward and the University ward in Hull is Cottingham Road. Cottingham Road runs to Cottingham, and at the boundary of the city of Hull, Cottingham Road Hull becomes Hull Road Cottingham. That's a pattern that's repeated around the edges of the city, where you see the arterial roads in the city move from being the destination in Hull to being Hull in the destination village, and I'll come back to that.

There are exceptionally strong arguments for the natural connections between Cottingham and its adjoining Hull wards. It's physically connected by Bricknell Avenue; there are some residential streets along the boundary between Hull and Cottingham that are literally divided between number 49 and number 51, for example, on Bishop Alcock Road, on Lythe Avenue and on Strathcona Avenue. Those are three perfectly normal residential streets which are literally cut down the middle between the boundary between Hull and Cottingham. The Bricknell council estate is a council state run, owned and managed by Hull city council, but a significant chunk of it is in the parish of Cottingham. People pay their council tax to Cottingham but their council rent to Hull. If you're going to attach anything to a Hull

seat, it makes absolute sense that it's Cottingham because the two are just intrinsically linked along those residential streets and by that estate.

But if you're going to do it, you have to include the Bricknell ward because the Bricknell ward goes there. Hull North has always been the city's university seat, and there are strong historic links between Cottingham and the University, Beverley & Newland and Avenue wards and Bricknell ward, which are the core of the city's university area. Until very recently, Cottingham was the site of most of the University of Hull student halls; buses ran from the student halls in Cottingham down Cottingham Road to the university campus and back again. People who live in Cottingham for that reason are often linked in one way or another with the Hull university. There's a strong sort of academic and cultural link between Cottingham and the university quarter of the city.

If you were able to see this map, it would be illustrating the fact that the Bricknell estate is literally cut in two by the boundary at this point. Residential streets are split in two by the boundary at this point, and there is one road called Golf Links Road, which if you look at it on a map, you would see it as attached to Hull but is one residential street cut out and tacked onto the parish of Cottingham. It makes absolute sense for Hull North and Cottingham to be linked together.

Our proposal also includes the Central ward in the Hull North seat. Central is currently split between Hull North and Hull West. The central spine of Central ward is the Beverley Road. The Beverley Road runs from the city centre in Hull, at the start of the Central ward, right up to the city boundary, where it goes on up to Beverley through the parish of Dunswell, which is in the Cottingham North ward. There is absolute coherence that a Hull North seat would hang around the central spine of the Hull Beverley Road, which is the main northern corridor, and the Cottingham road, which runs from Beverley Road out to Cottingham.

This is a point I wanted to talk about: the natural geography of Hull in relation to its main arterial roots. What you can see is the green lines on this map, one running north-south, that's the Beverley Road. It runs from the city centre at the start of Central ward to the town of Beverley via most of the Hull North constituency in the parish of Dunswell. Heading off that are the Inglemire Lane, Endyke Lane, Cottingham Road Hull, which becomes Hull Road Cottingham, and Bricknell Avenue, which run out to Cottingham. When you look at the natural geography of the city that you can see, there is a road network that radiates out from that point at the start of Beverley Road and goes to Beverley and Cottingham. On the west of the city, those three lines are effectively starting at the south. There is the Hessle Road, which runs from the city centre in Hull to the town of Hessle. There is the Anlaby Road, which runs from the city centre to the village of Anlaby in the parish of Anlaby with Anlaby Common, and coming off from the Anlaby Road, halfway between the city centre and the village of Anlaby, is the Willerby Road, which unsurprisingly runs from the city to the parish to the centre to Willerby Square, which is the centre of the parish of Willerby. On each of these cases, at the city boundary, Hessle Road Hull becomes Hull Road Hessle; Anlaby Road Hull becomes Hull Road Anlaby; and Willerby Road Hull becomes Kingston Road Willerby.

Again, you can just see that in terms of the natural geography of the city and people's natural commute, natural travel to work areas, the layout of the city lends itself to attaching Cottingham to the northern part of the city and the town of Hessle and the villages of Anlaby, Anlaby Common, Willerby and Kirk Ella onto the roads that run into the city centre from there. It also makes complete sense that when you look at this map, you can see on the left a big green line. That is the A-road that runs from the Humber Bridge to Beverley. That is the natural, whilst the Haltemprice villages are for cultural and historic reasons part of East Riding, not part of the City of Hull. They are part of the city's urban area. If you asked anyone who didn't know anything about local geography or politics to put a line where they thought the city of Hull ended, they would probably put it up that green line, and that is a very large A-road which clearly delineates the point at which you leave the built-up suburban area and move into something rural. For that reason, we agree with the submission from the Labour Party that the South Hunsley ward should not be attached to a Hull constituency because the South Hunsley ward falls out of that outer western ring road, and it's therefore not part of the urban or suburban part of the city.

Our proposed Hull West and Haltemprice constituency would use these natural communication lines and the outer ring road as their boundaries, and it would include the Tranby, and Willerby and Kirk Ella awards from the East Riding along with the town of Hessle. Hessle is already in the Hull West and Hessle constituency, so that would be no change. We agree with the point made by the Conservatives that Tranby and Willerby and Kirk Ella are basically one suburban area. They are divided by a parish boundary, which basically runs again down the middle of residential streets. You would not know, apart from a small sign, that you are moving from number 170 to number 172 on the same road in a built-up suburban area. So if you're going to include Tranby, which is sensible to do, you also need to include Willerby and Kirk Ella because it can't be split, but instead of Willerby and Kirk Ella, we should lose the South Hunsley ward. For example, Kirk Ella streets, such as Kerry Pit Way and Mill Lane, run straight onto Woodland Drive and Anlaby. You do not know when you move from Kirk Ella into Anlaby at that point.

Just to emphasise, we oppose splitting Tranby from Willerby and Kirk Ella, and we also oppose the inclusion of South Hunsley ward in Hull. South Hunsley is very different in character; it's not suburban. They're villages, and they're mainly people who live and work on the M62 corridor. Some of them commute into Hull, but a lot of them commute out to Leeds or Sheffield because they're places that you can easily access the M62 and they're a much better fit with Brough, Gilberdyke and Goole than they are with any urban or suburban part of Hull.

That's what our proposed counter-proposal for Hull would look like. It significantly improves natural community ties and uses our natural arterial roots and natural geography of the city to make coherent constituencies that have commonalities of interest. The border between the Hull West and Haltemprice seat and, in yellow and pink, the Hull North and Cottingham seat is the Hull-to-Cottingham railway line, which is a very distinct physical barrier that separates those two areas and which has always, for the last 30 or 40 years, been the constituency boundary and should be retained. We also mean we don't go into the East Riding on the other side.

Again to illustrate – which again if the map was showing you'd see – but that shows both the city boundary and the outer ring road. You can see that we're basically saying that if you're going to include anything in with Hull, don't do it to the east; do it to the west, using the natural suburbs which fall within that ring road. Everybody has accepted that Hull and the East Riding doesn't work in these proposals, and our solution is one ward split. We want to minimise ward splits, but the Commission has recognised that, for example, in Sheffield, it is far preferable to split Richmond than it is to create constituencies that don't have a commonality of community interest. We propose splitting the Wolds Weighton ward along the line of the A1079. The A1079 is the main road, the A-road, that runs from Hull to York. It runs around the south of the town of Market Weighton, around the south of the town of Pocklington. We propose that the area to the south – it's a very clearly visible and discernible community barrier so that if you're going to split a ward, it's an obvious line to do it. We've included the parishes that lie south of the A1079 in one seat with from Wolds Weighton and the parishes that lie to the north of it in the other. Splitting some of the wards in and around Hull, which are densely built-up urban areas, would make no sense because they are all part of the same place. Wolds Weighton is one market town and a large number of small villages. It could just as easily be three one-member wards as it is one three-member ward.

The villages that are currently in the north part of Howdenshire have as much in common with the villages that are in Wolds Weighton south of the A1079 as the one south of the A1079 do to the ones to the north. There is no problem splitting this ward along the line of the A1079. It's a clear natural barrier. I noticed that several resident submissions have actually suggested similar patterns for the East Riding that involve a ward split in Wolds Weighton to avoid having to split Willerby and Kirk Ella away from Tranby. This would create a Boothferry... we are calling it Boothferry in South Hunsley, we're open to other names. This would retain the core of what used to be the borough of Boothferry, prior to local government reorganisation, in a Boothferry in South Hunsley seat, which would include the town of Goole and everything up to, but not beyond, that whole outer ring road: Howdenshire, Pocklington and parts of the Wolds Weighton ward. This would mean that we could have six seats completely contained within Hull and East Riding without crossing over the boundaries.

In terms of your specific policies on wards splits, the policies say that this is allowed where it allows the Commission to adhere to existing local authority boundaries to avoid constituencies that cross them. Splitting Wolds Weighton allows there to be six constituencies in that block without crossing into North Yorkshire. Dividing one ward is permitted where it would avoid a domino effect. If you do not split one large rural ward in East Riding, any solution that you come up with in the city of Hull and its immediate suburbs doesn't reflect the city's natural communities, so it meets that test, and where the division of a ward would avoid otherwise unacceptable outcomes, it's also permissible, and I would argue that things like splitting Willerby and Kirk Ella from Tranby and adding bits of Holderness onto east Hull are far far less desirable as outcomes than splitting a collection of rural villages in half at the point where a major A-road cuts through them anyway.

On that basis, we feel that there is a really strong argument for this one additional ward split that would solve the problem that everybody has been wrestling with,

which is how to make sense of this part of the world whilst reflecting constituency ties and natural geography, and our proposal would look like that effectively. It would retain the Beverley and Holderness constituency more or less as is; it would retain most of the East Yorkshire constituency more or less as is. It would create a Boothferry and South Hunsley seat, which is basically an M62 corridor running east–west, and a Derwent Valley running north–south would recreate parts of the old Boothferry constituency in Boothferry borough that there'd be a lot of local support for and avoids a whole load of unnecessary problems elsewhere.

I guess in summary, it's good to see the huge levels of consensus across most of the region between the parties off the representations, and we want to congratulate the Commission on doing an excellent job in Yorkshire and Humber within the constraints of the current legislation. To reiterate, we support all bar eight constituencies as currently proposed, and two of the ones we've suggested an alternative to are entirely self-contained to avoid things that cross multiple local authorities. The other six are to make coherent logical constituencies within the unit that is Hull and the East Riding to minimise unnecessary change from people within their existing constituencies and preserve local ties much more effectively. Thank you very much for listening to that. We reserve obviously the right to sort of amend what we say in light of what we hear from representations in this and other hearings and in further public consultation, and in particular, we'll come back to the thorny issue of constituency names probably later in the process. I'd like to thank everyone for their time and hope that our solution to Hull and East Riding helps the Commission fix a really thorny problem with this specific review.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Dave. Are there any questions for clarification for Dave? Thank you very much for everyone this morning. Thank you for the detail and the clarity. That has been extraordinarily helpful, but I think we can now reward ourselves for breaking for lunch. Thank you very much everybody.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Ladies and gentlemen, just to introduce myself, my name's Paul Wiles. I'm one of the assistant commissioners for the Boundary Commission for England, and I'm chairing today and tomorrow's meeting. We're due to start at 13:13 which I think it now is. Our first speaker actually isn't here, but I know Jacqueline you're here and I think your husband wants to speak as well? Would you be ready to do that a bit earlier? I mean rather than delaying anything we might as well pull you forward if that's all right and we'll see how we go. Do you want to speak together?

Would you like to begin just by, first of all, giving us your name and which town you're from so that it's on the record, and then, when you are ready, please proceed.

ROBERT LAWRENCE: My name is Bob Lawrence, and I live in east Leeds in Cross Gates. And I'm here today to represent the East Leeds History and Archaeology Society. My wife, Jackie, and I actually run the society. We've been in existence since 1998, and we're interested in all aspects of local history, stretching from the east of the city right out to Cross Gates, where we live now.

When it comes to identifying yourself, whether or not you live in, say, Garforth or Leeds, if you ask the people from that area, for example, somebody from Harehills, they would say, 'I live in East Leeds' or 'I live in Leeds'. If you spoke to somebody in Garforth, they would more than likely say, 'Well, I live in Garforth, which is on the outskirts of Leeds', and same with Swillington. That area is more likely to identify with Aberford and Barwick in Elmet and places like that to see themselves as more rural than what somebody like me or people in Harehills, for example, who identify directly with the city. We're within the city boundaries of Leeds, and all this controls an awful lot of area outside of the city, and that's where they receive council tax from. When it comes to being part of our heritage, we actually belong to the area of the City of Leeds; it's an actual separate identity for such, and that's one of the main things when you're considering where a boundary should be. Look at the people and say to them, 'Do these people feel as though they belong to Leeds, or do they feel a little bit more autonomous?' I think in the case of Garforth and Swillington, they're probably more likely feeling more independent, especially Garforth. They've got their own football team, and it's called the Garforth Town because that's what Garforth was. It was a small town. Swillington was a small village, similar to Aberford, similar to Barwick, Oulton especially. They're also outside of the city boundaries of Leeds because Leeds was a major industrial city.

Now, if you want to expand the area, perhaps Burmantofts might be a better option because Burmantofts was, a) once part of the East Leeds constituency and b) we had one of the largest employers in the city in Montague Burton. They employed over 10,000 people directly in East Leeds, many of whom came from Harehills, Burmantofts, Gipton and all around the area. My wife and I both worked there. It's a specific identity of where you live, and that's what I hope for the Boundary Commission to take in mind when they're thinking about it. Burmantofts, to us, is far preferable than Garforth & Swillington.

JACQUELINE LAWRENCE: I personally don't feel any affinity with areas like Garforth & Swillington. They are outside of the city; they are east of Leeds, but they are not in East Leeds. I think that they regard themselves as a separate entity, and I think they would have different needs and concerns to the areas where we live or the rest of the constituency, which is more inner city. They don't have any kind of shared history with us because they were mining villages or agricultural; there's no mining now, same as there is no industry in Leeds, really, but still agricultural – so, still very different in terms of the personal view and in terms of the requirements. Also, there's a distance between the constituency of East Leeds as it is now and Garforth & Swillington, and it's open countryside. It's fields, and there's the M1 that divides it. So there's a geographical distance as well, which I think is important. I think it would be much preferable to have the constituency as a whole of areas of Leeds that run into each other, that join along to each other and have got the same needs and requirements. That's just my view.

ROBERT LAWRENCE: Also, we've got to think of things like, for example, the sort of amenities now. Garforth is almost self-contained; it's got its own supermarkets. It's got its own shops. It's got its own doctors. It's got its own schools. It's got its own churches. The people who live in Garforth don't have a real need to come into the city centre such, whereas people who still live in Harehills or live in Burmantofts or in that kind of area, which is much nearer to the city, would go actually basically more

often, not just on occasion when the people want to go up and have a nice day shopping or something like that. It's an entirely different mindset. If you are living in a rural area as opposed to an inner city area, you have a different mindset; you've got different needs, and it just should be addressed because the people of Garforth, they might care about something entirely different to somebody in Harehills. You don't know what they are, but they would be entirely different.

It'd be far better to expand to Burmantofts, which could expand right as far as the A64, The York road. As a community, they are very similar, probably in outlook. They live in a built-up area. They all share the same kind of amenities together, whereas in Garforth, it's outside of the cities. It's slightly different. I'd just like that to be considered please.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. That's been very clear, and thank you for coming forward earlier. Is anybody wanting to ask for a question of clarification?

Mr Jordan, would you like to take the stand? In a moment, you start by giving your name and which town you're from, then start when you're ready. When Mike has finished talking, I will ask if anybody's got any questions for clarification – but, please, through me as chair and only for clarification. The purpose of these hearings is not cross questioning or to start a debate. It's purely so that people have an opportunity to make their case.

MIKE JORDAN: Thank you, sir, and good afternoon. My name is Councillor Mike Jordan, I'm on North Yorkshire county council, and I'm speaking regarding the area currently known as Selby and Ainsty constituency. Now, the area of Selby district council, in my opinion, does not need to be tagged up with Kippax, as suggested. There is actually no connection as such between Selby area and Kippax other than a road. Selby district council has consistently produced more housing than the government recommended – 450 per year for the area – and is, by far and away, the biggest supplier in North Yorkshire when compared to the six other districts and borough councils in terms of housing. There are, as I speak, several large applications in the pipeline due to the new emerging local plan that we have. Furthermore, there are plans for an actual new settlement, which in itself will be as large as Kippax, although I appreciate that's some years away. I believe the Boundary Commission will not have taken this into account. In fact, in my ward itself, Carlton, which is a large village, was until three years ago a village of some 700 homes. By next month, it will be a village of 1,100 and growing because there's another large application coming in. You can sort of get a picture of what's going on.

I propose a new boundary is actually simply the current Selby district council boundary. Otherwise, in the very near future, it'll again become too big a constituency; obviously, that will be losing the Ainsty part of the ward, which I think every man and his dog knows has got to happen. Again, it will become too large a consistency; however, that's maybe some way off, and the alternative possibility of joining with Goole, as suggested... Now, Goole is at least used by people in my ward. That's an area of my ward where people do tend to go to Goole rather than Selby. There's good road connections and, as such, would be a better fit if we have to have another area tagged with us or town tagged with us than Kippax. That's it sir. Happy to take any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

PAUL WILES: Thank you for being so brief. Can I ask if anybody wants to ask any questions?

Mr Khan, then, would you like to come forward. If you'd like to begin just by telling us your name and your constituency that you are a Member of Parliament for, and then, please proceed when you wish. Thank you.

IMRAN AHMED KHAN: Imran Ahmed Khan, Member of Parliament for Wakefield. Firstly, may I thank the Boundary Commission for its hard work, diligence and professionalism over many months in the discharge of its statutory duties. It is a shame to have to cut up my constituency, one that has stood since the Great Reform Act of 1832, but the changes proposed by the Boundary Commission make sense, and I believe it has done an excellent job of proposing changes needed to reflect fairly and properly that ebb and flow of demographic and population changes over time. I fully support the Conservative Party's considered and sensible response to the Boundary Commission's proposals in respect to Wakefield, West Yorkshire and the entire region. Representing the people of Wakefield since 2019 has been a great privilege and honour. However, it is clear, albeit regrettable, that Wakefield cannot continue as a constituency without significant alterations to its boundaries.

The proposals make sense on transport, infrastructure, healthcare, social, historical, cultural, educational and administrative grounds, but more than that, they make sense at a more profound human level. Having been born in the heart of the new constituency, I know this to be true. The Boundary Commission's proposals recognise physical and geographic boundaries forged by the Calder and Dearne rivers but also acknowledge the distinct and separate urban and rural identities of Wakefield city and its outlying areas, respectively. Time is short, so I focus here on Ossett, Horbury and Wakefield rural, which form the largest geographical portion of my constituency, which together with Kirkburton, Denby Dale and Wakefield South constitute the proposed new seat provisionally named Ossett and Denby Dale. The Boundary Commission's proposals essentially recommend a reversion to the former established historic constituency boundaries, with Wakefield city being excluded and allocated to a neighbouring constituency. This is a thoughtful, sensible proposal and one that recognises and honours the existing human connections between people residing within the proposed constituency boundaries.

Currently, the Wakefield seat is divided by the M1 motorway north of the Calder at junction 39, splitting Horbury and Ossett from Wakefield city. Under the new proposals, Horbury and Ossett would be tied to the smaller towns and villages in the south and west. The motorway runs along a large section of the constituencies' eastern border, providing a physical boundary no less compelling than the natural dividing line formed by the Dearne and Calder rivers that bracket the proposed constituency. Aside from the obvious physical and administrative divisions, there are strong cultural, human, historic and social ties supporting the Boundary Commission's proposals. By most metrics, people in Ossett and Horbury have more in common with the folk of Denby Dale, Kirkburton, Scissett, Clayton West and the surrounding villages than they do with those in the City of Wakefield. This is reflected in the average incomes, property prices and geography of the area. Importantly, the proposed constituency boundaries also reflect existing shared school catchment areas. Having listened carefully to the constituents I serve, I am convinced that the

proposed boundaries are the best possible way of addressing demographic changes in this part of West Yorkshire.

However, the feedback I have received from my constituents makes plain their strong opposition to the provisional name of the new constituency chosen by the Boundary Commission – Ossett and Denby Dale. Many constituents are adamantly opposed to the provisional name. It has been criticised as inherently exclusionary because by selecting a large town and village as its name, it unintentionally creates a sense of disconnect among those in the new constituency who live outside those places. Several comments in the initial consultation from constituents within the proposed boundaries highlight this point. For example, one contributor wrote, 'The naming of the constituency must be representative of communities', and suggested use of a more inclusive name for the constituency. Another wrote, 'It is composed of four similarly sized townships, plus part of Wakefield, so the name Ossett and Denby Dale does not accurately reflect the area'. A third respondent said, 'The proposed name of Ossett and Denby Dale doesn't reflect the many villages and small towns which make up the proposed constituency'. There is merit to this criticism. The provisional name of the constituency selected by the Boundary Commission would erode and undermine the sense of belonging of many people that live within the constituency but outside Ossett and Denby Dale, for example, those living in Horbury, Sandal, Flockton, Kirkburton as well as a number of smaller villages.

Rather than use a provisional name that unintentionally creates a sense of remoteness, exclusion, separation and difference, I propose selecting a more inclusionary and cohesive constituency name that helps to unite and bring together people within the proposed constituency. The name of the constituency should be one which reflects the local identity of all who live within it, uniting them rather than dividing them. It must create emotional attachment and reinforce their sense of identity, belonging, ownership and connection. For this reason, I suggest the proposed new constituency be named Dearne and Calder instead of Ossett and Denby Dale. In naming the new constituency Dearne and Calder, the Commission would be focusing on two ancient, physical, geographical boundaries by following the Dearne from where it rises at Birdsedge to where it swells and pools at Bretton Hall and, on the other edge, by following the route of the mighty Calder as it passes and forms the proposed constituency boundary. Such a name is more engaging and inclusive of all the settlements in the constituency and best represents the identity of those who live within. In addition, these rivers have real historical and cultural significance, feeding into the canal system, which was instrumental in West Yorkshire's industrial past, aiding in the transportation of textiles, coal and other materials.

The Boundary Commission has proposed a sensible and well-thought-out constituency. It needs a sensible and well-thought-out name. Only when constituents feel a sense of belonging and represented by the name of their constituency can we have a truly engaged electorate, which is vital to our democracy. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me a chance today to speak. I am glad to see so much public involvement in this vital process, and I hope you will take my comments and views of my constituents into consideration when drawing up the final proposals. Although perhaps not the norm, I have chosen to leave a few minutes of my allocated time in case you have any questions or comments.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. May I ask if anybody's got any questions for clarification?

ROGER PRATT: Thank you very much. Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party. A question of clarification through you, Mr Chairman. You mentioned the wards of Ossett, and Horbury and South Ossett. I wonder if you could clarify what the ties are between those two wards.

IMRAN AHMED KHAN: Between Horbury and South Ossett, and then Ossett is a separate one.

Well, there's a gap between them, but the people of Ossett and Horbury have a very close relationship with each other, both commercial, business, schools, catchment areas and also in terms of medical practices and so on. In many ways, the two communities are indistinguishable, and to many, they're bracketed together, although Ossett has very much a defined market town of which it is immensely proud. Ossett has a wonderful feeling of what I believe our high street should be like in the future, full of small, independent shops, and the only national name you'll find on Ossett High Street and Queen Street would be the Co-Op. The connections, as I say, go very deep. Also, this proposal – and I know one is generally loath to divide a constituency between two local authorities – but if ever in West Yorkshire there was a time to do that, it is in this particular case, not only as I mentioned because Kirkburton and Denby Dale, until 2010, were part of the Wakefield constituency and Wakefield South was part of the constituency until 1997 but our Mid Yorkshire NHS trust headquartered in the hospitals in Wakefield also is in Dewsbury Hospital and serves the people of Ossett, Horbury and, indeed, Flockton and Kirkburton equally. If that doesn't answer the question, I'm very happy to provide a clarification if I haven't quite grappled to it.

ROGER PRATT: Yes, it more or less has, but it's really the ties, particularly Ossett with South Ossett – how those are tied.

IMRAN AHMED KHAN: For culture, in terms of faith groups, faith groups cover both areas very significantly. The Ossett, Horbury and Sitlington Royal British Legion, which is incredibly active, not only for the Red Cross appeal but in many many community activities, is centred on those three settlements and actually is a very considerable tie, not only in itself but with other charitable, voluntary and faith group organisations. There are a plethora of human voluntary organisation and other connections that really do bind not only Ossett and Horbury but I must go across to the townships of Netherton, Middlestown and Overton, which really do, in terms of social interactions, voluntary and charitable sector, act almost as one for various reasons.

Oh, if I just may add, Flockton, which is just the other side of Overton, that often feels terribly, inexplicably left out of being a different constituency because culturally and socially, they are tied with Overton.

COLIN BYRNE: Hello, I'm Colin Byrne. I'm one of the Boundary Commissioners. I wonder if you would just say a few words about the nature of the transport links

between the north-east of the proposed constituency i.e. Ossett and the south-west of Kirkburton and Denby Dale. Just how do those link together?

IMRAN AHMED KHAN: Well, actually, there's about three or four major roads that go across the constituency which connect from Denby Dale in the extreme south-east to Ossett in the north-west of the constituency. You've got the Barnsley Road, which until it becomes Kirklees is known as the Bar Lane; you've also got the one that goes all the way through the middle and the Denby Dale Road from Wakefield. There's three very major roads and then countless others that cross the middle of them. I think they're probably on this map here. Farnley Tyas, which is up almost near Almondbury, and Lepton are very very easy to get to Ossett. As a constituency, it's rather blessed with its communications that traverse it, and even further still, if you go to Sandal, even though geographically quite distant from Denby Dale or Farnley Tyas, the roads and communications are really rather good.

Of course, the proposed constituency is also graced by a very very effective local railway line, which will be a huge boon for it, particularly with the improvements with the Northern Powerhouse Rail with Manchester and then moving on into its connections with Leeds and so on. Its connections across are, I think, particularly well served.

PAUL WILES: Any further points for clarification? Thank you very much, Mr Khan. Is Jonathan Long here? Mr Long would you be willing to speak now?

If you'd like to start off by giving us your name and which town you are from, and then when you are ready, please start.

JONATHAN LONG: Good afternoon. My name's Jonathan Long. I'm from Leeds. I'm an emeritus professor at Leeds Beckett University. For those of you who wonder what on Earth that means, it simply means that I'm still able to pursue my academic interest but the university no longer pays me. I originally trained as a geographer at the University of Bristol and the University of McMaster. I don't envy the task that the commissioners face trying to juggle the different criteria they're expected to take into account. Operating from a distance, they can hardly be expected to appreciate the social geography of the constituent parts of the country. Inevitably, they get driven by a numbers game, hence the importance of hearings like this to get a better feel for the composition of communities. I live in Weetwood. That's in the north-west of Leeds. I make no apology for taking a partial approach, something I recognise, though, that is not available to the Commissioners, who must take a whole system approach, something that puts all the bits of the jigsaw together. Weetwood is currently part of Leeds North West, and I want to argue that two other options would provide a better fit with the geography of north-west Leeds than the Commission's proposal.

I was an undergraduate geography student in the early seventies at the time of an earlier reorganisation of the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies and, indeed, of local government generally. I remember a lecture then in which the lecturer proposed that it was a good democratic principle that constituencies should all contain the widest possible diversity of people, not one here for all the disadvantaged people put together and another one here for all the affluent people

put together. Noting the spatial structure of most cities, he suggested that this would best be accommodated by having a number of sectors running from the centre to the periphery of cities like the slices of a cake. That's what the current constituencies of Leeds North West and its neighbour Leeds North East, for example, currently offer, but I've been advised that retaining those is not up for consideration under any of the current proposals. That kind of principle, though, seems much more sensible than one that labels some constituencies as borough constituencies that would be in the core and others labelled county constituencies running around the outside. The main thing that the component parts of the county constituencies would have in common is their resentment at having to pay higher taxes than if they were outside Leeds but still, of course, able to benefit from all the services and employment opportunities that Leeds has to offer. The proposals of the Commission, I think, are likely to add fuel to the fire of independence movements resentful of the Radcliffe Award settlement in 1974.

Let me turn to the geographic considerations and local ties that the Commission is enjoined to take into account. Aside from the city centre, from Weetwood, my patterns of activity take me to Headingley for my GP, dentist and rugby team, to Kirkstall for the supermarket and the Indian and pizza takeaways that I prefer and to Horsforth for the optician and for delivering my partner to her appointments, while Weetwood has done for my work and my recreation.

These appear trivial, but it's the millions of things like this that are integral to the social geography of a city. My idea of the most sensible constituency construction in my part of Leeds would be to put together the wards of Headingley, Kirkstall, Horsforth and Weetwood; with an electorate to 76,332, it falls within the designated range. It will contain a diverse population in accommodation that varies from dense urban housing through terraces, high-rise flats, council estates and semi-detached housing to the well-spaced detached housing of more affluent residents. I've already alluded to the mix of services provided to residents and the students of Leeds' various universities; people from outside often forget- they just think that Leeds has Leeds University. Well, as I've already explained, I worked at Leeds Beckett University, and this proposed constituency also has Leeds Trinity within it. It's a sector of Leeds serviced by the transport links of the A660 and the A65. They all enjoy the travails of the congestion that that brings. It also has a railway line that runs through the four wards. It would satisfy the democracy through diversity criterion, of my former teacher.

Unfortunately for me, I don't recall seeing that as part of the whole system solution put forward by any of the written submissions, so I should perhaps cast around for an alternative that appears to make sense within my understanding of the geography of Leeds. I'm sorry, but the Boundary Commission proposal falls at one of the first hurdles because it involves combining three wards on the left bank of the River Aire with one on the other side of the river.

You have Weetwood, Headingley and Kirkstall on the left bank and Armley on the other bank of the river. Just as with the Thames in London, the Aire is a major line on people's mental maps of the city, not a line of communication but a barrier with only one crossing point at one edge of the proposed constituency and one just outside it on the other side. It's not exactly conducive to the ties that bind communities

together. Of the written submissions, one individual proposal putting Weetwood with Headingley, Kirkstall and Little London & Woodhouse is also within the stipulated range.

Of those that came from groups, there is an unlikely coming together of the Heavy Woollen District Independents and the Labour Party proposing a constituency of Guiseley & Rawdon, Horsforth, Otley & Yeadon with Weetwood. This is also within the stipulated range of the number of electors. Such a constituency would range from semi-rural to more densely packed communities developed over previous centuries. There's again a mix of housing stock. It offers a full range of facilities and is connected by the twin transport corridors of the A65 and A660. With a diverse demographic, it, too, would satisfy the democracy through diversity criterion.

I'd like to make two supplementary geographical points. Most of the proposals require splitting a ward somewhere within Leeds. I note that part of the Labour Party proposal also requires a split ward to make the numbers add up, and that's in Burmantofts & Richmond Hill. That would be divided between Leeds East and Leeds South East. If you have to split a ward somewhere to sort of equalise the electorate, this is an understandable one given the geography of the area. It follows the very significant barrier of the A64, which is almost as impermeable as the River Aire is to us. My second point, supplementary, would be one of the proposals I saw had Guiseley & Rawdon and Otley & Yeadon group with places like the Nidd Valley and Boroughbridge. I'm sorry, but I can see no sense in that at all.

In summary, from a parochial and personal point of view, my preferred solution would put together Headingley, Kirkstall, Horsforth and Weetwood. For the least worst whole solution, I'd go for the Labour Party proposal. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, sir. Has anybody got any questions for clarification they would like to ask? Yes, sir.

COLIN BYRNE: Colin Byrne from the Boundary Commission. Thank you very much for your proposals, and I may have missed this point, but are there any knock-on effects of your proposal? Do any of the surrounding constituencies then become non-compliant with the criteria, or are they all left within the statute?

JONATHAN LONG: Of my individual suggestion, yes there would have to be knock-on consequences.

That's the case with any proposal to shift one ward from another one. That's why I suggested that I might be better advised for plumping for one of the ones that people have calculated carefully does comply, hence my suggestion at the end.

PAUL WILES: Any other points of clarification people would like to ask? Thank you very much, indeed, for your thoughtful presentation.

Is there anybody else in the audience waiting to speak? Well in that case I suggest we have a ten minute break and we will come together again at 14:20.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: First of all, Ben Walters, would you be prepared to speak quite soon? If you'd like to start off by, just for the record, giving us your name and which town you are from, and then when you're ready, please start.

BEN WALTERS: I'm Ben Walters. I'm from Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, and I'm here today representing the constituency Labour Party from Brightside and Hillsborough. I just want to briefly outline the reasons why we support the proposal that is currently made. We believe that it's beneficial to retain as close as possible the current boundary that's in place. I believe the only change to the boundaries is as you see in the bottom corner there, which would realign the constituency boundary along the same lines as the local government boundaries. That portion that is not currently included is part of Hillsborough ward, and there are a number of people that live there for which it does cause a bit of confusion about who their member of parliament is, obviously residing in the Hillsborough council ward but in the Sheffield Central constituency as it currently is.

The portion, the sort of sliver that you can just see there, where the Malin Bridge is, is particularly interesting in that they're almost entirely cut off from the central constituency. The only access they've got to that is via the road that the blue line follows. There's a river to the rear of their properties. We do think it would be beneficial for that to be brought into the new constituency, the proposed Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough constituency, as it would make their access to the constituency better. I think in the public consultation that has already gone out, there were five or six comments, and the majority of those supported the changes and supported the very limited difference – virtually no change to the constituency, essentially. In terms of some of the factors that the Boundary Commission look at, we believe that this constituency matches with a lot of those factors. The new constituency wouldn't exceed the electoral quota. It would be within the window that it looked at, and it's a decent block. It's easy to travel within that block.

As I say, we appreciate the sort of move towards incorporating the local government boundaries. Many of the residents that live within the constituency work in the Northern General Hospital, which is situated at the centre of the constituency, which is a sort of factor that we believe ties a lot of those people together. You've got people that work in all the different roles in the Northern General Hospital that live right across the constituency, and in terms of local ties, again, a lot of the people that live across the constituency use the three district shopping centres. They rely on the same local services, public transport networks, road infrastructure and shopping facilities. I think overall, we've got a very positive view of the proposed constituency, and we support the Labour Party's regional and national position, which I believe is to support the changes more widely across Sheffield. That's everything. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Would anybody like to ask any questions for clarification? Am I right in thinking, Simon, that you want to talk about the same Brightside constituency? Can I suggest you go next so that while we've got it in our mind, we can hear what you'd like to say?

Again, if you give your name and where you're from for the record, and then start whenever you're ready.

SIMON NEWSUM: My name's Simon Newsum. On behalf of Gill Furniss MP, speaking on her thoughts on these proposals, I do apologise for any crossover that might have come from previous speakers; obviously, there's a lot of shared views on this. I'll try to avoid repetition.

First of all, just to point out that Gill Furniss does support the initial proposals. The existing constituency, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, was established in 2010, and it's largely been aligned to local government boundaries in that time. Again, just supporting what a previous speaker mentioned on that small exception, which is currently in Sheffield Central constituency, that has been proposed to be moved into Brightside and Hillsborough. Gill would support that. Ben touched on, I think, a point about members of the public electorate contacting the MP. We are currently in our office getting a lot of people from the area contacting us, which we do obviously have to pass over to Paul Blomfield in Sheffield Central, but moving this in does align local election boundaries. Obviously, it would be easier, we feel, for members of the public that live in that area. It would sort of like be more clarification for them about all the MPs, and a lot of people in that area do consider themselves to be part of Hillsborough, which I think is what attracts them to contacting us. When they see Hillsborough in the name, they do contact us as a first point.

Just on that, prior to Hillsborough becoming part of what is now Brightside and Hillsborough, the core of that constituency, which was Firth Park, Southey and what is now Shiregreen & Brightside wards, was, for as long as anybody could remember, I think, part of a Brightside constituency. These changes, although minimal, represent sort of like the smallest possible change you could probably have, and it's just a tidy-up exercise to bring everybody into that one constituency.

Again, so just touching on our boundaries there, we have got Rivers Don and Loxley, which sort of form part of our boundaries, and also, to the east side at constituency, our boundary with M1 and also some sort of arterial roads into the city centre. We do feel that they sort of form good hard boundaries between areas. I think that probably covers all points. I think Ben would've touched on some points that I was talking about. The only other one I would like to add is that we do welcome that the name Brightside has been kept in the constituency name. This is historic to Sheffield and its areas. I think Heeley was another one and Hallam, and so we are pleased that the name Brightside has been retained in each title. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Is there any questions for clarification? Thank you very much.

Mr Sobel, when you are ready for the record, would you just give us your name and the constituency you represent, and then please go ahead.

ALEX SOBEL: Alex Sobel. I represent Leeds North West, and I live in the Weetwood ward of that constituency in the present Leeds North West constituency. I believe the best solution for the people of Leeds North West is closest to what we have now. There has been a Leeds North West on similar boundaries for as long as collective memory remembers. The new Headingley & Hyde Park ward offers this opportunity. However, I accept even with these additional voters, it isn't possible to make this minimal change due to the quotas. I understand the need to keep split wards to a

minimum, especially where ward boundaries aren't clear to many residents. I'll come back to the point about where ward boundaries aren't clear later. As I said, I'm the MP for Leeds North West and live in Weetwood, but I was previously the councillor in Moortown, and I've lived in both Little London & Woodhouse and Chapel Allerton wards as well as Headingley & Hyde Park. So both a representative and resident perspective, across a number of constituencies, both in and bordering the current Leeds North West, I also worked as a community worker across a third of Leeds city council wards encompassing the current Leeds Central, West, North East and East constituencies.

The proposed Headingley constituency has a number of issues, especially splitting both Hyde Park and Woodhouse areas between two constituencies, as Hyde Park and Woodhouse lie in both Headingley & Hyde Park and Little London & Woodhouse wards, with very complex boundaries on small residential streets, which create real confusion for residents and make parliamentary case work and representation difficult. Uniting Little London & Woodhouse in the same constituency would be logical and consistent, and people who live in the Woodhouse part of Little London & Woodhouse even now will send me constituency casework or issues because of that close relationship between Headingley, Hyde Park and Woodhouse. As MP of Headingley, many residents in the Queenswood and St Annes villages and other parts of the Kirkstall ward above Burley Road often contact me as their MP. So uniting Kirkstall and Heaton wards makes sense, but not separating Hyde Park from Little London & Woodhouse as the Boundary Commission proposal intends to do.

As a resident of Weetwood, there's a clearly difficult choice to be had, but looking at the ward electorate numbers and the choices in front of us, it makes more sense for Weetwood to be united with Horsforth due to the many community links between the two. For instance, there is a new estate currently being built on the Horsforth Woodside Quarry in Weetwood ward, and when those houses are occupied, which they would be by the time of the next general election, those people would consider themselves to live in Horsforth and will more than likely have Horsforth in their mailing address. If the boundary changes go ahead as planned, they would be in a constituency called Headingley and the same with Horsforth train station, which is shared between Weetwood ward and Horsforth ward. There are many other community examples. For instance, the largest community football team in the north of Leeds, Horsforth St Margaret's, is the community football team for Weetwood children and practises at Weetwood Hall in Weetwood. People, especially from Weetwood north of the outer ring road, use Horsforth for banking and shopping, particularly extensively for banking purposes.

Uniting Otley & Yeadon with Guiseley & Rawdon ward also makes sense. There's a confusion in Yeadon around which MP represents them, as Yeadon is currently split between these two wards, between Guiseley & Rawdon and Otley & Yeadon and between myself and Stuart Andrew as the respective MPs. We often get each other's casework and are often asked to intercede on the same issues in the town, which does make representation difficult. So uniting Weetwood, Horsforth, Adel & Wharfedale and Otley & Yeadon wards makes sense, and it is within the quota as set out in the legislation and, with the other changes, would create a better scheme for Leeds which works.

The other ward in my constituency, Adel & Wharfedale ward, would probably benefit, considering the numbers, from being united with Alwoodley. Both have significant rural areas north of the main population centres which are linked. Both have similar housing stock, similar house prices, similar profiles, and there are clear road links. Also, the Moor Allerton Shopping Centre, which is in Alwoodley ward, is mainly utilised by people who live in Alwoodley, Moortown and Adel & Wharfedale wards. There are clear community links there. I mean, as I said, there is no perfect solution here in Leeds, which the Boundary Commission themselves accepted in their proposal.

I just want to comment on the Conservative proposal and the idea of bringing in a number of wards from Harrogate borough and uniting them with Guiseley & Rawdon, Otley & Yeadon and Adel & Wharfedale. I feel that this is clearly unworkable and, I have to say, an attempt to gerrymander boundaries. In addition, the Conservative proposal crosses local government and county boundaries and creates more cross-boundary seats than the Boundary Commission's. I think the proposal should be rejected outright as unworkable.

Finally, on naming, the tradition in Leeds has been that seats that are mainly in the pre-1974 Leeds city council boundaries – which, for instance, the current Leeds North West is – the entirety of Headingley & Hyde Park, Headingley ward and Weetwood ward and half of the Adel & Wharfedale ward were in Leeds pre-1974, and the remainder were outside of Leeds. The other Leeds seats – Leeds West, Leeds East, Leeds North East and Leeds Central – were predominantly, again, within the Leeds city council area prior to 1974. The tradition is that they all have the prefix *Leeds* because they were part of Leeds prior to 1974. Then, those seats that were mainly external or completely external to Leeds pre-1974 have another name reflecting their local area. The proposal to name Leeds North West, where in fact, very little of it – half a ward – was in the pre-1974 Leeds, will create confusion and is unworkable. The other thing is having a whole constituency identified as Headingley where a large portion of that constituency don't live in an area called Headingley will create significant confusion, whilst actually, there are some people who live on the Meanwood Road side of the current Chapel Allerton ward who consider themselves living in Headingley. There is no proposal I have seen which would place them in a Headingley constituency. So we're creating multiple confusions by having that name. My personal preference is to retain the names Leeds West and Leeds North West and whatever boundaries we end up with involving a range of wards in those two constituencies. I'd like to reserve my right to comment on constituency names in detail until after the revised boundaries after this stage process are released later in the year, as it's difficult to comment quite at this stage, but I do think that the Boundary Commission does need to carefully think about names within the current inner Leeds wards and particularly the areas that were predominantly part of Leeds city council areas prior to 1974. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. Is there any point of clarification people would like to ask? Right, thank you very much.

I'm afraid we don't have anyone else to speak at the moment. Ok we'll break until 15:20.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience while we've waited. I think our next speaker is David Salinger. Thank you, would you like to come to the front. If you'd like to start, David, just for the record, by giving us your name and which town you are from so that that's on the record, and then when you are ready, please start.

DAVID SALINGER: I'm David Salinger, and I live in Headingley in Leeds. I've lived there since 1979, and I'm currently secretary of a neighbourhood association within Headingley & Hyde Park ward, though I must say that we have not discussed the boundary revisions. What I'm saying is entirely my own personal opinion.

What I feel is that there's a missed opportunity here that Headingley & Hyde Park should be in the same constituency as Little London & Woodhouse ward, partly because the boundary between the two wards is somewhat artificial – not everywhere but down by Woodhouse Street where it cuts through the Little London estate. That is an old council house – well, not that old. I remember when part of it was being built, and that should really be in just one constituency. It forms a community. There's a small shopping centre which is in Headingley & Hyde Park, I believe, but, of course, is used a lot by residents of Little London & Woodhouse. That's a natural sort of unit which the ward boundaries intersect.

Also, the two wards between them contain probably the majority of Leeds University students. Headingley & Hyde Park has three halls of residence within it, and Little London & Woodhouse has a number. When I say halls of residents, nowadays, most of them are flat units. Little London & Woodhouse has a number of these as well, as includes the city centre, and, of course, Little London & Woodhouse includes the University of Leeds.

Finally, I think there's an open space - recreational space - Woodhouse Moor, which is within Little London & Woodhouse, but the people who use it are also people from Headingley & Hyde Park. That would include the whole area surrounding Woodhouse Moor. Those are basically the points I wish to put to you. I'd support a plan different from that of the draft plan with the Boundary Commission and one which included Headingley & Hyde Park and Little London & Woodhouse within the same constituency.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Would anybody like to ask any points of clarification to Mr Salinger? Right, thank you very much.

That brings us to John Eveleigh. When you get settled, would you just like to start off by, for the record, telling us your name and which town you are from, and then when you are ready, please go ahead.

JOHN EVELEIGH: My name's John Eveleigh, and I live in Otley in West Yorkshire. I'm a former town mayor of Otley and also a former town councillor. I also represented the town on Leeds city council some time ago. I'm currently a director of Otley Action For Older People, an organisation that promotes and supports independent living for older people in our community. I'm also the church secretary

for the Bridge Church, the United Reform Church in Otley. I, of course, speak today in a personal capacity.

As you would probably expect, my comments somewhat concentrate on what I feel is the best for the community where I live and that I've previously represented. I do appreciate the difficulties that the Boundary Commission have in drawing up a fair and sustainable proposal. Therefore, I'm concentrating my submissions today solely on the merits of the configuration of the new Leeds North West seat.

I suppose you will have heard from others who have been making submissions to you today that the Boundary Commission's proposals are rather like the curate's egg – good in part. For a moment, I will concentrate on those areas where I can support the proposals. Linking the wards of Otley & Yeadon, Horsforth and Guiseley & Rawdon does make some sense, particularly for residents of Yeadon, who currently find themselves separated in two Parliamentary constituencies. The Boundary Commission proposals will ensure that all of those independent towns and villages will retain their own identities within a single constituency. There are many existing ties between these various communities and uniting them in a single constituency would be a good outcome. Therefore, it could be said that I support 75% of the electoral commission's proposals.

The area where I would depart from the Commission would be the inclusion of Adel & Wharfedale ward and the exclusion of the Weetwood ward. There are a number of reasons that I would make in support of the new boundary comprising Otley & Yeadon, Guiseley & Rawdon, Horsforth and Weetwood, and these are as follows. I've already mentioned that I'm a director of Otley Action For Older People. There are strong links among the neighbourhood networks that have been established in this city over many years and maintaining some of those organisations within the umbrella of a single constituency would make sense. For example, Otley Action For Older People has built strong links with AVSED, which serves Aireborough: the Guiseley, Rawdon and Yeadon area and which we would retain. Also, we've built up strong relationships with OPAL based in the Weetwood ward, which would be moved into a neighbouring constituency.

The inclusion of Weetwood ward would also ensure that with its university campus and that of Trinity and All Saints University in the Horsforth ward, the constituency would retain a demographic balance that has been so valued within the current configuration of the Leeds North West seat, with a younger demographic in the south of the constituency and, as the census information will support, an older, increasingly retired population in the north of the constituency. A suitably mixed demographic would be a more favourable outcome, in my opinion. Boundaries are always somewhat controversial. I understand that where necessary, it makes sense to draw a boundary where there is a natural dividing line – rivers, major roads, train lines, et cetera. One such natural boundary to the south would be the ring road. However, the current Horsforth ward straddles the ring road, and the current boundary as proposed by the Commission would see the bulk of the population residing north of the ring road, with a small rump, I suppose, residing south of the ring road. By including the Weetwood ward within the boundary, there would be a more balanced population distribution between those living north of the ring road and those living south.

On balance, therefore, I feel that there would be major benefits from the inclusion of the Weetwood ward and the omission of the Adel & Wharfedale ward from the proposals for the new Leeds North West constituency. I want to just make some comments on some of the other counter-proposals that I've seen. I hope that the Commission will reject the proposals put forward by the Conservative Party. I agree with the comments made in the Liberal Democrat Party's submission that wherever possible, the number of crossings between North and West Yorkshire should be kept to a minimum. Linking Otley & Yeadon and Guiseley & Rawdon with Boroughbridge and Nidd Valley makes no administrative sense whatsoever and would highlight considerable issues where the boundary would not be coterminous with those of local government or National Health Service or other organisations. For example, the north of the constituency would reside in North Yorkshire under both North Yorkshire county council and Harrogate and Knaresborough council, electing a police and crime commissioner, and therefore would look to North Yorkshire for its services, policing, social services, education, health, et cetera, whereas the south of the constituency would reside within the Leeds city council boundary, electing a directly elected mayor for West Yorkshire and therefore obtaining services from Leeds. Despite the Conservative Party's submission, indicating that there are strong links between North Leeds and Harrogate, this is somewhat disingenuous, as there are always major complaints, certainly within the town of Otley, that public transport links from Otley to Harrogate are diabolical, due in no small measure to the complications of the different transport authorities operating either side of the boundary. I concur broadly with the Labour Party and the Heavy Woollen District Independents' submission that a new constituency comprising the following wards – Guiseley & Rawdon, Otley & Yeadon, Horsforth and Weetwood – would constitute an improved configuration than that currently set out by the Boundary Commission's proposals. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you this afternoon.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Mr Eveleigh. Is there anybody would like to ask any points of clarification?

COLIN BYRNE: Colin Byrne from the Boundary Commission. I apologise if I missed this, but could you just say in your proposed different constituency, where would the ward of Adel & Wharfedale be?

JON EVELEIGH: I think that would go into the new Leeds North. There would obviously have to be some other configurations, but along with some of the other proposals that I've seen – like, as I mentioned, the Labour Party submission and the Heavy Woollen District Independents submission – that is, I think, where I would sort of favour the new boundary being drawn.

COLIN BYRNE: Thank you very much.

PAUL WILES: Thank you. Anybody else who'd like to ask points of clarification? Thank you very much, indeed. Can we move on to Stewart Harper now?

When you are ready, if you'd like, for the record, just to give us your name and the town you are from, and then proceed when you are ready.

STEWART HARPER: Thank you very much. My name is Stewart Harper, and I live in Leeds; specifically, I live in the Guiseley & Rawdon ward of the current constituency of Pudsey. I've also been a parliamentary candidate in Leeds North West and a local government candidate in Otley & Yeadon.

First, can I thank you, Mr Chairman, for the work you've done and your team have undertaken in the months and years that have gone before. This is not to be underestimated. I want to speak today in support of the Conservative Party's proposal 85514, specifically around the seats in Leeds. I'd like to talk about those wards that make up Pudsey and Leeds North West at present, and although I'm only speaking really about two current constituencies, the Commission's job I appreciate, and the Conservative Party's counter-proposal doesn't take these in isolation but rather in the round.

Let me talk first about the wards of Pudsey and Calverley & Farsley. The Boundary Commission proposes that they move or are kept in a Pudsey seat with two other wards, those of Bramley & Stanningley and Farnley & Wortley. I'm lucky enough to spend a lot of my leisure time in these two wards. I can speak with some knowledge of their makeup. They are both part of an historic borough before the local government reorganisation of the 1970s and are still well connected in terms of services and geography, whilst Pudsey, Calverley and Farsley as towns themselves are distinct. There are very significant overlaps in the use of services. It makes sense, in my view, to keep them together as the Boundary Commission has done. It also makes some sense to connect Pudsey and Bramley & Stanningley, especially when one considers the overlap at the north and east, between Swinnow, which is currently in Pudsey, and Bramley, where residents use many of the same shops, for example, as well as community services. It makes less sense, in my view, to connect Farnley & Wortley in the same manner because the level of linkage does not apply.

Instead, I support the proposal that Horsforth be included instead to make up that seat. There is a geographic link, and the boundary between the wards of Horsforth and Calverley & Farsley is now virtually invisible given recent housing development in the Horsforth Vale. Another benefit to the proposal would be that fewer electors change constituency as per rule 5; three of four wards in the current Pudsey constituency would remain together. In respect of the fourth ward in the current constituency, that of Guiseley & Rawdon, the Conservative Party proposed that this creates, with two other wards from Leeds of Otley & Yeadon and Adel & Wharfedale, a constituency of Leeds North and Wharfedale, with six wards from Harrogate. Guiseley, Rawdon, Otley and Yeadon are market towns. Adel is more urban, but the rest of that ward is rural, running as it does down to the village of Pool and incorporating rural hamlets, such as Arthington. From Pool, the obvious link for shops for leisure facilities when Otley is not big enough is to Harrogate, not to Leeds.

Furthermore, the Conservative proposal also unites the town of Yeadon into one constituency, being split as it is now between two local government wards of Otley & Yeadon and Guiseley & Rawdon. Uniting Yeadon is a matter that local people have long argued in favour of. Finally, the proposal proposes a constituency comprising two local authorities rather than four under the proposal with the Wetherby and Easingwold seat. Finally, whilst I've not spoken of them in detail, I also believe that the Conservative Party's proposals for the rest of Leeds, including, in particular, the

proposal regarding a Morley and Rothwell seat, are extremely compelling. Once again, I commend the Commission for the work it's undertaking; I wish you well in your deliberations and look forward to seeing the results of this phase of the review. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Mr Harper. Is there anybody who would like to ask questions for clarification on Mr Harper? Right, thank you very much indeed.

I think we've got Claire Irving. If you'd just like to state your name and your town for the record and then begin when you are ready.

CLAIRE IRVING: Hello, my name is Claire Irving. I am the communities director of the East Leeds Project. I live in the ward of Gipton & Harehills in Leeds. First of all, I'd like to say that we are deeply concerned about the notion of splitting Harehills from East Leeds, but before this, I'd like to give a little bit about our organisation. We are a practitioner-led visual arts organisation based in Gipton in east Leeds. Both myself and my co-director, Kerry, have lived there for over 25 years, and we have worked not just within east Leeds but throughout the city. We work with artists of social action, which we understand as employing varied forms offered by the expanding field of contemporary art as a collaborative, collective and participatory social method for bringing about real-world instances of progressive justice, community building and transformation. That's a quote from Sholette and Bass.

We're really passionate about the work that we do and are very much embedded in the community. We have an ever-growing diverse array of local people of all ages and backgrounds involved in our projects, the main focus of which is creating a makerspace for the people of east Leeds. Here are our concerns: splitting Harehills from the rest of east Leeds feels to us unnatural. It breaks community ties and excludes the ethnic minority part of our community from other areas. Harehills is a transforming and transient population. I know that; I live there and have done for a long time. It's full of glorious people who interact with all kinds of other people within our ward of Gipton and Harehills. Whilst the ward, I understand, would remain within the council, taking Harehills out of that removes that connection that we have as community organisations. Moreover, it removes that connection from us as people, which is absolutely imperative when you're trying to create and consolidate ideas and move forward and enjoy each other's company. Obviously, culturally, we should always have creativity at the heart of what we do. It enhances everything and everybody that we are.

So it would have a negative impact for us on local organisations and mean the reduction of the vibrant and multicultural character of our community at a time when such interactions are more necessary than ever. What we have found throughout the pandemic is that there are small pockets within our Gipton & Harehills ward specifically that have encouraged conversation between each other, and that is very much due to our councillors but also due to our MP and also due to other people within the east Leeds area.

We ask that the Boundary Commission should consider the fact that there is a place called East Leeds, people who live in Gipton & Harehills and Seacroft and Killingbeck. We call ourselves, 'I am from Harehills in East Leeds'. It's an

identification that runs through the nature of who we are and where we live. It's in the minds of local people that is reflected in the everyday reality of their day-to-day lives, and Harehills is very much part of that community. To remove it from East Leeds is to break up the community by race, and it will be viewed as such. We would like to maintain the East Leeds constituency boundaries as they are today rather than altering them in the way that the Boundary Commission proposes. If changes have to be made to fit with the rules on constituency size, then please consider expanding the East Leeds constituency into areas of the city that were previously part of the East Leeds constituency, such as Burmantofts & Richmond Hill.

We have seen that the Boundary Commission is proposing adding Garforth & Swillington to the Leeds East constituency. We do find this strange, as unlike Harehills, these are areas that are quite separate from east Leeds and do not have community ties with the rest of the constituency. In saying that, they do have their own feel of community, and they very much see themselves as totally confined to who they are. People from Garforth say they're in Garforth; they don't say Garforth, east Leeds. I think the other thing that we are really keen on is continuing the local ties in matters of culture, history and socioeconomic understanding. If you take Harehills out of Gipton & Harehills, for organisations like us that are community based, especially those who are looking at working with visual artists, the artists that are based in Harehills would not necessarily get the connection to the funding that would allow them to grow and thrive. For us, that's really important, especially as we're looking to make a makerspace. In east Leeds there is no facility for anything like that which there are in other areas of Leeds, and to take it away from the people from Harehills when this possibility is just almost there seems unfair. Thank you very much. I would like to propose what I've just said.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. Would anybody like to ask any questions for clarification? All right, thank you very much Claire.

We now will take a break until 16:20.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Thank you for your patience. Just to introduce myself for those of you who've only arrived, my name is Paul Wiles, and I'm one of the assistant Boundary Commissioners for England and chairing today and tomorrow. If you are ready, first of all, John Bavington. If you'd start off by just giving, for the record, your name and where you are from, and then, whenever you're ready, please go ahead.

JOHN BAVINGTON: Thank you very much. My name's Reverend Canon John Bavington; I'm the vicar of Great Horton and Lidget Green, and I'm the area dean for the Church of England in the inner Bradford deanery. I lead two churches, St John's Great Horton and St Wilfred Lidget Green, both in Great Horton ward, and I'm chair of the Red Letter Project, which is a charity working to alleviate poverty in our parishes and in the surrounding area. Among other activities, we run two community halls and the Great Horton library. We run a full-time preschool, a sizable food bank, and we're in the process of converting an old church building – an empty church building - into a further community hub. Across our two churches, we typically have 150 people joining us for worship every Sunday, representing a regular membership

of about 250. We serve the local schools, providing volunteer governors and regular assemblies weekly in some schools and less often in others. Our buildings also host four other congregations whose cultural roots are in Nepal, Nigeria and Slovakia, and we're in the process of launching a monthly Arabic language service. I've lived and ministered in Great Horton for eight and a half years. I live and breathe in the community.

First of all, I want to acknowledge what a difficult job you've had, and I know it's not easy. I thank you for keeping all the Bradford council wards together in Bradford constituencies. That matters to us as a city. My home and parish sit in one of the only two wards that you've proposed to move, and I think the move is unfortunate. Four hundred extra voters are needed for Bradford South, and to change the constituencies of 20,000 people and more seems to me unnecessary. I want to make the case that instead of swapping the wards of Great Horton, and Clayton and Fairweather Green between Bradford South and Bradford West, it would be better to consider options that involve moving a smaller number of people. In the past, I know you've done all you can to avoid splitting wards, but across Yorkshire, I've become aware that sometimes to create coherent constituencies that conform to voter number parameters laid out in legislation, you have been known to split wards. My request is to ask you to split one more ward, and I'd really want to make three simple points.

The first point I make I realise is not strictly within the scope of your consideration, but nonetheless, let me say it. Our church, in common with many others in Great Horton, has established very strong connections and links with our MP, Judith Cummins, and likewise Naz Shah will have established similar ties in Clayton and Fairweather Green. I think it would be better to make a small change of splitting a ward rather than disrupting all the existing relationships. Those relationships are important. I don't think they should be discounted too lightly.

My substantial concern and my second point is in regard to the impact that proposed changes could have on community relations. Bradford's joined the City of Sanctuary movement with the avowed purpose to generate an environment of safety and hospitality in the city. A lot of good work has been done to make Bradford more inclusive and welcoming, but we need to be on our guard for anything that might halt that progress. Moving Great Horton into Bradford West is unhelpful in our attempts at further integration and cohesion in that part of the city. I moved to live in Bradford from London just under 20 years ago in the wake of the Bradford and Manningham riots. I'm not suggesting moving these wards between constituencies would precipitate riots, but such a move is unhelpful and undermines some of the work done subsequent to the riots. In particular, if the boundary proposals are carried out unchanged, Bradford South will become much less of a multiracial constituency. The unintended consequence of that proposal would be to significantly shift the racial balance between both Bradford South and Bradford West, and we would end up with one Member of Parliament representing a predominantly white constituency and the neighbouring Member of Parliament representing a predominantly South Asian constituency. I have to say, I think that would be really quite unhelpful.

As far as I can see, my third point and finally, is that moving one polling district from either Bradford East or Bradford West to Bradford South is relatively simple within

your process. I don't think it would create a domino effect that would make you go back to the drawing board and remap the whole of West Yorkshire. I think it would continue to be contained within the three Bradford constituencies, and I hope you'll consider these points in your deliberations. Thank you very much.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. Has anybody got any questions of clarification they would like to ask? All right, thank you very much indeed and thank you for coming.

Can we now turn to Mr Iftikhar? Thank you very much. If, when you are ready, you would for the record say who you are and where you're from, and then, when you are ready, please go ahead.

ABDUL IFTIKHAR: Good afternoon. My name is Abdul Iftikhar. I'm a practising criminal solicitor, a partner in the firm of Kamran Solicitors based in Leeds, but I was born and bred in Bradford, having spent my late teens and my twenties in the Great Horton ward.

I understand that this is not an easy task for the Commissioners. On paper, it looks like an easy maths problem, but in reality, it is much more complicated and has to address factors such as community, diversity and geography if it is to be successful. On that basis, I would urge the Commissioners to solve this problem with the very minimum of disruption to communities and their identities. The prior consultation for the 2018 review started out with a hugely damaging proposal for established communities in Bradford South. Thankfully, reason prevailed, and the Commissioners amended the proposals, for which we were grateful.

The 2018 review was ultimately shelved. However, the current proposals do much of the same damage to the same areas as the initial proposals from the review, splitting recognised communities and introducing incomprehensible new boundaries. Let me explain. The 2018 review's initial proposal would've split the community of Wibsey between three different Parliamentary constituencies: one urban village, three MPs – not remotely sensible, I would respectfully submit. As I said, thankfully, it was scrapped. The current proposal, however, again, splits Wibsey – this time into two because it takes the Great Horton ward out of Bradford South and places it into Bradford West. Boundaries in built-up urban setting are almost inevitably artificial and most often go unrecognised on a day-to-day basis. By that, I mean that it is difficult to discern where one community starts and another ends; that isn't the case for the residents of Great Horton ward who live in Wibsey. There is a pretty clear divide because Wibsey sits on the plateau above the urban centre of Great Horton – different schools, different shops and different neighbourhoods. Similarly, the urban centre of Great Horton – where, as I said, I spent my late teens and my twenties and where I still have immediate and extended family living – sits outside Bradford Centre, not as an extension of it, which is what the proposal to include it in Bradford West would imply.

On the other side of the balancing act is the proposal to include the Clayton and Fairweather Green ward into Bradford South. The first and most obvious problem here is the distance between communities. The village of Clayton sits separate from the rest of Bradford South, barely connected by the road network. By that, I mean

just two country lanes leave Clayton and then to Bradford South and both go to the Queensbury ward. The northern tip of the Clayton and Fairweather Green ward comprises the communities of Lower Grange and Fairweather Green. These communities have a common urban connection and shared streets with the Toller ward and Thornton and Allerton ward, both of which will remain in Bradford West. They have absolutely no connection to Queensbury or Bradford South; including them basically mirrors what the proposal does to Wibsey. It carves out a couple of neighbourhoods and splits the community into two constituencies. Surely there must be a better way of adding the few hundred extra constituents to Bradford South that are needed to make up the numbers. Swapping wards causes major problems; moving a single polling district from a neighbouring constituency, I would submit, is much less disruptive. I would urge you to look at that.

I accept that this would add a complication for the electoral administration because council wards will no longer be coterminous with the parliamentary constituencies. This, however, would be a minor inconvenience, and it is my understanding that the Boundary Commission will be looking at the Bradford council wards within the next few years. This could be addressed at that point. Presuming that there may be just one parliamentary election in the intervening period, the complication would be minimal and short-lived. In terms of disruption at the various levels of government, however, swapping wards between Parliamentary constituencies, as proposed, has implications for Bradford council. The council organises its services on a localities model, built around the five Parliamentary constituencies, with a council of representatives from the wards in the constituencies providing oversight and accountability. The proposals would dislocate this arrangement.

Finally, swapping Great Horton ward with the Clayton and Fairweather Green ward between Bradford South and Bradford West also has consequences for the ethnic diversity of both constituencies. The swap reduces the diversity of each, which I respectfully submit is unhelpful. In summary, I would urge you to amend the proposals to move a single polling district into Bradford South so that a) Wibsey stays as one community, b) Lower Grange and Fairweather Green stay with their neighbours, c) diversity is not adversely affected and, finally, d) disruption is minimised. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your kind consideration of my submissions and allowing me an opportunity to address the Commission. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you, Mr Iftikhar. If you'd just like to remain there for a moment. Is there anybody who would like to ask any points of clarification?

COLIN BYRNE: Thank you very much. Colin Byrne from the Boundary Commission. I may have missed this – if so, I apologise – but which polling district would you suggest should be moved into Bradford South?

ABDUL IFTIKHAR: It's difficult to say. That's obviously a matter for the Commission, but the point is that there's 400 constituents that we fall short of in Bradford South, and I would urge the Commission to look at the adjoining wards from outside the constituency and which best suits the amalgamation and one that leaves and causes the least disruption.

COLIN BYRNE: Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Is there anybody else who've got any questions of clarification? Very well, thank you very much.

If I may say so, what we've heard is the reason why we hold these consultations – so that we can listen to these kinds of comments for the kind of detailed impacts on the ground. So thank you very much.

Do we have Jac Morton? If you'd just start off by, for the record, giving your name and where you're from, your town, and then whenever you're ready, please start.

JAC MORTON: I'm Jac Morton, and I'm from Bradford city. I'm here to talk about the constituency of Bradford South.

The constituency of Bradford South is 405 electorates short of the permitted range for the parliament to be a Parliamentary constituency. The solution suggested by the Boundary Commission is the simplest solution and the best solution, in my opinion, when it comes to the electorate size of Clayton and Fairweather Green, and Great Horton. They have a very similar size, with the difference only being 619 electorates between the two. By exchanging the wards between Bradford South and Bradford West, this allows Bradford South to meet the minimum permitted electorate range while keeping the two constituencies a similar size. Aside from Bradford South meeting the minimum criteria of a parliamentary constituency, moving Clayton and Fairweather Green ward into Bradford South makes geographical sense. As a ward it is a suburban area, much like the other wards in Bradford South, featuring large areas of green space, meaning the needs of that ward are aligned with the rest of the wards in Bradford South. The electorate's concerns are about building on green belt land, HGV'S travelling on rural roads and the healthcare infrastructure that is set up within those areas. Equally, the wards within Bradford West would be considered inner city wards. They're built-up areas with a lot of terrace housing, and in the direct area around the city centre. Great Horton ward geographically is very much like the rest of the wards in Bradford West and has very similar needs to those wards in Bradford West.

The direct exchange of wards being proposed is both logical and the simplest solution as well, having minimal effect on those of voting age, council staff and ward councillors. There are not communities being split up, no new ward boundaries being drawn, and the only difference for the electorate is the MP. I am aware that the MP for Bradford South due to come in has raised her concerns. However, after reading her letter to the Boundary Commission, I was left with a few questions. Firstly, she quotes section 31 of the Guide to the 2023 Review of the Parliamentary constituencies. A division of a ward between constituencies would therefore risk breaking local ties as well as adding complexity to both the task of the returning officers in administering a parliamentary election in the area and the grassroots coordination of political party activism. She then goes on to propose the moving of one polling district into Bradford South. However, this creates a division of a ward between constituencies and adds complexity to both the task of the returning officer and the local council. While a single polling district is moving less electorates from one constituency to another, it creates a boundary issue on a local level, as many

wards contain many multiple polling districts. Under Judith Cummins' proposed change, an urban village like Clayton will be split between constituencies of Bradford South and Bradford West. She claims that a direct exchange would cause disruption to Bradford council's devolved operations, as Bradford council works at a neighbourhood level through five areas. However, a splitting of a ward to an exact polling district wouldn't have the same effect. I'm somewhat confused by this, as moving an entire ward from one committee's purview to another seems far simpler than giving the authority of one polling district in a ward to another committee, who has the ability to make decisions for that polling district that could potentially affect that ward – not to mention the difficult task of identifying which polling district to move and then holding public consultations to actually have it agreed.

This also does not take into consideration the electorate that have always been part of Clayton village, for example. They would suddenly be part of Great Horton, who has its own community support network. Isolating one polling district has more implications logistically than exchanging the wards. I would be happy for Ms Cummins to elaborate on her reasons, but as it stands, I'm at a loss as to how it would avoid disruption to Bradford council's operations. One of the other main arguments she has in her letter is that moving the wards would affect the diversity of Bradford South. Having spoken to those of my personal background and my brothers and sisters of South Asian descent, Bradford South is very much a diverse community, much like Bradford as a whole. The demographics of Great Horton and Clayton and Fairweather Green are very similar. It could actually, in fact, be argued that Clayton and Fairweather Green has greater diversity than the Great Horton ward. I would be curious to where Ms Cummins is getting her information from, as the last ONS information is already five years out of date and the information from 2019 is based on an estimate.

To conclude, I believe that the simplest solution to the Parliamentary constituency of Bradford South to meet the permitted electorate range is to move Great Horton ward into Bradford West and Clayton and Fairweather Green into Bradford South. This does not create a division of a ward, breaks no local ties, nor does it add any complexity to the task of the returning officer in a parliamentary election. It does create a diverse constituency that represents the city as a whole, creates cohesion between wards within the constituency in that they offer similar issues because of their shared geographical traits. Thank you for your time.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed Mr Morton. Does anybody have any points of clarification they'd like to put to Mr Morton? All right, thank you very much indeed and thank you for coming.

If you'd like to start just by, for the record, stating your name and which town you live in, and then having done so, please feel free to carry on.

JABBAR KARIM: Thank you very much. My name is Jabbar Karim. I run a community radio station in Leeds; I'm from the Harehills ward.

Thank you for the opportunity to air my views on the boundary proposals. As I mentioned, I'm the director of Fever FM, a local community radio station. We've been situated in Harehills since 1999, and the Boundary Commission proposal is to take

Harehills out of Leeds East constituency and put it into Leeds Central, I believe. Now, the main question I would ask on behalf of all the communities in Harehills is what benefits will Harehills gain? I mean, what is the rationale? Because Harehills, you may be aware, is one of the most deprived areas, economically and socially, in the whole country, let alone just in Leeds. The community has already worked extremely hard and been persistent to win any sort of recognition and support to help and overcome some of its challenges. The danger and the fear for the community and those championing it has to be that becoming part of Leeds Central will take it somewhat backwards rather than forwards.

Harehills has always been, and should remain, part of East Leeds and becoming absorbed to Leeds Central is the last thing the communities of Harehills need or want. Also, in terms of community cohesion, Harehills is a really multicultural area, one which thrives on its unique identity and has a bit of a hub for many global and cultural identities fusing together in the best way. Many different immigrant communities live and work together side by side and have done so successfully for a long time, and they have shared ambitions, shared goals and shared frustrations as well about taking the area forward. They have pride in the area. They fear that the core part of the community identity would be lost if they get absorbed into a more Leeds Central area.

As it looks at the moment, the people of Harehills don't get anything at all by losing the historical links, and in fact, they will lose rather than gain. If you look at the proposals as they are, other areas may gain from being part of Leeds Central but not Harehills. I'd also like to add Garforth & Swillington have never been part of East Leeds, and I am sure that communities in that area would prefer not to be part of East Leeds, while Harehills would like to remain part of East Leeds. Now, this is feedback from many community groups and local people who live and work in Harehills – that they're proud to be part of East Leeds, and being part of Leeds Central, which is a more commercialised, more non-multicultural area, it just doesn't seem to make any sense to anyone. That's the kind of feedback we get on our station.

Obviously, they're a little bit concerned that they might lose their sort of priority they might receive as being one of the most deprived areas in the UK. You've got to look at the sort of economics of the future. Will there be any benefits, or will there be less benefits? Also, as the gentleman mentioned, people in Harehills have supported and relied on the local MP to help him, especially people who have poor command of English. He has been very helpful in helping mostly people from a migrant family. It is a concern for everyone, to be honest. I think sometimes, you should just come and sit on our radio and hear the feedback yourself, really. That's it really. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Mr Karim. If you'd just stay there for a moment. Is there anybody who would like to ask any questions of clarification?

COLIN BYRNE: Thank you. Colin Byrne, Boundary Commission. I wonder if you'd be able to help us with the type of links that there are between Harehills and Burmantofts if you have any reflections on that.

JABBAR KARIM: They're very close to each other, and many families live part in Harehills and part in Burmantofts. They're very, very close. It's walking distance. From my memory, Burmantofts was part of East Leeds previously, and personally, I think Burmantofts should be part of East Leeds really because it is another area which is a multicultural area. As I mentioned before, people who come from abroad, they rely on the local community groups, such as ourselves and many other groups who are doing a wonderful job helping migrants to settle in and to sign a person up for the services and support that are available to them. Of course, they rely on the local MP as well.

PAUL WILES: Is there anybody else who would like to ask any questions of clarification? Thank you very much, indeed, and thank you for coming.

If you'd like to start for the record just by stating your name and where you're from, which town, and then whenever you're ready, please start.

PAUL BELBIN: My name is Paul Belbin. I live in the Wakefield district, but I worked for nearly 30 years in Leeds. I particularly want to talk about the Leeds East proposals, but if I have enough time left, I'll try and move into Wakefield as well. My history is that until 2020, I worked for an organisation called GIPSIL, which is a shortened version of Gipton Supported Independent Living. If you know the Gipton estate in east Leeds, that's where the organisation came from. It's a supported housing organisation. It provides supported housing, advice and counselling activities for vulnerable young people, and although, as the name suggests, the organisation began in Gipton, over the years since the early nineties, some of its services are now city-wide, but it's predominant services are in what I describe as in East Leeds.

My big problem with the proposal for Leeds East is the exclusion of Harehills from the current constituency. Instead, Garforth & Swillington move into the constituency, and Harehills comes out. There really is no community connection or cohesion between places like Gipton and Seacroft and Garforth & Swillington. These are not communities that move between each other, whereas Gipton and Harehills, frankly, you would struggle to say, 'I've left Gipton, and I've entered Harehills'. They are coterminous. In fact, the history of Gipton, most of the reason Gipton was built back in the 1930s was for a huge Burtons factory on the edge of Harehills and Burmantofts which employed 10,000 people at its peak, and the vast majority of Gipton people worked in Harehills.

Having worked all that time for GIPSIL, I know how much we really made an effort to make sure that people using our services were moving between the communities. Harehills itself is the most ethnically diverse place, certainly in the city of Leeds, possibly in the country, possibly in Europe. An incredible amount of different ethnic minorities live there, and creating cohesion between the different parts of East Leeds was a massive part of my job. Just for example, although GIPSIL is now based at the old Gipton fire station, which is just off York Road, we had other bases in Harehills itself at Archway Resource Centre. We delivered a lot of advice services out of the Compton Centre, which is at the heart of Harehills, and tried to build that connectivity between different ethnicities. It's effectively treated as one community. To me, the proposal to say, 'Let's draw a line for the constituency between Gipton and Harehills',

undermines a lot of that work and undermines the community cohesion we were trying to create. Because I was particularly on the development funding side of things for GIPSIL, and I still am in my current job in Wakefield, I spent a lot of time trying to influence MPs, councillors and decision-makers, and to me, if I was in my old job at GIPSIL, this proposal would make my life much harder to try and do that because I'd be going to different places to influence different parts of the service.

It's bigger than that, on the edge of Gipton is the Fearnville Sports Centre. It's a big facility for all of the community, not just Gipton; people come to use it from Harehills. They come out of Seacroft to use it. They don't come from Garforth & Swillington to use it. If you are going to look at an alternative to putting Garforth & Swillington into Leeds East and taking Harehills out, I'd suggest a much better alternative would be to include the Burmantofts part of the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward. The A64 of York Road runs straight out of Leeds city centre to the ring road actually. In inner East Leeds, it's almost a Berlin Wall. It's a huge barrier to people moving between Richmond Hill and Burmantofts, whereas, again, with Burmantofts in Harehills, it's almost impossible to tell where there's one begun and another one started.

Have I got a couple of minutes left?

PAUL WILES: Can I suggest we pause? I'll let you talk about Wakefield in a moment. I'd like to pause there because if anybody's got any points of clarification about what you said in East Leeds, I'd like to give people that opportunity first. Has anybody got any questions? Please do go on and talk about Wakefield.

PAUL BELBIN: I now live and work in the Wakefield district and similarly have a lot of engagement with local authorities, have engagement with some of the local MPs. The Wakefield district, at the moment, has four constituencies, three of which are entirely within the Wakefield district and one of which straddles Leeds and the Wakefield district. That's Morley and Outwood. The proposals mean that Wakefield will still have four constituencies, but now, those four constituencies will straddle three local authority areas because one of them will overlap into Kirklees. That already makes my life more complicated in terms of who do I influence, where do I need to go, who do I need to speak to.

One of the new seats is Ossett and Denby Dale, which I think of as being the M1 corridor. If you say to people, 'Ossett and Denby Dale', they go, 'Really?' Those two communities have no connection whatsoever. No one would ever travel from one to the other to use services. I accept that there needs to be a mishmash of a seat somewhere, but Ossett and Denby Dale really is awful.

If you move to the north of Wakefield, the new proposed Wakefield constituency, what's good is that it takes in the two wards which previously were in Morley and Outwood. Suddenly, great, the whole seat is within the constituency – except for then, it gains Rothwell, which is part of Leeds. People from Rothwell travel into Leeds. They do not travel into the Wakefield district. Similarly, people from the Wakefield district may commute into Leeds, but they don't use services in Rothwell. There really is no connection between them. What I would suggest would work far better is if you just go down a little bit. Wakefield South is a big chunk, a huge area population of Wakefield city centre. The idea that Wakefield South goes into this

Ossett and Denby Dale seat, where frankly, virtually no one from Wakefield South will ever travel to use services or facilities.... Wakefield South will be so much better included in the new Wakefield constituency because it makes up such a large part of the city, from Rothwell. If you substitute Wakefield South for Rothwell in the new Wakefield constituency, it's a coherent community. It's a coherent constituency. I still think no doubt that means that Ossett and Denby Dale would have to take in another area of Kirklees, and I still think that's a mishmash, but at least Wakefield would have a real identity and would feel like a real community rather than 'Why is this line drawn through the city?'

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much again. Are there any questions of clarification that people would like to ask on what we've heard about Wakefield?

ROGER PRATT: Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party.

You made an interesting proposal that Wakefield South should join Wakefield and Rothwell shouldn't. Have you done the electorates on that to see if that works in terms of electorates?

PAUL BELBIN: I haven't crunched the numbers absolutely. I know that Wakefield South has approximately 7,000 households.

ROGER PRATT: I think it's actually got 10,000 electors. Something like that.

PAUL BELBIN: Sorry. Households as opposed to like –

ROGER PRATT: But Rothwell has 16,000.

PAUL WILES: Suzanne.

SUZANNE MCCARTHY: Thank you. Suzanne McCarthy, Boundary Commission. I just want to check where you were going to place Rothwell if you're moving it out of Wakefield.

PAUL BELBIN: I'll be honest with you: I wasn't. I was looking at Wakefield. I was really looking specifically at Wakefield and saying that doesn't make sense to me as a seat or a community. It's not a coherent constituency. I appreciate everything's got a knock-on effect. I think you have to draw the line somewhere. I've got ten minutes, how far am I going to try and rearrange this map.

PAUL WILES: Anybody else got any questions for clarification? Just to say, you could also put in further written submissions if you really want to follow and cover the whole area. Thank you very much indeed, and thank you for coming and for your time.

I suggest we now have a break until 17:20 when our next speaker is due.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Thank you for your patience, everybody, and thank you for sitting there so patiently Mark. If you'd like to come to the front, we can now start. If you'd like to start off just for the record by giving your name and saying which town you are from, and then, whenever you're ready, please start.

MARK LAW: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and present my perspective on the conversation. My name's Mark Law. I live in Leeds - I've lived in Leeds for the past 30 years. In my day job, I was former CEO of Barca-Leeds, which is a voluntary community-facing sector organisation. It's one of the largest ones in Leeds. I have a good overview in terms of the community and community perspective, so my comments relate to the city of Leeds only. I don't like sort of a wider review.

From my perspective, as leader of one of the largest community-based organisations within the city, I understand that the Commission's proposal for the city has completely reconfigured three constituencies in the west of the city in order to create a whole ward solution. However, this can and will cause considerable change for communities that are historically very close. When I say very close, that means organisations and services cooperate across boundaries. That's going to have an impact on family and harmony in particular. Further to this, I'm concerned that proposals in the east of the city and, in particular, the division of the long-established coherent Gipton & Harehills ward will have a negative impact as well because, again, services work hand in hand across those wards and are associated. Clearly, I've read other responses to this, but I do agree an alternative approach could be that the city of Leeds, which could retain Gipton & Harehills ward within the Leeds East boundary, would also include Roundhay. The Adel & Wharfedale ward would be included in Leeds North East with Weetwood and Leeds North West seat along with Otley & Yeadon and Guiseley & Rawdon and Horsforth.

Despite my hesitations noted above, Pudsey constituency boundaries as proposed make sense from a head count point of view, but it is disruptive. Garforth & Swillington and Temple Newsam would be in Leeds South East seat, along with Beeston & Holbeck and Hunslet & Riverside. The Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward would then be divided if that idea was to be enacted, but they are communities that are already divided by the A64 - a significant barrier to cross-working and cross-movement of pedestrians. The A64 would form a barrier between the wards, and that's my input.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. If you just like to stay there for a moment, has anybody got any questions for clarification they'd like to ask? All right, thank you very much and thank you for being so patient.

Have we got Tony Macaluso? If you'd like to start as usual just by stating what your name is for the record and which town you are from, and then, when you're ready, please start.

TONY MACALUSO: My name is Tony Macaluso, and I work in Seacroft. I run an arts organisation, a third sector organisation. I reside in Headingley, so I reside in West Leeds, but speaking from the point of view of my professional standpoint.

For the last three and a half years, I've been the director of a community radio station, East Leeds FM, and an art centre called Chapel FM Art Centre, which is located in the heart of Seacroft. We work with a robust group of about 300 young people, particularly teenagers from really across East Leeds, and then many hundreds of adults as well, particularly producing radio programmes about the community and using the arts, doing theatre writing, et cetera. I want to be speaking on behalf of myself but also the wider network of arts organisations and third sector organisations. There's a network called We Are Seacroft that consists of about eight other organisations, and just really from an anecdotal and first-hand, on-the-ground experience and what we hear from the community members we work with around the strong feelings and the desire for Harehills to remain part of the East Leeds constituency and just the wider sense – not necessarily people thinking of it from the political context but just the cultural connections and the possibilities that exist between the two communities. I've certainly seen in the three and a half years I've been there that every time we bring a group of young people from Seacroft to Harehills or young people from Harehills to Seacroft, which we do quite regularly, that there's a tremendous amount of excitement about the two communities and the potential to build on the existing relationships and to explore possibilities for the future and the parallels between the communities.

We recently, in fact, just a few weeks ago, brought a group of young people from East Leeds FM to CATCH in Harehills, which is a fantastic third sector organisation. Out of those conversations, the young people from both communities were immediately hatching ideas and realising how much their two communities had in common. Coming out of two years of global pandemic – when these interactions have been less possible – to see something that might further weaken those connections to me just feels like potentially a tremendous setback. Particularly thinking about also the changing demographics of the communities, as Seacroft has a growing immigrant population becoming more diverse, the parallels and the connections and the possibilities for working closely with Harehills just seem more important than ever.

One of the things that we're working on right now is a big oral history project about the idea of home from home, the idea of what are the places in a community where people go to be part of something bigger than themselves. Through that, we and other third sector arts organisations both in Seacroft and Harehills, again, are having so many conversations about just the shared challenges, the shared opportunities and the excitement about being able to continue to work closely together. Again, the notion that this possibility that, by separating the communities politically, just makes that more difficult, more challenging. Also, lots of conversations about the potential, the need to make stronger transportation links between the communities. Again, that's something that just becomes that much more difficult to do, I think, if these proposed changes move ahead.

Finally just to say, over the past weeks in particular... I moved here from Chicago three and a half years ago, so speaking before our Boundary Commission was not something I anticipated, but I'm excited to be able to do that. I've just been able to have lots of conversations with people from our community at the arts centre and other places, just asking them, just for my own interest, do they feel like Harehills is part of the wider East Leeds connection with Seacroft and Gipton and other

communities. It's just been really revealing how resounding the yes is to that question, that people who've had long, deep connections feel like there are ties there that need to be maintained. Then, there's a real benefit to both communities with keeping them together, and there would be something demoralising and a bit of a loss if that link was broken in this way. I would just say out of dozens and dozens of conversations, I didn't encounter a single person around the art centre that felt like those communities didn't belong together and that there wasn't a cohesion. Almost everybody who was at all aware of the issue felt that it was something that really needed to be defended, preserved. We would be saddened if some of these opportunities to collaborate were made more difficult if some of these changes proceeded. Thank you all for your time.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. Would anybody like to ask any questions for clarification? All right, well thank you very much. You weren't in the room when I said it a few moments ago, but the sort of contributions that you and the previous speaker made are very important for the Commission because we don't know necessarily about the kind of things that you are talking about and it's immensely important that we understand them.

You've heard me say it so often, I won't repeat it. You know how to start.

SAMUEL FIRTH: Thank you very much, chairman. My name is Councillor Sam Firth. I'm a councillor for the Harewood ward here in Leeds, and I'm the chairman of Leeds East Conservatives.

The first thing I want to say is I'm disappointed by the number of submissions that have been particularly put forward that make sure that, in many opinion, that Garforth is not part of East Leeds, which actually I would contest. The main reason I would contest that is actually the simple fact of the amount of historical links that have been placed on the record, where actually the very recent A1M motorway is actually the only reason why Garforth is currently separated from the rest of the conurbation. The nature of where we are looking into this, if we look into the finer details, is the fact that the deanery of Whitkirk, the ancient parish of Austhorpe, where actually Austhorpe is in Leeds East, but the parish of Austhorpe is actually in Elmet and Rothwell. Also, more generally, the Catholic parish of St John Henry Newman, et cetera, all cross those boundaries into Garforth.

To also look into more detail, a lot of children and students from East Leeds study at Garforth Academy and other schools in the Elmet constituency. There is also the situation of the A63 Selby road, which runs all the way from the sort of northwestern tip of the Temple Newsam ward all the way through Garforth before it leaves Leeds at the east end of the city. The nature of all of these things that I mentioned, including the ring road, the A16620 that also runs through Cross Gates and through into the Temple Newsam ward, means that, ultimately, I believe that, certainly, there is scope to say that the accusations that Garforth is not part of East Leeds are somewhat unfounded because those that actually live in and around that area and people within my own ward class themselves as being within East Leeds generally. It is also the case that if you take the example of East Leeds' rugby league football club, that actually sits in Burmantofts & Richmond Hill but, funny enough, is very

much at home within Leeds Central. There has not been particularly strong opposition to its retention within Leeds Central as well.

Getting into the finer details of where I feel there are even closer links, the new Springs development at Thorpe Park, a major new development as part of a major East Leeds extension, is actually not only split between the Temple Newsam ward and the Garforth ward but, at the same time, they're looking at the situation where individual streets, taking particularly Barrowby Lane, where a number of houses are actually split between different polling districts, between TMB and GSR. We also have the situation at the end of that stretch of Barrowby Lane that's within the Temple Newsam ward that's west of the A1M motorway and is actually within the TMB polling district, but then, their gardens face onto Thorpe Park gardens. That is then in GSR. This is where the intricacy of the map actually shows certainly where certain communities are split up. If you take it even further to that and you look at the estate further below, down at Bullerthorpe Lane there; it still remains in the Elmet and Rothwell constituency and only until recently was moved into the Temple Newsam ward.

The fact is that there are a number of different links from everything – from people living next door to each other but having different MPs, different councillors, and certainly making that interesting at election time – means that actually, if we want to have better representation going back to the actual Temple Newsam estate, where actually the sister house, Barrowby Hall, sits within Garforth & Swillington ward. Also, more generally, the history of the area, the fact that in St Mary's Whitkirk in Whitkirk, which is in the centre of Temple Newsam, actually has a vast majority of people coming from Swillington buried in that cemetery.

Now, I appreciate that that history is not something that this commission will take on, but to make the claim that there is no link between Garforth and the rest of East Leeds historically is simply not looking at the facts on the ground. I also want to say it is regrettable that the fact that Cross Gates potentially may have to be split off for numbers because of the fact that, ultimately, at the moment, Cross Gates is split between three different wards. At the same time, we are in the situation where we have to look at the wider geography and how that fits into how it's going to go forward. For example, when you look at Austhorpe – I've mentioned already, Austhorpe is already split with CWC below the railway line when, in fact, that's just an anomaly when the fact that many would also say that they were in Whitkirk or even potentially Austhorpe itself.

The intricacies of the area are certainly something not to be dismayed. I think that also looking a bit further into the detail of going forward, where, in the situation, I want to just counter-propose what some proposals are being put forward by alternative parties, for example, the nature of the links between Harehills and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill. We have the situation where the links are even clearer and starker than those that are placed otherwise for Gipton, for example, around St James' Hospital, BRK, BRL, BRC and BRD. These polling districts are split street by street, house by house, in terms of being able to see how that actually splits up. There is also the general view that, potentially, there is a submission that Roundhay should be put in with Cross Gates & Whinmoor and other wards when there is a clear delineation between there – not only just the A58 Wetherby road that forms the

boundary but also that big expanse in the middle is Roundhay park and the Roundhay historical state and farmland and makes a clear delineation between the two.

I also think it is disappointing that other parties have put forward, for example, that Temple Newsam ward, despite its close links with Garforth and other parts of my own ward and the Harewood ward and other parts of the wider part of East Leeds, would also be suggested to be put in with a constituency that not only stretches as far as Beeston – so between Elland Road and Garforth Town FC is more than 12 miles – but also the fact that looking at the detail of how it plays out, the actual Leeds city council community committees would not only be split up further than what they are but would effectively.... The jigsaw puzzle would be thrown down on the floor, and you wouldn't know how to fix it back together because the outer south, the inner east and the outer east would all be split up into different areas. For example, it is the fact that Leeds city council's outer east committee puts together Temple Newsam with Garforth & Swillington. I think as a result, there are clear links that are working not only with just the local politicians that are working on the ground but also, more generally, in terms of the history and also intricacy of the geography within the area, means that certainly to make sure we can fit it within the numbers and also have clear community links, I think that's certainly the best way to go forward. Thank you very much, chair.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. If you would just pause for a moment. Has anybody got any questions of clarification they would like to ask us? All right, thank you very much.

I think we've got Richard Tiffin already here. If you'd like to start off just for the record, just telling us your name and where you are from, which town, and then having done so, whenever you're ready, please start.

RICHARD TIFFIN: My name's Richard Tiffin. I'm from Cross Gates, although I'm in Killingbeck & Seacroft ward. I'm a teacher. I teach. If you go into the ward, you can see David Young, right in the centre of Killingbeck & Seacroft. It's almost a circular-shaped building. That's David Young Community Academy. At this moment in time, that school serves that community with a single MP. That, for me, seems odd that we're deciding to pull in Garforth into the community and exclude that from our community. It would make more sense to me, looking at all of this area, Richmond Hill, Burmantofts is already part of that community at this end. It seemed to me that bringing in a community to the other side of the motorway, Garforth, and splitting up wards and the constituency at the same time in terms of catchments schools.... For example, I bring MPs into my school. Now, I brought our local MP. Now, we are going to have students that cross the boundary to the other side into Gipton & Harehills up there because the wards have been split. The constituency has been reduced that side to increase at the bottom end a rural or semi-rural area on the wrong side of the motorway. It seems odd when, if you've got to increase the size, why not go up the A64 into communities that share already: Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, the other side of the A64. It just seems a strange way to go about increasing the size of a community whilst, at the same time, cutting a community in half. It does seem very odd to me. Now, I understand increasing the size of constituencies, and I understand

you've got to balance a lot of things, but why Garforth into this community? It makes no sense to me.

PAUL WILES: Well, thank you so much. If you'd just like to stick there for a moment, Richard. Has anybody got any questions or clarification they'd like to ask?

SAMUEL FIRTH: My name's Councillor Sam Firth, and I'm a Conservative councillor. I just wanted to ask one question, which is about what you said about school catchments. Could you comment at all on the fact that, for example, Temple Newsam students or other students elsewhere in East Leeds go to schools within the Garforth & Swillington ward, or vice versa?

RICHARD TIFFIN: Well, we see over the years, that's changed anyway. I live in Cross Gates Road. At this point in time, we got David Young up there, Leeds East and Temple Moor. My kids went to Temple Moor – go to Temple Moor - down here; the boundary is down the middle of that road. We do always see boundary problems. What I'm asking is, well, why are we splitting up what's existing when we've already got this catchment area because David Young's changed over the years. Once upon a time, all it served was Killingbeck & Seacroft; much more now, we are seeing ethnic minorities coming in, all coming in from Harehills and so on. I just don't understand the rationale of now dividing that off a community that's already existing, that's going – community committees, councillors, all these things that already exist – and reduce the ward by half to go down to Garforth instead of going up to Richmond Hill for a community that is very similar. It just makes no sense to me. That's all.

PAUL WILES: Thank you. Are there any further points of clarification people would like to ask? All right, thank you very much indeed and thank you for coming.

I think our next speaker is Councillor Katie Dye. If you'd like to start, Councillor Dye, just by saying who you are and where you live, and then when you're ready, please start.

KATIE DYE: Ok everybody, nice to be here. My name is Katie Dye, and I'm a councillor for Killingbeck & Seacroft. It's the ward that I was born in and I still live in. My comments are going to be essentially about that ward and the neighbouring ward, which is Gipton & Harehills.

As you'll see, my ward, Killingbeck & Seacroft, borders Gipton & Harehills, and both wards very much feel and see ourselves as being part of an East Leeds community. We have a shared identity; we share many amenities, and I would really like to stay as a community of East Leeds. I feel that these current proposals look to change that community.

Just to talk about some of the amenities that we've got, we have a leisure centre called Fearnville which sits right on the edge of the two wards. I don't know if it's on the map but it's sort of on the border of Killingbeck & Seacroft and Gipton & Harehills. It serves a community. Both my children learned to swim there. I was there last week. It's a real community asset that serves Killingbeck & Seacroft, and it serves Gipton & Harehills. We've got many religious and community centres that

serve the ward. We've got an amazing organisation called East Leeds FM, which serves both wards, and people attend it from Killingbeck & Seacroft and attend it from Harehills. I don't know if you've had any representations from an organisation called the East Leeds Project, but they're another organisation that's working across both Killingbeck & Seacroft and Harehills.

A lot of these organisations that I work with, and myself as well, we've worked really hard to build up a character of East Leeds. I really don't feel it's logical to split that. I'm passionate about the area that I live in, the area that I was born in, and also about the work that a lot of the organisations that I've mentioned do across the whole of East Leeds. I really feel that if we redrew the boundary, we would make an artificial wall between that area of East Leeds. There's a sense of identity across East Leeds that I feel, and it's very much to do with being a kind of an inner city area of Leeds. I really feel that we have an awful lot of things in common that we don't have with the outer areas, being more rural and being kind of towns in their own right really, with a big difference between the way we feel about East Leeds as an inner city area and the way that the more rural places like Garforth & Swillington are. There's a patch of green between us; there's an identity. Garforth has an identity; it's somewhere I know. Swillington has an identity. Those areas have an identity of their own that to me, having been born and bred in East Leeds, is not part of that kind of more city area of East Leeds. It just doesn't seem to make sense to me for that reason.

In terms of the way that we organise ourselves as councillors, we organise ourselves into community committees, and Killingbeck & Seacroft is in a community committee with Gipton & Harehills. We work really closely with the councillors. We work closely in terms of being in contact with each other and the way we support our residents, but also, we share projects and we share funding arrangements. I think it would make it a lot more difficult if we weren't in the same ward. It's really effective for us having the same Member of Parliament and being part of the same constituency because I think it means that we can support residents and we can support organisations a lot more effectively.

I think that's probably most of what I want to say. I think in terms of organisation, it makes sense for us to stay with Gipton & Harehills; that's my major point. It doesn't make sense for us to lose that connection with half of Gipton & Harehills and instead pick up a connection with some of the outer areas of Leeds.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Councillor Dye. If you'd just stay there for a moment, does anybody wish to raise a point of clarification?

ROGER PRATT: Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party. You mentioned, I think, a Leeds body which covered more than one ward. I wonder if I could clarify through you as chairman which wards are included in that particular area.

KATIE DYE: Are you referring to the community committee? That's the organisation?

ROGER PRATT: Yes. I think you referred to a Leeds committee, which I think you said –

KATIE DYE: Killingbeck & Seacroft, Gipton & Harehills and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill.

ROGER PRATT: It's the three wards.

CLLR KATIE DYE: Yes.

ROGER PRATT: I'm very grateful, thank you.

PAUL WILES: Anybody else like to ask for any points of clarification? Thank you very much, Councillor Dye. Thank you for giving us your time.

Right we're waiting for other speakers to turn up. I suggest we have a ten minute break.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: All right, ladies and gentlemen, could we restart because I know that our next scheduled speaker is here. Mr Bostan, would you like to come forward? If you'd like to start, just for the record, by stating what your name is and where you live, which town you're from, and then having done that, please start and say whatever you want.

JAVOID BOSTAN: Good afternoon. My name's Javid Bostan. I'm from Marshfields; I live on Bolingbroke Street in Marshfield, and I've lived there most of my life. I'm here today to voice my opinion on the Boundary Commission proposals with regard to Bradford East and the boundaries. I'd like to express my support for the boundaries for Bradford East to remain as they are.

I agree with the Boundary Commission's comments in this regard, particularly the fact that moving the boundaries would split up the communities and people within the communities. Bradford East covers most of Marshfields, and by moving the boundaries to Bradford South, which is Wibsey, I think there'll be a big division. All the local facilities that the people in Marshfield, that we've grown up and used – for example, the faith organisations or community centres – and all the people you've grown up with are all part of Bradford East, and I strongly support that it stays together. That's all, unless there's any questions.

PAUL WILES: Anybody got any questions of clarification they'd like to ask? Thank you very much, and thank you for coming and giving up your time.

Do we have Jason McCartney? If you'd like to start off, just for the record, by giving your name and the constituency you represent, and having done so, then please start whenever you wish.

JASON MCCARTNEY: Good evening everyone. I'm Jason McCartney, a Member of Parliament for Colne Valley in West Yorkshire. I've been Member of Parliament there twice from 2010 to 2017 and then again now since December 2019. I know the constituency really well. I live there full time, and my mom and dad are my constituents. They live in the constituency.

I regret losing any part of my constituency, but I accept that my seat is way too large. I was therefore expecting to lose a ward, and I must say there is real logic and simplicity in what the Boundary Commission have proposed. I currently have 84,731 constituents compared to Huddersfield's 66,012, and I can tell you that's a lot more casework and a lot more issues for my wonderful, dedicated team to deal with. In these circumstances, I firmly believe that the Boundary Commission have made, as I say, the most straightforward and simple logical conclusion in transferring one ward across to Huddersfield. As I said, I don't want to lose anywhere. I love representing all of my constituency, and I particularly love my Crosland Moor community, but they really do have strong links to the Huddersfield constituency. I even find myself visiting, as the Member of Parliament for Colne Valley, schools in the Huddersfield constituency because I have so many pupils from my area going there. For example, I was at Paddock School in Huddersfield constituency just a fortnight ago because so many of my constituents from Crosland Moor go to that school. In fact, speaking to the head teacher, it almost seemed as though 70%, 80%, 90% of the children going there from the Crosland Moor ward were actually at Paddock School in Huddersfield constituency. I even have visited recently Mount Pleasant School in Huddersfield again. So there really is close links between the Crosland Moor community and the Huddersfield constituency.

I know some people have suggested breaking up and splintering the Lindley ward. Now, the Lindley ward is a very large ward, and it's getting bigger all the time due to house building, and therefore, the numbers just don't work in transferring that whole ward. It has very very close links to the rest of my constituency. Take, for example, New Hey Road, which is the main arterial road going up through Lindley ward. It then continues on to two other wards in my constituency. It clips the edge of Golcar ward, and then, it continues up to Outlane, which is in the Colne Valley ward as well. I've done lots of campaigning up there in Outlane. It's a particularly beautiful part of the constituency. It's the highest part, and there's some wonderful views over to Calderdale, but speaking to residents there, they send their children to schools in the Lindley ward and on to New College on New Hey Road. They obviously use the hospital in Lindley ward, and they do their shopping there as well. There's a fairly big Sainsbury's on New Hey Road as well. So there are really close links between the Lindley ward and my constituency, particularly the Golcar ward and the Colne Valley ward as well.

I've talked about New College, which is in the Lindley ward. None of my schools in my parliamentary constituency actually have sixth form. They actually go to sixth form colleges, and one of the biggest and the best is New College in the Lindley ward. Thousands and thousands of students from my Colne Valley constituency during term time commute there and travel to New College in the Lindley ward to get their education there as well. I've also mentioned the hospital, which me and my family use and obviously my constituents do as well.

I'm not going to detain you much longer really because I think this really is quite straightforward. Certainly, there's no need to splinter or split up Lindley ward. It wouldn't make much sense. The solution the Boundary Commission have come up with is logical. It's simple. It doesn't split any of the wards in the Colne Valley constituency. It's a direct transfer, and it works numerically for the quotas that you've

talked about as well. I think nationally national parties have sort of recognised and acknowledged that as well.

I won't keep you any longer. I think what you've come forward with, as I say, is logical. It works with the numbers, and there's no splintering of any wards in my community as well. As I said, right at the beginning, it's hard for a Member of Parliament because you get to know communities and you love representing them. It would be like losing some family members, but I'll still be able to go and visit and see them, as I do anyway. I've just come from Huddersfield railway station now and just bumped into lots of people. It'll be sad to lose them, but the solution you've come up with is the logical straightforward one, and it works with numbers without splintering any of the wards. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you, Mr McCartney. Is there anybody who would like to ask any questions of clarification to Mr McCartney? All right thank you very much, and thank you very much for coming.

If you'd just like to start off by, for the record, giving your name and where you live, and then whenever you are ready, please start.

MOHAMMED KAMRAN: My name's Mohamed Kamran. I work in the VCSE sector in Bradford, and I'm from the Little Horton ward. I have lived in Marshfields for most of my life.

There's a couple of points I just want to raise. I think the Boundary Commission are proposing to keep our constituency exactly the same, and I would definitely endorse and encourage you to keep that proposal. There is some kind of noise or some voice on the grapevine that they are thinking of taking one of the boxes – postal, electoral boxes – and putting it into the Bradford South or Wibsey area. I don't know how true that is, but I just want to kind of give my opinion and say that I think that the Boundary Commission's proposal to keep the constituency as it is should remain like that. The house that I live in, just to give you an idea, has historically been in three different electoral constituencies. I think that has been hugely problematic for us to have had different MPs at different stages because of the change in the boundary. About 20 years ago, the area that I live in, or the area next to where I live in, won a government £50 million regeneration programme. To give you context, my house was number 1, but it wasn't the first house on the street. The house that had joined our house was number 65, and 65 was kind of connected to our house, but it was on the street next to us, adjacent to us, and this £50 million budget that came into the area benefited the house that was next to me but had absolutely zero benefit to us because we were not on the right side of this constituency. The line that was drawn was very arbitrary. It was an unknown natural boundary line.

I think now, the way that the Boundary Commission has the proposal as it exists, there's a natural boundary line which is on the inner ring road of Bradford. I propose that that natural boundary should remain – kind of taking our area or our couple of streets away from us and putting them into an area which is not a natural fit. There's a big ring road that kind of disconnects the two areas. It doesn't feel natural where there's a natural boundary where it is now, and just that whole thing of my neighbour having access to a number of services and grants at the time which benefited their

house hugely, their families hugely. We are living next door, and you're thinking, 'Well, why is this?' The area on the indices of whatever multiple deprivation are exactly the same.

I would just encourage the Boundary Commission to keep the boundary as it is, and if there was any kind of proposal to change and take our streets or our electoral box out of the area, I would strongly go against it. I think it splits families. It splits communities. It's not a natural boundary line, and I think it's hugely problematic. I think historically, we have been through pillar to post, and it's unfair on the residents that live there. I would just be proposing for the Boundary Commission, for you, to keep it as it is.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. If you'd just stay there for a moment, Mr Kamran. I mean just to say that it's very important to hear support for what the Boundary Commission is proposing. Not because we're terribly sensitive souls, but the danger is, of course, if we don't hear that people agree with it, then we might decide to change it. It's actually very helpful to hear that.

MOHAMMED KAMRAN: Just to add to that, I think it's extremely important for you to run events like this that consults with the people that live there and not to just kind of blindly railroad plans through without consulting the communities, which it has felt like. I was younger when these changes were made in the past, and maybe we didn't have the ability or the intelligence to contribute our thoughts, and now, it's slightly different. I think the fact that you are consulting, and I hope you listen to what we've said here today, for the people that live there – I think it is extremely important that it remains the way that it is. It's unfair to just keep on changing us and building new relationships with new elected members and stuff. It is difficult.

PAUL WILES: We will certainly listen, as we listen to everybody who's giving evidence both orally and in writing. All of this will be weighed when the Commission makes its final decision. Would anybody like to ask any questions for clarification for Mr Kamran? Thank you very much, indeed, and thank you for coming.

We seem to have not had one of the speakers we thought had arrived. So we'll just pause for a moment and see if they come.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Sorry to keep you waiting Councillor Dodds. Once you settle yourself down, if just for the record, you would give us your name and where you are from, your town, and then having done so, please start as soon as you want.

JOANNE DODDS: I'm Councillor Dodds, and I'm councillor for the Great Horton ward in the Bradford South constituency. As well as being councillor for the Great Horton ward, I'm also a chair of the Bradford South area committee, and this is my third submission to the boundary review, as I've made one with my ward colleagues as a local councillor and another as chair of Bradford South area committee. Today, my focus is on the role of the area committee in Bradford. Because in Bradford, we're particularly proud that our area committee is tied into our five Bradford constituencies. It helps the council to work more effectively with our MPs, with all the

councillors in the constituency, and most importantly, for me, in my role, I can help everybody work together with and for the people of Bradford South.

Before I go on to say how I want you to improve your boundary proposals for Bradford, I want to put on record my thanks to you for respecting the boundaries of the Bradford district. In the previous review, we showed through the Keep Bradford Bradford campaign how strongly we all felt about the importance of keeping Bradford wards coterminous with Bradford constituencies. It might be useful at this point to explain how the area committee system works and how it works alongside our People Can initiative. The Bradford South area committee currently includes the wards of Tong, Royds, Queensbury, Wibsey, Wyke and Great Horton. The Bradford West area committee includes Toller, Thornton and Allerton, City, Manningham, Heaton, and Clayton and Fairweather Green. We have devolved services to each area committee who have distinct teams that deliver services such as youth service, visual services, highways and community engagement. A few years ago, the police changed their boundaries to fit with the constituencies.

The work of the area committees is overseen by panels of councillors across the district, and I see it as my job as chair to communicate with the officers about what the constituents of Bradford South want and to also help with the offices, to build up a team of volunteers to assist them to deliver through our People Can approach. Now, I worry that the current boundary proposals will make this much more difficult. I'm sure that simply switching one ward with another to make Bradford South and Bradford West the correct size is immensely attractive. However, you can no doubt see it's not as simple on the ground. I'm aware that the parish council in Clayton has similar misgivings to myself, and that at a parish council meeting, the council resolved to write to yourselves. Councillor Ilyas states in the parish council submission that existing structures within the Bradford metropolitan district council currently are based off the structure of the constituencies and have allocated resources per constituency. This includes staffing and funding. Over many years, the parish council has been able to set positive changes on the district council's agenda and action trackers, particularly through the Bradford West area committee. Many of these actions have been making their way up the list, which has taken many years of lobbying, relationship building and campaigning by the parish council. The parish council strongly advocate that the village is not broken up in any way and maintains its affiliation to Bradford West.

Now, if all parties do not want to move over 20,000 voters between constituencies, disrupt service delivery teams and risk long-established relationships developed, then I think the Commission should look again at its recommendations. Now, I know your first concern will be, 'What will the impact of the proposed changes have on the wider proposals?' Well any changes will be contained within Bradford, as it will only take moving one polling district from either Bradford West or Bradford East into Bradford South. This will minimise the impact of Bradford's devolved structures and involve the movement of only a few hundred people instead of tens of thousands. It will also have the benefit of not seriously unbalancing the demographics of the Bradford South and Bradford West constituencies. Swapping the largely white ward of Clayton and Fairweather Green with the largely South Asian ward of Great Horton has obvious implications for Bradford; we've worked too hard in Bradford to improve community cohesion to have it jeopardised by a needless major boundary change.

Finally, in the last review, the Commission's final submission recognised the strength of our community arguments and retained the three Wibsey base wards of Royds, Wibsey and Great Horton together as a core of the Bradford South constituency. Simply by moving one polling district, you can again recognise the voice of the people and keep Wibsey together, so I can say with confidence that people can make a difference. Thank you.

PAUL WILES: If you'd just like to stay there for a moment, councillor. Has anybody got any questions for clarification that they'd like to ask? Thank you very much, indeed, and thank you for giving up your time and coming this evening.

Right our next speaker isn't due until ten too, so I'm going to suggest we have another break. So we convene again at 18:50.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Mr Khaliq, we are at the time that you'd booked a slot. If you'd start so that we have it on the record, just giving us your name and where you are from, which town, and then having done that, whenever you are ready, please start and say whatever it is you'd like to say.

SHANWAZ KHALIQ: My name's Shanwaz Khaliq, and I live in Leeds. I'm in the Harehills ward. I live in Harehills.

With regard to this proposal about the boundaries, I'm very concerned. I've lived all my life in Harehills. I was brought up in Harehills. I'm from an Asian family. My parents, who came into this country in the eighties, we've gone through a lot. There's a lot of history. There's a lot of difficulties we've encountered. I was very fortunate. I saw the struggles the Asian community was having, and to address those and coming from parents who could speak very little English, I was fortunate enough to go to university. Coming back into the community – it's going back over 20 years – we've done many works. We've got the largest mosque within Leeds. It's a purpose built. It's not an existing building. As a community with other wards, with the MP, we addressed concerns on what our requirements were. I don't have the time to go into detail, but a lot of the things we've done as a community with the mosque, we've taken into account what the requirements are and what the purpose is. We've got a community centre – we've got the Bilal Community Centre for youngsters. It's a peaceful community.

My concern is a major concern in the sense that I think we don't have any issues. There's never been any problems, any difficulties, in what we've achieved. By doing this boundary, you're causing a division, and I think that's going to affect us. We don't want that division to happen. We want to continue with the ties, with the links, with the community, with the history we've got, with all those cultural, religious.... No matter what we've got, it's a multicultural city and multicultural area. We are doing very well with all different people of different backgrounds, regardless of colour, regardless of religion, regardless of race. We've progressed in many ways, and we want to prosper even further. If we can improve further with what we've achieved so far, we want to continue to do so. With this division, it's a major concern. We think it's

going to definitely affect us, and we don't want this to go ahead, and I want you to take this on board. If there's something you can do, I would like you to do about it.

PAUL WILES: Can I just ask, just for clarification, when you talk about division, can you just specify for us what Harehills will be divided from and what you would prefer?

SHANWAZ KHALIQ: Currently, we're a part of East Leeds, so we're a part – I mean, just because we're in Harehills, it doesn't mean that people from other wards.... They are more than welcome to come in. The developments we've done in the area, we've had links with Seacroft; we've had links with Killingbeck, with Whinmoor. We're already connected to those wards. What we've achieved is with communication, with sitting down with the MPs, with the councillors. We've collectively done that. If you cause that split, then we won't be a part of that group.

PAUL WILES: Who will you be connected to?

SHANWAZ KHALIQ: So it's the boundary division, so if you move us to a different area, we'll be –

PAUL WILES: Thank you. I just wanted to make sure I understood exactly what you were saying. Would anybody like to ask any questions of clarification? All right, thank you very much indeed.

Just to make sure you understand, if there are any further thoughts that you've got, you can still put things in writing as well, if you want to. Thank you very much for giving up your time this evening, and thank you for saying what you've said.

We're going to have to pause again.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: First of all, just so that it's on the record, please repeat your name and where you're from, which town, and having done that, whenever you are ready, please say whatever it is you'd like to say.

HAMEED SAID: My name is Hameed Said, and I'm from Bradford – Great Horton branch, basically.

I'm just a resident of Great Horton in the Bradford South constituency. I was surprised when a friend of mine basically told me last year that, that where I live would be moved out of Bradford South and to the North West, while people in Fairweather Green and living north of Thornton Road would be moved into Bradford South. This seemed nonsensical to me, so I investigated the reason why this was recommended. To me, it seems that it is because those who drew up the initial proposals were very good at the paths but not so good at the geography. Looking at the map of the proposed constituency, I can see that Clayton sites detached from the rest of the Bradford South, as it is poorly connected by only a few country lines into the Queensbury ward, while the north of Clayton & Fairweather Green ward communities that have nothing whatsoever in common with Bradford South and are much more integrated with Thornton and Toller, which are remaining in Bradford

West. Again by looking at the map, I can see that the big chunk of Wibsey is being moved into Bradford West, while the rest of the Wibsey community remains in Bradford South.

Now, after looking at the map, I also considered the implication that these changes would have on the human geography of Bradford. The striking impact was that the proposal would move the largely white ward of Clayton into Bradford South and the largely South Asian ward of Great Horton into Bradford West, which will in turn make the mainly white constituency in the Bradford South even whiter and mainly South Asian constituency in Bradford West even more South Asian. This may have no effect on our efforts to build a humanist Bradford that is more at ease with itself. The reduction of ethnic diversity in both constituencies may not lead, over time, to different pressures in each area that reduce community understanding, which in turn leads to greater ethnic tensions. However, many people are worried that this may happen if the current boundary proposals are passed. I would like to ask this one question: are you confident that the proposed boundary changes won't have these negative impacts? I would say to you, if you have even the smallest concern about the possible consequences mentioned, then you should look for an alternative way to making Bradford South slightly bigger.

I know that you must make the new Parliamentary constituencies conform with the set sizes set by the law. I'm also aware that the law gives you some flexibility in the way you can create these new constituencies. You can move units of wards that are smaller than whole wards in and out of the constituency. I will ask you to look at moving into Bradford South a small part of Bradford East or Bradford West. This would avoid disrupting all the people in both the Great Horton and the Clayton and Fairweather Green wards, protect ethnic diversity and ensure that the people of Wibsey remain in one community and that those living north of Thornton Road are not moved into the south. Thank you for allowing me the time to speak to you.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, indeed. If you just stay there for a moment. I mean, first of all, to say, the purpose of holding these consultations is precisely so that we can think about whether the original proposals should remain or whether they should be changed. It's very important that people do come and talk to us like this. Can I ask if anybody's got any questions of clarification that they would like to ask? I think you've been very clear, and I certainly understood exactly the point you were making. So thank you very much indeed.

We now haven't got another speaker due until 19:20. So I think we should break for another ten minutes and start again at 19:15.

[After a short adjournment]

PAUL WILES: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for your patience, I suggest we restart. Mr Barri are you happy to go ahead?

Mr Barri, just so that we've got it on the record because this is being recorded, as you know, repeat what your name is and then tell us where you live – just the town – and then whenever you are ready, you are free to start and say whatever you'd like to say.

ABDUL BARRI: My name is Abdul Barri, and I live in Harehills. I'm originally from Newcastle and I came to Leeds in 1995 as a result of being fortunate enough to be finding a job here. When I first came to Harehills, obviously, I had no knowledge of any particular persons. I didn't know anybody. I was quite apprehensive when I came here; I was quite young as well at the time but as soon as I came to Harehills where I was working, I felt part of the community. I felt that I belonged somehow. I was quite surprised that I felt at home because where I come from in Newcastle, we have a similar sort of area where I come from. As you know, Harehills and Gipton is a very deprived area of the city, and so that's the background that I'm from. I didn't feel out of place at all. As a result of my work, I came to meet a lot of the local residents who came to our agency for advice and assistance with their problems. This resulted in me, of course, getting to know them and dealing with all the issues that came through the door. One of the major issues that I deal with, obviously, was with benefit claims. I was an advisor at a local advice agency. A lot of the people within the region were financially struggling to make ends meet.

So Harehills is an area that I feel needs to be respected in that way because of the people that live there. We need to appreciate their needs. We need to understand that they have different ways of life. There's all sorts of different nationalities living there, predominantly Asian Muslims, which is what I'm part of. Our needs are different to needs of other areas of the city. I think that it would be wrong for us to split Harehills and Gipton into two because there's no logical reasons as to why we should move from one constituency to another given the fact that the constituent members of the two different areas are different. Therefore, the voices will be different. I don't think we will be heard as much if we were to be moved from where we are.

Our social inclusion, our social cohesion, the social ties are very important aspects that I think that the Commission should bear in mind when deciding the proposal of splitting the ward up. It's the only ward I understand is being split up. I don't really see the logical reason why that's been done. I think if you did split it up, then you are going to break up the ties, the social cohesion that has been painstakingly brought up into play over the years. I think if you were to do what you are proposing, then of course that cohesion will be broken. I think that isn't something that Harehills and its members are willing or wanting to happen because we have all sorts of issues. I don't think those issues will be dealt with as properly as they would be if they were within the one community, within Harehills and Gipton rather than being split up into the proposals that are being made.

The other issue that I would like to raise, of course, is the fact that it's important that we bear in mind the need to respect the constituent members' views and to act upon that rather than just to pretend that we're doing something that's good for the community when in fact what you are doing is probably creating disharmony within the community. I get the feeling that if you were to split the ward up, it's a bit similar to Grenfell a few years back – we had that tragedy, and they are sitting right on the edge of Kensington and Chelsea. You got two areas where it's affluent and deprived, and that's what you are going to end up doing here. If you were to split up Harehills and Gipton, you're going to bring in Garforth & Swillington. I mean, Garforth and Harehills are worlds apart. I feel that that's the sort of creation you're going to make. I

think there will be a lot of resentment within the Harehills constituents if they were to be moved from where they are.

Those are my small points. You probably have heard these before from other people, but those are the points that I'd like to raise. I would like the Commission to bear those in mind when you are making your proposals because I don't think you should split it. I think you should just keep it as it is.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much. You've been very clear actually, and that's very helpful. Can I just ask, does anybody want to ask any questions for clarification? Thank you very much indeed, and thank you for coming.

Now Mr Mahmood, would you be happy to... Rather like our last speaker, if you'd start off just by saying, so that we've got it on the record, what your name is and where you're from. Having done that, then in your own time, feel free to say what you want.

MOHAMMED MAHMOOD: Can I just thank you for taking time out to do this consultation? I think consultation is a great means of actually getting people's feedback.

So my name's Mohammed Mahmood. I'm born and bred here in Harehills. I bleed white basically, as they say. I've lived all my life here within the locality of Harehills. My main position within the community is that I work as a volunteer for the Muslim Cultural Society, which incorporates the main Bilal Mosque here in Leeds. I've been doing volunteer work with them for last 30, 40 years. It's not just a mosque; it's a community hub. We try to cater for not just the religious congregations but we've got facilities that offer things like sports and cultural needs and stuff like that.

As my colleagues stated before me, I think community and community cohesion is an integral part of harmony. We just feel that it always seems to be the inner city areas that seem to be divided, but you might say picked upon. It just kind of breeds a bit of resentment within people. We feel fairly strongly about our community. It's a very diverse community. There's people from the South Asian community as well as, recently, we've had representation from the Eastern Europeans. It's a community that's actually lived in harmony for a fairly long time, and that is not to say that we don't get on with the white community within our profiles. It's just the makeup that the demographic is so different to what is in Swillington and Garforth. You might say, well, what does he know about Swillington and Garforth? Well, I actually work in the local authority. I do a lot of highway schemes and stuff like that. I know the areas around Leeds fairly well, and I know the demographic makeup of Garforth & Swillington. It's primarily a white area, probably you might say slightly middle class. Do they have any kind of consistency in the harmonies within the community we live in? Possibly not. If you're just about the numbers game in terms of having the same number of constituents in each kind of constituency area, I can understand where you are coming from, but I think there's a greater need and a greater case for having harmony cultural needs. I just don't feel that there is that kind of interaction between us and people from Garforth. I don't think we have the same priorities. I don't think we have the same needs. I don't think we have the same cultural background, and those are facts. It's not about black or white or on basis of religion. It's about stating

the facts. It's a totally different demographic. It's Garforth & Swillington; it's just another side of Leeds basically. I just feel that from our point of view, it's important we take that community cohesion in place.

I think people within Harehills and Gipton have the same values, have the same needs, have the same problems, have the same issues. I think it's important that we take that into consideration. Working for the mosque and being involved with doing some outreach work, I know the issues that exist within Harehills and Gipton and the same issues that actually will be within Garforth & Swillington. I'm sure you probably had representation from those wards over as well. They probably will be making the same arguments as we are. I think it's just about understanding people's needs, understanding that people have deep-rooted heritage within Harehills and Gipton. I think it's just understanding that, you know – I'm not saying it's going to destroy harmony, but you know, why change something or why fix something that doesn't need fixing? Basically, I think that's my point of view. I think I've just highlighted exactly the same kind of words and sentiments my earlier colleagues kind of portrayed, and I think you'd probably get the same kind of story from other people because that is the reality of where we live and what we represent. I think that's probably it basically.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much, Mr Mahmood. Like the previous speaker, you've been very clear, and that's very helpful. I'm grateful you thank us, but actually it was Parliament that determined there should be such public consultations. It was built into the legislation. That is a necessary and important part of the process, and it's there precisely so that we can compare the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission against what people think of them and where they live. So that's the point, and thank you very much indeed. Can I just ask you to stay there for a moment? Has anybody got any questions of clarification that they would like to ask Mr Mahmood?

TONY BELLRINGER: Mr Mahmood, thank you. You said you are a representative from – is it the Bilal Mosque?

MOHAMMED MAHMOOD: Yeah Bilal Mosque. I think I made a written representation as well.

TONY BELLRINGER : Obviously, is it the one located in Harehills itself?

MOHAMMED MAHMOOD: Yeah. It's on Conway Road.

TONY BELLRINGER : But it also serves the Gipton area as well.

MOHAMMED MAHMOOD: It does. Yeah.

TONY BELLRINGER : Does it serve a wider area than that? And if so, how far would you say your congregation expands?

MOHAMMED MAHMOOD: We've got quite a few local mosques. I would say in terms of the local congregation and five daily prayers, you probably could talk within a four or five-mile radius of the mosque. In terms of the Friday prayers, you'll get

your taxi drivers, and people who actually do trade will actually come to the mosque. It's really the heartbeat of the community, basically, is the mosque. There are other mosques as well, basically, but like I said, I've been working for that mosque for a voluntary basis for the last 30-odd years.

Sorry just coming back to the consultation, I know the importance of consultation because we do highway schemes, so we do do consultations, and schemes are actually devised or formatted or whatever when we do get feedback. So I do understand this interaction with people that you're trying to engage with. That's why consultation to me is a really important part of my job.

PAUL WILES: Any other points of clarification people would like to ask? Thank you very much, indeed, and thank you for giving up your time.

Now I think we've got Mr Shahzad as well in the room. Are you ready, sir, to come to the table? Just because this is being recorded, just state your name and where you are from or the area, and then having done that in your own time, please just start saying whatever it is you want to say to us.

MOHAMMED SHAHZAD: My name is Mohammed Shahzad. I'm an elected councillor in the Moortown ward. I live in Harehills, and I've been living there for nearly 45 years – I'm giving away my age here, I'll be 45 towards the end of this month. I was actually born in Harehills as well in East Leeds, as we call it. The proposed changes have no impact on my representative ward, which is Moortown, where I am elected.

Harehills is a very diverse and welcoming multicultural area with good community-to-community relationships built up over time. Harehills for everyone is the start of East Leeds, and that has always been the case. Families from Harehills have got friends and family living throughout East Leeds. Many workers spend their lives living and working in East Leeds and never have to leave East Leeds to seek work elsewhere or housing elsewhere. Transport in East Leeds is linked to cover the existing work, family and friend connections that exist with Harehills and the rest of East Leeds. The people in Harehills represent the same socioeconomic backgrounds, whether they live in Harehills, Gipton, Seacroft, Cross Gates, Temple Newsam or Whinmoor. During the COVID pandemic, East Leeds came together as a family through third sector, voluntary organisations working together, such as CATCH, based in Harehills, Space2 and the fire station, based in Gipton, to help the residents of East Leeds who were vulnerable and most in need during the COVID pandemic. The Bilal Community Centre based in Harehills also opened its doors to the whole of the East Leeds community for walk-in vaccinations.

Many organisations have worked hard to build a harmonious and cohesive community in East Leeds. East Leeds residents stand together on many issues, such as improving the Fearnville Sports Centre, which is the go-to leisure centre for East Leeds residents from Harehills, Gipton, Seacroft and Killingbeck. The proposed changes to the Leeds East constituency, as I know it and as do other residents that live in East Leeds and all throughout Leeds, would completely change not just the Leeds East constituency but East Leeds as it is known and its identity. Harehills has been an integral part of East Leeds for nearly 70 years, since the inception of the

constituency. The good work done over many years to build the good community relationships amongst the diverse communities will be undone. Many networking opportunities will be lost. The changes would leave some schools on the border of two constituencies, with catchment areas also falling into two different constituencies.

The removal of Harehills from Leeds East will completely change the landscape of the constituency, removing the most culturally diverse section of the constituency from it. It will remove the iconic purpose-built Bilal Mosque from the constituency and many other cultural buildings. I believe the removal of Harehills from Leeds is very decisive and uncalled for, with no clear reason for Harehills being removed from the Leeds East constituency, and putting an unnecessary divide with no clear manmade or national border other than some secondary roads, which don't really define a border, and separating the existing community from each other. As I've said, it's very uncalled for.

It makes no sense to include villages such as Garforth & Swillington into Leeds East constituency since these villages have their own identity and are not linked to Leeds East and never have been. To reach the villages of Garforth & Swillington, you have to go across to the other side of the motorway. The two villages of Garforth & Swillington don't share the same socioeconomic background as the rest of East Leeds. If the size of the Leeds East constituency does have to be increased, then sections of Harehills which were previously removed from Leeds East constituency should be added back into the constituency and also include Burmantofts in the constituency to have the A64 ring road as a natural border between Leeds East and Leeds Central constituency. The residents living in the old parts of Harehills and Burmantofts share the same socioeconomic backgrounds, and it would be a benefit for Leeds East constituency since many of these residents also see themselves as East Leeds residents.

I hope the Boundary Commission note the arguments that have been made and come to the same conclusion as me. I know the residents of East Leeds think Harehills should remain part of Leeds East constituency, as it has always been an integral part of East Leeds and Leeds East constituency.

PAUL WILES: Thank you very much indeed for that. Does anybody want to ask any questions of clarification? All right, thank you very much indeed. I certainly heard that, and I'm sure my colleagues from the Commission heard that very clearly. Thank you very much and thank you for giving up your time.

[After a short adjournment]

I propose we finish for today. I think that's given a reasonable time for somebody to turn up. So, let's close for the day. Thank you everybody. It's been a long day, but it's been a very interesting day.