



East Midlands - Revised proposals recommendations
Commission paper

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electoral range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to the East Midlands: 47 (an increase of one from the current number, 46)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): five (11%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: six (13%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: one (Rutland and Stamford)
- Total number of local authorities in region: 35
- Local authorities which completed (or are due to complete) a local government electoral review after the BCE cut-off date of 1 December 2020:¹ nine (Amber Valley, Blaby, Charnwood, Chesterfield, Derby, Derbyshire Dales, Mansfield, North Kesteven, and Rushcliffe).

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted - and subsequent Orders made - by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Derbyshire, including City of Derby ²	790,982	10.78	11
Leicestershire, including City of Leicester ³	754,549	10.28	10*
Lincolnshire	551,904	7.52	7
Northamptonshire, comprising of the two unitary authorities of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire ⁴	529,899	7.22	7
Nottinghamshire, including City of Nottingham ⁵	823, 638	11.22	11
Rutland	30,154	0.41	n/a*
Totals	3,481,126	47.43	46

*The figure is for the existing sub-region, where Leicestershire and Rutland are considered together, as Rutland was not entitled to a whole constituency.

² Hereafter referred to as Derbyshire

³ Hereafter referred to as Leicestershire

⁴ Hereafter referred to as Northamptonshire

⁵ Hereafter referred to as Nottinghamshire

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the East Midlands into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Derbyshire	790,982	10.78	11	11	71,907
Leicestershire	754,549	10.28	10*	10	75,455
Lincolnshire and Rutland	582,058	7.93	7**	8	72,757
Northamptonshire	529,899	7.22	7	7	75,700
Nottinghamshire	823,638	11.22	11	11	74,876
Region totals	3,481,126	47.43	46	47	74,067

*The existing sub-region is Leicestershire and Rutland

** The existing sub-region is Lincolnshire only

Number of representations received

In the East Midlands region, the Commission received a total of 3,382 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 2,484 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 898 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were three in the East Midlands region (Nottingham, Leicester and Northampton). Some of these related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ⁶	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ⁷	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	30	25	55
Official political party response ⁸	17	13	30
Peer from the House of Lords	3	1	4
Local councillor	159	87	246
Local authority	9	10	19
Parish or town council	41	14	55

⁶ As declared by the respondents themselves.

⁷ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁸ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Other organisation	51	12	63
Member of the public	2,174	736	2,910
Totals	2,484	898	3,382

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire (except the Ashfield and Nottingham North and Kimberley constituencies). However, more generally very few representations have been received with regard to Derbyshire.

Campaigns and Petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns were received. In the East Midlands region, these were as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
We the electors in Leicester vigorously oppose the initial proposals put by the Boundary Commission to move Belgrave ward [Leicester West and Glenfield]	BCE-86576	Oppose	2,569
Keep Hucknall together [Sherwood]	BCE-85320	Support	416
Keep Abington and Phippsville in Northampton North [Northampton South]	BCE-95872	Oppose	75

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

Initial proposals sub-regions	Revised proposals sub-regions
Derbyshire	Derbyshire
Leicestershire	Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland
Lincolnshire and Rutland	Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire	

In the initial proposals the Commission decided to divide the East Midlands region into five sub-regions. These were: (1) Derbyshire; (2) Leicestershire; (3) Lincolnshire and Rutland; (4) Northamptonshire; and (5) Nottinghamshire. The Commission noted that the mathematical constituency entitlement is 0.41 in Rutland and 7.52 in Lincolnshire - this means that both counties will have to contain a constituency that crosses their respective county boundaries. The Commission therefore proposed that Rutland and Lincolnshire were combined to form a sub-region, to avoid more than one constituency that crossed a county boundary.

While there was general support for the proposed sub-regions, many respondents to the consultation contended that keeping Rutland with Leicestershire would better reflect the statutory factors; however, few made positive suggestions as to an alternative pair for Lincolnshire. The Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) suggested a constituency comprising Rutland, nine South Kesteven (Lincolnshire) wards and three Harborough (Leicestershire) wards - this would permit minimum change to the existing

constituencies in Lincolnshire, while allowing a beneficial pattern of constituencies across Leicestershire, including allowing three constituencies to be wholly contained in Leicester. The Assistant Commissioners recognise the strengths of the arguments to alter the sub-regional grouping, particularly the fact that this would result in less change in both Leicestershire and Lincolnshire than had been suggested in the initial proposals, and therefore recommend that Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland be treated together as a single sub-region.

As in the initial proposals the aim has been to try to minimise changes to existing constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable.

Under the revised proposals six of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, as opposed to five in the initial proposals. In the Derbyshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire sub-regions the number of constituencies crossing multiple local authorities is the same as in the initial proposals; however, this number has increased by one in the Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland sub-region. As in the initial proposals, one constituency crosses county boundaries - although that same constituency is now recommended to cross two county boundaries rather than one.

Assistant Commissioners recommend revising the composition of 19 of the 47 constituencies proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, Assistant Commissioners have decided not to recommend any revisions to the composition of the remaining 28. Of the 19 constituencies where they have recommended revising the composition, they also recommend revising the name of four. Of the 28 constituencies where they do not recommend revising the composition, they recommend revising the name of three.⁹

⁹ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	5	6	18	18	27	15	5	1	0	3	0	34
Revised proposals	6	7	21	13	27	14	6	0	1	6	0	39

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Derbyshire	5	3	3	0	7	2	2	0	0	0	0	11
Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and	1	2	7	8	8	8	2	0	1	1	0	13

Rutland												
Northamptonshire	0	0	6	1	5	2	0	0	0	4	0	6
Nottinghamshire	0	2	5	4	7	2	2	0	0	1	0	9
Totals	6	7	21	13	27	14	6	0	1	6	0	39

Derbyshire

Of the 11 existing constituencies in this sub-region, three have electorates that are currently outside the permitted electorate range - Derbyshire Dales and Mid Derbyshire constituencies are below the range, and the South Derbyshire constituency is above. Only three wards were required to be transferred between the constituencies to ensure they were all within the permitted electorate range. The South West Parishes ward was transferred from the Derbyshire Dales constituency to Mid Derbyshire, and the Hatton and Hilton wards were transferred from the South Derbyshire constituency to Derbyshire Dales. As the initial proposals represented such little change from the existing constituencies, the initial proposals in Derbyshire received a very low level of objection.

We did receive some opposition to the proposed Mid Derbyshire constituency on the grounds of weak community ties within the constituency; however, many of the comments received indicated that this is an issue in the existing constituency. In particular, BCE-55490 and BCE-88120 argued for the lack of community ties between the more urban areas of Allestree, Oakwood and Quarndon surrounding Derby and the rural communities focused on Belper. We received a small number of counter-proposals suggesting alternative constituencies in Derbyshire (BCE-56943, BCE-75245, BCE-79456 and BCE-82042), although, of these, only BCE-55438 attempted to address the issues in Mid Derbyshire. This proposal suggested changes to five of the 11 constituencies in Derbyshire focusing on retaining Hilton and Hatton with Etwall. The proposal includes Belper within a Derbyshire Dales constituency, Ashbourne, Hilton, Hatton and two Derby wards in a South West Derbyshire constituency, and a second constituency crossing the City of Derby boundary with the South Derbyshire constituency including the Chellaston ward. This

proposal results in wider disruption to the existing constituencies in Derbyshire, particularly a proposed 'South West Derbyshire' constituency that crosses five local authorities.

The initial proposals were supported by the Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664), Green Party (BCE-97544), Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) and Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369). The four qualifying parties approved of the minimal change made to the constituencies; however, they all recommended that the proposed 'Ilkeston and Long Eaton' constituency should retain the name of the existing constituency, 'Erewash'. This is also supported by Maggie Throup MP (BCE-73287 and BCE-96998), Derbyshire County Council (BCE-83979) and a large number of local residents (examples being BCE-71616 and BCE-73208).

Recommendations:

Given that the initial proposals represent such minimal change from the existing constituencies, and have proved largely uncontroversial in the consultation periods, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Commission retains the proposed boundaries set out in the initial proposals in Derbyshire. Reflecting the overwhelming public response, and the policy of retaining the names of largely unchanged constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners recommend the proposed Ilkeston and Long Eaton constituency should retain the name of Erewash.

Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland

Leicestershire

The Leicestershire sub-region was allocated ten constituencies in the initial proposals - the same as the current number allocated to Leicestershire and Rutland together, though the initial proposals separated the two, including Rutland in a sub-region with Lincolnshire. One existing constituency is within the permitted electorate range, one falls below, and the remaining eight are above. In formulating the initial proposals in Leicestershire, the Commission noted the City of Leicester unitary authority has a mathematical entitlement of 3.00 constituencies and the Leicestershire County Council area has a mathematical entitlement of 7.28

constituencies. If the Commission were to consider the City of Leicester separate from the county area, it would mean Leicester would be allocated three constituencies and Leicestershire seven. The electorate for Leicestershire is 534,229, which when allocated seven constituencies would result in an average electorate of 76,318, towards the upper end of the permitted electorate range. Consequently, the decision was made to cross the City of Leicester unitary authority boundary, in order to facilitate a pattern of constituencies for Leicestershire which better reflected the statutory factors.

We received opposition to the initial proposals for all three Leicester constituencies, with the comments focusing on the inclusion of Glenfield in a city constituency, and the proposal to transfer the Belgrave, Spinney Hills, and Westcotes wards from their existing constituencies. Many representations were received, including from Edward Argar (MP for Charnwood, BCE-84793) and BCE-93587, arguing that Glenfield does not share community ties with the City of Leicester and should be included in a county constituency - these sentiments were supported by the Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) and Leicester City Council (BCE-74892), which support retaining three constituencies wholly within the city boundary. The proposal to transfer the Belgrave ward from Leicester East to Leicester West and Glenfield was particularly poorly received. Respondents argued strongly that this ward forms the 'heart' of a coherent Leicester East community (particularly Keith Vaz, BCE-97495). Representations also outline the Belgrave ward is the centre for many community and religious groups which service the neighbouring North Evington, Rushey Mead, and Troon wards (BCE-61690, BCE-85963) - this was supported by a petition which attracted 2,569 signatories (BCE-86576). Similarly, Jonathan Ashworth (MP for Leicester South, BCE-73649) among many others provided evidence that the Spinney Hills ward is an intrinsic part of the Highfields community of Leicester South alongside the Stoneygate and Wycliffe wards, and therefore opposed its inclusion in the Leicester East constituency. We received numerous counter-proposals attempting to address the issues in Leicester (examples include BCE-75229 and BCE-84476); however, only the Labour Party proposal (BCE-95649) submitted during the secondary consultation proposed Belgrave and Spinney Hills remaining in their current constituencies without crossing the city boundary. This is achieved through transferring the Aylestone ward to Leicester West and dividing either the Evington or North Evington wards, with one polling district being included in a Leicester South constituency.

The initial proposals for the Hinckley and Bosworth, and North West Leicestershire constituencies were generally supported. There was some opposition to including the Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe ward in the Hinckley and Bosworth constituency - BCE-74256 and BCE-92630 propose to retain the Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe ward in North West Leicestershire by dividing the Sence Valley

ward between the Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire constituencies - this proposal makes no further changes to the initial proposals.

In relation to the proposed Melton and Syston constituency we received strong opposition to the separation of Rutland from Leicestershire - in particular separating the Melton and Rutland local authorities. Alicia Kearns (MP for Rutland and Melton, BCE-84062 and BCE-96679), Melton Borough Council (BCE-78673), BCE-55078 and BCE-95971 all provided evidence that Melton shares extensive community ties and service provision with Rutland. Representations also argue there are weak community ties between the rural Melton local authority and the more urban Syston area - examples include BCE-81940 and BCE-87498. Jane Hunt (MP for Loughborough, BCE-85971), BCE-79986 and BCE-85947 all oppose the initial proposal to include The Wolds ward in the Melton and Syston constituency, stating the wish for it to remain in the Loughborough constituency. We received one counter-proposal (BCE-79456) which combines part of the Melton local authority with Rutland and Lincolnshire; however, this results in two additional constituencies that cross the county boundary between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The general principle of pairing Rutland with Lincolnshire is supported by the Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664), Green Party (BCE-97544), Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) and Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369).

The initial proposals for Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Harborough, and Mid Leicestershire attracted some support - notably from the Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959, BCE-92603 and BCE-94369), BCE-72854, and BCE-90662 who argue the initial proposals for a coterminous Harborough constituency and a Blaby, Oadby and Wigston constituency have strong community ties; however, we received a significantly larger number of representations opposing the initial proposals. Alberto Costa (MP for South Leicestershire, BCE-92016), BCE-63428, BCE-64084, BCE-93587 and BCE-97468 all suggested that the initial proposals were unnecessarily disruptive, and that these constituencies ought to be closer aligned to the existing boundaries. The Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) and Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) both submitted proposals for Harborough and South Leicestershire constituencies that closely resemble the existing configuration.

We received numerous counter-proposals for Leicestershire. The Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369) propose changes to the Loughborough, Melton and Syston, and Mid Leicestershire constituencies. Their proposal retains The Wolds ward in Loughborough and unites Sileby in one constituency - this is also supported by the Leicester Liberal Democrats (BCE-85825 and

BCE-92603); however, this does not address any of the wider issues in Leicester and Leicestershire. BCE-87423 (Jonathan Stansby, revised counter-proposal of first consultation submission BCE-54739) proposes a pattern of constituencies that closely resembles the initial proposals, but with an alternative city crossing, retaining Glenfield in a county constituency and instead proposes to cross the city boundary at Braunstone Town and Eyres Monsell; however, it also pairs the Melton local authority with Market Harborough. The Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) propose another alternative crossing of the city boundary, including two Oadby wards in a revised Leicester East constituency. This proposal includes the three 'Harborough villages' wards with the Melton local authority and Syston, the remaining Oadby and Wigston wards with Market Harborough, a revived South Leicestershire constituency, The Wolds ward within Loughborough, and Spinney Hills within Leicester South; however, this proposal does not return Belgrave to Leicester East. The Conservative counter-proposal was supported by the seven Conservative Leicestershire MPs in a joint submission (BCE-63565).

We also received counter-proposals that avoided crossing the City of Leicester boundary. BCE-56943 proposed a Melton and Syston constituency that includes the 'Harborough villages', and South Leicestershire and Wigston and Market Harborough constituencies that align to the existing constituencies. BCE-94367 proposed a constituency that combines the Melton local authority with Market Harborough, a coterminous Blaby, a South Leicestershire constituency that includes Oadby and Wigston, and The Wolds in Loughborough. These proposals do not cross the City of Leicester boundary, albeit at the expense of disrupting the proposed Loughborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, and North West Leicestershire constituencies, which were broadly supported by representations. BCE-75591 suggested a similar pattern of constituencies to BCE-94367; however, it is more disruptive to all the existing constituencies. The Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) accepted the initial proposals for the Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire constituencies, and suggested only a minor revision to Loughborough, but proposed a substantial reconfiguration of Harborough and Blaby, Oadby and Wigston in order to better reflect the existing constituencies, facilitated by proposing a Rutland and Stamford constituency that includes the 'Harborough villages' wards, thus extending the constituency to cover three counties.

Recommendations:

The Assistant Commissioners note that several interlocking aspects of the initial proposals caused significant opposition during the consultation periods. The proposals to divide the existing Rutland and Melton constituency, include Glenfield within a Leicester constituency, and propose a Harborough constituency coterminous with the borough of the same name, among others, together amounted to a pattern of initially proposed constituencies which deviated substantially from the existing constituencies. While acknowledging the numerical constraints in this area, the Assistant Commissioners' view is that this level of disruption is not necessary to reflect the statutory factors, and thus recommend reverting to a configuration which more closely resembles the existing pattern of constituencies.

As such, and noting the force of local opinion on the matter, the Assistant Commissioners considered whether the existing pairing of Rutland and Leicestershire could be retained. The Assistant Commissioners note that no counter-proposals were received that proposed Rutland and Melton Mowbray in the same constituency, and that the general principle of a Lincolnshire and Rutland sub-region was supported by all qualifying political parties. Furthermore, the Assistant Commissioners recognise that Lincolnshire needs to be paired with another county to make a whole number of constituencies, and that Rutland is clearly the preferable option for Lincolnshire given both the numerical constraints, and the lack evidence received for local ties with Nottinghamshire or Leicestershire (see Lincolnshire and Rutland below). Even were an alternative pairing for Lincolnshire to be proposed, a Leicestershire and Rutland sub-region would have a theoretical entitlement of 7.69, almost exactly as numerically constraining for eight constituencies as Leicestershire alone would be for seven. The Assistant Commissioners' view therefore is that there is no viable option to retain Leicestershire and Rutland as a self-contained sub-region.

The Assistant Commissioners consequently considered whether a solution could be found which allocated seven constituencies to Leicestershire alone, despite the numerical constraints which that imposes. The Assistant Commissioners noted counter-proposal BCE-56943, which proposes Harborough, Mid Leicestershire, and South Leicestershire constituencies that closely resemble the existing constituencies; however, felt unable to recommend it as this is achieved at the cost of significant disruption to the otherwise well-received Hinckley and Bosworth, and North West Leicestershire constituencies. Consideration was given to an alternative to

this proposal, which sought to retain the initial proposals for Hinckley and Bosworth, and North West Leicestershire; however, this necessitated two split wards in the county, and the division of several communities. The Assistant Commissioners also considered the counter-proposals that paired the Melton local authority with Market Harborough (BCE-75591 and BCE-94367) and acknowledged that this could constitute a plausible solution; however, they noted the proposals were disruptive to existing constituencies and separated areas with established community ties. The Assistant Commissioners felt that insufficient evidence had been received to demonstrate that the Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough pairing would be an improvement as the proposals were not widely commented on during consultation. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners do not consider the potential disadvantages of these proposals to have been sufficiently explored by respondents. Consequently, the Assistant Commissioners are of the view that any seven-seat arrangement for Leicestershire requires unsatisfactory trade-offs, and therefore accept the logic of the initial proposals that some pairing is required for Leicestershire in order to alleviate the numerical pressure.

Nonetheless, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the opposition to the pairing of Leicestershire with Leicester in the initial proposals. They acknowledged that it would be desirable if the city could be considered separately from the county due to the disparate urban and rural communities - this was particularly highlighted during the Leicester public hearing (BCE-97450 and BCE-97529). They note the strength of feeling from residents of Glenfield evident in the representations received and, having visited the area, observed that despite its proximity to Leicester the area has a character distinct from the city. The Assistant Commissioners further note that several alternative crossings of the city boundary were proposed, such as at Oadby (Conservative Party, BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) or Braunstone Town (BCE-54739, BCE-79456 and BCE-87423); however, they are unpersuaded that any of these would be any more desirable than crossing the city boundary at Glenfield. Consideration was given to the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369), which accepted the proposed Leicester West and Glenfield constituency; however, the Assistant Commissioners felt that this proposal did not sufficiently address the issues raised for the proposed Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Harborough, and Mid Leicestershire constituencies - the most disruptive aspects of the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners note the counter-proposal of the Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649), which alleviates the numerical pressure on Leicestershire by including three wards from Leicestershire in a revised Rutland and Stamford constituency. This proposal endorses the Melton and Syston, Hinckley and Bosworth, and North West Leicestershire from the initial proposals,

but makes alterations to the remaining constituencies, which align them much more closely to the existing pattern of constituencies, including returning Glenfield to a Leicestershire constituency. The Assistant Commissioners note that representations from the three Leicestershire wards proposed to be transferred to Rutland and Stamford (the 'Harborough villages') broadly supported retaining their existing link to Rutland and share common rural characteristics; however, they also acknowledge that this proposal creates a unique constituency containing parts of three counties. As such, the Assistant Commissioners considered an amended version of this proposal, which did not cross the Leicestershire county boundary and instead included the Harborough villages in a revised Melton and Syston constituency. Although they felt that this option had some merit, and retained most of the benefits of the Labour counter-proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) for Leicestershire, the Assistant Commissioners noted that this proposal requires two wards to be split in the City of Leicester to resolve the broken community ties in Leicester East and Leicester South, and does not address the concerns of residents of Glenfield and their desire to maintain the City of Leicester boundary. On balance therefore, the view of the Assistant Commissioners is that the Labour counter-proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) best reflects the statutory factors and addresses the objections raised in consultation, and therefore recommend that it is adopted the Commission, subject to some alterations, as set out below.

The Assistant Commissioners noted that there was general support for the proposed Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire constituencies, and noted that these were endorsed by all four qualifying parties. They acknowledged that there was some opposition to the Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe ward being included in the proposed Hinckley and Bosworth constituency; however, this ward cannot be retained in the North West Leicestershire constituency without transferring another out. The Assistant Commissioners noted the counter-proposal BCE-92630; however, their assessment is that the case for splitting a ward here does not meet the criteria set out in the Commission's policy. Therefore, they recommend that the initial proposals are retained for these constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners note that the Loughborough constituency was broadly well received, except for the decision to transfer The Wolds ward to the Melton and Syston constituency, which drew opposition - representations argue The Wolds ward should be included with Loughborough due to the strength of community ties. The Assistant Commissioners observed that every counter-proposal received suggested including this ward within Loughborough, except the Labour Party proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) and BCE-54739. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the Conservative Party counter-proposal

(BCE-85837 and BCE-96664, also endorsed by BCE-85947 and Jane Hunt MP, BCE-85971) is adopted for Loughborough, which differs from the Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) proposal only in the inclusion of The Wolds within the constituency. The Assistant Commissioners note that this divides Quorn from Mountsorrel, the pairing of which was favourably commented on in representations; however, they feel as their recommendations restore an existing constituency boundary between the two, this decision can be justified given its benefits elsewhere in the county.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the mixed representations received regarding the proposal to separate the established pairing of Rutland and Melton - in particular the comments which argue it will divide areas with strong community ties, and extensive shared service provision and organisations. The Assistant Commissioners also noted the opposition to including the Melton local authority with Syston due to difference in community between these areas; however, this pairing was supported by all four qualifying parties. The Assistant Commissioners further note that if the option of pairing Melton with Market Harborough is discounted (for the reasons outlined above), then a Syston pairing is the only viable alternative. When visiting the area, they observed there were some differences between Melton Mowbray and Syston; however, they noted that both are small towns with a rural feel, and that they are well connected along the A607. As such, and in line with the Labour counter-proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649), the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the initial proposals for Melton and Syston, subject to removing The Wolds ward, as outlined above.

A significant feature of the initial proposals was the decision to propose a Harborough constituency coterminous with the local authority of the same name. The Assistant Commissioners note that the orientation of this constituency is very different from the existing Harborough constituency, and that this causes further disruption to the existing South Leicestershire and Charnwood constituencies. Although recognising the support of the Liberal Democrats among others for such a configuration, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that the majority of representations indicated that the initial proposals for this part of the county were unnecessarily disruptive. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) counter-proposal suggests Harborough and South Leicestershire constituencies that are very similar to the existing constituencies, and that Glenfield is included in a county constituency which enables the City of Leicester to retain three constituencies. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend adopting of the Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) for Harborough, South Leicestershire, and 'Charnwood', though in the latter case they believe that the initially proposed 'Mid

Leicestershire' name better reflects the composition of the constituency, and therefore recommend this constituency name is retained.

The Assistant Commissioners note the strength of feeling within the City of Leicester concerning community ties between the Belgrave ward and the North Evington, Troon and Rushey Mead wards in Leicester East, and the Spinney Hills ward and the Stoneygate and Wycliffe wards in Leicester South. Having visited the area, they agree these groups of wards share strong cultural and community ties and should be included in the same constituency. Of the counter-proposals received, the Assistant Commissioners note that only the Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-95649) returns both wards to their existing constituencies without crossing the City of Leicester boundary, but that this is facilitated by a split ward. Both the North Evington and Evington wards were suggested by representatives of national and local Labour groups, and having visited these wards, the Assistant Commissioners view is that there is no clear separation between the polling districts in the North Evington ward; however, they noted that there was a natural break between the southernmost polling district and the rest of the Evington ward. The Assistant Commissioners consider this proposed divided ward meets the Commission's policy as it prevents a wider 'domino effect' and enhances the ability of the Commission to represent local ties. Therefore, their recommendation is to adopt the Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-95649) for Leicester, with a split of the Evington ward.

Lincolnshire and Rutland

In formulating initial proposals in the East Midlands, the Commission noted that Lincolnshire has a mathematical entitlement of 7.52 constituencies - this is too large for seven whole constituencies, and too small for eight; therefore, it was necessary to pair Lincolnshire with another county. Rutland has a mathematical entitlement to 0.41 constituencies - too small to form a constituency in its own right; however, when considered with Lincolnshire, the combined mathematical entitlement is 7.93 constituencies. Therefore, the Commission proposed to allocate eight whole constituencies to a Lincolnshire and Rutland sub-region with a cross county constituency combining the whole of Rutland with 11 wards from the South Kesteven district.

The initial proposals for the Boston and Skegness, Gainsborough, Lincoln, and Louth and Horncastle constituencies were generally supported. We received a mixture of support and opposition to the proposed Grantham, Sleaford and North Hykeham, and South Lincolnshire constituencies. BCE-72115 and BCE-91956 suggested a lack of community ties within the proposed Grantham constituency, with Bourne in the south looking to Stamford, and Heckington in the north looking to Sleaford. There was opposition to the name 'Grantham', with representations wishing to rename it 'Grantham and Bourne' to better represent the proposed constituency (BCE-90960) - this was also supported by the Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664), Green Party (BCE-97544) and Gareth Davies (MP for Grantham and Stamford, BCE-80771). BCE-56530, BCE-63811, and the Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369) argued there are strong community ties between North Hykeham and Lincoln, which should therefore be included within the same constituency; however, despite this being raised as a viable alternative in the initial proposals report, there was little support for alterations to an otherwise unchanged Lincoln constituency. BCE-88213 and BCE-96125 argued there is a lack of community ties between the Five Village and Swineshead and Holland Fen wards and the South Holland local authority - BCE-74499 proposed to retain the existing South Holland and The Deepings constituency; however, this causes knock-on-impacts to constituencies in North and South Kesteven, and results in a Lincoln constituency of wards from three local authorities. There was also opposition to the 'South Lincolnshire' name, with various suggestions for alternatives (BCE-81659 and BCE-85615).

We received a mixture of support and opposition to the cross-county Rutland and Stamford constituency. Some representations (BCE-68437, BCE-74919 and BCE-93201) supported the initial proposals, arguing Rutland and Stamford share a similar character and there is historical precedent from the Rutland and Stamford constituency that existed 1918-1983 ; however, a larger number of representations (BCE-66270, BCE-81449, BCE-86849 and BCE-87296) were in opposition, arguing that Rutland looks to Melton Mowbray and Leicestershire. As already mentioned, we received one counter-proposal (BCE-79456) which combines Rutland with parts of the Melton and South Kesteven local authorities; however, it has significant knock-on-impacts. As mentioned previously, the Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) counter-proposal combines three Harborough wards with Rutland and Stamford, forming a constituency with wards from three counties. This results in some knock-on benefits in Lincolnshire, as it allows the existing South Holland and The Deepings constituency to remain unchanged, preserves the Five Village and Swineshead and Holland Fen wards in a Boston and Skegness constituency, and the Halton Hologate ward in a Louth and Horncastle constituency.

Recommendations:

As mentioned above, in relation to the initial proposals in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland, representations and counter-proposals received, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Commission adopt the boundaries of an amended Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649). On balance, the Assistant Commissioner deemed the advantages of a Rutland and Stamford constituency including three Harborough wards to outweigh the difficulties posed by a constituency including parts of three counties. Therefore, they recommend the three Harborough wards should be retained with Rutland within a Rutland and Stamford constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that the main benefits of the Labour Party proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) are in Leicestershire; however, it does have positive knock-on impacts in Lincolnshire. This submission supports the initial proposals for Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln, and Sleaford and North Hykeham which were generally supported. It retains the existing South Holland and The Deepings constituency unchanged, retains the Five Village, and Swineshead and Holland Fen ward in the Boston and Skegness constituency, and the Halton Hologate ward in the Louth and Horncastle constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered that retaining Market Deeping in an unchanged South Holland and The Deepings constituency had merit, which also addressed some of the opposition to the proposed Rutland and Stamford constituency by removing Market Deeping. They acknowledged that this proposal better reflects the statutory factors for the Boston and Skegness, and Louth and Horncastle constituencies too, as they more closely align to the existing constituency boundaries.

The proposed Gainsborough constituency was well-received in the consultation periods, and given that it is highly compliant with the statutory factors the Assistant Commissions recommend no change to this constituency. The Assistant Commissioners note the comments outlining the different community ties within the Grantham, Lincoln, and Sleaford and North Hykeham constituencies. Considering the evidence outlining the different community ties, they feel that none of the counter-proposals received reflect the statutory factors better than the initial proposals. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to these constituencies as initially proposed.

Northamptonshire

The Northamptonshire sub-region comprises two recently established unitary authorities - North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire, which are both temporarily using the county electoral divisions (hereafter referred to as wards) of the now defunct Northamptonshire County Council. The consequence of this is that the wards are unusually large for a primarily rural area, both geographically and in terms of electorate size; therefore, the unwieldy ward sizes, relatively close clustering of distinct communities, and the proximity to the regional boundary, led us to propose three divided wards in the initial proposals. A Local Government Boundary Commission for England review of the boundaries of both authorities is now underway, and will conclude around the same time as the BCE's final recommendations.

Northamptonshire is allocated seven whole constituencies with only one currently within the permitted electorate range - two fall below and four above. In addition to the difficulties caused by large ward sizes throughout the county, there are wide disparities in the electorates of the existing constituencies - ranging from 59,114 to 91,358, meaning that the initial proposals made changes to every constituency. Every proposed constituency in Northamptonshire received comments opposing the initial proposals to varying extents.

The initial proposals for the constituencies of Northampton North and Northampton South received a mixture of comments supporting and opposing them. The initial proposals were supported by the Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664), Green Party (BCE-97544), and Michael Ellis MP (Northampton North, BCE-66867), and opposed by the Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) and Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369). BCE-80291 and BCE-83291 argued that the initial proposals split communities by dividing Kingsthorpe from the Abington and Phippsville, and Castle wards - this was supported by a petition with 75 signatories (BCE-95872). The Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) made a counter-proposal in response to this issue, including the Abington and Phippsville, Castle, and Dallington Spencer wards in Northampton North, and Billing and Rectory Farm, and Riverside Park wards in Northampton South.

The proposed Daventry and South Northamptonshire constituencies also received some comments expressing opposition, in particular citing the transfer of the Earls Barton and Irchester wards from the existing Wellingborough constituency. Representations commented on weak community ties between the Earls Barton ward and the rest of the proposed Daventry constituency (BCE-83496, BCE-91142). Similarly, many representations (e.g. BCE-73436 and BCE-96677) provided evidence of the community ties broken by dividing the Irchester ward and including part in a South Northamptonshire constituency. Representations from both Earls Barton and Irchester expressed the wish to remain as part of a Wellingborough constituency; however, we have not received a counter-proposal that retains both the Earls Barton and Irchester wards entirely in a Wellingborough constituency. The Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664), Green Party (BCE-97544) and Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) all supported the initial proposals for Daventry and South Northamptonshire.

Several counter proposals were received arguing that three split wards in Northamptonshire was excessive, and that a satisfactory scheme could be achieved with fewer. The Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369) and BCE-94367 both proposed changes to all seven constituencies in Northamptonshire with only one divided ward, but these schemes result in dramatic disruption to the existing constituencies, and constituencies with weak community ties - this is particularly evident in the Liberal Democrats counter-proposal where Towcester and Raunds are included within the same constituency, and Wellingborough is included with wards adjacent to Daventry. BCE-55438 proposes no divided wards in Northamptonshire, and arguably better reflects community ties compared to the initial proposals; however, this is achieved at the expense of including the Oundle ward in a triple-county constituency with Rutland and part of Lincolnshire.

The initial proposals for the Corby and East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough and Raunds constituencies received representations that mostly opposed the changes. Similar to the opposition we received for the proposed Daventry and South Northamptonshire constituencies the comments were in relation to what wards should be included within a Wellingborough constituency. We received a number of comments opposed to including: the Raunds ward in a Wellingborough constituency as it shares community ties with more rural areas such as Thrapston (BCE-64100 and BCE-92191); part of the Finedon ward in a Kettering constituency as it shares close links to Wellingborough and the proposed boundary divides the Stanton Cross development between the Kettering and Wellingborough constituencies (BCE-75917, BCE-84203, and BCE-84681); and Irthlingborough in a Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency as this also shares close links to Wellingborough and is

geographically far removed from Corby (BCE-92191). The Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) proposed to include the entire Finedon ward in Wellingborough, and instead split the Irthlingborough ward, with the Raunds ward being included in Corby and East Northamptonshire - this proposal is supported by North Northamptonshire Council (BCE-74691). This counter-proposal requires an additional split to reduce the electorate of the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency - the suggestion is to split the Corby Rural ward between Corby and East Northamptonshire, and Kettering - resulting in four divided wards in Northamptonshire, an increase of one from the initial proposals.

Recommendations:

On the basis of evidence presented to the Assistant Commissioners through written representations and presentations at the public hearings, changes to five initially proposed constituencies in Northamptonshire are recommended.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that it was possible to reduce the number of divided wards. The Assistant Commissioners noted that both the Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369) and BCE-94367 only use one divided ward in their proposals, they also noted that BCE-55438 requires no divided ward, but at the cost of crossing the county boundary; however, they do not consider the benefits of dividing fewer wards to outweigh the significant disruption that these counter-proposals would require for the existing pattern of constituencies. The Assistant Commissioners note the decision to divide a number of wards in Northamptonshire in the initial proposals was made to alleviate the difficulties posed by the unusually large ward sizes throughout the county, and they agree with the view of the Commission that this approach is justified in order to best reflect the statutory factors.

In relation to the mixed representations for Northampton North and Northampton South, the Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence and counter-proposals, and agreed that the Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) had merit. They noted that this proposal unites the urban centre of Northampton in a single constituency by combining the Abington and Phippsville, Castle, and Dallington Spencer wards with the two Kingsthorpe wards. When visiting the area, the Assistant Commissioners observed that these wards shared strong community ties, and that the Labour proposal creates a clear boundary between Northampton North and Northampton South. Therefore, they recommend adopting this counter-proposal to include the

Abington and Phippsville, Castle, and Dallington Spencer wards in a Northampton North constituency and Billing and Rectory Farm, and Riverside Park wards in Northampton South.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that the Daventry and South Northamptonshire constituencies received opposition; which was focused on the inclusion of the Earls Barton ward and part of the Irchester ward respectively. Although acknowledging the considerable evidence outlining the different community ties, the Assistant Commissioners judgement is that there is no solution that does not have even less desirable knock-on impacts throughout Northamptonshire. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to the Daventry or South Northamptonshire constituencies as initially proposed.

The initial proposals for Corby and East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough and Raunds received the majority of the representations in the sub-region. The Assistant Commissioners noted that there was considerable evidence to include the Finedon and Irthlingborough communities within Wellingborough, and the Raunds ward with Corby and East Northamptonshire. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) unites the Finedon ward while splitting the Corby Rural and Irthlingborough wards. When visiting the area, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the Finedon ward had very strong community ties with Wellingborough, with the Stanton Cross Urban Extension divided by the initial proposals. They also acknowledged that the A6 provided an identifiable boundary separating Irthlingborough itself from the more rural parts of the Irthlingborough ward, and that the town was closely tied to Wellingborough. They noted that to facilitate these changes, the Corby Rural ward would need to be divided. While acknowledging that this ward clearly has strong community ties with Corby, the Assistant Commissioners consider that Middleton, Cottingham and Stanion, the parishes proposed to be included in the Kettering constituency, were of a consistent character with other rural villages in the adjacent Desborough, Rothwell and Mawsley, and Ise wards. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners recommend adopting the Conservative Party counter-proposal for the Corby and East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough constituencies.

Nottinghamshire

In formulating the initial proposals in Nottinghamshire, the Commission noted the City of Nottingham unitary authority has a mathematical entitlement of 2.90 constituencies and the Nottinghamshire County Council area has a mathematical entitlement of 8.32 constituencies. If the Commission was to consider the City of Nottingham separate from the county area it would mean Nottingham is allocated three constituencies and Nottinghamshire eight. The electorate for Nottingham is 212,877 - resulting in an average electorate of 70,959, towards the lower end of the permitted electorate range. The electorate for Nottinghamshire is 610,761 - resulting in an average electorate of 76,345, towards the upper end of the permitted electorate range. Consequently, this meant it was difficult to propose an arrangement of constituencies that reflected the statutory factors without crossing the City of Nottingham unitary authority boundary. Therefore, the Commission decided to propose a constituency that included part of the Broxtowe local authority with City of Nottingham wards.

The initial proposals for the Gedling, Nottingham East, Nottingham South, Rushcliffe, and Worksop and Retford constituencies generally were supported in the representations received. There was opposition to the proposed name 'Worksop and Retford', with representations wishing to retain 'Bassetlaw' as a constituency name (BCE-85855). The initial proposals for Nottinghamshire were also supported by the Green Party (BCE-97544), Labour Party (BCE-79476 and BCE-95649) and Liberal Democrats (BCE-80959 and BCE-94369), subject to retaining the 'Bassetlaw' name.

We received a mixture of support and opposition in response to the initial proposals for the Newark and Sherwood constituencies. BCE-86809 and BCE-88542 argued that the Newark constituency has poor community ties, as the Bassetlaw wards in the north look towards Retford and the area surrounding Bingham in the south shares community ties with Rushcliffe; however, this is equally an issue with the existing constituency. BCE-81811 suggests swapping the Beckingham and Clayworth wards between the proposed Newark, and Worksop and Retford constituencies. This aims to improve the links between the Bassetlaw wards with the Newark constituency; however, in doing so the Misterton ward in the Worksop and Retford constituency becomes inaccessible by road within the boundaries of the constituency. Other counter-proposals suggested different configurations of the Newark, Sherwood, and Worksop and Retford constituencies (BCE-55438 and BCE-88542); these counter-proposals cause more disruption

in the area. There was opposition to the proposed name 'Sherwood', with representations wishing to rename it 'Sherwood Forest' to better represent the proposed constituency, as well as to avoid confusion with the Sherwood community in Nottingham - this was supported by the Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) and Mark Spencer (MP for Sherwood, BCE-81132).

We received a mixture of representations expressing support and opposition to the proposal to cross the City of Nottingham boundary, including the Kimberley, Nuthall, and Watnall areas into the proposed Nottingham North constituency. During the first consultation we received lots of opposition from these wards - examples being BCE-76223, BCE-87997 and BCE-94777, expressing the wish to remain in the Broxtowe constituency, on the grounds that the areas concerned are rural villages separated from Nottingham by the M1, which acts as a natural boundary. The Conservative Party (BCE-85837 and BCE-96664) proposed to return these wards to the Broxtowe constituency, instead including the Beeston Central, Beeston North and Beeston Rylands wards into a Nottingham South constituency. This was supported by residents in the Kimberley area and Darren Henry (MP for Broxtowe, BCE-71122). During the second consultation, however, we received a substantial number of representations in support of the initial proposals, mainly from residents in Beeston who opposed the Conservative Party counter-proposal. The focus of these responses was that the counter-proposal divides the Beeston area, with one ward (Beeston West) remaining in the Broxtowe constituency and the other three being included in Nottingham South. BCE-65952, BCE-91651, and BCE-93005 all gave evidence arguing that Beeston is a single community centred on the boundary between the Beeston Central and Beeston West wards. The initial proposals also attracted the support of Broxtowe Borough Council (BCE-72949).

In response to the initial proposals for Ashfield and Mansfield we received substantial opposition to including the Brick Kiln and Grange Farm wards from Mansfield district in the Ashfield constituency. BCE-77363, BCE-85930 and BCE-96667 detailed that these wards form part of the Ladybrook estate and the wider Mansfield community. We received a number of counter-proposals to retain the Brick Kiln and Grange Farm wards in Mansfield. Ashfield District Council (BCE-81516) suggested including part of the Ransom Wood ward in a Sherwood constituency and the Hucknall West ward in the Ashfield constituency. This proposal divides the Hucknall West ward from Hucknall and creates a constituency with parts of four local authorities; this was opposed by a petition which attracted over 400 signatories (BCE-85320). A second option was submitted by Ashfield District Council (BCE-95699) during the second consultation, this was also supported by Mansfield District Council (BCE-96667) and the councillor for Grange Farm ward (BCE-93955). It included the Pleasley Hill and Bull Farm ward and part of the Berry Hill ward in the Ashfield constituency,

allowing Brick Kiln and Grange Farm wards to remain in Mansfield. Other counter-proposals were received, each of which would produce knock-on-effects for other proposed constituencies in Nottinghamshire that have been broadly supported.

Recommendations:

In relation to the initial proposals in Nottinghamshire, representations and counter-proposals received, the Assistant Commissioners recommend changes from the initial proposals to the boundaries of two constituencies and the name of an additional two.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the initial proposals for the Gedling, Nottingham East, and Rushcliffe constituencies, as these were mostly supported and closely reflect the existing pattern of constituencies. The Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to the boundary of the Worksop and Retford constituency; however, they do recommend the retention of the name 'Bassetlaw'. This reflects the naming policy, as the constituency is mostly unchanged, as well as the overwhelming balance of public opinion.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that the Newark and Sherwood constituencies had a mixture of support and opposition. Considering the counter-proposals and evidence outlining the different community ties, their view is that the initial proposals reflect the statutory factors better than any counter-proposal received. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any boundary changes to the initially proposed Newark or Sherwood constituencies; however, the Assistant Commissioners recommend renaming the proposed Sherwood constituency to 'Sherwood Forest'.

In relation to the mixed representations on the proposals for the constituency crossing from the City of Nottingham to Broxtowe, the Assistant Commissioners carefully considered all the evidence and counter-proposals. The Conservative Party counter-proposal was given particular consideration; however, they noted that the number of responses opposing this proposition was greater than the number opposing the initial proposals. When visiting the area, the Assistant Commissioners noted that there are good road connections between Beeston and the City of Nottingham, but there was still substantial separation due to the University of Nottingham campus and Highfields Park. Furthermore, they noted the proposed constituency boundary would run along the pedestrianised high street and the wider town centre of Beeston, dividing it between two constituencies, as outlined in the

representations. When visiting the Kimberley, Nuthall, and Watnall areas the Assistant Commissioners observed that the M1 forms a significant boundary with Nottingham; however, it is acknowledged that while this configuration combines these areas with the City with which there are not strong local ties, it is preferable to the counter proposal which would result in dividing areas where community ties are present. On balance, the conclusion of the Assistant Commissioners is that it would be more detrimental to separate a community between two constituencies than place in one constituency two distinct areas without strong links to each other. Therefore, they do not recommend any changes to the initial proposals for the Broxtowe, Nottingham North and Kimberley, and Nottingham South constituencies.

The initial proposals for Ashfield and Mansfield received the largest number of critical representations in Nottinghamshire. Any counter-proposal that does not directly transfer electors from the Mansfield constituency to Ashfield would necessarily result in disruption to other constituencies in Nottinghamshire which have been well received. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the first counter-proposal from Ashfield District Council (BCE-81516) would divide the community of Hucknall, and include parts of four local authorities in the Sherwood constituency, including an orphan polling district. They considered this would not better reflect the statutory factors relative to the initial proposals, and note opposition from residents of the Hucknall West ward. The second counter-proposal from Ashfield District Council (BCE-95699) limits changes to only the Mansfield and Ashfield constituencies, transferring the Pleasley Hill and Bull Farm ward and one polling district from the Berry Hill ward. Evidence received during the consultations, supplemented by a visit to the area, persuaded the Assistant Commissioners that the Brick Kiln and Grange Farm wards were intrinsic parts of the Mansfield community, stretching into the urban centre. These wards are particularly connected to the neighbouring Ladybrook and Penniment wards that collectively make up the Ladybrook Estate. During the site visit, the Assistant Commissioners noted the Pleasley Hill and Bull Farm ward was more rural in character and did not extend into the centre of Mansfield. They also noted that the part of the Berry Hill ward included in the Ashfield constituency in BCE-95699 is a new housing estate, as yet without direct road links to the rest of the ward. The Assistant Commissioners considered if an entire ward could be transferred into the Ashfield constituency, but believe this would cause similar issues to the initial proposals, as the Berry Hill and Oakham wards both extend towards the centre of Mansfield. Therefore, they recommend adopting this counter-proposal to include the Pleasley Hill and Bull Farm ward and part of the Berry Hill ward in the Ashfield constituency, returning Brick Kiln and Grange Farm wards to the Mansfield constituency.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	22	46.81
- Changed in composition and name	4	8.51
- Changed in composition only	15	31.91
- Changed in name only	3	6.38

Recommended constituency changes

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Amber Valley	No	No
Ashfield	Yes	No
Bassetlaw	No	Yes
Bolsover	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Boston and Skegness	Yes	No
Broxtowe	No	No
Chesterfield	No	No
Corby and East Northamptonshire	Yes	No
Daventry	No	No
Derby North	No	No
Derby South	No	No
Derbyshire Dales	No	No
Erewash	No	Yes
Gainsborough	No	No
Gedling	No	No
Grantham	No	No
Harborough	Yes	No
High Peak	No	No
Hinckley and Bosworth	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Kettering	Yes	No
Leicester East	Yes	No
Leicester South	Yes	No
Leicester West	Yes	Yes
Lincoln	No	No
Loughborough	Yes	No
Louth and Horncastle	Yes	No
Mansfield	Yes	No
Melton and Syston	Yes	No
Mid Derbyshire	No	No
Mid Leicestershire	Yes	No
Newark	No	No
North East Derbyshire	No	No
North West Leicestershire	No	No
Northampton North	Yes	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Northampton South	Yes	No
Nottingham East	No	No
Nottingham North and Kimberley	No	No
Nottingham South	No	No
Rushcliffe	No	No
Rutland and Stamford	Yes	No
Sherwood Forest	No	Yes
Sleaford and North Hykeham	No	No
South Derbyshire	No	No
South Holland and The Deepings	Yes	Yes
South Leicestershire	Yes	Yes
South Northamptonshire	No	No
Wellingborough	Yes	Yes



**Boundary
Commission
for England**

Eastern region - Revised proposals recommendations
Commission paper

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electorate range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to the Eastern region: 61 (an increase of 3 from the current number).
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 1 (2%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 10 (17%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 2
- Total number of local authorities in region: 46
- Local authorities which completed (or are due to complete) a local government electoral review after the BCE cut-off date of 1 December 2020¹: 12 (Basildon, Bedford, Brentwood, Castle Point, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Fenland, Harlow, Luton, North Hertfordshire, St Albans, and Stevenage).

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted - and subsequent Orders made - by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county

County	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Norfolk	675,778	9.21	9
Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough)	591,247	8.06	7
Suffolk	557,535	7.60	7
Essex (including Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea)	1,348,788	18.38	18
Bedfordshire (comprising Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton)	467,322	6.37	6
Hertfordshire	841,457	11.47	11
Totals	4,482,127	61.07	58

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the Eastern region into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Bedfordshire , comprising Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton, and Hertfordshire	1,308,779	17.83	17	18	72,710
Essex , including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, and Suffolk	1,906,323	25.97	25	26	73,320
Cambridgeshire , including Peterborough	591,247	8.06	7	8	73,906
Norfolk	675,778	9.21	9	9	75,086
Region totals	4,482,147	61.07	58	61	73,478

Number of representations received

In the Eastern region, the Commission received a total of 5,356 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 3,792 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 1,564 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings: there were 116 oral representations made in the Eastern region (in Cambridge, Southend-on-Sea, and Ipswich). Some of these related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ²	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ³	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	25	30	55
Official political party response ⁴	27	8	35
Peer from the House of Lords	1	1	2
Local councillor	144	96	240
Local authority	11	3	14

² As declared by the respondents themselves.

³ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁴ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Parish or town council	38	26	64
Other organisation	58	15	73
Member of the public	3,488	1,385	4,873
Totals	3,793	1,563	5,356

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so across Bedfordshire, and also much of Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

Initial proposals sub-regions	Revised proposals sub-regions
Bedfordshire , comprising Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton, and Hertfordshire	Bedfordshire , comprising Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton, and Hertfordshire
Cambridgeshire , including Peterborough	Cambridgeshire , including Peterborough
Essex , including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, and Suffolk	Essex , including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock
Norfolk	Norfolk and Suffolk

In the initial proposals, the Commission decided to divide the Eastern region into four sub-regions. These were: (1) Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire; (2) Cambridgeshire; (3) Essex and Suffolk; and (4) Norfolk.

There has been little opposition to the proposed sub-regions of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire. However, the Assistant Commissioners note that there has been some opposition to the sub-regions of Essex and Suffolk, and Norfolk. In formulating the initial proposals, the Commission considered that these sub-regions were the most satisfactory as they: allowed the theoretical entitlement numbers to be as evenly distributed as possible; there appeared few obvious places to cross the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk; and the theoretical entitlement for Essex alone is such that it was considered difficult to create a coherent pattern of constituencies across the county without major upheaval to existing constituencies.

While there was some support for the proposed sub-regions, many respondents to the consultation contended that joining Norfolk with Suffolk, and keeping Essex alone, would have multiple benefits. Firstly, many suggested that a 'Waveney Valley' constituency between Norfolk and Suffolk would be a more coherent cross-county boundary constituency, with strong local ties, a shared local identity and transport links, than would our initially proposed 'Haverhill and Halstead' (cross-county between Suffolk and Essex) constituency. Secondly, respondents such as Councillor Carol Poulter (BCE-73423) said that joining Norfolk and Suffolk as a sub-region minimises the change required to existing constituencies, particularly across much of Suffolk, and allows for a potentially better solution for other specific areas, such as Braintree or Great Yarmouth. Having considered these issues carefully and reflected on the evidence received, the Assistant Commissioners accept the rationale contained in the counter-proposals for alternative sub-regions and the benefits of altering the sub-regional grouping. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the sub-regions be changed, so that Essex is treated as a stand-alone sub-region, and Norfolk is paired with Suffolk. The impacts of this decision on specific constituencies will be discussed in detail below under the relevant county sub-section.

As in the initial proposals, the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable. Under the recommended proposals, three of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, as opposed to one in the initial proposals. As in the initial proposals, two constituencies cross county boundaries, and one of the cross-county constituencies is recommended to include wards from both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire (namely the Hitchin constituency). The second cross-county constituency is recommended to include wards from both Norfolk and Suffolk (namely a Waveney Valley constituency), as opposed to a cross-county constituency including wards from both Suffolk and Essex as in the initial proposals (namely the Haverhill and Halstead constituency).

It is recommended that the composition of 28 of the 61 constituencies that were proposed in the initial proposals be revised. After careful consideration, the Assistant Commissioners recommend not to make any revisions to the composition of the remaining 33. Of the 28 constituencies where it is recommended to revise the composition, it is also recommended to revise the names of eight. Of the 33 constituencies where it is not recommended to revise the composition, it is recommended to revise only the names of two.⁵

⁵ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	1	10	23	24	27	30	4	2	0	0	5	46
Revised proposals	3	15	19	21	28	28	5	2	0	2	6	50

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire	0	5	6	6	7	10	1	1	0	0	4	13
Cambridgeshire	0	1	1	5	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	6
Essex	1	3	9	5	7	9	2	0	0	2	1	17
Norfolk & Suffolk	2	6	3	5	9	6	2	1	0	0	1	14
Totals	3	15	19	21	28	28	5	2	0	2	6	50

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

During the initial proposals, it was proposed that the counties of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire be included together in one sub-region. We have received very few counter-proposals that oppose the creation of this sub-region.

Bedfordshire

More than 100 representations received during the two public consultations related to the three proposed constituencies in the south of the county; Luton North, Luton South and South Bedfordshire, and Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. These representations were largely related to issues in two wards: Eaton Bray and Stopsley. In the initial proposals, the ward of Stopsley was included in the proposed Luton North constituency from the existing Luton South constituency, and representations have highlighted the lack of access between the Stopsley ward and the rest of the constituency, due to the 'steep scarp slope of Bradgers Hill' (Sarah Owen MP, BCE-71761). The Eaton Bray ward was included in the proposed Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency from the existing South West Bedfordshire constituency in the initial proposals, and representations have highlighted that much of the ward, particularly the village of Billington, is far more closely linked to Leighton Buzzard than it is to Luton in proximity and community ties. A few counter-proposals were received in this area. The Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-85500) suggested the three wards that comprise the town of Houghton Regis (Houghton Hall, Tithe Farm, and Parkside) be included in the Luton North constituency, allowing a South West Bedfordshire constituency to include both Eaton Bray and Caddington wards. Similarly, several representations, such as that from Rachel Hopkins MP (BCE-71619) suggested that only the two wards of Tithe Farm and Parkside be included in the Luton North constituency, thereby dividing the town of Houghton Regis between two constituencies. Other counter-proposals included the Green Party proposal (BCE-96542) for a significantly different configuration for each of the two Luton constituencies, and the suggestion in BCE-56498 to retain Stopsley ward in the existing Luton South constituency by exchanging two further wards between the Luton constituencies: these were considered by the Assistant Commissioners to cause unnecessary disruption to existing constituencies. In investigating alternative proposals it was identified that it is possible to split the ward of Dunstable-Icknield and include the eastern part in the Luton North constituency

and the western part in the Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency. While this would allow the Stopsley ward to be retained in a Luton South constituency and Eaton Bray to be retained in a South West Bedfordshire constituency, it would entail a ward split that would join polling districts in one unitary authority with a constituency otherwise wholly within a different unitary authority, and would divide the town of Dunstable between constituencies.

The Conservative Party put forward a counter-proposal suggesting that the ward of Kempston Rural be included in the Bedford constituency, instead of in the North Bedfordshire constituency as in the initial proposals. The vast majority of representations received were opposed to this suggestion. There were few other issues raised in this area.

There have been few representations received regarding the proposed Mid Bedfordshire constituency.

Recommendations

Having considered all of the representations and the counter-proposals for Bedfordshire, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that no changes be made to the boundaries of any of the constituencies.

It is clear to the Assistant Commissioners that there is unlikely to be a solution for the Luton area that will attract widespread support. They do not consider that the evidence to split the Dunstable-Icknield ward is sufficiently compelling and as such consider that there are effectively only two realistic proposals: the initial proposals, and the Conservative Party counter-proposal to create a Luton North and Houghton Regis constituency. On balance, the Assistant Commissioners, while acknowledging the benefits of the Conservative Party counter-proposal which retains the Eaton Bray ward in a South West Bedfordshire constituency, and Stopsley ward in a Luton South constituency, consider that including the closely-linked towns of Houghton Regis and Dunstable in different constituencies - by including Houghton Regis in Luton North - would disrupt local ties, and unnecessarily result in constituencies that were further away from the existing pattern of constituencies. During their site visit to Luton they observed that, while there are strong transport links between Houghton Regis and Luton, the two areas have distinct and separate characteristics. The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not recommend making any changes to the constituencies of Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, Luton North, and Luton South and South Bedfordshire, as initially proposed.

Regarding name changes in the county, there were few suggestions, other than those regarding the proposed constituency of Luton South and South Bedfordshire. While it is acknowledged that the name is not ideal, the Assistant Commissioners consider that, given the geographical size of the proposed constituency, and the crossing of a unitary authority boundary to include two mostly rural wards, it is appropriate to continue to include South Bedfordshire in the constituency name.

Hertfordshire

The constituencies in the county of Hertfordshire received a broadly even mix of supporting and opposing representations. While we did receive counter-proposals in this area, we received comparably fewer than in other areas. It is considered that this is because of the relatively high level of support, and that the electorate figures are so tight around the county that it is difficult to make minor amendments to individual constituencies without creating significant knock-on effects across much of the county.

A significant number of representations drew attention to the proposed constituencies of St Albans, and Harpenden and Berkhamsted, regarding the Sandridge ward. The Sandridge ward was initially proposed to be included in the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency and many have suggested that the ward, and in particular the Jersey Farm neighbourhood within it, should be included in the St Albans constituency due to its geographical proximity and community ties (although it is worth noting that it is in the existing Hitchin and Harpenden constituency). Outside of this issue, the proposed St Albans constituency was relatively well supported, due to the minimal amount of change from the existing constituency. Representations regarding the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency were evenly divided between supporting and opposing, with those in opposition stating that the two towns have little in common regarding local ties and transport links, and those in support contending there are links between the towns, and that the new configuration would be no worse than the existing Hitchin and Harpenden constituency.

Similarly 25 representations, including from Grant Shapps MP (BCE-94852), drew attention to the Northaw & Cuffley ward, in particular the village of Newgate Street, which was included in the proposed Hertsmere constituency. The area of Newgate Street is in the existing Welwyn Hatfield constituency, but is not included in the constituency in the initial proposals, due to realignment to

new local government ward boundaries. These representations suggested that it should be retained in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency as in the existing arrangement. As it is not possible to include the whole of the Northaw & Cuffley ward in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency without removing another ward currently included, Grant Shapps provided a counter-proposal which suggested splitting the Northaw & Cuffley ward along the existing constituency boundary, in order to retain Newgate Street village in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency.

The majority of representations received for the proposed constituencies of Three Rivers and Hitchin were in support of the arrangements. However, in both instances, representations were received suggesting changes to the proposed constituency names. A number of respondents, including BCE-90540 among others, have suggested that the proposed Three Rivers name is inappropriately unspecific, given that there are various organisations around the country that use the name 'Three Rivers'. In addition, it is suggested that, even in the local area, let alone across the country, people do not know what area 'Three Rivers' refers to, or indeed which three rivers it references. A number of respondents have suggested the existing South West Hertfordshire name should be retained, with Peter Whitehead (BCE-80297) suggesting that despite the proposed boundaries being significantly different from the existing boundaries, the existing name would still be appropriate to reflect the geographic area of the constituency and its place within the county. Furthermore, the constituency is not wholly coterminous with the Three Rivers local authority, as it includes the Dacorum ward of Kings Langley, and as such the existing name would be more reflective of the local area than Three Rivers, and would likely resonate more with both locals and those further afield. It has also been highlighted that there is some historical precedent, as the proposed constituency boundaries are similar to the previous South West Hertfordshire constituency used from 1950 to 1983. Regarding the proposed Hitchin constituency, a number of representations (including Alan Borgars who spoke at the public hearing in Cambridge on day one, BCE-97330) have suggested that as it is a cross-country constituency, both counties included should have some form of representation in the name, with most proposing for either Stotfold, Shefford, or both to be included in the name with Hitchin.

Approximately 30 representations were received regarding the proposed Hertford and Stortford, and Broxbourne constituencies. The majority of these representations were in opposition to the separation of the three wards of Hertford Heath, Great Amwell, and Stanstead Abbots from the town of Hertford. Due to the tight electorate figures in this area, any attempt to include these wards in the Hertford and Stortford constituency requires a radical reconfiguration across a number of constituencies. For example, the

Green Party's counter-proposal (BCE-96542) separates the towns of Hertford and Bishop's Stortford into two different constituencies, with knock-on impacts to constituencies across much of Hertfordshire.

The initial proposals for the remainder of the constituencies in Hertfordshire (North East Hertfordshire, Stevenage, Watford, and Hemel Hempstead) were largely uncontentious and supported.

Recommendations

Having considered all of the representations and the counter-proposals for Hertfordshire, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that no changes be made to the boundaries of any of the constituencies. While there have been some contentious areas in the county, most of them cannot be readily addressed, either due to the electorate figures not allowing it, or because they would necessitate far-reaching negative effects across other areas of the county where the initial proposals were supported.

For example, it is recognised that the Sandridge ward, and particularly Jersey Farm, is linked to St Albans due to its geographical proximity and shared community ties. However, including either the whole of the Sandridge ward in the St Albans constituency, or only including the polling district containing Jersey Farm, would bring the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency below the permitted electorate range, which would require significant changes elsewhere in the county in order to bring all of the constituencies within the permitted electorate range. As such, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend making any changes to the constituency.

Similarly, while it is acknowledged that some aspects of the proposed Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency are not ideal, the electorate figures are so tight in this area that any attempt to reconfigure the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency would have negative knock-on effects across the county, and as such no change is recommended. This is also true for the proposed Hertford and Stortford constituency.

Regarding Grant Shapps MP's counter-proposal to split the ward of Northaw & Cuffley, the Assistant Commissioners do not feel that the Commission's criteria to justify a ward split have been met; they therefore do not recommend any revisions to the proposed Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere constituencies.

Despite this, on balance, the Assistant Commissioners have decided to recommend that the Commissioners adopt the suggestion to change the name of the proposed Three Rivers constituency to South West Hertfordshire as it would: retain the existing name; reflect the geographical composition of the constituency (arguably even more so than the existing arrangement); there is historical precedent; and evidence suggests it will be well supported in the area. Conversely, the Assistant Commissioners felt the balance of the argument for the naming of the proposed Hitchin constituency favoured retaining the proposed name as each of the towns suggested are considered too small to be included in a constituency name and, while the three Bedfordshire wards included in the constituency are in a different county to Hitchin, many of the electors in these wards would most likely see the Hertfordshire towns of Hitchin and Letchworth as their biggest local town, and therefore Assistant Commissioners consider the name Hitchin alone is suitably representative.

Cambridgeshire

In the initial proposals, it was proposed that Cambridgeshire would be treated alone and form a sub-region in its own right. Very few counter-proposals have been received that oppose this arrangement.

More than 1,000 representations were received regarding the proposed constituencies of Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire, making it one of the areas in the region, and also the country as a whole, with the most representations received. During the initial proposals, the only changes to the proposed Peterborough constituency were due to realignment to new local government ward boundaries. There were more substantial changes to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency, with six wards in the south being included in the Huntingdon constituency, although this change was necessary due to the existing North West Cambridgeshire constituency having a particularly high electorate. The reason for the large number of representations is largely in response to the Conservative Party's counter-proposal (BCE-85500), which suggests two newly configured Peterborough North and Peterborough South constituencies. This counter-proposal suggests that the three rural Peterborough unitary authority wards that are currently included in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency (Glinton & Castor, Barnack, and Wittering) be included in a Peterborough North constituency. Subsequently, it would require the urban wards of Central and West - that the Commission proposed to be included in the Peterborough constituency (as they are in the existing arrangement) - to be included in the proposed Peterborough South constituency. A significant number of representations have supported this counter-proposal. Most of these, including from Paul Bristow MP (BCE-96275, who also spoke at the Cambridge public hearing on day one, BCE-97324), make similar arguments, stating that Peterborough 'deserves two MPs', and that the current situation is confusing for local residents in the south of Peterborough, who make up a large proportion of the North West Cambridgeshire constituency electorate, as many incorrectly believe they are in the Peterborough constituency. Also, despite the proposal producing more change than necessary from the existing constituencies, it is already necessary to make significant changes to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency due to the existing high electorate. It should also be noted that due to realignment to new local government ward boundaries, the River Nene has already been crossed within the Fletton & Woodston ward. However, the majority of representations received have opposed the Conservative Party counter-proposal, with pertinent examples including Allan Kempself

(BCE-80951), Lisa Forbes (BCE-90904) and several people who spoke at the Cambridge and Ipswich public hearings. The main points in opposition to the counter-proposal, and therefore in support of the initial proposals, were threefold. First, Central and West wards both form key parts of the city, particularly Central ward, which contains the city centre including the railway station, the Peterborough Cathedral and one of the main mosques, and they are mostly connected to other areas north of the river, rather than south of it. These representations contend that the river is a clear demarcation between the proposed constituencies, except for a small area with relatively few residents where the ward itself now crosses the river due to realignment to new local government ward boundaries, whereas the counter-proposals would see two whole wards included in a constituency otherwise entirely on the other side of the river. Second, it has been suggested that the three rural wards of Glinton & Castor, Barnack, and Wittering are more similar in character to the rest of the North West Cambridgeshire constituency, and that they must remain in a constituency with other large rural areas (as they are currently), rather than be included in a constituency with mostly urban wards. Finally, it was argued that the city of Peterborough already has representation from two MPs (albeit one of those constituency names did not reference Peterborough), and that dividing the city in such a manner would not only be an unnecessary departure from the existing pattern of constituencies, but would also do little to reduce the confusion for local residents.

There have been very few other counter-proposals regarding the Peterborough area. One example (BCE-79444) included the Eye, Thorney & Newborough ward in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency, with Fletton & Woodston ward instead being included in the Peterborough constituency. This would create a more urban and compact Peterborough constituency, but requires crossing the River Nene more substantially than the initial proposals, and also moves far more electors than the initial proposals compared to the existing pattern. Another example, from Jonathan Stansby (BCE-88730), suggested the Fletton & Woodston ward be split to allow the constituency boundary to follow the river. While this is possible according to the electorate figures, the Assistant Commissioners do not feel that the Commission's criteria to justify a ward split are satisfied. There have also been some representations that have argued for a name change to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency, even if the boundaries remain the same as initially proposed. Most of these suggest including Peterborough in the name in order to reflect the fact that a significant proportion of the electors in the constituency live in the city of Peterborough, with 'Peterborough West and North Huntingdonshire', and 'Peterborough South and Ramsey' being two such examples.

Approximately 25 representations, including from Shailesh Vara MP (BCE-82901), were received regarding the separation of the villages of Great Gidding and Little Gidding from those of Steeple Gidding and Hamerton in the initial proposals - with the first two in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency - and the latter two included in the Huntingdon constituency. Jonathan Djanogly MP (BCE-96602) suggests splitting the Alconbury ward in order to avoid the separation of these closely-linked villages.

A substantial number of representations have been received regarding the proposed Cambridge constituency. In the initial proposals, it was necessary for one ward currently included in the existing Cambridge constituency to instead be included in the South Cambridgeshire constituency, and during the initial proposals it was considered that this ward should be Cherry Hinton.

We have received representations calling for each of Trumpington, Queen Edith's, and Cherry Hinton wards to be included in the Cambridge constituency. While strong arguments have been made to include Queen Edith's ward, based on local ties (including Homerton College, and Addenbrooke's Hospital), it was considered difficult to justify including it in the initial proposals, given that it is already not included in the existing Cambridge constituency. The choice between Trumpington and Cherry Hinton wards is finely balanced. Some representations, such as the Labour Party (BCE-79489) and the Liberal Democrats (BCE-94333) suggest that Cherry Hinton has a longer history of being included with Cambridge, that there is a less defined separation between Cherry Hinton and Cambridge than between Trumpington and Cambridge, and that Cherry Hinton is the site of important events such as the Cambridge Folk Festival. Alternatively, some representations have suggested that Trumpington is a rapidly developing urban area, with a significant number of tall residential buildings, and that Cherry Hinton has closer links and is more similar in character to both Queen Edith's ward and the other areas of South Cambridgeshire than Trumpington. There have been few other issues in the proposed South Cambridgeshire constituency.

A very small number of representations have also highlighted that the East Cambridgeshire constituency is non-contiguous, due to the area of Milton & Waterbeach ward to the east of the Cambridge North railway station being detached from the rest of the constituency. While the Boundary Commission usually attempts to avoid such situations, there is no specific statutory factor regarding contiguous constituencies, and in this area in particular it is less relevant, as the issue is caused by an already non-contiguous ward - as created by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England - which also followed the local authority boundaries. There have been few other issues in the East Cambridgeshire constituency.

Approximately 200 representations have been received regarding the proposed St Neots constituency. Some of these have been supportive, highlighting that St Neots is the largest town in Cambridgeshire (after the cities of Cambridge and Peterborough), and that the A428 road provides a good connection throughout much of the proposed constituency. However, we have received a larger number of opposing representations. The most frequent issue in opposition is that most of the South Cambridgeshire local authority wards included in the constituency, especially those to the east (such as Histon & Impington, and Girton), have little connection to the town of St Neots, and have a far stronger connection to the city of Cambridge and other areas of South Cambridgeshire; they should therefore either be in a constituency separate to St Neots, or be referenced in the constituency name. Counter-proposals in this area either suggested a St Ives constituency, with St Neots remaining with Huntingdon (BCE-61413), or a large reconfiguration in the south of the county, with some suggesting the division of Cambridge into two constituencies (BCE-69231); others suggest a 'doughnut' constituency around Cambridge (BCE-58939). Any large reconfigurations such as this would require a significant departure from the existing pattern of constituencies. A St Ives constituency would have the benefit that some of the South Cambridgeshire wards that have little connection to St Neots would have more of a connection to St Ives, although there would still be many wards with little connection to St Ives, and St Ives is a significantly smaller town than St Neots. There have been 26 individual suggestions for a different name for the proposed St Neots constituency, highlighting both the demand for renaming, and also the difficulty in choosing a name that is representative of the constituency as a whole and which would gain wide acceptance.

The majority of representations received for the proposed North East Cambridgeshire constituency were in support of the configuration. However, a few respondents have suggested that, given the proposed constituency is coterminous with the local authority, it should be renamed Fenland. However, others have said that the name Fenland is too unspecific and could cause confusion, as the Fens is a generic term and encompasses a significantly larger geographical area than the proposed constituency. Furthermore, the existing name, referencing a compass-point area of Cambridgeshire, fits in neatly with the general pattern across most of the county.

The initial proposals for the proposed Huntingdon constituency were largely uncontroversial and supported.

Recommendations

Having carefully considered all of the representations and the counter-proposals for Cambridgeshire, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that no changes be made to the boundaries of any of the eight constituencies.

Having considered the evidence regarding Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire, it is clear that both the initial proposals and the Conservative Party counter-proposal have merit. However, on balance, it was considered that the Conservative Party counter-proposal required unnecessary change to a large number of wards and electors, and that local ties would be broken, particularly regarding Central and West wards moving from the constituency of Peterborough to the constituency of North West Cambridgeshire. During the site visit to Peterborough, the Assistant Commissioners recognised the importance of Central ward to the rest of the proposed Peterborough wards in the north, that the River Nene does form a clear and definable boundary, and that the areas south of the river largely have a different character to those in the north. The Assistant Commissioners also considered that none of the proposed alternative names for the North West Cambridgeshire constituency were ideal, and while the name North West Cambridgeshire has its flaws, it is geographically accurate, and is consistent with many of the other constituency names across the county that use compass points as a reference. It was also considered that the current arrangement regarding 'the Giddings', while not ideal for those villages in particular, is better on the whole than any of the alternatives. This is because including the whole ward of Alconbury in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency would create a particularly unsatisfactory shape, and would likely divide communities in other areas. While it is possible, in terms of electorate figures, to split the ward so that only the area of Steeple Gidding and Hamerton is included in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that in this instance the Commission's criteria to justify a ward split have not been met.

As in the initial proposals, the Assistant Commissioners are aware that the issue of how wards are allocated between the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire constituencies is finely balanced. However, after much deliberation, it was considered that none of the evidence received for the inclusion of the Cherry Hinton ward in Cambridge was persuasive enough to recommend a change to the initial proposals. While there is clearly a strong case for its inclusion, the 'village' feel of Cherry Hinton ward, as well

as its close links to Queen Edith's ward, is considered to suit the character of the South Cambridgeshire constituency more than the Trumpington ward, which is rapidly urbanising.

Regarding the suggestion to split the Milton & Waterbeach ward in order to make the East Cambridgeshire constituency wholly contiguous, the assessment of the Assistant Commissioners is that, while the initial proposal is not ideal, a constituency being very slightly non-contiguous as a result of an already non-contiguous ward is not strong enough justification for a ward split.

The assessment of the Assistant Commissioners regarding the St Neots constituency is that, while it is acknowledged that parts of the constituency are more closely linked to Cambridge or other towns than to St Neots, the counter-proposals are not persuasive, as they fail to create a more coherent constituency, and would unnecessarily disrupt the surrounding constituencies negatively. Despite proposing no change to the boundaries, the Assistant Commissioners recommend changing the name of the proposed St Neots constituency to St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire in order to reflect the two distinct parts of the constituency. The reference of the compass point accords with the approach to naming of many of the other Cambridgeshire constituencies, while including St Neots specifically in the name reflects the importance of the biggest town in Cambridgeshire and accords with the Commission's policy to reference the main population centre if of a reasonable size.

Unlike St Neots, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded to recommend a change to the name of the proposed North East Cambridgeshire constituency, as the boundaries have only slightly changed from the existing pattern, and the naming approach is consistent with that across much of the county. Furthermore, the Assistant Commissioners agreed with the view that 'Fenland' would be too unspecific and could cause confusion as the Fens encompass a significantly larger geographical area than the proposed constituency.

Essex

During the initial proposals, it was proposed that Essex would be included in a sub-region with Suffolk, with a cross-county constituency of Haverhill and Halstead. As mentioned previously, a number of representations and counter-proposals were received that supported Essex being treated as a sub-region in its own right. These sub-regional changes have an impact on a number of the constituencies that have been initially proposed in Essex, and the various merits and disadvantages of these impacts on the individual constituencies are highlighted below. There are also issues, such as in the Southend area, that are unaffected by and unrelated to the change in sub-region.

The proposed constituencies of Colchester, Harwich and North Essex, and Witham generated over 1,000 representations, making it one of the areas in the region, and also the country as a whole, with the most representations received. During the initial proposals it was necessary for one ward currently included in the existing Colchester constituency to be included in the proposed Harwich and North Essex constituency. The initial proposals included the Prettygate ward, currently in the existing Colchester constituency, in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, due to its links to the Lexden & Braiswick ward, which due to realignment to new local government ward boundaries was proposed to be wholly included in Harwich and North Essex. The majority of representations called for these two wards to be included in the Colchester constituency as they are physically very close to the centre of Colchester, they have little to no connection to the town of Harwich (which is on the far side of Colchester), and they include numerous important transport and community links, such as a key arterial route into Colchester and numerous schools. Over 150 representations were also received regarding the ward of Mersea & Pyefleet being included in the proposed Witham constituency, rather than either being retained in the Harwich and North Essex constituency (as in the existing arrangement), or included in a Colchester constituency (it is part of the Colchester local authority). This move was necessary in the initial proposals, as it allowed a more coherent scheme across the county when Essex was paired in a sub-region with Suffolk, and it also removed the anomaly of the ward being disconnected from the rest of its existing constituency by a river with no connecting bridges within the constituency. Many representations suggested that, while there is no physical connection (due to the River Colne dividing the two

areas), the ward is nonetheless more suited to being included in a more coastal constituency like Harwich and North Essex, rather than being included in a more inland rural constituency such as Witham.

There have been a number of counter-proposals in the Colchester area. Oliver Raven's counter-proposal (BCE-85205) suggested that the Prettygate ward be retained in the Colchester constituency, with Highwoods ward, which is mostly comprised of newer housing developments, instead being included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. Counter-proposals which treat Essex as a sub-region on its own require the Essex constituencies to have a higher average electorate (approximately 74,900 rather than 73,000 in the initial proposals). One outcome of this is that, in order to create a coherent scheme across the county, it is effectively necessary to include either the Stanway ward or Mersea & Pyefleet ward in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, and for the two wards of The Bentleys & Frating, and The Oakleys & Wix to be included in the Clacton constituency, rather than remain in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. The Liberal Democrats counter-proposal (BCE-94333) suggested the inclusion of the Stanway ward with Harwich and North Essex, bringing three wards containing areas of urban Colchester together (Stanway, Prettygate, and Lexden & Braiswick). The Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-85500) suggests a more radical reconfiguration: creating two Colchester constituencies, one in the north including the town of Harwich, and one in the south which includes the Mersea & Pyefleet ward. There has been some support for this proposal, with it being suggested that there is a historic precedent as Colchester has previously been split into two constituencies in a similar manner, and that this allows for the Mersea & Pyefleet ward to be included in a Colchester constituency. However, there has also been some opposition, particularly during the second consultation phase, with people claiming that the last time Colchester was split into two it was not successful, and that a single, compact and wholly urban Colchester constituency, as is currently the case, should be retained with minimal change. While not suggested by any of the respondents to the public consultations, our analysis indicates that it is possible to split the ward of Lexden & Braiswick to include the predominantly urban polling areas, along with the whole of the Prettygate ward, in the Colchester constituency, with the Old Heath & The Hythe ward instead being included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency.

Similarly, the proposed constituencies of Castle Point, Southend West, and Rochford and Southend East generated over 700 representations, most of them opposing the initial proposals. It is necessary for the Castle Point constituency to include a ward from a different constituency, as it is currently below the permitted electorate range. As such, the initial proposals included the West Leigh ward in the proposed Castle Point constituency, and this, along with the existing Southend West constituency's electorate

being below the electorate range, necessitated five wards being transferred between the two Southend constituencies. Separating the West Leigh ward from the Southend West constituency was by far the most significant issue during the consultations, and the vast majority of representations received were regarding this change. These representations suggested that West Leigh was intrinsically linked to both Leigh and the rest of Southend, and had little to no connection to much of the Castle Point constituency, with the Salvation Army fields to the west of West Leigh forming a natural barrier between the two, both physically and metaphorically. There are limited options in this area due to the tight electorate figures and the nature of the physical geography.

Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the issues in this area are unrelated to and unaffected by the sub-regional change. One option discussed during the development of the initial proposals was to transfer the Lodge ward from the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency to the Castle Point constituency. While this had the benefit of avoiding splitting the town of Leigh, and giving more flexibility within the two Southend constituencies, there are clear negative implications, in that it would divide the town of Rayleigh, and the ward has little to no direct transport links to the Castle Point constituency. However, few counter-proposals suggesting this option or representations in favour of it have been received, probably due to the negative consequences identified. It is not possible to include the whole of the Pitsea South East ward in the Castle Point constituency, as doing so would bring both the Castle Point constituency above the permitted electorate range and the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency below the range, and create a non-contiguous constituency. However, it is possible to split the ward so that only the DO polling district, covering the village of Bowers Gifford, is included in the Castle Point constituency, and this proposal has been suggested by both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, among others. As in the Lodge ward option, this would avoid splitting the town of Leigh, and would allow for a more coherent set of constituencies within Southend. However, unlike the Lodge option, it would not divide any towns; in fact it would bring North Benfleet and Benfleet together, and there are clear transport links. However, there remain negative implications regarding this proposal, in that it would necessitate an 'orphan' polling district in a constituency otherwise entirely coterminous with the Castle Point local authority.

As mentioned above, in the initial proposals the five wards were exchanged between the constituencies of Southend West, and Rochford and Southend East, in order for both constituencies to be within the permitted electorate range. Far fewer representations were received regarding these five wards compared to West Leigh, although there was opposition during the Southend public hearing and in written representations to the Eastwood Park and St. Laurence wards being divided from the town of Leigh (for

example, BCE-85464 and Councillor Nigel Folkard, BCE-97366). However, there was also support for the city centre wards being included together in the Southend West constituency. Counter-proposals which suggested a ward split in Pitsea South East were able to reduce the amount of disruption within the two Southend constituencies, with the Conservative Party suggesting that the only change from the existing Southend West constituency should be for the St. Luke's ward to be included from the Rochford and Southend East constituency, while the Liberal Democrats called for the Milton ward to be included instead. Both options minimise change to the existing constituencies, but also have their drawbacks. The St. Luke's ward option creates two peculiarly shaped constituencies, which limits access between the city centre and the rest of the constituency. The Milton ward option, however, divides the city centre between two constituencies. During the public hearings we heard from a number of people (such as Councillor Aston Line - BCE-97363) who called for a constituency that brought the city centre wards of Victoria, Milton and Kursaal together into Southend West, with the wards of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence being included in the Rochford and Southend East constituency, as they were in the initial proposals. While this does not minimise change from the existing constituency boundaries, it does ensure that the city centre wards are kept together in a compact, almost exclusively urban constituency.

There have been few representations or counter-proposals regarding the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency, other than the proposal to split the ward of Pitsea South East mentioned previously, and a further proposal to make a minor adjustment in the south west of the ward near Thurrock. The Conservative Party and the Labour Party (BCE-79489), along with members of the public, have suggested a change that is unrelated to a sub-regional change. They have suggested that the two wards of Tilbury St. Chads, and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park be retained in the Thurrock constituency, as in the existing arrangement, with Chadwell St. Mary ward instead included in South Basildon and East Thurrock in their place, suggesting that the town of Tilbury and the Tilbury Docks are closely linked to the town of Grays in the Thurrock constituency.

Around 100 representations, almost exclusively negative, were received in both consultations regarding the initially proposed Braintree constituency, with James Cleverly MP's (BCE-91218) being a pertinent example. Most of these suggest that the proposed Braintree constituency is vastly different to the existing constituency, with a peculiar shape, and few links to the Chelmsford local authority wards that are included (namely Writtle, Chelmsford Rural West, Broomfield and The Walthams, and Boreham and The Leigs). This reconfiguration was effectively driven by creating an Essex-Suffolk sub-region with a Haverhill and Halstead cross-county constituency. As such, counter-proposals that have called for Essex to be considered as a sub-region in its own right

have proposed a Braintree constituency that is either unchanged from the existing constituency (apart from to realign to new local government ward boundaries), or has minor changes, with The Colnes ward being included in the Witham constituency and The Sampfords, and Felsted & Stebbing wards being included from the Saffron Walden constituency. Peter Long of the Witham & District Branch Co-operative Party (BCE-74106), submitted a counter-proposal which was supported by a number of representations, including several at the Southend public hearing, such as Jack Coleman (BCE-97379). This counter-proposal suggests a constituency comprising the towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, with a 'Mid-Essex Rural' constituency that would stretch from areas west of Chelmsford to Mersea Island to the south of Colchester. While the Assistant Commissioners see merits in the suggestion of a Braintree, Halstead and Witham constituency, this is dependent on the accompanying proposal for a Great Notley and Haverhill constituency, which is unfortunately outside of the permitted electorate range.

Fewer than 50 representations have been received regarding the proposed Saffron Walden constituency. However, a number of counter-proposals that suggest treating Essex as a sub-region on its own include a change to the constituency. These proposals have the benefit of retaining the four Chelmsford wards included in the existing Saffron Walden constituency, but also require the Saffron Walden local authority to be split into three constituencies (rather than one as in the existing constituency), with the Hatfield Heath, and Broad Oak & the Hallingburys wards being included in the Harlow constituency, and The Sampfords, and Felsted & Stebbing wards being included in an alternatively configured Braintree constituency.

Approximately 30 representations have been received regarding the proposed Harlow and Epping Forest constituencies, mostly during the second consultation, and almost exclusively in opposition to the proposals. They suggest that the village of Epping Upland, and parts of Epping Forest itself that are contained within the Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing ward, should be retained within the Epping Forest constituency. Few counter-proposals which combine Essex and Suffolk in a sub-region together propose a change to these constituencies, but in a number of counter-proposals (such as BCE-63334) that propose Essex to be a sub-region on its own, it is possible to retain the ward in the Epping Forest constituency.

Around 20 representations, mostly in opposition, were received regarding the proposed Brentwood constituency. These mostly concern the two wards of Moreton and Fyfield, and High Ongar, Willingale and The Rodings which are currently included in the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency (but were initially included with the proposed Saffron Walden constituency), and the

naming of the constituency as Brentwood rather than retaining the name of Brentwood and Ongar. It is difficult to achieve this change with the sub-regions proposed under the initial proposals, but these changes have been proposed by a number of counter-proposals (such as BCE-63334) which call for Essex to be a sub-region on its own.

Similarly, approximately 20 representations were received regarding the proposed constituency of Maldon. However, in counter-proposals that call for Essex to be a sub-region on its own, it is suggested that the Maldon constituency retains the ward of Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon, which is currently included in the existing constituency but had been included within the proposed Braintree constituency. This would mean that every ward in the existing constituency is retained with the addition of the Galleywood ward, as in the initial proposals.

Around 40 representations were received regarding the proposed Chelmsford constituency, split roughly equally between those supporting and opposing. Those supporting suggest that the Galleywood ward is the most appropriate ward to be included in the Maldon constituency, while opposing representations suggest that it should be retained by splitting Chelmsford into two constituencies, although this would be a major departure from the existing constituency and would have an impact across much of the county.

No representations were received regarding the proposed Clacton constituency, although counter-proposals which proposed a sub-regional change often necessitated a small change to the boundaries, as discussed previously.

Very few representations have been received regarding the Basildon and Billericay, and Rayleigh and Wickford constituencies, with few counter-proposals suggesting changes, and both are unaffected by any sub-regional changes.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners recommend that Essex be treated as a sub-region on its own, rather than be paired with Suffolk as in the initial proposals. There are numerous reasons for this, with benefits across much of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. The specifics of these benefits to individual constituencies, and any disadvantages, are discussed in the following paragraphs. It is recommended that the counter-proposal put forward by the Liberal Democrats, which is identical across Essex to the counter-proposal suggested by BCE-63334 except in the Southend area, be adopted for the whole of Essex, except for minor changes to the Colchester and Witham constituencies. This is recommended as it is considered to be a more coherent scheme than the Conservative Party counter-proposal: it minimises disruption to the existing constituencies, and allows more constituencies to remain either wholly unchanged or changed to realign to new local government ward boundaries only. While it is acknowledged that the Conservative Party counter-proposal has its merits, such as the Braintree constituency remaining unchanged except to realign to new local government ward boundaries, there are considered to be significant disadvantages, such as the proposed Witham constituency, which stretches from the Stanway ward west of Colchester, to the Galleywood ward south of Chelmsford.

A substantial amount of evidence has been received regarding the proposed constituencies of Colchester, Harwich and North Essex, and Witham. The Assistant Commissioners have studied these in great detail, including a site visit to look at the areas for themselves. It is clear that this is a finely balanced issue, and that each proposal has strengths and weaknesses. Given the recommendation to treat Essex as a sub-region on its own, it is not possible for each of these three constituencies to remain the same as in the initial proposals, as the electorate of the rest of the county would be too high to create a coherent scheme; as such, some change is therefore inevitable. They consider the most suitable way to create a coherent pattern of constituencies across Essex is for one of the Stanway or Mersea & Pyefleet wards to be included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. The River Colne divides the Mersea & Pyefleet ward from the Tendring local authority wards that comprise the rest of the Harwich and North Essex constituency, with no bridge crossing until much further north near Colchester, outside of the ward. There is, however, a foot ferry. Also, the Mersea & Pyefleet ward is currently included in the existing Harwich and North Essex constituency, whereas Stanway is included in the existing Witham constituency. Furthermore, a number of representations have suggested that the Mersea & Pyefleet ward has few links west towards the town of Witham, with the ward in fact being more similar to the Harwich and

North Essex constituency in that both areas are coastal in character. As such, the Assistant Commissioners have concluded that retaining the Mersea & Pyefleet ward with Harwich and North Essex most closely fulfils the statutory requirements of maintaining existing constituencies and local ties, despite the geographical considerations in the area.

Regarding the issue of the Lexden and Prettygate wards, it is considered that, after assessing all of the evidence including undertaking a site visit to the area, these two areas are an integral part of Colchester, with strong transport links, close geographical proximity, historical links and community ties regarding schools and other establishments. It is also considered, however, that the Lexden & Braiswick ward as a whole is too geographically large and is a predominantly rural ward, and as such it would be inappropriate to be considered in an urban Colchester constituency. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that this ward be split, with the three mostly urban polling districts, which are divided from the rest of the ward by the A12 road and the railway line, being included in the Colchester constituency, and the rural polling districts remaining in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. A further benefit of this ward split is that it allows the existing boundary in this area to be effectively retained. It is also recommended that the entirety of the Prettygate ward be included with Colchester, as it is in the existing arrangement. Given that the Assistant Commissioners recommend that these two areas should be included in the Colchester constituency, it is necessary for one ward that was initially proposed to be included in the Colchester constituency to instead be included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency.

Much deliberation has been given to this issue, and it is clear that none of the options are without negative consequences. The Assistant Commissioners consider that the preferred option is to include the ward of Old Heath & The Hythe in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. They note that a significant portion of this ward, including all of the village of Rowhedge, is currently included in the constituency. Also, as the Mersea & Pyefleet ward is now recommended to remain in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, including the Old Heath & The Hythe ward provides a stronger link between Mersea & Pyefleet and the rest of the constituency, as it contains Fingringhoe Road (which becomes Old Heath Road) and the Colne Causeway bridge - the first bridge crossing the River Colne when driving from Mersea to Harwich. Furthermore, the town of Wivenhoe has links to the village of Rowhedge via the foot ferry. It is acknowledged that a significant portion of the Old Heath & The Hythe ward is currently included in the existing Colchester constituency and has close community ties to the city. However, it is considered that this is true of any of the other options, such as the Greenstead, St. Anne's & St. John's, Highwoods, or Mile End wards, and that Old Heath & The Hythe is

the only ward out of these options that has a significant portion already included in the existing Harwich and North Essex constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the Conservative Party counter-proposal seemingly arbitrarily divided the city of Colchester, including the separating of Lexden from Prettygate, and required an unnecessarily large departure from the existing constituency boundaries. They also considered that the counter-proposal submitted by both BCE-63334 and the Liberal Democrats required both the Stanway and Mersea & Pyefleet wards to be included in different constituencies than they are in the existing arrangement, and that their inclusion of the Prettygate, and Lexden & Braiswick wards in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, was considered undesirable for the reasons mentioned previously.

Having considered all of the substantial evidence regarding the initially proposed constituencies of Castle Point, Southend West, and Rochford and Southend East, the Assistant Commissioners consider that the options which have most regard for the statutory factors are to propose splitting the Pitsea South East ward (as proposed by the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats), and a reconfiguration within the two Southend constituencies in order to allow the city centre to be included in a wholly urban and suburban constituency. While it is acknowledged that no ward splits are ideal, particularly those which require a single polling district from one local authority being included in a constituency wholly comprising wards from another local authority, they considered that in this instance it is the preferred option in order to increase the electorate of the Castle Point constituency to within the permitted range while also formulating a pattern of constituencies in the surrounding area that better reflect the statutory factors. The initial proposal to include the West Leigh ward in the Castle Point constituency has generated significant opposition from local residents, and it is clear that such an option would severely disrupt community ties in this area. Additionally, the Lodge ward option, which only a few respondents have supported, would also significantly disrupt local ties in Rayleigh, and the two areas have no direct transport connections. Bowers Gifford (the DO polling district), however, has direct transport links to Castle Point, and as observed during a site visit by the Assistant Commissioners to the area, there is a clear separation between this area and the towns of Pitsea and Basildon, and therefore the disruption to local ties will likely be minimised. This proposal also allows for the village of North Benfleet and the town of South Benfleet to be included in a constituency together. The added benefit of this option is that it allows more flexibility within the two Southend constituencies than the initial proposals allowed.

While it is possible to keep the constituency of Southend West wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement other than the addition of a single ward from the Rochford and Southend East constituency, it is considered that any of the options (the Milton,

Victoria, or St. Luke's wards) would potentially divide what is considered to be the urban area and centre of Southend. Including either the Milton or Victoria ward would be an arbitrary divide of the city centre. Including the St. Luke's ward would avoid this, but would create a peculiarly shaped constituency, retaining the less than ideal existing situation of the city centre wards being included in an otherwise extensively rural constituency, and separating them from much of the rest of the urban core of the city. It also allows the wards of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence to be included with the Rochford and Southend East constituency, which allows the areas closest to the airport (and accordingly most likely to be impacted by it) to be included in the same constituency as the airport itself. While some representations have suggested that these two areas have connections to Leigh, it was considered by the Assistant Commissioners that the A127 road does form an identifiable and easily understood physical boundary, and that the resultant benefits across the rest of the area outweigh this disadvantage. As such they considered that, regarding the two Southend constituencies, minimising change from the existing constituencies is not preferential, as to do so makes it more difficult to adhere to the other statutory factors, such as shape and accessibility of a constituency, and avoiding the breaking of local ties. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend a Southend Central and Leigh constituency comprising the whole of the existing Southend West constituency, apart from the wards of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence, which are included in Rochford and Southend East constituency, and the inclusion of three wards that contain Southend city centre from the existing Rochford and Southend East constituency. They recommend that this newly configured constituency be named Southend Central and Leigh, as they consider it better reflects the inclusion of the city centre wards. Leigh is recommended to be included in the name as a community with a strong and distinct identity within Southend, and they consider that to simply call the constituency Southend Central would not be reflective of the constituency as a whole.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend a small change to both the proposed constituencies of Thurrock, and South Basildon and East Thurrock, with the Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park ward being retained in Thurrock as in the existing constituency, and Tilbury St. Chads ward included in South Basildon and East Thurrock, as suggested by a number of representations and counter-proposals, including the Conservative Labour parties. The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the argument that the change allows the town of Tilbury and the Tilbury Docks to be retained within a constituency that includes its nearest town (Grays), with which it has important transport links and community ties.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend a significant reconfiguration for the proposed Braintree constituency, to realign it far more closely to the existing boundaries. This is possible due to the change of sub-regions, as the initially proposed constituency of Haverhill and Halstead necessitated a large change to the Braintree constituency. As such, they recommend that the Braintree constituency retains all of its existing wards, other than The Colnes ward, which is included in the Witham constituency. The only other recommended changes are that Braintree gains the two wards of The Sampfords, and Felsted & Stebbing. While it is acknowledged that it is possible to leave the Braintree constituency unchanged other than to realign to new local government ward boundaries, as the Conservative Party and other counter-proposals have put forward, it is considered that the recommended changes are preferable, as they allow for a scheme across the rest of Essex that more closely reflects the statutory factors.

As a result of the change in sub-regions, a number of constituencies that received relatively few representations are necessarily required to have changes recommended, although most of these are minor, and the Assistant Commissioners believe many of them are likely to be supported. Reconfiguring the sub-regions means that the proposed constituency of Brentwood is able to include the two wards of Moreton and Fyfield, and High Ongar, Willingale and The Rodings, both of which are included in the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency. The Assistant Commissioners recommend this change as it allows the revised constituency to replicate the existing constituency, other than some minor changes to realign to new local government ward boundaries. As such, it is also recommended that the name also revert to the existing name of Brentwood and Ongar.

Similarly, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Epping Forest constituency retain the ward of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing, as it allows the Epping Forest constituency to be wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement.

The Assistant Commissioners also recommend that the Saffron Walden constituency retain the four Chelmsford local authority wards of Writtle, Chelmsford Rural West, Broomfield and The Walthams, and Boreham and The Leighs as in the existing arrangement, rather than being included in the Braintree constituency as initially proposed. While it is acknowledged that a few respondents from these wards stated that they felt little connection to the town of Saffron Walden, it is considered that this configuration is closer to the existing arrangement, and that making such changes allows for a significantly better pattern of constituencies across much of the county. The only other changes from the existing Saffron Walden constituency are for the wards of Hatfield Heath, and Broad Oak & the Hallingburys to be included in the Harlow constituency, and for The Sampfords, and Felsted

& Stebbing wards to be included in the Braintree constituency. The Assistant Commissioners consider that making such changes allows for a significantly better pattern of constituencies across much of the county.

Furthermore, a small change is required to the proposed Clacton constituency, with the two wards of The Bentleys & Frating, and The Oakleys & Wix being included from Harwich and North Essex. While this is further from the existing constituency than the initial proposals, and stretches further north, taking in parts of the A120 road, it is considered that the significant, wider benefits of the sub-regional change in other areas far outweigh the disadvantages of these changes to the Clacton constituency. As mentioned previously, treating Essex as a sub-region on its own increases the average electorate across the county, and therefore requires initially proposed constituencies with electorates at the lower end of the permitted range, such as Clacton, to increase their electorates by including more wards.

No changes are recommended for the initially proposed Chelmsford, Basildon and Billericay, and Rayleigh and Wickford constituencies.

Norfolk and Suffolk

During the initial proposals, it was suggested to combine the counties of Essex and Suffolk to form one sub-region, and for Norfolk to be treated as a sub-region on its own. As mentioned previously, we have received a large number of representations and counter-proposals claiming that instead Suffolk and Norfolk should be joined together in a single sub-region. The suggested sub-regional change has an impact on a number of the constituencies that were initially proposed in both Suffolk and Norfolk. The various merits and disadvantages on the individual constituencies are detailed below.

Norfolk

The issue in Norfolk that received the most representations during the consultations was the inclusion in the initial proposals of the two North Norfolk wards of Stalham and Hickling in the Great Yarmouth constituency. It was acknowledged that this change was not ideal when proposed, but was considered necessary if Norfolk was to be treated as a sub-region on its own, in order to create a coherent pattern of constituencies across the county. The vast majority of representations, which mostly came from residents of the two wards of Stalham and Hickling, opposed the proposals, claiming that the two wards were vastly different from the rest of the Great Yarmouth constituency. The differences referenced by respondents, such as Duncan Baker MP (BCE-71049) and Hickling Parish Council (BCE-84188) were that Great Yarmouth is a more deprived area with a different socio-economic and demographic background to North Norfolk. They also highlighted the differences in physical geography between the rural areas of Stalham and Hickling (which include a designated area of outstanding natural beauty) and the mostly urban Great Yarmouth. A number of counter-proposals were received suggesting that the wards of Stalham and Hickling could continue to be included in the North Norfolk constituency as they are in the existing arrangement, and for the Great Yarmouth constituency to be wholly coterminous with the local authority and therefore also wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement. All of the counter-proposals that suggested this change also combined Norfolk and Suffolk together in a single sub-region, as it is difficult to propose this change and retain a coherent scheme throughout the county when Norfolk is considered as a standalone sub-region.

In the initial proposals, the five wards of Lancaster North, Lancaster South, The Raynhams, Stibbard, and Walsingham, which include the town of Fakenham and are included in the existing Broadland constituency, were included in the North Norfolk constituency. Few representations were received regarding this change, although those that were received were largely supportive, suggesting that the boundary aligned more closely with the local authority, that the town of Fakenham is one of the largest towns in the North Norfolk local authority and should therefore be included in a constituency with most of the rest of the local authority, and that the five wards had little in common with the rest of the existing Broadland constituency. A number of counter-proposals that called for Norfolk to be joined in a sub-region with Suffolk proposed that the five wards moved in the initial proposals should remain in the North Norfolk constituency, as the moving of those wards was largely consequential on including Stalham and Hickling wards with Great Yarmouth: not moving any of these wards would allow the existing constituency to remain unchanged except to realign to new local government ward boundaries.

While there were only a small number of representations regarding the two proposed Norwich constituencies, they presented strong views and evidence. Some representations supported the initial proposals, suggesting that much of the Thorpe Hamlet ward - currently in the existing Norwich South constituency but initially proposed to be included in the Norwich North constituency - is north of the river and therefore has more connection to the Norwich North constituency, and that this change meant the boundary between the two constituencies more closely followed the River Wensum. Conversely, opposing representations suggest that the Thorpe Hamlet ward contains crucial areas of the city centre such as the railway station, the football stadium, one of the cathedrals, and numerous shops, restaurants and other facilities, which are more closely linked to the Norwich South constituency that contains much of the rest of the city centre. It is difficult to keep the two Norwich constituencies as proposed unchanged and create a coherent scheme across the county if a sub-regional change is adopted. As such, a number of counter-proposals suggested the existing Norwich South constituency be left unchanged, with the Thorpe Hamlet ward being retained in the Norwich South constituency, and the Old Costessey ward being retained in the South Norfolk constituency rather than the Norwich South constituency as initially proposed. As the existing Norwich North constituency is below the permitted electorate range, a further change is required, and two options were proposed in the representations. First, the Conservative Party, among others, propose that the two wards of Drayton North and Drayton South be included in Norwich North, while the Liberal Democrats call for the ward of Spixworth with St. Faiths to be included in the Norwich North constituency.

There were very few representations received regarding the proposed North West Norfolk, South West Norfolk, Mid Norfolk and South Norfolk constituencies. Despite this, a number of counter-proposals necessitated changes to some or all of these constituencies. Many of the counter-proposals called for a cross-county Waveney Valley constituency including wards from the existing South Norfolk constituency and from a number of existing Suffolk constituencies. In these proposals, the South Norfolk constituency required additional electors from elsewhere, and many called for the South Norfolk local authority town of Wymondham (comprised of the Central Wymondham, North Wymondham and South Wymondham wards) and the nearby Easton ward to be included in the South Norfolk constituency. This has a knock-on impact on both the initially proposed Mid Norfolk and South West Norfolk constituencies, with a number of marginally different counter-proposals suggested in these areas.

Recommendations

As mentioned previously, the Assistant Commissioners recommend a change to the sub-regions to include Norfolk and Suffolk together, rather than Norfolk alone. This change is recommended largely due to the significant benefits across Suffolk. It also necessitates change across Norfolk; in some areas this change is considered positive, in others it is more marginal. The Assistant Commissioners recommend changes to eight of the nine constituencies in Norfolk.

The most significant benefit of the sub-regional change to Norfolk is that it is possible to recommend that the Great Yarmouth constituency remain unchanged. This is recommended as the Assistant Commissioners were convinced by representations from the wards of Stalham and Hickling which highlighted the differences between the two wards and the rest of the proposed constituency, and it allows the constituency to remain coterminous with the local authority and unchanged from the existing boundaries. Due to this change, the Assistant Commissioners also recommend that the North Norfolk constituency does not include the five wards that include the town of Fakenham and the surrounding areas as it does in the initial proposals. While it is acknowledged that a small majority of respondents supported the inclusion of these wards in the North Norfolk constituency, there was also some opposition. Furthermore, not only do the recommended boundaries allow the North Norfolk constituency to be unchanged from the existing boundaries other than to realign to new local government ward boundaries, they also allow the Broadland constituency boundary to become much more closely aligned to the existing boundaries, as well as allowing for the

benefits regarding the Great Yarmouth constituency mentioned previously. The Assistant Commissioners also recommend that the Broadland constituency be renamed Broadland and Fakenham as they consider that this would better reflect the composition of the constituency.

Although the two Norwich constituencies did not garner a large number of representations, the recommended change in sub-regions means a change from initial proposals in the two constituencies is necessary in order to create a coherent pattern of constituencies across the rest of the county. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Norwich South constituency remain unchanged from the existing boundaries, with the Old Costessey ward remaining in the South Norfolk constituency and the Thorpe Hamlet ward being retained in the Norwich South constituency. During a site visit to the area, they found that the ward of Thorpe Hamlet contained a significant portion of the city centre, and consider that to include it in the Norwich North constituency, as initially proposed, would divide the city centre between two constituencies, with many city centre landmarks and services being included in a constituency that is more suburban in character than the Norwich South constituency. The only recommended change to the Norwich North constituency from the existing arrangement is for the two wards of Drayton North and Drayton South, currently included in the Broadland constituency, to be included in the Norwich North constituency. While it is acknowledged that including the Drayton community in a Norwich North constituency is likely to somewhat disrupt local ties between the villages of Drayton and Taverham, it is judged to best fulfil the statutory criteria of the options considered. First, it is necessary for the Norwich North constituency to gain electors in order to be within the permitted electorate range, and including wards from the existing Broadland constituency significantly reduces the amount of change required to both the Broadland and the Mid Norfolk constituencies. It is recommended that the Drayton ward be included, rather than Spixworth with St. Faiths, as on their site visit it was clear to the Assistant Commissioners that despite the odd shape of the two Drayton wards, there are good transport links to the Norwich North constituency, and a similar suburban character across both areas. The peculiar shape of the two wards is largely exacerbated by areas with few or no inhabitants. On the contrary, the Spixworth with St. Faiths ward is almost entirely rural, made up mostly of fields, and the A1270 road separates much of the ward from the Norwich North constituency. Furthermore, there is historical precedent for the village of Drayton being included in Norwich North.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend that the second cross-county constituency in the region should be a Waveney Valley constituency, rather than a constituency of Haverhill and Halstead, as in the initial proposals. The recommended Waveney Valley

constituency is discussed in more detail in the Suffolk section below, as the majority of the proposed constituency is within Suffolk. However, this proposal does have an impact on the South Norfolk constituency, as six wards to the south of the existing South Norfolk constituency would be included in the cross-county constituency. As such, it is necessary for the South Norfolk constituency to gain additional electors in order to be within the permitted electorate range. The Assistant Commissioners recommend that the wards of Old Costessey and Easton, both currently in the existing South Norfolk constituency, be retained in this constituency, rather than be included in the Norwich South and Mid Norfolk constituencies as initially proposed. Furthermore, the three wards of North Wymondham, Central Wymondham, and South Wymondham, currently in the existing Mid Norfolk constituency, are recommended to be included in South Norfolk, thus bringing the constituency within the permitted range. While few representations were received regarding this area, there was some support for the idea of Wymondham being included in a constituency composed exclusively of other South Norfolk local authority wards. Wymondham is the largest town in the South Norfolk local authority, and clearly has strong links to other areas in the constituency.

The changes recommended to the South Norfolk and Broadland constituencies by the Assistant Commissioners have a knock-on impact on both the Mid Norfolk and South West Norfolk constituencies. The Mid Norfolk constituency is recommended to retain the five wards to the north of the Mid Norfolk local authority (Necton, Launditch, Hermitage, Upper Wensum, and Lincoln) that are currently included in the existing constituency, but were initially proposed to be separated and included in the Broadland and South West Norfolk constituencies. In exchange, two wards to the south of the Mid Norfolk local authority (Harling & Heathlands, and Guiltcross), initially proposed to be included in the Mid Norfolk constituency, are recommended to instead be retained in the South West Norfolk constituency as in the existing arrangement. The recommendations therefore allow both constituencies to become more similar to their existing configurations, with the recommended South West Norfolk constituency only being changed from the existing boundary to realignment to new local government ward boundaries.

It is recommended that no changes be made to the initially proposed North West Norfolk constituency.

Suffolk

The largest issue in Suffolk during the consultations, by number of representations received, is the initially proposed Haverhill and Halstead cross-county constituency between Suffolk and Essex. Almost all of the representations received regarding this constituency opposed it. Most of these representations, such as that from Halstead Town Council (BCE-65834) highlight the poor transport links between the two towns, particularly the public transport links, which are effectively non-existent. Furthermore, many of the wards in Suffolk look to the towns of Newmarket or Bury St Edmunds and not south to Essex, while the wards in Essex look mostly to the town of Braintree and not to Suffolk in the north. Others consider the knock-on impacts to both the Braintree and the West Suffolk constituencies unnecessarily disruptive, while others point to the River Stour as a dividing point. Due to the mathematical entitlement of Suffolk, it is necessary to have a cross-county boundary constituency that includes Suffolk wards. Those who opposed the Haverhill and Halstead proposal generally supported one of two options: a 'Waveney Valley' constituency or a 'Newmarket and Thetford' constituency, with the majority supporting the former, such as Geoffrey Holdcroft (BCE-93742). The rationale put forward in support of a Waveney Valley constituency is that there is a shared local character on both sides of the River Waveney, with the river being a uniting factor rather than a division, and that the A143 road provides a strong transport connection east-west across much of the proposed constituency. The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership has also been referenced to highlight the commercial links in the area. The reasons given in support of a Newmarket and Thetford constituency, suggested by the Green Party among others, are that it brings more of Thetford Forest together, and crosses the county boundary where it is less defined than other areas.

A relatively small number of representations were received regarding the proposed Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket constituency, although they were almost exclusively in opposition. This opposition generally highlights that both the existing West Suffolk and Bury St Edmunds constituencies are significantly reconfigured in the initial proposals, with the Bury St Edmunds constituency in particular being divided between four proposed constituencies. Furthermore, areas like Rougham and Stowmarket are separated from Bury St Edmunds, with which they have strong community ties, in the initial proposals. Counter-proposals in favour of a Norfolk-Suffolk sub-region are able to suggest constituencies that are more similar to the existing West Suffolk and Bury St Edmunds constituencies, with only relatively minor changes required. Unlike the Conservative Party counter-proposal, Councillor

Carol Poulter's proposal (BCE-73423) includes Stowmarket in the same constituency as Bury St Edmunds, suggesting that the two towns have strong community ties and transport links, particularly with new housing developments being built along the A14 road.

Similarly, the proposed North Suffolk constituency elicited a small number of representations, but with the vast majority being in opposition. While some contend that the constituency has a similar rural character across much of the proposed area, those in opposition, such as West Suffolk Constituency Labour Party (BCE-67608), suggest that the constituency is too vast, with poor internal transport links and no sizable town to act as a focal point. Others, such as Mike Porter (BCE-61706) have said that the roads in Suffolk tend to run north-south rather than east-west, and also highlight that such a constituency is a significant change from any of the existing constituencies, creating unnecessary disruption. In a number of counter-proposals, the proposed North Suffolk constituency is effectively replaced by the proposed Waveney Valley constituency mentioned previously. However, Daniel Poulter MP (BCE-92875) submitted a counter-proposal, which he states should only be taken into account if the sub-regions were to not change. In this counter-proposal, he suggested that the constituencies of Ipswich North and Stowmarket, and North Suffolk are significantly revised into Stowmarket, and Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituencies, following a north-south configuration rather than an east-west one in order to maintain a more similar shape to the existing constituencies, and to better reflect the road connections across the area.

The proposed Ipswich North and Stowmarket constituency received some support, for example from Thérèse Coffey MP (BCE-82425), although the majority of respondents were in opposition to the proposals, such as Councillor Elaine Bryce (BCE-71444). The support centred on the connections between the two towns, with the A14 road providing a strong transport link. On the contrary, those in opposition suggest that Stowmarket has more links to the town of Bury St Edmunds, and has little connection to the town of Kesgrave on the far side of Ipswich. Furthermore, the communities of Wickham Market and Framlingham have strong ties, and it has been suggested that they should be retained within the same constituency. The Conservative Party counter-proposal, despite proposing different sub-regions and large changes across much of Suffolk, proposes no change to the proposed Ipswich North and Stowmarket constituency. Conversely, Councillor Carol Poulter's counter-proposal includes Stowmarket with Bury St Edmunds, allowing Wickham Market and Framlingham to be included in a reconfigured Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency that is more similar to the existing arrangement.

The proposed constituency of Suffolk Coastal received relatively few representations. Some supported the proposals due to the minimal change, although some claim that the village of Wickham Market has more links to Ipswich and Framlingham (both towns are currently included in the same constituency as Wickham Market), than to the Suffolk Coastal constituency. Some have also suggested that the ward of Kelsale & Yoxford, proposed initially to be included in the North Suffolk constituency, has close links to Saxmundham and other wards in the Suffolk Coastal constituency with which they are currently included in an existing constituency. The counter-proposals in this area generally take one of two different approaches: those similar to Councillor Carol Poulter's counter-proposal suggests that Wickham Market be included in a Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency, and Kelsale & Yoxford ward be included in Suffolk Coastal as mentioned above. The other proposes a radical reconfiguration with the Suffolk Coastal constituency split into two, with the town of Felixstowe forming a constituency with eastern Ipswich.

The proposed Ipswich constituency, which is wholly unchanged from the existing constituency, has received very few representations. Some support the initial proposals due to there being no change, although others oppose them as they believe Ipswich should be evenly divided between two constituencies. Even fewer representations have been received regarding the proposed South Suffolk and Lowestoft constituencies, with no clear issues raised.

Recommendations

As mentioned previously, the Assistant Commissioners recommend a change to the sub-regions to include Norfolk and Suffolk together, rather than for Suffolk to be joined with Essex. This has been a carefully considered decision, and has been recommended because it is considered to have a significantly more positive effect across much of Suffolk, particularly in regards to minimising disruption to existing constituencies. It is recommended that the required cross-county constituency, replacing the proposed Haverhill and Halstead, be a 'Waveney Valley' constituency, rather than a Newmarket and Thetford constituency. One reason for this is that the Assistant Commissioners consider that creating a Newmarket and Thetford constituency appears to cause more disruption to existing constituencies across both Norfolk and Suffolk. Second, representations have been received from residents of Newmarket who claim that they should be included with Cambridgeshire and not Suffolk, and therefore to include the town in a cross-county constituency with Norfolk instead would go directly against local sentiment and cause even more disruption

and confusion than the existing arrangement. Finally, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the large amount of evidence received regarding a Waveney Valley constituency, with many highlighting the community ties and sense of identity shared across both sides of the river. They decided to see the area for themselves and following a site visit observed that the physical geography and socio-economic characteristics of both sides of the river seemed to be similar. The name 'Waveney Valley' is recommended as it was suggested by a large number of respondents and the Assistant Commissioners consider that it would be appropriately reflective of the nature of the constituency, with the River Waveney running directly through the centre of the proposed constituency.

There were two main counter-proposals received during the consultations for a Suffolk arrangement that involves a Waveney Valley constituency: the Conservative Party counter-proposal (which is the same as the Liberal Democrats and some members of the public), and Councillor Carol Poulter's counter-proposal. The Assistant Commissioners recommend that Councillor Carol Poulter's counter-proposal be adopted for several reasons. While the Conservative Party counter-proposal somewhat reduces the amount of change from the existing arrangement of constituencies, Councillor Carol Poulter's counter-proposal results in even less change again. For example, Councillor Carol Poulter proposes that the town of Stowmarket should remain in a Bury St Edmunds constituency, which the Assistant Commissioners judge to adhere to the statutory factors more closely than the Conservative Party counter-proposal or the initial proposals, as the two towns are currently in a constituency together. This would, therefore, minimise disruption to the existing constituencies and move significantly fewer electors. Also, the proposal acknowledges that the two towns have close community and transport links, which are likely to grow stronger due to numerous housing developments being built along the A14 corridor. Furthermore, Councillor Carol Poulter's proposal allows for the towns of Wickham Market and Framlingham, two areas with close community ties, to remain in a constituency together. It also proposes a Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency which, despite some changes from the existing arrangement, is more closely aligned to the existing constituency than either the initial proposals or the Conservative Party counter-proposal. This allows the ward of Kelsale & Yoxford to remain in Suffolk Coastal, linking it to the town of Saxmundham and to other areas with which it has community ties. Finally, the Risby ward is retained in a West Suffolk constituency, giving the constituency a better shape and more coherence than in the Conservative Party counter-proposal.

The Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to the initially proposed Ipswich, South Suffolk, and Lowestoft constituencies.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	30	49%
- Changed in composition and name	7	11%
- Changed in composition only	21	34%
- Changed in name only	2	3%

Recommendations constituency names

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Basildon and Billericay	No	No
Bedford	No	No
Braintree	Yes	No
Brentwood and Ongar	Yes	Yes
Broadland and Fakenham	Yes	Yes
Broxbourne	No	No
Bury St Edmunds	Yes	Yes
Cambridge	No	No
Castle Point	Yes	No
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	Yes	Yes
Chelmsford	No	No
Clacton	Yes	No
Colchester	Yes	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard	No	No
East Cambridgeshire	No	No
Epping Forest	Yes	No
Great Yarmouth	Yes	No
Harlow	Yes	No
Harpenden and Berkhamsted	No	No
Harwich and North Essex	Yes	No
Hemel Hempstead	No	No
Hertford and Stortford	No	No
Hertsmere	No	No
Hitchin	No	No
Huntingdon	No	No
Ipswich	No	No
Lowestoft	No	No
Luton North	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Luton South and South Bedfordshire	No	No
Maldon	Yes	No
Mid Bedfordshire	No	No
Mid Norfolk	Yes	No
North Bedfordshire	No	No
North East Cambridgeshire	No	No
North East Hertfordshire	No	No
North Norfolk	Yes	No
North West Cambridgeshire	No	No
North West Norfolk	No	No
Norwich North	Yes	No
Norwich South	Yes	No
Peterborough	No	No
Rayleigh and Wickford	No	No
Rochford and Southend East	Yes	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Saffron Walden	Yes	No
South Basildon and East Thurrock	Yes	No
South Cambridgeshire	No	No
South Norfolk	Yes	No
South Suffolk	No	No
South West Hertfordshire	No	Yes
South West Norfolk	Yes	No
Southend Central and Leigh	Yes	Yes
St Albans	No	No
St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire	No	Yes
Stevenage	No	No
Suffolk Coastal	Yes	No
Thurrock	Yes	No
Watford	No	No
Waveney Valley	Yes	Yes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Welwyn Hatfield	No	No
West Suffolk	Yes	Yes
Witham	Yes	No



**Boundary
Commission
for England**

London - Revised proposals recommendations
Commission paper

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Recommendations

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Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

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Recommended constituency changes

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electorate range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to London: 75 (an increase of two from the current number, 73)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 2 (3%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 10 (14%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross local authority boundaries: 31
- Total number of local authorities in region: 33 (incl. City of London Corporation)
- Local authorities currently undergoing a local government electoral review¹:
 - None

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted - and subsequent Orders made - by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1 December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances. London has been particularly heavily affected by the number of local government reviews in the region, with many Orders being made either shortly before or after the 1 December 2020 statutory cut-off date.

- Local authorities with new wards made by Order dated *after* the statutory cut-off date of 1 December 2020:
 - Barking and Dagenham
 - Bromley
 - Greenwich
 - Havering
 - Kingston-upon-Thames
 - Lambeth
 - Newham
 - Waltham Forest
 - Wandsworth

Allocation of constituencies

North/South London	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
'North London'*	3,428,454	46.71	45
'South London'**	2,122,000	28.91	28
Totals	5,550,454	75.62	73

* Consisting of that part of London north of the River Thames

** Consisting of that part of London south of the River Thames

While the London region is mathematically entitled to 75.62 constituencies, the statutory formula for distribution of numbers of constituencies to different parts of the UK (and applied by us equally to the English regions) allocates 75 constituencies to London as a whole. This difference between entitlement and allocation is particularly acute in North London, which is allocated 46 constituencies when its entitlement is 46.71.

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided London into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
North East London ²	662,740	9.03	9	9	73,638
Newham and Tower Hamlets	368,155	5.02	4	5	73,631
North Central and North West London ³	2,397,559	32.66	32	32	74,924
South Central and South West London ⁴	1,538,390	20.95	20*	21	73,257
South East London ⁵	583,610	7.96	8*	8	72,951
Region totals	5,550,454	75.62	73	75	73,680

*The existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency is divided between the proposed South Central and South West London, and South East London sub-regions. It has been counted in the South Central and South West sub-region.

² Comprising the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest.

³ Comprising the boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Camden, the City of London, Ealing, Enfield, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames (that part which lies on the north side of the River Thames), and Westminster.

⁴ Comprising the boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (that part which lies on the south side of the River Thames), Southwark, Sutton, and Wandsworth.

⁵ Comprising the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, and Greenwich.

Number of representations received

In the London region, the Commission received a total of 7,697 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 6,233 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 1,464 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were five in the London region (Westminster, Havering, Ealing, Merton and Bromley). Some of these related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ⁶	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ⁷	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	66	51	117
Official political party response ⁸	27	14	41
Peer from the House of Lords	8	0	8
Local councillor	331	75	406
Local authority	24	4	28

⁶ As declared by the respondents themselves.

⁷ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁸ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Parish or town council	3	1	4
Other organisation	152	50	202
Member of the public	5,622	1,269	6,891
Totals	6,233	1,464	7,697

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so in the boroughs of Bexley, Sutton and Wandsworth, and in the proposed constituencies of Croydon South, Greenwich and Woolwich, and Hammersmith and Chiswick. Comparatively few representations have been received with regard to the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Enfield, Hillingdon, Lewisham, Newham, and Tower Hamlets, and with regard to the proposed constituencies of Kingston and Surbiton, Leyton and Wanstead, Richmond Park, and Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner.

Campaigns and petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns were received. In the London region, these were as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
STOP Emerson Park moving to Romford	BCE-85274	Oppose	934
Keep Camberwell together	BCE-80191	Oppose	810
Keep Emerson Park in Hornchurch & Upminster	BCE-84512	Oppose	598
Emerson Park Ward and Romford Constituency	BCE-86397	Support	176
Keep Chadwell Heath and Whalebone in the same constituency	BCE-96898	Oppose	156
Romford Constituency	BCE-86399	Support	153
Romford and Hornchurch & Upminster Constituencies	BCE-86398	Support	137
Do not split the Davidson Road community in two	BCE-85918	Oppose	115
ROMFORD - Ardleigh Green - Gidea Park - Emerson Park - ONE COMMUNITY!	BCE-86188	Support	77
Support for Conservative counter-proposal for Hampstead and Highgate	BCE-96453	Oppose	75

Opposition from Shooters Hill ward	BCE-70034	Oppose	45
Opposition to dividing West Norwood community	BCE-65829	Oppose	26
Support for Conservative counter-proposal for Chipping Barnet	BCE-80738	Oppose	25
Opposition to Petts Wood & Knoll ward moving from Orpington to Bromley	BCE-86097	Oppose	24
Friends of Barnfield support Greenwich and Woolwich	BCE-77610	Support	19
Align Chingford and Woodford Green boundary to A406	BCE-61086	Mixture	15
Support for Conservative Party Lambeth proposals	BCE-84712	Oppose	11
Support for initial proposals for Streatham	BCE-92523	Support	11
Support for initial proposals for Bexley ("I am writing to express my strong support...")	BCE-96895	Support	9
Support for Finchley and Muswell Hill, and Hendon and Golders Green	BCE-91543	Support	9
Opposition from residents of Campden ward	BCE-83381	Oppose	7
Support for initial proposals for Romford constituency	BCE-86177	Support	6
Support for initial proposals for Bexley ("I am writing in response to the Boundary...")	BCE-96894	Support	5

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, we have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed. As we found at initial proposals, so the Assistant Commissioners too felt that the relatively large number and proportion of local authorities in London that had new wards made by Order dated around the time of the statutory cut-off date of 1 December 2020 made the creation of a pattern of constituencies that would make logical sense to electors at future Parliamentary elections particularly difficult in this region. The technical and statutory reasons for this seemed not well understood by some of those responding to the initial proposals, and the Assistant Commissioners recommend some text in the revised proposals consultation report - and probably also the final report - be dedicated to clarifying the issue.

Initial proposals sub-regions	Revised proposals sub-regions
North East London	North East London
Newham and Tower Hamlets	Newham and Tower Hamlets
North Central and North West London	North Central London
South Central and South West London	North West London
South East London	South West London
	South Central London
	South East London

In the initial proposals, the Commission decided to divide the London region into five sub-regions. These were: (1) North East London; (2) Newham and Tower Hamlets; (3) North Central and North West London; (4) South Central and South West London; and (5) South East London. We noted that it was mathematically possible to consider North Central London and North West London sub-regions separately, using the A5 road as a boundary between the boroughs lying to its west (Brent and Harrow) and the boroughs lying to its east (Barnet and Camden). When investigating this approach, we grouped the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, the City of London, Enfield, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster into the North Central sub-region, and the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, and Richmond upon Thames (North of the river) into the North West sub-region. However, this North Central sub-region required an average constituency size of 76,420 electors - very close to the upper limit of 77,062 - making it difficult in practice to create a configuration of constituencies here without dividing multiple wards. Combining North Central and North West London into one sub-region required an average constituency size of 74,924 electors, thereby allowing for greater flexibility in formulating a pattern of constituencies.

We also identified that it was mathematically possible to consider South Central London and South West London sub-regions separately. A South Central sub-region, comprising the boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark, was entitled to 11.85 constituencies; a South West sub-region, comprising the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (South of the river), Sutton, and Wandsworth, was entitled to 9.10 constituencies. These sub-regions could therefore be allocated 12 and nine constituencies respectively. However, it proved difficult to create a practicable scheme of constituencies in a stand-alone South Central sub-region without dividing multiple wards, due to the electorates and configurations of the wards across these four boroughs. Combining the sub-regions therefore enabled greater flexibility.

In North London, we received almost unanimous support for our proposed North East, and Newham and Tower Hamlets sub-regions. The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not recommend any changes to these sub-regions. However, while there was some support for our proposed North Central and North West sub-region, many of the counter-proposals submitted to us advocated the use of the A5 road (Edgware Road) as a dividing line, and consequently suggested that the North Central and North West sub-region should be broken down into two, three, or even four smaller sub-regions. For example, counter-proposals from the Liberal Democrats (BCE-80979) and John Bryant (second submission: BCE-94748) presented two sub-regions for this area,

grouping the boroughs as follows: (1) Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington; and (2) Brent, the City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames (North), and Westminster. The Assistant Commissioners noted that these were different groups of boroughs to the ones that had been initially explored in developing the initial proposals. The Conservative Party's counter-proposal (BCE-86589) put forward three sub-regions for the North Central and North West area, grouping the boroughs as follows: (1) Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey; (2) Camden, Hackney, and Islington; and (3) Brent, the City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames (North), and Westminster. John Bryant's initial submission (BCE-73747) also presented three groupings of boroughs, though groups (1) and (2) were different to the Conservative Party's, as follows: (1) Barnet and Camden; (2) Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington. Counter-proposals from Jonthan Stansby (second submission: BCE-89921), Peter Whitehead (BCE-78064) and Adam Gray (BCE-61555) divided the North Central and North West sub-region into four groups of boroughs: (1) Barnet and Camden; (2) Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington; (3) Brent, the City of London, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Westminster; and (4) Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Richmond upon Thames (North). The Assistant Commissioners recognised the merits of treating the A5 as a significant geographical consideration for revising the sub-regions.

We also received counter-proposals suggesting one or more constituencies crossing the River Thames, thereby merging 'North London' and 'South London'. Lewis Baston (BCE-81615) and BCE-79433 proposed one constituency crossing the Thames in the borough of Richmond upon Thames, while Oliver Raven (BCE-85352) proposed two constituencies crossing the Thames, in the boroughs of Richmond upon Thames and Kingston upon Thames. We also received some representations suggesting that the River Thames could reasonably be crossed in a constituency at Richmond.

Having considered the counter-proposals and the arguments presented to us, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded that they should depart from the approach of using the River Thames as a logical, natural boundary between 'North London' and 'South London'. They concluded that the patterns of constituencies proposed as a result of the Thames crossing(s) did not better meet the statutory factors than those counter-proposals which did not cross the River Thames. However, in light of the extensive evidence received across North Central and North West London, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded that they should recommend a pattern of constituencies which respected the A5 road as a dividing line. They considered that this approach would,

on the whole, minimise change to the existing constituencies (particularly across North Central London), reduce the number of borough boundary crossings, and better reflect local ties in a number of areas. As a result of their analysis of representations and counter-proposals, the Assistant Commissioners recommend dividing the North Central and North West London sub-region into two smaller sub-regions: North Central London, comprising the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington; and North West London, comprising the boroughs of Brent, the City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames (North), and Westminster. These sub-regions align with the groupings of boroughs proposed by the Liberal Democrats and John Bryant (BCE-94748).

In South London, the South Central and South West sub-region was largely opposed due to Longthornton ward (from the borough of Merton i.e. the 'South West' area) being included as an orphan ward in the Croydon North constituency (i.e. the 'South Central' area). Many representations contended that Longthornton ward should remain in the Mitcham and Morden constituency, and several viable counter-proposals presented a stand-alone South West sub-region. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that South West London, comprising the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (South), Sutton, and Wandsworth, should be treated as a sub-region in its own right.

In terms of South Central and South East London, the counter-proposals presented a variety of sub-regional approaches. The Labour Party (BCE-79496) and the Liberal Democrats supported the South East London sub-region, and proposed a stand-alone South Central sub-region. Pete Challis (BCE-83681) put forward a combined South Central and South East sub-region. The Conservative Party presented two sub-regions for South London. Their South West sub-region included Lambeth with the grouping of Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (South), Sutton, and Wandsworth; their South East sub-region accordingly comprised the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Lewisham, and Southwark. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the Conservative Party treated Lambeth as a co-terminous borough (that is, with three constituencies contained wholly within the borough boundary), as did John Bryant (BCE-73466) and John Cartwright (BCE-53975). However, Mr Bryant and Mr Cartwright then diverged from the Conservative Party's approach by putting forward two groupings of boroughs across the rest of South Central and South East London: (1) Greenwich, Lewisham, and Southwark; and (2) Bexley, Bromley, and Croydon.

Having considered the approaches carefully, and examined the consequences for the pattern of constituencies across South Central and South East London, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded that they should depart from the initially proposed South East sub-region. They concluded that treating South Central and South East sub-regions separately enabled an arrangement of constituencies that, overall, better reflected the statutory factors across these areas of London. They therefore recommend a South Central London sub-region, comprising the boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark, and a South East London sub-region as initially proposed, comprising the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, and Greenwich.

As in the initial proposals, the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable.

Under these recommendations, three of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, as opposed to two in the initial proposals. In the area of North Central and North West London, the recommendations reduce the number of constituencies crossing two local authorities from 18 to 14. Across the whole of London, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that 27 constituencies cross local authority boundaries.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend revising the composition of 43 of the 75 constituencies proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, they have decided not to make any revisions to the composition of the remaining 32. Of the 43 constituencies where they have recommended revising the composition, they have also revised the names of 29. Of the 32 constituencies where the Assistant Commissioners have not recommended revisions to the composition set out in the initial proposals, they have revised only the names of five.⁹

⁹ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	2	10	29	34	44	31	0	N/A	N/A	3	5	44
Revised proposals	3	7	33	32	48	27	0	N/A	N/A	6	6	49

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
North East London ¹⁰	1	1	5	2	5	4	0	N/A	N/A	3	1	9

¹⁰ Comprising the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest.

Newham and Tower Hamlets	0	0	2	3	4	1	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	2
North Central London ¹¹	1	1	6	6	9	5	0	N/A	N/A	0	3	9
North West London ¹²	0	2	8	8	9	9	0	N/A	N/A	0	2	13
South West London ¹³	1	2	4	2	7	2	0	N/A	N/A	1	0	6
South Central London ¹⁴	0	0	6	6	8	4	0	N/A	N/A	1	0	5
South East London ¹⁵	0	1	2	5	6	2	0	N/A	N/A	1	0	5
Totals	3	7	33	32	48	27	0	N/A	N/A	6	6	49

¹¹ Comprising the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington.

¹² Comprising the boroughs of Brent, the City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames (North), and Westminster.

¹³ Comprising the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (South), Sutton, and Wandsworth.

¹⁴ Comprising the boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark.

¹⁵ Comprising the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, and Greenwich.

North East London

There are currently nine constituencies in the North East London sub-region. The initial proposals were also for nine constituencies. Four of the existing constituencies have electorates within the permitted electorate range, and the initial proposals retained the Walthamstow constituency wholly unchanged.

Grouping together the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest to form a North East London sub-region was widely supported. We did, however, receive a counter-proposal from Adam Gray (BCE-61555) which combined our North East sub-region with our Newham and Tower Hamlets sub-region to create a larger 'East London' sub-region, via a constituency that crossed the boundary between Redbridge and Newham. Having considered the overall pattern of constituencies in Mr Gray's counter-proposal, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded that they should pursue this approach.

The initial proposals for the North East sub-region were fully supported by the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. The Conservative Party provided a counter-proposal (BCE-86589) which followed the general pattern of the initial proposals, but with some amendments, which they argued better reflected existing constituencies and local ties. Counter-proposals which diverged more significantly from the initial proposals were provided by Oliver Raven (BCE-85352) and BCE-79433. We also received smaller scale counter-proposals, focused on the three constituencies of Chingford and Woodford Green, Leyton and Wanstead, and Walthamstow, from Robert Cole (BCE-79475) and BCE-55200.

A large number of representations opposed the initial proposals for the Romford constituency and the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency, specifically, the transfer of Emerson Park ward from Hornchurch and Upminster to Romford. Opposition stemmed largely from the residents of Emerson Park, and we received two petitions opposing the transfer of the ward: 1) an online form of 598 signatures ('Keep Emerson Park in Hornchurch & Upminster') provided by Julia Lopez, MP for Hornchurch and Upminster (BCE-84512); and 2) an online form of 934 signatures ('STOP Emerson Park moving to Romford') provided by the Hornchurch and Upminster Conservative Association (BCE-85274). However, we also received some support for the proposed transfer of Emerson Park ward, including four postal petitions totalling 543 signatures, and representations from Andrew Rosindell, MP for Romford

(BCE-85341, BCE-96869). Reference was made to a large part of Emerson Park ward formerly being included in the Romford constituency.

Several representations suggested transferring all or part of the Harold Hill area (Heaton and Gooshays wards) to the Romford constituency instead of Emerson Park, citing Harold Hill's historic links with Romford. A number of representations also suggested that changes to the two constituencies in question could be minimised by keeping Emerson Park ward in Hornchurch and Upminster, keeping Hylands ward wholly in Romford, and splitting Hacton ward between Hornchurch and Upminster, and Dagenham and Rainham. This was the approach taken by the Conservative Party, who proposed to maintain the Romford constituency wholly unchanged, with the only change to the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency being the transfer of two polling districts from Hacton ward (HN4 and HN5) to the Dagenham and Rainham constituency.

Additionally, several representations advocated that the Commission should consider Havering's new ward boundaries. The Order for new electoral arrangements in Havering was made in September 2021 and the new boundaries came into force at the local elections in May 2022 - both dates well after the cut-off date for local government boundaries that the Commission 'may take into account' under the Act. Respondents including local councillors, Andrew Rosindell MP, the Hornchurch and Upminster Conservative Association, the Conservative Party, and local residents, suggested that a solution for the area should be found using the boundaries of the *new* Emerson Park, Squirrel's Heath and/or Elm Park wards. Some localised counter-proposals (BCE-56623 and BCE-72164) were also based on Havering's new ward boundaries. Respondents argued that using the new boundaries would better reflect communities, in particular uniting the Elm Park community which is currently divided between constituencies, and would avoid split wards and confusion over the coming years.

The initial proposals for the Ilford North and Ilford South constituencies were received with a mixture of support and opposition. In response to Chadwell Heath becoming an orphan ward in the Ilford South constituency, we received a petition of 156 signatures from local residents in opposition (BCE-96898). They contended that the initial proposals would break local ties between Chadwell Heath and Whalebone wards, which are both in the borough of Barking and Dagenham and encompass the Chadwell Heath community either side of the A118 road. However, we also received support for the initial proposals, with the Chadwell Heath South Residents' Association arguing that 'bringing Chadwell Ward [currently in Ilford South] and Chadwell Heath Ward under one

constituency is a positive step towards unifying the entire Chadwell Heath area' (BCE-81131). Similar sentiments were expressed by local councillor Bert Jones (BCE-77301) among others.

In the borough of Waltham Forest, a number of representations drew attention to the A406 North Circular road. The boundaries of Chapel End ward and Hale End and Highams Park ward - and therefore the boundaries of the Walthamstow constituency and the Chingford and Woodford Green constituency, both as existing and as initially proposed - span the A406. However, since an Electoral Changes Order was made in May 2021, Waltham Forest has new ward boundaries which follow the A406 rather than cross it. Respondents suggested that the constituency boundaries should be adjusted to reflect the new ward boundaries, arguing that the North Circular is a hard barrier with different communities living on either side. This adjustment was put forward in the Conservative counter-proposal, by Sir Iain Duncan Smith, MP for Chingford and Woodford Green (BCE-82509), and in a campaign from local residents (BCE-61086). However, David Lee, on behalf of the Chingford and Woodford Green Labour Party (BCE-97615), opposed the adjustment on the basis that it would breach Rule 5 of the Act and would be in contravention to the BCE's own guidelines on splitting wards.

Recommendations

Given the strength of opposition to the proposed transfer of Emerson Park ward from the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency to the Romford constituency, the Assistant Commissioners carefully considered the arguments and evidence received - both in opposition to and in support of the initial proposals. They also assessed the merits of the counter-proposals provided for the area. First they noted that, while the division of Hylands ward in the initial proposals attracted very little opposition, the counter-proposal from Oliver Raven did not divide *any* ward across the entire North East London sub-region. This counter-proposal also kept Emerson Park ward in the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency. However, the Assistant Commissioners considered that Mr Raven's counter-proposal resulted in extensive disruption to the existing constituencies across the sub-region and would therefore break local ties in several areas.

The Assistant Commissioners noted that the counter-proposals from Mr Raven and BCE-79433 included Heaton and Gooshays wards in a Romford constituency, thereby addressing the consultation responses which suggested that those wards - comprising

the Harold Hill community - would make a more logical extension to the Romford constituency than Emerson Park ward. However, the Assistant Commissioners considered that including Heaton and Gooshays wards in a different constituency to Harold Wood ward would separate the Harold Hill community from its close neighbours in Harold Wood and Harold Park. They also noted that these counter-proposals again resulted in unnecessary change to existing constituencies elsewhere in the North East sub-region.

The Assistant Commissioners then assessed the Conservative Party counter-proposal, which they felt had merit: it retained the Romford constituency wholly unchanged, and kept Emerson Park ward in the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency, by dividing Hacton ward rather than Hylands ward. They noted that the Conservative Party supported the rationale for dividing a ward: 'We accept that to achieve a coherent pattern of constituencies a ward must be split in Havering. Without a ward split two constituencies entirely in Havering would both be at the lower end of quota making it more difficult to comply with Rule 2 elsewhere in the subregion.'

Given the number of representations which suggested taking into account Havering's new ward boundaries, the Assistant Commissioners were also interested in exploring solutions based on the new boundaries. The Commission policy states that, where the Commission is considering splitting a ward (as we are in Havering), 'in considering how to split that ward, the BCE is prepared to take into account, as appropriate, any new ward boundaries introduced after 1 December 2020.' (See *Guide to the 2023 Review*, paragraph 40.) Following analysis of Havering's new ward boundaries, and inspired by suggestions and evidence provided to us in representations, the Assistant Commissioners determined a potential solution for the Hornchurch area based on the new ward boundaries, as follows: the existing¹⁶ Hacton ward and St Andrew's ward would be divided between the Hornchurch and Upminster, and Dagenham and Rainham constituencies, such that those parts of the existing wards which fall under the new Elm Park ward would be included in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency. The existing Emerson Park ward would then be divided between the Hornchurch and Upminster, and Romford, constituencies, such that those parts of the existing ward which fall under the new Squirrel's Heath ward would be included in the Romford constituency. The Assistant Commissioners noted that,

¹⁶ 'Existing' in this context refers to the ward boundaries that existed or were in prospect as at 1 December 2020, in other words, those boundaries that we were obliged to have regard to when developing the initial proposals. In Havering's case, those boundaries are no longer 'existing' in practice because the new electoral boundaries came into force at the May 2022 local elections. However, for ease of reference, this paper refers to the December 2020 boundaries as 'existing'.

under this approach, it was not numerically possible to include in the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency those southwesterly parts of the new Hacton ward which extend into the existing Elm Park ward.

To help the Assistant Commissioners gain a better understanding of the Hornchurch area 'on the ground', and to help them weigh up the Conservative Party counter-proposal against other options, they visited the area. Having assessed the Conservative Party's proposed split of Hacton ward, by driving down the road which would become the constituency boundary, they considered that splitting the ward in such a way would divide a close-knit residential neighbourhood. They were therefore not convinced that the Conservative Party's solution was viable. Having explored the Elm Park area, they conceded that Abbs Cross Lane / South End Road - the new ward boundary - would make a more suitable constituency boundary. Visiting Emerson Park ward demonstrated to the Assistant Commissioners that the western part of the ward has close links with Ardleigh Green and other areas of the neighbouring Squirrel's Heath ward, but that the bulk of the ward would naturally gravitate to Hornchurch town centre.

Following their visit, and having assessed further ways in which Emerson Park, Hacton and St Andrew's wards could be divided along existing and/or new boundaries, the Assistant Commissioners recommend the solution described above which takes into account the new boundaries of Elm Park ward and Squirrel's Heath ward. Although this solution divides three existing wards, and although it does *not* take into account the new boundary at the southwestern end of Hacton ward, the Assistant Commissioners consider that it much better reflects community ties on the ground than the Conservative counter-proposal, and responds to the numerous representations received about the Emerson Park ward and the surrounding area. This solution also provides a degree of 'future-proofing' for the area, in that only one new ward (Hacton) would be divided between constituencies.

With regard to Chadwell Heath ward, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the Conservative Party counter-proposal addressed those representations and petition which argued that Chadwell Heath should remain in a constituency with its neighbouring Whalebone ward to the south. Under the Conservative Party proposal, Chadwell Heath ward remains in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency, and Becontree ward (currently in the Barking constituency) consequently becomes an orphan ward in the Ilford South constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered this counter-proposal carefully, but they found no compelling evidence that Becontree would make a more suitable orphan ward than Chadwell Heath, and they considered that the transfer of Becontree ward from the Barking constituency to the Ilford South constituency would break local ties in the Becontree estate. They

also observed that Becontree ward is separated from the rest of the Ilford South constituency by Goodmayes Park and playing fields - natural boundaries - whereas the northern part of the boundary between Chadwell and Chadwell Heath wards is indistinct, running along residential roads.

The Assistant Commissioners also noted the suggestion in some representations that, if Chadwell Heath ward were to be included in the Ilford South constituency as per the initial proposals, Whalebone ward should be divided such that the northern part of the ward above the railway line is also included in the Ilford South constituency (BCE-96898, BCE-81131). Respondents stated that the section of the ward north of the railway line is part of the Chadwell Heath community, whereas the section of the ward south of the railway line is part of the Becontree community. Aligning the constituency boundary with the railway line would therefore reflect local ties. The Assistant Commissioners explored whether it was possible to divide the ward in this way, by including polling districts LB and LD in the Ilford South constituency, and LA and LC in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency. However, this took Ilford South above the permitted electorate range, and Dagenham and Rainham below.

In light of their assessments, and noting also that the initial proposals did receive a degree of support, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the initial proposals should be adopted for the constituencies of Ilford South and Barking.

The Ilford North constituency received a mixture of support and opposition from local residents regarding the transfer of the Cranbrook and Valentines wards from Ilford South to Ilford North. Those in support argued that the initial proposals united Cranbrook and Valentines wards with Barkingside and Clayhall wards, whose residents all gravitate to the shared local hub of Gants Hill, making use of its shops, restaurants and tube station. Those in opposition contended that the A12 road (which runs through Gants Hill) is a natural barrier, and that the initial proposals separate Cranbrook and Valentines wards from Ilford town centre, where many residents use local amenities. Having considered the evidence, and the alternative options provided by counter-proposals from Mr Raven and BCE-79433, the Assistant Commissioners concluded that no alternative configuration for Ilford North would better reflect the statutory factors than the initial proposals. They also noted the support from the Conservative Party, who agreed that Cranbrook and Valentines wards made a 'very logical extension' to the Ilford North constituency. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the initial proposals are adopted for the Ilford North constituency.

Turning to the issue of the A406 road in Waltham Forest, the Assistant Commissioners recognised the strength of the arguments encouraging us to align the boundary of the Chingford and Woodford Green, and Walthamstow, constituencies with the A406, in line with the new local government ward boundaries. Respondents cited the A406 as a ‘hard boundary’ between communities, and additionally noted that since the expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone to the A406 in 2021, the road also represents a financial boundary. However, the Assistant Commissioners were ultimately persuaded by the arguments of David Lee: aligning the constituency boundary with the A406 would require two existing wards to be split, and these splits would not meet any of the criteria for ward splitting set out by the BCE in paragraph 31 of the *Guide to the 2023 Review*. Furthermore, dividing these two wards would result in unnecessary change to the existing Walthamstow constituency, which the initial proposals maintain wholly unchanged. In light of these arguments, and noting also the strong support for the inclusion of Bridge ward in the Chingford and Woodford Green constituency, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend that the initial proposals for the Chingford and Woodford Green constituency and the Walthamstow constituency should be changed.

Regarding the Leyton and Wanstead constituency, the Assistant Commissioners observed that there were differing views over the proposed inclusion of South Woodford ward in this constituency. Most respondents supported the initial proposals, including South Woodford ward councillor Beverley Brewer (BCE-81222) and the Chingford and Woodford Green Constituency Labour Party (BCE-84455), citing local ties between South Woodford and Wanstead. However, some respondents argued that residents of South Woodford identify as part of the wider Woodford community to the north. Robert Cole, on behalf of South Woodford Ward Conservatives, drew attention to the South Woodford Neighbourhood Forum area which extends north over the A406 into Churchfields ward (BCE-79475 and BCE-97600). Mr Cole provided a counter-proposal for South Woodford ward to be included in the Chingford and Woodford Green constituency, as did BCE-55200. However, both these counter-proposals caused disruptive knock-on effects to the Leyton and Wanstead, and Walthamstow constituencies. Having weighed up the evidence, and having considered both counter-proposals to cause unnecessary change in the borough of Waltham Forest, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the initial proposals for the Leyton and Wanstead constituency should be adopted.

Newham and Tower Hamlets

The boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets currently have four constituencies. Due to significant growth in the number of electors in this area, the initial proposals allocated five constituencies to the pair of boroughs. It was therefore necessary for one constituency to cross the River Lee, which acts as the borough boundary between Newham and Tower Hamlets.

We received near unanimous support for grouping Newham and Tower Hamlets together as a sub-region, and the initial proposals were fully supported by the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. Counter-proposals were provided by John Bryant (BCE-73494), Jonathan Stansby (BCE-67759), Oliver Raven (BCE-85352) and BCE-79433. As previously mentioned, Adam Gray (BCE-61555) provided a counter-proposal that merged the Newham and Tower Hamlets sub-region with the North East London sub-region. Notably, three of the counter-proposals put forward a Poplar and Canning Town constituency, crossing the River Lee in the south of the two boroughs, in place of (or in addition to) a constituency crossing the River Lee in the north of the two boroughs as per the initial proposals. Mr Bryant and Mr Stansby both referenced the precedent of a Poplar and Canning Town constituency that existed from 1997 to 2010.

Despite receiving only 88 representations from respondents in Newham and Tower Hamlets, a number of themes emerged. Respondents expressed a mixture of support and opposition for the proposed Stratford and Bow constituency, crossing the River Lee between Stratford and New Town ward in Newham, and Bow East ward and Bromley North ward in Tower Hamlets. The main argument against the proposed constituency was that it did not respect borough boundaries, though some respondents such as Andrew Corti (BCE-90989) also argued that the A12 road and the Olympic Park represented 'significant barriers' between the Newham part and the Tower Hamlets part of the constituency. Conversely, a number of respondents supported the constituency, in particular arguing that crossing the Lee towards the north of the borough boundary made more sense than towards the south. For example, BCE-84217 noted that the river is 'narrow/canalised' between Stratford and Bow and there are 'ample' crossing points for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and public transport users. Towards the south, however, the river is much wider with fewer crossings - thus a 'barrier separating communities'. BCE-84217 also contended that the Olympic Park is a 'common area of community focus'

for north west Newham and north east Tower Hamlets. In opposition to John Bryant's counter-proposal, BCE-96899 noted that the 'links between Bow and Stratford are multifold'.

We received some representations arguing that West Ham ward should be included in the Stratford and Bow constituency rather than the West Ham and Beckton constituency, and in turn, Green Street West ward should be included in the West Ham and Beckton constituency. Respondents argued that West Ham ward extends almost to Stratford High Street, contains Stratford Park, and comes under the same council-designated community neighbourhood as Stratford. They also contended that the District Line would make a coherent constituency boundary at the south of the ward.

With regard to the name of the Poplar and Limehouse constituency, some representations argued that 'Isle of Dogs', 'Canary Wharf' or 'Docklands' should be included in the constituency name, among other suggestions. Councillor Andrew Wood (BCE-80621) conducted social media polls asking local residents to choose their preferred name for the constituency, with 'Poplar and the Isle of Dogs' emerging as the top choice. However, BCE-96899 countered Councillor Wood's submission, arguing that the Isle of Dogs is in fact part of Poplar, and that Poplar and Limehouse is a more inclusive name for the constituency. BCE-96899 also highlighted that the Facebook survey was conducted on the Canary Wharf and Isle of Dogs Facebook group, therefore was potentially biased. Other respondents similarly saw no need for the constituency name to change, with Councillor Peter Golds (BCE-73892) noting that the constituency 'includes the bulk of the former borough of Poplar and most of the historic Limehouse constituency'. Regarding the composition of the constituency, a small number of respondents were concerned that St Katharine's and Wapping ward formed a long salient to the constituency, and suggested this ward should be included in the Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency in place of St Dunstan's ward. However, others emphasised the riverside character of St Katharine's and Wapping ward and its affinity with the fellow riverside wards of Limehouse, Canary Wharf, Island Gardens, and Blackwall and Cubitt Town.

The East Ham constituency was almost unanimously supported, with respondents noting that the eight wards comprising the constituency were the wards which identify most closely with East Ham. Stephens Timms, MP for East Ham, stated that the proposed boundary successfully reflected the local geography and transport corridors (BCE-72204, BCE-97554).

Recommendations

Having assessed the merits of each of the counter-proposals for the Newham and Tower Hamlets sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners concluded that none of them better reflected the statutory factors than the initial proposals. In particular, they considered that a constituency crossing the River Lee between Stratford and Bow presented a more logical solution than one crossing the Lee between Poplar and Canning Town, given the more extensive links across the river between Stratford and Bow and the recent development of the Olympic Park area.

Regarding the suggestion that West Ham ward should be swapped with Green Street West ward in the Stratford and Bow constituency, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that while some parts of the ward would undoubtedly have local ties with Stratford, the ward also encompassed core areas of West Ham and contained amenities such as West Ham Park and West Ham C of E Primary School. The Assistant Commissioners felt that Green Street West ward would be somewhat isolated in its new constituency should the swap take place, and they found no compelling evidence that Green Street West ward has stronger ties with the Plaistow area than the Forest Gate area. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend that West Ham ward is swapped with Green Street West ward.

Having considered the various arguments concerning the name of the Poplar and Limehouse constituency, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the representations of BCE-96899 and Councillor Golds, concluding that there were no compelling reasons to change the name of the constituency. While acknowledging that the proposed constituency does not include Limehouse station, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the shape and geographical span of the constituency was very similar to the existing Poplar and Limehouse constituency. In addressing the question of whether St Katharine's and Wapping ward should be included in the Poplar and Limehouse constituency or the Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency, the Assistant Commissioners took the same view as the Conservative Party, who stated: 'Although we note the St Katharine's and Wapping ward is connected to the rest of the [Poplar and Limehouse] constituency by a very narrow strip of land in the vicinity of Butcher Row we consider its closest links to be with its fellow riverside residential wards of Limehouse and Canary Wharf than with the more densely

populated wards to the north from which it is divided by the Highway.’ The Assistant Commissioners also noted that swapping St Katharine’s and Wapping ward for St Dunstan’s ward would divide the Stepney community.

In light of their assessments, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to the initial proposals for the Newham and Tower Hamlets sub-region.

North Central London

As previously described, the initial proposals treated North Central and North West London as one large sub-region. There are currently 32 constituencies across this area, and the initial proposals were also for 32 constituencies.

Some counter-proposals supported the North Central and North West sub-region. Jonathan Stansby (initial submission: BCE-67759), BCE-85271 and BCE-63179 all treated the two areas together and proposed constituencies crossing the A5 between Barnet and Harrow, Barnet and Brent, and Camden and Brent. The three counter-proposals which put forward constituencies crossing the River Thames (BCE-79433, Oliver Raven (BCE-85352) and Lewis Baston (BCE-81615)) also put forward constituencies crossing the A5.

On the other hand, many of the counter-proposals submitted to us advocated the use of the A5 road as a dividing line from the north of the region to the City of Westminster, and consequently suggested that the North Central and North West sub-region should be broken down into two, three, or even four smaller sub-regions - as outlined above.

Representations expressed a mixture of support and opposition for constituencies crossing the A5 road. The Stanmore and Edgware constituency was mostly opposed, with respondents such as Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow East (BCE-77996, BCE-97660) and Councillor Nick Mearing-Smith (BCE-85979) arguing that the A5 represents a natural and historic boundary between Barnet and Harrow, and that the primary transport links from Edgware run south through Hendon rather than west across to Stanmore. However, some respondents supported the proposed constituency, arguing that the Edgware community in fact spans the A5 (as demonstrated by wards being named 'Edgware' in both Barnet and Harrow) and residents use local services on either side of the road. BCE-91108 drew attention to the Edgware Growth Area Supplementary Planning Document, adopted by Barnet and Harrow local authorities, which recognises that Edgware town centre extends across the A5.

The Hendon and Golders Green constituency was largely supported by local residents. Many respondents argued that the proposed constituency reflects religious communities, in particular the Orthodox Jewish community, as well as Muslim, Hindu,

Christian and Buddhist faith groups. Respondents also described abundant community links between Kingsbury (Brent) and Colindale / West Hendon (Barnet), and argued that the Welsh Harp reservoir and Brent Cross shopping centre would be focal points for the constituency. Conversely, others viewed the Welsh Harp reservoir and the A5 as geographic barriers. Carolyn Downs, on behalf of Brent local authority, contended that Cool Oak Lane does not present an appropriate link across Welsh Harp reservoir since 'it is a very narrow lane and not suitable for pedestrians', and furthermore, 'crossing the A5 at this point by car is also very difficult with one way streets and no right turns off the A5 into Hendon in this area' (BCE-81617). Concerns were also raised by respondents such as Councillor Peter Zinkin (BCE-97715) that the Orthodox Jewish community would be represented almost wholly within the Hendon and Golders Green constituency, with the potential to reduce that community's representation to one MP, rather than across two constituencies as per the present arrangement.

Across the rest of the borough of Barnet, the initial proposals were again received with a balance of support and opposition. Regarding the proposed Finchley and Muswell Hill constituency, concerns were expressed over crossing the borough boundary between Barnet and Haringey. Several respondents argued that the existing Finchley and Golders Green constituency is highly cohesive in terms of community ties and transport links, and that there are comparatively few links between the Finchley area (Barnet) and the Muswell Hill area (Haringey). Residents of Garden Suburb ward in particular emphasised their practical and historic links with Golders Green and Finchley Road, rather than Muswell Hill. Residents from Haringey contended that the initial proposals would split the Muswell Hill community, and on a wider level, would separate areas which all identify as part of the former borough of Hornsey. However, a number of respondents including the Finchley and Golders Green Labour Party (BCE-81119) supported the initial proposals, arguing that Finchley shares more in common with Muswell Hill and Highgate than it does with Childs Hill, Cricklewood and Golders Green. Respondents outlined strong geographic, transport, community and religious ties across the proposed constituency, drawing attention in particular to the uniting thread of the Northern Line (High Barnet branch). Some representations noted that East Finchley town centre serves residents on both the Barnet and Haringey sides of the borough boundary.

Further north in the borough of Barnet, we received strong opposition to the transfer of the East Barnet and Brunswick Park wards from the Chipping Barnet constituency to the proposed Southgate and Barnet East constituency. Local residents, Theresa Villiers, MP for Chipping Barnet (BCE-83552, BCE-89861), and the Chipping Barnet Conservative Association (BCE-84097, BCE-97669)

were among those who set out numerous historic and community reasons why East Barnet and Brunswick Park wards should remain in a constituency with the rest of the High Barnet area, rather than being paired with Southgate in the borough of Enfield.

There was notable support for the Conservative Party counter-proposal for the borough of Barnet, and for their proposed Chipping Barnet constituency in particular. Several representations formed part of a campaign supporting the counter-proposal (BCE-80747). The campaign outlined that the initial proposals divided Barnet into five constituencies, only one of which was wholly contained within the borough. In contrast, the Conservative Party counter-proposal divided Barnet into four constituencies, three of which were wholly contained within the borough, and with Finchley and Golders Green remaining largely unchanged from its current boundaries.

Similarly to the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats proposed four constituencies covering the borough of Barnet, three of which were wholly contained within the borough. They proposed exactly the same Chipping Barnet and Hendon constituencies as the Conservative Party, but presented a different arrangement for a Finchley constituency. John Bryant's first counter-proposal (BCE-73747) presented a very similar arrangement to the Liberal Democrats' for Barnet, with only a small difference in the southwest corner of the borough. A slightly different approach was taken by Mr Bryant in his second counter-proposal (BCE-94748), matched in part by Peter Whitehead (BCE-78064) and Jonathan Stansby (second submission: BCE-89921): all three of these counter-proposals included Mill Hill ward in place of Brunswick Park ward in their Chipping Barnet successor constituency, resulting in a much narrower Hendon constituency. Mr Bryant consequently included Brunswick Park and Friern Barnet wards in his Southgate constituency - thereby pairing them with wards in the borough of Enfield - whereas Mr Whitehead and Mr Stansby included Brunswick Park and Friern Barnet wards in their Finchley constituency. We received a number of other counter-proposals for the borough of Barnet, but we noted that these counter-proposals often made reference to existing rather than prospective ward boundaries¹⁷ and/or suggested splitting at least one ward in the borough.

In the borough of Haringey, we received significant opposition to the proposed transfer of West Green ward from the Tottenham constituency to the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency. Respondents including David Lammy, MP for Tottenham (BCE-74186),

¹⁷ Barnet was one of the London boroughs with prospective wards already made by Order as at 1 December 2020. It is such a prospective boundary 'rather than any existing boundary which it replaces' that the Act states the Commission may take into account.

argued that West Green ward is an integral part of the Tottenham community, especially since the ward includes Lordship Recreation Ground and the Broadwater Farm estate - site of the 1985 Broadwater Farm riot, which Mr Lammy described as 'a terrible but fundamentally important part of Tottenham's history'. Although representations were focused on West Green ward, some respondents also opposed the transfer of White Hart Lane ward from the Tottenham constituency to the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency, particularly the Tower Gardens Conservation Area located in the southeastern part of the ward. Respondents noted that the conservation area has been part of the Tottenham constituency since its construction in 1900, and the streets are named after historical figures associated with Tottenham.

A number of representations suggested that the Commission should keep West Green ward in the Tottenham constituency, and instead transfer Harringay ward to the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency. While acknowledging that Harringay ward is separated from the Hornsey area by a railway line, representations cited community ties between Harringay and Hornsey, and noted that residents either side of the railway line use the same stations. Some representations described a shared character and similar demographics between Harringay ward and neighbouring areas to its west and north. The Labour Party proposed swapping West Green and Harringay wards in their counter-proposal (BCE-79496).

Alternative suggestions for the Tottenham constituency included splitting West Green and/or White Hart Lane wards between the Tottenham constituency and the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency, noting that the westernmost areas of both wards share some affinity with the Wood Green community. Mr Lammy advocated splitting both West Green and White Hart Lane wards, but said 'If the Commission are not minded to support the split ward proposal, I would encourage them to support a straight swap of West Green ward for Harringay ward ... It is clear to me that, at the very least, the Broadwater Farm estate must remain a part of the Tottenham constituency...'

The Conservative Party proposed retaining West Green ward wholly within their Tottenham constituency, and splitting White Hart Lane ward between their Tottenham constituency and their Enfield South and Wood Green constituency. The Liberal Democrats also proposed retaining West Green ward wholly within their Tottenham constituency, but included the whole of White Hart Lane ward in their Southgate and Wood Green constituency. In his first submission, John Bryant included both West Green and White Hart Lane wards wholly within his Tottenham constituency. Mr Bryant also proposed a Southgate and Wood Green constituency

bearing resemblance to the Liberal Democrats' proposal, and the Assistant Commissioners noted that a number of other counter-proposals joined the Southgate area (borough of Enfield) with the Wood Green area (borough of Haringey) - such as counter-proposals from the Haringey Liberal Democrats (BCE-84163) and Peter Wilkinson (BCE-85393). However, some respondents voiced opposition to those counter-proposals that paired Southgate and Wood Green. For example, Catherine West, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green (BCE-88540), argued that Wood Green is the 'civic capital' of Haringey and has strong community ties with the rest of Haringey, not with Southgate, which is in a different borough.

The proposed inclusion of the two Hackney wards of Brownswood and Woodberry Down in the Tottenham constituency was almost unanimously opposed by local residents and Hackney council (BCE-95993, BCE-96008). Respondents contended that the initial proposals would break local ties between Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill West wards in particular, and several respondents argued that transferring Woodberry Down to a Haringey-based constituency would potentially create administrative and funding difficulties for the Woodberry Down regeneration project. Regarding Brownswood ward, some local residents said that if the ward has to be moved from its current constituency, it would be better suited to the Islington North constituency, since Brownswood shares many local services and concerns with neighbouring areas in Islington North.

Elsewhere in the borough of Hackney, we received notable opposition to the proposed transfer of Dalston ward from the Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency to the Islington North constituency. Respondents argued that Dalston ward is the 'heart' of Hackney and contains some key Hackney institutions, as well as a stretch of Kingsland Road which runs north-south through the borough. Concern was also expressed over the ward becoming an orphan ward in an Islington constituency. Some representations and several counter-proposals, including the Liberal Democrats' submission, suggested that De Beauvoir ward would make a better fit than Dalston ward with an Islington constituency. Many counter-proposals included De Beauvoir as an orphan ward in an Islington South constituency. However, a number of respondents including the Secretary of De Beauvoir Branch Labour Party (BCE-92915) subsequently opposed those counter-proposals, arguing that De Beauvoir shares few links with Islington but is strongly connected to its neighbouring Hackney wards.

The initial proposals for the Kentish Town and Bloomsbury constituency were largely opposed, primarily due to the inclusion of Tufnell Park ward as an orphan ward in this constituency. Tufnell Park residents argued that they look to the borough of Islington,

especially Holloway Road, for local services, and have few connections with Kentish Town or Camden in general. We also received opposition to the proposed name of the constituency, with several respondents citing the long historical precedent of the name 'St Pancras' and arguing that the existing constituency name of Holborn and St Pancras should be retained. There was some support for the composition of the proposed constituency, however, in light of the challenges faced in north London. Sir Keir Starmer, MP for Holborn and St Pancras (BCE-81604, BCE-93471) and Georgina Gould, on behalf of Camden Council and Camden Labour Group (BCE-83159) were among those expressing their support.

The Green Party put forward a counter-proposal covering parts of the boroughs of Hackney and Islington (BCE-83421). Their counter-proposal retained Tufnell Park ward in an Islington North constituency, and transferred Junction ward (its northerly neighbour) to the Kentish Town and Bloomsbury constituency instead. Dalston ward remained in the Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency, and Brownswood ward was transferred to Islington North. Consequently, Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill West wards were included in the Tottenham constituency.

In the north of the borough of Camden, we received strong opposition from local residents regarding the proposed Camden Town and St John's Wood constituency, and the proposed West Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, on the grounds that the initial proposals would divide the close-knit Hampstead community and create somewhat incoherent new constituencies with limited community relationships. Numerous representations formed part of a campaign opposing the initial proposals and (implicitly) supporting the Conservative Party counter-proposal for a Hampstead and Highgate constituency (BCE-96453). Conversely, we did receive some support for the proposed West Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, with respondents arguing that the Kilburn High Road (the A5 / borough boundary between Camden and Brent) was a connector rather than a divider, and it was therefore important that the Kilburn High Road and its adjacent wards remain together in the same constituency.

Despite the rationale for a constituency spanning the Kilburn High Road, many counter-proposals took an approach similar to the Conservative Party, treating the Kilburn High Road as a boundary and proposing a Hampstead-focused constituency. The Liberal Democrats proposed a Hampstead constituency which included two wards from the borough of Barnet. John Bryant (both initial and second submission), Peter Whitehead, and Jonathan Stansby (second submission) all proposed a Hampstead constituency that included one ward, Childs Hill, from the borough of Barnet. The Liberal Democrats, Mr Bryant, Mr Whitehead and Mr Stansby all

proposed a Holborn and St Pancras constituency wholly within the borough of Camden (though made up of slightly different configurations of wards), while the Conservative Party proposed a Holborn and St Pancras constituency which included one ward, Clerkenwell, from the borough of Islington.

The initial proposals for the City of London and Islington South constituency were greeted with a mixture of support and opposition, though most respondents were in opposition, arguing that the City should be kept in a constituency with the City of Westminster. In terms of links between the 'two cities', respondents cited historical, religious and ceremonial ties; shared professional services (notably in the financial, legal and commercial sectors); culture and tourism hubs; a need for cooperation on security, intelligence and policing; the shared riverside area; and transport links. The City of London Corporation (BCE-83944), among others, provided a detailed submission in opposition. On the other hand, several residents in the north of the City supported the initial proposals, arguing that they look to Islington for local services such as shopping, entertainment and educational facilities. Respondents noted that five of the City's most populated residential wards share a border with Islington, and Paul O'Brien (BCE-91670) summarised a recurring view among those in support of the initial proposals: 'There appears to be a common misrepresentation of the City of London. Many comments appear to focus on the 'image' of the City of London as a financial centre rather than on City residents.' Emily Thornberry, MP for Islington South and Finsbury (BCE-75567), supported the initial proposals, referring to existing cooperation between the City and Islington on matters of housing and education, alongside several transport, healthcare and hospitality links. Meg Hillier, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch (BCE-85522, BCE-97499) also supported the initial proposals, outlining 'strong links' between the City and Islington.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners recognised the interplay of several issues in North Central London and the finely balanced, often conflicting, views put forward by respondents. They acknowledged the merits of those representations in support of the initial proposals for the Stanmore and Edgware constituency and the Hendon and Golders Green constituency, which both crossed the A5 road. They also acknowledged the strength of those representations in support of the initial proposals for the Finchley and Muswell Hill constituency, which spanned the boroughs of Barnet and Haringey. However, they noted that these representations often argued that the initial proposals would 'build on existing local ties' or 'reinforce' community ties (for example, the campaign in

support BCE-91543), whereas representations in opposition provided evidence of ways in which the initial proposals would break local ties.

The Assistant Commissioners carefully considered the counter-proposals from the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats, and several individuals when determining an arrangement of constituencies to recommend for North Central London. Regarding the borough of Barnet, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the Conservative Party's and Liberal Democrats' proposed Chipping Barnet and Hendon constituencies were very similar to the existing Chipping Barnet and Hendon constituencies, save for the transfer of Edgwarebury ward from Hendon to Chipping Barnet, and the transfer of Friern Barnet ward (currently in Chipping Barnet) to a different constituency. They observed that a number of other counter-proposals took a similar approach, particularly regarding Edgwarebury ward. While acknowledging Edgwarebury's close ties with the town of Edgware, especially in that part of the ward west of the M1 motorway, the Assistant Commissioners noted that including this ward in the Hendon constituency would take the Hendon constituency over the permitted electorate range. They also noted that it was not numerically possible to include Mill Hill ward instead of Edgwarebury ward in the Chipping Barnet constituency. They therefore conceded that, in order to avoid significant disruption elsewhere, Edgwarebury ward would need to be included in a Chipping Barnet constituency - and they noted the arguments in support of this from Theresa Villiers MP (BCE-83552), campaign BCE-80738, and others.

The Assistant Commissioners felt that a significant benefit of the Chipping Barnet constituency as proposed by the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats, John Bryant (initial submission) and Adam Gray was the inclusion of East Barnet and Brunswick Park wards, thereby addressing the local concerns from this area that had arisen in response to the initial proposals. While Mr Bryant's second counter-proposal (BCE-94748), and counter-proposals from Peter Whitehead and Jonathan Stansby (second submission), included East Barnet ward in their Chipping Barnet successor constituency, Brunswick Park ward was not included. The Assistant Commissioners considered that this approach would continue to break local ties between Brunswick Park ward and the Barnet area.

In assessing the different configurations presented for a Finchley-based constituency, the Assistant Commissioners recognised the strength of the Conservative Party's Finchley and Golders Green constituency, which was unchanged from the existing constituency except for minor realignments with local government ward boundary changes. They noted that many other

counter-proposals transferred Childs Hill ward (or, in the case of the Liberal Democrats, both Childs Hill and Cricklewood wards) from Finchley and Golders Green to a Hampstead-based constituency comprising wards from the borough of Camden. While accepting that Barnet has too many electors to accommodate three whole constituencies, and therefore at least one Barnet ward must be joined with wards from a neighbouring borough, the Assistant Commissioners considered that including Childs Hill ward in a Hampstead-based constituency would break local ties in the Golders Green area and divide the two wards (Childs Hill and Golders Green) which encompass the Golders Green community. They also noted that, geographically, Childs Hill ward lies on the northern side of the hill which reaches its summit at Whitestone Pond, the highest point in inner London situated at the top of Hampstead village. Therefore Childs Hill is geographically separated from the Hampstead community.

In light of their analysis, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Conservative Party counter-proposal for the borough of Barnet - specifically, their three proposed constituencies of Chipping Barnet, Hendon, and Finchley and Golders Green - should be adopted.

When considering approaches to the boroughs of Haringey and Enfield, the Assistant Commissioners felt that the Conservative Party counter-proposal for Haringey had merit. They noted that the seven Hornsey wards to the west of the East Coast Main Line railway were kept together in the Hornsey and Friern Barnet constituency, and although Friern Barnet ward was included as an orphan ward, they were persuaded that at least the part of the ward lying south of the A406 road had close ties to the Muswell Hill area to its south. Representations from Friern Barnet ward described ties to the south and west, rather than to the north. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the Conservative Party proposed a compact Tottenham constituency very similar to the existing Tottenham constituency, and which did not include the two Hackney wards of Brownswood and Woodberry Down. They acknowledged the benefits of the Conservative Party's proposed split of White Hart Lane ward, in keeping the Tower Gardens conservation area in the Tottenham constituency, but they noted that other counter-proposals did not require a ward split in Haringey.

Although proposing to cross the borough boundary between Haringey and Enfield, as did many counter-proposals, the Conservative Party presented an arrangement for the borough of Enfield that was notably different to both the initial proposals and to several of the other counter-proposals received. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the Conservative Party proposals

for Enfield would result in significant disruption to the existing constituencies and would break local ties in the Edmonton area (by separating Haselbury ward from Lower Edmonton and Edmonton Green wards) and in the Southgate area (by including Palmers Green and Arnos Grove wards in a different constituency to central Southgate).

The Assistant Commissioners felt that the Liberal Democrats counter-proposal for Haringey, although different to the Conservative Party's, also had merit. While presenting a less compact Tottenham constituency than the Conservative Party, they took the same approach as the Labour Party in simply swapping West Green ward with Haringay ward, therefore enabling West Green ward to remain in the Tottenham constituency. Haringay ward was consequently linked with the Hornsey wards to the west of the railway line in a Hornsey and Highgate constituency which included Highgate ward from Camden. In arguing for the inclusion of Highgate as an orphan ward, the Liberal Democrats highlighted that Highgate village is itself divided between the boroughs of Haringey and Camden, with the borough boundary running along the village high street. The Assistant Commissioners agreed that there was logic in uniting all of Highgate in one constituency.

Similarly to the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats proposed a constituency joining the Wood Green area of Haringey with parts of the borough of Enfield, but the Assistant Commissioners considered that the Liberal Democrats' solution for the rest of Enfield better reflected the statutory factors than the Conservative Party's solution: there would be less change to existing constituencies and fewer local ties broken under the Liberal Democrats' plan than under the Conservative Party's plan. Although expressing some concern over the inclusion of Winchmore Hill ward in the Edmonton constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that an alternative option - swapping Winchmore Hill ward for Carterhatch ward in the Enfield North constituency - would present a less coherent solution. The Assistant Commissioners also noted that further, more extensive amendments to the Liberal Democrats counter-proposal for Enfield were possible, but they considered that these did not present better solutions overall. Some counter-proposals, such as those from Peter Whitehead, Jonathan Stansby (second submission), and Adam Gray proposed a constituency crossing the Enfield-Haringey boundary between Edmonton and Tottenham, rather than between Southgate and Wood Green. However, the Assistant Commissioners observed that this approach would divide the Tottenham community.

Turning their attention further south in the North Central sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the Conservative Party counter-proposal would present significant disruption to existing constituencies in the borough of Islington: the two existing Islington constituencies would essentially be divided east-west, resulting in somewhat incoherent new constituencies and breaking local ties in a number of areas. The Conservative's proposed Islington South East constituency included two non-contiguous wards from the borough of Hackney (Clissold ward and Hoxton West ward); the Assistant Commissioners considered that the inclusion of these wards would break local ties in the Stoke Newington area and the Hoxton area, and since the wards are not adjacent to one another, the impression and consequences could be analogous to two orphan wards. The Assistant Commissioners additionally noted that the Conservative's proposed Holborn and St Pancras constituency, in the borough of Camden, included an orphan ward (Clerkenwell) from the borough of Islington.

In contrast to the Conservative Party counter-proposal, the Liberal Democrats presented a pattern of constituencies in the borough of Islington much closer to the existing arrangement: Islington North remained wholly unchanged, and Islington South and Finsbury remained unchanged save for the addition of De Beauvoir ward as an orphan ward from the borough of Hackney. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the existing Islington South and Finsbury constituency falls under the permitted electorate range and therefore needs to gain one ward. While any orphan ward is not ideal, and acknowledging the opposition from some De Beauvoir residents to being joined with an Islington constituency, the Assistant Commissioners felt that the Liberal Democrats provided sound reasoning for joining De Beauvoir ward to Islington South: 'This is a ward of a similar residential character and built environment to the Islington wards to the west sharing the N1 post code. It borders Islington to the north and west and the Regents Canal to the south - so is relatively separated from the rest of Hackney ... [We] consider this to be a less incongruous expansion of Islington South than the addition of the City of London.' The Liberal Democrats proposed the same Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency as the initial proposals, and their Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency included Dalston ward - thereby keeping Dalston ward within a Hackney constituency. The Assistant Commissioners noted that several other counter-proposals, such as those from John Bryant (initial and second submission), Peter Whitehead, Jonathan Stansby (second submission), Adam Gray, and Robert Young (BCE-57009) presented exactly the same arrangement as the Liberal Democrats for Islington and Hackney.

In light of their assessments, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for constituencies in the boroughs of Islington and Hackney should be adopted - namely, their four proposed constituencies of Islington North, Islington South, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, and Hackney South and Shoreditch. Linking Hackney with the borough of Haringey, the Assistant Commissioners also recommend that the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for the Tottenham constituency should be adopted (aligning with the Labour Party counter-proposal for Tottenham): including West Green ward in the constituency in place of Harringay ward, and transferring White Hart Lane ward to a constituency with the Wood Green area. Moving into Enfield, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for the three constituencies of Southgate and Wood Green, Enfield North, and Enfield South, should be adopted.

The Assistant Commissioners concluded that the Liberal Democrats' solution for Islington, Hackney and Enfield better reflected existing constituencies than the Conservative Party's solution for these boroughs, and ultimately provided a stronger solution against the statutory factors. While acknowledging that the Conservative Party's Tottenham constituency was potentially more attractive than the Liberal Democrats', by virtue of it being contained wholly within the borough of Haringey and presenting less change from the existing Tottenham constituency, the Assistant Commissioners did not consider its advantages to outweigh the consequential disruption to Enfield and Islington in the Conservative Party's scheme. While also acknowledging that the Conservative Party's proposed split of White Hart Lane ward was desirable in terms of community ties in the Tower Gardens estate - and numerically essential for the Conservative Party's arrangement in this area - the Assistant Commissioners did not consider that it sufficiently met the BCE's criteria for ward splitting, especially since other viable whole-ward alternatives were possible. The Assistant Commissioners were further satisfied by David Lammy MP's inference that retaining West Green ward in the Tottenham constituency was more important than dividing White Hart Lane ward.

While acknowledging that there was some opposition to a constituency pairing Wood Green with Southgate, the Assistant Commissioners noted representation BCE-70966 from Joan Lyons, a resident of the southern part of Enfield borough, who emphasised community ties between Bowes and New Southgate wards (in the borough of Enfield) and Woodside and Bounds Green wards (in the borough of Haringey). Ms Lyons said it was 'crucial' that these four wards were in the same constituency. The Assistant Commissioners also considered that the borough boundary was very permeable between Bowes/New Southgate and Woodside/Bounds Green, and they noted that the Piccadilly Line linked the Wood Green area all the way to the northern extent of

the Southgate and Wood Green constituency in Cockfosters ward. Regarding the Liberal Democrats' solution for the Enfield North constituency, which includes Grange Park ward (currently in the Enfield Southgate constituency), the Assistant Commissioners noted a number of representations advocating the inclusion of Grange Park in Enfield North to unite more of Enfield town centre in the same constituency.

In determining a solution for the Hornsey area, the Assistant Commissioners recognised that the adoption of the Conservative counter-proposal for Barnet would necessitate the Friern Barnet ward being included as an orphan ward in a constituency with wards to its south. However, given the decision to recommend the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for the Tottenham constituency and, more widely, the boroughs of Hackney and Islington, it would not be possible to recommend the Conservative Party's Hornsey and Friern Barnet constituency without some minor adjustments. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend a Hornsey and Friern Barnet constituency that includes Harringay ward in place of Highgate ward. As previously discussed, representations outlined that Harringay ward shares community ties with the Hornsey area.

The Assistant Commissioners subsequently recommend a Hampstead and Highgate constituency based on the Conservative counter-proposal, but including Haringey's Highgate ward in place of Gospel Oak and Haverstock wards from Camden. While acknowledging that this solution would make Highgate an orphan ward in the constituency, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by those representations that argued for the uniting of the two Highgate wards (one in Camden; one in Haringey) in the same constituency, since the Highgate community spans the borough boundary. Responses from the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum (BCE-75096), the Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCE-85815), and the Highgate Society (BCE-79895), for example, presented strong cases as to why Haringey's Highgate ward should be linked with its neighbouring Camden ward. The Assistant Commissioners also noted the strong support in representations for the 'concept' of a Hampstead and Highgate constituency, given its historical precedent, and they noted that although Hampstead Heath could be seen to represent a geographic barrier between the Hampstead community and the Highgate community, respondents tended to view the Heath as a shared amenity, with residents either side sharing similar local concerns. The Heath was therefore seen as a unifier rather than a divider. Other counter-proposals, such as those from John Bryant (both submissions), Peter Whitehead, Jonathan Stansby (second submission), and Adam Gray, also presented constituencies spanning Hampstead Heath.

Finally, the Assistant Commissioners recommend a Holborn and St Pancras constituency based on the Liberal Democrats' proposed Holborn and St Pancras, but including Gospel Oak ward in place of Kentish Town North ward. The Assistant Commissioners consider that their recommended Holborn and St Pancras reflects the shape of the existing constituency. They acknowledge the separation of the two Kentish Town wards, but they note the hard boundaries of the railway line and Leighton Road dividing Kentish Town North ward from Kentish Town South ward. When exploring alternative options for the area, the Assistant Commissioners observed that Primrose Hill ward could be included in the Holborn and St Pancras constituency in place of Gospel Oak ward. However, they concluded that this would result in greater change from the existing constituencies. They also felt that the railway lines at the north of Gospel Oak ward and the east of Primrose Hill ward would provide identifiable constituency boundaries. Additionally, since the western part of Primrose Hill ward would likely identify with the Swiss Cottage / South Hampstead area, the Assistant Commissioners felt that this ward was better suited to the Hampstead and Highgate constituency; including it in Holborn and St Pancras would break local ties in South Hampstead.

North West London

The initial proposals for constituencies in the boroughs of Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow (except the eastern part of the borough), Hillingdon, Hounslow, and Richmond upon Thames (North) were fully supported by the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. The Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats provided counter-proposals for Brent, the City of London, part of Harrow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster. Other counter-proposals for the North West sub-region area were provided by John Bryant (BCE-73747 / BCE-94748), Adam Gray (BCE-61555), Peter Whitehead (BCE-78064), and Jonathan Stansby (second submission: BCE-89921), among others. We also received a number of localised counter-proposals covering a small number of constituencies or boroughs.

The initial proposals for Kensington and Chelsea generated very strong opposition: we received over 1,200 representations opposing the constituencies of Fulham and Chelsea West, Kensington and Westbourne, and Westminster and Chelsea East. Respondents expressed deep concern over the division of Chelsea into two constituencies, the division of South Kensington into three constituencies, and the division of the borough as a whole into three constituencies. Respondents also opposed the inclusion of three north Westminster wards (Harrow Road, Queen's Park, and Westbourne) in a Kensington-based constituency, noting the hard geographical barriers of the Grand Union Canal and the Great Western Main Line railway dividing north Kensington from north Westminster, and therefore the lack of local ties or shared community between the two areas. We received detailed submissions from Greg Hands, MP for Chelsea and Fulham (BCE-85525, BCE-97568), Felicity Buchan, MP for Kensington (BCE-82504 and BCE-97521), Kensington, Chelsea & Fulham Conservative Association (BCE-77809), local councillors, community representatives and organisations, and many others. There was some support for our initial proposals, particularly for Kensington and Westbourne, from respondents including Kensington & Chelsea Labour Group of Councillors (BCE-81089) and Emma Dent Coad, former MP for Kensington (BCE-75590), but the evidence in support was limited compared to the evidence against the initial proposals.

Greg Hands MP and Felicity Buchan MP put forward an 'alternative proposal' for constituencies of Chelsea and Fulham, and Kensington and Bayswater: the same as the Conservative Party counter-proposal. This counter-proposal closely reflected the existing Chelsea and Fulham constituency, thereby keeping the Chelsea community together. The proposed Kensington and

Bayswater constituency kept the South Kensington community together, too, and linked Kensington with the Westminster wards of Bayswater and Lancaster Gate rather than the three wards to the north of the borough. The counter-proposal was widely supported, and residents cited extensive community ties between the Notting Hill and Bayswater areas, noting that the borough boundary was far more porous here than further north. John Bryant, Robert Young (BCE-57009) and BCE-77883 presented the same arrangement as the Conservative Party for Chelsea and Fulham, and Kensington constituencies.

The Liberal Democrats proposed the same Chelsea and Fulham constituency as the Conservative Party, but joined Kensington with the two Westminster wards of Westbourne and Knightsbridge & Belgravia, rather than Bayswater and Lancaster Gate. Residents of Knightsbridge & Belgravia ward opposed this counter-proposal, arguing that their community ties were with south Westminster rather than Kensington. The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum also stated, 'it is important to us that our identity remains fully and firmly aligned to 'Westminster'' (BCE-82496).

Some representations expressed concern over the inclusion of the whole of Brompton & Hans Town ward in a Kensington-based constituency (as per the Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats counter-proposals), since the ward comprises two historically distinct areas: the northern 'Brompton' part which identifies as South Kensington, and the southern 'Hans Town' part which identifies as Chelsea. Respondents including the Milner Street Residents Association (BCE-71353) and the Chelsea Society (BCE-69976) suggested we split Brompton & Hans Town ward between the Kensington constituency and the Chelsea and Fulham constituency, and consequently move all or part of Redcliffe ward to the Kensington constituency to balance the numbers. However, while noting that it was regrettable that the Hans Town area would not be included in a Chelsea constituency, Greg Hands MP and the Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham Conservatives (BCE-88510) did not support a split-ward solution.

As previously described, most representations regarding the City of London opposed it being joined with Islington South and advocated that it should remain paired with Westminster. The majority of counter-proposals presented a Cities of London and Westminster constituency based on the existing constituency, and therefore retaining the link between the City and Westminster. Some counter-proposals, for example those from Robert Young, BCE-83455 and BCE-83390, suggested that the City should be joined with wards from Camden as well as Westminster. These respondents cited cultural, business and transport links between the two Camden wards of Bloomsbury and Holborn & Covent Garden, and the surrounding areas in the City and Westminster.

The initial proposals for the borough of Brent generated relatively few comments from Brent residents, but we received strong opposition to the inclusion of the two Harrow wards of Kenton East and Kenton West in the Kenton and Wembley West constituency. Respondents including Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow East (BCE-77996, BCE-97660) argued that the borough boundary between Harrow and Brent along Kenton Road (A4006) is a hard and distinct boundary, and residents of the two Kenton wards in Harrow use local services in neighbouring Harrow wards (and vice versa) - not Brent. Therefore the initial proposals would break local ties in the southeastern part of Harrow.

The Conservative Party, Liberal Democrats and John Bryant provided counter-proposals for Harrow and Brent which kept Kenton East and Kenton West wards in a Harrow constituency. All three respondents proposed a Harrow East constituency comprising all the wards in the existing Harrow East constituency, except for Wealdstone North ward, and including Queensbury ward as an orphan ward from Brent. The Liberal Democrats named this constituency Stanmore and Queensbury but the composition was identical. Respondents noted that the borough boundary between Brent's Queensbury ward and Harrow's Edgware ward is porous, running along residential roads, and the Jubilee Line runs from Stanmore down through Queensbury ward, providing a key transport link between the areas of the proposed constituency. There was notable support for this counter-proposal in local representations. Other counter-proposals from Adam Gray, Peter Whitehead and Jonathan Stansby (second submission) joined the Stanmore and Queensbury areas too, but in a narrower and more elongated constituency which divided Kenton East ward from Kenton West ward.

Several counter-proposals put forward two constituencies wholly contained within the borough of Brent, based on the areas of Wembley and Willesden. The Liberal Democrats and John Bryant proposed exactly the same arrangement, with a compact Wembley constituency uniting all the core Wembley wards, and a more geographically expansive Willesden-based constituency extending north to Kingsbury ward. Adam Gray, Peter Whitehead, Jonathan Stansby (second submission), and Lewis Baston (BCE-81615) also proposed a Wembley constituency identical to the Liberal Democrats and John Bryant, though with different configurations for the Willesden constituency. The Conservative Party, on the other hand, proposed a Brent North constituency and a Brent Central constituency based more closely on the existing Brent North and Brent Central. Barry Gardiner, MP for Brent North (BCE-83032), Brent North Constituency Labour Party (BCE-82794, BCE-95197), and Dawn Butler, MP for Brent Central (BCE-75112) also made suggestions for constituencies in the borough of Brent.

Given the approach taken by many counter-proposals to treat the A5 road as a dividing line until the borough of Westminster, we received several suggestions for a constituency crossing between the boroughs of Brent and Westminster - joining the most southern wards of Brent with the northwestern wards of Westminster, albeit in different configurations. The Conservative Party wrote in their initial submission: 'Although this involves breaking up Hampstead and Kilburn [existing constituency] we note again that the Brent-Camden border is the clear boundary of the A5 whereas the Brent-Westminster boundary runs along residential roads and there are clear ties between the Brent wards of Kilburn and Queen's Park and the Westminster ward of Queen's Park (the latter of which contains the area known as West Kilburn).'

In the north of the borough of Hillingdon, we received some opposition to the division of the Harefield community, since the initial proposals included Harefield Village ward and Ickenham and South Harefield ward in different constituencies. Counter-proposals from John Bryant and Howard Erdunast (BCE-66754) united Harefield by including Harefield Village ward in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency, and consequently transferring Ruislip Manor ward to the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency. Mr Erdunast provided an additional option for uniting Harefield: transferring both Harefield Village, and Ickenham and South Harefield wards to the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency, and including Ruislip Manor and Eastcote wards in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency. However, Mr Erdunast stated that he felt the former option was superior. While acknowledging that the initial proposals divided Harefield, the Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats contended that the alternatives outlined above would result in more disruption to the existing constituencies, and the Conservative Party argued that including Ruislip Manor ward in a different constituency to South Ruislip ward would break ties between these two areas. Therefore, the political parties supported the initial proposals.

In the borough of Richmond upon Thames (North), residents of Whitton ward voiced strong opposition to the initial proposals, which transferred Whitton ward from the existing Twickenham constituency to the Brentford and Isleworth constituency. Respondents argued that the initial proposals would divide the Whitton community, which also spans Heathfield ward, and concerns were expressed over Whitton becoming an orphan ward in a Hounslow-based constituency. Residents said that they identified with the Twickenham area, in the borough of Richmond upon Thames, rather than Hounslow. We received representations from the Leader

of the Borough of Richmond upon Thames (BCE-83785), Whitton ward councillors (BCE-79339), and Twickenham Conservative Association (BCE-85197), among many others.

Some representations made suggestions for ways in which Whitton ward could remain in the Twickenham constituency. For example, the Twickenham Conservative Association suggested transferring St Margaret's & North Twickenham ward to the Brentford and Isleworth constituency instead of Whitton ward, and other respondents suggested transferring Heathfield ward instead of Whitton ward. Councillor Jo Humphreys (BCE-97659) suggested splitting both St Margaret's & North Twickenham ward and Twickenham Riverside ward, and transferring the eastern portions to the Richmond Park constituency across the River Thames, arguing that the eastern parts of these wards had close ties with Richmond. Representation BCE-52884 suggested splitting both Whitton and Heathfield wards between the Twickenham and Brentford and Isleworth constituencies.

A small number of representations did, however, support the initial proposals for Brentford and Isleworth. For example, Hounslow South ward councillors (BCE-84368, BCE-80323) and Ruth Cadbury, MP for Brentford and Isleworth (BCE-81536, BCE-97643) accepted the inclusion of Whitton ward in the constituency and noted strong community links between Hounslow South and Whitton wards.

In the borough of Ealing, we received notable opposition to the transfer of Walpole ward from the Ealing Central and Acton constituency to the Southall constituency. Respondents cited Walpole's strong ties with Ealing Broadway (the town centre area) and lack of connections with Southall. Many representations also opposed changing the name of the 'Ealing Southall' constituency to simply 'Southall': residents of Hanwell Broadway, Northfield, and Walpole wards argued that they identified as part of Ealing, and advocated either retaining the current constituency name, or including 'West Ealing' / 'Ealing West' in the name. Some respondents, while opposing the name, supported the inclusion of Walpole ward in the Southall constituency. BCE-79646 and Councillor Gareth Shaw (BCE-75932 and BCE-97628), for example, described Walpole's close ties with its neighbouring Hanwell Broadway and Northfield wards.

Response to the initially proposed Ealing Central and Acton constituency was mixed, with some objections to the inclusion of the two Hammersmith and Fulham wards of College Park & Old Oak, and Wormholt, in the constituency. Residents from the

southeastern corner of Wormholt ward voiced the strongest opposition, arguing that they were connected with Shepherd's Bush, and Hammersmith more widely, rather than Ealing or Acton. However, respondents such as Councillor Hitesh Tailor (BCE-85082), Ealing Central and Acton Labour Party (BCE-82608) and Rupa Huq, MP for Ealing Central and Acton (BCE-81043 and BCE-97639) noted many shared local ties - including transport links, shopping facilities, and community organisations - across the borough boundary between Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham. Response to the initial proposals for the Ealing North constituency was overwhelmingly positive, since no changes were proposed to the existing constituency except realignment with new local government ward boundaries.

Some counter-proposals, such as those from Peter Whitehead and Kevin Larkin (BCE-85271), suggested maintaining the existing Ealing Central and Acton constituency unchanged - enabling Walpole ward to remain in the constituency, and enabling College Park & Old Oak ward and Wormholt ward to be part of a Hammersmith-based constituency. However, these counter-proposals had knock-on effects for the other Ealing constituencies and for the wider sub-region. A counter-proposal from the Ealing Central and Acton Conservative Association (BCE-81503) put forward an unchanged Ealing Central and Acton constituency, and a Southall constituency that included those parts of Heston East and Heston West wards (in the borough of Hounslow) that lie north of the M4 motorway, thus requiring two ward splits.

We received strong support for the initially proposed Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency, with respondents citing many local ties and transport connections between the Hammersmith and Chiswick areas. A number of respondents, however, suggested an amendment to the initial proposals: moving Southfield ward (in the borough of Ealing) to the Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency, and moving both White City and Shepherd's Bush Green wards (in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham) to the Ealing Central and Acton constituency (see BCE-85074 for example). This could be achieved with no knock-on consequences to the neighbouring constituencies. This counter-proposal was suggested in order to unite Southfield ward with the three other Chiswick wards, since Southfield residents (particularly in Bedford Park) have ties with Chiswick and feel part of the Chiswick community. Andy Slaughter, MP for Hammersmith, opposed the counter-proposal, however, on the grounds that it would create a three-borough constituency (BCE-96868).

Recommendations

Noting the strength of opposition to the initial proposals in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Assistant Commissioners carefully considered the counter-proposals provided to us. They considered that the Conservative Party counter-proposal effectively addressed the issues raised in representations and presented a logical solution for the constituencies of Chelsea and Fulham, and Kensington and Bayswater. They considered that the Conservative Party's choice of wards to include in the Kensington constituency (namely, Bayswater and Lancaster Gate) made more sense in terms of community ties than the Liberal Democrats' choice of Knightsbridge & Belgravia, and Westbourne - particularly since Knightsbridge & Belgravia and Westbourne wards are non-adjacent. The Assistant Commissioners noted the suggestion for splitting Brompton & Hans Town ward and Redcliffe ward, in order to include the Hans Town area in the Chelsea and Fulham constituency, but they concluded that the proposed splits did not meet the Commission's criteria for ward splitting. In light of their analysis, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Conservative Party counter-proposal for the constituencies of Chelsea and Fulham, and Kensington and Bayswater, be adopted.

Before settling on a recommendation for a constituency joining the City of London with Westminster, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that the suggestion for a constituency joining the City with parts of Camden and Westminster presented some merit in terms of geographical shape and local ties. However, since this suggestion would involve combining three local authorities in one constituency, and since it would not align with the new sub-regions, the Assistant Commissioners did not pursue this approach.

The Assistant Commissioners observed that, under the Conservative Party's counter-proposal, either Abbey Road ward or Church Street ward could be included in the Cities of London and Westminster constituency. The Conservative Party chose to include Abbey Road in Cities of London and Westminster, and Church Street in their Paddington and Kilburn constituency. John Bryant, on the other hand, proposed exactly the same arrangement as the Conservative Party, but swapped Abbey Road and Church Street. In defending their choice to include Church Street ward in the Paddington and Kilburn constituency, the Conservative Party wrote: 'The A5 between Church Street and Little Venice is almost entirely a shopping district which unites people on both sides of the road. To the north between Abbey Road and Maida Vale it is a clearer boundary often having housing tower blocks set back from

the road.’ To help the Assistant Commissioners decide which was the most appropriate solution for Abbey Road and Church Street, they visited the area.

When walking around the boundary of Church Street ward, the Assistant Commissioners observed that the Marylebone Road (A501) provides an identifiable boundary along the south of the ward, the Chiltern Main Line railway provides a significant barrier along the northeastern part of the ward, and the Grand Union Canal similarly provides a clear geographical boundary along the north of the ward. Therefore the ward was somewhat separated from the wards to its north, south and east. In contrast, the Assistant Commissioners observed the shared community of St John’s Wood between Abbey Road ward and Regent’s Park ward to its east. Walking down the A5, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the road narrowed between Church Street ward and Little Venice ward to its west, with increasingly more shops and cafes on either side of the road, and a sense of community ‘buzz’. The Assistant Commissioners therefore agreed with the Conservative Party and concluded that Church Street ward would fit better with the Paddington and Kilburn constituency, and Abbey Road ward with the Cities of London and Westminster constituency. Thus the Assistant Commissioners recommend the adoption of the Conservative Party counter-proposal for these two constituencies.

In determining a solution for the boroughs of Brent and Harrow, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded that the Harrow East constituency as proposed by the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats, and John Bryant addressed the concerns from residents of Kenton East and Kenton West wards, and presented an arrangement similar to the existing Harrow East constituency. Though acknowledging it was not ideal to include Queensbury ward as an orphan ward from Brent, they considered that the ward made a logical extension to the constituency, given the permeability of the borough boundary along the northern edge of the ward, and the arguments set out in representations. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the counter-proposal for Harrow East, as outlined above, is adopted. Since the composition of the initially proposed Harrow constituency was very largely supported, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to this constituency other than naming it Harrow West, as per the current name.

The Assistant Commissioners recognised that the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Party counter-proposals for the two constituencies wholly within Brent could be interchanged without affecting the wider pattern of constituencies. They considered that the Conservative counter-proposal had merit because it reflected the existing Brent constituencies more closely than the Liberal

Democrats' counter-proposal. However, they noted that under the Conservative Party's plan (and under the initial proposals), Alperton ward would be almost completely separated from the rest of the Brent Central constituency by multi-track overground and underground railway lines and Wembley Brook. Representations from Brent North Constituency Labour Party (BCE-82794), local councillors (BCE-83566 and BCE-83254), and residents argued that Alperton's connections are northwards to Wembley Central and Sudbury wards, and pointed out that the ward would be geographically isolated - and local ties broken - if it were to be included in the Brent Central constituency. When assessing the Liberal Democrats counter-proposal, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the inclusion of all the Wembley wards in one constituency made considerable sense, particularly as some representations spoke about the cohesiveness of the Wembley wards and local ties between them. The Assistant Commissioners also noted that the Liberal Democrats used the River Brent and an extensive portion of the A4140 road as a boundary between their Wembley, and Willesden and Kingsbury constituencies, making a logical geographic boundary. On balance, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for Brent better reflected the statutory factors overall, and therefore they recommend the adoption of the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for Wembley and Willesden constituencies.

Turning to the borough of Hillingdon, the Assistant Commissioners saw merit in the alternative option for the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency and the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency, which united both Harefield wards in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency, and transferred Ruislip Manor ward to the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency (as presented in John Bryant and Howard Erdunast's counter-proposals). They noted that this solution would address representations from the Harefield area, and while they acknowledged the Conservative Party's concerns over local ties being broken between Ruislip Manor and South Ruislip wards, they observed that Ruislip Manor was geographically divided from South Ruislip by Yeading Brook and railway lines. They also considered that the alternative solution would unite more of Ruislip town centre in the same constituency. However, the Assistant Commissioners recognised that the alternative solution represented greater change from the existing constituencies than the initial proposals, and would pair the densely populated Uxbridge area with rural Harefield. Emphasising the finely balanced nature of the decision, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the alternative solution for Uxbridge and South Ruislip, and Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, should be adopted: they considered that this provided a better reflection of the statutory factors overall. Further south in the borough of Hillingdon, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the composition of the initially proposed Hayes and West Drayton constituency was largely supported, therefore they recommend no changes to this constituency as initially proposed, other than a return to its existing name of Hayes and Harlington.

Recognising the strength of opposition to the initial proposals regarding Whitton ward, the Assistant Commissioners sought to investigate solutions that would enable Whitton ward to remain in the Twickenham constituency. They noted, however, that suggestions to transfer St Margaret's & North Twickenham ward to the Brentford and Isleworth constituency instead of Whitton ward were not numerically possible: this brought Brentford and Isleworth over the permitted electorate range. While it was numerically viable to transfer Heathfield ward to Brentford and Isleworth instead of Whitton ward, the Assistant Commissioners considered that this would not solve the issue, since the Whitton community would still be divided - and Heathfield ward is more geographically distant from the Hounslow area than Whitton ward. The Assistant Commissioners also considered that splitting Whitton and/or Heathfield wards would not provide a better solution than the initial proposals, since the Whitton community as a whole would still be divided between constituencies. Splitting St Margaret's & North Twickenham ward and Twickenham Riverside ward between the Twickenham constituency and the Richmond Park constituency, as suggested by Councillor Humphreys, presented a potentially attractive solution in terms of community ties: both Whitton and Heathfield wards could remain in the Twickenham constituency, and there was evidence of ties between Richmond and eastern parts of Twickenham. However, the Assistant Commissioners observed that this solution would bring the Richmond Park constituency over the permitted electorate range, and it would disregard the sub-regional boundary of the River Thames.

The Assistant Commissioners noted that it was possible to transfer either Heathfield ward or Hampton North ward to the Feltham and Heston constituency, to enable Whitton to remain in Twickenham, but that this necessitated knock-on changes to Feltham and Heston, and Brentford and Isleworth, resulting in greater disruption to existing constituencies and the breaking of local ties in parts of Hounslow and Heston. A small number of counter-proposals provided further options for keeping Whitton in Twickenham, but again these resulted in significant disruption elsewhere, which the Assistant Commissioners did not feel was justifiable. Following their analysis, the Assistant Commissioners concluded that no alternative option or counter-proposal better reflected the statutory factors than the initial proposals. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no changes to the initially proposed constituencies of Brentford and Isleworth, Feltham and Heston, and Twickenham.

Turning to the borough of Ealing, the Assistant Commissioners assessed those counter-proposals that maintained the Ealing Central and Acton constituency unchanged except for minor realignment with new local government ward boundaries. They

recognised the merit in retaining an existing constituency unchanged, and noted that this would address concerns in Walpole ward and the two northerly Hammersmith and Fulham wards. However, they observed that this approach created knock-on effects throughout all the other boroughs in the North West sub-region and resulted in some significant changes to the existing pattern of constituencies elsewhere. More locally, they observed that this approach would necessitate change to the Ealing North constituency, which could otherwise be left unchanged except for local government boundary realignment. Regarding the opposition to Walpole ward being included in the Southall constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that reverting the name of this constituency to Ealing Southall would go some way in recognising the identity of Walpole residents, as well as Hanwell Broadway and Northfield residents, who feel part of the Ealing community. Regarding the inclusion of College Park & Old Oak ward and Wormholt ward in the Ealing Central and Acton constituency, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence of community ties between these wards and their neighbouring Ealing wards - and they noted that some representations had drawn attention to the former Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush constituency (1997 - 2010), which spanned Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham boroughs.

Finally, the Assistant Commissioners considered the counter-proposal that joined Southfield ward from Ealing with the Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency. They noted that this counter-proposal had merit in terms of local ties, but that it would create a three-borough constituency, and they concluded that the local ties arguments did not outweigh the inconveniences attendant on a constituency spanning three local authorities. In light of their assessments, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no changes to the initial proposals for Ealing borough, apart from changing the name of the initially proposed Southall constituency to Ealing Southall, and no changes to the initial proposals for the Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency.

Overall, for the North Central London sub-region and the North West London sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners note that their revised proposals recommendations reduce the number of constituencies crossing borough boundaries from 18 in the initial proposals, to 14. They also note, however, that their recommendations increase the number of orphan wards from three to five. Given the challenges and the potential for wide-ranging 'domino effects' in these parts of north London, the Assistant Commissioners consider that the increase in orphan wards nonetheless produces a balanced and coherent pattern of constituencies better reflecting the statutory factors.

South West London

As previously described, the initial proposals divided South London into a South Central and South West sub-region (allocated 21 constituencies), and a South East sub-region (allocated eight constituencies). Following analysis of the counter-proposals and representations received, the Assistant Commissioners recommended that South London be divided into three sub-regions: retaining the South East grouping, but dividing the larger South Central and South West grouping into two.

The key issue influencing the sub-regional change in South Central and South West London was the initially proposed transfer of Longthornton ward from the Mitcham and Morden constituency to the Croydon North constituency, making it an orphan ward from the borough of Merton. We received over 200 representations opposing the transfer of the ward, with residents arguing that they look to Mitcham, and the borough of Merton more widely, for local services and amenities including schools, community groups, healthcare services, leisure facilities and places of worship. The initial proposals were therefore said to break local ties in Longthornton ward. Respondents also noted that transferring Longthornton ward to the Croydon North constituency would leave its neighbouring Pollards Hill ward geographically isolated. Representations from Siobhain McDonagh, MP for Mitcham and Morden (BCE-86195, BCE-93662), local councillors, community representatives and local residents provided much detailed evidence. Counter-proposals from the Conservative Party (BCE-86589), the Liberal Democrats (BCE-80979), the Labour Party (BCE-79496) and several individuals included Longthornton ward in a Mitcham and Morden constituency, thus addressing the feedback from representations.

Elsewhere in the borough of Merton, we received notable opposition to the transfer of Cannon Hill ward from the Wimbledon constituency to the Mitcham and Morden constituency. Residents contended that the initial proposals would break local ties, since they relied upon local services, transport links, and social and recreational facilities in neighbouring Wimbledon wards, rather than in the Mitcham or Morden areas, which they rarely visited. Also relating to the initially proposed Wimbledon, and Mitcham and Morden constituencies, a number of respondents questioned why parts of Morden town centre, including Morden tube station and parts of the high street (at the southern end of Merton Park ward) were included in the Wimbledon constituency rather than the

Mitcham and Morden constituency. Although reflecting the existing constituency arrangement in this area, respondents seemed to imply that all of Morden town centre should be in the Mitcham and Morden constituency.

In their counter-proposal, the Conservative Party included Cannon Hill ward in the Wimbledon constituency and divided Merton Park ward between the Wimbledon, and Mitcham and Morden constituencies. They noted that polling district data was not available for the borough of Merton, since the wards were prospective, but they observed that the prospective Merton Park ward was very similar to the former Merton Park ward. They therefore proposed transferring the former RC polling district, comprising the southern half of the ward, to the Mitcham and Morden constituency - thereby uniting all of Morden town centre. They also proposed transferring Wandle ward from Wimbledon to Mitcham and Morden. A number of respondents, including Stephen Hammond, MP for Wimbledon (BCE-79551, BCE-97645) supported the Conservative Party's proposals. Counter-proposals from John Bryant (BCE-73466) and Jonathan Stansby (BCE-89921) included the whole of Merton Park ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency, in place of Cannon Hill ward, and did not transfer Wandle ward.

While representations acknowledged that the Wimbledon constituency needed to gain electors from the borough of Kingston upon Thames to fall within the permitted electorate range, the initial proposals to include St. James and Old Malden wards were almost unanimously opposed. We received detailed evidence from Stephen Hammond MP, the Leader of Kingston Conservative Group (BCE-75767), and the New Malden Labour Party Branch (BCE-70157), among others. Respondents argued that separating these wards from Beverley ward would divide the New Malden community, breaking local ties. If travelling further afield for local services, residents of St. James and Old Malden wards said they would go to Kingston Town, Worcester Park (in the borough of Sutton), or even to Epsom and Ewell in Surrey, rather than Wimbledon. The railway line connecting the Old Malden area with Wimbledon was seen as a physical barrier rather than a connector.

The Conservative Party and the Green Party (BCE-83421) put forward the same counter-proposal for the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames (South), albeit with different constituency names. They proposed to include the two Kingston upon Thames wards of Coombe Hill and Coombe Vale in the Wimbledon constituency, rather than St. James and Old Malden wards. This proposal was well supported, with respondents outlining community ties and bus links between the Coombe area and the Wimbledon area, and emphasising that Wimbledon Common was a shared amenity. Some respondents pointed out

that certain residents of the two Coombe wards are eligible to vote for 'Conservators' responsible for the preservation of Wimbledon Common, and must pay a levy towards the management of Wimbledon and Putney Commons. As Mr Hammond put it, Wimbledon Common is therefore 'not just a recreational connection, but [a] shared political and financial connection'.

The counter-proposal from the Conservative Party and the Green Party then enabled all the 'Malden' wards to remain together in a constituency wholly within the borough of Kingston upon Thames. Grove ward, comprising Kingston town centre, was consequently transferred to the Richmond Park constituency. The Leader of Kingston Conservative Group argued that Grove ward has links northwards to the residential Canbury and Tudor wards (as demonstrated by the Kingston Town neighbourhood committee that covers these three wards), and that the River Thames binds Kingston town centre to Richmond.

The Labour Party and Liberal Democrats did not present a counter-proposal for the Wimbledon, Kingston and Richmond areas. John Bryant proposed a different pair of wards to be included in the Wimbledon constituency - Beverley and St. James - and therefore proposed that Old Malden ward should remain in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency. Other counter-proposals received for this part of London were those that suggested crossing the River Thames in one or more constituencies, and therefore did not adhere to our approach of using the Thames as a sub-regional boundary. We received some requests from respondents in the borough of Kingston upon Thames, including Kingston and Surbiton Constituency Labour Party (BCE-81045), to consider using the new ward boundaries for the borough. The Order for new wards in Kingston upon Thames was made in April 2021, and the new wards came into effect at the May 2022 local elections - well after the statutory cut-off date.

The initial proposals for the boroughs of Sutton and Wandsworth were well supported, since they presented very minimal change from the existing constituencies in these boroughs, and between them continued to wholly align to the borough boundaries. In Wandsworth, respondents including Marsha de Cordova, MP for Battersea (BCE-85838), accepted that the split of Fairfield ward was necessary in order to prevent a reconfiguration of all three Wandsworth constituencies. One local councillor (BCE-84306) highlighted that splitting the ward along the A214 road, as proposed, actually better reflected community ties in the area, since the road represented a natural boundary between the Battersea and Wandsworth communities. The Wandsworth Conservatives (BCE-73797) advocated using Wandsworth's new ward boundaries - similarly to Kingston upon Thames, the Order for new wards in Wandsworth was made in April 2021 and implemented in May 2022. They suggested how the new wards may be grouped into

three Wandsworth constituencies, but did not provide any electorate numbers or estimations. Ms de Cordova MP (BCE-97558) acknowledged Wandsworth's new wards, but did not consider that this posed a concern at constituency level.

Recommendations

In assessing the counter-proposals received for the borough of Merton, the Assistant Commissioners noted that while the Liberal Democrat and Labour Party counter-proposals included Longthornton ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency - thus addressing the representations received from this ward - they also included Cannon Hill ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency. John Bryant and Jonathan Stansby presented the same solution as the Liberal Democrats and Labour Party, but chose to include Merton Park ward in Mitcham and Morden rather than Cannon Hill ward. Given the evidence received about these neighbourhoods, the Assistant Commissioners considered that Cannon Hill would fit better with the Wimbledon constituency and Merton Park with the Mitcham and Morden constituency, as per Mr Bryant and Mr Stansby's proposal.

The Assistant Commissioners felt that the Conservative Party's proposed split of Merton Park ward had some merit in terms of community ties at the southern end of the ward, but that it would divide the residential Merton Park neighbourhood in the middle of the ward. The split also required the transfer of Wandle ward from Wimbledon to Mitcham and Morden, but the Assistant Commissioners considered that Wandle ward had stronger ties to Wimbledon, as outlined by Councillor Martin Whelton (BCE-97652). They also noted that the split of Merton Park was not necessary for the integrity of the Conservative Party's wider scheme: Merton Park could be wholly transferred to Mitcham and Morden, and Wandle remain in Wimbledon, without impacting their counter-proposal for the rest of the Merton, Kingston and Richmond areas.

In determining which Kingston upon Thames wards to include in the Wimbledon constituency, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence that the two Coombe wards would make a more logical extension to the constituency than Old Malden and St. James wards - as presented in the Conservative Party and Green Party counter-proposal. While acknowledging it may not be ideal to transfer Grove ward to the Richmond Park constituency, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the rationale for doing so, and they noted that the narrow salient extending at the east of Grove ward accommodated a waste disposal centre

rather than a residential area. They considered that the arrangement put forward by the Conservative Party and Green Party for the borough of Kingston upon Thames enabled a pattern of constituencies across the South West London sub-region better reflecting the statutory factors than the initial proposals.

In light of their analysis, the Assistant Commissioners recommend the adoption of the Conservative Party and Green Party counter-proposal for the borough of Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames (South) - namely, a Richmond Park and Kingston Town constituency, and a Surbiton and The Maldens constituency. They then recommend the adoption of a modified version of the Conservative Party's proposal for the borough of Merton: a Mitcham and Morden constituency including the whole of Merton Park ward (as Mr Bryant and Mr Stansby proposed) and a Wimbledon and Coombe constituency retaining Wandle ward.

Given the unanimous support for the initial proposals in the borough of Sutton, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any changes to the two constituencies as initially proposed in this borough. Turning to Wandsworth, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged those representations suggesting a pattern of constituencies using the new ward boundaries, but they did not find sufficient compelling evidence to pursue this approach. Therefore, they recommend no changes to the initial proposals for the borough of Wandsworth.

South Central London

The initial proposals for the borough of Croydon were received with a mixture of support and opposition. The Croydon South constituency was widely supported, with respondents including Chris Philp, MP for Croydon South (BCE-81587), noting that the initial proposals kept together the communities of Purley, Coulsdon, Kenley, Sanderstead, Croham and South Croydon, which are of a similar character and connected by the A23 road and the Brighton mainline railway. Very little concern was expressed over the proposed split of Waddon ward; Mr Philp contended that the polling district proposed to be included in the Croydon South constituency had strong links to the South Croydon neighbourhood.

However, we received notable opposition from the Woodside and Addiscombe community regarding the proposed inclusion of Woodside ward in the Norwood constituency rather than the Croydon East constituency with its Addiscombe neighbours. Respondents argued that the Woodside and Addiscombe areas had been in the same constituency for over 60 years, and that Woodside residents looked south to Addiscombe for shopping, health and community services, and transport links towards central Croydon. Including Woodside in a different constituency to Addiscombe therefore broke longstanding local ties. Respondents also highlighted that the Brighton mainline railway represented a hard physical barrier between Woodside ward and the rest of the proposed Norwood constituency to its north - which would particularly isolate the residents of Towpath Way / Canal Walk in the southwestern corner of the ward. We received a petition expressing concern that Davidson Road, lying parallel to Towpath Way / Canal Walk, would be divided into two constituencies under the initial proposals (BCE-85918). Further detailed evidence was provided by Sarah Jones, MP for Croydon Central (BCE-85520) and several local councillors.

On the other hand, some respondents argued that Woodside shared local ties with the South Norwood area to its north, pointing out that South Norwood leisure centre, country park, social club and mosque were all located in Woodside ward. They contended that the railway line was permeable around South Norwood town centre, whereas the tram line running along the southern edge of Woodside ward presented a hard boundary. Chris Philp MP and some Croydon councillors highlighted that Croydon Council's Local Plan designated South Norwood and Woodside as one 'place', with Addiscombe as another distinct 'place'.

The Conservative Party (BCE-86589), the Liberal Democrats (BCE-80979), and Jonathan Stansby (BCE-89921) supported the initial proposals for Croydon South and Croydon East constituencies. The Liberal Democrats and Mr Stansby included Woodside ward in a Norwood constituency with wards to its north, albeit in a slightly different configuration to the initial proposals. The Conservative Party included Woodside ward in their Croydon North East and Penge constituency, which crossed the borough boundary with Bromley. The Labour Party opposed the initial proposals for the Croydon East constituency and presented a counter-proposal, which was also put forward by John Bryant (BCE-73466): Woodside ward remained together with Addiscombe in their Croydon East constituency, and consequently Selsdon Vale & Forestdale ward was transferred to their Croydon South constituency. This counter-proposal did not require Waddon ward to be split. An almost identical arrangement for Croydon East and Croydon South was put forward by Pete Challis (BCE-83681), but Mr Challis proposed that South Croydon ward should be split.

In the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, we received over 400 representations opposing the division of the existing Dulwich and West Norwood constituency into four different constituencies. Helen Hayes, MP for Dulwich and West Norwood (BCE-83343, BCE-95683), and many local councillors, community organisations and individuals voiced their strong opposition to the breaking of local ties. Although spanning the two boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, respondents argued that the existing constituency unites communities such as Herne Hill, Gipsy Hill and West Dulwich, which are divided by the borough boundary. The initial proposals would therefore break community ties in these areas, particularly in Herne Hill, which would be divided into three constituencies, and in West Norwood, whose town centre and high street would be divided into two constituencies. Other arguments contended that the initial proposals would pair boroughs lacking any community, geographical or administrative connections. Respondents pointed out that West Norwood, proposed to be joined with wards from Croydon in the Norwood constituency, is geographically separated from Croydon by the Norwood Ridge. Similarly, the Dulwich area, proposed to be joined with wards from Lewisham in the Dulwich and Sydenham constituency, is divided from Lewisham by the Sydenham Hill Ridge and Dulwich Woods.

The Labour Party counter-proposal addressed concerns from residents by presenting a Dulwich and West Norwood constituency based on the existing constituency, therefore including the communities of Herne Hill, Dulwich, Gipsy Hill, West Dulwich and West Norwood together in the same constituency. This counter-proposal was well supported in representations. Pete Challis proposed a similar Dulwich West constituency, but including Tulse Hill ward in place of Champion Hill ward, and splitting Knight's Hill ward. The

Conservative Party, in respecting the borough boundary between Lambeth and Southwark, proposed a Norwood constituency comprising the Lambeth wards of the existing Dulwich and West Norwood (plus two additional Lambeth wards), and a Dulwich and Sydenham constituency similar to the initial proposals. John Bryant and John Cartwright (BCE-53975) took a similar approach to the Conservative Party on the Lambeth side of the borough boundary, but then paired Dulwich with Camberwell in a constituency wholly within the borough of Southwark. The Liberal Democrats and Jonathan Stansby supported the initial proposals for Dulwich and Sydenham, and divided the Lambeth wards currently in Dulwich and West Norwood into two different constituencies.

We received two campaigns relating to the proposals for Lambeth borough as a whole. One campaign (BCE-84712) opposed the initial proposals for Lambeth, stating that they were 'unnecessarily disruptive' and broke local ties in the West Norwood area in particular. The campaign also noted that transport links primarily run north-south in the borough, whereas the initially proposed Clapham and Brixton constituency and Streatham constituency stretched from the eastern to the western boundaries of the borough with poor internal transport connections. This campaign supported the Conservative Party counter-proposal, which presented three constituencies wholly within Lambeth, two of which (Streatham and Vauxhall) were very similar to the existing constituencies. Conversely, we received a campaign (BCE-92523) supporting the initial proposals for the Streatham constituency and opposing any counter-proposals - including the Conservative Party's, the Labour Party's, and the Liberal Democrats' - which removed Tulse Hill and/or Brixton Hill wards from the Streatham constituency, on the grounds that these counter-proposals would break local ties.

Regarding the initial proposals for the Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency, which spanned the northern part of the borough boundary between Lambeth and Southwark, opposition was expressed by residents of St George's ward (in the borough of Southwark) at being separated from their neighbouring areas of Elephant and Castle, and Borough. Camberwell residents also voiced strong opposition to the division of the Camberwell area between constituencies: under the initial proposals, Camberwell Green ward was included in the Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency, and St. Giles ward in the Peckham constituency. Respondents outlined strong community ties, shared local services, and a shared sense of identity between these two wards, and an online petition of 810 signatures called 'Keep Camberwell Together' was submitted by the SE5 Forum for Camberwell (BCE-80191). A number of counter-proposals, such as those from the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats, Jonathan Stansby, John Bryant and John Cartwright, retained the two Camberwell wards together in a single constituency. The Labour Party

presented an arrangement more similar to the initial proposals for this area, thereby including the two Camberwell wards in two different constituencies.

The initial proposals for the Lewisham East constituency and the Deptford constituency did not generate much comment, since they were unchanged from the existing constituencies except for realignment with new ward boundaries. However, some local councillors and other respondents expressed opposition to the Conservative Party counter-proposal for the borough. Under the Conservative Party's arrangement, Lewisham would be divided into five constituencies, only one of which would be contained wholly within the borough. Respondents particularly noted that the Conservative counter-proposal would break local ties between Lee Green and Hither Green in the east of the borough. The Labour Party counter-proposal for Lewisham, however, was supported. Although representing more change from the existing constituencies than the initial proposals, respondents supported the Labour Party's proposed transfer of Bellingham ward to the Lewisham East constituency, and Blackheath ward to the Deptford-based constituency.

Recommendations

When considering solutions for Croydon and Lambeth, the Assistant Commissioners observed that those counter-proposals that treated Lambeth as a co-terminous borough (the Conservative Party, John Bryant, and John Cartwright) all consequently proposed a constituency crossing from Croydon to Bromley in the Crystal Palace area. Croydon is entitled to 3.46 constituencies, therefore a constituency crossing out of Croydon is necessary - and if pairings with Sutton, Merton and Lambeth are deemed undesirable, then a pairing with Bromley remains the only option. On the other hand, those counter-proposals that did not treat Lambeth as a self-contained borough (the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, Jonathan Stansby and Lewis Baston) all proposed constituencies crossing between Lambeth and Southwark, and Lambeth and Croydon. The Labour Party and Mr Baston proposed a Lambeth-Southwark constituency based on the existing Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, and a Lambeth-Croydon constituency joining Streatham with Croydon's northeastern wards. The Liberal Democrats and Mr Stansby proposed a Lambeth-Southwark constituency joining parts of Brixton and Herne Hill with Camberwell, and a Lambeth-Croydon constituency joining West Norwood with Croydon's northeastern wards (similar to the initial proposals).

The Assistant Commissioners saw considerable merit in the counter-proposals to treat Lambeth as self-contained, with exactly three constituencies aligned to the borough boundaries. They noted that the Conservative Party's proposal very closely reflected the boundaries of the existing Vauxhall and Streatham constituencies, with both these constituencies changed by only one ward each. They considered that this proposal for Lambeth would therefore strongly reflect the statutory factors within that borough. However, they observed that the Conservative Party's proposal had significant undesirable knock-on consequences for the boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham. The Peckham community would be divided, with parts of Peckham being paired with Deptford in a constituency crossing between the boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham, and the borough of Lewisham would be divided into five different constituencies (compared with three currently) bearing little resemblance to the existing constituencies. Lewisham's Bellingham ward would become an orphan ward in the Beckenham and Bromley Town constituency, whereas representations stated that Bellingham's links were north to Catford and east to Downham, not south to Beckenham or Bromley.

When assessing the Labour Party's counter-proposal for Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the proposal to retain a Dulwich and West Norwood constituency had merit. While noting that the Labour Party's arrangement for Dulwich and West Norwood necessitated some significant change to the existing Vauxhall and Streatham constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners considered that it enabled a pattern of constituencies in the rest of Southwark and Lewisham more similar to the existing arrangement than the Conservative Party's counter-proposal. Lewisham was divided into only three constituencies under the Labour counter-proposal, closely reflecting the existing pattern. While Southwark was divided into five constituencies under the Labour Party's alternative, two were wholly contained within the borough - and the Assistant Commissioners considered that Labour's proposed Bermondsey and Borough constituency, Peckham constituency, and Dulwich and West Norwood constituency were all clearly related to the pattern of existing constituencies. They further considered that Labour's proposed Lewisham West and East Dulwich constituency would unite the Forest Hill and Honor Oak communities in the same constituency.

Turning to the borough of Croydon, the Assistant Commissioners saw the benefits of including Woodside ward and Addiscombe wards in the same constituency, given the representations received from this area. They noted that while the Labour Party achieved this in their counter-proposal for Croydon East, the consequential transfer of Selsdon Vale & Forestdale ward to Croydon South

would divide the town of Selsdon into two constituencies and break local ties in the Selsdon community. Representations from residents and local councillors highlighted the importance of keeping the two Selsdon wards in the same constituency. The Assistant Commissioners also noted that the Labour Party did not put forward a ward split in the borough of Croydon, but instead proposed splitting Thornton Heath ward in the borough of Lambeth. However, the Assistant Commissioners identified that it was possible to amend the Labour Party's counter-proposal to avoid splitting Thornton Heath ward, and to retain the two Selsdon wards in the same constituency: this would require splitting Waddon ward instead (transferring two polling districts to Croydon South, rather than one as per the initial proposals), transferring Woodside ward to the Croydon North constituency, and transferring Norbury & Pollards Hill ward to the Streatham and Thornton Heath constituency. To help them understand the potential implications of this approach, the Assistant Commissioners visited the area.

When visiting Waddon ward, the Assistant Commissioners were not convinced that dividing the ward presented a desirable solution. The resultant constituency boundary would run through residential streets and divide a homogeneous neighbourhood. When visiting Woodside ward, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the Brighton Mainline railway did present a significant physical barrier between Woodside ward and South Norwood ward to its north. On visiting Canal Walk / Towpath Way, they sympathised with resident's concerns that this road and the surrounding area would be extremely isolated if included in a constituency with wards to its north rather than to its south. However, the Assistant Commissioners observed that Norbury & Pollards Hill ward was well connected with its neighbouring Norbury Park ward, and clearly part of the same community. Therefore, including the two Norbury wards in the same constituency appeared to represent an improvement on the Labour Party's proposals. Crossing the borough boundary from the Norbury area to the Streatham area, the Assistant Commissioners felt that the areas merged together with little discernible difference from Norbury Park ward to Streatham South ward. In contrast, they observed that the summit of the Norwood Ridge marked a notable boundary between West Norwood and Croydon.

Following their site visits, the Assistant Commissioners explored further options for the Waddon and Woodside areas. They ultimately determined a solution that enabled the whole of Waddon ward to remain in a single constituency, and that enabled most of Woodside ward to remain in a constituency with its southerly Addiscombe neighbours - while not dividing the town of Selsdon as a consequence. This solution involved adding the Park Hill & Whitgift ward to the Croydon South constituency, and splitting Woodside ward by including all its polling districts except WDS1 in the Croydon East constituency. WDS1 would be included in a

constituency with South Norwood ward to its north. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the WDS1 polling district, in the northeastern corner of the ward, linked seamlessly with South Norwood ward - which in fact traverses the railway line in this area. They also felt that South Norwood Country Park would make a suitable constituency boundary along the southeastern edge of the polling district. Regarding Park Hill & Whitgift ward, the Assistant Commissioners considered that this ward encompassed part of the South Croydon neighbourhood, and therefore made a logical addition to the Croydon South constituency.

In light of their assessments, the Assistant Commissioners recommend an amended version of the Labour Party counter-proposal for the borough of Croydon and part of the borough of Lambeth, as outlined above, comprising the constituencies of Croydon East, Croydon South, Croydon West and South Norwood, and Streatham and Norbury. They recommend a Lambeth Central constituency replicating the Labour Party's Clapham and Brixton constituency, but including the whole of Thornton Heath ward. They then recommend the adoption of the Labour Party counter-proposal for the rest of the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. While recognising the merits of the Conservative Party counter-proposal - and other counter-proposals - in certain areas, they concluded that the Labour Party's proposal best reflected the statutory factors across the sub-region as a whole.

South East London

In the borough of Greenwich, the initial proposals for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency were strongly supported by local residents, community representatives, local councillors and Matthew Pennycook, MP for Greenwich and Woolwich (BCE-79275). Respondents acknowledged that the existing constituency was above the permitted electorate range, and they supported the transfer of Glyndon ward to the Erith and Thamesmead constituency. Many respondents said that the initial proposals maintained the integrity of the Greenwich, Woolwich and Charlton communities, and provided much detailed evidence of strong community ties between these areas. Additionally, many respondents expressed opposition to counter-proposals that would divide the Greenwich and/or Woolwich communities, namely those counter-proposals from Lewis Baston (BCE-85357), Pete Challis (BCE-83681), BCE-79433, Oliver Raven (BCE-85352), John Cartwright (BCE-53975) and John Bryant (BCE-73466). Particularly strong opposition was voiced to the counter-proposals from Mr Baston and Mr Challis, which involved splitting at least one ward in the Woolwich area. Mr Pennycook MP provided a detailed submission outlining how these counter-proposals would break community ties across the existing Greenwich and Woolwich constituency and cause disruption to existing constituencies elsewhere (BCE-95607).

The initially proposed Erith and Thamesmead constituency, which spanned the boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley (as per the current arrangement), received a mixed response. There was general support for the communities of Abbey Wood, Belvedere, Erith, and Thamesmead remaining together in the same constituency. The proposed addition of Glyndon and Shooters Hill wards was welcomed by residents of Plumstead: the Plumstead community is currently divided between three constituencies, and residents contended that the initial proposals would unite Plumstead in the same constituency. However, it was noted that Plumstead only extends partially into Shooters Hill ward, and the remainder of the ward identifies as the distinct Shooters Hill community. It is therefore a ward of 'two halves'. Residents of the Shooters Hill part of the ward were strongly opposed to being transferred from the Eltham constituency to the Erith and Thamesmead constituency. They argued that Shooters Hill has strong historic links with Eltham - and Woolwich - but minimal connection with Erith or Thamesmead. Clive Efford, MP for Eltham (BCE-82792), provided details on the history of Eltham and Shooters Hill, and we also received a campaign from Shooters Hill residents opposing their removal from the Eltham constituency (BCE-70034).

Recognising that Shooters Hill ward contains two distinct communities, some respondents suggested that we should consider Greenwich's new ward boundaries, which separate Plumstead and Shooters Hill into different wards. The Order for new wards in Greenwich was made in December 2021 and came into effect at the May 2022 local elections - well after the statutory cut-off date. Representations such as BCE-96419 suggested that we should amend the initial proposals slightly to use the boundary between the new Plumstead Common ward and the new Shooters Hill ward as the boundary between the Erith and Thamesmead, and Eltham constituencies, arguing that this would better reflect local ties.

The initial proposals for two constituencies wholly contained within the borough of Bexley - Bexleyheath and Crayford, and Sidcup and Welling - were well supported, since the proposed constituencies were mostly unchanged from the existing arrangement except for realignment with new ward boundaries in the borough (which were implemented in 2018) and the addition of Northumberland Heath ward to the Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency. Respondents noted that these minor adjustments enabled the whole of the Bexleyheath community, which extends into the West Heath and Northumberland Heath areas, to be united in a single constituency, and the whole of Welling to be united in a single constituency. There was opposition, however, to the proposed name Sidcup and Welling: respondents including Louie French, MP for Old Bexley and Sidcup (BCE-90509) and James Brokenshire, the late MP for Old Bexley and Sidcup (BCE-85526), argued that 'Old Bexley' should be preserved in the name of the constituency due to its historical significance. They suggested retaining the existing name, or changing the name to Old Bexley, Sidcup and Welling.

The Conservative Party fully supported the initial proposals for the borough of Bexley, the Erith and Thamesmead constituency, and the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency. The Liberal Democrats also supported the initial proposals for this area, and for the whole of the South East London sub-region. The Labour Party supported the initial proposals for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, but provided a counter-proposal for the remainder of Greenwich and Bexley. This counter-proposal retained Shooters Hill ward in an Eltham constituency, which resulted in knock-on changes to the Bexley constituencies: for example, the two Welling wards were included in different constituencies, and the Chislehurst ward from the borough of Bromley was included as an orphan ward in a Sidcup and Chislehurst constituency. The Labour Party stated that the towns of Sidcup and Chislehurst have 'strong road connections across the A20' and are of a 'similar size and character'. However, Councillor David Leaf (BCE-96877) disputed the

Labour Party's assertion, stating that the A20 is instead a 'significant hard geographical barrier as a busy dual carriageway and runs along the Bexley and Bromley borough boundary', further noting that only one road and one pedestrian footpath cross the A20 between Sidcup and Chislehurst. Councillor Leaf also strongly opposed the division of the two Welling wards, arguing that this proposal would break community ties in Welling.

The initial proposals for the Eltham and Chislehurst constituency combined the Eltham area of Greenwich with the Chislehurst area of Bromley. We received over 300 representations opposing the proposed constituency, with most respondents arguing that Eltham and Chislehurst were two very different communities in different London boroughs, with limited community, social or transport connections between the areas. The A20 road, running through Coldharbour and New Eltham ward towards the south of Greenwich borough, was referenced as a strong dividing line between the two areas. Chislehurst residents said that they looked to Bromley for social activities, shopping, community groups, and local services, therefore the initial proposals would break local ties between Chislehurst and Bromley. We received detailed evidence from Sir Bob Neill, MP for Bromley and Chislehurst (BCE-83845), and the Chislehurst Society (BCE-63365), among others.

There was considerable support for a counter-proposal for a 'Chislehurst and Mottingham' constituency, as presented by the Coldharbour & New Eltham Conservatives (BCE-83821). This was identical to the national Conservative Party's 'Chislehurst and Bromley Common' constituency. The counter-proposal joined the Chislehurst area with other wards in Bromley and one ward - Coldharbour & New Eltham - from Greenwich. Respondents argued that the borough boundary between Bromley and Greenwich is indistinct and, as mentioned, the A20 road (and to a lesser extent, the Sidcup railway line that acts as the northern boundary to Coldharbour & New Eltham ward) represents the actual dividing line between communities. Respondents from Mottingham, including the Mottingham Residents Association (BCE-93669), highlighted that the Mottingham community spans the Bromley-Greenwich boundary, therefore this counter-proposal would unite all of Mottingham in a single constituency. On the other hand, some respondents argued that the counter-proposal would divide the New Eltham community, which lies either side of the Sidcup railway line, and thus either side of the proposed constituency boundary.

Elsewhere in Bromley, we received strong opposition to the initial proposals regarding Petts Wood and Knoll ward, which was transferred from the existing Orpington constituency to the proposed Bromley constituency. Local councillors, Gareth Bacon, MP for

Orpington (BCE-68240), and a campaign from local residents (BCE-86097) contended that the initial proposals would break community ties: Petts Wood and Knoll ward has long-standing historical and administrative links with Orpington, and the ward boundary extends all the way to Orpington high street. It was also argued that the ward is separated from Bromley by railway lines. There was notable support for the Conservative counter-proposal in this area, which kept Petts Wood and Knoll ward in the Orpington constituency, and split the neighbouring Cray Valley West ward between the Orpington, and Chislehurst and Bromley Common constituencies. Some representations suggested splitting Petts Wood and Knoll ward, so that at least the Knoll part of the ward (the southern portion of the ward extending from central Orpington to Crofton Lane) could remain in the Orpington constituency. Some other representations suggested splitting Darwin ward (situated further south in Bromley borough) and transferring part of Darwin ward and the whole of Biggin Hill ward from the Orpington constituency to the Bromley constituency - to enable Petts Wood and Knoll to remain in Orpington.

The initially proposed Beckenham constituency, which joined together the Beckenham and Penge areas, was greeted with a mixed response. Some Penge residents argued that they shared very little in common with Beckenham, and identified more closely with Lewisham in terms of culture, socio-economic status, and outlook. Conversely, others argued that Penge and Beckenham made a natural fit, and shared many local services and recreational amenities such as Crystal Palace park and Beckenham Spa. Local resident Anthony McPartlan (BCE-97731) noted that the initial proposals would unite all of Beckenham town centre in a single constituency: part of Beckenham town centre and high street lies in Clockhouse ward, which is currently in the Lewisham West and Penge constituency. The Penge Forum (BCE-90003) and Penge & Cator Labour Party Branch (BCE-91360) argued that if the initial proposals were to be adopted, 'Penge' should be included in the constituency name, to recognise this sizeable community.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners noted the overwhelmingly positive response to the initial proposals for Bexley borough, and for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency. They agreed with respondents from Greenwich and Woolwich that the counter-proposals provided by Lewis Baston, Pete Challis, BCE-79433, Oliver Raven, John Cartwright, and John Bryant would break local ties across the area and, in some cases, result in significant disruption to other existing constituencies.

Regarding Shooters Hill ward, the Assistant Commissioners recognised the differing views put forward by Plumstead residents and Shooters Hill residents. They acknowledged that dividing the ward along the new ward boundaries would make sense in terms of community ties, and they noted that it was also possible to divide the ward using existing polling district boundaries. However, they considered that splitting the ward - whether using existing or new boundaries - would present a very isolated benefit and therefore would not meet the Commission's criteria for ward splitting. While recognising the efforts of the Labour Party to retain Shooters Hill ward in an Eltham constituency, therefore minimising change to the existing Eltham constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the resultant changes to the Bexley constituencies in the Labour Party counter-proposal would break a number of local ties in Bexley borough.

On balance, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no changes to the initial proposals for the constituencies of Bexleyheath and Crayford, Erith and Thamesmead, Greenwich and Woolwich, and Sidcup and Welling - except for reverting the name of Sidcup and Welling to its existing name, Old Bexley and Sidcup.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the strong opposition to the initial proposals for the Eltham and Chislehurst constituency. They recognised the merits of the Conservative Party counter-proposal in joining the Chislehurst community with other parts of Bromley, and including the Eltham area in a separate constituency to Chislehurst. However, they noted that some of the main arguments put forward in support of the Conservative Party counter-proposal, such as the uniting of the Mottingham community, also applied to the initial proposals. We had also received many representations from residents of the streets south of the A20 in the southeastern part of Coldharbour & New Eltham ward, supporting the Conservative counter-proposal, who contended that they look to Chislehurst for their local services (rather than Eltham) and therefore welcomed being joined in a constituency with Chislehurst wards. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the initial proposals, again, would reflect these residents' views.

Understanding that the A20 represents a hard boundary for people living in the area, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the A20 does not align with the boundary of Coldharbour & New Eltham ward, but runs through the ward, with the Sidcup railway line representing the actual ward boundary. No counter-proposals had suggested splitting Coldharbour & New Eltham ward to reflect the A20 as a hard geographic barrier, and the Conservative counter-proposal used the railway line (ward boundary) as their

proposed constituency boundary. Acknowledging that the community of New Eltham spans the railway line in the eastern parts of Coldharbour & New Eltham ward and Eltham South ward, the Assistant Commissioners therefore took note of those representations expressing concern that the Conservative counter-proposal would divide the New Eltham community and break local ties in this area. Furthermore, the Assistant Commissioners noted that the Conservative counter-proposal paired the core Eltham wards with three wards in Lewisham borough. They considered that this approach would break local ties in Lewisham, and as previously discussed, cause significant disruption to existing constituencies in Lewisham and Southwark.

The Assistant Commissioners noted that some counter-proposals did not cross the Bromley-Greenwich boundary. John Bryant and John Cartwright proposed a similar Bromley and Chislehurst constituency, wholly within the borough of Bromley, and an Orpington and Sidcup constituency joining parts of Bromley and Bexley boroughs. Lewis Baston and Pete Challis also proposed Bromley and Chislehurst constituencies wholly within the borough of Bromley. The Assistant Commissioners noted the merits of some of these counter-proposals in isolation, but they considered that each one caused significant consequential disruption elsewhere.

When assessing the response to the initial proposals for three constituencies contained wholly within the borough of Bromley - Bromley, Beckenham, and Orpington - the Assistant Commissioners noted that the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats fully supported the initial proposals. They also considered that the key issue generating wholesale opposition from respondents was the transfer of Petts Wood and Knoll ward from the Orpington constituency to the Bromley constituency. They therefore sought to find amendments to the initial proposals that would enable Petts Wood and Knoll ward to remain in the Orpington constituency, and their investigations showed that this would not be viable without splitting at least one ward in the borough. A potential solution involved splitting Farnborough and Crofton ward (currently in Orpington) between the Orpington and Bromley constituencies, and splitting Shortlands ward (currently in Beckenham) between the Bromley and Beckenham constituencies - allowing Petts Wood and Knoll to remain wholly in the Orpington constituency. To help them assess the implications of these potential ward splits 'on the ground', and also to gain a better understanding of some of the issues in Chislehurst, and Coldharbour and New Eltham ward, the Assistant Commissioners visited the area.

When visiting Shortlands ward, the Assistant Commissioners drove along Hayes Lane (the B251), which would become the constituency boundary under the ward split proposal. They considered that this was a well used through-route rather than a road

which drew communities together, therefore they considered that it would make a suitable constituency boundary. They crossed from Shortlands ward into Bromley Town ward, to assess whether the railway line between Shortlands and Bromley Town posed a significant barrier. They concluded that there were good road connections across the railway line and that, given the geographical proximity to Bromley, residents of the eastern part of Shortlands ward would naturally gravitate to Bromley town centre for local services and amenities. Additionally, the Assistant Commissioners noted that a number of respondents, including the Conservative Party, had outlined strong community ties between Shortlands and Bromley Town. The Assistant Commissioners were therefore unconcerned by the prospect of splitting Shortlands ward between the Beckenham and Bromley constituencies.

When visiting Farnborough and Crofton ward, the Assistant Commissioners drove along Crofton Avenue which would become (part of) the constituency boundary under the ward split proposal. They observed that this was a small road running through an integrated residential area, and that dividing the ward in this way would divide the Crofton community. They also felt that the whole ward had close ties to Orpington and that local residents would clearly gravitate to Orpington as its nearest town centre. Therefore, they were not persuaded by the prospect of dividing Farnborough and Crofton ward between the Orpington and Bromley constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners subsequently visited Petts Wood and Knoll ward, driving northwards from Orpington town centre through the Knoll area to Petts Wood high street. They noted Knoll's proximity to Orpington high street and also observed that the area ascends to a summit on Crofton Lane. They considered that Crofton Lane 'sub-divided' the ward and somewhat separated the Knoll community from the Petts Wood community. Following their observations, they agreed to revisit those representations that suggested splitting Petts Wood and Knoll ward along Crofton Lane.

Travelling further north, the Assistant Commissioners visited Chislehurst and then crossed the borough boundary between Bromley and Greenwich. They subsequently crossed the A20 road and the Sidcup railway line to visit the New Eltham area, before driving out of London along the A20. They noted the imperceptibility of the borough boundary between Bromley and Greenwich at this point, and agreed that the A20 road represented a significant dividing line. The railway line appeared to be a weaker boundary, and they observed that New Eltham's 'town centre' area spanned the railway line, with shops, cafes, businesses and local amenities extending along Footscray Road and Southwood Road either side of the railway. The Assistant Commissioners therefore felt that

using the railway line / Coldharbour and New Eltham ward boundary as a constituency boundary would certainly break local ties in New Eltham. Driving eastwards along the A20, the Assistant Commissioners observed that the road widened and became a very strong boundary between Bromley and Bexley boroughs, which confirmed their view that any counter-proposals for constituencies crossing between Bromley and Bexley (including the Labour counter-proposal) would be undesirable.

Following their site visits, the Assistant Commissioners investigated further options for ward splits in Bromley borough. They identified that it was possible to divide Petts Wood and Knoll ward along Crofton Lane, using polling district boundaries, rather than divide Farnborough and Crofton ward (while retaining the split of Shortlands ward). This would avoid the problematic split of Farnborough and Crofton ward, and would acknowledge the Knoll area's strong ties to Orpington. The Petts Wood area, however, would still be linked with Bromley.

The Assistant Commissioners also identified that it was possible to avoid splitting both Shortlands ward and Petts Wood and Knoll ward by splitting only Darwin ward instead, and transferring Biggin Hill ward from the Orpington to the Bromley constituency. Since Darwin ward encompasses a largely rural area, they considered that the split would be unlikely to divide communities. They also noted that the A233, the main road running through Biggin Hill, continues northwards to Bromley - therefore, although geographically distant, Biggin Hill could be seen as reasonably well connected to Bromley town. However, due to the shape of Biggin Hill ward, the Assistant Commissioners noted that transferring the ward to the Bromley constituency would divide part of the Biggin Hill community. A solution was identified in Bromley borough's new ward boundaries (implemented in May 2022 following the Order being made in April 2021), since the new Biggin Hill ward included those parts of the Biggin Hill community that were separated under the existing Biggin Hill ward. This solution would therefore involve splitting the existing Darwin ward in three ways: polling district DA1 would be included in the Bromley constituency, and those parts of polling districts DA5 and DA7 that lie in the *new* Biggin Hill ward would be included in the Bromley constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered that this solution had merit in that it required only one ward to be split (under both the existing and new boundaries), rather than two wards as per the other potential solutions, and enabled the whole of Petts Wood and Knoll ward to remain in the Orpington constituency.

In light of their analysis and site visits, the Assistant Commissioners recommend the adoption of the initial proposals for the constituencies of Eltham and Chislehurst, and Beckenham - except for changing the name of Beckenham to Beckenham and

Penge. They then recommend amendment of the initial proposals for the Bromley and Orpington constituencies, keeping Petts Wood and Knoll ward in the Orpington constituency, and splitting Darwin ward in alignment with the new ward boundary surrounding Biggin Hill, as outlined above. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the strong opposition to the joining of the Eltham and Chislehurst communities in a constituency, but they consider that any practicable alternatives would result in knock-on disruption to existing constituencies and the breaking of community ties elsewhere. Therefore, they conclude that retaining the initial proposals for Eltham and Chislehurst would ultimately enable a pattern of constituencies that better reflects the statutory factors across the rest of the South East London sub-region and the South Central London sub-region.

The Assistant Commissioners note that their recommendations for the whole of South London do not include any orphan wards. While they recommend increasing the number of split wards across South London from two in the initial proposals, to three, they consider that their recommended ward splits help to minimise the breaking of local ties and ultimately result in an arrangement of constituencies better reflecting the statutory factors.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	48	64%
- Changed in composition and name	29	39%
- Changed in composition only	14	18%
- Changed in name only	5	7%

Recommended constituency changes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Barking	No	No
Battersea	No	No
Beckenham and Penge	No	Yes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Bermondsey and Old Southwark	Yes	Yes
Bethnal Green and Stepney	No	No
Bexleyheath and Crayford	No	No
Brentford and Isleworth	No	No
Bromley and Biggin Hill	Yes	Yes
Carshalton and Wallington	No	No
Chelsea and Fulham	Yes	Yes
Chingford and Woodford Green	No	No
Chipping Barnet	Yes	Yes
Cities of London and Westminster	Yes	Yes
Croydon East	Yes	No
Croydon South	Yes	No
Croydon West and South Norwood	Yes	Yes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Dagenham and Rainham	Yes	No
Dulwich and West Norwood	Yes	Yes
Ealing Central and Acton	No	No
Ealing North	No	No
Ealing Southall	No	Yes
East Ham	No	No
Edmonton and Winchmore Hill	Yes	Yes
Eltham and Chislehurst	No	No
Enfield North	Yes	No
Erith and Thamesmead	No	No
Feltham and Heston	No	No
Finchley and Golders Green	Yes	Yes
Greenwich and Woolwich	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Hackney North and Stoke Newington	No	No
Hackney South and Shoreditch	Yes	No
Hammersmith and Chiswick	No	No
Hampstead and Highgate	Yes	Yes
Harrow East	Yes	Yes
Harrow West	No	Yes
Hayes and Harlington	No	Yes
Hendon	Yes	Yes
Holborn and St Pancras	Yes	Yes
Hornchurch and Upminster	Yes	No
Hornsey and Friern Barnet	Yes	Yes
Ilford North	No	No
Ilford South	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Islington North	Yes	No
Islington South	Yes	Yes
Kensington and Bayswater	Yes	Yes
Lambeth Central	Yes	Yes
Lewisham East	Yes	No
Lewisham North and Deptford	Yes	Yes
Lewisham West and East Dulwich	Yes	Yes
Leyton and Wanstead	No	No
Mitcham and Morden	Yes	No
Old Bexley and Sidcup	No	Yes
Orpington	Yes	No
Peckham and Walworth	Yes	Yes
Poplar and Limehouse	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Putney	No	No
Queen's Park and Little Venice	Yes	Yes
Richmond Park and Kingston Town	Yes	Yes
Romford	Yes	No
Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner	Yes	No
Southgate and Wood Green	Yes	Yes
Stratford and Bow	No	No
Streatham and Norbury	Yes	Yes
Surbiton and The Maldens	Yes	Yes
Sutton and Cheam	No	No
Tooting	No	No
Tottenham	Yes	No
Twickenham	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Uxbridge and South Ruislip	Yes	No
Vauxhall	Yes	Yes
Walthamstow	No	No
Wembley	Yes	Yes
West Ham and Beckton	No	No
Willesden	Yes	Yes
Wimbledon and Coombe	Yes	Yes



**Boundary
Commission
for England**

**North East region - Revised proposals recommendations
Commission paper**

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electorate range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to the North East: 27 (a decrease of two from the current number, 29)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 2 (just under 7%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 0 (0%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 4
- Total number of local authorities in region: 12
- Local authorities which have new wards made by Order after the BCE cut-off date of 1 December 2020:¹ Stockton-on-Tees (The Order, which was laid on 15 June 2022, will not be made until the Commons returns in September. Stockton-on-Tees now has 27 wards, one more than previously)

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted - and subsequent Orders made - by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
County Durham	393,533	5.36	6
Northumberland	249,414	3.40	4
Tees Valley (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton on Tees)	494,601	6.74	7
Tyne and Wear (Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, and Sunderland)	815,451	11.11	12
Totals	1,952,999	26.61	29

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the North East region into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region ²	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland	596,886	8.13	9	8	74,611
County Durham, South Tyneside, Sunderland, excluding Gateshead	716,893	9.77	11	10	71,792
Gateshead	144,619	1.97	2	2	72,310
Tees Valley, including Hartlepool	494,601	6.74	7	7	70,657
Region totals	1,952,999	26.61	29	27	72,333

² The initial proposal sub-regions mirrored the combined authorities: North East (County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland), North of Tyne (Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland), and Tees Valley (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees), with the exception of Gateshead which was considered separately.

Number of representations received

In the North East region, the Commission received a total of 2,392 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 1,592 representations were received during the first eight-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 800 representations during the six-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were two in the North East region (Newcastle upon Tyne and Middlesbrough), as well as feedback submitted via the consultation website, email or letter. Some representations received at the secondary stage related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ³	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ⁴	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	17	18	35
Official political party response ⁵	14	7	21
Peer from the House of Lords	1	0	1
Local councillor	78	47	125

³ As declared by the respondents themselves.

⁴ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁵ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Local authority	8	0	8
Parish or town council	13	3	16
Other organisation	13	9	22
Member of the public	1,448	716	2,164
Totals	1,592	800	2,392

Many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals; however, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, and in particular across the Stockton-on-Tees unitary authority. Very few representations were received with regard to the constituencies of Hartlepool and Sunderland Central which both remained wholly unchanged under the initial proposals.

Campaigns and Petitions

The North East region received one representation from an organised campaign, and this was as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
Arthur's Hill is and always will be part of the West End	BCE-85954	Opposes initial proposals	17

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

Initial proposals sub-regions	Revised proposals sub-regions
Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland	'North of Tyne': Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland
County Durham, South Tyneside, Sunderland, excluding Gateshead	'North East': County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland
Gateshead	'Tees Valley': Tees Valley, including Hartlepool
Tees Valley, including Hartlepool	

In the initial proposals the North East region was divided into four sub-regions. These were: (1) Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland (North of Tyne Combined Authority); (2) County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland; (3) Gateshead; and (4) Tees Valley. The local authorities in the region are all unitary authorities. Beginning in 2014, they are now grouped into three combined authorities: North East (County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland), North of Tyne (Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland), and Tees Valley (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton on Tees). The initial proposal sub-regions mirrored these, with the exception of Gateshead, as the Commission noted that Gateshead could have two constituencies wholly contained within the local authority boundary. None of the initial proposals crossed a combined authority boundary, and that remains the case in these revised proposal recommendations.

While there was strong support for the proposed sub-regions, many respondents to the consultation from Sunderland contended that keeping Gateshead separate from the rest of the North East Combined Authority would be unnecessarily disruptive to the remaining area. Bridget Phillipson MP (BCE-82612) recognised the benefits of using the combined authorities in the North East: however, she considered that treating Gateshead separately may incur ‘a much higher and disproportionate cost in terms of the extent to which seats elsewhere can reflect real contiguous communities’. Having considered these issues carefully and reflected on the evidence received, the Assistant Commissioners recognise the strengths of the arguments to alter the sub-regional grouping, particularly the fact that this would result in a more cohesive Sunderland and City of Durham, and provide a pattern of constituencies which better reflects local ties across the sub-region. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the revised proposals include Gateshead as part of a sub-region including the entire North East Combined Authority - resulting in three sub-regions that exactly reflect the combined authority areas.

As in the initial proposals, the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable.

Under these recommendations, two of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, the same as in the initial proposals. Ten constituencies include wards from two local authorities, the same as in the initial proposals: however, one constituency now includes wards from three local authorities.

The Assistant Commissioners’ recommendations reduce the number of constituencies that cross metropolitan county boundaries, from four to three. Two constituencies cross the county boundaries of Northumberland, and Tyne and Wear (Hexham, and Cramlington and Killingworth), with the other crossing the county boundaries of County Durham and Tyne and Wear (Blaydon and Consett).

The Assistant Commissioners recommend revising the composition of 17 of the 27 constituencies proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, they have decided not to make any revisions to the composition of the remaining ten. Of the 17 constituencies where they recommend revising the composition, they have also revised the name of 11 constituencies. Of the ten

constituencies where the Assistant Commissioners have not revised the composition, they recommend changing the name of just one.⁶

⁶ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	2	0	11	14	17	10	0	4	0	0	2	21
Revised proposals	2	2	13	10	16	10	1	3	0	4	2	16

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
North of Tyne sub-region	0	0	4	4	4	3	1	2	0	3	2	3
North East sub-region	1	0	6	5	8	4	0	1	0	1	0	8
Tees Valley sub-region	1	2	3	1	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
Totals	2	2	13	10	16	10	1	3	0	4	2	16

North of Tyne sub-region: Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland

Of the nine existing constituencies in this sub-region, none have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under the initial proposals the number of constituencies in this sub-region was reduced by one to eight.

A number of representations supported the sub-region composition, which grouped all the unitary authorities included in the North of Tyne Combined Authority. A number of counter-proposals that were received suggested alternative constituencies within the sub-region, although the initial proposals were supported by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. A counter-proposal was put forward by the Green Party at the Newcastle public hearing (BCE-97038), which modified the initial proposals slightly, suggesting splitting the Longhorsley ward to better reflect local ties. The Labour Party provided a counter-proposal (BCE-79502) with more changes to the initial proposals, arguing that this better reflected the local communities in the sub-region in comparison to the initial proposals.

Northumberland

By far the most contentious issue in the North East region was the Whitley Bay and Cramlington constituency proposed in the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners recognised that the initial proposals for Whitley Bay and Cramlington crossed the local authority boundary between North Tyneside and Northumberland. Multiple representations outlined the strong coastal community links between Whitley Bay, Cullercoats and Tynemouth. When talking about Whitley Bay and Cullercoats, BCE-82766 states that the 'two towns share a community identity and are in walking distance, sharing many facilities'.

In the initial proposals, the proposed Blyth and Ashington constituency was largely supported in representations. BCE-65880 praises how the initial proposals kept the towns of Ashington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Choppington, Bedlington and Blyth together, 'as the communities share many similar characteristics'. Furthermore, BCE-65880 supports how the initial proposals kept 'the parishes of both Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea intact and wholly within the same constituency'.

The proposed Berwick and Morpeth constituency did divide opinions, with some residents unhappy that Longhorsley ward had been separated from the town of Morpeth. BCE-65798 alludes to the links across the ward oriented north-south to Alnwick or Morpeth, with 'all cultural, economic, medical and travel foci' of Longhorsley being in the existing Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency.

Several representations, including Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP (BCE-71206), requested that the Berwick and Morpeth constituency name include the town of Alnwick, to be renamed Berwick, Alnwick and Morpeth. Alternatively, multiple representations suggested simply naming the constituency North Northumberland. Similarly, during the consultation periods we received a number of representations asking for Bedlington to be included in the name of the proposed Ashington and Blyth constituency, to be known instead as Ashington, Blyth and Bedlington, or alternatively for the name to be South East Northumberland.

North Tyneside

Multiple respondents from the North Tyneside local authority felt aggrieved that the initial proposals divided the local authority between three constituencies, two of which crossed the local authority boundaries: with Newcastle upon Tyne (Newcastle upon Tyne North); and with Northumberland (Whitley Bay and Cramlington). Alan Campbell MP mentioned in his Newcastle public hearing representation (BCE-97058) that the initial proposals were 'unnecessarily disruptive' and were a 'radical change' to North Tyneside.

Assistant Commissioners noted that the Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-79502) keeps Tynemouth relatively unchanged, preserving the coastal conurbation of Whitley Bay, Cullercoats and Tynemouth together. Additionally, the Labour counter-proposal avoids having Callerton and Throckley as an 'orphan ward' as part of a Hexham constituency as per the initial proposals. Unfortunately, the domino effect of this counter-proposal means the constituency of Hexham includes the more distant Bedlington and Choppington ward, which has been opposed during the secondary consultation, with one respondent identifying in BCE-91946,

there are 'no direct public transport links to the Hexham area.' BCE-92795 questioned the local ties between the two areas, stating 'Bedlington has traditionally linked to the south-east of Northumberland and has strong ties to Blyth.'

There was a counter-proposal submitted in BCE-76940 which proposed a split of the Riverside ward at the A19 'Tyne Tunnel', as it represents a 'physical barrier' that splits the communities in a 'more natural way'. This ward split was adopted by the North Tyneside Constituency Labour Party in their counter-proposal, BCE-81552, who stated the Riverside ward split, 'allows you to unite the communities around North Shields while keeping the communities around Wallsend united'.

Newcastle upon Tyne

The North East region received its only petition (BCE-85954) in the North of Tyne sub-region. The petition, which included 17 signatories, advocated for Arthur's Hill ward to be included in Newcastle's West End, rather than part of a Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency as in the initial proposals. BCE-83002 outlined how Arthur's Hill and Elswick have 'a strong local identity, established through a network of community and voluntary organisations that collaborate across the west end.'

The vast majority of the representations we received in Newcastle at the initial consultation stage focussed on the Callerton and Throckley 'orphan ward,' which was included in a Hexham constituency in the initial proposals. Callerton and Throckley was referred to as the 'Outer West of Newcastle' in numerous representations, including Catherine McKinnell MP (BCE-67056). She goes on to argue that removing Callerton and Throckley from a Newcastle constituency would 'divide these historical community ties across the Outer West of Newcastle'. However, during our secondary consultation and at public hearings we also received evidence supporting the initial proposals. In weighing up the competing evidence, Assistant Commissioners noted the support for the initial proposals, including comments made by a local resident in BCE-97074 who says, 'large numbers of children from Throckley do come up to Heddon school' and 'people from Heddon use Throckley on a daily basis' for amenities.

We received a number of representations supporting the Labour counter-proposal as it managed to preserve the Outer West (generally considered anything in Newcastle upon Tyne west of the A1). However, we also received representations opposing this counter-proposal, as Bedlington respondents, who were included in a Hexham constituency, felt this did not respect their ties to Blyth. The Assistant Commissioners drove from Bedlington to Hexham during their site visit of the region and observed that any traveller using main roads would need to cross two other constituencies under the Labour Party counter-proposal, which they felt indicated that direct links between these areas are almost non-existent.

Recommendations

Having considered the initial proposals, and the Labour Party's counter-proposals for Bedlington and Choppington to be included in a Hexham constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that there was a degree of merit in each of them. However, on balance, they have decided to recommend an alternate option of their own design, which delivers more benefits in terms of the statutory factors than either the initial proposals or Labour's counter-proposal. The three ward split solution they recommend respects the existing pattern of constituencies better than the initial proposals - in particular in the east, keeping Tynemouth relatively unchanged and maintaining more local ties across the sub-region. This decision was influenced by the large number of representations the Commission received with regards to the Whitley Bay and Cramlington constituency. Assistant Commissioners observed when driving around the area during a site visit that Whitley Bay and Cullercoats formed one contiguous community with no clear break. Assistant Commissioners recommend that the name, Tynemouth, be retained as the revised constituency is similar to the existing one.

The Assistant Commissioners noted the suggestion to split the Riverside ward at the A19 'Tyne Tunnel', put forward by the North Tyneside Constituency Labour Party but noted this counter-proposal still included Bedlington in a Hexham constituency. The Assistant Commissioners however identified that they were able to utilise the proposed Riverside ward split, in conjunction with two other ward splits in Newcastle upon Tyne, to allow for a more cohesive proposal, respecting local ties, and avoiding Whitley Bay being paired with Cramlington, without also bringing Bedlington and Choppington into a Hexham constituency.

The second ward split recommended for this sub-region splits Kingston Park South & Newbiggin Hall ward, using the A696 as the divide, as this appears to be a distinct physical barrier between the two communities. The polling district north of the A696 is included in a Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency, and the remaining three polling districts south of the road included in Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West. The final ward split necessary in the sub-region is in Castle ward. The Assistant Commissioners recommend that Castle ward be split along the Hazlerigg Civil Parish boundary, with the northern polling districts uniting the communities of Brunswick Village, Hazlerigg and Wideopen in the constituency of Cramlington and Killingworth. The Assistant Commissioners are aware that this constituency would be the only one they recommend which contains parts of three local authorities, but felt that this allows for an overall pattern of constituencies in the sub-region that better reflects community ties than any of the alternatives proposed.

The Assistant Commissioners deemed the splits necessary in order to resolve the key issue of Whitley Bay and Cramlington. Their recommendations have the added advantages of: placing the wards of Arthur's Hill and Monument in a Newcastle upon Tyne West constituency, resolving Whitley Bay being paired with Cramlington whilst avoiding Bedlington and Choppington being included in a Hexham constituency and facilitating a Tynemouth, similar to the existing constituency. Assistant Commissioners are aware that splitting wards is undesirable, but the positive benefits in terms of shaping the whole sub-region appear worthwhile relative to the impact at a local level.

Having considered the conflicting evidence, there is no clear solution for the concerns raised around Callerton and Throckley that will attract widespread support. The Assistant Commissioners do not consider that the evidence to split a ward here is sufficiently compelling and recognise that a split ward here is not necessary to facilitate more widespread benefits. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners propose no change to the Commission's Hexham constituency. The Labour Party's counter-proposal keeping Callerton and Throckley within the outer west of Newcastle was deemed to be too disruptive in its consequences for Bedlington and Choppington: it was clear to see during their site visits that both have clear (and direct) transport links to Blyth, and contrastingly very limited direct connections to Hexham and the west.

The Assistant Commissioners accordingly recommend that the boundaries of the constituencies of Berwick and Morpeth, and Blyth and Ashington remain the same as in the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners felt there was not a strong enough case to

recommend moving Longhorsley ward into a constituency including Morpeth and that it was not possible in their recommended three ward split pattern. Having considered the views regarding the names of the Berwick and Morpeth, and Blyth and Ashington constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners recommend keeping the names the same, rather than including a third town. They felt this would ensure consistency across the country in the brevity of names. Assistant Commissioners felt the name 'Cramlington and Killingworth' would better reflect the geography of the newly recommended constituency. As the Wallsend area (part of North Tyneside) is recommended to be in a constituency with eastern parts of Newcastle upon Tyne, they recommend that the constituency be named 'Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend'. To reflect the central and western wards now being included in the constituency to the west of this, Assistant Commissioners recommend naming this constituency 'Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West'.

'North East' sub-region: County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland

Of the 13 existing constituencies in this sub-region, only three have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range: City of Durham, North West Durham and Sunderland Central. Under the initial proposals the number of constituencies in what was then two sub-regions (including Gateshead) was reduced to 12. The initial proposals changed all but one existing constituency (Sunderland Central) in this sub-region. In formulating the initial proposals for this sub-region, the Commission noted the particular challenges facing it, in that a large proportion of the constituencies fall below the lower 5% limit. The Green Party supported the initial proposals in this sub-region, however the Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrats all presented counter-proposals.

Gateshead and South Tyneside

The initial proposals treated the Gateshead local authority as its own sub-region as it was noted that it could have two constituencies wholly contained within its boundaries (Blaydon and Gateshead). The geographic features of the River Tyne and the North Sea coast, coupled with a wholly unchanged Sunderland Central to the south, and largely supported South Shields

constituency to the east resulted in a Jarrow and Sunderland West constituency that included three Sunderland wards (Castle, Redhill and St. Anne's). Representations from these three Sunderland wards heavily opposed being included in a Jarrow constituency. One resident from St. Anne's ward stated in BCE-71787 'there is no real connection, historically, culturally, or spiritually between my ward and Jarrow'. Assistant Commissioners noted that not only is this ward part of a different local authority, it is also separated from Jarrow by the physical barrier of the River Wear.

The Labour Party (BCE-79502) proposed a counter-proposal including Gateshead in a County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland sub-region. The Labour Party proposed to divide Gateshead across parts of four constituencies and Sunderland across three, with a Blaydon and Consett constituency crossing the County Durham and Gateshead boundary, and a Jarrow constituency including four Gateshead wards, two more than it has currently. The two other constituencies including Gateshead wards from their proposal are for a Gateshead constituency which includes the centre of the city and reaches the Whickham area, and a Washington constituency which stretches from Lamesley ward to the south of the town of Gateshead to Redhill ward in the north of Sunderland.

Sunderland

Assistant Commissioners were aware of the fact that the initial proposals divided the city of Sunderland five ways between the constituencies: City of Durham; Jarrow and Sunderland West; Seaham and Peterlee; Washington and Sunderland South West; and Sunderland Central. Assistant Commissioners recognised that Seaham and Peterlee included Doxford as an 'orphan ward', which one respondent (BCE-55392) pointed out is 'separated from the rest of the constituency geographically by the A19 and the band of farmland that circles Sunderland' and their 'community is in the city'.

We received a large number of representations exclaiming how disruptive our initial proposals were to Sunderland, with Bridget Phillipson MP highlighting (BCE-82612) this through the 'separation of the coalfields wards - Copt Hill, Hetton, Houghton, Shiney Row - across two constituencies, given their shared history and identity'.

County Durham

In the Commission's initial proposals, the City of Durham constituency included the Sunderland coalfield wards mentioned above rather than its current wards to the west of the city of Durham. Representations from the wards on the western periphery of Durham opposed this change due to their strong connections to the city, as expressed in BCE-68871, which highlighted that 'services such as public transport, health and leisure are focussed on the city'. A similar sentiment was felt through representations from residents of Bowburn in the Coxhoe ward, including BCE-87517, which cites strong transport links with the city, via 'three major bus services (56, 57 & X12) to Durham'.

The Commission's initial proposals divided Willington from the towns of Crook and Tow Law. The Assistant Commissioners noted several representations advocating for the towns of Crook, Tow Law and Willington to be kept together in a constituency. Dehenna Davison MP in her representation BCE-84385 opposed the split of the towns, as it would 'sever the strong and historical community link' as part of the Three Towns Area Action partnership of Durham County Council.

A number of counter-proposals were received that kept Gateshead intact, supporting the initial proposals, but altered the configuration of other constituencies around the City of Durham. Both the Liberal Democrats and Conservative parties submitted counter-proposals for this sub-region, and they both chose to adopt our coterminous Gateshead local authority, and consequential Jarrow and Sunderland West constituency. However, both of their schemes vary south of Sunderland, with the Liberal Democrats' counter-proposal splitting Sunderland four ways, including the colliery areas of Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring being included in a 'Houghton and Seaham' constituency. Additionally, the Liberal Democrats proposed the City of Durham constituency include the town of Chester-le-Street. The Conservative Party's sub-region counter-proposal is the same as the initial proposals around Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland, splitting the latter five ways between constituencies. The Conservative counter-proposal retained the Doxford 'orphan ward' and proposed splitting the Deerness ward between the constituencies of North West Durham and Bishop Auckland.

Recommendations

Assistant Commissioners noted the large number of representations from residents in Sunderland who felt aggrieved at being moved into a constituency that was largely part of another local authority that shared no community ties or transport links. The Assistant Commissioners recommend adopting a counter-proposal for this sub-region from Edward Carlsson Browne (BCE-94274), itself a slight variation on the Labour Party counter-proposal (BCE-79502), which breaks up an otherwise coterminous Gateshead local authority, splitting it four ways to facilitate a more cohesive Sunderland split between only three constituencies. Under this counter-proposal Jarrow includes the four Gateshead wards of: Felling; Pelaw and Heworth; Wardley and Leam Lane; and Windy Nook and Whitehills. Commissioners noted that the existing Jarrow constituency already includes two of these four Gateshead wards and it avoids Jarrow from including wards from the City of Sunderland, which was heavily opposed at initial consultation. The recommended Gateshead constituency includes three wards around the Whickham area (Dunston Hill and Whickham East, Whickham North and Whickham South and Sunnyside), which would be reflected in the proposed new constituency name of 'Gateshead and Whickham'. Under the recommendations, Blaydon would be paired with Consett, across the local authority boundary into County Durham. Having driven between the two areas during a site visit, Assistant Commissioners observed they are well connected via the A694 and did not discern a significant difference in character between them. To reflect the two main population centres at either end of the constituency, the Assistant Commissioners recommend naming it 'Blaydon and Consett'. The Assistant Commissioners recognised that some support, including from Gateshead Council (BCE-97056) was received for the two initially proposed constituencies covering the local authority, but considered retaining these two constituencies in the revised proposals would not enable the formulation of constituencies across the wider sub-region that better reflected the statutory factors.

The recommended Washington constituency spans the local authority boundary between Sunderland and Gateshead, including the Gateshead wards of Birtley and Lamesley. Although the A1 poses a physical barrier between the two local authorities, there was strong support for the two areas being included in the same constituency. Evidence from BCE-78132 outlines the historical ties as 'Washington families travelled to work at what was then the Royal Ordnance Factory and socialised at the local pubs and clubs' in Birtley.

The Assistant Commissioners were cognisant of the fact that the city of Sunderland was much less divided in the Carlson Brown and Labour counter-proposals, managing to keep Sunderland Central wholly unchanged (as in the initial proposals) whilst retaining the existing constituency of Houghton and Sunderland South apart from the addition of St. Anne's ward (which has good connections to Houghton). Furthermore, the City of Durham constituency would include the adjacent western wards of Brandon, Deerness, and Esh and Witton Gilbert which are strongly connected to the city through amenities and transport links. North Durham now includes the rural Lanchester ward to bring it within the electorate range.

The Assistant Commissioners, however, felt that the Labour counter-proposal did have some drawbacks in the south of the sub-region. The Durham South ward was removed from the City of Durham constituency and instead included in Sedgefield, which felt incongruous, as it was observed during a site visit that that ward contained large elements of Durham University. Additionally, Assistant Commissioners considered the Labour Party's division of Spennymoor and Tudhoe as arbitrary. Multiple representations were made at the Middlesbrough public hearing, including BCE-97093, which opposed Labour's split of Spennymoor and Tudhoe as 'the two areas are intrinsically linked' and 'strongly connected' through pubs, community events and schooling. Finally, the Labour counter-proposal also removed the ward of Sherburn from the existing City of Durham, which has historically been part of the city.

The Assistant Commissioners noted the counter-proposal from Edward Carlsson Browne (BCE-94274), which utilised the Labour counter-proposal across most of the sub-region, but suggested splitting Trimdon and Thornley ward, to 'produce better boundaries in three constituencies.' The proposed ward split moves the five polling districts from the north of the ward, including Wheatley Hill and Thornley, into an Easington constituency. These villages have been included in an Easington constituency in the past and have good connections to the east via the A181. Having driven across the proposed ward split during a site visit, Assistant Commissioners felt there was a clear separation between the communities in the north and south of the ward. The villages of Deaf Hill, Trimdon and Trimdon Grange are included in a Sedgefield constituency with which they have good links via Salters Lane. Assistant Commissioners agree with Carlsson Browne that the ward split has wider benefits across the sub-region. Firstly, it allows Sherburn ward to be brought back into a City of Durham constituency, which Carlsson Browne states 'looks to Durham and has been part of the City of Durham constituency since 1918'. Additionally, Durham South, which includes elements of Durham University, can be retained in the City of Durham. Finally, the ward split proposal allows the whole of Spennymoor town to be kept

together, including the adjacent village of Tudhoe, which it has strong links with. The Returning Officer for the split ward area will likely be the same as the two constituencies in question are both contained within County Durham. The Assistant Commissioners recommend changing the name from Newton Aycliffe and Sedgfield to 'Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor', to reflect the largest population centres in the constituency.

It is worth noting that although the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal does keep Willington, Crook and Tow Law together in a single constituency, it was deemed to be too disruptive as it failed to resolve the strongly opposed Jarrow and Sunderland West constituency, and the City of Durham constituency was left without the adjacent wards to the west. The Assistant Commissioners felt the Conservative Party's split of Deerness ward did not facilitate a more cohesive sub-region in terms of local ties, with their proposed Bishop Auckland being made of two disconnected parts, there being no direct route between the Deerness and Brandon wards and the rest of the constituency without crossing through either the City of Durham or North West Durham constituencies.

Tees Valley sub-region: Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton on Tees

Of the seven existing constituencies in this sub-region, only three have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range: Hartlepool; Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland; and Stockton South. Under the initial proposals the number of constituencies in this sub-region remained at seven. In the initial proposals, the Commission changed all of the existing constituencies in this area apart from Hartlepool, which was retained wholly unchanged and coterminous with its local authority boundary.

The Green Party, Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats all supported the initial proposals in this sub-region, but the Conservative Party suggested a slight alteration across the southeastern part of the sub-region, which was supported during both consultation periods.

Hartlepool

Assistant Commissioners noted support for the Hartlepool constituency from both the Conservatives (BCE-85491) and Labour Party (BCE-79502). They support no change to the existing constituency, which keeps it coterminous with its borough.

Darlington

During the initial public consultation we received conflicting representations from electors in our proposed Stockton West constituency. A number of respondents in the Darlington villages of Hurworth-on-Tees, Middleton St George and Sadberge were opposed to being included in a Stockton constituency as they felt more connected to Darlington. A Sadberge resident rightly stated in BCE-85415 that the village is 'under the administrative jurisdiction of Darlington Borough' and the Assistant Commissioners understand this is one of the statutory factors. Local Councillor Lorraine Tostevin (BCE-81100) argues that residents of Hurworth wish to be part of Darlington, 'the Borough in which they live, shop, spend their leisure time'. One way to resolve this would be to instead include the ward of Heighington & Coniscliffe, but this lies to the north and west of Darlington and has even fewer connections to Stockton, and would require residents to drive through Darlington to reach Stockton-on-Tees. However, there was some support from respondents in the Darlington villages at being included in Stockton West. A respondent from Middleton St George (BCE-96070) felt that their village is 'very much interconnected' with villages in Stockton local authority, stating that 'the facilities in our village provide community links to a lot of other local villages with our dental and medical practices having patients from the Western Parishes, Hurworth, Eaglescliffe and Hartburn wards'.

Stockton-on-Tees

During the secondary consultation and public hearings, we received large numbers of representations that were supportive of the Commission's initial proposals for Stockton North and Stockton West. A Long Newton resident stated in representation BCE-86742, her village has 'a long-term association with nearby Middleton St George, many villagers being registered with the GP surgery there'. Additionally, Assistant Commissioners were aware of Long Newton residents having strong connections with Yarm, outlined in BCE-86742, stating 'Long Newton has always identified with Yarm and Eaglescliffe in terms of shopping and attendance at Eggescliffe comprehensive school'. Electors from the sub-region also outlined good transport links connecting Sadberge with the proposed Stockton West constituency. BCE-91120 highlighted transport links 'through Dinsdale Station, Sadberge residents have a direct train to Eaglescliffe, Thornaby and Allens West Stations. Tees Flex bus services also link up Sadberge with Yarm and Stockton.'

With regard to Stockton North, the Assistant Commissioners noted support from residents and Matt Vickers, MP for Stockton South. In his representation, Mr Vickers (BCE-82678) praised our initial proposals for Stockton North, swapping the more urban Parkfield and Oxbridge for the rural Western Parishes ward. Mr Vickers outlined how 'Parkfield and Oxbridge areas are a much better fit to Stockton North. The communities are tied inseparably to the Town Centre including through community groups, church attendance, shopping habits and transport links.'

Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland

The initial proposals for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland included the additional New Marske and Marske-by-the-Sea wards of Longbeck and St. Germain's along the coast. There was strong opposition from residents living in the coastal towns and surrounding villages of Marske-by-the-Sea and Saltburn who felt they had stronger links with Redcar to the north along the coast. BCE-73354 highlighted the similarities in the coastal communities of Redcar, Marske-by-the-Sea and New Marske, stating 'this is in part because of the geography of Marske & New Marske, and our historic fishing community.' Furthermore, respondents from

Redcar expressed close ties to Marske-by-the-Sea and Saltburn via transport links. BCE-82395 highlighted that these close ties are 'strengthened by the rail connection between Redcar and Saltburn and the shared beaches and bay'. Bus routes run predominantly up the coast, with evidence from a New Marske resident in BCE-81745, which highlighted that 'the only bus route serves Redcar and then, after a considerable journey, Middlesbrough town centre.'

BCE-70783 raised the point that the initial proposals for the Redcar and Eston constituency means that it crosses the local authority boundary with Middlesbrough. In response to this, the Conservative Party (BCE-85491) and Jacob Young MP (BCE-71814) submitted a counter-proposal which drew a lot of support from residents in the Redcar and Cleveland area. The counter-proposal allows the Redcar constituency to remain unchanged apart from to reflect the new boundaries of the Saltburn ward. Additionally, Jacob Young MP makes the point that the Conservative counter-proposal 'unites the Saltburn, Marske & New Marske Parish Council under one Constituency.' The Redcar constituency would also be contained within the Redcar and Cleveland local authority. Furthermore, the counter-proposal has perceived benefits in Middlesbrough, as Jacob Young MP outlines in his public hearing representation (BCE-97107), describing how the Conservative Party counter-proposal would 'keep the communities of Marton West, Marton East and Marton Manor together under one constituency' preserving local ties in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency.

Assistant Commissioners recognised the issue of Thornaby being split between Middlesbrough and Stockton West, both in the initial proposals and in the Conservative counter-proposal. We received multiple representations from local residents outlining the strong and unique community ties in the area, but there was no valid counter-proposal presented - and Assistant Commissioners have equally not been able to identify one - that was able to keep the town of Thornaby together in a single constituency without causing substantial disruption elsewhere.

Recommendations

Firstly, the Assistant Commissioners have decided to recommend that Hartlepool remain wholly unchanged and conterminous with its local authority boundary.

With regards to the constituency of Darlington, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the initial proposals including the ward of Heighington & Coniscliffe to the North was the best option. Assistant Commissioners noted divergent views on the division of wards within Darlington local authority between the proposed Darlington and Stockton West constituencies. However, on balance, the Assistant Commissioners felt that there was more support for the initial proposals from residents in the eastern Darlington satellite villages being included in Stockton West. The alternatives would include Heighington & Coniscliffe ward in Stockton West or would require altering the Tees Valley and County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland sub-regions, which wasn't suggested during either consultation period. The Assistant Commissioners felt the social and commercial connections between Hurworth, Sadbergh & Middleton St. George and other villages in the proposed Stockton West constituency, are more with Darlington than Stockton West, but links do exist with the latter, and alternative schemes would be more disruptive. Assistant Commissioners noted the overwhelming support for the Western Parishes ward being included in the Commission's Stockton West constituency. This also allowed for the proposed Stockton North to include Parkfield and Oxbridge ward, which unites communities and uses the River Tees as a more congruent natural boundary, and has been largely supported.

The Assistant Commissioners' recommendation is to adopt the counter-proposal submitted by the Conservative Party (BCE-85491) and endorsed by Jacob Young MP (BCE-71814). They noted that in this counter-proposal, the revised Redcar constituency would comprise wards from just one local authority, Redcar and Cleveland, rather than two local authorities (Redcar and Cleveland, and Middlesbrough) as per the initial proposals, and would unite the Saltburn, Marske and New Marske Civil Parish.

Under the Conservative counter-proposal, the existing Redcar constituency would only change to reflect the new ward boundaries of the Saltburn ward, respecting local ties and uniting it with the coastal communities of Marske-by-the-Sea and Redcar. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the majority of representations in this sub-region came from residents in this coastal conurbation. Therefore, uniting them without having a 'domino effect' across the sub-region, impacting the heavily supported Stockton West constituency was a superior option in comparison to the Commission's initial proposals. It was noted that the Conservative counter-proposal better respected existing constituencies, with fewer wards being moved and subsequently fewer electors. We received several representations that opposed the name change to Redcar and Eston, and so the Assistant Commissioners recommended that it return to its original name of 'Redcar'.

Furthermore, the Conservative party counter-proposal only splits the Middlesbrough unitary authority between two constituencies, whereas it is split between three constituencies in our initial proposals. Finally, the Conservative counter unites the communities of Marton within the constituency of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland.

The Assistant Commissioners recognise that their decision to adopt the Conservative counter-proposal in the Tees Valley sub-region means that regrettably, Thornaby will remain split between Middlesbrough and Stockton West. This option avoids the alternative proposal of having a Middlesbrough constituency that crosses the natural boundary of the River Tees, taking in rural areas of Stockton, including Billingham, which was deemed to be a more disruptive option when forming the initial proposals. To recognise the strong identity and community of Thornaby, however, the Assistant Commissioners recommend a name change to the Middlesbrough constituency, instead calling it 'Middlesbrough and Thornaby East'.

Appendix

Revised proposals: Overview of changes from initial proposals

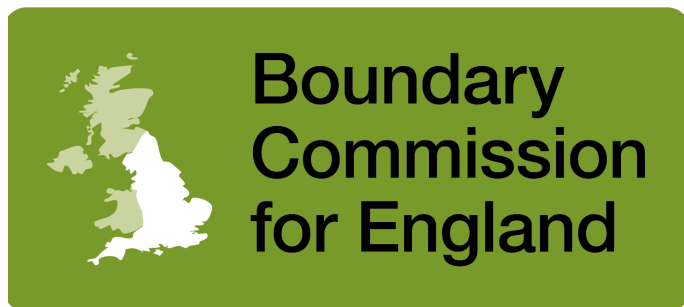
	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	18	67%
- Changed in composition and name	11	41%
- Changed in composition only	6	22%
- Changed in name only	1	4%

Proposed constituency names

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (Yes/No)	Name changed from initial proposals (Yes/No)
Berwick and Morpeth	No	No
Bishop Auckland	Yes	No
Blaydon and Consett	Yes	Yes

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (Yes/No)	Name changed from initial proposals (Yes/No)
Blyth and Ashington	No	No
City of Durham	Yes	No
Cramlington and Killingworth	Yes	Yes
Darlington	No	No
Easington	Yes	Yes
Gateshead and Whickham	Yes	Yes
Hartlepool	No	No
Hexham	No	No
Houghton and Sunderland South	Yes	Yes
Jarrow	Yes	Yes
Middlesbrough and Thornaby East	No	Yes
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	Yes	No
Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West	Yes	Yes
Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend	Yes	Yes
Newcastle upon Tyne North	Yes	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (Yes/No)	Name changed from initial proposals (Yes/No)
Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor	Yes	Yes
North Durham	Yes	No
Redcar	Yes	Yes
South Shields	No	No
Stockton North	No	No
Stockton West	No	No
Sunderland Central	No	No
Tynemouth	Yes	No
Washington	Yes	Yes



West Midlands - Revised proposals recommendations Commission paper

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electorate range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to West Midlands: 57 (a reduction of two).
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the revised proposals (RPs): 9 (15%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 12 (20%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 1
- Total number of local authorities in region: 30
- Local authorities which completed (or are due to complete) a local government electoral review after the BCE cut-off date of 1 December 2020¹: 11 (Cannock Chase, Malvern Hills, Redditch, South Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, East Staffordshire, Stratford-on-Avon, Telford and Wrekin, City of Wolverhampton, Worcester, Wychavon).

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Herefordshire	142,019	1.94	2
Shropshire, including Telford and Wrekin	376,136	5.12	5
Worcestershire	447,152	6.09	6
Warwickshire	432,462	5.89	6
West Midlands Metropolitan County	1,938,351	26.41	28
Staffordshire, including Stoke-on-Trent	832,892	11.35	12
Totals	4,169,012	56.80	59

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the West Midlands into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Herefordshire	142,019	1.94	2	2	71,010
Shropshire	376,136	5.12	5	5	75,227
Worcestershire	447,152	6.09	6	6	74,525
Warwickshire	432,462	5.89	6	6	72,077
Coventry	217,818	2.97	3	3	72,606
Birmingham and Solihull	892,558	12.17	12	12	74,380
Staffordshire and the Black Country	1,660,867	22.64	25	23	72,212
Region totals	4,169,012	56.80	59	57	73,141

Number of representations received

In the West Midlands region, the Commission received a total of 4,776 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 3,933 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 843 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were three in the West Midlands region (Birmingham, Stafford and Worcester). Some of these related to comments made during first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ²	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ³	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	43	32	75
Official political party response ⁴	12	10	22
Peer from the House of Lords	2	1	3
Local councillor	214	75	289

² As declared by the respondents themselves.

³ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁴ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Local authority	10	5	15
Parish or town council	49	8	57
Other organisation	60	24	84
Member of the public	3,543	688	4,231
Totals	3,933	843	4,776

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so in parts of Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry and Telford. Very few representations have been received with regard to large parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

Campaigns and petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns and petitions were received. In the West Midlands region, these were as follows:

Campaign/petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
No to Castle Bromwich in Birmingham	BCE-74956	Oppose	140
Rename Meriden	BCE-83344	Oppose	30
Keep Selly Oak in Selly Oak	BCE-83463	Support	64
Keep Aldridge Together	BCE-83623	Oppose	403
Don't Kick Aston Out Of Perry Barr Constituency	BCE-84738	Oppose	322
North Birmingham Community Together	BCE-85111	Oppose	94
Keep Sutton Coldfield Unchanged	BCE-85955	Support	26
Standing Up For Oscott and Kingstanding	BCE-85143	Oppose	58

Coventry Support	BCE-92300	Support	79
Hillfields in Support	BCE-96428	Support	14
Coventry Support (2)	BCE-96429	Support	58
Coventry Support (3)	BCE-96430	Support	79
Blakenhall United	BCE-96433	Oppose	104

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, we have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

These revised proposals recommendations have been formulated using the same sub-regions as the initial proposals. Some counter-proposals were received which suggested alternative sub-regions. Assistant Commissioners considered whether these proposals had any merit, but concluded that this would result in significant disruption to existing constituencies and would not better reflect the statutory factors in the region.

Nothing the Assistant Commissioners saw in representations to change the sub-regions over-rode the original reasoning and approach of the Commission at initial proposals, to:

- Enable Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire to be treated as self-contained sub-regions, as they are in the existing pattern of constituencies;
- Also divide up the West Midlands metropolitan area into separate sub-regions, allowing Coventry to be allocated three whole constituencies wholly contained within its administrative area, Birmingham to share a single constituency with Solihull, and the Black Country to share a single constituency with Staffordshire.

We received broad support for the proposed sub-regions throughout both consultation periods, with all major political parties supporting our stance. We received some counter-proposals which proposed Birmingham as a standalone sub-region, combining Solihull with Warwickshire instead (BCE-80763, John Bryant BCE-94673). This configuration was considered at both initial proposal and revised proposal stage; however, in order to respect existing constituency boundaries in Birmingham and Warwickshire as far as possible, this is not being recommended for these revised proposals. We also received a substantial number of representations advocating for Staffordshire as a standalone sub-region. Adopting this approach would require Staffordshire constituencies with an average electorate of almost 76,000, very close to the top of the permitted electorate range. This approach would significantly

hamper our ability to create constituencies in Staffordshire that respect existing constituency boundaries, local authority boundaries and local ties. For this reason we are not adopting this approach, or recommending any change to our sub-region grouping for these revised proposals.

As in the initial proposals the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable.

Under the revised proposals nine of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, the same as in the initial proposals. We do not propose to change the number of constituencies which cross local authority boundaries. As in the initial proposals, we are only proposing one cross-county boundary constituency, that continuing to be a Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency crossing the county boundary between Staffordshire and the West Midlands, as set out in the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend revising the composition of 11 of the 57 constituencies proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, the Assistant Commissioners have decided not to recommend any revisions to the composition of the remaining 46. Of the 11 constituencies where Assistant Commissioners have recommended revising the composition, they have also revised the name of five. Of the 46 constituencies where Assistant Commissioners have not recommended revisions to the composition set out in initial proposals, they have revised only the name of three constituencies.⁵

⁵ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	9	12	15	21	38	17	2	1	0	3	3	43
Revised proposals	9	10	17	21	38	17	2	1	0	6	3	42

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county	Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two counties			
Herefordshire	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Shropshire	0	1	4	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	3

Worcestershire	4	0	2	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	6
Warwickshire	2	2	2	0	2	3	1	0	0	1	6
Coventry	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
Birmingham and Solihull	0	2	7	3	11	1	0	0	3	0	12
Staffordshire and the Black Country	2	2	4	15	12	10	1	1	3	2	14
Totals	9	9	21	18	37	17	2	1	6	3	45

Herefordshire

Both of the existing constituencies in Herefordshire are within the permitted electorate range; however, due to local ward boundary changes in the country, it is not possible to retain both of these constituencies without dividing wards between constituencies. Two wards, Holmer and Stoney Street, cross the existing boundary between the two constituencies. The initial proposals included the Stoney Street ward in the North Herefordshire constituency and the Holmer ward in Hereford and South Herefordshire.

Only 41 representations were received for the County of Herefordshire. Of these, 27 objected to the placement of the Stoney Street and Holmer wards.

The Conservative Party put forward a counter-proposal for the county, including Stoney Street wholly in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency, and transferring the Holmer ward to the North Herefordshire constituency (BCE-86587). This proposal was endorsed by members of the public and local councillors, who provided evidence to suggest why these two wards should be swapped between the two Herefordshire constituencies such as BCE-54942 or Cllr David Hitchiner (Day 2, Worcester hearing, BCE-97263).

Recommendations

Having considered the initial proposals and all representations received, including the possibility of ward splits, the Assistant Commissioners considered that there was sufficient evidence to recommend that the Commission adopt the counter-proposal suggested by the Conservative Party.

The initial proposals were justified by noting that, while the majority of the Holmer ward is situated north of the Roman Road and outside of the city boundary, a portion of the ward lies south of the road, within the boundaries of the city of Hereford. We did not deem it satisfactory for part of the city of Hereford to be placed in a separate constituency to the rest of the city. The Assistant

Commissioners feel that we have received sufficient evidence in the secondary consultation to consider modifying the initial proposals. Some - though minimal - support was received to the initial proposals configuration of the two wards, but the Assistant Commissioners felt the balance of the argument favoured the alternate approach: were significant support for the original proposals to be received in response to a change at revised proposals, the wards could be switched back at final recommendations stage, with no wider impact.

The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by evidence which discussed and focused on the River Wye. Although noting that there is a bridge over the River Wye into North Herefordshire within the Stoney Street ward, the Assistant Commissioners accept that the river provides a geographical barrier separating the ward from the northern half of the county. Although the Assistant Commissioners recognise that the ward straddles both sides of the river, they also note the evidence from those such as Bill Wiggin MP (BCE-59017), who highlight that the vast majority of the electorate in the Stoney Street ward live south of the River Wye. They note the argument that fewer electors would see their existing constituency changed under the Conservative Party counter-proposal relative to the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners therefore believe that placing Stoney Street in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency better reflects the statutory factors, particularly with regard to reducing change to the existing constituencies and better reflecting community ties within the county.

The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend including Stoney Street in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency and Holmer in the North Herefordshire constituency.

Shropshire

Although four of the five existing Shropshire constituencies are outside of the permitted electorate range, the initial proposals transferred only four whole wards between constituencies - minimising change to existing constituencies. We proposed to transfer two wards from Shrewsbury and Atcham to Ludlow and two from North Shropshire to The Wrekin. We also proposed to change the names of the existing constituencies of Shrewsbury and Atcham, Ludlow, and The Wrekin to, respectively: Shrewsbury; Ludlow and Bridgnorth; and Newport and Wellington, as these would better align with the Commission's naming policy.

The vast majority of the representations we received in Shropshire focused on two main topics: which constituency the Telford and Wrekin unitary ward of Priorslee should be included in, and the names of constituencies in the county. Representations on the former point were a mix of support and opposition in both consultation periods. Representations focused on constituency names were almost unanimously in opposition to the initial proposals.

We received one counter-proposal which both kept the county as its own sub-region and suggested an alternative configuration (David Jones, BCE-54131).

Recommendations

The counter-proposal from David Jones transferred the Rea Valley ward to the Ludlow and Bridgnorth constituency, allowing the Severn Valley ward to remain in the Shrewsbury constituency. The Assistant Commissioners recognise the merits of this counter-proposal, particularly for residents who live north of the A5 within the Severn Valley ward. Despite this, we did receive some support for our initial proposals from residents living in the south of the ward (BCE-67709) and we did not receive any representations supporting Mr Jones' counter-proposal; for this reason, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend adopting it.

We did not receive any evidence throughout consultation which the Assistant Commissioners felt was sufficient reason to adjust our proposed North Shropshire constituency. They therefore do not recommend making any changes to the constituency.

We received a significant number of representations in both consultation periods objecting to the proposed Telford constituency. Representations such as BCE-71905 objected to the inclusion of the Priorslee ward in the constituency. Telford and Wrekin Council provided a counter-proposal which suggested including the Hadley and Leegomery ward in the Telford constituency in its place (BCE-75906). While we received some representations supporting this counter-proposal, we received a far greater quantity of comments referencing links between Priorslee and Telford (BCE-87892), referencing links between Hadley and Wellington (Stuart Parr Stafford Day 1, BCE-97232), or directly objecting to the Telford and Wrekin Council counter-proposal (BCE-78046). Although the Assistant Commissioners accept that Priorslee and Hadley and Leegomery have some local ties to Shifnal and Telford respectively, they do not believe that this counter-proposal would represent an improvement on the initial proposals in respect to the statutory factors, particularly as, in the initial proposals, the Telford constituency was changed only to align with new local government ward boundaries. Therefore, in order to respect existing constituency boundaries, and respect local ties within Telford, in particular with Priorslee, the Assistant Commissioners do not propose recommending any changes to the constituency.

The initial proposals proposed to change the name of The Wrekin constituency to Newport and Wellington, in order to reflect the main population centres in the constituency, in line with the Commission's naming policy. Adding the town of Bridgnorth to the name of the existing Ludlow constituency was also proposed, in order to reflect the second major settlement within the constituency (which has a population parity with Ludlow). Both of these proposed name changes drew opposition in both consultation periods. As the naming policy suggests that the Commission would accept suitable alternatives with strong local support, the Assistant Commissioners recommend changing both constituency names. In the case of Newport and Wellington, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining The Wrekin as a constituency name, in recognition of the cultural significance of the Wrekin to the area, as evidenced in a substantial number of representations (such as BCE-66554 and BCE-68448, Mark Pritchard MP). The Assistant Commissioners do not recommend making any adjustments to the proposed constituency boundary.

We received a number of representations opposing the proposed Ludlow and Bridgnorth constituency name. Rather than proposing reverting back to the 'Ludlow' constituency name, the Assistant Commissioners recommend naming the constituency South

Shropshire, as they agree that it 'better reflects the geographical and cultural identity of this constituency' (BCE-76801, Peter Boyce) - and the generally very dispersed nature of population across the constituency. As with every other constituency in the sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend making any revisions to the proposed boundaries of this constituency either.

Worcestershire

Four of the six existing constituencies in the county of Worcestershire are within the permitted electorate range, and three are coterminous with their local authority boundaries. The initial proposals therefore suggested moving only two whole wards from the existing Mid Worcestershire constituency to the Redditch constituency. The Commission also proposed two constituency name changes, again to better align with its general naming policy: Mid Worcestershire to Droitwich and Evesham, and Wyre Forest to Kidderminster.

Almost all of the representations received in Worcestershire were objections raised to the new Kidderminster constituency name. We also received some opposition to the proposal to transfer the wards of Dodderhill, and Harvington and Norton to the Redditch constituency.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners feel that our initial proposals for the Worcester, West Worcestershire and Bromsgrove constituencies strongly reflect the statutory factors. They therefore do not recommend making any changes to the proposed boundaries.

The initial proposals report acknowledged that the proposed Redditch constituency broke ties between the Harvington and Norton ward and Evesham, and the evidence received in both consultation periods corroborates this. Representations from the ward referenced its close ties with Evesham, as well as the poor transport links with Redditch (BCE-92415, BCE-81942). We also received a number of counter-proposals which retained the Harvington and Norton ward in the same constituency as the town of Evesham (BCE-72037, BCE-96434 and Green Party Birmingham Day 1, BCE-97178). These counter-proposals pair Redditch with the village of Alvechurch in the Bromsgrove local authority. Although the Assistant Commissioners recognise the close links between Harvington and Norton and Evesham, they do not believe that disrupting the otherwise wholly unchanged and coterminous Bromsgrove constituency would result in a better reflection of the statutory factors in the county. The Assistant

Commissioners therefore do not recommend making any adjustments to the proposed Redditch or Droitwich and Evesham constituencies.

We received a substantial number of representations regarding the name of the proposed Kidderminster constituency. Most respondents did not feel any connection to the town of Kidderminster despite it being the largest population centre in the local authority. In contrast, we received substantial evidence to suggest that people felt a sense of belonging to 'Wyre Forest', a name which most respondents felt was more inclusive of other large settlements in the district, such as Bewdley or Stourport-on-Severn (BCE-88434, BCE-74024). The Assistant Commissioners note the argument made by those such as Mark Garnier MP (BCE-60975 and Worcester hearing day 1), who pointed out that not changing the name if the boundaries were remaining unchanged would be consistent with the Commission's naming policy. As the proposed constituency is wholly unchanged from the existing one, in line with the policy on names, and taking into account local support for retention of the existing name, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the constituency name of Wyre Forest.

Warwickshire

Four of the six existing constituencies in Warwickshire are within the permitted electorate range. The initial proposals balanced the electorates of the remaining two by transferring a single ward, Budbrooke, from the Warwick and Leamington constituency to Kenilworth and Southam.

The majority of the response in Warwickshire has unsurprisingly focused on the Budbrooke ward. Almost all of these comments objected to the initial proposals, citing Budbrooke's close ties to both Warwick and Leamington. The Conservative Party's counter-proposal for this area recommended splitting the Budbrooke ward, transferring the Hatton Park area to the Kenilworth and Southam constituency to allow the rest of the ward to be included in Warwick and Leamington. This counter-proposal was well supported by respondents.

We also received a number of counter-proposals for the sub-region. The majority of these suggested pairing Solihull and Warwickshire together in a sub-region (such as BCE-80763 and BCE-87563). We also received some counter-proposals (such as BCE-79834) which significantly revised the composition of the sub-region in order to allow the constituencies within it to align closer with local authority boundaries (the potential for which the Commission itself raised in the initial proposals).

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners do recognise some of the benefits of altering the sub-regional grouping to combine Solihull and Warwickshire together. They agree this configuration would allow some constituencies in Warwickshire to better reflect local authority boundaries (albeit at the expense of reflecting existing constituencies), but they do not feel that it demonstrates an improvement overall on the initial proposals for the whole region and therefore recommend retaining Warwickshire as its own sub-region.

The initial proposal report noted a possible alternative arrangement for Warwickshire. This configuration could allow the orphaned Bulkington ward to transfer to a constituency with other wards from the Nuneaton and Bedworth local authority and create a Rugby constituency that is coterminous with the district boundary. As explained in the initial proposal report, however, this would require the Stratford-on-Avon and Kenilworth and Southam constituencies to be configured with electorates extremely close to the permitted minimum electorate, and cause more disruption to existing constituencies than would otherwise be necessary. The Assistant Commissioners recognise that this alternative may seriously disrupt local ties within this area of the sub-region: in the case of counter-proposal BCE-79834, the Whitnash ward has been transferred out of the Warwick and Leamington constituency. Evidence received in the consultation periods suggests that this move would sever close community ties between Whitnash and Royal Leamington Spa (BCE-83579). The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not propose accepting this counter-proposal.

The Assistant Commissioners note the objection received regarding the placement of the Budbrooke ward. Residents in villages such as Barford and Budbrooke strongly opposed the initial proposals, on the basis that all community ties and shared local services are either with Warwick or Leamington. Respondents also argued that they had very few, if any, ties to either Kenilworth or Southam. The Conservative Party counter-proposal recommended a split of the Budbrooke ward to allow most of the population centres within it to remain in the Warwick and Leamington constituency. The Assistant Commissioners visited the area in order to assess the viability of this split. They observed that the Hatton Park area of the ward appeared to be a distinct community that showed more similarity with rural areas in the Kenilworth and Southam constituency than it did to Warwick town; however, evidence gathered on the site visit also showed a clear rural-urban separation between Warwick and the rest of the Budbrooke ward. In particular, the M40 and A46 provided a sizeable and distinct boundary between Warwick and population centres such as Barford and Sherbourne. Furthermore, while evidence received in the consultation periods suggested these villages have close links to Warwick, similar evidence was also received from other settlements outside the existing constituency such as Cubbington and Radford Semele. On the evidence of site visits and both consultation periods, the Assistant Commissioners do not feel that the Commission's criteria to justify a ward split has been met; they therefore do not recommend any revisions to the proposed Warwick and Leamington, or Kenilworth and Southam constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not recommend making any changes to the initial proposals in any of the six constituencies in the Warwickshire sub-region.

Coventry

Two of the three existing constituencies in Coventry have electorates that are within the permitted range; however, as the wards in the city have very high electorates, it was not possible to develop a scheme which involved the transfer of a single ward. It was therefore necessary to swap at least two wards between constituencies. The Commission initially proposed to transfer the Lower Stoke ward from Coventry East to Coventry South, with the Binley and Willenhall ward moving in the opposite direction.

We received a considerable number of supportive representations in relation to the three proposed Coventry constituencies. Most supportive representations commented on the close ties shared between the St Michael's ward and the adjacent Lower Stoke ward. These representations also commented on the integral role of the central St Michael's ward as a hub for the Coventry South constituency, emphasising that transferring it out of the constituency would break community ties. We received several counter-proposals for Coventry. The Conservative Party presented a counter-proposal which proposed transferring the Woodlands ward (from the existing Coventry North West constituency) into Coventry South, transferring the St Michael's ward in the opposite direction. This counter-proposal received some support in both consultation periods, with representations highlighting that this would bring Woodlands and Westwood wards together, helping to reunite the Tile Hill community (which they considered divided by the existing constituency boundary) within a single constituency.

The Liberal Democrats also provided a counter-proposal which united both Woodlands and Westwood wards together in the Coventry South constituency. Rather than transferring the St Michael's ward to Coventry North West, this counter-proposal transferred Lower Stoke back to Coventry East and moved Foleshill to Coventry North West, effectively altering the initial proposals by transferring three wards.

Recommendations

The consultation periods provided us with substantial evidence on the various community links within the City of Coventry, particularly in relation to Tile Hill and Lower and Upper Stoke. While the Assistant Commissioners recognise it is possible to reunite both of these areas under the Liberal Democrats counter-proposal, they also do not feel that it is proportionate to transfer three wards within the city, altering every existing constituency within Coventry when one could remain unchanged. They also do not feel it is justifiable to make this adjustment at the expense of Foleshill, as this move would break community ties shared between Foleshill and both wards with which it shares an eastern ward boundary.

The cases in favour of retaining the initial proposals, and in favour of change, were both persuasively made, particularly those which were delivered at each of the public hearings in the region. The Assistant Commissioners therefore deemed it necessary to conduct site visits in the city, visiting the St Michael's ward, Lower and Upper Stoke, and Tile Hill. They particularly noted the distribution of housing within the St Michael's ward, the majority of which lies outside the ring road and to the north-east, east and south. This was something raised during the consultation period (Nazifa Zaman, Birmingham public hearing BCE-97163). While the ward is bordered by Coventry city wards on all sides, the A4053 central Coventry ring-road is, in the judgement of the Assistant Commissioners, a hard boundary between it and neighbouring wards in the Coventry North West constituency. In contrast, travel between St Michael's and Lower or Upper Stoke was comparatively seamless. Other representations supportive of the Conservative Party counter-proposal argued that the railway line running along the southern border of the St Michael's ward formed a substantial boundary between the ward and the rest of the Coventry South constituency. Having visited the area, the Assistant Commissioners find this argument unpersuasive, noting the relative ease with which it was possible to move between St Michael's and Cheylesmore wards. Finally, although some continuity was noted between the Lower Stoke and Upper Stoke wards, the boundary between the two appeared to be clear and distinct, with the A4600 providing a clear demarcation.

Although not to the same extent, the Assistant Commissioners felt similarly about the boundary between the two wards that make up Tile Hill. Although there was some evidence of a clear shared community between Woodlands and Westwood wards, the ward boundary and distinctiveness between the two is clear for the most part. The Assistant Commissioners do not feel that community ties between these two wards warrants a change to the initial proposals, especially given that the community is divided by an existing constituency boundary. The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not recommend making any adjustments to the three initially proposed Coventry constituencies.

Birmingham and Solihull

As mentioned previously, both constituencies in the borough of Solihull are above the permitted electorate range, and the local authority therefore needed to be paired with a neighbouring local authority in the initial proposals. The Commission proposed pairing Solihull with Birmingham, transferring the wards of Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood to the Birmingham Hodge Hill constituency. In order to balance the two constituencies wholly within the borough, the initial proposals transferred the Elmdon and Silhill wards from the Solihull constituency to Meriden, moving the Blythe ward in the opposite direction.

Due to local ward boundary changes, it was not possible to keep any of the Birmingham constituencies wholly unchanged. The initial proposals aimed to limit changes to existing constituencies as far as practicable. The Commission initially proposed to split two wards in the city, Weoley & Selly Oak and Brandwood & King's Heath. This was proposed to preserve community ties within the Birmingham Selly Oak and Birmingham Northfield constituencies, and avoid significant disruption to constituencies across the south of the city - and consequential breaking of other local ties - that would have been necessitated by a whole ward alternative. Both wards are divided by the existing constituency boundaries, and the initial proposals broadly retained the existing division in both cases.

We received both supportive and critical representations across the sub-region in both consultation periods. A large proportion of the comments received from Solihull borough were made in reference to Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood. Comments were almost unanimous in their objection to the initial proposals. Respondents suggested that, despite their close geographical proximity, areas to the north of Solihull borough were culturally and socially detached from the City of Birmingham. Elsewhere in Solihull, we received a substantial number of supportive representations, including a letter writing campaign. Supportive representations commented on the Commission's proposal to keep both Solihull constituencies contained within the West Midlands county as well as the decision not to split any wards in the borough (Ian Courts, BCE-73613). We also received a petition on behalf of Saqib Bhatti

MP, arguing for a change of constituency names in the borough to include 'Solihull' in both constituency names, in order to reflect the altered configuration of constituencies (BCE-83344).

The proposed Birmingham constituencies also generated a mixed response in public consultation. We received an overall level of support for the proposed Northfield, Selly Oak, Edgbaston, and Sutton Coldfield constituencies; however, the proposed Erdington and Perry Barr constituencies drew significant objection. Most respondents on this topic focused on the four wards of Kingstanding, Oscott, Aston and Lozells, arguing that the former two should be included in the Erdington constituency, and that the latter two should be included in Perry Barr. We received several petitions on this topic and a counter-proposal from the Conservative Party, which proposed an alternative that met the electorate requirement by suggesting a split of the Stockland Green ward; this counter-proposal drew considerable support from respondents in both consultation periods.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners appreciate the concerns raised by the residents of Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood during the consultation periods; however, despite the large number of representations in the area, we did not receive any valid counter-proposals that included alternative Solihull borough wards in a cross-local authority boundary constituency with Birmingham. The Assistant Commissioners considered alternative configurations of constituencies in Solihull that included Lyndon, Olton or parts of Shirley in a cross-local authority constituency with Birmingham. Any alternative that would provide a solution for residents in Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood, however, would simply disrupt community ties across Birmingham and Solihull in a different place. We did not receive any compelling evidence suggesting another area of Solihull would be better suited to being included in a Birmingham constituency, and therefore lack sufficient grounds to depart from the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners understand that these proposals may break community ties in the north of Solihull borough; however, they feel their inclusion in a Birmingham constituency allows the scheme to better satisfy the statutory factors across the sub-region. This is demonstrated by the support we have received for our proposed Meriden and Solihull constituencies. As such, and taking into consideration the lack of objection from the Birmingham part of the constituency, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to the proposed Hodge Hill constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners recognise the desire for an alteration of the Solihull and Meriden constituency names. The boundaries of both constituencies in the initial proposals differ from the existing ones and the rural-urban divide between the two has become more ambiguous. Given this, the Assistant Commissioners understand the argument for changing the constituency names; however, they also feel that the proposed names are both clear and in line with our naming policy. The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not recommend making any alterations to the names or boundaries of the proposed Solihull and Meriden constituencies.

In south Birmingham, the proposed Selly Oak, Edgbaston and Northfield constituencies all drew an overall level of support from the consultation periods. We did not receive any evidence to suggest that changing these constituencies would better reflect the statutory factors. The Assistant Commissioners therefore do not propose making any changes to the proposed composition of these three constituencies. The level of reaction to our proposed Hall Green, Yardley, and Ladywood constituencies was muted, and balanced in its sentiment. We did not receive any counter-proposals for these areas of Birmingham that - in the opinion of the Assistant Commissioners - provided significant improvement on the initial proposals. As a result, they do not recommend making any changes to any of these proposed constituencies either.

North Birmingham generated the vast majority of opposing representations in Birmingham throughout the consultation periods. The initial proposals report acknowledged that the Aston and Lozells wards may not share local ties with the Erdington area. It also acknowledged the close community ties between the Kingstanding and Oscott wards. Evidence received in the consultation has indicated that, while these wards are closely connected to each other, both look to other wards in the Erdington constituency for community services and local amenities (BCE-80064). Similarly, we received evidence to suggest Aston and Lozells share community links with areas in the Perry Barr constituency (Darius Sandhu, Birmingham public hearing BCE-97151).

The Conservative Party submitted a counter-proposal that transferred Aston and Lozells to the Perry Barr constituency, therefore allowing Kingstanding and Oscott to be transferred to Erdington. This is achieved through a split of the Stockland Green ward, transferring polling districts south of the A4040 to the Birmingham Perry Barr constituency. The Assistant Commissioners visited the Stockland Green ward in order to observe this split. At the Birmingham public hearing, Gary Sambrook MP described the area surrounding Slade Road as a 'neighbourhood in its own right'. The site visit corroborated this evidence, as it was clear that Slade

Road provided amenities and community services to the surrounding housing. The Assistant Commissioners considered the potential access problems between Slade Road and the area south of the M6, noting that the A4040 provides the only road link between the Slade Road area and Aston. There is little evidence that this area of Stockland Green has particular affinity to Perry Barr, with respondents, including Councillor Ewan Mackey, suggesting that there was 'an element of compromise' involved in this counter-proposal, with the overarching objective being to include Aston, Lozells, Kingstanding, and Oscott in constituencies with which they had the strongest community ties. Based on the considerable evidence received about such affinities, the Assistant Commissioners accept this argument. They therefore recommend adopting the Conservative Party counter-proposal for north Birmingham, splitting the Stockland Green ward, with polling districts STG5, STG6 and STG7 transferring to the Birmingham Perry Barr constituency.

Although we received overwhelming support for our proposed Sutton Coldfield constituency, including a supportive petition, we received a detailed representation from Andrew Mitchell MP arguing for a change of the constituency name in order to include the 'Royal' prefix often accompanying the town name (BCE-86951). The Assistant Commissioners recognise and understand the desire for this name change; however, they note that the existing constituency name is well aligned with our naming policy. Additionally, the proposed constituency boundary is largely unchanged from the existing one. The Assistant Commissioners therefore see no reason to recommend a name change.

Staffordshire and the Black Country

The Black Country

Every existing constituency in the Black Country is below the permitted electorate range, and it is therefore inevitable that every constituency will experience some element of change in this review. When developing the initial proposals, the Commission was acutely aware of the strong community identities held in towns across the Black Country, and our proposals sought to preserve these ties as far as practicable.

In Dudley borough, the Commission proposed Halesowen and Stourbridge constituencies, which contained all the core wards that make up each respective town. The initial proposals split the Sandwell borough ward of Blackheath, transferring the southernmost polling district to the Halesowen constituency. The Commission proposed expanding the existing Dudley North constituency southward to include Brockmoor and Pensnett. The remaining wards from the existing Dudley South constituency were either transferred to Stourbridge, or formed part of the cross-county boundary constituency of Kingswinford and South Staffordshire.

As in Dudley, all constituencies in Sandwell have electorates that require them to be changed. The Commission proposed expanding the West Bromwich East constituency southwards to include the ward of St Pauls. West Bromwich West was proposed to be expanded westwards to include the Dudley borough ward of Coseley East. In order to compensate for the loss of the St Paul's ward, the Commission proposed extending the existing Warley constituency westwards to take in the Rowley ward and most of the Blackheath ward.

In Wolverhampton, the initial proposals retained three constituencies for the city, with both the Wolverhampton North East and Wolverhampton South East constituencies sharing their eastern boundary with the M6 motorway. The Commission proposed to expand the Wolverhampton South West constituency eastwards to include the wards of Oxley and Blakenhall.

Finally, in the Walsall local authority, the Commission proposed reorientating the configuration of constituencies, combining Walsall town with Aldridge Central and South, Pheasey Park Farm and Streetly. The other constituency wholly contained within the borough combined Bloxwich with Brownhills.

The proposal to include the town of Kingswinford in a cross-county boundary constituency was met with objection from residents in both Kingswinford and the South Staffordshire local authority alike. We received a number of counter-proposals, which either prevented a cross-county boundary constituency (such as BCE-75677 submitted by Gavin Williamson MP), or proposed a different area with which to form such a constituency (such as BCE-79523 submitted by the Labour Party). Both of these counter-proposals generated a substantial number of representations, both in support and in opposition. The Assistant Commissioners also noted that the remaining proposed constituencies in Dudley borough were largely supported by members of the public, MPs, and local councillors.

All three of the proposed constituencies in the Sandwell local authority drew objections. Central to this was the proposal to transfer the St Pauls ward to the West Bromwich East constituency. Evidence received in the consultation period suggested that this proposal would break local ties within Smethwick (Jay Anandou, BCE-81640). Of the counter-proposals received, the Conservative Party's response generated the highest level of support. This proposal would include St Pauls in a Smethwick constituency, but divide the two named Wednesbury wards between constituencies (BCE-83853, Nicola Richards MP).

The most substantial opposition to the proposals in Wolverhampton centred around the Blakenhall ward, which was proposed to transfer from Wolverhampton South East to Wolverhampton West. We received evidence, particularly at the Birmingham public hearing, to suggest that Blakenhall looked east towards Bilston for its community ties (Paul Birch, Birmingham public hearing, BCE-97167). The Labour Party submitted a counter-proposal that would transfer Blakenhall into a constituency with Bilston, but dividing Bushbury North from Bushbury South in the process (the Labour Party, BCE-79523).

One of the largest sources of objection to the initial proposals in this sub-region was the proposed Walsall constituency. Residents from the village of Aldridge strongly disagreed with the proposal to divide the two named Aldridge wards from each other. The evidence received pointed to the close-knit community spirit in Aldridge, emphasising its separation from Walsall town (Maria Smith,

BCE-75470). Counter-proposals from the Conservative Party (BCE-86587) and the Liberal Democrats (BCE-97146) both sought to bring the two Aldridge wards within the same constituency. Both these counter-proposals instead divide what are viewed as the four 'core' urban Walsall wards between two constituencies. We also received a sizeable petition from the residents of Aldridge, objecting to the proposals and endorsing the Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-83623). We also received a counter-proposal from David Murray (BCE-96434), which combines Walsall and Bloxwich, allowing the Aldridge-Brownhills constituency to remain largely unchanged; this proposal requires a split of the Paddock ward.

Many respondents also objected to the proposed Walsall constituency based on the belief that the four core Walsall town wards would be better suited in a constituency with Wednesbury, crossing the M6 motorway. All of these comments were written in support of the Labour Party counter-proposal which, as a result of pairing Walsall with Wednesbury, would create a Lichfield and Aldridge constituency, crossing over the county boundary (Paul Townsend, BCE-95487). This counter-proposal, along with the initial proposals, was strongly opposed by residents of Aldridge (BCE-94623).

Recommendations

When formulating the recommendations for revised proposals, the decision to create a cross-county boundary constituency between Kingswinford and South Staffordshire was reexamined. The Assistant Commissioners considered counter-proposals that crossed the county boundary elsewhere (such as the Labour Party's proposal). While this alternative scheme would allow for the retention of an unchanged South Staffordshire constituency, it would also require much of the Black Country and Staffordshire to be altered, marking a more significant departure from the existing pattern of constituencies and their relationship to local authority boundaries. Although we received a high quantity of representations supporting the Labour Party counter-proposal for the Black Country, we received very little in the way of detailed evidence to support - for example - a case for the proposed Aldridge and Lichfield constituency. When considering this alongside the statutory factors, the Assistant Commissioners do not believe that this counter-proposal represents an improvement on the initial proposals for the sub-region and therefore do not recommend adopting it.

The Assistant Commissioners also considered counter-proposals that did not cross the county boundary at all, such as in the submission made by Gavin Williamson MP. We received evidence in the secondary consultation to support the approach of keeping Staffordshire as a self-contained sub-region. While not all respondents directly supported this alternative proposal specifically, respondents largely felt the separate identity of Staffordshire should not be combined with urban areas in the Black Country. While the Assistant Commissioners accept that cross-county boundary constituencies should be avoided if possible, they believe that the Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency is necessary to create constituencies across the region which far better reflect the statutory factors overall, particularly regarding local ties. Gavin Williamson's counter-proposal involved multiple divided wards across Birmingham, the Black Country and Staffordshire, something which was directly objected to in the secondary consultation (for example Brewood and Coven Parish Council, BCE-93214). It involved the disruption of local ties across Birmingham, Dudley and Sandwell and made alterations to proposed constituencies that were largely supported in public consultation, such as Halesowen and Stourbridge. Finally, this counter-proposal included a cross-local authority boundary constituency between Dudley and Birmingham; we have received evidence to suggest that this would be a poor reflection of community links in the area (Simon Phipps, BCE-95024). The Assistant Commissioners do not feel that this counter-proposal demonstrates an improvement on the initial proposals across the region; therefore, they do not recommend adopting this counter-proposal.

The Assistant Commissioners do not recommend making any revisions to the initial proposals for Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge constituencies, as they were all largely supported in the consultation period and we have not received any evidence to suggest that alterations would better reflect the statutory factors across the sub-region.

The sizeable opposition to our proposed Walsall constituency was largely accompanied by support for either the Conservative or Labour Party counter-proposals. Supporters of Labour's amendments argued that Walsall shared community ties with Wednesbury to the south, and that they should comprise a Walsall and Wednesbury constituency, though little evidence was received substantiating this point. As previously noted, they also relied upon a constituency combining Aldridge with Lichfield. On a visit to the area, it was clear to the Assistant Commissioners that the M6 Motorway provided a sizeable barrier between Walsall and Wednesbury. Furthermore, while the Assistant Commissioners do accept the argument that residents in both Walsall and Wednesbury use services on both sides of the motorway (Valerie Vaz MP, Worcester public hearing, BCE-97260), this alternative proposal would create a domino effect, disrupting well-received constituencies across the sub-region. The Assistant

Commissioners consider that this counter-proposal does not better reflect the statutory factors across the region and therefore do not recommend adopting it.

Supporters of the Conservative Party counter-proposal focused on maintaining close community ties within the village of Aldridge. The proposal allowed both named Aldridge wards, along with Rushall-Shelfield, to remain in a single constituency. While the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal also brings both Aldridge wards together in a constituency, it leaves them both separated from Rushall-Shelfield. To counteract this change, both counter-proposals divide the town of Walsall between constituencies, with the Liberal Democrats opting to transfer Pleck out of the Walsall constituency and the Conservative Party transferring Pleck and St. Matthew's. While the Assistant Commissioners believe that all of Aldridge should be represented in a single constituency, they do not agree that this should be achieved by splitting up Walsall. The Assistant Commissioners do not deem it appropriate to mend community ties in one area of the borough at the expense of another. They feel that neither counter-proposal achieves an improvement on the initial proposals for Walsall and therefore do not recommend the Conservative or Liberal Democrat counter-proposals for the borough.

Despite rejecting the counter-proposals outlined above, the Assistant Commissioners accept that it would be desirable for both Walsall and Aldridge to each be represented by a single constituency. They therefore considered alternative proposals that they felt satisfied this objective. The counter-proposal submitted by David Murray (BCE-96434) retains the existing Aldridge-Brownhills constituency largely unchanged; only the Pheasey Park Farm ward and three polling districts from the Paddock ward are transferred into the constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered a similar alternative scheme which divided the St Matthew's ward, utilising a single polling district in place of the polling districts from the Paddock ward. In both of these variations, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that the whole of the Paddock and St Matthew's wards look towards Walsall rather than Aldridge; however, they also feel that splitting one of these wards significantly enhances our ability to preserve more local ties across the borough as a whole. Based on evidence delivered by David Murray (Stafford hearing, BCE-97235), the Assistant Commissioners regarded Paddock as a more suitable ward to divide than St Matthew's; however, rather than adopting Mr Murray's counter-proposal outright, they feel it is more appropriate to transfer two polling districts instead of three (numerically it is possible to take anything between one and four of the six polling districts in this ward). The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend retaining the existing Aldridge-Brownhills constituency with the addition of Pheasey Park Farm and the two polling districts from the

Paddock ward in which the great majority of the housing lies to the east of the Rushall canal, effectively forming a constituency boundary that runs partly along the canal. Accompanying this, the Assistant Commissioners also recommend a Walsall and Bloxwich constituency comprising the remainder of the four core Walsall wards, together with Bloxwich, Blakenall and Birchills Leamore.

More representations were made regarding Sandwell than any other local authority in the region, most of which were in opposition to the initial proposals. Evidence received in the consultation periods reinforced the point that Sandwell, rather than a homogenous cultural unit, is made up of six towns, 'which all have their own cultural and historic identity' (BCE-71611). The initial proposals sought to avoid dividing these towns as much as possible; however, given the limits imposed by the electorate quota and the large ward sizes in Sandwell, this was difficult to achieve.

The proposal to transfer the St Pauls ward into the West Bromwich East constituency raised a significant level of opposition, as did the proposal to include the Rowley ward in a constituency with Smethwick. Comments received during the consultation periods provided extensive and, at times, contradictory evidence regarding local ties in the borough. The Assistant Commissioners therefore considered it necessary to undertake site visits in Sandwell in order to observe local community ties. Upon visiting Smethwick, the Assistant Commissioners felt the boundary between St Pauls and the rest of Smethwick to be fluid and, at times, indiscernible on the ground. In contrast, St Pauls and West Bromwich are separated by the M5 Motorway and a large industrial estate. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the St Pauls ward certainly looked south to Smethwick rather than north to West Bromwich, corroborating much of the evidence that we received. They also visited Rowley Regis, in order to discern the community ties in the area and provide context to the representations given during consultation. Much of the evidence provided to support the Conservative Party counter-proposal rested on the assertion that most of Rowley's local ties were with Tividale to the north. Upon visiting the area, the Assistant Commissioners found far more evidence of shared community between Rowley and Blackheath. Despite this, there did appear to be some community links between Rowley and Tividale wards and it was considered viable that they would be included in the same constituency. In order to preserve close local ties within Smethwick, the Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend transferring the Rowley ward out of the constituency, replacing it with St Pauls. Given the loss of the Rowley ward, they recommend naming the constituency 'Smethwick'.

The proposed revisions to the St Pauls and Rowley wards are in line with the Conservative Party counter-proposal for Sandwell. In order to account for the loss of the St Pauls ward, they propose transferring the Wednesbury North ward to a West Bromwich constituency, separating it from Wednesbury South. We received a large quantity of evidence during the first consultation period to support this change; most respondents argued that Wednesbury North has a far greater connection with Friar Park than Wednesbury South and this change would 'unite' the two communities. Despite many attendees at the public hearings supporting this claim, we received a substantial number of comments from Wednesbury residents in the secondary consultation giving evidence to the contrary. Upon visiting Wednesbury, the Assistant Commissioners found that, while there are evidently some local ties between Wednesbury North and Friar Park, there are also strong ties with Wednesbury South, with the ward boundary between the two cutting directly through Wednesbury town centre. The Assistant Commissioners do not feel it is appropriate to include these wards in separate constituencies and therefore do not recommend the Conservative Party counter-proposal for Sandwell in full. The Assistant Commissioners instead recommend transferring Friar Park and Hateley Heath wards westwards, to join Wednesbury and Tipton in a constituency; this is recommended to be named 'Wednesbury and Tipton'. The wards of Rowley, Tividale and Oldbury are recommended by the Assistant Commissioners to join West Bromwich and Great Barr in a constituency; they recommend this constituency to be named 'West Bromwich'. While the Assistant Commissioners recognise that this disrupts the existing constituency boundaries more than is mathematically strictly necessary, they believe that this configuration demonstrates an improvement on the initial proposals, particularly from the perspective of preserving local ties.

Finally, in Wolverhampton, the Labour Party counter-proposal generated some level of support, with respondents commenting on the close community ties between Blakenhall and Bilston to the east. The counter-proposal, however, also split Bushbury North from Bushbury South. After analysing the representations received, the Assistant Commissioners were satisfied that genuine and close community links exist between Blakenhall and Bilston; however, evidence provided to us has suggested that these links are not exclusive links (BCE-95937). While the Assistant Commissioners accept the argument that Blakenhall has strong local ties eastwards towards Bilston, they also recognise that some links exist westwards too, with Graiseley and, to a lesser extent, with Penn. Furthermore, the Assistant Commissioners do not agree that Blakenhall should be transferred back into Wolverhampton South East at the expense of a divided community elsewhere. Evidence provided to us in consultation highlighted the links that residents in the Bushbury North ward share with both Bushbury South and Wednesfield (Andrew McNeil, Birmingham Public Hearing, BCE-97148). The Assistant Commissioners therefore feel it would be inappropriate to adopt the Labour Party

counter-proposal for Wolverhampton and, in order to retain local ties within Bushbury, do not recommend making any revisions to the initial proposals for the city.

Staffordshire

Several existing constituencies in Staffordshire are within the permitted electorate range and, when formulating the initial proposals the Commission sought to limit change to these wherever possible. In practice, this proved difficult, owing to the disruption caused by the proposal to include Kingswinford with South Staffordshire, and the need for constituencies in the north of the county to gain additional electors. Despite this, the initial proposals kept two constituencies, Burton and Cannock Chase, wholly unchanged. Four more constituencies, Lichfield, Tamworth, Stoke-on-Trent North and Newcastle-under-Lyme, were changed only to align with new local ward boundaries. As of March 2020, Stoke-on-Trent Central had the lowest electorate of any existing constituency in England; it was therefore necessary to expand the constituency considerably. The Commission proposed to extend it southwards to include Fenton, as well as the wards of Sandford Hill and Meir Hay. Similarly, the initial proposals proposed to extend Stoke-on-Trent South southwards in order to include three wards from the Stafford local authority and two wards from Staffordshire Moorlands district. It proposed to reorientate the existing Stafford constituency to include rural areas to the north west of the town. There was then a proposed Stone and Great Wyrley constituency, covering both Stafford and South Staffordshire local authorities. Recommendations for the remaining Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency have already been discussed in the section above.

We received an extremely low number of responses commenting on the composition of the proposed Burton and Cannock Chase constituencies. Representations were received regarding the name of the proposed Burton constituency, arguing for the addition of Uttoxeter, in order to recognise the second largest settlement in the constituency (BCE-75102).

Due to the electorate of the Staffordshire Moorlands local authority, it is not possible to create a constituency that is coterminous with the boundary of the local authority, similar to Cannock Chase. This fact was acknowledged by respondents in the consultation period and we received some supportive comments from residents of areas such as Cheadle (BCE-62999). We also, however, received a substantial number of comments objecting to the exclusion of Forsbrook or Checkley from the constituency (BCE-79031).

We received more representations concerning the Lichfield ward of Whittington & Streethay than any other single ward in the region. These respondents raised unanimous objection to Streethay's proposed inclusion in the Tamworth constituency, citing their close community ties with Lichfield and a geographic detachment from Tamworth. The Conservative Party counter-proposal sought to address this by splitting the ward, allowing the single Streethay polling district to remain in the Lichfield constituency. This counter-proposal drew significant support over both consultation periods. In contrast, very few representations were received regarding our proposed Tamworth constituency. Some respondents, such as the Member of Parliament for Tamworth, were broadly supportive of the constituency, but mentioned the issue with Streethay's proposed placement as an additional point, while stressing that they would not want the whole ward removed from Tamworth (BCE-65143).

The proposed Stoke-on-Trent North and Stoke-on-Trent Central constituencies drew an overall level of support. We received some comments arguing for the inclusion of Kidsgrove in the Stoke-on-Trent North constituency name, which also drew some support. Residents from within the unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent were largely supportive of our Stoke-on-Trent South constituency, agreeing with the approach to retain three named Stoke-on-Trent constituencies. Residents in the proposed constituency based outside of Stoke-on-Trent were far less supportive, arguing that they would be better suited in a constituency with Stone (BCE-54159) or the rest of Staffordshire Moorlands as mentioned above.

We did not receive many representations referring to the proposed Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency in the consultation periods; however, the majority of the comments we did receive were supportive of the initial proposals.

As mentioned in the previous section, we received a large amount of opposition to the proposed changes to the existing South Staffordshire constituency, many writing in support of the 'Staffordshire Together' campaign and counter-proposal. While the Assistant Commissioners considered options that either crossed the county boundary elsewhere or not at all, they are not proposing any revisions to the Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency: as discussed above, they believe this helps to best satisfy the statutory factors across the sub-region and the region as a whole.

While we received very few representations from residents in the proposed Stafford constituency, we received some opposition from those who live in the part of the existing Stafford constituency that were included in a Stone and Great Wyrley constituency in the initial proposals. This, together with representations relating to Stone itself, made up the bulk of the response to this newly formed constituency. Most respondents commented on the lack of community ties between the northern and southern ends of the proposed constituency, providing evidence to suggest that the initial proposals had broken community ties down the length of Staffordshire. We received counter-proposals that avoided the need for a constituency pairing Stone and Great Wyrley together; these will be discussed in the recommendations section below.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners consider both the proposed Cannock Chase and Burton constituencies to be compliant with the statutory factors and do not recommend making any revisions to them. The Assistant Commissioners recognise the strength of feeling in both Burton and Uttoxeter for a name change; however, they consider the existing constituency name of 'Burton' to be suitable and, as it is well in-line with our naming policy, do not recommend any naming adjustments.

The Assistant Commissioners note the considerable opposition received regarding the Staffordshire Moorlands district wards of Checkley and Forsbrook. For these revised proposals, the Assistant Commissioners sought alternatives that retained one of these wards within the Staffordshire Moorlands constituency. Due to the low electorates of the proposed Staffordshire constituencies, any alteration to the Staffordshire Moorlands constituency would result in a 'domino effect' of change, impacting almost all constituencies across Staffordshire, the Black Country and Birmingham. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the strong sense of community feeling held in Checkley and Forsbrook; however, given the scale of change necessary to include either of them in the Staffordshire Moorlands constituency, they required overwhelming evidence that this would demonstrate significant improvement on our initial proposals for the region. The Assistant Commissioners did not feel that this high threshold of evidence had been met during the consultation periods and therefore deemed it necessary to visit the ward on a site visit. They observed that, while there is an element of distance and some visible differences between the two Staffordshire Moorlands wards and the south of Stoke-on-Trent, the two areas are well-connected by road and share some similarities in their nature; this was particularly evident in the Forsbrook ward. In conclusion, the Assistant Commissioners do not feel that the sub-region should be entirely

reconfigured for the sake of Checkley or Forsbrook, and therefore do not recommend changes to the proposed Staffordshire Moorlands or Stoke-on-Trent South constituencies.

The proposed Stoke-on-Trent Central, Stoke-on-Trent North and Newcastle-under-Lyme constituencies were all largely accepted during the consultation period. In light of that and the evidence received, the Assistant Commissioners see no reason to make changes to the composition of these three constituencies. Similarly, the Assistant Commissioners have not received any evidence to persuade them to make any adjustments to the names of any of the Stoke-on-Trent constituencies. While they understand the importance of being inclusive to areas in Stoke-on-Trent constituencies that lie outside of the city, they do not feel that the existing constituency names are inappropriate or misleading. As all three Stoke-on-Trent constituency names are compliant with our naming policy, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any adjustments to them.

The evidence received regarding the Lichfield suburb of Streethay was comprehensive. Respondents to the consultation periods explained in great detail the close links between Streethay and Lichfield, the value in shared parliamentary representation and the corresponding disadvantage of parliamentary representation from Tamworth. Aside from the evident lack of physical separation between Streethay and Lichfield, respondents also provided evidence describing the community services and amenities shared between the two (Frederick Booth, Stafford public hearing, BCE-97236). The Conservative Party counter-proposal suggested splitting the ward to allow Streethay to remain in the Lichfield constituency. Many respondents commented on the counter-proposal specifically, providing further evidence to support this arrangement. The Assistant Commissioners visited the area on a site visit in order to observe the feasibility and suitability of a split of the Whittington and Streethay ward. The Assistant Commissioners observed that, while Streethay could be considered as its own separate community, it also appeared to have a heavy reliance on Lichfield for local amenities. Further to this, the A38 to the east of Streethay serves as a physical separation barrier between Streethay and the rest of the ward, and reinforces the distance between Streethay and its nearest population centre to the east. As a result of the evidence gathered both during consultations and the site visit, the Assistant Commissioners agree with the arguments that Streethay and Lichfield should be included in the same parliamentary constituency and therefore recommend adopting the Conservative Party counter-proposal.

The initial proposals report conceded that the proposed Stone and Great Wyrley constituency was particularly lacking in community ties between its northerly and southerly parts. Evidence received in the consultations has corroborated this assessment, with many respondents suggesting that the constituency pairs together areas which have very few, if any, links to each other (BCE-69008). The Assistant Commissioners visited the proposed Stone and Great Wyrley constituency to assess the transport links and community ties within it. While they accept that the Stone and Great Wyrley constituency does not fully reflect community ties in the county, they are of the opinion that its retention is key to achieving a sub-region that satisfies the statutory factors as best as possible. Additionally, due to the low average electorate of the proposed Staffordshire constituencies, any adjustments to Stone and Great Wyrley would also result in changes to the composition of constituencies across the sub-region, disrupting supported constituencies and unchanged existing constituencies in the process. For this reason, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend making any revisions to the Stone and Great Wyrley or neighbouring Stafford constituencies.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	14	25%
- Changed in composition and name	4	7%
- Changed in composition only	7	12%
- Changed in name only	3	5%

Proposed constituency names

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Aldridge-Brownhills	Yes	Yes
Bedworth and North Warwickshire	No	No
Birmingham Edgbaston	No	No
Birmingham Erdington	Yes	No
Birmingham Hall Green	No	No
Birmingham Hodge Hill	No	No
Birmingham Ladywood	No	No
Birmingham Northfield	No	No
Birmingham Perry Barr	Yes	No
Birmingham Selly Oak	No	No
Birmingham Yardley	No	No
Bromsgrove	No	No
Burton	No	No
Cannock Chase	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Coventry East	No	No
Coventry North West	No	No
Coventry South	No	No
Droitwich and Evesham	No	No
Dudley	No	No
Halesowen	No	No
Hereford and South Herefordshire	Yes	No
Kenilworth and Southam	No	No
Kingswinford and South Staffordshire	No	No
Lichfield	Yes	No
Meriden	No	No
Newcastle-under-Lyme	No	No
North Herefordshire	Yes	No
North Shropshire	No	No
Nuneaton	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Redditch	No	No
Rugby	No	No
Shrewsbury	No	No
Smethwick	Yes	Yes
Solihull	No	No
South Shropshire	No	Yes
Stafford	No	No
Staffordshire Moorlands	No	No
Stoke-on-Trent Central	No	No
Stoke-on-Trent North	No	No
Stoke-on-Trent South	No	No
Stone and Great Wyrley	No	No
Stourbridge	No	No
Stratford-on-Avon	No	No
Sutton Coldfield	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Tamworth	Yes	No
Telford	No	No
The Wrekin	No	Yes
Tipton and Wednesbury	Yes	Yes
Walsall and Bloxwich	Yes	Yes
Warwick and Leamington	No	No
West Bromwich	Yes	Yes
West Worcestershire	No	No
Wolverhampton North East	No	No
Wolverhampton South East	No	No
Wolverhampton West	No	No
Worcester	No	No
Wyre Forest	No	Yes



Boundary Commission for England

South West - Revised proposals recommendations
Commission paper

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electoral range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to the South West: 58 (an increase of three from the current number, 55).
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 2 (3%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 12 (21%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 4
- Total number of local authorities in region: 15
- Local authorities which completed (or are due to complete) a local government electoral review after the BCE cut-off date of 1 December 2020:¹ Mid Devon (order made 26th July 2021) and Cheltenham (currently underway)

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Gloucestershire	483,442	6.59	6
Wiltshire (including Swindon)	533,514	7.27	7
Dorset (including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole)	587,471	8.00	8
Avon (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire)	854,331	11.64	11
Somerset	425,570	5.80	5
Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay)	919,454	12.53	12
Cornwall (including Isles of Scilly)	438,354	5.97	6
Totals	4,242,136	57.80	55

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the South West region into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (including Swindon)	1,016,956	13.86	13	14	72,640
Dorset (including Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole)	587,471	8.00	8	8	73,434
Avon, Somerset and Devon (including Plymouth, and Torbay)	2,199,355	29.97	28	30	73,312
Cornwall (including Isles of Scilly)	438,354	5.97	6	6	73,059
Region totals	4,242,136	57.80	55	58	73,111

Number of representations received

In the South West region, the Commission received a total of 4,729 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 3,534 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 1,195 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes 123 who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were four in the South West region (Exeter, Gloucester, Bath, and Dorchester). Some of these secondary consultation responses related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ²	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ³	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	36	24	60
Official political party response (both national and regional)	28	15	43
Peer from the House of Lords	3	0	3
Local councillor	139	101	240

² As declared by the respondents themselves.

³ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

Local authority	22	2	24
Parish or town council	67	27	94
Other organisation	44	15	59
Member of the public	3,195	1,011	4,206
Totals	3,534	1,195	4,729

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so from the Bristol area. Relatively few representations have been received with regard to the Avon, Somerset and Devon sub-region.

Campaigns and petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns were received. In the South West region, these were as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
Keep Priory ward in Exeter	BCE-86603	Oppose	1,583
Objection to the inclusion of Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley in North Dorset	BCE-86298	Oppose	79

Change of name of Totnes to South Devon	BCE-57092	Oppose	65
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Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

Initial proposals sub-regions	Revised proposals sub-regions
Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire	Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire
Dorset	Dorset
Avon, Somerset, and Devon	Avon, Somerset, and Devon
Cornwall	Cornwall

The revised proposals recommendations have been formulated using the same sub-regions as the initial proposals. There was broad acceptance of our sub-regions, notably from the qualifying political parties, although there were some significant representations that suggested alternative sub-regions. John Bryant (BCE-94126), suggested sub-regions of: Devon, Somerset, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset; Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, and Bristol; Wiltshire; and presumably Cornwall and Dorset on their own. Not dissimilar sub-regions were proposed by Jonathan Stansby (BCE-62734): Somerset, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset; Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, and Bristol; Devon, Dorset, and Wiltshire; and Cornwall. Pete Whitehead (BCE-85087) suggested sub-regions of Gloucestershire and Bristol, Somerset and Devon, Swindon and Wiltshire, and presumably the counties of Cornwall and Dorset standing as individual sub-regions. In his

representations (BCE-84936 and BCE-96320), Oliver Raven proposed that each ceremonial county should be treated on its own, although Bristol, Gloucestershire and Somerset would form a separate sub-region. However, Oliver Raven was unable to provide any substantive rationale for his proposed constituencies and regions.

While these counter-proposals for alternative sub-regions had some merit and aimed at minimising constituencies that crossed county boundaries, the Assistant Commissioners noted the general level of support for the proposed sub-regions and were not persuaded that the alternative proposals had garnered greater support in the secondary consultation. They concluded that in some cases the alternative sub-regions would result in more disruption to existing constituencies and would not therefore better reflect the statutory factors in the region.

Jacob Rees-Mogg MP (BCE-80882) objected to the Commission's use of the now abolished local government area of 'Avon', recommending instead that constituencies in this area should be allocated to two sub-regions based on historic counties: Gloucestershire with Bristol; and Somerset. No mention is made of the current unitary authorities, which provide the local government boundaries that the Commission must have regard to under the Act - Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. The Commission has used the term 'Avon' merely as a convenient, shortened term that continues to be generally understood when needing to refer together to the four unitary authorities in the area⁴: in its substantive analysis it has had regard only to the boundaries of those current unitary authorities, not the pre-1996 Avon county, let alone the pre-1974 boundaries of Gloucestershire and Somerset. The Conservative Party's original submission (BCE-86590) and secondary consultation response (BCE-97624) say: "We support the creation of the Avon, Somerset and Devon sub-region. We note that it is entitled to almost exactly 30 constituencies so we support the allocation of 30 constituencies".

In the initial proposals the South West region was divided into four sub-regions. The electorate of Gloucestershire does not allow for a whole number of constituencies, and thus needs to be included in a sub-region with a neighbouring county/local authority.

⁴ In a similar manner, we might have grouped together only Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire, and referred to them collectively as the '[West of England Combined Authority](#) area'.

Gloucestershire and Wiltshire are therefore treated as one sub-region (with a mathematical entitlement of 13.86 constituencies), and a cross-county boundary constituency is proposed, crossing the county boundary around Cirencester. This allows for 14 whole constituencies to be constructed in the sub-region.

Cornwall and Dorset are each treated as their own sub-region. Cornwall has a mathematical entitlement of 5.97 constituencies, allowing the allocation of six. This avoids a constituency crossing the Cornwall and Devon boundary that was mathematically necessary in previous reviews. The mathematical entitlement in Dorset is exactly 8.0, allowing for 8 constituencies to be allocated. By considering these counties as separate sub-regions, it has been possible to more easily reflect existing constituency boundaries, local authority boundaries and local ties in these areas. The proposed sub-region that comprises Avon, Somerset and Devon, with a mathematical entitlement of 29.97 constituencies, allows for 30 whole constituencies to be created within the sub-region, with two constituencies crossing the Avon and Somerset county boundary (across which there is an argument for historic local ties) and one constituency crossing the Somerset and Devon county boundary.

As in the initial proposals the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable whilst adhering to the statutory quota.

Under the revised proposals one of the existing constituencies is wholly unchanged, as opposed to three in the initial proposals. There are no changes from the initial proposals to the number of constituencies that would cross the boundaries of two local authorities (four). The Assistant Commissioners recommend that three constituencies in the Avon, Somerset, and Devon sub-region cross a county boundary.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend the revision of the composition of 22 of the 58 constituencies proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, they have decided not to make any revisions to the composition of the remaining 36. Of the 22 constituencies where they have revised the composition, they also recommend revising the names of five. Of the 36 constituencies where they have not revised the composition, they recommend revising the names of three.⁵

⁵ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	3	8	16	31	39	13	6	4	0	1	3	41
Revised proposals	1	11	19	27	39	13	6	4	0	2	3	42

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	0	2	3	9	9	2	3	1	0	1	2	8
Dorset	0	4	1	3	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	8

Avon, Somerset and Devon	1	3	11	15	18	9	3	3	0	1	1	20
Cornwall	0	2	4	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Totals	1	11	19	27	39	13	6	4	0	2	3	42

Gloucestershire and Wiltshire

Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire has an electorate of 483,442, which results in a mathematical entitlement to 6.59 constituencies. This is too large for six whole constituencies, and too small for seven. It therefore needed to be paired in a sub-region with a neighbouring county or unitary authority. Wiltshire (including the Swindon unitary authority) has a combined electorate of 533,514, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 7.27 constituencies. While it had previously considered that it may be possible to formulate a pattern of constituencies within Wiltshire alone, this is not the case in Gloucestershire, and at the initial proposals it was decided that pairing the two counties would allow the creation of a pattern of constituencies that better reflects the statutory factors across the sub-region as a whole. Having combined Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in one sub-region in the initial proposals, 14 constituencies were allocated, an increase of one constituency. It was also agreed that the constituency crossing the county boundaries should not be between Gloucestershire and the Swindon unitary authority: doing so would mean that the town of Swindon would be divided between three constituencies, covering three council areas (Swindon, Wiltshire, and Cotswold). It was considered that a constituency crossing between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire council would present a more suitable solution. It has always been considered that options for proposals in the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire sub-region are limited, due to the natural geography and location of the major settlements, as well as the regional boundaries with West Midlands, the South East, and with Wales.

All of the constituency electorates in Gloucestershire (with the exception of the Forest of Dean) are too large to form constituencies within the permitted electorate range.

The Cheltenham borough wards of Prestbury and Swindon Village are currently included in the existing Tewkesbury constituency; in the initial proposals the two wards continued to be included in Tewkesbury. In order to bring the electorate of the Cheltenham constituency down to within the permitted electorate range, the Borough of Cheltenham ward of Springbank was proposed to

additionally be included in Tewkesbury. This proved to be deeply unpopular, with approximately 350 objections to the initial proposals. Residents said that they identified with Cheltenham and that they have no real connection to Tewkesbury (e.g. BCE-80907). Chris Nelson, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, and Chair of the Cheltenham Association of Conservatives, who spoke at the public hearing held in Gloucester (BCE-97944), suggested that Springbank would receive less attention than if it remained in Cheltenham.

The Conservative Party (BCE-86590) and some local residents suggested that the St Paul's ward, rather than Springbank, should be included in the Tewkesbury constituency, and noted that St Paul's was in the same county division as the Swindon Village ward, which is currently in the existing Tewkesbury constituency. This was supported by a number of respondents, for example BCE-96882, who opposed any suggestion that the Battledown ward should be the ward to be excluded from Cheltenham as an alternative solution, as proposed by Steve Lloyd of the Green Party(BCE-95629), Alex Chalk, MP for Cheltenham (BCE-69746), and a local councillor (BCE-79144). Others expressed the view that Pittville was a more appropriate ward to exclude from Cheltenham, (BCE-87592), although this was opposed in a number of representations, including a local councillor (BCE-74192), who drew attention to Cheltenham's 'Pump Room' being located in the Pittville ward. In the evidence given by Alisha Lewis, Councillor for St Paul's ward (BCE-87980 and (BCE-97920) she was very much opposed to the exclusion of the St Paul's ward, which she said was "the heart of Cheltenham" and included Cheltenham High Street down its centre, as well as the Centre Stone for Cheltenham, the heart of the origins of Cheltenham.

With an electorate of 81,509, the existing Gloucester constituency is too large to form a single constituency, and was modified in order to bring it within the permitted electorate range. In formulating the initial proposals, the Commission considered the possibility of transferring three wards that form the community of Quedgeley to The Cotswolds constituency. However, it was considered that transferring wards from the north of Gloucester city to a Tewkesbury constituency would better satisfy the statutory factors. The City of Gloucester ward of Longlevens is currently not in the existing Gloucester constituency. It was proposed that this ward should remain in the Tewkesbury constituency, and be joined by the City of Gloucester wards of Elmbridge and Barnwood. The Commission did consider including the City of Gloucester ward of Kingsholm & Wotton in the Tewkesbury constituency, rather than the Barnwood ward, but considered that Kingsholm & Wotton had a particularly strong association with the Gloucester identity, containing half of Gloucester railway station, the council offices, the Premiership rugby club, and Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

As in Cheltenham, the initial proposals attracted a great deal of opposition: over 400 responses opposed the inclusion of either the Elmbridge or Barnwood ward in the Tewkesbury constituency, for example BCE-78063, BCE-84543 and Peter Dalton (BCE-61527). Additionally, there were a significant number of representations calling for the Longlevens ward to be 'returned' to the Gloucester constituency, for example Bruce Clifford (BCE-92963), and BCE-91734. Others considered that all three wards should continue to be included in the Gloucester constituency and that three wards containing the community of Quedgeley should instead be excluded and placed in The Cotswolds, e.g. Gloucester City Liberal Democrats (BCE-81903), and John Bryant (BCE-72050).

At 83,818, the electorate of the existing Tewkesbury constituency is well above the permitted range. In formulating the initial proposals for constituencies for Gloucester and Cheltenham, the Springbank ward from the Borough of Cheltenham and the two additional wards of Elmbridge and Barnwood from the City of Gloucester were added to compensate for seven Tewkesbury district wards from the existing Tewkesbury constituency being included in the neighbouring proposed The Cotswolds constituency, including the Isbourne and Winchcombe wards, together with five wards that form the geographical area between our proposed Gloucester and Cheltenham constituencies.

The initial proposals generated a number of representations in opposition, particularly from the Isbourne and Winchcombe wards, for example, Tewkesbury Town Council (BCE-65728), and Peter Davison-Smith (BCE-81726). It had been noted that the proposed configuration led to an odd-shaped Tewkesbury constituency, with the town of Tewkesbury itself being somewhat isolated in a small geographical area in the far north of the constituency. However, these sentiments were not unanimous and there was some support for the inclusion of the Winchcombe ward in particular to be included in The Cotswolds constituency, as in the initial proposals (BCE-88128). Tewkesbury Town Council also proposed that the whole of the town of Churchdown should be included in The Cotswolds constituency.

The existing Stroud constituency is far too large to remain unchanged, with an electorate of 84,573. In order to bring the Stroud constituency within the permitted electorate range the four Stroud district wards of Hardwicke, Painswick & Upton, Bisley, and Chalford were included in the proposed The Cotswolds constituency. The Minchinhampton ward, although a Stroud district ward, was located in the existing The Cotswolds constituency, and in the initial proposals the ward remained so. These changes resulted

in the Stroud constituency falling below the permitted electorate range. Consequently, it was proposed to increase its electorate with the inclusion of the two Stroud district wards of Kingswood and Wotton-under-Edge, which are currently located in the existing The Cotswolds constituency.

There has been a significant level of opposition to the initial proposals for Stroud, with a large number of representations received covering a range of wards that it has been suggested should be included in the constituency. However, the electorate of Stroud District is almost 95,400 and it is inevitable that a number of Stroud district wards have to be included in a constituency other than Stroud.

We received approximately 110 representations objecting to the inclusion of the Chalford ward in The Cotswolds, for example BCE-85223, and Kenneth Brown (BCE-97919), and Councillor Helen Fenton (BCE-97938). There were also calls for the Minchinhampton ward to be included in Stroud, for example BCE 87518, and some support for the initial proposals that included the Wootten-under-Edge and Kingswood wards in the Stroud constituency (BCE-85021). We received significant opposition to the inclusion of the Hardwicke ward in The Cotswold constituency, for example Siobhan Baillie, MP for Stroud (BCE-85155), Hardwicke Parish (BCE-90827), and BCE-63044, with a number of representations supporting the Conservative Party counter-proposals (BCE-86590). Others suggested that the Nailsworth ward instead should be included in The Cotswolds, for example Councillor Mark Ryder (BCE-97926), and Councillor Denise Powell and Mr Philip Powell (BCE-97928). Councillor Powell, who now lived in Hardwicke village, but who had previously lived in Nailsworth, said that Hardwicke's links with Stroud were stronger than those of Nailsworth, which tended to look east towards the town of Tetbury. However, there was support for the initial proposals in which Nailsworth was included in the Stroud constituency, for example BCE-88140 and Paul Archer (BCE-89206), and considerable opposition to the representations that sought to include Hardwicke in Stroud instead of Nailsworth, for example Councillor Mick Fealty (BCE-91576) and Councillor Doina Cornell, (BCE-90936), BCE-97969, and Steve Lydon, Chair of Stroud Constituency Labour Party (BCE-97939).

The initial proposals for the Forest of Dean did not elicit a large number of representations, but the majority of those that were received were in support of the proposals.

The initial proposals make substantial changes to the boundaries of the existing The Cotswolds constituency with the extension of the constituency westwards to include seven wards from the existing Tewkesbury constituency, together with four wards from the existing Stroud constituency. However, due to the transfer of other wards to the proposed cross-county boundary constituency (see below), the resulting The Cotswolds constituency actually covers a more compact geographic area than the existing constituency. Around 310 representations were received in opposition to the proposed The Cotswolds constituency, but this number also includes many representations that cover more than one constituency in addition to The Cotswolds. Some of these are referred to above. However, there was also support for the initial proposals with regard to The Cotswold constituency, for example Councillor John Bloxson, Leader of the Labour group on Gloucestershire County Council (BCE-78154), and general support from Geoffrey Wheeler (BCE-71266). Cotswold District Council (BCE-95936) supports both the initially proposed The Cotswolds, and Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituencies - albeit renamed North Cotswolds and South Cotswolds - apart from the suggestion to include the Chedworth and Churn Valley ward in the same constituency as Cirencester.

There was also support for the whole of the town of Churchdown (which is divided into two different constituencies in the initial proposals) to be included in The Cotswolds constituency with the inclusion of the Churchdown St John's ward joining the Churchdown, Brookfield with Hucclecote ward.

Wiltshire

In order to create an extra constituency to which the combined area of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire is mathematically entitled, it had been necessary to create a constituency – Cirencester and North Wiltshire - that crossed the boundary between the two counties. The initial proposals generated a significant amount of opposition in the representations where the sentiment was widely expressed that the town of Cirencester – ‘the Capital of the Cotswolds’ – could not be in a constituency with parts of Wiltshire, for example. Geoff Warren (BCE-92623), and Elly Harris (BCE-84177). However, a number of representations suggested that the new cross-county constituency might be more acceptable if the name were changed, with South Cotswolds being a common and popular suggestion, for example (BCE-93907 and BCE-91949), with The Cotswolds being renamed North Cotswolds (BCE-96109 and BCE-76939). Among the representations in opposition to the Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituency were a number that

opposed the inclusion of the wards of Coln Valley, and in particular Northleach, which, it was suggested, looked towards the north Cotswolds and had little in common with Cirencester, let alone with north Wiltshire: BCE-94602 and Tony Antoniou (BCE-95912).

There were also both written and oral representations that suggested that the Chedworth and Churn Valley ward should not be included in The Cotswolds, but in the same constituency as Cirencester, for example BCE-92948, and Cirencester Town Council (BCE-93310). Councillor Paul Hodgkinson (BCE-91957), highlighted the links of the ward with Cirencester, dating back to the times when Bagendon (which became Corinium) was the 'largest pre-Roman settlement in England'.

In Wiltshire itself, local government ward changes had made it difficult, in some instances, to respect existing constituency boundaries. Consequently, there was considerable change and opposition to our proposals. There was, however, some support for the proposed Chippenham constituency, for example Robert Giles (BCE-84784), who also supported the proposed Devizes and Melksham constituency, and Councillor Nick Botterill (BCE-97839). The Conservative Party (BCE-86590) largely supported the initial proposals for both Melksham and Devizes, and Chippenham.

The Liberal Democrat Party (BCE-80986), proposed significant changes to the Chippenham, and Melksham and Devizes constituencies and said that the town of Corsham should be included in the same constituency as Chippenham. This was strongly supported by councillors from the town of Corsham and Corsham Town Council (BCE-69152), who say that the ward of Box and Colerne also has very close links with the town of Corsham (as in the initial proposals) and that Corsham was included in the same constituency as Chippenham between 1885 and 1983. The Liberal Democrats also proposed a Melksham and Devizes constituency that ran from north of the town of Royal Wootton Bassett, down to Devizes and some distance beyond the town to its south, and included Calne. This was strongly opposed in the representations. BCE-94763 said that the links between Corsham and Chippenham had been overstated and that Calne had close links with Chippenham. Others objected to the Liberal Democrats' revised Melksham and Devizes constituency. Michele Donellan, MP for Chippenham (BCE-85373), noted the links between Royal Wootton Bassett and Calne, but said that there were no historic cultural, government or governance links between Melksham and Calne and Royal Wootton Bassett, nor between Devizes and Royal Wootton Bassett.

There was widespread opposition from the rural wards surrounding Devizes to their perceived separation from the town of Devizes. In the initial proposals the town of Devizes was no longer included in the constituency after which it had been named (which was therefore to be renamed East Wiltshire), and was instead included at the eastern edge of the newly created Melksham and Devizes constituency, so named because Melksham is now the larger town of the two. Many representations from East Wiltshire seemed to believe that they had been moved out of the Devizes constituency when, in fact, it was Devizes that had been moved, and it was the Pewsey Vale wards, Urchfont and Bishops Canning, and The Lavingtons wards that had remained in the existing constituency. Councillor Tamara Reay (BCE-97960) said that a new, proposed railway station for Devizes (Devizes Gateway) would most likely be located in the Urchfont and Bishops Canning ward. There was also opposition to the initial proposals from areas to the north of Devizes and which had been included in the proposed Chippenham constituency, and in particular, from the Bromham area of the Bromham, Rowde and Roundway ward. The Conservative Party required this ward to be split in their counter-proposal, with the Bromham area being included in the Melksham and Devizes constituency. There was also support for the inclusion of the town of Bradford-on-Avon in the Melksham and Devizes constituency (BCE-84135).

There was opposition to the other constituencies in Wiltshire, most notably from East Wiltshire and Salisbury where, in order to avoid the division of a community, the initial proposals had included the whole of the town of Amesbury in East Wiltshire. It was suggested in representations that Amesbury looked very much towards Salisbury and its inclusion in the East Wiltshire constituency would not be appropriate, as it had no links with the towns to the north of Salisbury Plain (BCE-53701 and BCE-95769). From the proposed Trowbridge and Warminster constituency there were few representations, but there was some support. The main issue appeared to be proposals for a return of the existing constituency name of South West Wiltshire (BCE-93272). There was some limited support for the inclusion of the Hilperton ward in the same constituency as Trowbridge (BCE-60007).

There was support generally for the decision not to cross the county boundary between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in Swindon, and to treat Swindon separately. In the initial proposals, the only change made to the North Swindon constituency was to realign constituency boundaries with new ward boundaries and, in accordance with the constituency naming policy, to move 'North' from a prefix to a suffix in the constituency name, thus Swindon North. However, as a consequence, the Mannington and Weston, and Covingham and Dorcan wards were wholly included in the proposed Swindon South constituency, which then had an electorate

above the permitted range. To address this, it was proposed that the southern Swindon wards of Wroughton and Winchelstowe, and Ridgeway be included in East Wiltshire, and that the Chiseldon and Lawn ward, in view of the urban element in the northern part of the ward, should continue to be in the proposed Swindon South constituency. There was support (and some opposition) for the initial proposals for both Swindon constituencies, for example BCE-67871 and BCE-78133, and some objections to the inclusion of each of the three wards in the East Wiltshire constituency: for example, Lord Robert Hayward (BCE-81475 - Ridgeway); BCE-96323 (Wroughton and Winchelstowe); and Neil Hopkins (BCE-95475 - Chiseldon and Lawn). The Commission had originally considered whether the Ridgeway ward, rather than Chiseldon and Lawn should be included in South Swindon as most of the ward lay to the north of the M4 motorway, but was not persuaded by this proposal.

Recommendations

Gloucestershire

The Assistant Commissioners considered the representations and the oral comments that were given at the public hearings. They decided to visit a number of areas in Cheltenham to see, in particular, the wards of Battledown, Pittville, St Paul's, and Springbank for themselves in view of the conflicting nature of the evidence.

The Assistant Commissioners agreed with the comments expressed by Councillor Alisha Lewis. It was their view that St Paul's was an integral part of the centre of Cheltenham and they considered it would be wholly inappropriate to exclude the ward from the Cheltenham constituency. They considered that Pittville was also an integral part of Cheltenham and noted the similarity in housing type with the rest of the centre of Cheltenham. The Battledown ward was similarly considered to be clearly part of Cheltenham, particularly in the west of the ward, adjacent to more central areas of Cheltenham. They did, however, note that the ward had a large rural element, but that road links from Battledown eastwards were very poor and that hills separated the ward from the rest of Gloucestershire.

On visiting Springbank ward, they noted that the ward had some similarities with the Swindon Village ward, which was not included in the Cheltenham constituency. They observed that the Springbank ward was very residential in nature with a mixture of social housing and newer developments further away from Cheltenham. Although they considered that the ward definitely looked towards Cheltenham, they concluded that these links were not as strong with the town centre as were those of the St Paul's, Battledown and Pittville wards.

The Assistant Commissioners recognise that the ideal would be to include the Springbank ward in Cheltenham, but despite the very strong opposition to its inclusion in the Tewkesbury constituency, a further ward has to be excluded from the existing Cheltenham constituency. In their view, they did not feel that any significant links would be broken if the Springbank ward were to be included in Tewkesbury, rather than in Cheltenham, alongside the Cheltenham Borough wards of Prestbury and Swindon Village (despite St Paul's being in the same county division as Swindon Village). They therefore recommend that the Springbank ward be included in the Tewkesbury constituency, as in the initial proposals, and that there be no further change to the proposed Cheltenham constituency.

With regard to the opposition to the initial proposals in Gloucester, the Assistant Commissioners decided to visit the wards in question. They drove through the Longlevens ward along the B4063 and the Elmbridge Road through Elmbridge and into the Barnwood ward, both of which they considered were similar in nature. From there they drove along the A38 to Quedgeley. They considered that Quedgeley did indeed have a different dynamic to that of the rest of Gloucester, with newer housing and industrial estates. They also noted that the Liberal Democrats (Councillor Jeremy Hilton, BCE-81903) had used major roads as boundaries in their counter-proposals and that these were clearly defined. However, they also considered that the area had little in common with The Cotswolds constituency and that Quedgeley could be considered to cover four wards, rather than the three which it had been proposed could be included in The Cotswolds. The Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded that despite being relatively newer and somewhat self-contained, Quedgeley should be included in The Cotswolds rather than Gloucester.

However, they do make one recommendation to amend the initial proposals with regard to Gloucester. They considered that all three wards of Longlevens, Elmbridge and Barnwood were part of Gloucester and that each had a legitimate claim to be included in the constituency. However, this is just not possible due to the electoral size of the city, and two of the three need to be excluded.

The Longlevens ward is currently part of the Tewkesbury constituency: the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the ward continue to remain in that constituency. As Elmbridge is geographically next to the Longlevens ward, they recommend that it be also included in the Tewkesbury constituency, allowing the Barnwood ward to remain in the Gloucester constituency, in accordance with views expressed in many of the representations.

The Assistant Commissioners continued their site visit to Stroud where there had been a large number of representations regarding a number of different wards. From Gloucester, they drove along the A430 and B4008 through the Hardwicke ward and then through the Stonehouse ward into Stroud, and from there, along the A46 through the Nailsworth Valley to Nailsworth itself and then on to the Wotton-under-Edge ward via the B4058. They would have liked to have included as many District of Stroud wards in the Stroud constituency, but due to the large electorate of the borough, it was inevitable that a number of wards would have to be excluded.

Progressing through Hardwicke, the Assistant Commissioners noted that most of the ward's population appeared to be located in the north of the ward, close to Gloucester, but that the rest of the ward was very rural in nature. They were particularly struck by the very clear demarcation between the Hardwicke and Stonehouse wards, where there was an abrupt change between open land in Hardwicke and housing in Stonehouse, which ends right at the boundary between the two wards, and a stream that also marked the boundary. Driving through Stroud and along the Nailsworth Valley to the town of Nailsworth, they considered that, although Nailsworth was a town in its own right, there was continuous ribbon development from Stroud towards Nailsworth along the valley and that it was not obvious where one community ended and the other started. They visited Minchinhampton, where it was observed that the western edge of the ward was high land and almost moor-like, unlike the valley community of Nailsworth, and visited Wotton-under-Edge, which they considered to be a large, rural ward, that, although part of the District of Stroud, had little in similarity with Stroud itself.

One of the main issues in Stroud was whether to adhere to the initial proposals and include the Nailsworth ward in the constituency, or whether to include the Hardwicke ward instead. The Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence and the representations and concluded that it would not be possible to include both within the Stroud constituency without a significant reconfiguration of the constituency which would have knock-on effects across constituencies that are being proposed in Gloucestershire. They were mindful that the Stroud borough ward of Painswick and Upton, which was adjacent to the Hardwicke ward, was to be included in

The Cotswolds constituency in the initial proposals. They also noted the strength of feeling, on both sides of the debate, and the quality of the evidence that was presented in support of both propositions. It was for this reason that their site visit proved to be valuable.

As mentioned above, the Assistant Commissioners observed the rural nature of the Hardwicke ward and the stark boundary between it and the Stonehouse ward, which was in the proposed Stroud constituency. They also considered that there was continuous urban development along the Nailsworth Valley and that there was little to differentiate Nailsworth from Stroud, apart from their town centres. They therefore recommend no changes to the initial proposals with regard to these two wards and that the Nailsworth ward be included in Stroud, and that Hardwicke be included in The Cotswolds.

They considered whether the Minchinhampton ward should be included in Stroud, as suggested in a number of representations, but noted that the ward is not currently in the existing Stroud constituency. They recommend no change to the initial proposals with regard to Minchinhampton.

They also considered the Chalford ward, which had been excluded from Stroud in the initial proposals. In weighing up the evidence, they concluded that the case for Chalford's continued inclusion in Stroud was strong: it was in the existing Stroud constituency and it was effectively separated from Minchinhampton by the River Frome and the A419 London Road. However, its inclusion would mean that another ward would have to be excluded from Stroud, to ensure that its electorate was within the permitted range. In the initial proposals, the Stroud district wards of Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood had been included in the Stroud constituency from the existing The Cotswolds constituency. Although there had been relatively few representations regarding these wards, this change had been very much welcomed. The Assistant Commissioners noted that if they were to include the Kingswood ward alone in a Cotswold constituency, this would create an orphan ward, and so they considered whether both the Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood wards could be transferred. However, the numbers did not allow for this.

Faced with a difficult decision they bore in mind that, although both Chalford and Kingswood were wards of the District of Stroud, Chalford was already in the existing Stroud constituency, whereas Kingswood was in the existing The Cotswolds constituency. Furthermore, they noted that Chalford contained approximately 5,300 electors, whereas Kingwood contained approximately 1,800.

By including Chalford in Stroud, they would be moving fewer electors between existing constituencies. They therefore recommend that Chalford be included in the Stroud constituency. Due to the other changes in Gloucestershire, it was not feasible to include Kingswood in The Cotswolds, and while acknowledging that Kingswood would be an orphan ward, they recommend, reluctantly, that it should be included in Cirencester and North Wiltshire.

The Assistant Commissioners considered that there was persuasive evidence for the inclusion of the Isbourne ward, in particular, and the Winchcombe ward in the Tewkesbury constituency, where they are currently located. Although there were some links between Winchcombe and The Cotswolds, they recommend that both wards be included in the Tewkesbury constituency. The recommended changes to the Tewkesbury and The Cotswolds constituencies would mean that it was possible to unite the two wards containing the town of Churchdown in the same constituency, as requested in some of the representations. In the initial proposals, the ward of Churchdown St John's had been included in Tewkesbury, thereby dividing the town in two. They therefore recommend the inclusion of both the Churchdown wards in The Cotswolds.

They considered the evidence about the Northleach ward and agreed that it would be more appropriate to include the ward in The Cotswolds, rather than Cirencester and North Wiltshire, and they recommend this change. However, The Cotswolds would have an electorate that was too low. To address this issue and to bring it within the permitted range, they also recommend that the Coln Valley ward be included in The Cotswolds. They noted the historical evidence of the links between Chedworth and Churn Valley ward and the town of Cirencester. However, the ward's inclusion in Cirencester and North Wiltshire would again leave The Cotswolds with an electorate that was below the permitted range. Furthermore, the ward's inclusion with Cirencester would result in a very odd shape to The Cotswolds constituency, with a narrow neck of land linking the two parts of the constituency. For these reasons, they do not recommend the Chedworth and Churn Valley's inclusion in Cirencester and North Wiltshire.

The Assistant Commissioners were very mindful of the opposition to the Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituency, but considered that a cross-county constituency was unavoidable if they were to adhere to the sub-regions that had generally been supported. However, they also noted the considerable body of representations that suggested that The Cotswolds could be named North Cotswolds, and that naming Cirencester and North Wiltshire as South Cotswolds could be an acceptable compromise to residents in both Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. Although the Assistant Commissioners were content to recommend these two

name changes, they suggest that the constituencies be called The Northern Cotswolds and The Southern Cotswolds, as this is considered to be more geographically correct.

No changes are recommended to the Forest of Dean constituency as initially proposed.

Wiltshire

The Assistant Commissioners considered that the conflicting opinions in the rest of North Wiltshire were particularly difficult to reconcile, and that, with regard to the proposed Chippenham, and Melksham and Devizes constituencies, any change would be likely to result in significant amendments to the pattern of constituencies across the sub-region.

The Assistant Commissioners visited parts of North Wiltshire to understand the representations more fully. They accepted that there were links between Chippenham and Calne, and also with Royal Wootton Bassett. They visited the rural Calne South ward and the Bromham, Rowde and Roundway ward and observed that the community of Bromham in the south of the ward was adjacent to, and closely connected with, Devizes. In view of the large number of representations objecting to the initial proposals, they then visited the Urchfont and Bishops Cannings ward as well as The Lavingtons ward. However, despite its close proximity to Devizes, they considered that the boundary between the urban town and the rural Urchfont and Bishops Canning ward was very clear and identifiable. Similarly, they considered that the boundary between Devizes and The Lavingtons was clear and, despite the objections in the representations, they did not consider that there was any compelling reason why either ward needed to be in the same constituency as the town of Devizes.

The Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence and concluded that it would be possible to amend the proposed Chippenham constituency so that Royal Wootton Bassett, Calne, and Corsham would all be in the same constituency as Chippenham. This would address most of the concerns in the representations received. They identified that this would also allow them to address the large number of representations received concerning the wards surrounding Devizes and that they could include some of these wards in the same constituency as the town, in particular, the Urchfont and Bishops Canning, The

Lavingtons, and Bromham, Rowde and Roundway wards. Furthermore, the inclusion of Bromham, Rowde and Roundway in Melksham and Devizes would mean that this ward did not need to be split, as in the Conservative Party counter-proposal. This arrangement would mean that the ward of Calne South would have to be included in Melksham and Devizes, but when they visited the ward, the Assistant Commissioners observed that it was very rural in nature, largely separate from the town of Calne and that it was reasonable to consider that its residents looked both to Calne and Devizes for services. Additionally, a consequence of adopting these changes would mean that the ward of Hilperton, which was considered to be part of the town of Trowbridge, would be included in the same constituency as Trowbridge, where it is currently not under the initial proposals. They therefore recommend altered Chippenham, and Melksham and Devizes constituencies. However, the numbers would not allow for the Box and Colerne ward to be included in the same constituency as Calne in this arrangement.

These recommendations would have consequences for the three remaining constituencies in Wiltshire. The inclusion of the Urchfont and Bishops Cannings, and The Lavingtons wards in Melksham and Devizes meant that additional wards would need to be included in the East Wiltshire constituency. However, this would be difficult to achieve, as the electorates of all the remaining constituencies were so close to the minimum permitted. The Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Till Valley ward be included in East Wiltshire from the proposed Salisbury constituency. The Till Valley ward attracted very few comments in the representations, but this change was suggested by a councillor (BCE-94897). The town of Amesbury would also remain in the East Wiltshire constituency. Whilst the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge and understand the representations that suggested the town remain in the Salisbury constituency, on the southside of Salisbury Plain, they considered that if the town were to remain undivided, all its wards would have to be included in East Wiltshire. The inclusion of the Till Valley ward in East Wiltshire to the town's south and east would also mean that the town was less peripheral within the constituency.

Although both the Nadder Valley and Tisbury wards attracted very little attention in the representations, among those that did mention the wards were proposals that they be included in the Salisbury constituency, for example, The Green Party (BCE-85287). This would now be possible within the new configuration for constituencies recommended by the Assistant Commissioners and they propose that both wards be included in the Salisbury constituency.

A consequence of their recommendations elsewhere in Wiltshire meant that an additional ward had to be included in the Trowbridge and Warminster constituency. As discussed above in relation to Melksham and Devizes, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Hilperton ward be included in Trowbridge and Warminster. Although not in the existing constituency, it could be considered a part of Trowbridge, and its inclusion has been proposed in representations. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the name of the constituency was both suitable and appropriate, but they noted and accepted the calls for the constituency's name to revert to that of the existing constituency. They therefore recommend that the constituency be renamed South West Wiltshire

On their site visit to Wiltshire, the Assistant Commissioners visited each of the three wards in south Swindon that respondents considered could be included in the East Wiltshire constituency and noted that there had been a number of representations regarding these wards. They considered that the Wroughton and Wichelstowe ward was largely rural, apart from the community of Wroughton, and that there was a considerable amount of rural land between the community and the built-up area of Swindon. The Chiseldon and Lawn ward was similarly rural in nature, except in the north of the ward - north of the M4 motorway - where they observed an extension of the continuous urban area of Swindon in the Lawn and Badbury areas and that the north of the ward was geographically close to Swindon old town. Despite the rural nature of the rest of the ward, it seemed appropriate that this ward as in the initial proposals, or at least the northern part of this ward, should be included in the Swindon South constituency.

They also visited the Ridgeway ward. The boundary between the built-up area of Swindon to the west and the Ridgeway ward was very pronounced along the A419. They considered that, despite the M4 running across the southern part of the ward Ridgeway was an appropriate candidate for inclusion in the East Wiltshire constituency due to its rural characteristics.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend that both the Wroughton and Wichelstowe, and Ridgeway wards be included in the East Wiltshire constituency, as in the initial proposals. However, they noted that, as a consequence of their changes elsewhere in Wiltshire, it would not be possible to include the whole of the Chiseldon and Lawn ward in the Swindon South constituency and they therefore recommend that the Chiseldon and Lawn ward be divided. The division would include the three urban polling districts of CLA, CLC and CLD, that lie to the north of the M4 motorway, in Swindon South, with the rural polling district CLB being included in East Wiltshire. They noted that the M4 motorway runs east/west across the whole of the Chiseldon and Lawn ward and would

provide a very clear, understandable boundary between the two parts of the ward. If the recommendation to split the Chiseldon and Lawn ward were not to be accepted, there is just one 'whole ward' solution that would not result in the collapse of the other proposed constituencies in Wiltshire and into Gloucestershire, as would otherwise be the case: this would be to include the Ridgeway ward in South Swindon and the whole of Chiseldon and Lawn in East Wiltshire. However, this proposal was not considered favourable when formulating the initial proposals and would place a rural ward in Swindon South, and a ward with a large urban element in East Wiltshire.

To illustrate the very narrow margins of electorates with which the Assistant Commissioners have had to work to construct viable constituencies in Wiltshire, and that all the constituencies have electorates that are very close to the minimum that is permitted, the following would be the electorates of the constituencies in Swindon and Wiltshire should the Assistant Commissioners recommendations be accepted:

Swindon North: 72,173

Swindon South: 72,468

Chippenham: 71,648

Melksham and Devizes: 71,823

East Wiltshire: 71,109

Salisbury: 70,242

South West Wiltshire: 71,551

Dorset

There are currently eight constituencies in the sub-region, which comprises the two unitary authorities of Dorset, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP). Six of the existing constituencies currently have electorates within the permitted range, with the existing Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency having an electorate below the permitted range, and the West Dorset

constituency having an electorate above the range. The initial proposals were based as much as possible on existing constituencies, but due to ward realignments this has not been possible in some constituencies. Eight constituencies would continue to be wholly contained within the ceremonial county of Dorset.

The existing Bournemouth East, Bournemouth West, Poole, and Christchurch constituencies are all within the permitted electorate range, but due to changes to local government ward boundaries, retaining these constituencies wholly unchanged would divide a number of wards between constituencies. Therefore, the only changes proposed in the initial proposal to these constituencies was to realign constituency boundaries with new ward boundaries.

There was a significant level of support for the constituencies in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole ('BCP') unitary authority which are unchanged, apart from the realignment with new ward boundaries, but some objection, for example from Thomas Burke (BCE-75170), who, in common with some other representations, objects to East Dorset wards being included in the Christchurch constituency. Also, the initial proposals had changed the name of Mid Dorset and North Poole to Mid Dorset and Poole North. A number of representatives said that the name should not be changed. Peter Kingswood (BCE-85513, BCE-96743, BCE-96744, and BCE-97886) submitted a counter-proposal that called for the Dorset unitary authority to be treated separately and allocated four whole constituencies, and the unitary authority of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to similarly be treated separately and allocated four constituencies. Mr Kingswood's counter-proposal was strongly opposed by Patrick Canavan, Secretary of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Labour Party (BCE-97888), who suggested that Mr Kingswood's counter-proposal would not command local support and seemed to artificially try and fit constituencies into unitary boundaries, which would ultimately split communities.

As a consequence of ward boundary changes, the Dorset ward of West Purbeck in the Mid Dorset and Poole North constituency has been extended to the coast, meaning that its inclusion in the proposed Mid Dorset and Poole North constituency would bisect the existing South Dorset constituency. In the initial proposals, it was proposed that the West Purbeck ward be included in the South Dorset constituency. Consequently, in the initial proposals the existing Mid Dorset and Poole North constituency was extended northwards to include the Dorset ward of Stour & Allen Vale, which was previously in the North Dorset constituency. The

North Dorset constituency required further changes to realign constituency boundaries with local government ward boundaries. The whole of the Dorset wards of Chalk Valleys, and Puddletown & Lower Winterborne were included in the North Dorset constituency. In the initial proposals the Chickerell ward was included in the South Dorset constituency, from West Dorset, and the Upwey & Broadwey ward was included in the West Dorset constituency, from South Dorset. This was not popular, with many respondents saying that this configuration caused a disruption of the historic and local ties present in the area. There were calls for the Upwey & Broadwey ward to remain in the same constituency as Weymouth, with it being suggested that the ward follows the traditional main route to Weymouth town centre, as well as being surrounded on three sides by other wards of Weymouth. The initial proposals were not, however, met with any objections from any of the four qualifying political parties. The Conservative Party in their second consultation submission, BCE-97624, noted that they saw no alternative to the Commission's proposals because of the size, shape and extent of the wards and that, although they would consider an alternative scheme that was non-disruptive, "we have not seen such an alternative".

The issue that has garnered the most opposition to the initial proposals (more than 250 objections) comes from the Chalk Valleys ward, with residents in the Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley areas very much opposed to their inclusion in North Dorset from the South Dorset constituency, for example BCE-76150, BCE-82405, and Karen Burghart, BCE-95996. One respondent, BCE-86298, submitted a letter of objection and a petition containing 79 names. Several individuals also gave oral evidence at the hearing in Dorchester, for example Felicity Lewis (BCE-97892 and written representation BCE-61760), and Max and Claire Crosby (BCE-97891). These respondents said that their ties were with Dorchester and the West Dorset constituency, and that they had little in common with North Dorset or places that appeared far away, such as Verwood, which were included in North Dorset.

We received representations from individuals offering an alternative configuration, including from Chris Loder, MP for West Dorset (BCE-82829 and BCE-978900). He accepted that there was no whole-ward solution to resolve this issue, and suggested that ward-splitting was the only way to properly address the constraints faced in the Dorset sub-region. He considered that local ties would continue to be broken in many areas if the Commission did not consider whether the circumstances in South Dorset, North Dorset, and West Dorset were exceptional enough to warrant constituencies that split wards. Mr Loder noted that in West Dorset, there are currently three wards - Sherborne Rural, Chalk Valleys and Puddletown & Lower Winterborne - that are 'split' over two constituencies, mainly as a result of the recent setting of new wards for Dorset Council. In his counter-proposal, he proposed the

splitting of two wards: West Purbeck and Chalk Valleys. He suggested that through the West Purbeck split, the Commission would be able to create a Dorset sub-region with a similar existing pattern of constituencies, and that this split would also allow the Upwey & Broadway Ward to be included in South Dorset. He also suggests that a further split in the Chalk Valleys ward would allow the Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley areas to be included in West Dorset, i.e. in the same constituency as the significant market town of Dorchester, with which the local residents claim affinity.

The Assistant Commissioners considered these representations fully and their conclusions are set out in the recommendations section below.

Recommendations

In view of the opposition to the initial proposals, the Assistant Commissioners decided to conduct site visits within the county to help them better understand the evidence received. Through their site visits they were able to observe community ties - particularly from the Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley communities. They found the Chalk Valleys ward was large in area and rural in nature. They considered that although the communities mentioned above undoubtedly did use Dorchester for services, they were some distance away from the town. While they had sympathy with the residents of the Chalk Valleys ward, and with Chris Loder's well-supported counter-proposal, the Assistant Commissioners did not consider that the criteria had been met for the splitting of two wards under this counter-proposal. They were also mindful of the evidence given by Simon Hoare, MP for North Dorset at the public hearing in Dorchester (BCE-97887), who, while supporting the initial proposals for his constituency and opposing any split wards in the county said that he was not aware of any objections locally in his area. He said he also wanted to address the misconception and 'slightly specious arguments' that people will somehow be constrained in their shopping and other activities by Parliamentary boundaries, and said that Dorset is much less parochial now it has moved from districts to unitaries.

The Assistant Commissioners continued their site visit from the Winterborne & Broadmayne ward, through Upwey & Broadway and into Weymouth. While they agreed with those who claimed that Upwey & Broadway was intrinsically part of Weymouth, the ward's

inclusion in South Dorset would mean that the Chickerell ward would have to be included in West Dorset (although this was supported in some of the representations), but that the Winterborne & Broadmayne ward would also have to be included in South Dorset. This is a large, mainly rural ward whose boundaries go right up to the town of Dorchester itself. It would not be possible to include the Upwey & Broadwey ward alone in South Dorset, and the Assistant Commissioners did not consider that they could recommend the inclusion also of Winterborne & Broadmayne in South Dorset.

In the initial proposals, the Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency had been renamed Mid Dorset and Poole North, to reflect more closely the Commission's views about the naming of constituencies with compass points. This was opposed, for example by the Labour Party (BCE-97426), who considered the change unnecessary as no revisions were being proposed to the constituency.

Having considered the initial proposals and all the representations received, including the possibility of ward splits, the Assistant Commissioners have concluded that no evidence received throughout consultation provided a sufficient reason for them to adjust the composition of any of the Dorset constituencies as initially proposed. They therefore do not recommend making any such changes. However, they agreed with those who called for a reversion to the original name of the proposed Mid Devon and Poole North constituency and recommended that the existing name of Mid Dorset and North Poole be retained.

‘Avon’, Somerset and Devon:

The electorate of the unitary authorities that constitute the former county of Avon, at 854,331, results in a mathematical entitlement to 11.64 constituencies. While it was possible to allocate 12 constituencies to these four authorities together, the average electorate would be only 71,194, meaning that there would be limited flexibility in formulating a pattern of constituencies. The electorate of Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) at 919,454 results in a mathematical entitlement to 12.53 constituencies. It would therefore be difficult to allocate a whole number of constituencies to that area without significant disruption to local ties and it was proposed that the county be grouped with Somerset, which has an electorate of 425,570 and a mathematical entitlement to 5.80 constituencies. Given the limited flexibility in constructing constituencies within Avon, it was proposed that it should form part of a

sub-region with Somerset and Devon. This results in a mathematical entitlement to 29.97 constituencies and an allocation of 30 constituencies to the sub-region, representing an increase of two from the current figure. Three constituencies that cross county/unitary boundaries in this sub-region were proposed. Two would cross the boundary between Somerset and one of the unitary authorities in the former Avon area, and the other would cross the county boundary between Somerset and Devon. There has been general support for the constituencies proposed in this sub-region from all the four qualifying political parties, albeit with some relatively minor local amendments.

Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire

Two of the four existing constituencies in Bristol have electorates that are significantly above the permitted range, particularly in Bristol West, which now is the largest constituency by electorate in England (apart from the existing Isle of Wight constituency) with 99,859 electors; it was therefore proposed that there be an additional constituency allocated to Bristol, resulting in a cross-local authority boundary constituency with South Gloucestershire.

It was proposed that, to best satisfy the statutory factors, the cross-local authority boundary constituency should cross the unitary authority boundary between the City of Bristol and South Gloucestershire. South Gloucestershire council area already contains what would generally be considered some of the northern Bristol suburbs and new development, and extending at least one Bristol constituency northwards into South Gloucestershire might appear to be a logical solution: for example, Bristol Parkway station is located within the existing Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency. However, it was considered this would cause considerable disruption to both the existing Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency and the wider South Gloucestershire unitary authority. A new Bristol North East constituency that expanded eastwards into South Gloucestershire was therefore proposed.

There was general support for the proposals in this area, to not expand the Bristol constituencies northwards, into Filton and Bradley Stoke, but eastwards into the existing constituency of Kingswood. There was widespread support and very little opposition to the five proposed Bristol constituencies (including that shared with South Gloucestershire), with support very clearly

outnumbering opposition. All four qualifying political parties - Conservative (BCE-86590 and BCE-97624), Labour (BCE-79532), Liberal Democrat (BCE-80986), and Green (BCE-85287) - supported the composition and names of the five proposed Bristol constituencies of Bristol Central, Bristol East, Bristol North East, Bristol North West, and Bristol South in their entirety. The electorate of the existing Kingswood constituency was below the permitted electorate range and there was some objection to the inclusion of the South Gloucestershire wards of Kingswood, New Cheltenham, Woodstock, and the whole of the divided Staple Hill and Mangotsfield from the existing Kingswood constituency in the Bristol North East constituency, for example BCE-84711, but these were very few in number.

In South Gloucestershire unitary authority, to the north of Bristol, only limited changes were made to the existing Thornbury and Yate, and Filton and Bradley Stoke constituencies. Apart from some realignment with new ward boundaries, these were the inclusion of the Pilning & Severn Beach ward in Thornbury and Yate, and the inclusion of the Emersons Green ward in Filton and Bradley Stoke from the existing Kingswood constituency. The remaining wards of the existing Kingswood constituency had either been incorporated into Bristol North East, or the proposed Keynsham and North East Somerset constituency (Bitton and Oakland Common, Hanham, Longwell Green, and Parkwall and Warmley). Despite the relatively modest change in South Gloucestershire, there was opposition, largely from the Conservative Party (BCE-86590 and BCE-97624), Councillor Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council (BCE-81938), and Sanjay Shambhu (BCE-97838). Many of those who opposed the initial proposals also supported the counter-proposal submitted by the Conservative Party, which sought a reconfiguration of the South Gloucestershire constituencies in a broadly east/west arrangement. South Gloucestershire West would be the “ successor” to Filton and Bradley Stoke, with the inclusion of the wards of Severn Vale and Thornbury from the existing Thornbury and Yate constituency, the whole of the Winterbourne ward and the ‘return’ of the Pilning and Severn Beach ward, and a South Gloucestershire East constituency comprising six wards from the existing Thornbury and Yate constituency plus the whole of the Boyd Valley, and Frenchay and Downend wards, and the Emersons Green ward.

There was also significant opposition to the Conservative Party counter-proposal, particularly in the representations during the second consultation, for example Councillor Claire Young from Thornbury and Yate constituency (BCE-96423), Councillor Angela Morey (BCE-92437 and BCE-97835), and Penny Richardson (BCE-97837). Penny Richardson alluded to the fact that Filton and

Bradley Stoke was a relatively young constituency that was originally a hodgepodge of areas, but that it has developed its own identity and a real sense of stability and continuity. She asked that it be allowed a degree of longevity.

There was some support, but mostly objection, to the proposed Keynsham and North East Somerset constituency. In the initial proposals the four South Gloucestershire wards of Bitton and Oakland Common, Hanham, Longwell Green, and Parkwall and Warmley from the existing Kingswood constituency were included in the proposed constituency with 11 wards from North East Somerset. Most objections concerned the “abolition” of the Kingswood constituency, the exclusion of the town of Midsomer Norton from the constituency, and that the areas north of the river Avon have little in common with those areas to the south of it. The representations of Sam Ross (BCE-84603 and BCE-95845) are typical of those received in objection to this proposed constituency. There has been no objection to the initially proposed composition of this constituency from any of the four qualifying political parties.

A number of representatives have suggested that the name of the constituency is inaccurate and tautologous, as Keynsham is a North East Somerset town and the name does not reflect the communities from South Gloucestershire that are included. The Conservative Party supports the composition of the constituency, but suggests it be renamed North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire South.

The electorate of the Bath constituency was below the permitted range and was increased by the inclusion of the Bath and North East Somerset wards of Bathavon North and Newbridge. The initial proposals for Bath were largely supported, although there was some opposition as the Bathavon South ward was not included in the constituency (see under Frome below). Few representations were received with regard to the proposed Weston-super-Mare constituency from which, in order to reduce its electorate, the three largely rural wards of Blagdon & Churchill, Banwell & Winscombe, and Congresbury & Puxton were included in the proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency, thereby making Weston-super-Mare a more compact, urban constituency. Elsewhere in North Somerset, there was slightly more objection to the initial proposals for the North Somerset constituency, but much of this was in opposition to the surrounding constituencies and which had an impact on North Somerset. Notably, the current MP for North

Somerset, Dr Liam Fox, supported the initial proposals for North Somerset (BCE-85323).

Somerset

As all of the existing constituencies in Somerset have electorates that are considerably above the permitted electorate range, major change in the initial proposals was unavoidable, although there was a general consensus of support for the initial proposals from all the four qualifying political parties, albeit with some minor amendments.

Six Bath and North East Somerset wards, including the town of Midsomer Norton, were included in a Frome constituency, with 13 wards from the existing Frome and Somerton constituency, together with the South Somerset district ward of Bruton, which would be an orphan ward, and the Ashwick, Chilcompton and Stratton ward from the existing Wells constituency. In the initial proposals the Glastonbury and Somerton constituency contained a total of 15 wards from the existing Frome and Somerton constituency, including the town of Somerton itself, seven wards from the existing Wells constituency, including the towns of Glastonbury and Street, with which Glastonbury has close ties, and the South Somerset district ward of Hamdon.

There was a significant degree of opposition to the proposed Frome constituency with most of the objections concerning the inclusion of the Bathavon South ward in the constituency (as noted above). Typical of these are the representations from Robert and Avril Grieg (BCE-84170 and BCE-70092), who claim that the parishes and communities in the south of the ward - Claverton, Monkton and Wellow - should be in the Bath constituency. However, there was also notable support, for example from Frome and District Chamber of Commerce (BCE-79905), which said the proposed constituency is “much more coherent than the existing Somerton and Frome constituency”. The town of Somerton is included in the newly configured Glastonbury and Somerton constituency. There was similarly some limited objection, but also support for the proposed constituency, for example from

Somerset Independents (BCE-66981). In their revised submission, BCE-97624, the Conservative Party included the Pennards and Ditcheat ward in Frome rather than Glastonbury and Somerton, which is also supported in representation BCE-83252.

The proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency was significantly different to the existing Wells constituency: in addition to the inclusion of wards from surrounding constituencies, it would no longer include the town of Burnham-on-Sea, nor the Ashwick, Chilcompton and Stratton ward. It would extend to the Bristol Channel (as the existing Wells constituency already does), but at a different point, and cross the boundary between Somerset and the North Somerset unitary authority. In excess of 55 representations objecting to the initial proposals for the constituency were received, but this figure is possibly exaggerated as it will include some representations regarding surrounding constituencies that name-check Wells and Mendip Hills. Kenn Parish Council objects to its inclusion in the constituency (BCE-63436), and Peter Lander(BCE-81337) claims that the proposals for the constituency “make no sense whatsoever”. However, there was some notable support, for example from Janet Carter (BCE-84144), and James Heapey, MP for Wells (BCE-74863), as well as from the four qualifying political parties. The very high electorate of the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency at 85,448 was reduced by the inclusion of four wards that comprise the town of Burnham-on-Sea with 13 remaining wards from the existing Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency, and was renamed Bridgwater. Whilst generally supportive, BCE-83792 expressed the views of a number of those in opposition to the inclusion of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station development in the Tiverton and Minehead constituency, rather than Bridgwater, which is home to many of the plant’s workforce, and there were some calls for the constituency to include reference to Bridgwater Bay or Burnham in the constituency name. The initial proposals were supported by the current MP, Iain Liddell-Grainger (BCE-97812).

In Yeovil, slight adjustments were made to realign the constituency boundaries with ward boundary changes, maintaining the entirety of the town of Yeovil within the constituency. Opposition to the proposed constituency was limited, but most of those in opposition, including Yeovil’s current MP, Marcus Fysh (BCE-85217 and BCE-97893) noted that the Northstone, Ivelchester and St Michael’s ward is currently split between existing constituencies. Mr Fysh suggested that this large, rural ward (which is included in

the Glastonbury and Somerton constituency in the initial proposals) be split, with the area in the south that is in the existing Yeovil constituency remaining in Yeovil.

It was proposed that the reconfigured Taunton Deane constituency be called Taunton, as the Taunton Deane district after which it was originally named no longer exists. The proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Tiverton and Minehead included the remaining wards of the existing Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency, three wards from the existing Taunton Deane constituency, and the whole of the two Somerset West and Taunton district wards of South Quantock, and Wiveliscombe & District, which are both currently divided between constituencies (following local government ward changes). There was considerable opposition to the constituency containing parts of two counties, for example BCE-84838, but some support, for example from a local councillor (BCE-82741), who considered the new constituency “geographically cohesive”. However, much of the opposition concerned the inclusion of the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward in this constituency rather than in Taunton, with it being suggested that the ward could be exchanged and retained in Taunton with the Upper Culm ward being included in the Tiverton and Minehead constituency. The current MP for Taunton Deane, Rebecca Pow, provided evidence in her representations (BCE-71726, BCE-85941, and BCE-97953) that Norton Manor Camp, which is home to 40 Commando Royal Marines, and which is included in the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward, is integral to the town of Taunton, and that 40 Commando were granted the Freedom of the Borough of Taunton in 2003, which gives them the right to parade through the town with a marching band.

Devon

As in Somerset, there was a strong degree of support for the initial proposals in Devon from all the qualifying political parties, although in other areas, some relatively minor alternatives were proposed. However, there was unanimous opposition to the proposed Exeter and Exmouth constituencies.

As a result of the inclusion of eight wards (including those comprising the town of Tiverton itself) from the existing Tiverton and Honiton constituency in the proposed cross-county Tiverton and Minehead constituency, Tiverton and Honiton was renamed

Honiton. This constituency was extended westwards in the initial proposals to include four wards from the existing East Devon constituency, including the towns of Ottery St Mary and Sidmouth. The initial proposals for Honiton were reasonably well supported, for example by Simon Jupp, MP for East Devon (BCE-86099 and BCE-83738), albeit with a suggested name change. Most of the opposition concerned the separation of the town of Ottery St Mary from the West Hill and Aylesbeare ward, for example Colin Bennett (BCE-92521), and Elizabeth Pangbourne (BCE-92469). As it was considered that the existing East Devon constituency name did not accurately reflect its location, following the inclusion of four East Devon council wards in the Honiton constituency, and the inclusion of additional wards to the west, the constituency was renamed Exmouth.

The electorate of the existing Exeter constituency, at 80,676, is above the permitted range and the constituency also has a number of wards that cross the boundaries of existing constituencies following local government ward changes. In the initial proposals the three City of Exeter wards of Topsham, St. Loyes and Priory were included wholly in the proposed Exmouth constituency. Apart from these changes, the existing Exeter constituency was otherwise unchanged. This proposal was almost unanimously opposed; more than 500 written representations were received in opposition, as well as petitions containing 1,853 names, and this was the largest issue in the South West region and one of the largest in England as a whole. All the qualifying political parties and Ben Bradshaw, MP for Exeter (BCE-77026) objected. The main issue was the inclusion of the Priory ward in the Exmouth constituency. Many of the representations detailed, in some length and with passion, the historic links of the ward with the centre of Exeter, for example Catherine Craig (BCE-64028), Andrew Hannan (BCE-62899), and Susan Turner (BCE-79540). Many others suggested that the Pinhoe ward, rather than Priory, should be included in the Exmouth constituency, for example, Marina Asvachin (BCE-62793), and Exeter City Council (BCE-82644), although there was also some opposition to this alternative, for example BCE-84334.

The existing North Devon constituency is wholly unchanged in the initial proposals, and the existing Newton Abbot, Torbay, and Central Devon constituencies were changed only to realign with changes to local government ward boundaries. None of these constituencies were particularly contentious, although there were calls for the Newton Abbot constituency to be renamed Teignbridge, a former name for the constituency, in a number of representations, including that of the Conservative Party (BCE-86590 and BCE-97624). It was acknowledged in the initial proposals that the Central Devon constituency would still contain

wards from four different local authorities, but it was considered that any alternatives would require significant changes to constituencies that otherwise require only minor changes. However, there were calls, for example from Jamie Kemp, councillor for the Exe Valley ward (BCE-97831 - supported by the Conservative Party) for the ward to be included in the Exmouth constituency, which would mean that Exe Valley would no longer be an orphan ward in the Central Devon constituency. BCE-90318 suggested that, due to its close proximity to Sidmouth, the ward of Newton Poppleford and Hartford should be included in the Honiton constituency, and that this would also allow for the inclusion of the Exe Valley ward in Exmouth. However, the inclusion of the Exe Valley ward was opposed by the Labour Party during the second consultation (BCE-95667), who said that without the Exe Valley ward, the Bradninch and Silverton wards would effectively become detached from the rest of Central Devon due to there being poor road access to the rest of the constituency.

Relatively minor changes were proposed to the existing Totnes constituency, with the inclusion of the Charterlands ward from the existing South West Devon constituency in the proposed constituency. However, there was opposition, largely from residents of the Brixham area, who considered that they should be included in the Torbay constituency (BCE-61417), although this was not possible due to the electorate size of the Torbay constituency. There were also many representations - in excess of 200, and a petition containing 65 names - that supported the call from Anthony Magnall, MP for Totnes (BCE-57096), to rename the constituency as South Devon. He considers the current name not only “fails to reflect the constituency as it now is, but alienates residents who feel they are often overlooked” and that the name should be more inclusive to those who live in areas of the constituency other than Totnes. This proposal is also supported by the Liberal Democrats.

The existing Torridge and West Devon, and South West Devon constituencies are otherwise largely unchanged in the initial proposals, apart from the inclusion of the two West Devon District wards of Buckland Monachorum and Burrator in the proposed South West Devon constituency from Torridge and West Devon. To reflect the fewer West Devon district wards that are now included in the constituency, but also recognising the main West Devon population centre it includes, it was proposed that the constituency be renamed Torridge and Tavistock. The inclusion of the Buckland Monachorum and Burrator wards in South West Devon was objected to in a number of representations, for example Alan Hughes (BCE-91259), and Val Bolitho (BCE-56595), who claim the wards' ties are with the town of Tavistock. Stephen Fletcher (BCE-58902) said that the proposals divided the National

Park. However, there was support, for example from John Gray of the Torridge and West Devon Conservative Association (BCE-81798).

In the City of Plymouth, the existing Plymouth Moor View constituency has an electorate below the permitted range, while the Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency has an electorate above that range. Due to the large electorates of the city wards, there is no solution that allows for both constituencies to fall within the permitted electorate range through the transfer of a single ward. There is a configuration that brings both constituencies within the permitted electorate range by exchanging two wards, but the result of this configuration would be the inclusion of the Devonport ward in the Plymouth Moor View constituency, thereby constructing a constituency that contains inland rural areas in the same constituency as the historic dockyard. It was considered that this was unsatisfactory and likely to break community ties between Devonport, Plymouth Hoe and the Barbican. In order to retain these community ties, it was proposed that the Peverell ward be divided in the centre of Plymouth, broadly along the A386 Outland Road, with three polling districts being included in the Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency, and two polling districts of the ward being included in the Plymouth Moor View constituency. This would result in minimal change to both constituencies.

Among the representations there was support for the initial proposals from the Labour Party (including Christopher Cuddihee of Plymouth Sutton and Devonport Constituency Labour Party, BCE-83437), and the Green and Liberal Democrat parties, but also support for the Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-86590 and BCE-97624), including from Tony Carson, Chairman of Plymouth Sutton and Devonport Conservative Association (BCE-84707). This counter-proposal divided, instead, the Devonport ward. Alistair Philpot (BCE-62873 and BCE-97815) suggested that Plymouth be divided across three constituencies: Plymouth East, Plymouth North and Ivybridge, and Plymouth West. John Bryant (BCE-94126), took a similar approach, suggesting Plymouth Devonport, Plymouth Sutton, and South West Devon constituencies, the latter including wards from the north of Plymouth, rather than the east. Luke Pollard, MP for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport (BCE-97427), opposed the Conservative Party counter-proposals to split the Keyham area in Devonport ward and include part in the Plymouth Moor View constituency, and

highlighted the close community ties with the rest of the Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency that had been strengthened by the tragic events in the area in 2021 (though some objected to this line of argument, for example Martin Slator, BCE-91192).

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners noted that overall there was a significant degree of support for the constituencies across the four council areas that used to be Avon, and that opposition was generally limited. There was widespread acceptance that Bristol would require an additional constituency, and little by way of opposition to the initial proposals to accommodate the additional constituency. It was noted that all four qualifying political parties supported the proposals for Bristol. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that no changes be made to any of the five initially proposed Bristol constituencies of Bristol Central, Bristol East, Bristol North East, Bristol North West, and Bristol South .

In South Gloucestershire, there was some limited opposition to the wards of the existing Kingswood constituency being included variously in the Filton and Bradley Stoke, Bristol North East, and Keynsham and North East Somerset constituencies, but nothing that the Assistant Commissioners considered would persuade them to make any alterations to the initial proposals. However, they do consider that the name Keynsham and North East Somerset is not an accurate name to describe the constituency. A number of names were suggested, but the one that the Assistant Commissioners considered was the most suitable was North East Somerset and Hanham, a slight variation of which was suggested by Jed Quinn (BCE-97965). Hanham is arguably the largest community from the South Gloucestershire wards that are included with the North East Somerset wards. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the constituency be renamed North East Somerset and Hanham. They recommend no change to the composition of any of the constituencies in this part of the sub-region

The Assistant Commissioners noted the general level of agreement and support for the initial proposals from the qualifying political parties across Somerset. They agreed with the Conservative Party, who, in their submission during the second consultation (BCE-97624), said that the initial proposals were “probably the only practical solution to increase the Bath electorate”. With regard

to the proposed Frome constituency, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the frustrations of those living in the south of the Bathavon South ward at their proposed inclusion in that constituency. However, it was not possible to include both the Bathavon North, and Bathavon South wards in the Bath constituency. They also noted the support for the constituency from, for example, the Somerset Independents, who claimed to represent local residents (BCE-66981), and the evidence given by Frome and District Chamber of Commerce. They noted that those in opposition to the proposed Glastonbury and Somerton constituency outnumbered the representations in support, but these numbers were not large and they did not consider the evidence that had been submitted had persuaded them to revise the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that no changes be made to the Bath, Frome, and Glastonbury and Somerset constituencies as initially proposed.

The Assistant Commissioners similarly acknowledged the opposition to the proposed Wells and Mendip Hills, and Bridgwater constituencies, but also the considerable support, notably from the local MPs. They considered the issue of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station development, which was located in the Quantock Vale ward and which some suggested should be in the proposed Bridgwater constituency, but noted that no-one had made a clear counter-proposal to this effect. They were not persuaded that the name of the Bridgwater constituency should be changed to Bridgewater Bay, Bridgwater and Burnham, or anything similar. They therefore recommend no changes be made to the Wells and Mendip Hills, and Bridgwater constituencies as initially proposed.

In Yeovil, the assistant Commissioners considered that the initial proposals had aimed to keep all the wards of the town in the constituency, and that only the southern part of the newly enlarged ward of Northstone, Ivelchester and St Michael's had been previously included in the existing constituency. They considered the calls for the ward to be split, with this area being retained within the Yeovil constituency, as proposed by Marcus Fysh MP, but they were not persuaded that the proposed split ward met the Commission's criteria regarding the splitting of wards. They therefore recommend no change to the Yeovil constituency as initially proposed.

The proposed constituency of Taunton was considerably smaller in area than its predecessor, Tauton Deane, and it was inevitable that the constituency would no longer contain all the wards of the existing constituency. The main area of objection was to the exclusion of the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward from the constituency. The Assistant Commissioners noted that the ward was physically close to Taunton town centre, and the evidence presented for the ward's inclusion in the Taunton constituency, in particular the town's links with Norton Manor Camp in the ward. They considered the evidence presented by Rebecca Pow MP to be compelling and were persuaded by her suggestion to retain the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward in the same constituency as Taunton. However, the Assistant Commissioners were less persuaded by the calls for the constituency to include the town of Wellington in its name. The inclusion of the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward in Taunton would mean that another ward would have to be included in the Tiverton and Minehead constituency in exchange, to allow both constituencies to remain within the permitted electorate range. They noted the representations that had suggested that the Upper Culm ward should instead be included in the Tiverton and Minehead constituency, for example BCE-82696. They noted that the ward is currently in the existing Tiverton and Honiton constituency, and that its inclusion in the proposed constituency would maintain the ward's ties with the town of Tiverton, and also the Lower Culm ward, which had been included in the Tiverton and Minehead constituency in the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners noted the opposition to the cross-county constituency of Tiverton and Minehead, although they also noted some support, and acknowledged that within the arrangement of constituencies that had been initially proposed, a constituency would have to cross the county boundary between Somerset and Devon. Although part of Devon would be included in the same constituency as holiday resorts on the Bristol Channel, they considered that the proposed constituency was appropriate.

The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend the alterations to the Taunton, and Tiverton and Minehead constituencies with regard to the wards of Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove, and Upper Culm, but do not recommend that the name of the Taunton constituency be changed from that set out in initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend there be no revisions to the North Devon constituency, which remains unchanged from the existing constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence regarding the Torbay, Newton Abbot and Totnes constituencies. They did not consider there was any compelling evidence for them to recommend any changes to the Torbay and Newton Abbot constituencies. Although they were sympathetic to those who called for the name of the Newton Abbot constituency to revert to its former name of Teignbridge, they noted that Newton Abbot was the name of the existing constituency, that there had been no changes to the existing constituency, other than to realign constituency and new ward boundaries, and that to change the name of the constituency could be confusing to residents. They therefore recommend no change from initial proposals to either the Torbay or Newton Abbot constituencies. However, they considered that a persuasive case had been made for a change of name only to the Totnes constituency, which had been altered to a relatively minor level in the initial proposals. They were persuaded that the name 'Totnes' could be considered as inappropriate in view of the other significant areas that are included in the constituency, such as Brixham, and agreed that a name change to South Devon would be more inclusive and would be welcomed in the constituency. They therefore recommend no change to the composition of the Totnes constituency, but do recommend that it be renamed South Devon.

In Honiton, the initial proposals to include four wards from the existing East Devon constituency, including the towns of Ottery St Mary and Sidmouth were reasonably well supported. Most of the opposition concerned the separation of the town of Ottery St Mary from the West Hill and Aylesbeare ward which, it has been proposed, would remain in the Exmouth constituency. They noted, among other representations, the evidence given by Jes Bailey (BCE-97823), who called for the inclusion of the ward from Exmouth to maintain social and business ties. There were also calls for the Newton Poppleford and Hartford ward to be included in the Honiton constituency, due to its close proximity to the town of Sidmouth. The Assistant Commissioners identified that it would be possible for Honiton to include both these additional wards and for its electorate to remain within the permitted range. They also noted calls for the constituency name to include a reference to Sidmouth, the sizable town which would now be included in the constituency. Alistair Philpot (BCE-59706) had suggested that the Budleigh and Rayleigh ward should also be included in the Honiton constituency, although the Assistant Commissioners noted that it would not be possible to include the ward in light of the

other changes that were being considered. Having considered the evidence, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that both the wards of West Hill and Aylesbeare, and Newton Poppleford and Hartford should be included in the Honiton constituency, and that its name should be revised to Honiton and Sidmouth.

The initial proposals for the Exeter and Exmouth constituencies had resulted in overwhelming opposition, particularly with regard to the Priory ward. The ward had been included in the Exmouth constituency in the initial proposals because it was currently divided between the two existing constituencies of Exeter and East Devon, but the very significant and detailed evidence in so many representations had demonstrated that the ward was integral to the city of Exeter and almost no-one supported its exclusion. Many representations suggested that the Pinhoe ward, instead, should be the ward to be included in the Exmouth constituency. Although Pinhoe is a City of Exeter ward, it comprises mostly new development and has ties to the town of Broadclyst and the newer developments in the Cranbrook ward. This alternative was also proposed by Exeter City Council, although the ward's inclusion in the Exmouth constituency was not unanimous. The ward's inclusion in Exmouth would mean that the three eastern wards of Exeter would all be in the Exmouth constituency. The Assistant Commissioners found the evidence with regard to the Priory ward to be compelling and they therefore recommend that it be included in the Exeter constituency, and exchanged with the Pinhoe ward, which would be included in Exmouth. To reflect these changes, they noted that a number of changes of name had been suggested, but they recommend that Exeter should retain its name, and that Exmouth be renamed Exeter East and Exmouth.

It had further been suggested (as considered above) that the Exe Valley ward should be included in the Exmouth constituency from the Central Devon constituency. The changes made to constituencies in this area meant that this was now possible. The Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Exe Valley ward be included in Exeter East and Exmouth. This would mean that Exe Valley would no longer be an orphan ward in the Central Devon constituency, and that Central Devon would now contain parts of three local authorities, rather than four as in the existing arrangement and the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners considered the representations regarding the proposed Torridge and Tavistock, and West Devon constituencies, and noted the opposition from the Buckland Monachorum and Burrator wards. While they acknowledged this

opposition, they also noted some support for the initial proposals and considered that any changes would have a knock-on impact throughout the constituencies in Devon. They were not persuaded by the evidence to include the Buckland Monachorum and Burrator wards in the same constituency as Tavistock, and recommend no change to the Torridge and Tavistock, and South West Devon constituencies as initially proposed.

The Assistant Commissioners considered that the issue in Plymouth lent itself to a binary solution: whether to split the Peverell or Devonport wards, and they noted the evidence that had been submitted, both in support and opposition to the splitting of either ward. It was decided that a site visit to Plymouth would be necessary to 'see on the ground' the proposed splits. The site visit was undertaken on foot.

It was considered that the A386 provided a strong, clear boundary between the polling districts that it has been proposed should be included in the Plymouth Moor View constituency and the rest of Peverell, along almost all of the road's extent through the Peverell ward. This was reinforced by Central Park which also separated these areas. Furthermore, it was considered the nature of the housing to the south and east of the road was somewhat different to that in the area to the north and west, and that the areas either side of the A386 had a distinctly different 'feel' about them, with the area to the north and west being more similar in nature to the North Prospect area of Ham ward.

The site visit continued through the North Prospect area to the north of the Devonport ward and in particular, the Keyham area. It is this area that the Conservative Party had suggested should be separated from the rest of the Devonport ward and be included in the Plymouth Moor View constituency.

During the visit, it was considered that the housing in Keyham was similar in nature to that in the Ham ward (which was being included in Plymouth Moor View), but also similar to the housing in the Ford area of the Stoke ward (which would be included in the Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency). The evidence given at the public hearing in Exeter which suggested that close links had been forged between Keyham, the rest of the Devonport ward and the Ford area was also considered. However, it was noted that the Conservative Party counter-proposal did use identifiable, existing ward boundaries along significant roads (Wolseley Road,

Henderson Place/Royal Navy Road, and Moor View Road).

It was considered, however, that the Conservative Party counter-proposals would divide the Devonport Docks effectively across the middle, excluding the administrative buildings and Headquarters of Her Majesty's Naval Base, Devonport from the maritime-focused Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency.

The Conservative Party considered that it would still be appropriate for the southern constituency to be called Plymouth Sutton and Devonport. However, with the exclusion of a significant part of the Devonport ward itself (not least the naval HQ), the Assistant Commissioners struggled to see how the long-standing and historical reference to Devonport could continue to be included in either constituency name if the counter-proposal were to be adopted.

The Assistant Commissioners considered the merits and disadvantages of the splitting of either ward was finely balanced. However, they were not persuaded that the division of the Devonport ward, in which the Keyham area, part of Devonport docks, and the administrative headquarters of the Devonport fleet would be included in the Plymouth Moor View constituency, was a satisfactory or appropriate proposition. Although the splitting of the Peverell ward was not without disadvantages, they consider that the advantages of splitting the Peverell ward significantly outweighed any advantage of the splitting of the Devonport ward instead. They therefore recommend that no revisions be made to either the Plymouth Sutton and Devonport, and Plymouth Moor View constituencies, as initially proposed.

Cornwall

Of the six existing constituencies in this sub-region, only four have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under the initial proposals the number of constituencies in this sub-region remained the same. The Commission received many representations that expressed support for Cornwall being treated as a stand-alone sub-region and that no constituency would cross the county boundary into Devon.

In the initial proposals, relatively minor changes were proposed to the existing constituencies in the county, with the existing North Cornwall constituency being wholly unchanged in the proposals, and the three existing constituencies of South East Cornwall, St Austell and Newquay, and St Ives being changed only to realign them with new local government ward boundaries. To bring the Truro and Falmouth constituency within the permitted electorate range, it was proposed that the whole of the Perranporth, and Threemilestone & Chacewater wards be included in the Camborne and Redruth constituency. However, because of the significant changes to ward boundaries in Cornwall and the preference to include whole wards within constituencies, it was necessary to include additional wards with smaller electorates within the Truro and Falmouth constituency to bring it back within the permitted electorate range. It was therefore proposed to include within the constituency the Constantine, Mabe & Mawnan ward, and the whole of the divided Falmouth Trescobeas & Budock ward from the Camborne and Redruth constituency.

A number of counter-proposals were received suggesting alternative configurations to constituencies. Many of these, including Julian Young of St Austell and Newquay Liberal Democrats (BCE-80197), and St Austell Bay Economic Forum (BCE-74129), drew attention to the historic China Clay area - specifically the Roche & Bugle ward. Under the initial proposals, this divided ward was included wholly within the South East Cornwall constituency. However, many representations said that this would, in effect, divide the China Clay area between constituencies, and called for it to be included instead with other China Clay wards in the St Austell and Newquay constituency. The Labour Party (BCE-79532) and the Devon and Cornwall Liberal Democrats' Simon Taylor (BCE-97404), suggested that, in order to accommodate the Roche & Bugle ward in St Austell and Newquay, the Fowey, Tywardreath and Par ward should be included in the South East Cornwall constituency. The Conservative Party had initially

supported all six of the Commission's proposed constituencies for Cornwall (BCE-86590), but in their response to the second consultation (BCE-97624) they supported the inclusion of the Roche and Bugle ward in St Austell and Newquay, but proposed instead that the St Columb Major, St Mawgan and St Wenn ward be included in the North Cornwall constituency. This was supported by Cornwall Council (BCE-97825), in a detailed rationale from James Mustoe (BCE-97810), and by Steve Double, MP for St Austell and Newquay (BCE-97811).

There was also considerable opposition to the inclusion of the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward in the Camborne and Redruth constituency in the initial proposals. A number of individuals, the Liberal Democrats, and the Conservative Party in their later representation (BCE-97624) provided a counter-proposal for the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward, suggesting that the continued inclusion of this ward in the Truro and Falmouth constituency would better reflect the local communities than had the initial proposals. Much of the opposition received to our initial proposals was from residents who maintained that Threemilestone has a significant residential area which is a satellite village of Truro, with many local businesses in the Threemilestone area likely to consider themselves a part of the greater Truro trading area, for example Stuart Roden (BCE-77139), BCE-89938, and BCE-96442. The name itself derives from the fact it is three miles from the centre of Truro (Susan Holden, BCE-65135). The Conservative Party counter-proposal closely matched existing constituencies, by including the Constantine, Mabe & Mawnan in the Camborne and Redruth constituency (where it is currently located) in order to accommodate the inclusion of Threemilestone & Chacewater in Truro and Falmouth. The Liberal Democrats also included the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward in Truro and Falmouth, but instead proposed that the St Newlyn East, Cubert & Goonhaven ward be included in Camborne and Redruth. . The Labour Party (BCE-97834) considered that it was not appropriate that either of these two wards be included in another constituency, as suggested, and supported the retention of the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward in the proposed Camborne and Redruth constituency.

The initial proposals for the remainder of the constituencies in the Cornwall sub-region were largely uncontroversial and supported, although there was some further opposition to the proposed Camborne and Redruth, and St Ives constituencies on the grounds that the town of Hayle should be included in St Ives, from (for example Guy Shipton, BCE-67158), and that the St Ives constituency should also include a reference to the Lizard Peninsula in its name.

Recommendations

Having considered the initial proposals, all the counter-proposals and suggestions for the Cornwall sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners considered that there was a degree of merit in each of them. However, on balance, they have decided to recommend that the Commission adopt the proposals suggested by Cornwall Council and The Conservative Party, whose evidence they considered to be the most persuasive, and whose proposals more closely resemble the existing pattern of constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners consider that the China Clay area should be wholly contained within one constituency through the inclusion of the Roche & Bugle ward in the St Austell and Newquay constituency, which is best accommodated by including the St Columb Major, St Mawgan & St Wenn ward in North Cornwall. They consider that there are strong transport links between the ward and constituency through the A39 and heard evidence that the area has been in a North Cornwall constituency in the past. Opposition to the initial proposals and support for this counter-proposal was considered to be strong.

The Labour Party, in their response to the second consultation (BCE-95667), and others, suggested an alternative configuration to keep the China Clay area whole by including the Fowey, Tywardreath & Par ward in South East Cornwall. However, the Assistant Commissioners consider that there is strong association between this ward and the neighbouring St Bazely ward, both of which are included in the existing St Austell and Newquay constituency, as well as there being significantly weaker links to South East Cornwall, including a lack of a river crossing across the Fowey estuary.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward be included in the Truro and Falmouth constituency, with the Constantine, Mabe & Mawnan ward being included in Camborne and Redruth. In this configuration the two wards are exchanged, with both wards being included in their existing constituencies and the concerns in the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward are addressed. The Assistant Commissioners did accept that the Constantine, Mabe & Mawnan ward inevitably looked towards the town of Falmouth, but considered that as the ward was currently in the existing Camborne and Redruth

constituency, and that there were distinct benefits of retaining the Threemilestone & Chacewater ward in Truro and Falmouth, their recommendation was balanced and appropriate.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend no change from the initial proposals for the St Ives, and South East Cornwall constituencies.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	25	43%
- Changed in composition and name	5	9%
- Changed in composition only	17	29%
- Changed in name only	3	5%

Recommendations constituency names

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Bath	No	No
Bournemouth East	No	No
Bournemouth West	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Bridgwater	No	No
Bristol Central	No	No
Bristol East	No	No
Bristol North East	No	No
Bristol North West	No	No
Bristol South	No	No
Camborne and Redruth	Yes	No
Central Devon	Yes	No
Cheltenham	No	No
Chippenham	Yes	No
Christchurch	No	No
East Wiltshire	Yes	No
Exeter	Yes	No
Exeter East and Exmouth	Yes	Yes
Filton and Bradley Stoke	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Forest of Dean	No	No
Frome	No	No
Glastonbury and Somerton	No	No
Gloucester	Yes	No
Honiton and Sidmouth	Yes	Yes
Melksham and Devizes	Yes	No
Mid Dorset and North Poole	No	Yes
Newton Abbot	No	No
North Cornwall	Yes	No
North Devon	No	No
North Dorset	No	No
North East Somerset and Hanham	No	Yes
North Somerset	No	No
Northern Cotswolds	Yes	Yes
Plymouth Moor View	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Plymouth Sutton and Devonport	No	No
Poole	No	No
Salisbury	Yes	No
South Devon	No	Yes
South Dorset	No	No
South East Cornwall	Yes	No
South West Devon	No	No
South West Wiltshire	Yes	Yes
Southern Cotswolds	Yes	Yes
St Austell and Newquay	Yes	No
St Ives	No	No
Stroud	Yes	No
Swindon North	No	No
Swindon South	Yes	No
Taunton	Yes	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Tewkesbury	Yes	No
Thornbury and Yate	No	No
Tiverton and Minehead	Yes	No
Torbay	No	No
Torrige and Tavistock	No	No
Truro and Falmouth	Yes	No
Wells and Mendip Hill	No	No
West Dorset	No	No
Weston-super-Mare	No	No
Yeovil	No	No



**Boundary
Commission
for England**

**North West - Revised Proposals recommendations
Commission paper**

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2023 Review

Electorate quota: 73,393

Electorate range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to the North West: 73 (a reduction of two).
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 10 (13%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 2 (3%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 4
- Total number of local authorities in region: 39
- Local authorities which completed (or are due to complete) a local government electoral review after the BCE cut-off date of 1 December 2020:¹ 19 (Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Carlisle, Chorley, Fylde, Halton, Lancaster, Liverpool, Oldham, Pendle, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, St Helens, Tameside, Trafford, West Lancashire, Wigan).

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical Constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Cheshire	827,414	11.27	11
Cumbria	389,717	5.31	6
Greater Manchester	2,000,428	27.26	27
Lancashire	1,114,043	15.18	16
Merseyside	1,049,947	14.31	15
Totals	5,381,549	73.33	75

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the North West region into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Cheshire and Merseyside*	1,877,361	25.58	26	26	72,206
Cumbria and Lancashire*	1,503,760	20.49	22	20	75,188
Greater Manchester	2,000,428	27.26	27	27	74,090
Region Totals	5,381,549	73.33	75	73	73,719

*In the Initial proposals, the Southport constituency crossed the Merseyside/Lancashire county boundary. This table displays the sub-regions whole, and has not been re-calculated based on the proposed crossing.

Number of representations received

In the North West region, the Commission received a total of 6,825 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 5,034 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 1,791 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were five in the North West region (Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, Preston, and Kendal). Some of these related to comments made during first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ²	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ³	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	56	6	62
Official political party response (both national and regional)	29	4	33
Peer from the House of Lords	0	0	0

² As declared by the respondents themselves.

³ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

Local councillor	175	49	124
Local authority	14	7	21
Parish or town council	19	13	32
Other organisation	54	19	73
Member of the public	4,687	1,693	6,380
Totals	5,034	1791	6,825

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so in parts of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire.

Campaigns and petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns were received. In the North West region, these were as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
Support for Bury North	BCE-86579	Support	106
Opposition to Westmorland and Lonsdale changes	BCE-86580	Oppose	434
Keep Leigh in Leigh	BCE-86581	Oppose	485
Opposition to Bury South losing Radcliffe North Ward	BCE-86582	Oppose	146
Proposal to move Lower Darwen into Blackburn	BCE-86599	Poll	Oppose - 221 Support - 8
I support Morecambe and Lunesdale being kept separate from the City of Lancaster	BCE-86602	Poll	Oppose - 34 Support - 975
As a Skerton Resident, I	BCE-86601	Support	Oppose - 1

identify as living in Lancaster			Support - 119
Opposition to Lowton becoming part of Wigan	BCE-97957	Support	161

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

Initial proposals sub-regions	Revised proposals sub-regions
Cumbria and Lancashire*	Cumbria and Lancashire*
Cheshire and Merseyside*	Cheshire and Merseyside*
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester

*In both the initial proposals and the recommended revised proposals, the Southport constituency crosses the Merseyside/Lancashire county boundary.

These revised proposals recommendations have been formulated using the same sub-regions as the initial proposals. Some counter-proposals were received that suggested alternative sub-regions. A number of these constructed constituencies without regard to any discernible sub-region (e.g. BCE-59207 and BCE-85367). Aside from these, no counter-proposals were received which the Assistant Commissioners considered provided an alternative arrangement of viable sub-regions, and which would better reflect the statutory factors in the region.

The initial proposals sought to accommodate as many counties as possible as sub-regions in their own right. Greater Manchester is, however, the only 'county' within the North West region that can truly stand alone as a sub-region without causing disruption and breaking local ties elsewhere in the region. Cumbria's electorate of 389,717 results in a mathematical entitlement of 5.31 constituencies. This number is too large for the county to be allocated five whole constituencies, and too few for six. As such, it could not be considered as a sub-region in its own right and it was therefore necessary for Cumbria to be paired with another county. The only pairing that respects regional and national boundaries is with Lancashire.

The electorate of the metropolitan area of Merseyside, of 1,049,947, suggests a mathematical entitlement of 14.31 constituencies, which again makes it extremely difficult to allocate a whole number of constituencies to the area without causing significant disruption. In determining which area Merseyside should be paired with, it was noted that the electorate in the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, at 244,680 gives the borough a mathematical entitlement of 3.33 constituencies. This means that there cannot be a whole number of constituencies wholly contained within the Wirral borough boundary. It was therefore necessary for a constituency to either cross between the Wirral and the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority, or for a constituency to span the River Mersey between the Wirral and the City of Liverpool. In previous reviews, the crossing of the River Mersey has been strongly opposed, so the initial proposals crossed the Wirral boundary with Cheshire West and Chester treated Merseyside and Cheshire as a sub-region.

Despite supporting Lancashire and Merseyside being generally in separate sub-regions, the Assistant Commissioners are recommending one constituency that crosses the county – and sub-region – boundary, matching the initial proposals in this area. It combines four wards of the District of West Lancashire with the Merseyside town of Southport. This has been accepted as being necessary to improve the prospective constituency pattern across both Merseyside and Lancashire by the national Conservative and Labour party counter-proposals (BCE-86369, BCE-79505). It has, however, received widespread opposition from residents of the Ainsdale ward, who contend that their ward is an intrinsic part of Southport and should be included within the Southport constituency (BCE-77635, BCE-90826).

The initial proposals contained four cross-county boundary constituencies that, it was considered, improved the proposals for constituencies across the North West region. There was broad support for the proposed sub-regions throughout both consultation periods, with all major political parties supporting the stance of the initial proposals. Some counter-proposals were received that

proposed crossing the Greater Manchester boundary (Jonathan Stansby BCE-59207, Oliver Raven BCE-85367), or attempted to avoid crossing the county boundary between Merseyside and Lancashire (John Bryant, BCE-70325). These alternative configurations were considered carefully; however, in order to respect existing constituency boundaries across the region as far as possible, they are not being recommended as revised proposals. The Assistant Commissioners are therefore not recommending any change to the sub-region grouping suggested at initial proposals.

As in the initial proposals the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many existing constituencies as is practicable.

Under the revised proposals thirteen of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, two more than the initial proposals. A further five are unchanged except to realign with local government ward boundary changes: three more than the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners' recommendations do not change the number of constituencies that cross local authority boundaries. As in the initial proposals, there are four recommended constituencies that do so: Morecambe and Lunesdale (Cumbria and Lancashire); Southport (Lancashire and Merseyside); Ellesmere Port and Bromborough; and Widnes and Halewood (both Cheshire and Merseyside).

The Assistant Commissioners recommend revising the composition of 33 of the 73 constituencies we proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, they have decided not to recommend any revisions to the composition of the remaining 40. Of the constituencies where they do recommend revising the composition, they recommend revising the names of 16. Of the constituencies where they have not revised the composition, they recommend revising only the name of one⁴.

⁴ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	11	2	21	43	46	23	4	4	0	3	5	52
Revised proposals	13	5	35	38	43	26	4	4	0	7	4	53

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county	Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two counties			
Cumbria and Lancashire	2	3	6	14	6	11	3	1	1	1	14
Cheshire and Merseyside*	3	1	11	15	16	9	1	3	4	2	19

Greater Manchester	8	1	18	9	21	6	0	0	2	2	20
Totals	13	5	35	38	43	26	4	4	7	4	53

* The Southport county crossing is counted under Cheshire and Merseyside rather than Cumbria and Lancashire in this table.

Cumbria and Lancashire

There are currently six constituencies in Cumbria, none of which have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range. Therefore none are able to be retained unchanged. Furthermore, only five constituencies can be wholly allocated within the county boundary, necessitating one cross-county boundary constituency to be constructed, the larger part of which is within Lancashire.

To reduce the electorate of the Carlisle constituency to within the permitted range, the Dalston and Burgh ward was included in the Workington constituency in the initial proposals as an 'orphan' ward, and no further changes were proposed to the Carlisle constituency. Three of the qualifying political parties agree with the initial proposals concerning the proposed Carlisle constituency and that, despite its strong links to the city, the Dalston and Burgh ward is best placed to not be included within the constituency. This is the only aspect of the initial proposals within Cumbria that has resulted in broad agreement. There was, however, opposition from local residents, for example, BCE-79264.

In order to avoid another constituency that would extend across Cumbria, a Workington constituency was proposed that is more closely aligned with the boundaries of Allerdale district than the existing constituency. This allowed for both a distinction between the ports of Workington and Whitehaven, and took account of new local government ward boundaries in this area. The proposed Workington constituency includes all the wards of Allerdale district, except the Crummock and Derwent Valley, and Keswick wards, and also includes the Dalston and Burgh ward from the City of Carlisle.

The initially proposed Westmorland and Eden constituency included the entirety of Eden district, extended into South Lakeland District, and included the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale, and Kendal Rural wards, and the five wards that constitute the town of Kendal itself. The A6 and M6 provide strong transport links between Kendal and Penrith and, it was considered, avoided the arbitrary division of either town. The South Lakeland district ward of Broughton and Coniston has been extensively reconfigured by boundary changes. The inclusion of this ward within the Barrow and Furness constituency would have resulted in significant disruption across Cumbria. To avoid this it was proposed that the Barrow and Furness constituency be extended eastwards, across the Leven Estuary and is largely the same as the existing constituency, but now includes the Cartmel and Grange wards, but no longer includes the Broughton and Coniston ward. It was considered that this arrangement allows for a more practicable

configuration of constituencies across Cumbria, without fundamentally altering the nature of the existing Barrow and Furness constituency.

The proposed Copeland and the Western Lakes constituency is similar to the existing Copeland constituency and includes the Crummock and Derwent Valley, and the Keswick wards. The proposed constituency includes the Broughton and Coniston, Ambleside and Grasmere, and Windermere wards. In order to maintain the entirety of Lake Windermere within a single constituency, and to avoid dividing the communities of Windermere and Bowness-on-Windermere, the Bowness and Levens ward was split between constituencies; the westernmost part of this ward, which contains Bowness-on-Windermere and the southern expanse of Lake Windermere was included within the Copeland and the Western Lakes constituency. The remainder of the divided Bowness and Levens ward was included with the Burton and Crooklands, and Arnside and Milnthorpe wards in the proposed Cumbria and Lancashire cross-county boundary constituency. It was considered that the existing Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency was the most suitable for extension across the county boundary. The natural boundary of the River Lune largely forms the point of division between the town of Morecambe and the City of Lancaster. However, the Upper Lune Valley and Skerton East wards were included in the Lancaster constituency in the initial proposals, despite the Skerton ward being west of the River Lune, and no longer included with the Skerton West ward within a Morecambe-based constituency, which, it was proposed be called Morecambe and South Lakeland.

Over 900 representations providing evidence and opinion was received across Cumbria, most of which object to the initial proposals. In doing so, many of the representations object to all the constituencies as a whole, rather than to specific constituencies.

However, the Conservative Party supported the initial proposals in their entirety, barring name change recommendations (BCE-86369). Further evidence supporting this position was provided by Chris Whiteside, Chairman of the North West Region Conservative Party (BCE-74137). These respondents felt that the initial proposals better reflected both local government ties and the existing constituencies across Cumbria than any alternatives provided.

The Liberal Democrats (BCE-80878 and BCE-94345), the Labour Party nationally and locally (BCE-79182, BCE-79505), and a large number of members of the public have provided a significant amount of evidence indicating that the initial proposals bear little

to no regard to the physical geography or communities within Cumbria. Brendan Sweeney on behalf of the Cumbrian Labour Parties (BCE-79182), and others have quoted sections of the BCE's 2013 Revised Proposals Report within representations, as the initial proposals in 2011 broadly correlated to those of this review. It was quoted that: "*There was also widespread concern that the Commission had fundamentally misunderstood the geographical and demographic characteristics of the sub-region, such that its proposals for each of the new constituencies, with the exception of Carlisle, ... were flawed and should not be allowed to stand. The strength of feeling on this was strong, ranging from surprise to anger to incredulity...Physically, the mountains are such a barrier that it is not sensible to try to embrace them in the ways proposed by the commission.*" While the 2023 Review is a fresh review, and the numerical criteria we are working to are different, issues of physical geography and local ties remain relevant important considerations, and the quotation concerning the past review is therefore pertinent and accurately reflects the issues and strength of feeling received in this Review also.

The Liberal Democrats counter-proposal makes equally clear their concerns with the initial proposals, stating: "*It is clear that the highest mountain range in England provides a significant border between communities, and that the UNESCO World Heritage Site status does not confer any community ties in return*" (BCE-80878). Richard Marbrow of the Liberal Democrats (BCE-97970, BCE-97971), and Tim Farron, MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, provided further evidence that the configuration of constituencies suggested in the initial proposals was inadequate (BCE-97977). They suggested that it was as easy to get to Scotland and Wales from Workington as it was to get to Windermere, and that the Copeland and the Western Lakes constituency in particular bore no relation to community ties or the realities of physical geography.

The requirements for a cross-county constituency between Cumbria and Lancashire have been accepted by all three of the qualifying parties, and all have included Arnside and Milnthorpe, and Burton and Crooklands as the two wards from Cumbria to be included in the Morecambe based constituency. The Liberal Democrats and Labour parties have not included any part of the Bowness and Levens ward in a cross-county constituency, as their proposals do not require this ward to be divided.

The proposed Lancaster constituency is significantly different from the existing Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency. The Skerton East and Upper Lune Valley wards are now proposed to be included within this constituency. Although the proposed constituency still extends into the Borough of Wyre, no part of it now extends across the River Wyre into Fleetwood. Over 200 representations concerning the Skerton East and Skerton West wards in Lancaster were received. David Morris, MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale

(BCE-86598) and the Conservative Party (BCE-86369) suggest that the wards should be together within the Morecambe constituency. Conversely, Cat Smith, MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood (BCE-71660) and the Labour Party (BCE-79505), suggest that the wards should be together within the Lancaster constituency. Cat Smith's representation differs from that of the national Labour Party in that the Party continues to include the town of Fleetwood in their proposed Lancaster constituency, whereas Ms Smith supports the Commission's proposals to exclude the town from Lancaster.

It was proposed that the town of Fleetwood be included in the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency. This would contain the settlements of Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Thornton from the Borough of Wyre, and five wards from the Blackpool unitary authority, containing the Bispham and Warbreck areas. The existing Blackpool South constituency has an electorate of 56,887, which is significantly below the permitted electorate range. Therefore, it was proposed that the Blackpool South constituency would contain the entirety of the existing constituency, and extend north to include the Claremont, Layton, Park, and Warbreck wards. The constituency would remain entirely within the bounds of the Blackpool unitary authority. Relatively minor change was proposed to the existing Fylde constituency. However, in order to bring it within the permitted range, the Borough of Wyre wards of Tithebarn, Breck, and Hardhorn with High Cross were proposed to be included in the constituency. These three wards comprise the town of Poulton-le-Fylde, which the initial proposals sought to avoid dividing. This also enabled a Fylde constituency that no longer includes wards from the City of Preston and comprises the entirety of the Fylde borough, and the three Wyre wards mentioned previously. Although representations were received that both opposed and supported the proposed Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde constituencies, the initial proposals were not particularly contentious and relatively few representations were received.

The proposed Preston constituency included the majority of the city of Preston and the Garrison, Sharoe Green, Greyfriars, and Cadley wards - wards that comprise the area of Fulwood. However, the entirety of the city of Preston cannot be contained within one constituency; to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range, the two City of Preston wards of Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton were included in the Ribble Valley constituency, which was significantly reconfigured, as well as the Preston Rural North, and Preston Rural East wards. This arrangement meant that most of the town of Bamber Bridge is no longer included within a constituency centred on the Ribble Valley. The proposed Ribble Valley constituency included all except three wards from the Ribble Valley borough: East Whalley, Read and Simonstone; Whalley and Painter Wood; and Billington and Langho. These three wards were included in the proposed Hyndburn constituency. No part of the proposed Hyndburn constituency would

extend into the Borough of Rossendale. As Hyndburn borough does not contain enough electors to form a constituency on its own, the three wards mentioned previously from the Borough of Ribble Valley were included in order to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range. The south of Lancashire is one of the areas in the North West region that has received the most representations (over 2,500), overwhelmingly in opposition to the initial proposals. In Preston, there was significant opposition to the initial proposals, and calls for the Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton wards to be included within the constituency at the expense of the Greyfriars and Sharoe Green Ward, which covered the Fulwood area. This view was echoed by Sir Mark Hendrick, MP for Preston (BCE-66332), and by respondents at the Preston public hearing. Although Fulwood is part of the urban area of Preston, it is not in the existing Preston constituency, and a number of representatives suggested that Fulwood was different in character to the rest of Preston.

The existing constituencies of Hyndburn, Rossendale and Darwen, Blackburn, Chorley, South Ribble, and West Lancashire are all able to remain unchanged, other than to realign constituency boundaries with changes to local government ward boundaries. However, it was noted that maintaining all six of these constituencies unchanged would result in significant disruption across other parts of Lancashire, and that making some relatively minor changes throughout Lancashire would result in less disruption overall and a distribution of constituencies that more closely reflects local ties. The proposed Blackburn constituency was changed only by the realignment of the constituency boundary in the south to reflect local government ward changes. This aligns the constituency boundary with that of the town's southern boundary, along the M65, and it no longer artificially divides the town of Blackburn. However, the Blackburn South and Lower Darwen ward alone has prompted over 150 representations to the initial proposals, with the residents of the ward being unequivocal that they belong with Darwen rather than Blackburn, for example BCE-60667.

To the east, the existing constituency boundaries of Burnley and Pendle are both coterminous with their respective local authorities. However, both have electorates that are currently below the permitted electorate range. It was therefore proposed to include the Briercliffe, and Lanehead wards from the Borough of Burnley in the proposed Pendle constituency. To bring the existing Burnley constituency back within the permitted electorate range, it was extended south by including the five easternmost wards of the Borough of Rossendale. The A671 forms a direct transport link between the two main urban areas of the proposed constituency, and is here called the 'Burnley Road'. Since the proposed constituency would cross two local authorities and include the town of Bacup, it was renamed Burnley and Bacup.

The initial proposals included the Whalley and Painter Wood, East Whalley Read and Simonstone, and Billington and Langho wards within the proposed Hyndburn constituency. A large number of representations were received from this area, contending that there are no community ties between these areas and Accrington (which is included in the Hyndburn constituency), for example BCE-57646, and that Whalley is intrinsically linked more to Clitheroe and the wider Ribble Valley than to Accrington or other parts of Hyndburn (BCE-80637). There has been further evidence that the initial proposals arbitrarily divide the town of Whalley by retaining the Whalley Nethertown ward in the Ribble Valley constituency. It also suggests that the Sabden area also has links to Whalley, and that all these areas should be considered as one in any revised proposals, BCE-65366.

Following these proposed changes, the existing Rossendale and Darwen constituency required further reconfiguration to bring it within the permitted electorate range. It was proposed that it should include the Greenfield and Worsley wards, which were formerly within the Hyndburn constituency. The constituency would continue to include the four wards that contain part of the town of Darwen; namely the Darwen West, Darwen South and Darwen East wards, and the West Pennine ward, as well as the Adlington and Anderton, and Chorley North East wards, from the Borough of Chorley. Although the constituency would now span three local authorities rather than two, it was considered that this configuration better reflected local ties than the alternatives considered. The constituency was proposed to be renamed West Pennine Moors, to reflect the geography of the constituency. As the proposed Chorley constituency would no longer contain the two wards of Adlington and Anderton, and Chorley North East, it would include the Ecclestone, Heskin and Charnock Richard ward, and the Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South ward. This resulted in a revised Chorley constituency that nevertheless remained contained wholly within the Borough of Chorley. The proposed West Pennine Moors constituency has generated well over 1,500 representations, which have also been overwhelmingly in opposition to the initial proposals across the whole area. The proposed constituency is said to have arbitrarily divided both Chorley (Rachel Lewis, BCE-54309), and Rossendale, and included parts of both boroughs with areas of Darwen that responses say they have little to nothing in common with (BCE-93098). Jake Berry, MP for Rossendale and Darwen(BCE-86599), detailed all the perceived disadvantages that were created by the proposed constituency.

It was proposed to extend the existing Southport constituency across the county boundary into its rural hinterland within Lancashire. Although it is possible to retain the existing Southport constituency wholly unchanged within the Borough of Sefton, it was considered that this would result in significant disruptive knock-on effects throughout the North West. It was therefore proposed that the four Borough of West Lancashire wards of North Meols, Hesketh-with-Becconsall, Tarleton, and Rufford be included in the

Southport constituency. It was considered that these wards were already somewhat separated from the remainder of Lancashire by the physical boundaries of the River Ribble to the north, and the River Asland/River Douglas to the east. Including these wards within a Southport constituency also allowed for the proposal of a South Ribble constituency that is wholly contained within the Borough of South Ribble, contains the entirety of Leyland, and most of the town of Bamber Bridge. The initial proposals made no change to the existing West Lancashire constituency, which is wholly unchanged.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners identified that formulating a pattern of constituencies in Cumbria would be a difficult task, and they decided to visit the county to see some of the areas for themselves. They visited the Dalston and Burgh ward, and observed that, although the ward clearly looks to and is well connected to Carlisle, the village of Dalston is separated from the city by a large area of rural land. There also appeared no change of character between the Dalston and Burgh ward and the northern elements of Allerdale borough. These reasons, and the cross-party consensus that the initial proposals were the most reasonable option for a Carlisle constituency, led to the Assistant Commissioners recommending that there should be no change to the proposed Carlisle constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners considered that there were, in effect, only two solutions for the other constituencies in Cumbria. Their recommendations would have to be based on which of the mutually exclusive approaches they should take across the remainder of Cumbria (aside from Carlisle), which they considered was fundamentally a difficult balance between the differing statutory factors. They considered that the initial proposals are arguably stronger in regard to respecting existing local government boundaries. The weight and quality of evidence received at both consultation stages indicated that the alternative approach, as typified by the counter proposals from the Liberal Democrat Party(BCE-80878) and Brendan Sweeney on behalf of the Cumbrian Labour Parties (BCE-79182) is arguably stronger in relation to community ties. They considered that neither approach could be reasonably weighed over the other in regard to the existing constituencies due to the scale of change, which required either the wholesale reconfiguration of the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency as initially proposed, or in the alternative approach, the requirement for at least one constituency to stretch east-west across the whole county

The Assistant Commissioners therefore considered they were confronted with a difficult decision between two main options that were equally balanced: a retention of the initial proposals for the whole county, or the adoption of one of the counter-proposals (or variant thereof). They considered that none of the counter-proposals was without disadvantage, but in view of the evidence received, neither were the initial proposals. They considered that to recommend the retention of the initial proposals in spite of the overwhelming body of evidence opposed to them, would not reflect the community identity evidence received. Furthermore, consulting on a different pattern of constituencies could elicit further evidence in support or opposition to either of the initial

proposals and/or revised proposals, They therefore recommend a pattern of constituencies that is a mixture of those proposed by the Liberal Democrats and Cumbrian Labour parties, and takes the alternative approach to the initial proposals.

In the south west of the county, they recommend that the Broughton and Coniston ward be divided along the boundary between the existing Barrow and Furness constituency and the existing Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency. Dividing the ward here retains an existing constituency boundary, and is required for the alternative scheme to be adopted. Though Brendan Sweeney also proposed splitting the Black Combe and Scafell ward, the Assistant Commissioners did not feel that this split was required to create an acceptable scheme for Cumbria, and that it did not meet the Commission's criteria to justify a ward split.

Though the division of the Broughton and Coniston ward recreates the existing Barrow and Furness constituency, the constituency is still under the permitted electorate range. As such, the Black Combe and Scafell ward, and the Millom ward, which is effectively an enclave, can be included to bring it within range. Despite the fact this becomes a constituency that crosses three local authorities, and contains a divided ward, the Assistant Commissioners consider that there is a significant community of interest between the areas north and west of the Duddon Estuary and the Furness Peninsula. The northern boundary of this constituency follows the River Mite as far as Eskdale, where it deviates to follow the ridgelines of Illgill Head, Scafell Pike, and Great End.

They recommend that the remainder of the divided Broughton and Coniston ward should remain within a recommended Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, as it is currently. This constituency would contain all the wards from the South Lakeland District that are included in the existing constituency, with the exception of Arnside and Milnthorpe, Burton and Crooklands, and Sedbergh. It would also include all the wards within the Eden District that are to the south of the town of Penrith, together with Dacre, Greystoke, and Ullswater. Richard Marbrow of the Liberal Democrats provided evidence (BCE-BCE-97970, BCE-97971) that the River Eamont south of Penrith formed the historic boundary between the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland, and would be a identifiable constituency boundary in this area. The Assistant Commissioners agreed with this assessment. They also considered that their recommendations in this area would address many of the objections to the initial proposals in this area, as they avoid a division of the South Lakeland local authority.

As discussed, the Dalston and Burgh ward cannot be included within the recommended Carlisle constituency. As such, the Assistant Commissioners propose that it form part of the suggested Penrith and Solway constituency. This constituency is the result

of the changes described in the south and east of Cumbria. It includes all the remaining wards in the Eden valley not mentioned above, as well as the 15 most northern wards of the Borough of Allerdale. In the west of Allerdale, the constituency's southern boundary would be the River Derwent. This is the case as far as Broughton Cross, where the constituency boundary follows the ward boundaries to the south of Cockermouth, and the north of Keswick. Although it stretches east to west across Cumbria, from Alston to the Solway Firth, the Assistant Commissioners consider this to be an acceptable constituency. The proposed constituency boundaries are well defined, it has a common rural character, and on their site visits to the area covered by this constituency they considered that the road connections were adequate and would not present any obstacle. This constituency once again includes areas from three local authorities, and the Dalston and Burgh ward is an 'orphan'. However, the ward is also an 'orphan' in the initial proposals, so there is no further detriment in regard to the ward. Despite all this, they recognised the potential issues with the geographic extent of the Penrith and Solway constituency, however, on balance adopting this constituency as part of the revised proposals allows for the formulation of constituencies across Cumbria which better reflect the community identity evidence received.

The successor to the much opposed Copeland and the Western Lakes constituency in the initial proposals is recommended to be a Whitehaven and Workington constituency. The name reflects both key towns within the suggested constituency name (in alphabetical order) and the constituency contains the entirety of Copeland borough, aside from the two wards in the Barrow and Furness constituency (Black Combe and Scafell, and Millom). It also includes the Crummock and Derwent Valley, and Keswick wards, which are both part of the existing Copeland constituency with Workington. The Whitehaven component comprises the remaining Allerdale borough wards south of the River Derwent. During their site visit the Assistant Commissioners observed Whitehaven and Workington to be well connected towns with a very similar character, despite some evidence of local rivalry, and therefore felt justified in including them in a constituency together.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that their revised recommendations for Cumbria may initially seem to be considerably worse with regard to the statutory factor concerning local government boundaries. However, they were conscious of the incoming unitary authorities for Cumbria, which will replace the current authorities, as highlighted in BCE-84457, which should mitigate these concerns to a large extent. On the assumption that their recommendations in Cumbria are accepted by the Commission, following the introduction of the new authorities (scheduled to take place shortly before our final recommendations, in April 2023), two of the

recommended constituencies would cross the unitary authority boundaries, and none crossing three local authorities. By way of comparison, the initial proposals would cross the two unitary authorities once.

The Assistant Commissioners also consider that their recommendations for Cumbria accurately reflect the significant numbers and nature of the representations and evidence received, with a demonstrable improvement to community ties in the South Lakeland area in particular. These proposals remove the need to divide the Bowness and Levens ward, so there would remain a single divided ward in Cumbria (that recommended for Broughton and Coniston ward). They further consider that the only plausible alternative position would be to revert to the initial proposals, with some alternative names for some of the constituencies.

The Arnside and Milnthorpe, Burton and Crooklands, and Sedbergh wards would be the Cumbrian component of the recommended cross-county constituency between Cumbria and Lancashire. It is recommended that the constituency be called Morecambe and Lunesdale, reflecting the existing name of the constituency. The Assistant Commissioners consider this is justified as the River Lune runs through the centre of the proposed constituency and is a common feature throughout its length. The Assistant Commissioners also consider that the Skerton East and Skerton West wards should be included in the same constituency, but that they belong within Lancaster rather than Morecambe. In the petition organised by David Morris, MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale (BCE-86601), calling for the two wards to be united in the same constituency, it is clear that respondents felt that they were more part of Lancaster than Morecambe. During their visit to the area to observe the links for themselves, the Assistant Commissioners noted the 'Welcome to the City of Lancaster' sign upon entering Skerton, and they considered that the A683 forms a clear boundary between Skerton and Morecambe. In order to accommodate the inclusion of the Skerton East and Skerton West wards within the Lancaster constituency, they recommend that the Lower Lune Valley ward be included in the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency in exchange. As the Lancaster constituency contains a large component from the Wyre borough, it is recommended that its name be changed to reflect this, and therefore the name the Assistant Commissioners recommend is Lancaster and Wyre.

There have been very few representations concerning the proposed constituencies of Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde. The Assistant Commissioners consider there is no justification for change in this area, and therefore recommend these three constituencies be unchanged from the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners consider that the evidence provided regarding the proposed Preston constituency has been unequivocal. They also visited Preston and observed that the Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton wards are undeniably part of the core of urban Preston: they are of a similar character to the city centre. By contrast, their site visit to the Greyfriars and Sharoe Green wards, which encompass the Fulwood area, presented to them a community that appeared to be of a fundamentally different character, and distinct from the city. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that the Preston constituency includes Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton, and does not include Greyfriars and Sharoe Green. This configuration is more reflective of the existing constituency pattern, as the Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton wards are within the existing Preston constituency, and the Greyfriars and Sharoe Green wards are not, and would be included in the Ribble Valley constituency.

The West Pennine Moors constituency in the initial proposals was almost universally opposed, with the national Labour Party referring to it in their counter-proposal as “anomalous” (BCE-79505). The evidence provided against the initial proposals was considered to be compelling. It demonstrated that there were no sufficient links of either transport or community between the Adlington and Anderton ward, the Chorley North East ward, and Blackburn with Darwen. Similarly, the Borough of Rossendale was divided, with the Bacup area being incorporated within a constituency centred around Burnley. It was noted that the four constituencies of Blackburn, Chorley, Hyndburn, and Rossendale with Darwen can all remain either wholly unchanged, or unchanged except to realign with local government ward boundary changes. As such, the Assistant Commissioners consider that by far the best option in this area is for these four existing constituencies to remain largely unchanged, as in some places the constituencies would need to realign with new ward boundaries. This would result in minimal change from the existing constituencies in an area that has received well over 1,500 representations, overwhelmingly in opposition to changes suggested in the initial proposals. This would also remove the need to divide the Blackburn South and Lower Darwen ward, as suggested by the national Conservative Party (BCE-86369).

The Assistant Commissioners’ recommended Burnley constituency would be largely the same as the existing constituency, which is coterminous with the Burnley borough boundaries. In order to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range, however, it would also include the two Pendle wards of Brierfield East and Brierfield West. This is considerably less change than the initial proposals, and there is continuous urbanism between these wards and Burnley itself.

Maintaining the existing configuration of constituencies in the south of Lancashire also results in less change to the South Ribble constituency the Assistant Commissioners recommend, than do the initial proposals. They recommend that the South Ribble constituency should continue to contain the two Chorley wards of Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South, and Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard, as well as all of its current South Ribble borough wards other than Faringdon East and Faringdon West.

These latter two wards would be included in the recommended Ribble Valley constituency. The Assistant Commissioners consider that larger-scale changes to the Ribble Valley and Pendle constituencies are justified in light of the benefits gained by their other recommendations in this area. Although they acknowledge that the Ribble Valley and Pendle constituencies they are recommending might not best reflect local tites, they consider that the retention of four existing constituencies that are wholly unchanged, or unchanged except to realign with local government ward boundary changes, and an additional two that are unchanged except to realign with local government ward boundary changes, is, on balance, a superior and more appropriate set of recommendations than were the initial proposals, particularly in view of the very considerable opposition that the initial proposals generated in those parts of Lancashire.

The recommended Pendle and Clitheroe constituency contains the entirety of the Borough of Pendle, aside from the two Brierfield wards, and ten wards from the Ribble Valley, covering the Whalley and Clitheroe areas. Upon visiting this area the Assistant Commissioners were clearly of the view that these wards had little in common with Hyndburn - in which they were located in the initial proposals - and that there is a greater shared rural character between the two areas, and good transport and communication links. It was considered that the inclusion of these areas from the existing Pendle and Ribble Valley constituencies within the same constituency was more suitable than their inclusion in Ribble Valley and Hyndburn. They also considered that, although being a geographical landmark in the area, Pendle Hill provides no impediment to the navigation around this recommended constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners recommended that no revisions be made to the West Lancashire constituency, which the initial proposals maintained as it currently exists.

Cheshire and Merseyside

The initial proposals cross the county boundary between Merseyside and Lancashire at Southport. As a consequence, the existing Sefton Central constituency, which could be left wholly unchanged, is subject to minor change. The proposed Sefton Central constituency includes the Ainsdale ward from the existing Southport constituency, and no longer includes the Molyneux ward, which is now included in the proposed Liverpool Norris Green constituency. The Bootle constituency is wholly unchanged. Around 200 representations have been received in opposition to the inclusion of the Ainsdale ward in the Sefton Central constituency, with detailed evidence that this ward should be with Southport (BCE-77635, BCE-90926). Potentially, some of these representations are due to the fact that both the Southport and Sefton Central constituencies are within the permitted electorate range and therefore do not need to change. However, despite these objections and the altering of two constituencies that would otherwise be unchanged, crossing the county boundary has been supported by all three of the qualifying political parties as enabling the most suitable pattern of constituencies for large swathes of the North West region.

The wards in the City of Liverpool all have large electorates; the Liverpool Riverside ward alone contains 15,186 electors. This meant that fairly significant changes had to be proposed in order to produce constituencies in this area that are within the permitted electorate range. Although it will still contain the Walton area, the existing Liverpool Walton constituency was largely reconfigured in the initial proposals and would no longer contain the Everton or Anfield wards, and would include the Croxteth and Norris Green wards. It was also proposed that the constituency would include the Molyneux ward from the Borough of Sefton. Although this ward is largely rural in nature, it was considered that there are no reasonable alternatives in view of the other constituencies being proposed on Merseyside. As the constituency has been altered significantly enough to suggest a change of name to better reflect its new configuration, it was proposed that it be called Liverpool Norris Green. Over 300 representations were received with regard to this constituency, with overwhelming opposition to its name in particular, many representations highlighting the fact that Walton is an historic town, pre-dating Liverpool (BCE-80533). Christine Smith (BCE-97972) provided detailed evidence concerning the importance of Walton to the local community, and the history of Liverpool as a whole. This evidence echoed that provided by others

during both consultation stages. The other key issue in this constituency concerns the Molyneux ward. This is an 'orphan ward' from the Borough of Sefton. It is suggested that its inclusion within the Liverpool Norris Green constituency not only arbitrarily divides the town of Maghull, but adds an unrepresentative rural spur to an otherwise urban Liverpool constituency (BCE-87658). It has been suggested that dividing the ward would resolve this issue (BCE-60777). Dan Carden, MP for Liverpool Walton, has written a detailed representation regarding these issues (BCE-80111).

The remaining constituencies in Liverpool generated relatively few representations and, although there was some opposition to the initial proposals, there was also support. The proposed Liverpool Riverside constituency largely follows the boundaries of the existing constituency, but is more centred to the west. It included both the Everton and Anfield wards, but no longer included the existing constituency's three southeastern wards of Greenbank, Mossley Hill, and St. Michael's. These three wards are now included in the proposed Liverpool Wavertree constituency. This constituency remains centred on Wavertree, but in order to bring it within the permitted electorate range, it no longer includes the Church or Old Swan wards. The Church ward is included in the proposed Liverpool Garston constituency, which is similar to the existing Garston and Halewood constituency, except for the addition of this ward. This constituency is now wholly contained within the City of Liverpool authority, as it no longer extends into the Halewood area of the Borough of Knowsley. The proposed Liverpool West Derby constituency is also similar to the existing configuration. It now includes the Old Swan ward, and no longer includes the Norris Green or Croxteth wards, and extends into the Borough of Knowsley, incorporating the wards of Page Moss and Swanside. The City of Liverpool cannot be allocated a whole number of constituencies that would lie entirely within its boundaries, so one constituency must cross into Knowsley. This was considered to be the most appropriate location for the crossing, resulting in a compact constituency with an urban character and community links. With the exception of the two wards mentioned previously being included in the Liverpool West Derby constituency, and the realignment of the constituency boundary in the south to match local government ward changes, the proposed Knowsley constituency is otherwise unaltered.

Although the St Helens North constituency can remain unchanged, under the initial proposals it was modified slightly in order to account for required changes in the existing St Helens South and Whiston constituency, which has an electorate larger than the permitted electorate range. As such, the proposed St Helens North constituency no longer included the Parr ward, but did include

the Town Centre ward. The proposed St Helens South constituency included all the remaining wards within the Borough of St Helens, and also the Prescott South ward from the Borough of Knowsley. Although this would be an 'orphan ward', it is currently part of the existing St Helens South and Whiston constituency. Various configurations of constituencies in this and the surrounding area were considered by the Commission in formulating the initial proposals, but it was considered these would be more disruptive and reflect the statutory factors to a lesser extent. There was opposition to the initial proposals in St Helens, particularly with regard to the Town Centre ward, which would be included in the much more rural St Helens North constituency instead of the St Helens South and Whiston constituency, which contained more of the urban town of St Helens itself. Marie Rimmer, MP for St Helens South and Whiston (BCE-75253, BCE-93357) and the Labour Party (BCE-79505) provided evidence that *St Helens town centre ward is "the historical and civic centre of the original St Helens town, most of which is now found in St Helens South. St Helens North comprises many other towns and urban districts such as Newton-le-Willows, Earlstown, Rainford, Billinge and Haydock that were later added to the St Helens Metropolitan Borough"*. They counter-proposed that both the Town Centre and Parr wards be included in St Helens South and Whiston, and that the Knowsley Borough ward of Whiston and Cronton be divided. This would, it was claimed, enable the St Helens North constituency to remain completely unchanged, and would result in very minor change (less than one whole ward) to the existing St Helens South and Whiston constituency, and maintain the Town Centre ward with the rest of the civic centre of St Helens. It was also noted in the representations that the initial proposals would remove Whiston Hospital, the primary hospital for the St Helens borough, from the St Helens South and Whiston constituency.

It was proposed that the natural physical boundary of the River Mersey be used to bisect the Borough of Halton in the initial proposals. The northern wards of Halton, including all of the town of Widnes on the northern bank of the river, would form most of a constituency that would extend north across the ceremonial county boundary of Cheshire to include the three wards of Halewood North, Halewood South, and Whiston and Cronton from the Borough of Knowsley. It was considered that this proposed Widnes and Halewood constituency would result in less change within Liverpool and Knowsley than the alternatives. Similarly, it allowed for very minor changes in the Boroughs of St Helens and Warrington. It was acknowledged that Whiston would therefore be divided between two constituencies, and that this is not an ideal solution, but it was considered that there was no reasonable alternative for the wider area as a whole.

On the southern bank of the River Mersey, the town of Runcorn formed the largest urban area of the proposed Runcorn and Helsby constituency. This constituency contained all the wards of the Borough of Halton that are south of the River Mersey, and extended west into the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority. It was proposed that it would contain the four wards of Frodsham, Helsby, Gowy Rural, and Sandstone from that authority, which follow the southern bank of the River Mersey, the Manchester Ship Canal, and the M56 and A56. It was considered that including the entirety of Widnes and Runcorn in separate constituencies results in a practicable configuration and distribution of constituencies across Cheshire and Merseyside. The use of the River Mersey to bisect the Borough of Halton and create two constituencies, each based on Widnes and Runcorn has been broadly well received, although there have been some calls to change the name of the Runcorn and Helsby constituency to reference the 'Sandstone Ridge' or Frodsham in its name.

The proposed Warrington North constituency is unchanged from the existing constituency, except to realign the constituency boundary with local government ward changes. The existing Warrington South constituency has an electorate of 86,422, which is considerably above the permitted electorate range. It was therefore proposed that there should be a Warrington South constituency that no longer included the Lymm North and Thelwall, or Lymm wards. These two wards, which constitute the entire town of Lymm, were proposed to be included within the Tatton constituency, along with the Dane Valley ward from the Cheshire East unitary authority. In his representation, the MP for Warrington South, Andy Carter (BCE-82169), provided evidence that Thelwall is an integral part of central Warrington, and has limited connections or community ties with Lymm, despite parts being in the same ward. He suggests that the ward be divided in order to retain more electors in their existing constituency, and avoid the division of the Thelwall community. This has also been suggested by members of the public, for example BCE-90268.

In the initial proposals, it was proposed that a new constituency be constructed, which would be centred around, and named, Northwich. This constituency would be wholly contained within the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority, and would arguably be a successor to the existing Weaver Vale constituency, although significantly reconfigured. As mentioned above, the Lymm North and Thelwall, Lymm and Dane Valley wards would be included within a Tatton constituency. The configuration proposed for the Northwich and Tatton constituencies results in minor changes within the rest of the Cheshire East unitary authority. Elsewhere in Cheshire, the Macclesfield constituency is entirely unchanged. Apart from the inclusion of the Dane Valley ward in the

Tatton constituency, the proposed Congleton constituency was unchanged, except to realign the constituency boundary with local government ward changes. The proposed Crewe and Nantwich constituency is also only changed by just one ward, except for realignment with local government ward changes, with the inclusion of the Wybunbury ward in the proposed South Cheshire constituency.

The existing Eddisbury constituency was significantly reconfigured in the initial proposals. Although it still spans the two unitary authorities of Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester, the constituency is now more compact. The Wybunbury ward is the only new inclusion within the constituency from Cheshire East. However, the changes affecting Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority wards are more pronounced. The town of Winsford was now mostly included in the Northwich constituency and the constituency no longer extends so far north towards the River Mersey, as that area is now within the proposed Runcorn and Helsby constituency. As the changes to the existing Eddisbury constituency have been significant it was proposed that this constituency be named South Cheshire, which was considered to be more reflective of the nature and geographical extent of the constituency. The River Dee was proposed as the constituency boundary with the proposed Chester North and Neston constituency. The two wards to the south of the river – Handbridge Park and Lache – are included within the South Cheshire constituency. Middlewich Town Council (BCE-66412) provided a highly detailed representation, setting out the community ties in central Cheshire, and suggesting an alternative configuration of constituencies to unite the three key towns of Middlewich, Northwich and Winsford. This configuration is also supported by the national Labour Party (BCE-79505). They attest that Middlewich has historic and current connections with Northwich and Winsford, and that its presence in Cheshire East is anomalous. Winsford itself was divided by the initial proposals, with four of its five named wards in the Northwich constituency, and one in the South Cheshire constituency. There were numerous calls to include the Winsford Over and Verdin ward in the Northwich constituency in exchange for the Weaver and Cuddington ward, which is geographically separate from Northwich, BCE-70310. However, there were also many representations that had supported the initial proposals and the inclusion of the Weaver and Cuddington ward in the proposed Northwich constituency. There were similar calls to exchange the Wybunbury and Leighton wards between the South Cheshire and Crewe constituencies, for example BCE-85371.

The five wards that comprise Chester north of the River Dee were included in a constituency with the Saughall and Mollington, and Willaston and Thornton wards in the initial proposals, as well as the three wards which comprise the town of Neston. It was considered that to name the constituency Chester North and Neston would be the most accurate and appropriate name for this constituency. In the initial proposals, the Commission took great lengths to try to not divide the city of Chester. However, this proved to be elusive, and the difficulties caused by not dividing the city of Chester would be considerable, with knock-on effects throughout both Cheshire West and Chester, and the Wirral. It was therefore proposed that the city be divided, with the River Dee forming a clear geographic boundary between constituencies. The initial proposals to not include the Lache and Handbridge Park wards in the same constituency as the remainder of Chester was overwhelmingly opposed during the public consultations, with well over 500 representations, almost all in opposition. Although the River Dee is a geographic boundary, residents feel it is an arbitrary line, and does not reflect any true divide in the local community. However, it has been broadly accepted that, despite the near unanimous opposition, there is no better solution that would support a cohesive scheme of constituencies in the wider area, with two former Lord Mayors of Chester (Jill Houlbrook and Razia Daniels - BCE-97973 and BCE-97974) reluctantly acknowledging that there was no acceptable alternative. The Chair of Cheshire West and Chester Labour Group (BCE-80689) suggests splitting five wards just to maintain one constituency. The current MP for the City of Chester, Chris Matheson, did propose an alternative solution, but this involved a number of splits within the Handbridge Park ward (BCE-71681).

A key reason for these changes is that there cannot be a whole number of constituencies contained within the boundary of the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral. Although there are currently four whole constituencies, the electorate of the Wirral now only allows for an allocation of three whole constituencies, and one part constituency. As the Commission did not wish to propose a constituency that spanned the River Mersey between the Wirral and the City of Liverpool, it was therefore necessary for a constituency to extend into the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority. It was proposed that this county-crossing constituency be centred around Ellesmere Port, which, as it would no longer incorporate Neston, or the Gowy Rural ward, would now extend along the southern bank of the River Mersey, and include the Eastham and Bromborough wards from the existing Wirral South constituency. To take account of these changes, the proposed constituency was simply called Ellesmere Port. The proposals for the remainder of the Wirral seek to minimise changes wherever possible. To achieve this it was proposed that the Upton ward be divided along the physical boundary of the A5027. The northern half of this ward, consisting of the Upton community, would be

included within the proposed Wallasey constituency, the remainder of which is unchanged. The southern half of this ward, containing the Woodchurch community, would continue to be included in the Wirral West constituency, which also gains the Heswall and Clatterbridge wards. The proposed Birkenhead constituency is changed only by the inclusion of the Bebington ward. It was considered that the benefits provided by the division of the Upton ward considerably outweighed the disadvantages of not doing so; it enabled the retention, with minimal change, of three of the existing four constituencies on the Wirral, and all alternative configurations of constituencies within this area that were considered were less reflective of local and community ties.

Recommendations

Whilst noting and understanding the concerns raised regarding the Ainsdale ward and its inclusion in the Sefton Central constituency, rather than Southport, the Assistant Commissioners considered that there is no acceptable solution for the North West region without crossing the county boundary here. They considered the division of a ward here would also not provide an acceptable solution. Despite the fact that existing Southport and Sefton Central constituencies can both remain unchanged in terms of their electorate, the extent of change and disruption that would be forced elsewhere by doing so have been considered such as to justify the minor change in this area. As such the Assistant Commissioners recommend Southport and Sefton Central constituencies be retained as in the initial proposals. There have been very few representations from the proposed Bootle constituency, and therefore the Assistant Commissioners recommend that there be no change to the initial proposals with regard to this constituency.

As discussed above, the Liverpool Norris Green constituency has been widely criticised. As such, the Assistant Commissioners unreservedly recommend that the name of the constituency be restored as to Liverpool Walton. The evidence provided by Christine Smith (BCE-97972) was particularly helpful in assisting the Assistant Commissioners in understanding the importance of Walton to the local community, and the history of Liverpool as a whole. They also considered that suggestions to divide the ward of Molyneux had merit (BCE-60777, BCE-87658). Upon visiting the ward as part of their site visits to the North West, the Assistant Commissioners felt that the evidence provided was consistent with their observations. The ward is extensive, containing both urban and rural elements, and small segments of the town of Maghull. The M57 forms a large and recognisable physical boundary between the rural area to the north, and urban Aintree to the south. They therefore recommend the division of the Molyneux ward. Polling districts C4, C5, and C6, covering Aintree, would be included in the Liverpool Walton constituency, with the boundary here following the River Alt. The remainder of the ward would be included in the Sefton Central constituency, where the whole ward is currently located. They considered evidence (BCE-80111) that the civil parish of Aintree was included in the Liverpool Walton constituency between 1950-1955 gave precedent for the association. The Assistant Commissioners' recommendation not only retains more electors in the Sefton Central constituency than do the initial proposals, but removes the rural spur from an otherwise urban set of wards. Unlike Aintree, Maghull has never been associated with Liverpool. Furthermore, they considered that one of the statutory factors, respecting "*any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies*" suggested that a ward split would be

appropriate. This does result in three polling districts (C4, C5 and C6) being the only area from a Sefton ward being included in a Liverpool constituency. As such, they can be considered 'orphan' polling districts. In the initial proposals the whole ward is an 'orphan'. The Assistant Commissioners judge that adhering to the existing ward boundaries in this area during the initial proposals arbitrarily divided the town of Maghull, thus unquestionably breaking community ties. As mentioned above, this issue is exacerbated by the makeup of the Molyneux ward, which contains seemingly disparate communities. Although this solution has no far-reaching consequences, the Assistant Commissioners feel strongly that it is in keeping with the spirit of the statutory rules, and would result in a more optimal configuration for both constituencies involved.

The remainder of the constituencies in the City of Liverpool have received very few representations, and therefore the following are recommended without any change from the initial proposals: Liverpool Garston, Liverpool Riverside, Liverpool West Derby, and Liverpool Wavertree. No change is recommended to the Knowsley constituency, where the local MP, Sir George Howarth commented that he was disappointed, yet could not identify a more suitable proposal (BCE-86320).

As well as providing evidence on the issues with the proposed St Helens North and St Helens South constituencies, Marie Rimmer MP provided a counter-proposal to resolve them (BCE-75253, BCE-93357). Returning the Town Centre and Parr wards to their existing constituencies results in the St Helens North constituency being entirely unchanged from its existing configuration. In order to bring the St Helens South constituency within the permitted electorate range, polling district WC5 from the Whiston and Cronton ward would be included in the constituency. The divided ward is wholly within the St Helens South and Whiston constituency currently, so this solution retains more electors in both of the St Helens based constituencies. The division of this ward follows the Liverpool to Manchester railway line, a recognisable physical barrier that is used 13 times as a ward or polling district boundary in Knowsley MBC (BCE-93357). It would also result in Whiston Hospital being included in the St Helens South constituency (BCE-75253). This constituency would be called St Helens South and Whiston, as it is currently. The Assistant Commissioners recommend this arrangement and modification of the initial proposals for the two St Helens constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to the Widnes and Halewood or Runcorn and Helsby constituencies as proposed in the initial proposals. Also, the Warrington North constituency was unchanged, other than to realign with changes to local government ward boundaries, and the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to it as initially proposed.

The Assistant Commissioners consider that the Lymm North and Thelwall ward currently includes two fundamentally disparate parts. Thelwall is an integral part of central Warrington, separated from rural market-town Lymm by empty land and the physical barrier of the M6. They consider that the initial proposals here have unintentionally broken community ties in the area, which can be resolved by dividing this ward. They therefore recommend that four polling districts - SNC, SND, SNE, SNF - remain within the Warrington South constituency, where they are currently located. These four polling districts align with the boundaries of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish, which is also divided by the initial proposals. The recommended Warrington South constituency is therefore slightly modified from that in the initial proposals, with the addition of the four polling districts mentioned above. They recommend that the remainder of the Lymm North and Thelwall ward be included in the Tatton constituency, as in the initial proposals.

The division of this ward would enable a new configuration of constituencies in central Cheshire, which the Assistant Commissioners consider better reflects community ties in this area, and has a number of other benefits. First, their recommended Tatton constituency can now be the same as the existing constituency, except for the addition of Lymm, and to realign with changes to local government ward boundaries. This results in fewer electors moving than the initial proposals. It also assuages the concerns of the residents of Allostock, who suggest in the representations that they were more linked with Knutsford than Northwich (BCE-69401). The Assistant Commissioners do not consider that dividing the Marbury ward to incorporate Sutton Weaver within Runcorn and Helsby meets the Commission's threshold for dividing a ward (BCE-93016), as had been suggested in the representations. Similarly, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded by the Conservative Party's proposal to divide the Gawsforth ward to enable the Tatton constituency to remain within two local authorities (BCE-86369). They considered that the division of this ward appeared to be a consequence only of the division of the Lymm North and Thelwall ward.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend uniting the three Mid Cheshire towns of Middlewich, Northwich and Winsford in a single constituency. This would therefore unite all the named Winsford wards within one constituency, which has been one of the largest issues in this area of Cheshire at both consultation stages (BCE-70310, BCE-95334). Although Middlewich would be an 'orphan' ward within the constituency, this would enable the Dane Valley ward to be returned to the Congleton constituency, where it is currently located, and which they recommend. This new configuration that the Assistant Commissioners recommend is, in effect, a hybrid between the counter-proposals of the national Labour and Conservative parties (BCE-79505, BCE-86369). If the recommended pattern for this part of Cheshire were not adopted, the alternative will be to revert to the initial proposals, but to still

exchange the Weaver and Cuddington ward for the Winsford Over and Verdin ward in the Norwich constituency. In both options, no changes are made to the recommended Macclesfield constituency, which continues to remain as the existing constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners visited the Leighton and Wybunbury wards to observe for themselves the issues 'on the ground'. They were not persuaded that the counter-proposal by the Conservative Party and others (BCE-85371) to exchange the Leighton ward with the Wybunbury ward in the Crewe and Nantwich constituency had sufficient merit. They observed that Leighton clearly contains part of the urban extent of Crewe, including Leighton Hospital, and that Wybunbury is a large rural ward that they considered better fitted the character of the South Cheshire constituency than Crewe. The Assistant Commissioners recommend, however, that this constituency be renamed Chester South and Eddisbury. It is the same configuration as in the initial proposals, with the sole difference being that it would now contain the Weaver and Cuddington ward rather than the Winsford Over and Verdin ward. They considered that the change of name would reflect the inclusion of the Lache and Handbridge Park wards from Chester, and, having a Chester North constituency it would be sensible to also have a Chester South.

There was a very large amount of evidence that the Chester North and Neston constituency was undesirable, and that the River Dee is not a true boundary in the lives and minds of Cestrians. However, there was near unanimous - albeit reluctant - acceptance that though far from ideal, this was the best and most appropriate solution for the wider area. The Assistant Commissioners did not consider that they could recommend a solution that suggests splitting five wards or splitting one ward multiple times, just to maintain one constituency.

The proposed Ellesmere Port constituency crosses the county boundary between Cheshire and Merseyside. The Assistant Commissioners wish to reflect this in the constituency name, and therefore recommend it be renamed and called Ellesmere Port and Bromborough. The recommended constituency composition is not changed from that initially proposed.

The Assistant Commissioners consider that the constituencies in the Wirral peninsula should be considered together as one, as there are a number of interlinked issues, each with knock-on implications for neighbouring constituencies. The large ward sizes on the Wirral make finding a whole-ward solution that would meet the statutory factors very difficult. The constituencies and approach on the Wirral Peninsula as initially proposed has been broadly supported, notably by three of the qualifying political parties, and has

received specific praise from Dame Angela Eagle, MP for Wallasey (BCE-75925). The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend that no revisions be made to the initial proposals for the Birkenhead, Wallasey, and Wirral West constituencies.

Greater Manchester

The metropolitan area of Greater Manchester has a mathematical entitlement to 27 constituencies. Of the existing constituencies, 14 are within the permitted electorate range, seven are below, and six are above. The initial proposals leave seven of the existing 27 constituencies wholly unchanged.

There was a degree of support for the constituencies that had been proposed in Greater Manchester, although inevitably there was opposition, which in some areas was strong.

In the south of the sub-region, the proposed Stockport constituency would include the Reddish North and Reddish South wards. The Manor ward would be included within the proposed Hazel Grove constituency (from the existing Southport constituency), which is otherwise unchanged. The existing Cheadle constituency would be wholly unchanged. This configuration results in three constituencies contained wholly within the boundaries of the Borough of Stockport. It was proposed that the two existing constituencies that are currently contained within the Borough of Trafford – Stretford and Urmston, and Altrincham and Sale West – be retained wholly unchanged. The existing Wythenshawe and Sale East constituency, which would continue to span the boundaries of the Borough of Trafford and the City of Manchester, also would remain wholly unchanged. Although the existing Manchester Withington constituency can remain wholly unchanged, because there have been local government ward changes in this area, to do so would mean having to divide a number of these new wards. In the initial proposals therefore, the only change made to the constituency was to realign it to these new wards. The existing Manchester Gorton constituency has been similarly subjected to local government ward changes, and as a result no longer includes the Gorton and Abbey Hey ward. As the existing constituency name is no longer appropriate, it was proposed that the new constituency be called Manchester Longsight.

It was possible to consider the four geographically contiguous metropolitan boroughs of the City of Salford, Wigan, Bolton and Bury as a group, with an allocation of ten constituencies. This allowed the Commission to retain the distinction between the cities of Salford and Manchester, and to largely maintain the existing distribution and configuration of constituencies within these four boroughs. The proposed Salford constituency remained wholly within the City of Salford local authority and included the Broughton ward, which although to the east of the River Irwell, and within the existing Blackley and Broughton constituency, is a ward of the City of Salford local authority. The Eccles, and Swinton and Wardley wards were included within the proposed Worsley and Eccles

constituency, as was the Astley Mosley Common ward, from the Borough of Wigan. This is the only ward from that authority that is included within a Salford-based constituency. Although this ward would add a further rural element to the constituency, it was considered that the rural area within the existing Worsley and Eccles South constituency was significant enough for this addition to not fundamentally change the character of the constituency.

Within the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan, the existing Wigan constituency remained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals. The existing Makerfield constituency could remain unchanged, but was modified in order to account for proposed changes to the existing Leigh constituency, which has an electorate over the permitted range. A Makerfield constituency that is largely unchanged, except that it now includes the Leigh West ward rather than the Ashton ward, was proposed. The proposed Leigh South and Atherton constituency would include the Atherton ward, which is once again within a constituency wholly contained within the Borough of Wigan. The constituency would also include the Ashton ward, which is currently in the Makerfield constituency. It was recognised that the inclusion of the West Leigh ward in a Makerfield constituency, and the Ashton ward in the Leigh South and Atherton constituency, meant that the towns of both Leigh and Ashton-in-Makerfield would be divided between constituencies. However, it was considered that configurations of wards in this and the surrounding area meant that some division of communities was unavoidable. The initial proposals welcomed representations with alternative arrangements in this area that result in less disruption, without resulting in consequential negative effects elsewhere in Greater Manchester. The proposals generated a significant amount of opposition, being the largest single issue in Greater Manchester. There has been overwhelming opposition to the inclusion of the Leigh West ward (containing Leigh Town Hall) in the Makerfield constituency, and the Ashton ward (containing half of the town of Ashton-in-Makerfield) in the Leigh South and Atherton constituency. Both of the current MPs in the area, James Grundy, MP for Leigh (BCE-86586), and Yvonne Fovargue, MP for Makerfield (BCE-74981), provided detailed representations on the issue. The issue has generated approximately 500 representations, and an equivalent amount in petition responses. Mr Grundy MP spoke further at the Manchester Public Hearing (BCE-97975), and highlighted a positive of the initial proposals here, in that they unite the town of Atherton, which had previously been divided between the Leigh and Bolton South constituencies.

The proposed Bolton West constituency was largely unchanged, apart from the inclusion of the Hulton ward to bring it within the permitted electorate range, as the Atherton ward is no longer included. This would also result in the constituency being wholly contained within the Borough of Bolton. The proposed Bolton North East constituency only differed from the existing constituency by one ward; the Little Lever and Darcy Lever ward would be included within the constituency from Bolton South, which would

include the Salford wards of Walkden North, Walkden South, and Little Hulton, in order to bring it within the electorate range. This also enabled the keeping of the town of Walkden in one constituency. In order to acknowledge the crossing between the Borough of Bolton and the City of Salford, it was proposed to be renamed Bolton South and Walkden. There was opposition to this, with a number of representations from the Walkden area providing evidence that it is an integral part of Salford borough and should not be included within a constituency alongside wards from Bolton (BCE-87274). The Radcliffe North ward was proposed to be included in the Bury North constituency and the Kersal and Broughton Park ward, from the City of Salford, was included in the proposed Bury South. Although this would be an 'orphan ward,' it appears to have better physical links with the Sedgley area of Bury than the city of Salford itself.

To decrease the electorate of the existing Rochdale constituency, which was too high, the Spotland and Falinge ward was included in a Heywood constituency. However, as the existing Heywood and Middleton constituency already has an electorate that is above the permitted range, it was further proposed that the wards of South Middleton and East Middleton no longer be included in that constituency. This does result in the division of the town of Middleton, and it is acknowledged that this is not an ideal outcome. However, it was considered that the extensive disruption that would be caused by the alternatives would not provide a better solution overall for this area. As the whole of Middleton would no longer be included in the constituency, it was proposed that the constituency be named Heywood. The proposed Manchester Blackley constituency was significantly reconfigured from the existing Blackley and Broughton constituency on which it is based. It would no longer contain any wards from the City of Salford, nor the Cheetham ward from the City of Manchester. Instead it would include the Moston ward, and the South Middleton and East Middleton wards from the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale. Almost 100 representations have been received from the town of Middleton, with many of these contending that Middleton is an historic town with a clear and long established identity, and suggests it should be reunited within one constituency (BCE-86364).

Within the Borough of Oldham, it was proposed that both the existing Oldham East and Saddleworth, and Oldham West and Royton constituencies would remain wholly unchanged. However, in this area the Commission proactively identified an alternative that it considered had merit: the Alexandra and St Mary's wards, both currently within the existing Oldham East and Saddleworth constituency, could be exchanged with the Royton North and Royton South wards, both currently within the existing Oldham West and Royton constituency. This would provide a more compact urban constituency to the west, containing a greater proportion of Oldham town centre, and a constituency to the east that would have a more suburban and moorland character. While the initial

proposal was to retain the existing two constituencies unchanged, representations on this alternative were welcomed. The responses were fairly equally spread, with support for the alternative slightly outweighing numerically that for maintaining the existing constituencies (for example BCE-83531), while a former leader of Oldham Council (BCE-92982) and others (BCE-86350), provided detailed evidence in support of maintaining the existing configuration. The existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency could remain unchanged. However, it was considered that maintaining it results in a less than ideal configuration across the east of Greater Manchester. It was therefore proposed that the constituency no longer include the Mossley, Stalybridge North and Dukinfield Stalybridge wards, but would include the Denton North East, Denton West and Denton South wards, which constitute the entirety of the town of Denton. The constituency would remain wholly within the Borough of Tameside and unite the communities of Denton and Hyde, whose urban areas almost adjoin, and be renamed Denton and Hyde.

The electorate of the existing Ashton-under-Lyne constituency is below the permitted range. The three wards mentioned previously (which are no longer within the proposed Denton and Hyde constituency), were included within the proposed Ashton-under-Lyne constituency, along with the Dukinfield ward. As the inclusion of all four of these wards would give the Ashton-under-Lyne constituency an electorate that was above the permitted range, it was proposed to no longer include the Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards, or the Droylsden East and Droylsden West wards within this constituency, which, along with the Audenshaw ward, would form a Failsworth and Droylsden constituency. This constituency would also include the Clayton and Openshaw, and Gorton and Abbey Hey wards from the City of Manchester. Furthermore, it was proposed that the Miles Platting and Newton Heath ward be divided between this constituency and the proposed Manchester Central constituency: the latter to include the Miles Platting area, to the west of the A6010, and the Failsworth and Droylsden constituency to contain the Newton Heath area to the east of this road. The proposed Manchester Central constituency would also include the Cheetham ward, and not the Clayton and Openshaw or Moston wards. It was considered that not dividing the Miles Platting and Newton Heath ward would have significant negative knock-on effects across the eastern side of Greater Manchester, and would result in a set of constituencies that had less regard for the statutory factors.

Within the borough of Tameside there were two key issues raised by representations. The first was that the existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency had been changed, when it did not need to. Within the new constituency, Denton and Hyde are separated by the River Tame, so they should not be together. Also, the proposed Failsworth and Droylsden constituency crossed three local authorities, and contained a split ward. It has been suggested that the Failsworth and Droylsden areas are distinct and not

connected, and should therefore not be included within the same constituency. The three MPs whose existing constituencies cover the Borough of Tameside, Jonathan Reynolds, MP for Stalybridge and Hyde, Andrew Gwynne, MP and Angela Rayner, MP for Ashton-under-Lyne (BCE-86365, BCE-86363, BCE-75197, respectively) all provided detailed evidence in opposition to the initial proposals.

Recommendations

Despite receiving a number of counter-proposals that cross the county boundary of Greater Manchester (for example BCE-59207 and BCE-85367), the Assistant Commissioners did not consider the merits of these satisfactory enough to justify a change of sub-regions, as they would result in significant disruption to existing constituencies. As such, they therefore recommend retaining the sub-regions as initially proposed, with Greater Manchester as a stand-alone sub-region with no constituencies crossing its county boundaries.

The proposed constituencies of Altrincham and Sale West, Cheadle, Hazel Grove, Manchester Withington, Stretford and Urmston, Stockport, and Wythenshawe and Sale East have generated relatively few representations, and those that have been received have been almost entirely positive - such as the proposal to bring the two wards covering Reddish into a constituency wholly contained within the Borough of Stockport (BCE-89364), or retaining the existing Stretford and Urmston constituency wholly unchanged (BCE-83736, BCE-85288). As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change in either name or composition to any of the initially proposed constituencies mentioned in this paragraph.

The Assistant Commissioners considered a key rationale of the initial proposals in this area, to maintain the historic boundary of the River Irwell between the cities of Salford and Manchester, was sound. As very few representations were received from the proposed Salford constituency, they recommend no further change to it as initially proposed. Despite the representations from Walkden residents to be part of an unchanged Worsley and Eccles South constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that leaving this constituency unchanged would result in a large scale domino effect across the west of Greater Manchester, with all other resulting constituencies being less in keeping with the statutory factors than the initial proposals. They therefore are not persuaded by the counter-proposals and recommend no change to the Worsley and Eccles constituency as initially proposed. Very few representations were received regarding the Wigan constituency, which was unchanged from the existing constituency in the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend no changes to the Wigan constituency.

The initial proposals for the Leigh South and Atherton, and Makerfield constituencies have been the most contentious in Greater Manchester. The Assistant Commissioners consider that the suggested option from the Labour Party (BCE-79505) would require

further changes across the west of Greater Manchester that are not required. Similarly, they do not consider that the proposal by Yvonne Fovargue, MP for Makerfield (BCE-74981), meets the Commission's criteria for dividing a ward. They therefore recommend the inclusion of the Ashton ward to the Makerfield constituency, and the Leigh West ward in the Leigh and Atherton constituency. In order to bring the latter within the permitted electorate range, they recommend the division of both the Atherleigh and Leigh West wards (polling districts LCA and LDA respectively), as suggested by the Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-86369), and the 'Keep Leigh in Leigh' Campaign, represented by James Grundy, MP for Leigh (BCE-86586). The areas of Dangerous Corner and Pickley Green would be included in the proposed Makerfield constituency, which would be unchanged from the existing constituency, apart from the addition of these communities. The Leigh and Atherton constituency would include the remainder of both divided wards. In order to minimise disruption in this area the Assistant Commissioners recommend the division of the LCA polling district. The incoming ward boundary between the new Hindley Green and Atherton South, and Lilford wards is very similar to the existing polling district boundary, but more closely aligns with Westleigh Brook. Dividing the LCA polling district here would mean that although dividing two 'existing' wards at this stage, in terms of the future wards that will be implemented in this area, this solution would actually only divide a single ward, Leigh West. The Assistant Commissioners' recommendations retain more electors in their existing constituencies, maintain the existing centres of Ashton and Leigh within their respective constituencies, and result in no domino effect across the west of Greater Manchester (which would otherwise be required with a whole ward alternative).

The Bolton West, Bolton North East, and Bolton South and Walkden constituencies have all been broadly supported (apart from the Walkden area). As such the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to these three constituencies as initially proposed. They also consider that the Radcliffe North ward is better suited than the Unsworth ward to be included in the Bury North constituency. They therefore recommend both Bury North and Bury South constituencies be unchanged from the initial proposals.

The constituencies of Heywood, Rochdale, and Manchester Blackley are also recommended by the Assistant Commissioners to be as in the initial proposals without further alteration. They noted the considerable body of objections, and the quality of the evidence, from Middleton residents to the division of their town, and the subsequent calls to have their town's name included in that of the constituency (BCE-86364). However, in recommending no change to the Heywood and Manchester Blackley constituencies, they considered and recommend that neither constituency containing elements of Middleton should have its name changed.

Despite a great deal of support for the alternative configuration laid out in the initial proposals report, it is the judgement of the Assistant Commissioners - having weighed the quality of the arguments presented for and against the change - that maintaining both of the Oldham constituencies entirely unchanged is the solution most in keeping with the statutory factors. As such, they recommend Oldham East and Saddleworth, and Oldham West and Royton unchanged from their existing configuration, as in the initial proposals.

The Failsworth and Droylsden constituency was the source of much opposition, with both a weight and quality of evidence (e.g. David Heyes, BCE-97976) that Failsworth and Droylsden do not share a community of interest, and are in fact geographically separated by the River Medlock.. Site visits undertaken to this area by the Assistant Commissioners confirmed to them the evidence provided. As such, the Assistant Commissioners consider that a more radical change from the initial proposals in the east of Greater Manchester would be appropriate. They recommend maintaining the existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency entirely unchanged, which the initial proposals did not do. They then recommend an Ashton-under-Lyne constituency containing all the remaining Tameside wards, barring the three named Denton wards.

The three Denton wards would be included with four wards from the City of Manchester: Burnage, Gorton and Abbey Hey, Levenshulme, and Longsight. The Assistant Commissioners considered that there was very persuasive evidence provided in representations (BCE-97976) that the Denton area itself was originally overspill from east Manchester, and that the areas are well linked both physically and in community terms. On their site visits to the area, the Assistant Commissioners observed the excellent transport links across this area. They recommend that this constituency be named Gorton and Denton. They also recommend that the wards of Ardwick, Fallowfield, Hulme, Moss Side, Rusholme, and Whalley Range be included in a new, compact Manchester Rusholme constituency as part of this reconfiguration of constituencies in the east of Greater Manchester. These wards are all to the south of the Mancunian Way, and are all of a similar character, containing a large proportion of the student population of Manchester.

Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend a Manchester Central constituency to include the Ancoats and Beswick, Cheetham, Clayton and Openshaw, Deansgate, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, Piccadilly, and the two Failsworth wards. This is broadly similar to the existing composition of the constituency, with the addition of Failsworth. Again, evidence was received that

Failsworth is closely linked to east Manchester, and site visits to the area confirmed this. The constituencies recommended in this area of Tameside and Manchester area follow a broadly similar pattern to that proposed in (BCE-70325).

The significant benefits of these recommendations is that this configuration removes from east Manchester any constituency crossing three local authorities, and eliminates the requirement for a divided ward in the area. The Assistant Commissioners feel their recommended configuration reflects and addresses the key issues of the objections received to initial proposals in this area.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	33	45%
- Changed in composition and name	16	22%
- Changed in composition only	16	22 %
- Changed in name only	1	1.4%

Recommended constituency names

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Altrincham and Sale West	No	No
Ashton-under-Lyne	Yes	No
Barrow and Furness	Yes	No
Birkenhead	No	No
Blackburn	Yes	No
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	No	No
Blackpool South	No	No
Bolton North East	No	No
Bolton South and Walkden	No	No
Bolton West	No	No
Bootle	No	No
Burnley	Yes	Yes
Bury North	No	No
Bury South	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Carlisle	No	No
Cheadle	No	No
Chester North and Neston	No	No
Chester South and Eddisbury	Yes	Yes
Chorley	Yes	No
Congleton	Yes	No
Crewe and Nantwich	No	No
Ellesmere Port and Bromborough	No	Yes
Fylde	No	No
Gorton and Denton	Yes	Yes
Hazel Grove	No	No
Heywood	No	No
Hyndburn	Yes	No
Knowsley	No	No
Lancaster and Wyre	Yes	Yes
Leigh and Atherton	Yes	Yes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Liverpool Garston	No	No
Liverpool Riverside	No	No
Liverpool Walton	Yes	Yes
Liverpool Wavertree	No	No
Liverpool West Derby	No	No
Macclesfield	No	No
Makerfield	Yes	No
Manchester Blackley	No	No
Manchester Central	Yes	No
Manchester Rusholme	Yes	Yes
Manchester Withington	No	No
Mid Cheshire	Yes	Yes
Morecambe and Lunesdale	Yes	Yes
Oldham East and Saddleworth	No	No
Oldham West and Royton	No	No
Pendle and Clitheroe	Yes	Yes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Penrith and Solway	Yes	Yes
Preston	Yes	No
Ribble Valley	Yes	No
Rochdale	No	No
Rossendale and Darwen	Yes	Yes
Runcorn and Helsby	No	No
Salford	No	No
Sefton Central	Yes	No
South Ribble	Yes	No
Southport	No	No
St Helens North	Yes	No
St Helens South and Whiston	Yes	Yes
Stalybridge and Hyde	Yes	Yes
Stockport	No	No
Stretford and Urmston	No	No
Tatton	Yes	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Name changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Wallasey	No	No
Warrington North	No	No
Warrington South	Yes	No
West Lancashire	No	No
Westmorland and Lonsdale	Yes	Yes
Whitehaven and Workington	Yes	Yes
Widnes and Halewood	Yes	No
Wigan	No	No
Wirral West	No	No
Worsley and Eccles	No	No
Wythenshawe and Sale East	No	No



South East Region - Revised proposals recommendations
Commission paper

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electoral range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to the South East Region: 91, including the two ‘protected’ constituencies for the Isle of Wight (an increase of seven from the current number, 84)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 13 (15%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 3 (4%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 3
- Total number of local authorities in region: 64
- Local authorities new wards made by Order after 1 December 2020, or currently undergoing a local government electoral review¹: 21 (Bracknell Forest, Brighton and Hove, Buckinghamshire Council, Crawley, Epsom and Ewell, Fareham, Gosport, Gravesham, Guildford, Havant, Maidstone, Medway, Mid Sussex, Mole Valley, New Forest, Reading, Slough, Southampton, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells, and Waverley).

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission’s proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st Dec 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Berkshire	635,137	8.65	8
Buckinghamshire (incl Milton Keynes)	587,087	8.00	7
East Sussex (incl Brighton & Hove)	616,362	8.40	8
Hampshire (incl Portsmouth and Southampton)	1,353,121	18.44	18
Isle of Wight	111,716	1.52	1
Kent (incl Medway)	1,325,000	18.05	17
Oxfordshire	499,731	6.81	6
Surrey	859,954	11.72	11
West Sussex	646,410	8.81	8
Totals	6,634,518	90.40	84

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided the South East region into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Berkshire, Hampshire (incl Portsmouth and Southampton), and Surrey	2,848,212	38.81	37	39	73,031
Buckinghamshire (incl Milton Keynes)	587,087	8.00	7	8	73,386
East Sussex (incl Brighton & Hove) and West Sussex	1,262,772	17.21	16	17	74,281
Isle of Wight	111,716	1.52	1	2	55,858
Kent (incl Medway)	1,325,000	18.05	17	18	73,611
Oxfordshire	499,731	6.81	6	7	71,390
Region totals	6,634,518	90.40	84	91	72,907

Number of representations received

In the South East region, the Commission received a total of 7,556 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 5,557 representations were received during the first 8-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well as representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 1,999 representations during the 6-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes all those who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were four in the South East region (Crawley, Portsmouth, Reading, and Ashford). Some of these related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ²	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ³	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	49	39	88
Official political party response ⁴	39	13	52
Peer from the House of Lords	6	0	6
Local councillor	226	89	315
Local authority	24	6	30

² As declared by the respondents themselves.

³ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁴ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Parish or town council	109	41	150
Other organisation	74	46	120
Member of the public	5,030	1,765	6,795
Totals	5,557	1,999	7,556

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so in Mid and South Hampshire (Winchester), and the eastern parts of East Sussex.

Campaigns and petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns were received. In the South East region, these were as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
Opposition to changes in Arundel and South Downs constituency (from areas across the existing constituency including: Amberley, Bury, Coldwaltham, Fittleworth, Houghton, Madehurst, Nutborune, Pulborough, Stopham, Storrington, and Washington)	BCE-63927, BCE-86401, BCE-86402, BCE-86403, BCE-86404, BCE-86405, BCE-86406, BCE-86407, BCE-86408, BCE-86409, BCE-86410, BCE-86411, BCE-86412, BCE-86413, BCE-86414	Oppose	883
Support for unchanged Gillingham and Rainham constituency, across various local petitions	BCE-60161, BCE-96921, BCE-96922	Support	183
Support for Gerrards Cross remaining in a South Buckinghamshire constituency	BCE-96915	Support	26

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

These revised proposals recommendations have been formulated using the same sub-regions as the initial proposals. Some counter-proposals were received that suggested alternative sub-regions. Assistant Commissioners considered whether these proposals had any merit, but concluded that this would result in significant disruption to existing constituencies as well as unnecessary change to well-received initially proposed constituencies. These alternative sub-regions are discussed in the relevant sections below.

As in the initial proposals the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many unchanged as is practicable.

Under the revised proposals 15 of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, as opposed to 13 in the initial proposals. In Kent the recommendations reduce the number of constituencies crossing between multiple local authorities. As in the initial proposals, three constituencies cross county boundaries: between Berkshire and Surrey; East Sussex and West Sussex; and Surrey and Hampshire.

Assistant Commissioners have recommended revising the composition of 27 of the 91 constituencies we proposed in June 2021. After careful consideration, they have decided not to recommend any revisions to the composition of the remaining 64. Of the 27 constituencies where they have recommended revising the composition, they have also recommended revising the names of nine. Of the 64 constituencies where they have not recommended revising the composition, they have recommended revising only the names of nine.⁵

⁵ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	13	3	11	64	50	33	8	3	0	3	3	57
Revised proposals	15	3	9	64	47	36	8	3	0	7	4	67

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey	9	1	2	27	18	17	4	2	0	2	4	30

Buckinghamshire	0	0	1	7	7	1	0	0	0	2	0	6
East Sussex and West Sussex	3	0	3	11	8	7	2	1	0	3	0	14
Isle of Wight	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	3	2	2	11	10	6	2	0	0	0	0	12
Oxfordshire	0	0	1	6	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Totals	15	3	9	64	47	36	8	3	0	7	4	67

Berkshire, Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton), and Surrey

Of the 37 existing constituencies in this sub-region, 20 have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range. The initial proposals increased the number of constituencies in this sub-region to 39, nine of which were retained wholly unchanged from the current pattern of constituencies.

In the initial proposals, the Commission proposed two county-crossing constituencies: one between Berkshire and Surrey (Windsor) and one between Surrey and Hampshire (Farnham and Bordon). A counter-proposal from the Labour Party (BCE-79511) suggested introducing an additional county-crossing constituency between Berkshire and Hampshire (Mid Berkshire and Tadley), primarily to facilitate the preservation of two largely unchanged constituencies for Reading. While accepting that this counter-proposal improves on the initial proposals in the Reading area, aligning better with existing constituencies, and reducing the number of constituencies containing parts of the Reading local authority from three in the initial proposals to two, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded by the evidence for local ties across the proposed Mid Berkshire and Tadley constituency arising from both the consultation periods and a site visit made to the area. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining this sub-region with two county crossings as in the initial proposals, but with a slightly different configuration in one of those crossings.

A number of other counter-proposals that were received suggested alternative pairings of these counties, resulting in a different set of sub-regions, although our proposals for a Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey sub-region were supported by all of the major political parties. These alternatives included: BCE-65841, which proposed a crossing between Berkshire and Hampshire but no crossings with Surrey; BCE-80456, advocating for a crossing between Kent and Surrey; and elements of John Bryant's counter proposal (BCE-72184) advocating for a crossing between Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The Commission had already considered these alternatives when developing the initial proposals, and no new information during either consultation convinced the Assistant Commissioners that a different orientation would produce a better pattern of constituencies. Local responses from the concerned areas did not suggest any of the above solutions, and the Assistant Commissioners did not see enough benefit from the resulting patterns of constituencies that could be created by adopting the alternative sub-regions described above.

Berkshire

Within Berkshire, the Labour Party suggested a revision of nine constituencies around the border with Hampshire. This counter-proposal generated considerable discussion within Reading, as its chief concern was the retention of a Reading East and Reading West constituency pair largely unchanged, instead of the initially proposed Reading, Early and Woodley, and Mid Berkshire constituencies. While minimising change in the two Reading constituencies, the knock-on effects of this counter-proposal, particularly the Mid Berkshire and Tadley county-crossing constituency, included greater change from the existing pattern as well as a major deviation from initially proposed constituencies that had been otherwise generally well-received (see below).

Aside from the Labour counter-proposal above, the initial proposals in Berkshire were broadly supported. Many elements of the initial proposals were generally uncontentious (Maidenhead, Newbury, Slough, Windsor) or well-received (Bracknell, Mid Berkshire, Earley and Woodley, Wokingham). In addition to the Labour Party's reconfigurations of Reading, there were less far-reaching counter-proposals that also proposed two constituencies for Reading, without the need to cross into Hampshire: John Bryant (BCE-72184) and Dave Sharp (BCE-95565). Representations BCE-65841 and BCE-80456 both advocated a county-crossing similar to the Labour Party suggestion, while Jonathan Stansby (BCE-61336) suggested a Wokingham and Yateley county-crossing

constituency. BCE-59262 suggested Wokingham and Sandhurst, and Bracknell and Ascot constituencies within Berkshire. The Conservative Party (BCE-86588) accepted the initial proposals subject to two minor amendments: the first replaced the proposed split of the Downlands ward with two new split wards in Ridgeway and Southcote, aimed at maintaining links between the Berkshire Downs villages; and the second split a number of wards in the Bracknell Forest local authority to align with finalised LGBCE ward boundaries. Both of these issues received a small number of representations, including endorsements from the MPs for Bracknell, Newbury, and Reading West.

Recommendations

Having considered the initial proposals, all the counter-proposals and suggestions for Berkshire, the Assistant Commissioners believe that the initial proposals represent the best overall pattern of constituencies; the lack of objections to the initial proposals was a major factor in their decision. Their conclusion was based in part on a site visit to assess the validity of the Labour and Conservative counter-proposals around Reading; evidence gathered on this site visit supported the logic of the initial proposals and did not persuade the Assistant Commissioners that any alternatives better reflected local ties. Additionally, the dramatic knock-on effects of the Labour counter-proposal, and others that attempted to preserve unchanged constituencies in Reading, to proposed constituencies that were otherwise well received (especially Earley and Woodley, and Wokingham), discouraged the Assistant Commissioners from adopting them. The Assistant Commissioners do not believe that further splitting of wards in Berkshire would meaningfully improve adherence to the statutory factors. As such, the Assistant Commissioners' recommendation is to retain the initial proposals in Berkshire, albeit with minor changes to the Surrey part of the county-crossing Windsor constituency (see below).

Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton)

There were a number of counter-proposals suggested for Hampshire, including two large-scale reconfigurations aimed at retaining a constituency similar to the existing Meon Valley: one by the Liberal Democrats (BCE-82881) and another by a number of local Conservative associations and their respective MPs (BCE-72093). Specifically the latter counter-proposal was jointly submitted on behalf of Eastleigh, Meon Valley, and Fareham Conservative associations; the Fareham Association suggested a proposal with a different Fareham ward being transferred into the suggested Meon Valley constituency. Other counter-proposals featuring a retention of the Meon Valley constituency included Jonathan Stansby (BCE-63166) and BCE-65841. John Bryant (BCE-72184),

Michael Hopkins (BCE-56948), and BCE-59262 all suggested variations of a Mid Hampshire constituency in the centre of the county. Many of these counter-proposals retain Eastleigh, Fareham, and Winchester constituencies that bear a resemblance to the existing configuration. The Liberal Democrats, and others above, additionally seek to unite the settlement of Whitehill and Bordon (reported to be a single community that was divided in the initial proposals) by including Oakley & the Candovers ward in East Hampshire. Damian Hinds, MP for East Hampshire (BCE-76243) made two submissions requesting a resolution to the Bordon and Whitehill division. The Labour Party did not make any objections to the initial proposals in Hampshire aside from its county-crossing configuration in the north of the county. Fareham Borough Council (BCE-75308) and Eastleigh Borough Council (BCE-75658) both produced counter-proposals to facilitate minimal change for their respective eponymous constituencies, with resulting knock-on effects and greater change for adjacent constituencies (i.e. Hedge End and Waterlooville or Alton and Meon Valley).

The Conservative Party suggested a ripple of wards and an additional ward split, affecting the North East Hampshire, North West Hampshire, Romsey and Southampton North, Eastleigh, and Hedge End constituencies. Ranil Jayawardena MP (North East Hampshire) and Kit Malthouse MP (North West Hampshire) made submissions endorsing the Conservative counter-proposal. Caroline Dineage MP (Gosport), Maria Miller MP (Basingstoke), and Steve Brine MP (Winchester) submitted representations in support of the initial proposals. Flick Drummond MP (Meon Valley), Suella Braverman MP (Fareham), and Paul Holmes MP (Eastleigh), disagreed with their national party's submission and instead supported a 'Meon Valley restoration' counter-proposal as already described. Julian Lewis MP (New Forest East) wrote to advocate for retaining the name of his constituency unchanged, and Alan Mak MP (Havant) wrote to suggest his constituency designation be changed from Borough to County.

The initially proposed Winchester constituency received an overwhelmingly positive response, with locals supporting the constituency's strong internal links, highlighting the fact that it consists exclusively of wards within the Winchester district area. Some residents of the Eastleigh district wards in the existing Winchester constituency also expressed agreement with the proposed configuration. Winchester represented the constituency with the largest number of responses supporting the initial proposals in the South East region.

We received numerous representations regarding the proposed Hedge End constituency, including a mix of both support and opposition. The principal concern in this constituency was that the name of Hedge End did not reflect the broader character of the

area, with the greatest proportion of local representations expressing a preference to change the name to Hamble Valley (BCE-59319).

Recommendations

Despite counter-proposals advocating for the retention of a Meon Valley constituency, or any significant reconfiguration of Mid Hampshire, the Assistant Commissioners believe that the arguments for adopting such a proposal are outweighed by the significant body of support for the proposed Winchester constituency, which would necessarily be disrupted under these counter-proposals. Additionally, the Assistant Commissioners note that Waterlooville represents a difficult area to account for, due to its adjacency to the wholly unchanged and minimally changed constituencies of Havant and East Hampshire, respectively; as such they acknowledge that the Fareham and Waterlooville constituency represents the best option, as they were unconvinced by alternative pairings for these towns. They note that opposition in this part of the county, other than from local MPs, has been relatively muted, and that alternatives would again necessarily disrupt unchanged or otherwise well-received constituencies. The knock-on effects of these counter-proposals often resulted in additional local authority crossings or divided communities, particularly the town of Fareham in the BCE-72093 submission, and ultimately did not reflect the general consensus of support evident in representations for the wider area. The Assistant Commissioners were unconvinced by the Conservative Party's suggested revisions, noting in particular an unnecessary ward split in the north of the county (which they felt did not meet the Commission's published criteria for a ward split) and an Eastleigh constituency with poor internal connectivity.

The Assistant Commissioners accept that Bordon and Whitehill are divided by the initial proposals and that it would be desirable to address this in the revised proposals. The Liberal Democrat proposal to transfer Whitehill Hogmoor and Greatham ward into the county-crossing Farnham and Bordon constituency by adding the Oakley and the Candovers ward to East Hampshire, thus undoing a ward split from the initial proposals, was strongly considered; however, it was noted that the inclusion of Oakley in the Basingstoke constituency was well received, and that there is little evidence of any ties between Oakley and the East Hampshire constituency. As a consequence, acknowledging the logic of the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal, but wishing to retain well-received elements of the initial proposals, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the split of Oakley and the

Candovers, but transferring the Candovers part of the ward (south of the M3) from North East Hampshire to East Hampshire, thus enabling the transfer of Whitehill Hogmoor and Greatham ward to the Farnham and Bordon constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners agreed that Hamble Valley would be a more appropriate name for the proposed Hedge End constituency, noting that the two Southampton constituencies are similarly named according to rivers and that the River Hamble represented the defining characteristic of the proposed constituency; as such they recommend the constituency be called Hamble Valley. They additionally recommend retaining the existing constituency names of New Forest East and New Forest West as opposed to the proposed East New Forest and West New Forest. They acknowledged some logic in Alan Mak's suggested designation change, noting the relative lack of population density on Hayling Island; however, they were ultimately not persuaded that this was sufficient reason to change the designation of Havant, which was proposed to remain wholly unchanged and does not seem to contain more than a small rural element.

Surrey

The exclusion of the South Park and Woodhatch ward of Reigate and Banstead from the Reigate constituency generated substantially more objections than any other issue in the region. A number of counter proposals were designed around resolving this problem, including the Liberal Democrats (BCE-82881), the Green Party (BCE-83090), John Bryant (BCE-72184), and Jonathan Stansby (BCE-61336). The first two of these alternatives take the same approach, limiting the knock-on impact of the solution to the three local authorities of Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, and Reigate and Banstead; in doing so, however, they require a greater degree of change than the initial proposals in those areas. In contrast, the two latter alternatives minimise the degree of change to individual constituencies by transferring single wards across a greater number of constituencies. Specifically, these responses propose a 'ripple effect' that involves the transfer of an additional ward into Dorking and Horley from Godalming and Ash, and another from Farnham and Bordon into Godalming and Ash. Other counter-proposals include the following. Representation BCE-80456 addresses the Reigate issue by extending East Surrey further to the east and crossing into Kent at Edenbridge; this counter-proposal does not include any other crossings for Surrey and as such includes reconfigurations around the county including a Walton and Weybridge / Esher and Surrey Hills constituency pairing. Representation BCE-65841, focussed around a self-contained Surrey, suggests Dorking and Cranleigh, and Leatherhead and Esher constituencies to alleviate the

Reigate issue. Representation BCE-59262 proposes a Reigate and Caterham constituency in this area as well as an East Surrey constituency stretching into the Mole Valley local authority.

Outside of Reigate, two issues at either end of the proposed Weybridge and Chertsey constituency resulted in a number of representations. As mentioned earlier, the county crossing of Windsor was opposed by Egham residents, and an alternative crossing at Englefield Green and Virginia Water was suggested by Jonathan Stansby (BCE-61336) and Peter Whitehead (BCE-78356). At the southeastern end of the constituency, residents of Cobham & Downside ward expressed frustration at being separated from the neighbouring Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon ward. Some of these representations, including the official response of the Conservative Party (BCE-86588) and that of Dominic Raab, MP for Esher and Walton (BCE-71095), suggested reuniting the two wards within the Esher and Walton constituency by removing the Hersham Village ward instead (though a number of representations received from across the area disagreed with this proposition). This submission additionally suggested the possibility of splitting Esher ward, as one of its component polling districts falls on the western side of the River Mole (next to Hersham Village ward); however, this split is not required to bring either constituency within the permitted electorate range. Others expressed a simple desire to reunite the communities under any circumstances.

There was some opposition to the initially proposed Godalming and Ash constituency. The Liberal Democrat submission suggests additional changes to that constituency, with knock-on impacts for Guildford, Runnymede and Weybridge, and Surrey Heath. Conservative MPs from Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, and Runnymede and Weybridge submitted comments largely supporting the initial proposals, while advocating for the minor alterations around Esher and Walton, and Weybridge and Chertsey (noted above), from the official Conservative Party response.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners considered that the Liberal Democrat and Green Party solutions, as well as other counter-proposals described above, for Reigate presented too great a change to an otherwise uncontentious area. As such they have decided to adopt the suggestions of John Bryant and Jonathan Stansby, which feature the 'minor ripple effect' of wards stretching into Hampshire, which thereby also help to facilitate the solution recommended for the Bordon and Whitehill issue. Specifically, this

revision would see: South Park and Woodhatch ward returned to Reigate (from Dorking and Horley); Ewhurst ward transferred from Godalming and Ash to Dorking and Horley; Elstead and Thursley ward from Farnham and Bordon to Godalming and Ash; Whitehill Hogmoor and Greatham ward from East Hampshire to Farnham and Bordon; and the transfer of the southern polling districts of Oakley & The Candovers ward to East Hampshire (as described in the Hampshire section above). This series of changes offers a solution to two aspects of the initial proposals that generated significant opposition: the division of South Park and Woodhatch ward from Reigate, and the separation of Whitehill Hogmoor and Greatham ward from the rest of Bordon and Whitehill. The view of the Assistant Commissioners is that, while including the Ewhurst ward in Dorking and Horley creates an orphan ward, the character of this ward is in keeping with the rest of the constituency. While little commented on in the consultation, the Assistant Commissioners are of the view that their recommendation to include Elstead and Thursley ward and the Candover villages polling districts in the Godalming and Ash, and East Hampshire constituencies respectively are an improvement on the initial proposals with regard to local ties.

As mentioned in the Berkshire recommendations above, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the Windsor constituency crossing into Englefield Green and Virginia Water presented a significant improvement over the Egham option. This was due to significantly better road connections observed on a site visit to the area, as well as a more similarly consistent character between those wards and the Sunningdale and Old Windsor areas on the Berkshire side of the border. With regard to Esher and Walton, the Assistant Commissioners suggest a revision that maintains the links between Cobham & Downside, and Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon by bringing both wards together, albeit into Runnymede and Weybridge rather than Esher and Walton; this was because they considered the connections of Hersham Village ward with Esher and Walton were too strong to be broken in order to make room for both Cobham & Downside and Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon. Specifically, they considered the railway line between Hersham Village ward and Walton South ward did not represent a boundary between the two communities, and that the River Mole did not represent a boundary between Hersham Village ward and Esher ward; they observed that these three communities represented one continuous area, and considered that the Conservative Party counter-proposal offered insufficient evidence to include these wards in different constituencies. In order to accommodate the addition of Cobham & Downside ward and Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon ward to Runnymede and Weybridge, they recommend bringing the Oatlands & Burwood Park ward into Esher and Walton, as the Burwood Park estate currently falls within the boundaries of Esher and Walton, and Oatlands appears to share links with Walton. The existing Surrey county council electoral divisions support this notion, with the Walton South and Oatlands

division encompassing the northern area of Oatlands and Burwood Park ward, and Burwood Park included in the Hersham division. Although this specific orientation was not suggested by any representations or counter-proposals, the Assistant Commissioners are of the view that it represents the best pattern for the area. The other elements of the Liberal Democrat proposal for Surrey, as well as more radical reconfigurations, were rejected on the grounds that they would be too disruptive to uncontested or supported areas of the county.

The Assistant Commissioners were also persuaded by evidence that the local residents feel far more connected to the name of Runnymede and Weybridge as opposed to Weybridge and Chertsey, even if all of Runnymede local authority is not within the constituency, and as such recommend revising the name of the constituency accordingly.

Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes)

Of the seven existing constituencies in this sub-region, six are over the permitted electorate range. As the county is entitled to an eighth constituency there is relatively significant change required, and the Commission accordingly proposed changes to Chesham and Amersham despite the fact that it falls within the permitted electorate range.

All of the qualifying political parties supported Buckinghamshire as a stand-alone sub-region. John Bryant (BCE-72184) recommended combining Berkshire with Buckinghamshire, with two county crossing constituencies: Marlow and Maidenhead; and a South Buckinghamshire constituency that includes three Slough wards. Although the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that this pattern would enable the retention of the existing Chesham and Amersham constituency unchanged, they do not consider its strengths sufficient to warrant such significant change from the remaining existing pattern of constituencies.

Within the county, the Liberal Democrats (BCE-82881) suggested transferring two wards between the initially proposed Chesham and Amersham, and Princes Risborough constituencies; specifically, they suggested including the entirety of the Chiltern Ridges ward in Chesham and Amersham and transferring the Hazlemere ward into a renamed West Buckinghamshire constituency. The Conservative Party (BCE-86588) suggested a different transfer, suggesting Tylers Green and Loudwater ward is included in Chesham and Amersham, while Hazlemere is included in a renamed Wycombe constituency. Steve Baker, MP for Wycombe

(BCE-70336), additionally advocated for this counter-proposal, as well as for the retention of the name Wycombe for the constituency. The Labour Party supported the initial proposals throughout the county.

BCE-59262 recommended a three-ward rotation in the south of the county, including Marlow ward with Wycombe, Tylers Green and Loudwater ward with Chesham and Amersham, and Beaconsfield ward with South Buckinghamshire (renamed Beaconsfield). In addition to his alternative county crossings, John Bryant suggests rotating wards in Milton Keynes (including a different pairing between Milton Keynes and the town of Buckingham) as well as a Mid Buckinghamshire constituency that includes Hazlemere.

A number of issues in Buckinghamshire were raised during the consultations. The largest of these, by number of responses, was general dissatisfaction with the proposed Princes Risborough constituency, particularly from residents at its extremities who feel that their ties are to other areas (such as those in the Chiltern Ridges ward looking to Chesham and Amersham, or those in Grendon Underwood ward looking to Buckingham). Residents in Beaconsfield expressed concern over the division of their town between two constituencies; Beaconsfield Town Council (BCE-93375) suggested splitting the Gerrards Cross ward, which contains the historic old town of Beaconsfield, such that the town can be wholly contained in the same constituency, with the remainder of the ward included in the Chesham and Amersham constituency. BCE-56945 (updated as BCE-88612 in the second consultation) suggested two alternatives for Buckinghamshire. Both require two ward splits: the first option divides the Gerrards Cross and Chiltern Villages wards, in order to facilitate reuniting Beaconsfield; the second option splits the West Wycombe and Flackwell Heath wards to facilitate an unchanged Chesham and Amersham constituency, with Princes Risborough extending further south to include Chiltern Villages ward. There were additionally a number of representations from residents of Marlow Bottom (in the Chiltern Villages ward), separated from the nearby town of Marlow by an existing constituency boundary, which the Commission retained in the initial proposals.

There was some opposition to the proposed Buckingham and Bletchley constituency, though the majority of these comments disagreed with the principle of any seat crossing between Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes unitary authorities (which is an inevitability without crossing into a different region). Those that recognised the need to propose a constituency containing parts of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes broadly supported the pairing of Buckingham and Bletchley. Representations from across the Milton Keynes area expressed a desire to retain the existing Milton Keynes North and Milton Keynes South constituency names, as

opposed to the initially proposed Newport Pagnell and Milton Keynes names. This preference to retain Milton Keynes in the name of both constituencies was expressed by both Iain Stewart, MP for Milton Keynes South (BCE-79202), and Ben Everitt, MP for Milton Keynes North (BCE-83516).

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners' view is that Buckinghamshire's near-perfect entitlement to eight constituencies means that compelling reasons would be needed to justify including it within a larger sub-region. No such reasons have been provided, and the Assistant Commissioners additionally note support from local residents for the ceremonial county being treated as a sub-region, with no commentary from either side of the Berkshire/Buckinghamshire boundary to suggest that cross-county constituencies would be welcome. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining a Buckinghamshire sub-region.

In the north of the sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners note a general level of support for the composition of initially proposed constituencies in the Milton Keynes area. They are not persuaded that any of the proposed alternatives for Milton Keynes can be justified on the evidence received, particularly where these would involve crossing into Buckinghamshire at a different place. The Assistant Commissioners recommend no changes to the boundaries of the initial proposals for Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes, and Buckingham and Bletchley, but do recommend adopting the names Milton Keynes North and Milton Keynes South for the former two proposed constituencies, respectively.

Despite the concerns received in relation to the proposed Princes Risborough constituency, the Assistant Commissioners agree with the view expressed in BCE-85308, which acknowledges Princes Risborough as the best option for any configuration of a constituency in the centre of the county, and feel that numerical and geographic constraints make such a constituency unavoidable. The Assistant Commissioners do not feel that any changes to the southern boundaries of the constituency would better reflect the statutory factors; these being the proposed extensions into Hazlemere, Chiltern Villages, or West Wycombe described in counter-proposals above, and therefore recommend retaining the initial proposals for Princes Risborough. The Assistant Commissioners recognise that the name 'Princes Risborough' may not adequately reflect the geographical extent of this

constituency, as many representations specifically reference a lack of connection to the town of Princes Risborough; however, Assistant Commissioners do not feel that the evidence received indicates a clearly preferable alternative.

The Assistant Commissioners considered the Conservative Party's suggestion to transfer the Hazlemere, and Tylers Green and Loudwater wards between Chesham and Amersham, and High Wycombe. Having visited the area, their view is that, while Hazlemere shares a greater affinity to Wycombe than Chesham, there was far greater separation than for Loudwater, which forms an integral part of High Wycombe town, such that removing the ward would divide the town; they therefore recommend retaining the initially proposed boundaries for High Wycombe. They were persuaded that the name of High Wycombe is not reflective of the constituency, and as such recommend that the existing constituency name of Wycombe is retained.

The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by evidence that Beaconsfield town was divided in the initial proposals. They considered that the splitting of Buckinghamshire's unusually large wards is justified in this instance, as it was in the similar case of Chesham in the initial proposals. They recommend splitting the Gerrards Cross ward, including Gerrards Cross itself in a proposed Chesham and Amersham constituency and both the Beaconsfield ward, and the part of Beaconsfield town within the Gerrards cross ward in a proposed Marlow and South Buckinghamshire constituency. This is the proposal of Paul Mason from Beaconsfield Town Council; however, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that polling district SFH, which includes the village of Hedgerley, is included in Marlow and South Buckinghamshire. The Assistant Commissioners feel that the representation of Thomas Broom of Hedgerley Parish Council (BCE-97737) established that Hedgerley is a community separated from Gerrards Cross by the M40, with links to the South Buckinghamshire areas, as opposed to Chesham or Amersham. As this alteration would return Beaconsfield to the Marlow and South Buckinghamshire constituency, the Assistant Commissioners additionally recommend that the existing name of Beaconsfield can be appropriately retained.

East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove) and West Sussex

There are currently 16 constituencies in this sub-region, of which ten have electorates above the permitted range, and one (Brighton Kemptown) has an electorate below the range. Of the five constituencies that are within the range, Crawley (which is coterminous with the Crawley local authority) and Hove were proposed unchanged from their existing configurations.

The initial proposals recommended that East and West Sussex be combined into a single sub-region with 17 constituencies, with a single constituency crossing between the two (East Grinstead and Uckfield). No counter-proposals were received that proposed alternative sub-regions containing all or part of Sussex, and given the obvious ties between the two, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining this sub-region.

East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove)

As mentioned above, the proposed East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency is the single county-crossing constituency in the sub-region. There was some dissatisfaction with the general principle of constituencies containing parts of two counties, as has been the case in Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey. There was some support from the wards of Mid Sussex local authority that fall under the existing Horsham constituency, as well as recognition of the logic of the seat from those within its two eponymous towns. The most controversial element of the proposed constituency was the inclusion of villages north of Lewes (and within the Lewes local authority area), such as Barcombe, Ditchling, and Plumpton . Respondents from these wards (such as BCE-93689) expressed a strong affiliation with Lewes and a desire to remain in a constituency with the town.

The Liberal Democrats (BCE-82881) submitted a counter-proposal for the three constituencies of East Grinstead and Uckfield, Hailsham and Crowborough, and Lewes. It returns the wards north of Lewes to a Lewes constituency by including more of the eastern part of the proposed constituency in a reconfigured Hailsham and Uckfield constituency; and an East Grinstead and Crowborough constituency that acts as the county-crossing constituency in this configuration. The main support for this counter-proposal came from the areas nearest Lewes listed above; however, it received opposition in the secondary consultation from residents impacted by its changes in other areas, particularly in the Polegate and Willingdon community, which would be divided under the Liberal Democrat proposal.

Jonathan Stansby (BCE-61336) suggested an alternative county-crossing constituency of Lewes and Burgess Hill, which additionally included two wards of the Horsham local authority. This change results in a Mid Sussex constituency composed of the northern wards of the Mid Sussex local authority (as opposed to the southern wards) and a Seaham and Hailsham constituency.

BCE-59262 proposed a High Weald constituency stretching from Withyham to Rye along the East Sussex/Kent border; it also includes pairings of Hastings and Battle, and Bexhill and Hailsham. Oliver Raven (BCE-85388) suggested a Lewes constituency that includes Haywards Heath as well as a Hailsham and Newhaven constituency, and a crossing between West Sussex and the Brighton and Hove unitary authority, rather than between West and East Sussex.

The initially proposed Eastbourne constituency was well-received within Eastbourne itself, as it was made coterminous with its local authority. There was some dissatisfaction from Lower Willingdon and Upper Willingdon wards, which were removed from the constituency, but those residents who understood that some change was necessary in order to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range supported pairing Willingdon with Polegate in the proposed Lewes constituency.

There were relatively few representations received in the constituencies of Bexhill and Battle, and Hastings and Rye, though the majority were supportive of the minor change in the initial proposals. There was a campaign in the proposed Hailsham and Crowborough constituency, coordinated by Nusrat Ghani, MP for Wealden (BCE-65370), and supported by the Conservative Party (BCE-86588), which was generally supportive of the initial proposals, but with two suggested changes: the transfer of the Hartfield ward from East Grinstead and Uckfield to Hailsham and Crowborough, which can be made without further knock-on effects, and a change of name from Hailsham and Crowborough to 'Sussex Weald'.

There was no proposed change to the external boundaries of the three constituencies largely consisting of the Brighton and Hove unitary authority, which was well-received. Only two wards were transferred between Brighton Pavilion and Brighton Kemptown, with Queen's Park ward being included in Pavilion, and Hanover and Elm Grove ward included in Kemptown. There was opposition to this transfer from both wards, with residents advocating for any alternative that was more similar to the existing pattern. Lloyd Russell-Moyle, MP for Brighton Kemptown (BCE-79075), submitted a counter-proposal suggesting a split of the Hanover and Elm Grove ward. This proposal received support from both constituencies, as it addressed local ties and geographic factors and satisfied residents of both wards who felt better represented under the existing pattern; it additionally suggested altering the name of the eastern constituency to Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven in recognition of the boundary extending outside of the Brighton and Hove area. The proposed Hove and Brighton West constituency was unchanged from the existing boundaries, but

with a different name; this was strongly opposed by local residents, who expressed their preference for Hove and Portslade, suggested by Peter Kyle, MP for the current constituency (BCE-56706).

Recommendations

In the east of the county, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to the proposed Bexhill and Battle, Eastbourne, and Hastings and Rye constituencies. These three constituencies received relatively few representations and bear a strong resemblance to the three existing constituencies in the area. The transfer of Heathfield from Bexhill and Battle to Hailsham and Crowborough was noted as a particular strength based on positive comments received from respondents in the area.

The Assistant Commissioners considered that the principle of the initially proposed East Grinstead and Uckfield represented the best county-crossing constituency, despite the dissatisfaction in representations received from villages north of Lewes. Having visited the area, the Assistant Commissioners feel that, although the villages in the northern area of Lewes local authority are clearly closely tied to Lewes itself, it would not be unreasonable for them to be represented in the same constituency as Uckfield, as in the initial proposals. Additionally, they considered a boundary between the wards of Polegate South and Willingdon Watermill, and Lower Willingdon, as in the Liberal Democrats' proposal, to be unsatisfactory, as it clearly divided the community. They accept the arguments presented by Nusrat Ghani MP's campaign and the Conservative Party, and therefore recommend transferring the Hartfield ward to Hailsham and Crowborough to reunite it with Withyham, a change which can be accommodated without any knock-on impact; they additionally recommend changing the name of the constituency to 'Sussex Weald'.

In Brighton, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the counter-proposal of Lloyd Russell-Moyle. Having visited the area on a site visit, they observed the centre of Kemptown extends into Queen's Park ward. Additionally, they consider that splitting this ward facilitates greater adherence to the statutory factors, specifically on electors moved, geographic factors, and local ties. They therefore recommend returning the Queen's Park ward to the Brighton Kemptown constituency, and splitting the Hanover and Elm Grove ward between the constituencies of Brighton Pavilion and Brighton Kemptown. Although they recognise the logic of the argument presented regarding the name of the latter constituency, the Assistant Commissioners do not feel that sufficient evidence has been received for why the name of this constituency, fundamentally unchanged from the existing constituency under their

recommendations, should be renamed. They therefore recommend retaining the existing name of Brighton Kemptown, but note the Commission may wish to invite representations specifically on this constituency name in consultation on the revised proposals. They do, however, recommend changing the proposed name of Hove and Brighton West to 'Hove and Portslade', given the overwhelming force of representations received on this subject.

West Sussex

The initial proposals for the eight constituencies wholly within West Sussex attracted some of the most strident opposition anywhere in the South East region. Nonetheless, some areas proved uncontentious. The proposal to retain a Crawley constituency, unchanged from the existing constituency and coterminous with the borough of the same name, attracted a small number of representations in support.

Similarly, the proposed Horsham constituency was broadly well received, including by Jeremy Quin, MP for Horsham (BCE-81523). Supportive representations emphasised that this constituency is now wholly contained within the Horsham local authority, with only a small number of objections.

The reception to the proposed Mid Sussex constituency was mixed, but with more positive than negative representations received. The proposal to expand the existing constituency south to incorporate Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint was broadly well received, with respondents suggesting that the proposals were an improvement on the existing pattern (where these areas represent an isolated extremity of the Arundel and South Downs constituency), reflecting instead the strong north-south community links (particularly shopping and schooling) built on the spine of the London - Brighton rail line and A23 (BCE-88483). To the north, the response was more negative, with respondents from the rural wards of High Weald, and Ardingly and Balcombe arguing that their ties are to Haywards Heath, and thus they should be included with Mid Sussex rather than East Grinstead and Uckfield. A counter-proposal was received from Mims Davies, MP for Mid Sussex (BCE-83229) including these rural wards in a Mid Sussex constituency, and instead transferring the more built-up Hassocks ward east into East Grinstead and Uckfield.

The remaining five constituencies collectively attracted more than 1,300 representations. The initial proposals in this area departed significantly from the existing pattern, in particular dividing the existing Arundel and South Downs constituency between six different constituencies. The resulting pairing of rural and coastal areas in the Arundel and Littlehampton, and Shoreham constituencies was deeply unpopular, with hundreds of representations received in objection, particularly from the the three wards of: Storrington & Washington; West Chiltington, Thakeham & Ashington; and Pulborough, Coldwaltham & Amberley. Many of these representations expressly endorsed the representation of Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs (BCE-85406), though the reasoning in individual responses sometimes differed from his, and indeed would actually appear not to be satisfied by the specifics of his alternative.

Mr Griffith proposed minor change from the initial proposals, adding the Pulborough, Coldwaltham & Amberley, and Storrington & Washington wards to the Arundel and Littlehampton constituency, Cokeham, Peverel, and Offington wards to the Shoreham constituency, and the Salvington ward to the Worthing constituency. Nonetheless, Mr Griffith's representation urged the Commission to "preserve one rural constituency in West Sussex", utilising "a small number of split wards" if necessary. The Conservative Party's response (BCE-86588) endorsed both the Mims Davies and Andrew Griffith counter-proposals.

Although more muted, there was opposition from respondents in the coastal parts of the Arundel and Littlehampton, and Shoreham constituencies, respectively relating to the breaking of ties between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, and between Lancing and Sompting. This latter issue was also raised by several respondents in the proposed Worthing constituency. Although there was some support for the idea of uniting most of Worthing borough in a single constituency, respondents felt the inclusion of Adur district wards in the Worthing constituency was to the detriment of the Worthing borough wards (Offington and Salvington) that were proposed in the Arundel and Littlehampton constituency. The response to this proposal from those wards was uniformly negative, with respondents emphasising the strong links between these wards and Worthing itself. Sir Peter Bottomley, MP for Worthing West (BCE-72065), and Tim Loughton, MP for East Worthing and Shoreham (BCE-75608), both expressed their dissatisfaction with the initial proposals and a preference for the Andrew Griffith counter-proposal. Richard Hopkins (BCE-97863) emphasised the importance of distinction between the rural inland areas and the built-up coastal strip in West Sussex, as it relates to their respective industries and the abilities of MPs to effectively advocate on behalf of constituents.

The response to the proposed Chichester and Bognor Regis constituencies overwhelmingly focused on the decision to include three wards from Chichester district in the Bognor Regis constituency. We received a large number of representations arguing that this proposal would break local ties on the Manhood Peninsula, the area on the West Sussex coast between Chichester, Selsey and Pagham – the clearest example of this case being the representation of Councillor Andrew Brown (BCE-97799). In both constituencies we also received a number of representations from the areas that were proposed to be transferred from the existing Arundel and South Downs constituency – almost unanimously, residents in these areas expressed a preference for remaining in a rural constituency oriented towards the South Downs, rather than the urbanised county town or coastal strip.

Other than the Conservative proposal outlined above, we received five counter-proposals covering these constituencies. The proposal from Chichester District Council (BCE-71425) accepts the mixing of coastal and rural areas, expanding the Arundel and Littlehampton constituency further north, and Bognor Regis east to take part of Littlehampton, allowing Chichester to take the wards on the Manhood Peninsula. The proposal of Oliver Raven (BCE-85388) retains the division of the Manhood Peninsula, but restores a close approximation of the existing Arundel and South Downs constituency, as well as wholly coastal Worthing West and Worthing East constituencies. This proposal also suggested a county-crossing constituency combining the northern wards of Adur with Hove, as mentioned above.

The remaining three counter-proposals all seek to both reunite the Manhood Peninsula and create a successor constituency to the existing Arundel and South Downs. As in the Oliver Raven proposal, the Green Party proposal (BCE-83090) achieves this by crossing into Hove, albeit in a more limited way, taking the two Southwick wards into the Hove constituency. This proposal does not make a recommendation for which constituency the Chichester district wards of Loxwood and Fernhurst should be included in. Councillor Alan Butcher (BCE-96417) proposed significant changes to the initial proposals across West Sussex. A principle of his counter-proposal was to retain constituencies that were more aligned along the coast and inland those that were more rural in character. His proposal included a more compact Chichester constituency, uniting the Manhood Peninsula and incorporating Pagham and the two Aldwick wards of Arun district. This facilitates a constituency similar to the existing Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, which loses these three wards and gains the two Rustington wards, and an Arundel and South Downs constituency that extends further west into the Chichester local authority. Councillor Butcher's proposal for the Worthing constituency is identical to that of the Conservative counter-proposal (the entire Worthing borough except the Offington ward), with his proposal for

Shoreham comprising the entire Adur local authority as well as the Offington, Angmering & Findon, Ferring, and East Preston wards. This results in a “horseshoe” Shoreham constituency that wraps around Worthing, though this has historical precedent in the Shoreham constituency that existed between 1983 and 1997. Finally, the Bramber, Upper Beeding & Woodmancote ward would be transferred to the Mid Sussex constituency in order to reduce the electorate of Arundel and South Downs to within the permitted range. Jonathan Stansby (BCE-88301) proposed exactly the same Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency as Councillor Butcher, and a Chichester constituency changed only by the loss of the Lavant ward to Arundel and South Downs; the easternmost Horsham district wards would be included in a county-crossing constituency stretching to Lewes as described above. Mr Stansby’s proposal was the only one received that proposed retaining the existing East Worthing and Shoreham constituency, which is within the permitted electorate range, wholly unchanged, with the existing Worthing West constituency losing only the two Rustington wards and gaining the Angmering & Findon ward.

Councillor Butcher’s proposal was endorsed by Littlehampton Town Council (BCE-96810), on which he sits, and Arundel Town Council (BCE-97871), but was opposed by Councillor Sean Gunner, Leader of Arun District Council (BCE-90912), who argued that Councillor Butcher’s proposed constituencies would have weak local ties, and would unnecessarily split the Arun District between four constituencies.

Recommendations

In the view of the Assistant Commissioners the proposed Crawley constituency is highly compliant with the statutory factors, and therefore no change is recommended. Similarly, the Assistant Commissioners note broad support for the proposed Horsham constituency and thus recommend retaining the initial proposals for this constituency as well. The Assistant Commissioners considered the counter-proposal of Mims Davies MP. Though acknowledging public feeling in the High Weald, and Ardingly and Balcombe wards, it was noted that a majority of representations in this area explicitly highlighted the strength of north-south community ties between Burgess Hill and Hassocks, and felt it would not better reflect the statutory factors to transfer the latter east to East Grinstead and Uckfield, especially given that Ardingly and Balcombe ward is not part of the existing Mid Sussex constituency. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the initial proposals for this constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners note that to propose six constituencies across the Adur, Arun, Chichester, Horsham, and Worthing districts, the average electorate needs to be 76,577, very close to the top of the permitted range, and that this severely constrains the possibilities in this part of the county. Nonetheless, their view is that it is possible to achieve significant improvements on the initial proposals, with the specific aim to resolve both the division of the Manhood Peninsula and the fragmentation of the existing Arundel and South Downs constituency. Although Assistant Commissioners felt the Conservative Party counter-proposal constitutes an improvement on the initial proposals (by including all of Adur district in a single constituency and aligning the Worthing constituency more to the local authority boundaries), it solves neither of the fundamental problems highlighted by the hundreds of representations received, and as such it is not recommended to the Commission.

The proposals of Chichester District Council and Oliver Raven each solve one major issue, but arguably make the other worse: the former divides the town of Littlehampton between two constituencies, and the latter further isolates Selsey on the Manhood Peninsula by reincorporating the North Mundham & Tangmere ward into the Chichester constituency. The Green Party counter-proposal is incomplete, with no suggestion about where the Loxwood and Fernhurst wards could be included. As such, each of these three counter-proposals are rejected by the Assistant Commissioners.

The proposals of Councillor Butcher and Mr Stansby are very similar, except for their Worthing and Shoreham constituencies. Although acknowledging the historical precedent for a compacted Worthing constituency and a Shoreham constituency including Angmering & Findon, Ferring, and East Preston wards, the view of the Assistant Commissioners is that the ties of these areas are to Worthing. Mr Stansby's solution retains an additional constituency (East Worthing and Shoreham) completely unchanged, and a Worthing West constituency that is a clear successor to the existing constituency, losing only the two Rustington wards and gaining the Angmering & Findon ward. Although noting the support for a single Worthing constituency containing as much of the borough as possible, and consultation responses indicating that Angmering & Findon would ideally be included in an Arundel and South Downs constituency, the Assistant Commissioners believe that Mr Stansby's proposal is the solution that is most compliant with the statutory factors given the mathematical restrictions in West Sussex and enable a formulation of a pattern of constituencies across all of West Sussex that better reflect the statutory factors and the evidence received. As part of this pattern, the Assistant Commissioners recommended the above two constituencies with boundaries as proposed by Mr Stansby be adopted for this area, while retaining the existing constituency names of 'East Worthing and Shoreham' and 'Worthing West'.

Councillor Butcher and Mr Stansby proposed an identical Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency, which compared with the existing constituency gains the two Rustington wards and loses Pagham and the two Aldwick wards to a Chichester constituency. Several representations alluded to the strong ties between Rustington and Littlehampton (BCE-70170) and the lack of ties to Worthing in the existing arrangement; however, the Conservative Party response to the second consultation period (BCE-96866) objected to the transfer of the Aldwick wards, arguing that this broke local ties with Bognor Regis. The Assistant Commissioners note that if the Aldwick ward is included in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency in this configuration, and instead the Bersted ward is transferred to Chichester, the Chichester constituency is within range, and the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency is just 23 electors above the permitted range. Given the extremely high average electorate needed in this area, the only viable solution is to split a ward between constituencies. The Assistant Commissioners identified that the Felpham East ward could be split, transferring a single polling district of 100 electors comprising the hamlet of Flansham to the Arundel and South Downs constituency. No representations were received from Flansham during either consultation period; however, having conducted a site visit to the area, the opinion of the Assistant Commissioners is that the A259 forms a clear boundary between Flansham and the rest of the Felpham East ward, and that the character of the area more closely resembled rural South Downs villages to the north than the coastal area to the south. The Assistant Commissioners note that it is not possible to unite the Manhood Peninsula without including some of the urban extent of Bognor Regis in a Chichester constituency, and that, given this constraint, the Bersted ward - which has strong road connections to Chichester along the A259 - would be preferable to Aldwick as the area to transfer to Chichester. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend adopting the proposal of Councillor Butcher and Mr Stansby, subject to the modifications outlined above.

Given that the Chichester constituency must include the Pagham and Bersted wards to bring the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency within range, the constituency must be reconfigured significantly from the existing and initially proposed configuration. Councillor Butcher and Mr Stansby's proposals for Chichester were very similar, the only difference being whether the Lavant ward should be included in Chichester or Arundel and South Downs. In the view of the Assistant Commissioners this ward is well connected to the centre of Chichester, and the small number of representations received indicates that the area's ties are to Chichester rather than the South Downs. As such the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Lavant ward is included in the Chichester constituency, as in Councillor Butcher's counter-proposal. The decision to include the Bersted ward rather than the two

Aldwick wards from Bognor Regis reduces the electorate of the Chichester constituency sufficiently to also include the Westbourne ward. The Assistant Commissioners feel that it would be most compliant with the statutory factors to include this ward in the Chichester constituency, reflecting the ward's local government and existing constituency arrangements, and thus also recommend this to the Commission.

This adjustment results in a Chichester, and Arundel and South Downs constituency pair with a combined electorate of 153,639; there is no whole-ward solution that produces two satisfactory constituencies within the five local authority areas listed above. Councillor Butcher resolves this by transferring Bramber, Upper Beeding and Woodmancote ward into a Mid Sussex constituency and Mr Stansby resolves this by transferring the same ward, plus the Henfield ward, into a Lewes constituency. The Assistant Commissioners note the considerable number of representations from these wards (such as BCE-93888) emphasising a preference for remaining in a South Downs focused constituency. Both proposals additionally include areas very close to central Chichester - such as Westhampnett - in the Arundel and South Downs constituency. As such, the Assistant Commissioners feel that a second ward split is merited in the Goodwood ward, in order to include Westhampnett and West Dean in the Chichester constituency. This split enables both Chichester, and Arundel and South Downs to fall within the permitted electorate range and also includes all of Horsham district not otherwise in the Horsham constituency to be included in Arundel and South Downs. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Goodwood ward be divided.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that, even with their proposed amendments, this proposal divides the Arun district between four constituencies, an increase on both the initial proposals (two) and the existing constituencies (three). Nonetheless, this proposal represents a dramatic improvement on the initial proposals with regard to minimising disruption to the existing constituencies, with an additional constituency retained wholly unchanged, and a general reversion to the existing separation between rural and coastal areas. The Assistant Commissioners feel that their modified versions of the proposals of Councillor Butcher and Mr Stansby resolve many of the broken local ties which Cllr Gunner identifies, and as such they recommend it to the Commission.

Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight is a special case, as the legislation governing the review mandates that the existing single constituency must be divided into two constituencies, which are not subject to the constraints of the permitted electorate range. In its initial thinking, the Commission worked on the basis that the River Medina functioned as a geographic boundary between two distinct areas of the island and subsequently proposed an East Isle of Wight and West Isle of Wight that used the river as its major division. Additionally, the Commission considered that any proposal should seek to roughly balance the electorate size of the two constituencies.

Following the consultation stages, there was broad support for the Commission's general approach to divide the island on an east/west basis. There was a strong and collective response, however, that the detail of the initially proposed boundary was not optimal. Political parties (both local and national), local councillors, residents, and community organisations were largely single-minded on this point. The vast majority of respondents suggested a counter-proposal for the Isle of Wight where the three wards of East Cowes, Fairlee and Whippingham, and Osborne transfer into the western constituency, and the three wards of Newchurch, Havenstreet & Ashe, Ventnor & St Lawrence, and Wroxall, Lowtherville & Bonchurch transfer into the eastern constituency. This specific suggestion was proposed by a large number of respondents (and supported by many others) including, but not limited to, Steven Backhouse (BCE-53841), Councillor Geoff Brodie (BCE-58087), Councillor Bob Blezzard on behalf of the Sandown Independents (BCE-66508), Councillor Daryll Pitcher on behalf of the Vectis Party (BCE-76154), David Pugh on behalf of Isle of Wight Conservative Association (BCE-82637), the Liberal Democrats (BCE-82881), the Conservative Party (BCE-86588), and Matthew Ambrosini on behalf of Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council (BCE-96022). Bob Seely, MP for Isle of Wight (BCE-91560), retained the Ventnor and St Lawrence ward in the western constituency in his slight alteration to the above proposal. The Labour Party (BCE-79511) suggested a different approach based on a north/south division of the island, reminiscent of the now-defunct Medina and South Wight district councils. This proposal attracted notably less local support, and received significant challenge during the second consultation. There were additional alternatives, such as BCE-56040 that suggested a division between coastal and inland constituencies.

In addition to the boundary changes detailed above, there was also widespread dissatisfaction with the names of East Isle of Wight and West Isle of Wight. There were some suggestions of shortening these names to only 'Wight' (without the 'Isle of') as well as some entirely alternative names such as 'Vectis' but almost all those who commented on the names of the constituencies expressed a preference for the compass point indicators to come at the end, i.e. Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West.

Recommendations

As a matter of general principle, the Assistant Commissioners noted that it would be in keeping with the spirit of the legislation to aim to propose two constituencies with broadly similar electorates, despite this not being a statutory requirement.

The Assistant Commissioners note that the west-east division of the Isle of Wight in the initial proposals was near-unanimously well-received, and that the north-south configuration proposed by the Labour Party drew significant opposition. They therefore recommend that this orientation of the two constituencies is retained; however, they feel that the initial proposals can be improved on. The Assistant Commissioners note the wide-ranging support for the specific 'three ward transfer' counter-proposal outlined above, which was backed by the majority of local residents as well as most of the qualifying political parties and local parties. They consider that it better reflects community ties between East and West Cowes on either side of the Medina and that it does not divide the town of Newport as was the case in the initial proposals. Additionally, this alternative results in two constituencies with more even electorates than was initially proposed. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend adopting this counter-proposal, and that the names of the two constituencies should be Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West.

Kent (including Medway)

There are currently 17 constituencies in this sub-region, 10 of which have electorates that are within the permitted range (the other seven are all too large). Of these, two constituencies (Gillingham and Rainham, and Gravesham) were wholly unchanged in the initial proposals, and a further two where the composition was changed only to realign with changes to ward boundaries (Canterbury, and Dover and Deal).

In the initial proposals Kent was proposed as a sub-region, with 18 constituencies. Only one representation (BCE-80456) proposed an alternative sub-region configuration involving Kent, suggesting a pairing with Surrey. The Assistant Commissioners considered this proposal, but concluded that the existing sub-regions best reflected the statutory factors, and as such recommend retaining a self-contained Kent sub-region.

Compared to elsewhere in the region, Kent attracted relatively few major representations. The Labour Party (BCE-79511) and Green Party (BCE-83090) both accepted the initial proposals for Kent in full. Support for the unchanged Gravesham, and Gillingham and Rainham constituencies was unanimous, with the latter attracting a petition with more than 150 signatures in favour of the initial proposals (BCE-60161). Similarly, the fundamentally unchanged Dover and Deal constituency was well received, with several respondents commenting positively on the decision to add Deal to the name, including Natalie Elphicke, MP for the current constituency (BCE-74114). No counter-proposal received suggested more than minor changes to these three constituencies.

The proposed Canterbury constituency was well received by those within the proposed constituency; however, it was strongly opposed by residents of Sturry, who were included in the West Thanet constituency in the initial proposals. Representations from this area emphasised Sturry's strong community ties to Canterbury, and distance from Thanet. Representations from elsewhere in West Thanet were also largely negative, particularly regarding the local ties within the constituency. Respondents variously suggested that they felt better connected to Canterbury (BCE-92185), Margate (BCE-83657), or Dover (BCE-82618). A smaller number of representations supported the constituency (BCE-75786), or objected to the name without taking issue with the boundary (BCE-63109). The East Thanet constituency was much more positively received, particularly the decision to bring together Margate and Cliftonville, which are divided by the existing constituency boundary (BCE-80127). Representations in opposition to East Thanet largely focused on the implications for the West Thanet constituency rather than objecting to East Thanet itself; Sir Roger Gale, MP for North Thanet (BCE-86547), and Craig Mackinlay, MP for South Thanet (BCE-86457), submitted representations opposing the initial proposals.

The proposed Sevenoaks constituency attracted almost no representations, other than those from residents of the two Dartford borough wards that were proposed as part of the constituency. These representations expressed a strong preference to remain in the Dartford constituency (BCE-91912), facilitated by a split ward if necessary. Similarly, the decision to include the two wards of

Hartley and Hodsoll Street, and Ash and New Ash Green in the Tonbridge constituency was also opposed, particularly from residents of the latter, who identified that the Sevenoaks constituency has an electorate within the permitted range and therefore that no change is necessary; this included Laura Trott, MP for Sevenoaks (BCE-86114). Almost all of the responses received regarding the proposed Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge constituencies addressed these two issues.

The proposed Maidstone and Malling constituency attracted some opposition from a few different areas. The reconfiguration of the existing pairing of Malling with Tonbridge was opposed, with the most common rationale being a preference for remaining in a more rural focused constituency (Dennis King, BCE-97764). A minority of representations emphasised schooling and shopping links between Malling and Maidstone (BCE-55262), and were thus supportive of the initial proposals. The use of the River Medway as the northern boundary of this constituency, thus dividing Aylesford, was opposed by a small number of representations, including Tracey Crouch, MP for Chatham and Aylesford (BCE-71084), and Councillor Robert Cannon (BCE-77256), but this drew little attention from the northern side of the boundary, with some residents there even suggesting that the proposals accurately reflected that area's ties to Maidstone (BCE-70071). Another source of opposition was the fact that, despite the constituency name, Maidstone and Malling only contains a relatively small amount of the Maidstone borough (Geoffrey Harvey, BCE-97771). Residents of Boxley, Bearsted, and Shepway all expressed the view that the status quo, under which they are included in Faversham and Mid Kent, is unsatisfactory and thus should not have been retained in the initial proposals (BCE-92074).

Very few representations were received concerning Chatham and Aylesford or Rochester and Strood, except regarding which ward should be transferred from Rochester and Strood to Chatham and Aylesford. In the initial proposals report, this issue was highlighted, justifying the choice to take Rochester South and Horsted as the option that minimised disruption to Rochester. This argument was accepted by Kelly Tolhurst, MP for Rochester and Strood (BCE-86282), but opposed by some residents (BCE-56915). An alternative, to take the River ward instead, was proposed by Tracey Crouch, MP for Chatham and Aylesford (BCE-71084), but other representations emphasised that this ward contains much of the historic centre of Rochester, whereas Rochester South is comparatively distant (e.g. Councillor Christopher Buckwell, BCE-97765).

Similarly, the proposed Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituency attracted little attention, though the decision to transfer the West Downs, and Teynham and Lynsted wards to Faversham and Mid Kent (the only changes to the boundaries of the existing

constituency) was generally supported (BCE-53086). Objections were received from residents of three wards of the existing Ashford constituency (Charing, Downs North, and Downs West) that were proposed for inclusion in the Faversham and Mid Kent constituency. The representations from this area emphasised local ties with Ashford and distance from Faversham. A small number of representations received suggested that an acceptable compromise would be for the Downs North ward to be retained in Ashford, with the Charing and Downs West wards being included in Weald of Kent (BCE-72044). This could be facilitated by transferring the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst ward from Weald of Kent to Tunbridge Wells, thus returning the latter to its existing configuration (as in the Conservative counter-proposal). The idea of retaining the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst ward in Tunbridge Wells was supported by Greg Clark, MP for Tunbridge Wells (BCE-97758) and the leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (BCE-76008), but we also received some representations approving of the initial proposals for this ward (BCE-52481). Other than this issue, both the proposed Tunbridge Wells and Weald of Kent constituencies were well received (BCE-54808).

By far the most substantial issue raised concerning the proposed Folkestone and Hythe, and Ashford constituencies was the decision to transfer the North Downs West and North Downs East wards from the former to the latter. Representations from both constituencies were strongly opposed to this proposal, particularly concerning the town of Hawkinge, which residents suggest has limited links with Ashford and is closely connected to Folkestone, of which local authority it is a part (BCE-60769).

Five counter-proposals were received covering substantial parts of Kent. The Conservative Party (BCE-86588) suggested minor change to three areas of the sub-region: to retain the Darenth ward and part of the Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley ward in Dartford; to retain an unchanged Tunbridge Wells constituency by transferring the Park Wood ward from Faversham and Mid Kent to Weald of Kent; and swapping the Dover wards of Sandwich, and Little Stour and Ashstone for the Thanet wards of Margate Central and Dane Valley, to restore the existing north-south configuration of Thanet. The Liberal Democrats (BCE-82881) proposed minor changes to the Ashford constituency (adding the Kingsnorth Village and Bridgefield ward), and the Rochester and Strood constituency (swapping the River ward for Rochester South and Horsted), and a substantial reconfiguration to the Chatham and Aylesford, Maidstone and Malling, Faversham and Mid Kent, and Weald of Kent constituencies. This proposal aims to resolve the divisions of both Chatham and Aylesford, and create a compact urban constituency centred on Maidstone. BCE-59262 proposed a different configuration of the same four constituencies, as well as transferring the Saxon Shore ward to Folkestone and Hythe, but agrees with the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal for Ashford.

The remaining three counter-proposals, submitted by John Bryant (BCE-94668), Peter Whitehead (BCE-81068), and Oliver Raven (BCE-85388) pair Tunbridge Wells with Edenbridge, allowing Tonbridge to retain its existing pairing with Malling. They also propose a compact Maidstone constituency similar to that of the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal, while Mr Whitehead and Mr Raven suggest a north-south configuration of the two Thanet constituencies (in Mr Whitehead's case, both constituencies are unchanged from the existing configuration except to realign to new local government boundaries). The major difference between these counter-proposals is in their handling of the Ashford, Faversham and Mid Kent, and Weald of Kent constituencies. Mr Raven proposes only minor changes to the proposed Ashford constituency, gaining the Kingsnorth Village and Bridgefield, and Saxon Shore wards, and losing the Wye with Hinxhill ward, with Faversham and Mid Kent taking the rural area to the west of Ashford. Mr Whitehead instead expands Faversham and Mid Kent eastwards to take in Whitstable from Canterbury, which then correspondingly takes wards to the south, allowing the Ashford constituency to include more of the rural surrounding wards. Mr Bryant extends a South Kent constituency further west in the Tunbridge Wells local authority, with Faversham roughly divided between Ashford, Maidstone, and Swale districts.

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners note in general that the Kent sub-region attracted comparatively few representations, and as such they recommend only minor changes to the initial proposals.

The proposed Gravesend constituency is coterminous with the Gravesham borough, unchanged from the existing constituency, and has been strongly supported in the representations received. As such, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change from the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners recognise that, given that the Dartford borough is surrounded on three sides by the regional boundary and the Gravesend constituency, the only practicable option is for Sevenoaks to take any wards that are not included in the constituency. They further note that it is only strictly necessary to remove a single ward from the Dartford borough, and that the initial proposals removed two. While acknowledging the evidence received that the ties of the Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley

ward are clearly to Dartford, the Assistant Commissioners are of the view that the strong road connections between this ward and the Sevenoaks constituency make it a better option than any alternative. The Assistant Commissioners are not persuaded by the argument of the Conservative Party that the breaking of local ties in this area meets the threshold for a ward split, particularly given that this would create a split orphan part-ward in the Sevenoaks constituency. Consideration was given as to whether the Darenth ward should be retained in the Dartford constituency. However, the Assistant Commissioners noted that comparatively few representations were received concerning this ward, the likelihood of ties with the neighbouring community of South Darenth across the local authority boundary, and the fact that this would leave Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley as an orphan ward in the Sevenoaks constituency, and thus recommend that this ward is also remains in the Sevenoaks constituency, as initially proposed. Although acknowledging that it would be desirable to retain the Ash and New Ash Green, and Hartley and Hodsoll Street wards in either a Dartford or Sevenoaks constituency, the Assistant Commissioners feel that no counter-proposal received achieves this without undesirable knock-on effects. Given this, and noting that the Tonbridge constituency has proven otherwise uncontroversial, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the initial proposals for the Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners note that the existing Rochester and Strood constituency is too large and must lose a single ward, and further note that any viable option divides Rochester. While the proposal of Tracey Crouch MP to swap the River ward for the Rochester South and Horsted ward would result in fewer electors being transferred to a different constituency, the boundary of the River ward runs through the historic centre of Rochester, and as such the Assistant Commissioners are of the view that transferring the Rochester South and Horsted ward to Chatham and Aylesford ward is the solution that best reflects the statutory factors. As such, their recommendation is to retain the initial proposals for Rochester and Strood.

The Assistant Commissioners note that both the Gillingham and Rainham, and Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituencies were well received and reflect the minimum possible change from the existing pattern of constituencies, and as such recommend the initial proposals are also retained in both cases.

The proposed Chatham and Aylesford constituency, owing to the decision to remove the Aylesford South and Ditton wards under the initial proposals, now no longer contains all of Chatham nor all of Aylesford, and the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that this is undesirable. Nonetheless, counter-proposals that seek to address this issue, such as that of the Liberal Democrats

(BCE-82881) and BCE-59262 do so only at the expense of creating considerable disruption to the existing pattern of constituencies. In the view of the Assistant Commissioners, the force of the arguments received regarding this constituency is not sufficient to persuade them that such disruption would be merited, and as such they recommend retaining the initial proposals for Chatham and Aylesford.

The Maidstone and Malling constituency received a small number of representations across both consultation periods. The Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded that there was sufficient opposition to the initial proposals in this area to warrant the degree of change required to retain a Tonbridge and Malling constituency similar to the existing configuration; as such they recommend a Maidstone and Malling constituency as initially proposed.

With regard to Faversham and Mid Kent, the Assistant Commissioners note that the only other substantial objections came from the three Ashford borough wards that were included in this constituency. The proposed Ashford constituency is too large to include all three of these wards; however, it could be expanded to include the Downs North ward, with Downs West and Charing being transferred to Weald of Kent, as suggested by Westwell Parish Council (BCE-72044). The Assistant Commissioners are persuaded that the ties of these wards are to the Ashford and Weald of Kent constituencies, and observe that this change would eliminate an unnecessary local authority crossing; however, they feel that the wards naturally look to the south and that the A252 running through all three wards is evidence of local ties between them, and thus that all three should be represented in the same constituency. Given that this is not possible within the Ashford constituency, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that all three wards are included in the Weald of Kent constituency. The addition of these wards means that the Tunbridge Wells constituency can be expanded to include the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst ward, and thus be proposed completely unchanged. The Assistant Commissioners therefore recommend the revisions to the Tunbridge Wells, Weald of Kent, and Faversham and Mid Kent constituencies outlined above.

The Assistant Commissioners observe that, despite the opposition to the inclusion of Hawkinge in the Ashford constituency, with many responses received emphasising the area's ties to Folkestone, the North Downs East ward is too large to be included in the Folkestone and Hythe constituency. They also note that this issue could be resolved by an additional ward split; however, they do

not feel that the case for doing so meets the threshold for a ward split set out in the Commission's policy. As such, they recommend that the initial proposals are retained for Ashford, and Folkestone and Hythe.

The Dover and Deal constituency was proposed unchanged other than to realign to local government boundaries, and was well received, with particular support for the change of name, which several respondents suggested is already in popular usage. As such the Assistant Commissioners see no reason to recommend any change to this constituency as initially proposed. The proposed Canterbury constituency was also changed only to realign to local government boundaries, though in this case this resulted in the village of Sturry being transferred to Thanet North, despite being very close to Canterbury. The Assistant Commissioners feel that any additional change to the Canterbury constituency would be to the detriment of the existing constituency and local government boundary statutory factors, and thus recommend retaining the initial proposals for Canterbury.

Several counter-proposals were received regarding the two Thanet constituencies. The Assistant Commissioners considered the counter-proposal of the Conservative Party to exchange the Sandwich and Little Stour wards for the Margate Central and Dane Valley wards. This configuration technically results in less disruption to the existing constituencies than the initial proposals, but the Assistant Commissioners believe that this configuration divides Margate in an unacceptable way. The Assistant Commissioners note that the proposal of Oliver Raven to transfer the ward of Seasalter to Faversham and Mid Kent, thus allowing Sturry to remain in the Canterbury constituency, is compatible with the changes to Faversham and Mid Kent outlined above. This proposal permits a range of options for the two Thanet constituencies, including one that leaves both of the existing constituencies changed only to align to local government boundaries. The Assistant Commissioners felt that this option merited consideration; however, their view is that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that this would be an improvement on the initial proposals, and as such they recommend that the boundaries of the proposed West and East Thanet constituencies as initially proposed are retained unchanged. The Assistant Commissioners do, however, recognise concerns regarding local ties in the proposed West Thanet constituency, where respondents indicated a lack of connection to 'Thanet' and instead associated more with their local towns; they therefore recommend 'Herne Bay and Sandwich' as an alternative name for the West Thanet proposed constituency, recognising the two distinct coastal communities within the constituency.

Oxfordshire

Of the six existing constituencies in this sub-region, all are over the permitted electorate range, such that there is an entitlement to an additional seventh constituency. While acknowledging that substantial changes to each constituency was therefore inevitable, the Commission sought to minimise change and the number of constituencies crossing local authority boundaries within the county when devising the initial proposals. There were no counter-proposals received that suggested pairing Oxfordshire with any other counties, and as such the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining Oxfordshire as a self-contained sub-region.

The most significant issue in Oxfordshire was the inclusion of several wards from the West Oxfordshire district in the Bicester constituency. Responses from villages in these wards, such as Eynsham, Hanborough, and Stonesfield, stressed their ties to the nearby town of Witney, and a corresponding lack of connections to Bicester in neighbouring Cherwell district. Despite this sentiment, only one counter-proposal, from Oliver Raven (BCE-85388), attempted to address this concern. Mr Raven's suggestion included a rotation of wards around the county, with the objective of reuniting the three wards of Eynsham and Cassington, Freeland and Hanborough, and North Leigh with the Witney constituency. This subsequently leads to knock-on impacts in the form of alternative constituency pairings, namely Bicester and Thame, Henley and Didcot, and Kidlington and Abingdon.

The Green Party, the Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrats all support the Commission's proposals in Oxfordshire with no amendments. The Conservative Party (BCE-96866) supported the initial proposals in the first consultation period, but during the second consultation amended this to suggest moving a single ward. Specifically, this change, which was also recommended by both local MPs (BCE-96482), would see the Stanford ward returned to its existing constituency of Didcot and Wantage, as opposed to joining Witney as initially proposed; this change can be made with no further knock-on effects.

Elsewhere in the county there were small pockets of commentary. This included some support for a revision of the name of the Henley constituency to Henley and Thame (BCE-65257), in recognition of the latter town's increased population. The MP for Banbury, Victoria Prentis (BCE-83061), submitted comments supporting the adjustments to constituencies in the north of the county. There was also support for the Bicester constituency within the eponymous town and its immediate surrounds, as well as

support for the minor changes to the Oxford East, and Oxford West and Abingdon constituencies to better reflect local links within the city, including from Oxford East MP Annelise Dodds (BCE-74846).

Recommendations

The Assistant Commissioners investigated a number of potential alternatives within Oxfordshire to address the concerns of electors living near Witney proposed to join the Bicester constituency, including both Oliver Raven's counter-proposal as well as internally-developed possible alternatives. Ultimately they determined that any changes necessary to facilitate this would be too disruptive to every other constituency within the county, which were well-received or uncontentious.

In recognition of the local authority crossing which was the source of much of the opposition to the proposed Bicester constituency, the Assistant Commissioners considered that including the name of a settlement within West Oxfordshire in the constituency name would better reflect the extent of communities within the constituency; they therefore propose that the constituency should be renamed Bicester and Woodstock, but retain the boundaries of the initial proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the Conservative Party's suggestions, noting evidence from residents in Stanford ward that indicated a greater affinity between communities in the area to Wantage rather than to Witney. They therefore propose Stanford be retained in Didcot and Wantage, but that the initial proposals are otherwise retained for these two constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners see some merit in the idea of renaming the Henley constituency to Henley and Thame, but feel that the evidence provided so far does not provide compelling reasons to deviate from the Commission's general policy of retaining the names of existing constituencies where their boundaries remain fundamentally similar. They therefore recommend retaining the initial proposals in full for Henley, but suggest the Commission may wish to invite views specifically on the proposed constituency name during the consultation on the revised proposals.

The Assistant Commissioners note that responses from the proposed Banbury, Oxford West and Abingdon, and Oxford East constituencies have been broadly supportive of the initial proposals, and recommend that they are retained by the Commission.

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	36	40%
- Changed in composition and name	9	10%
- Changed in composition only	18	20%
- Changed in name only	9	10%

Recommended constituency changes

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Aldershot	No	No
Arundel and South Downs	Yes	Yes

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Ashford	No	No
Aylesbury	No	No
Banbury	No	No
Basingstoke	No	No
Beaconsfield	Yes	Yes
Bexhill and Battle	No	No
Bicester and Woodstock	No	Yes
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Yes	Yes
Bracknell	No	No
Brighton Kemptown	Yes	No
Brighton Pavilion	Yes	No
Buckingham and Bletchley	No	No
Canterbury	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Chatham and Aylesford	No	No
Chesham and Amersham	Yes	No
Chichester	Yes	No
Crawley	No	No
Dartford	No	No
Didcot and Wantage	Yes	No
Dorking and Horley	Yes	No
Dover and Deal	No	No
Earley and Woodley	No	No
East Grinstead and Uckfield	Yes	No
East Hampshire	Yes	No
East Surrey	No	No
East Thanet	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
East Worthing and Shoreham	Yes	Yes
Eastbourne	No	No
Eastleigh	No	No
Epsom and Ewell	No	No
Esher and Walton	Yes	No
Fareham and Waterlooville	No	No
Farnham and Bordon	Yes	No
Faversham and Mid Kent	Yes	No
Folkestone and Hythe	No	No
Gillingham and Rainham	No	No
Godalming and Ash	Yes	No
Gosport	No	No
Gravesham	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Guildford	No	No
Hamble Valley	No	Yes
Hastings and Rye	No	No
Havant	No	No
Henley	No	No
Herne Bay and Sandwich	No	Yes
Horsham	No	No
Hove and Portslade	No	Yes
Isle of Wight East	Yes	Yes
Isle of Wight West	Yes	Yes
Lewes	No	No
Maidenhead	No	No
Maidstone and Malling	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Mid Berkshire	No	No
Mid Sussex	No	No
Milton Keynes North	No	Yes
Milton Keynes South	No	Yes
New Forest East	No	Yes
New Forest West	No	Yes
Newbury	No	No
North East Hampshire	Yes	No
North West Hampshire	No	No
Oxford East	No	No
Oxford West and Abingdon	No	No
Portsmouth North	No	No
Portsmouth South	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Princes Risborough	No	No
Reading	No	No
Reigate	Yes	No
Rochester and Strood	No	No
Romsey and Southampton North	No	No
Runnymede and Weybridge	Yes	Yes
Sevenoaks	No	No
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	No	No
Slough	No	No
Southampton Itchen	No	No
Southampton Test	No	No
Spelthorne	No	No
Surrey Heath	No	No

Proposed constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Sussex Weald	Yes	Yes
Tonbridge	No	No
Tunbridge Wells	Yes	No
Weald of Kent	Yes	No
Winchester	No	No
Windsor	Yes	No
Witney	Yes	No
Woking	No	No
Wokingham	No	No
Worthing West	Yes	Yes
Wycombe	No	Yes



Yorkshire and the Humber - Revised proposals
recommendations
Commission paper

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2023 Review

Electoral quota: 73,393

Electorate range: 69,724 - 77,062

Initial proposals overview

- Total number of constituencies allocated to Yorkshire and the Humber: 54 (the same as the current number).
- Total number of existing constituencies that are retained wholly unchanged in the initial proposals (IPs): 2 (4%)
- Total number of existing constituencies that are unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with new or prospective local government ward boundaries: 13 (24%)
- Total number of proposed constituencies that cross county boundaries: 3
- Total number of local authorities in region: 21
- Local authorities that had (or will have) an Order for new wards made after the statutory cut-off date of 1 December 2020:¹ North Lincolnshire unitary authority is currently undergoing a local government electoral review. It is also worth noting that a new unitary authority area of North Yorkshire Council has been approved and will be established in April 2023. This council will administer the area currently covered by North Yorkshire County Council and the district councils of Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough, and Selby.

¹ Local government electoral reviews are conducted - and subsequent Orders made - by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Such reviews are conducted on a rolling basis and may affect the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors, and also the ward name. While the Commission's proposals are expressed in terms of wards as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1st December 2020, the consequences of subsequent ward boundary changes may be taken into account in certain circumstances.

Allocation of constituencies by county/metropolitan county

County/metropolitan county	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies
Humberside, comprising East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, North East Lincolnshire, and North Lincolnshire ²	684,294	9.32	10
South Yorkshire	1,007,392	13.73	14
North Yorkshire, including City of York ³	620,874	8.46	8
West Yorkshire	1,653,940	22.54	22
Totals	3,966,500	54.04	54

² Hereafter referred to as Humberside.

³ Hereafter referred to as North Yorkshire.

Sub-regions

The initial proposals divided Yorkshire and the Humber into the following sub-regions:

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing number of constituencies	Proposed number of constituencies	Average constituency size in proposed sub-region
Humberside and South Yorkshire	1,691,686	23.05	24	23	73,552
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	2,274,814	30.99	30	31	73,381
Region totals	3,966,500	54.04	54	54	73,454

Number of representations received

In the Yorkshire and the Humber region, the Commission received a total of 2,759 representations during both consultation phases. Of these, 1,982 representations were received during the first eight-week consultation on the initial proposals. There were also a number of duplicate representations within this total, as well representations that made general or irrelevant comments that did not have any bearing on the substance of the initial proposals.

The Commission received a total of 777 representations during the six-week secondary consultation phase. This number includes 122 who gave evidence at the public hearings, of which there were three in the Yorkshire and the Humber region (Leeds, Hull and Northallerton). Some of these secondary consultation responses related to comments made during the first consultation, while others made comments on aspects of the initial proposals. Representations were received from the following respondents:

Type of respondents ⁴	Initial consultation	Secondary consultation ⁵	Total number of representations
Member of Parliament	28	23	51
Official political party response ⁶	14	7	21
Peer from the House of Lords	0	0	0
Local councillor	96	53	149
Local authority	8	3	11

⁴ As declared by the respondents themselves.

⁵ Those who submitted representations at both initial and secondary consultations have been counted twice.

⁶ This includes both national and local political party responses.

Parish or town council	13	0	13
Other organisation	51	60	111
Member of the public	1,772	631	2,403
Totals	1,982	777	2,759

While many of the representations can be categorised as opposing the Commission's initial proposals, there has been some degree of support for the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, but particularly so in the City of Sheffield and the City of York. Very few representations have been received with regard to the Borough of Scarborough and large parts of South Yorkshire.

Campaigns and petitions

As expected, throughout the region, representations from a number of organised campaigns were received. In the Yorkshire and the Humber region, these were as follows:

Campaign/Petition	ID number	Support/oppose initial proposals	Strength (no. of signatories)
'Keighley and Ilkely' name	BCE-68507	Oppose	68
Keep Great Horton ward in Bradford south	BCE-74652 and BCE-74656	Oppose	49
Keep South West Holderness ward separate from Hull	BCE-63300	Oppose	9

Revised proposals recommendations

In light of the representations and evidence received, and following site visits to some of the contentious localities, the Assistant Commissioners have considered whether the initial proposals should be changed.

These revised proposals recommendations have been formulated using the same sub-regions as the initial proposals. While there was widespread support for the proposed sub-regions, some respondents to the consultation proposed alternative groupings, including the Conservative Party (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980). Under their alternative, the Conservative Party grouped South Yorkshire with the unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, as in the initial proposals. However, elsewhere they considered North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and the unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull as a second sub-region of 37 constituencies. This included two cross-county boundary constituencies between the East Riding of Yorkshire and North Yorkshire, and a further two between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. While the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the strength of parts of the Conservative Party counter-proposal, they did not, on the whole, consider that the new sub-region arrangement permitted a superior overall arrangement based on the statutory factors. Similarly, they did not consider that foregoing sub-regions altogether and treating the region as one group of 54 constituencies, as in BCE-79391, resulted in a superior arrangement. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the sub-region groupings used in the Yorkshire and the Humber region under the initial proposals be retained in the revised proposals.

As in the initial proposals the aim has been to try to minimise changes to constituencies and to retain as many existing constituencies unchanged as is practicable.

Under the Assistant Commissioners' recommendations for revised proposals, two of the existing constituencies are wholly unchanged, the same as in the initial proposals. In the North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire sub-region it has been possible to reduce the number of constituencies crossing multiple local authorities by one, whereas this number remains unchanged in the Humberside and South Yorkshire sub-region. As in the initial proposals, the Assistant Commissioners recommend three constituencies that cross county boundaries. They recommend that the Doncaster East and Axholme constituency crosses the

county boundary between Humberside and South Yorkshire, and the Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold constituencies cross the boundary between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

The composition of 22 of the 54 constituencies that were proposed in June 2021 are recommended for revision. After careful consideration, the Assistant Commissioners decided not to recommend revisions to the composition of the remaining 32. Of the 22 initially proposed constituencies where the Assistant Commissioners have recommended a revised composition, they have also recommended changing the name of six. Of the 32 constituencies where there are no recommendations to revise the composition of the constituencies, it is proposed that the names of four should be revised from that initially proposed.⁷

⁷ See Appendix for tabular breakdown.

Comparison between initial and revised proposals

	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/ metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Initial proposals	2	13	18	21	40	12	2	3	0	3	4	36
Revised proposals	2	12	21	19	41	11	2	3	0	8	2	34

Revised proposals: detail of changes from existing constituencies

Sub-region/county	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies (incl. Unitary Authorities)			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county		Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two	Three			
Humberside and South Yorkshire	0	7	6	10	17	6	0	1	0	3	0	14
North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	2	5	13	11	24	5	2	2	0	5	2	20
Totals	2	12	19	21	41	11	2	3	0	8	2	34

Humberside and South Yorkshire

There are currently 24 constituencies across Humberside and South Yorkshire, ten of which are within the permitted electorate range. Under the initial proposals the sub-region was allocated 23 constituencies, a reduction of one from the existing arrangement.

When formulating the initial proposals in this sub-region the Commission noted that Humberside has an electorate of 684,294, meaning it could be allocated nine constituencies at an average size of 76,033. However, given this is only 1,029 below the upper limit of the permitted electorate range, it would result in little flexibility in creating constituencies. In addition to geographical constraints caused by the shape of the county, in particular the Humber estuary, this would make it extremely difficult to construct nine constituencies within the boundaries of Humberside. Therefore the Commission in formulating its initial proposals decided to combine Humberside and South Yorkshire to form a sub-region. Combined, this sub-region has 1,691,686 electors, thus a mathematical entitlement to 23.05 constituencies.

The Commission then considered the cross-county boundary constituency necessary between Humberside and South Yorkshire, noting that the options would be restricted due to the limited length of boundary between the two, and the natural geography of the Humber estuary. The Commission proposed a Doncaster East and Axholme constituency that included the Isle of Axholme area of North Lincolnshire unitary authority with the east of Doncaster borough.

Humberside

The initial proposals for the unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull were particularly contentious at consultation. Significant opposition was received in response to the extension of the proposed constituencies of Kingston upon Hull East, and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle into the East Riding of Yorkshire - in excess of 100 representations regarding each. Respondents from the South West Holderness ward referenced the distinct rural character of the communities of the ward compared to east Hull, and the specific suburban and rural problems that they face (BCE-85494). In addition, many representations, including a letter writing campaign (BCE-63300), referenced a 2014 'referendum' on the subject of the extension of Hull city into the surrounding East Riding of Yorkshire. Respondents noted a high response rate to the 'referendum' and an almost

universal opposition to such expansion. A smaller number of representations were received, however, that questioned the level of separation of Hull and the town of Hedon, and in particular any conclusions drawn from the 'referendum'. BCE-91781 states that following the awarding of 'free port' status to the Humber area and the forthcoming development of the proposed Yorkshire Energy Park, the gap between the two communities will close further. George McManus (BCE-97284) queried the reliance that should be placed on the '2014 referendum' referenced in multiple representations, instead describing it as a 'carefully selected opinion poll'.

To the west of Hull, respondents, including Emma Hardy, MP for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle (BCE-75273), opposed the inclusion of the South Hunsley ward in the proposed Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency, for similar reasons to those heard from South West Holderness. The representations contend that the South Hunsley ward is significantly more rural than the rest of the proposed constituency and point out that it is bisected from Hull and its surrounding villages by the north-south A164 Humber Bridge-Beverley road. The representations also noted the stark socio-economic differences between the communities of South Hunsley and those in the west of Hull, contending that such differences mean community ties between the areas are limited.

Elsewhere in the East Riding of Yorkshire unitary authority, some opposition to the proposed Goole and Haltemprice constituency was received. In excess of 50 representations, including those from Joe Riches (BCE-85267) and the Haltemprice & Howden Constituency Labour Party (BCE-79425), suggest that the constituency stretches too far east-west, grouping communities with very little in common. In particular it is suggested that the suburban developments to the west of Hull - such as Cottingham and Willerby - have no links to the town of Goole and its rural hinterlands, and would be better placed in a predominantly Hull-based constituency. The Liberal Democrats (BCE-83448, BCE-96103 and BCE-96983) point out that Cottingham is physically connected to Hull by Bricknell Avenue, Inglemire Lane and Endyke Lane, with residential areas such as the Bricknell Estate split by the city boundary. Similarly, it is highlighted that the East Riding of Yorkshire ward of Tranby is physically connected to the Hull city ward of Boothferry by Anlaby Common, while residential streets such as Kerry Pit Way and Mill Lane run from Tranby ward into the East Riding of Yorkshire ward of Willerby and Kirk Ella with no discernible difference between communities.

Around 30 representations were also received in opposition to the proposed Bridlington and Holderness constituency. Charlie Dewhurst (BCE-85041), among others, said that, other than sharing a coastline, there is little in common between Bridlington and the Holderness villages, and the transport links between them are very poor.

Multiple counter-proposals were received for the six constituencies covering the unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull, which aimed to rectify some of the issues discussed above. The Liberal Democrats propose dividing the East Riding of Yorkshire ward of Wolds Weighton between constituencies, using polling districts that mirror extant parish council boundaries. This would allow for a Beverley and Holderness constituency similar to the existing arrangement, less the North Holderness ward, and would avoid the inclusion of South West Holderness ward in the proposed Kingston upon Hull East constituency. The two other Hull-based constituencies would extend west into the East Riding of Yorkshire through the inclusion of the Cottingham North, Cottingham South, Tranby, and Willerby and Kirk Ella wards, while avoiding the inclusion of the South Hunsley ward. The centre of Hull would still be divided between constituencies, as in the initial proposals, with the Central ward in a proposed Kingston upon Hull North and Cottingham constituency, and the St. Andrew's & Docklands ward in a proposed Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice constituency. The division of the centre of Hull - defined as these Central and St. Andrew's & Docklands wards - was identified as an issue by Emma Hardy MP (BCE-97184) among others. The merit of the Liberal Democrats counter-proposal for this area was acknowledged, however, by both the Labour (BCE-79525, BCE-95675 and BCE-96982) and Conservative (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) parties, while the Green Party (BCE-96981) supported it entirely.

Another counter-proposal from the Haltemprice & Howden Constituency Labour Party does not amend either of the proposed Beverley and The Wolds, and Bridlington and Holderness constituencies, meaning South West Holderness ward would still be included in the proposed Kingston upon Hull East constituency. However, they suggest the two Cottingham wards be included in the proposed Kingston upon Hull North constituency, while exchanging wards between this constituency and the proposed Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle to avoid the inclusion of South Hunsley ward, and also to permit the retention of Central, and St. Andrew's & Docklands wards in one constituency.

Moving south of the Humber estuary, the representations received in response to the proposed Scunthorpe constituency were mostly positive, although there was extensive opposition to the proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and South Humber constituencies - resulting in excess of 200 representations. Matthew Brown (BCE-57861) and Cleethorpes Community Sports and Education (BCE-62190), among others, argue that Grimsby and Cleethorpes are highly distinct areas with different identities and socioeconomic needs, and for this reason they should be in different constituencies. Additionally, representations such as those

from Liam Tarttelin (BCE-70613) and BCE-87106 oppose the exclusion of the Scartho ward from Grimsby, and the villages of Waltham, New Waltham and Humberston from Cleethorpes, and their subsequent inclusion in a constituency with more industrial towns such as Immingham and Barton-upon-Humber.

Approximately 70 representations supported a consistent counter-proposal for the towns of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, as suggested by Matthew Brown - though with various names for the constituencies. Respondents proposed that the centres of the two towns be in separate constituencies: Grimsby would be grouped with Barton, Brigg, and Immingham to create what is described as a more industrial constituency, while Cleethorpes would be grouped with the villages of Humberston, Waltham, and New Waltham to the south, creating a more rural constituency with an economy based on tourism and agriculture, according to the representations.

Although there was significant opposition to the proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and South Humber constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners note that their composition was supported by the Liberal Democrats and the Labour and Conservative parties, as well as North East Lincolnshire council (BCE-74577, BCE-74580 and BCE-93502). The proposed South Humber name was, however, widely opposed across representations from political parties, local authorities and members of the public. Most of the opposition focused on the use of 'Humber' in the name, and the most popular alternatives included the most populous towns within the proposed constituency, such as Brigg and Immingham, or were a geographical description, such as Northern Lincolnshire.

Recommendations

In Humberside (less the three wards comprising the Isle of Axholme), the Assistant Commissioners recommend changes from the initial proposals to the boundaries of six constituencies, and to the name of an additional one.

Having considered the representations and counter-proposals received regarding the six constituencies covering the unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull, the Assistant Commissioners consider that both the counter-proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrats (BCE-83448, BCE-96103 and BCE-96983) and the Haltemprice & Howden

Constituency Labour Party (BCE-79425) have merit. However, they conclude that the former better satisfies the statutory factors and therefore recommend its adoption, with minor adjustments.

To better understand the issues around Hull, the Assistant Commissioners decided to visit the area. They noted the objection received from the South West Holderness ward. However, upon visiting the ward, they observed that the main settlements of Hedon and Preston act as dormitory settlements to the city of Hull for all intents and purposes. They also considered that planned development around the Salt End area and the granting of 'free port' status along the Humber would likely decrease the separation between the city of Hull and the town of Hedon even further. Despite this, the Assistant Commissioners appreciate that the ward currently has a distinct character when compared to the east of Hull, and that a large proportion of it is highly rural and sparsely populated. As such, they conclude that it is more appropriate to incorporate wards to the west of the city into Hull-based constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence regarding South Hunsley ward being distinct from the city both in character and demographics. They also considered that the Haltemprice villages (Hessle, Anlaby, Anlaby Common, Willerby, Kirk Ella, West Ella and Cottingham) have very few ties to Goole and Howden with which they are grouped in the initial proposals, and act as 'a de facto part of the city's urban/suburban area' (Liberal Democrats, BCE-83448) contained within the A164 ring road. In particular, they noted the evidence that the local authority boundary between the Hull wards of Boothferry and Derringham and the East Riding of Yorkshire wards of Tranby, and Willerby and Kirk Ella is imperceptible, passing through residential streets. This was confirmed to them while visiting the area in order to see the local geography for themselves.

Based on the above, the Assistant Commissioners consider that the alternative approach suggested by the Liberal Democrats provides a superior arrangement of constituencies in this area, and they recommend that the Wolds Weighton ward be divided between constituencies. This allows for the inclusion of the South West Holderness ward in a Beverley and Holderness constituency, as opposed to in the proposed Kingston upon Hull East constituency. The proposed Beverley and Holderness constituency would then be the same as the existing arrangement, less the North Holderness ward. In turn, the North Carr ward is included in the Kingston upon Hull East constituency, rather than in Kingston upon Hull North, as in the initial proposals. To the west of Hull, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the South Hunsley ward be included in a constituency with the town of

Goole, with the Willerby and Kirk Ella ward instead included in the Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency. They also recommend that the two wards comprising the village of Cottingham - Cottingham North and Cottingham South - are included in the Kingston upon Hull North constituency. In a divergence from the detail of the Liberal Democrats' counter-proposal, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that Central ward be divided, using polling districts, between the Kingston upon Hull North, and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituencies. This allows for more of the centre of the city of Hull to be included in one constituency - Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle - including Hull train station and Hull Royal Infirmary, which were in the proposed Kingston upon Hull North constituency in the initial proposals.

As previously outlined, the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Wolds Weighton ward be divided between constituencies as suggested in the Liberal Democrats' counter-proposal. They recommend this division uses polling districts which match the parish council boundaries in the ward, and roughly follow the clear demarcation of the A1079 road. The nine polling districts covering the villages of Melbourne and Bielby, among others, would be included in a Goole and Pocklington constituency, which is similar to the Goole and Haltemprice constituency of the initial proposals, less the Haltemprice villages, but with the addition of the South Hunsley and Pocklington Provincial wards. The remainder of Wolds Weighton ward (20 polling districts) would be included in a Bridlington and The Wolds constituency, including the towns of Bridlington and Driffield, among others.

With regard to the three constituencies covering the unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire (less the Isle of Axholme) and North East Lincolnshire, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the strength of opposition to the initial proposals, and also the support for the counter-proposal first submitted by Matthew Brown (BCE-57861). Despite this they recommend no change to the composition of constituencies in the area.

The Assistant Commissioners note that the opposition across North East Lincolnshire mostly concerns the grouping of the towns of Grimsby and Cleethorpes in one constituency, and the inclusion of the villages of Waltham, New Waltham and Humberston in a constituency with more industrial towns to the north, such as Barton and Immingham. They also appreciate that Matthew Brown's counter-proposal attempts to rectify these issues. However, upon evaluating the merit of it against the initial proposals, including by visiting the area, they did not consider the counter-proposal to be superior. They note that the creation of a separate Cleethorpes-based constituency in the counter-proposal necessitates the transfer of the wards of Heneage, Park and South from

Grimsby to a constituency with Cleethorpes and the more rural villages to the south. When visiting these wards the Assistant Commissioners considered them to be key parts of the town of Grimsby, particularly in their northern reaches, and as such felt that the counter-proposal would unacceptably divide the community. In fact, the Assistant Commissioners struggled to distinguish the boundary between the suburbs of Grimsby and Cleethorpes and concluded that they act as one continuous urban area. As such, no change to the composition or name of the proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes constituency is recommended. Nonetheless, the Assistant Commissioners were sympathetic to opposition to the proposed arrangement from residents of the Scartho ward. They appreciate that Scartho is a suburb of Grimsby and its exclusion from a constituency containing Grimsby town centre in their recommendations is unfortunate. Despite this, no counter-proposal received during the consultations, or alternative arrangements investigated by the secretariat and Assistant Commissioners, was able to satisfactorily resolve this issue.

With regard to the villages of Waltham, New Waltham and Humberston, while the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that they likely look to Cleethorpes for their key services and amenities, they considered that the wards containing them have a distinctly more rural character. They also appreciate that these villages would be grouped with considerably more industrial areas to the north, such as Immingham. However, they noted that the large majority of the proposed South Humber constituency is still highly rural, made up of agricultural land, with industrial development confined to the southern bank of the Humber estuary. They also note that the rural villages south of Cleethorpes are already in an existing constituency (Cleethorpes) with towns to the north such as Immingham and Barton-upon-Humber.

While the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any change to the composition of the proposed South Humber constituency, they acknowledge the widespread opposition to the initially proposed name. They appreciate that reference to 'Humber' in the name is unpopular, and therefore recommend it be called Brigg and Immingham as suggested by the Labour Party (BCE-79525, BCE-95675 and BCE-96982), BCE-88617 and BCE-87777, among others.

The Assistant Commissioners note the overall support for the proposed Scunthorpe constituency and therefore do not recommend any changes from initial proposals in respect of composition or name.

South Yorkshire

The initial proposals for South Yorkshire were largely uncontroversial and supported, garnering considerably fewer representations at consultation than the other parts of the region. They were wholly supported by the Liberal Democrats (BCE-83448, BCE-96103 and BCE-96983), and Green (BCE-96981) and Labour (BCE-79525, BCE-95675 and BCE-96982) parties, while the Conservative Party (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) supported them for all but one ward.

Very few representations were received during the consultations regarding the initial proposals across the Boroughs of Barnsley and Sheffield, with the majority of those being in favour of the arrangement. Only one counter-proposal was received that altered the composition of the constituencies across these local authorities (BCE-79391).

The proposed arrangement of constituencies across Rotherham and Doncaster was more controversial during the consultation stages. The greatest source of contention across the South Yorkshire proposals was the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme, resulting in excess of 40 representations. There was opposition to the inclusion of the three wards that comprise the Isle of Axholme in a predominantly Doncaster borough constituency from respondents in both Doncaster and North Lincolnshire, with representations such as BCE-65908 suggesting the areas have different characters and limited ties. In particular, residents of the Thorne & Moorends ward indicated they would prefer to be included in the proposed Doncaster North constituency rather than Doncaster East and Axholme, highlighting their close links to the town of Stainforth (BCE-94934). Elsewhere in Doncaster borough, there was some opposition to the inclusion of the large rural ward of Tickhill & Wadworth with the urban centre of Doncaster in the proposed Doncaster Town constituency. Respondents to the consultation, including the Doncaster North Constituency Labour Party (BCE-78202) and the Doncaster Central Constituency Labour Party (BCE-78248), suggested that the Tickhill & Wadworth ward should be in a constituency with the rural Doncaster villages to its east, underlining the strong association with the village of Bawtry.

Multiple counter-proposals were received suggesting an alternative arrangement across Doncaster borough. These included BCE-65908, which avoided the inclusion of the Thorne & Moorends ward in the Doncaster East and Axholme constituency, and the

Tickhill & Wadworth ward in the Doncaster Town constituency, by exchanging wards between the three constituencies that make up the borough. Other counter-proposals, such as those from the Doncaster North Constituency Labour Party and the Doncaster Central Constituency Labour Party, proposed dividing wards between constituencies to resolve some of the issues across the borough.

Regarding Rotherham borough, there was some opposition to the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency. This was predominantly due to the inclusion of the community of Bramley (Bramley & Ravenfield ward) in this constituency, rather than the Rother Valley constituency. Representations such as those from Alexander Stafford, MP for Rother Valley (BCE-69848, BCE-69858 and BCE-94666) state that there are no links between Bramley and the main centres of the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency. Elsewhere in the borough, there was also some opposition to the inclusion of the Rother Vale ward in the proposed Rother Valley constituency instead of in Rotherham. The Conservative Party exchanged this ward from the former to the latter constituency in their counter-proposal, contending that the communities of Catcliffe and Treeton have closer links with Rotherham, and are separated from the towns of the Rother Valley constituency by open greenspace.

Recommendations

Having considered representations and counter-proposals received to the initial proposals in South Yorkshire (including the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme), the Assistant Commissioners recommend changes from the initial proposals to the boundaries of two constituencies and the name of an additional one.

In view of the very limited opposition to the initial proposals in the Borough of Barnsley and City of Sheffield, the Assistant Commissioners recommend retaining the initial proposals in their entirety across these authorities. This includes the proposed constituencies of: Barnsley North, Barnsley South, Penistone and Stocksbridge, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, Sheffield Central, Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield Heeley, and Sheffield South East.

The Assistant Commissioners accept the reasoning laid out in the Conservative Party (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) counter-proposal for including the Rother Vale ward from the proposed Rother Valley constituency in Rotherham. They

acknowledge that following changes to local government ward boundaries the ward is currently divided between these two constituencies, but accept that the communities of Catcliffe, Waverley and Treeton may have closer ties with the town of Rotherham rather than with the communities of Rother Valley such as Dinnington. These closer ties refer to physical road links and shared primary care networks and school catchment areas. The Assistant Commissioners also noted the existence of significant green belt land between the communities of the Rother Vale ward and those of the rest of the proposed Rother Valley constituency, including Waverley Park, Treeton Dyke and Hail Mary Hill Wood. For these reasons the Assistant Commissioners recommend that the Rother Vale ward be transferred from the proposed Rother Valley constituency to Rotherham. They recommend retaining the same names for both proposed constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the opposition to the inclusion of the part of the community of Bramley that lies south of the A631 Bawtry Road in the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency. They appreciate that the community of south Bramley likely has closer ties with Wickersley South in the proposed Rother Valley constituency than with the main centres of the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency. However, the Assistant Commissioners note that this part of Bramley is within the Bramley & Ravenfield ward, which now extends south of the A631 Bawtry Road following changes to local government ward boundaries. As such, the only way to retain the community of south Bramley in the Rother Valley constituency where it currently is, would be to include the whole of the Bramley and Ravenfield ward, or divide the ward between the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, and Rother Valley constituencies. Including the whole ward would precipitate change across the local authority that would likely negatively affect community ties within it, and the Assistant Commissioners did not consider that this proposal met the required justification for dividing a ward. As such, no change is recommended to the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge some opposition to the proposed arrangement of constituencies across Doncaster borough and the Isle of Axholme - in particular the opposition to the inclusion of the Isle of Axholme in the cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme. Despite this opposition, the Assistant Commissioners confirm their recommendation that South Yorkshire and Humberside should be combined as a sub-region to allow for more flexibility when creating constituency arrangements across both counties. In particular, they note that if there was to be no cross-county boundary arrangement there would be extensive change from the existing arrangement of constituencies across the sub-region - and particularly so across

South Yorkshire where the change proposed is otherwise minimal. The Assistant Commissioners also note that all the qualifying political parties supported a constituency crossing between South Yorkshire and the North Lincolnshire unitary authority. Due to the relatively short border between the county of South Yorkshire and the Humberside unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and East Riding of Yorkshire, the possibilities for a cross-county boundary arrangement are limited, and the Assistant Commissioners continue to believe that the inclusion of all of the Isle of Axholme in a cross-county boundary constituency is the most appropriate arrangement to facilitate a pattern of constituencies across the sub-region as a whole that best reflect the statutory criteria.

The Assistant Commissioners also acknowledge opposition to the inclusion of Tickhill & Wadsworth ward in the proposed Doncaster Town constituency rather than with the rural villages to the east of the city, and to the inclusion of Thorne & Moorends ward in the proposed Doncaster East and Axholme constituency rather than Doncaster North. Despite this, and having considered the counter-proposals received, the Assistant Commissioners do not consider that they better satisfy the statutory factors than the initial proposals, particularly with regard to respect for the existing arrangement of constituencies. Therefore they recommend no change to the composition of the constituencies across Doncaster borough and the Isle of Axholme, as initially proposed.

Although no change is recommended to the composition of the three constituencies covering Doncaster borough, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that, since the initial proposals were published, Doncaster has acquired city status. As a result, they no longer consider the proposed name of Doncaster Town to be suitable. Instead the Assistant Commissioners recommend a return to the existing constituency name of Doncaster Central. No name changes are recommended for the proposed Doncaster East and Axholme, and Doncaster North constituencies.

North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

There are currently 30 constituencies across North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, 12 of which are within the permitted electorate range. Under the initial proposals the sub-region was allocated 31 constituencies, an increase of one from the existing arrangement.

When formulating the initial proposals in this sub-region the Commission noted that North Yorkshire, with an electorate of 620,874 (indicating a mathematical entitlement to 8.46 constituencies) could not be assigned a whole number of constituencies. Therefore it had to be grouped with at least one other county. It was identified that combining North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire created a sub-region of 2,274,814 electors, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 30.99 constituencies. Such a grouping also allowed for more flexibility when constructing constituencies in West Yorkshire, where the electoral size of metropolitan borough wards made it particularly difficult to create constituencies within the permitted electorate range without dividing wards between constituencies. This issue is particularly acute in the City of Leeds and the Borough of Kirklees, with minimum ward sizes of more than 15,000 and 12,000, respectively.

The Commission proposed two cross-county boundary constituencies in the initial proposals: Selby, between the City of Leeds and District of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold, between the City of Leeds, District of Selby and Borough of Harrogate.

North Yorkshire

The initial proposals for North Yorkshire, including the cross-county boundary constituencies with West Yorkshire, were mostly opposed at consultation, other than for constituencies where the proposals were very similar to the existing arrangement. We received very few representations regarding the proposed Scarborough and Whitby constituency, which is wholly unchanged from the existing, and from the proposed Skipton and Ripon constituency, which is altered by the transfer of only one ward (as well as realignment to new local government ward boundaries). The arrangement across the City of York, where the proposed York Central and York Outer constituencies are amended only to align with new local government ward boundaries, was mostly supported.

Rachael Maskell, MP for York Central (BCE-74918), among others, supports the minimal change to the City of York constituencies and the subsequent inclusion of the University of York (Hull Road ward) in the proposed York Central constituency.

Both cross-county boundary constituencies proposed in this sub-region were contentious during the consultation periods. Around 55 representations opposed the inclusion of the Leeds city ward of Kippax & Methley in a predominantly Selby district-based constituency, including BCE-62798 and BCE-88382. They state that there is no commonality between the two areas, with Kippax instead being closely tied to the Leeds town of Garforth. The Conservative Party (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) propose linking Selby in a cross-county boundary constituency with the town of Goole, rather than Kippax & Methley. In turn, they propose that the Kippax & Methley ward be split along the River Aire, with both parts being included in Wakefield borough-based constituencies. This counter-proposal is supported by Nigel Adams, MP for Selby and Ainsty (BCE-95208) and Andrew Percy, MP for Brigg and Goole (BCE-97280), who reference the many physical, historical and cultural links between the towns of Selby and Goole, while Alec Shelbrooke, MP for Elmet and Rothwell (BCE-71205 and BCE-97126), suggests the Wakefield district town of Castleford acts as the economic hub for the community of Kippax.

The second cross-county boundary constituency in the sub-region, Wetherby and Easingwold, was also strongly opposed during consultation, garnering roughly 75 negative representations (excluding those referring to the inclusion of the Harrogate district ward of Claro, which is discussed in detail below). Most of the opposition makes reference to the large geographical size of the proposed constituency and the fact it covers four separate local authorities. Kevin Hollinrake, MP for Thirsk and Malton (BCE-73692), suggests that this makes the constituency 'poorly compliant with Rule 5(b)' of the legislation, while the Liberal Democrats (BCE-83448, BCE-96103 and BCE-96983) suggest it would make it unduly difficult for a Member of Parliament to represent. Many representations, such as that from Mr Shelbrooke MP (BCE-71205), BCE-79539 and BCE-88424, state that the proposed constituency groups many disparate communities with no local ties or natural affinity between them. BCE-62815 states that the three principal towns of the proposed constituency all look to 'different cities as their geographical, social and political locus: Wetherby to Leeds, Easingwold to York and Boroughbridge to Ripon'. With respect to the crossing of local authority boundaries, Assistant Commissioners noted that the new unitary authority area of North Yorkshire Council, which has been approved and will be established in April 2023 - as highlighted in representations such as BCE-94120 - will reduce the four current local authorities in question to two.

Multiple counter-proposals were received for the cross-county boundary arrangement between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. Both the Liberal Democrats and BCE-60759 agree that the most appropriate place to cross the county boundary is between the east of the City of Leeds and the neighbouring districts of North Yorkshire, and suggest two constituencies that cover the same area as the Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold constituencies in the initial proposals, but distribute the 31 wards differently between the constituencies. They suggest the three Leeds wards of Harewood, Kippax & Methley, and Wetherby be included in a constituency with eight wards comprising the southern 'half' of Selby district, covering the villages of Eggborough and Sherburn in Elmet, among others. The remainder of Selby district would be grouped with the same Harrogate and Hambleton wards included in the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency. This arrangement reduces the number of cross-county boundary constituencies compared to the initial proposals, while avoiding a constituency containing wards from four local authorities, replacing it with one that crosses three. Kippax & Methley would also no longer be an 'orphan ward', as it would be in a constituency with the other City of Leeds wards of Harewood and Wetherby.

Jonathan Stansby (BCE-87147) proposed another alternative cross-county boundary arrangement between the City of Leeds and North Yorkshire: the City of Leeds wards of Harewood, Kippax & Methley, and Wetherby would be included in a constituency with the six most westerly wards of Selby district, covering the town of Tadcaster and village of Sherburn in Elmet, among others; the remainder of Selby district, including the town of Selby itself, would be grouped with six City of York wards; and the Harrogate and Hambleton wards in the initially proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency would be grouped with a further six City of York wards to create a third constituency. As in the counter-proposal submitted by the Liberal Democrats and BCE-60759, this arrangement would result in one less county boundary crossing compared to the initial proposals, would avoid a four local authority constituency and would prevent Kippax & Methley being an 'orphan ward'. However, it requires extensive change to the arrangement across the City of York: the initial proposals avoided such disruption, which as noted above was actively welcomed in the representations.

Apart from the cross-county boundary arrangement, the largest issue in the county during consultation by number of representations, was the proposed inclusion of the Claro ward in the Wetherby and Easingwold constituency, rather than in Harrogate and Knaresborough. This resulted in around 105 representations, including those from Councillor James Roberts

(BCE-85310) and Andrew Jones, MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough (BCE-97292), which highlight the strong connections between the Claro ward and the towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough, while suggesting there are very few links to Wetherby and Easingwold. BCE-78315 emphasises the vastly greater distances between the largest town of Claro ward - Scotton - and Wetherby and Easingwold: over ten and 19 miles respectively, compared to just over two miles to Knaresborough. They also state that there are multiple bus services between the ward and Harrogate and Knaresborough, but no direct public transport links to Wetherby or Easingwold. Including the Claro ward in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency, as in the counter-proposals from the Conservative Party and BCE-80475, would have no wider knock-on effects, with the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency remaining within the permitted electorate range. Similar arguments to those from the Claro ward discussed above, were also received in representations from residents of the Boroughbridge ward, such as BCE-74128, although in considerably fewer numbers. The Boroughbridge ward, like part of Claro, is in the existing Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency.

The transfer of the Bedale and Tanfield wards from the existing Richmond (Yorks) constituency to the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency was also highly contentious during the consultations, resulting in around 95 representations. Multiple representations suggest these wards are intimately linked to the towns of Northallerton and Richmond, with Bedale being described as a 'suburb of Northallerton' in BCE-58275, while having very few links with the communities of Thirsk and Malton. It is also suggested that Bedale has much more affinity with the Yorkshire Dales area to the west, rather than the North York Moors to the east, with the town being described as 'the gateway to the Dales' in BCE-83814. Furthermore, Jonathan Stansby (BCE-64225) highlights that the wards of Bedale and Tanfield are physically cut off from the rest of the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency by the River Swale.

As well as opposition specifically regarding the Bedale and Tanfield wards, some representations were received opposing the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency more generally. Rick Parker (BCE-58711) and Rowan Humphreys (BCE-80046) contend that the proposed constituency is too large geographically and encompasses such a variety of communities that parliamentary representation would be difficult. In particular, a number of representations, such as those from David Knowles (BCE-57699) and Councillor Mike Cockerill (BCE-87233), highlight that Filey in the far east of the proposed constituency is a coastal community with little affinity to Thirsk or Malton. Instead they suggest that it would be more appropriately included in a constituency with Scarborough.

The Conservative Party proposes retaining the Bedale ward in the Richmond (Yorks) constituency, making reference to the town's strong ties to Morton-on-Swale and Northallerton, and the return of over 7,000 electors to their existing constituency, while the Tanfield ward would remain in Thirsk and Malton. They propose exchanging the Bedale ward with Great Ayton. This is in addition to their more extensive changes to the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency, due to their proposed cross-county boundary constituency between Ryedale and Scarborough districts and the unitary authority of East Riding of Yorkshire, and a different cross-county boundary arrangement between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. The replacement of the Bedale ward with the Great Ayton ward is, however, deliverable as an isolated modification to the initial proposal arrangement, with no wider knock-on effects beyond the two constituencies involved. However some representations, such as that from Councillor Carl Les (BCE-97304), indicate that the Bedale and Tanfield wards, and similarly Great Ayton and the neighbouring Stokesley wards, are closely related, and that these pairs of wards should not be divided.

Jonathan Stansby (BCE-64225 and BCE-87147) avoids dividing the two pairs of wards, as discussed above, but recommends both Bedale and Tanfield wards should be exchanged in the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency with the Great Ayton and Stokesley wards. He suggests that the Great Ayton and Stokesley wards are better connected to the rest of the proposed constituency by the B1257 road, whereas the Bedale and Tanfield wards are isolated by the River Swale. However, this evidence regarding connectivity is directly contradicted by Councillor Ron Kirk (BCE-97296), who says that the North York Moors act as a great geographical divide between the wards of Great Ayton and Stokesley and the rest of the Thirsk and Malton constituency, and instead the communities of these wards look west to Richmond, and north to Teeside. Councillor John Weighell (BCE-97293) appreciated the strength of opposition to the inclusion of the Bedale and Tanfield wards in the Thirsk and Malton constituency, but reluctantly supports the initial proposals, as they are considered to be superior to the alternative of moving Great Ayton and Stokesley wards.

Aside from consideration of which wards to transfer between the Richmond (Yorks) and Thirsk and Malton constituencies, few representations were received with regard to the former. However, some representations were received which approved of the composition of the proposed constituency, but not its name. Emma Atkinson (BCE-66273) notes that Richmond is not the largest population centre in the proposed constituency and also that the '(Yorks)' is unnecessary and often omitted by the media.

Recommendations

Having considered representations and counter-proposals received to the initial proposals in North Yorkshire (including the two proposed cross-county boundary constituencies of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold), the Assistant Commissioners recommend changes from the initial proposals to the boundaries of two constituencies and to the name of an additional one.

Considering the very limited opposition to the proposed Scarborough and Whitby, and Skipton and Ripon constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to the initial proposals for these. They acknowledge the opposition to the inclusion of the town of Filey in the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency, with many representations stating it would be better included in a constituency with Scarborough. However, due to the change this would necessitate to the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, which is otherwise wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement, they do not consider that this would better satisfy the statutory factors.

The Assistant Commissioners also note the relatively low number of representations received in regard to the initial proposals for the City of York, with a significant proportion of those being in support. They acknowledge the merit of the counter-proposal submitted by Jonathan Stansby (BCE-87147), particularly with regard to the reduction in county and local authority boundary crossings. However, on balance, due to the extensive change it would require to the two constituencies that constitute the City of York and the likely resultant breaking of community ties, the Assistant Commissioners do not consider this counter-proposal to better fulfil the statutory factors than the initial proposals. As such, no change is recommended to the initially proposed York Central and York Outer constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners also consider that the counter-proposal submitted by the Liberal Democrats (BCE-83448, BCE-96103 and BCE-96983) for the two cross-county boundary constituencies has merit. As with the counter-proposal submitted by Jonathan Stansby, they appreciate that it is likely to be superior to the initial proposals with regard to respect for local government boundaries. However, they consider that it creates constituencies that are less coherent than their equivalents in the initial proposals. In particular, the Assistant Commissioners have concerns regarding the unusual shape of the proposed Selby and

Easingwold constituency, and the poor travel and transport connectivity within it. They also question the level of community ties between the City of Leeds wards of Wetherby and Harewood and the communities in the south of Selby district. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge that given these geographical and community ties-based considerations the decision between the Liberal Democrats' counter-proposal and the initial proposals was a finely balanced one; however, after consideration, they believe the initial proposals are a superior arrangement.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the potential benefits of a constituency that groups the towns of Selby and Goole, as in the Conservative Party counter-proposal (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980), and the support this garnered from multiple representations during the consultations. They accept that there are strong transport, cultural and historical links between the two areas. However, this would be a cross-county boundary constituency between North Yorkshire and the unitary authority of East Riding of Yorkshire and therefore would rely upon a new sub-region arrangement and consequential extensive change across the whole region. As has been mentioned previously, the Assistant Commissioners did not consider that such a sub-region arrangement would result in a superior pattern of constituencies based on the statutory factors. In light of the above considerations, no change is recommended to the Selby constituency as initially proposed.

Although no change is recommended to the cross-county boundary element of the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the extensive evidence presented in the representations for including the Claro ward in the proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency. They acknowledge that due to changes to local government ward boundaries the ward is currently divided between three constituencies, but that more electors reside in the existing Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency. They also accept that residents from across the ward likely look to Knaresborough or Harrogate for their services, while there are inadequate links to the main population centres of the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency. For these reasons the Assistant Commissioners recommend the Claro ward be transferred from the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency to Harrogate and Knaresborough. They recommend no change to the names of the constituencies.

The Assistant Commissioners note that residents of Boroughbridge ward made similar points during the consultation to those heard from the Claro ward regarding their omission from the proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency. However, including

both Claro and Boroughbridge wards in this constituency (necessary to avoid a detached part) would necessitate change to all three of the constituencies that include part of Harrogate district; creating an arrangement of constituencies that the Assistant Commissioners consider would be inferior to the initial proposals. For this reason, it is recommended that the Boroughbridge ward remains in the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the strength of opposition to the inclusion of the Bedale and Tanfield wards in the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency. They appreciate that these wards likely have closer links to the towns of Northallerton and Richmond, rather than with the population centres of the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency. Despite this, the Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any change to the composition of either the proposed Richmond (Yorks) or Thirsk and Malton constituencies. This is partly due to the lack of any counter-proposal that they consider to be superior to the initial proposals with regard to the statutory factors. They are not minded to separate either the Bedale and Tanfield wards or Great Ayton and Stokesley wards, and therefore consider the only viable counter-proposal would be the exchange of Bedale and Tanfield with Great Ayton and Stokesley, as proposed by Jonathan Stansby (BCE-64225 and BCE-87147). However, they consider that the upland area of the North York Moors between the settlements of Great Ayton and Stokesley and the Thirsk and Malton constituency acts as a significant physical barrier that would negatively affect the accessibility and community ties across a constituency that grouped these areas. As such, the Assistant Commissioners conclude that the initial proposals are the superior arrangement in this area and recommend no change to those.

Although no change is recommended to the composition of the proposed Richmond (Yorks) constituency, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the small amount of opposition received to the name of this constituency. They note that Richmond is not the most populous settlement within the constituency, and therefore recommend a name change to Richmond and Northallerton. This reflects the main population centre and county town in North Yorkshire - Northallerton - while still acknowledging Richmond, which has featured in the Parliamentary constituency name since the 16th Century.

West Yorkshire

The initial proposals for the five constituencies that comprise the City of Bradford in the initial proposals received a mixture of support and opposition during the consultation periods. One of the greater issues across the metropolitan area of West Yorkshire, by number of representations, was regarding the name of the proposed Keighley constituency - resulting in around 235 representations. Many approved of the composition of the new constituency, which is changed only from the existing to align with new local government ward boundaries, but felt that the constituency would be better named Keighley and Ilkley. A campaign in favour of such a name change was organised by Robbie Moore, MP for Keighley (BCE-75768), and included a letter writing campaign of over 65 representations, beginning with BCE-68507. Mr Moore MP states that the constituency includes two distinct primary towns, but only one of them is reflected in the constituency name. It is suggested that this causes confusion among residents and Keighley and Ilkley would be a more appropriate name.

Elsewhere in the City of Bradford, significant support was received for maintaining the Shipley constituency with only minimal change to align with new local government ward boundaries, garnering around 60 representations. Despite this, a smaller number of representations were received from residents of the Idle and Thackley ward, stating their opposition to their continued inclusion in the Bradford East constituency, and suggesting they would be better included in a constituency with the town of Shipley. BCE-94154 and BCE-94233 suggest the communities of Thackley and Idle have very little in common with the more inner city areas of Barkerend and Little Horton, both due to their geographical separation, and the socio-economic differences between them.

Around 80 representations were received in opposition to the exchange of wards between the proposed Bradford South and Bradford West constituencies. Judith Cummins, MP for Bradford South (BCE-75077), among others, voiced serious concerns about the effects of including the Clayton and Fairweather Green ward from the Bradford West constituency in Bradford South, and the Great Horton ward in the other direction. They suggest that such an exchange of wards could damage community cohesion due to a reduction in the ethnic diversity of both constituencies involved, and that this could jeopardise 'the decades of work of inclusion and diversity' (Sandale Trust, BCE-90671) across Bradford. Representations also raise the issue of the division of the community of Wibsey between constituencies in the initial proposals. Wibsey is spread across the wards of Great Horton, Wibsey, and Royds

(Sandale Community Trust, BCE-66593) and thus would be divided between the proposed constituencies of Bradford South and Bradford West.

Multiple representations proposed dividing a ward in the City of Bradford to avoid the exchange of wards between Bradford South and Bradford West. Ms Cummins MP and Thomas Hughes (BCE-97114) highlight that the existing Bradford South is only just over 400 electors below the permitted electorate range. However, the exchange of wards suggested in the initial proposals moves over 22,000 electors from their current constituency. This would mean 'unnecessary change for 98% of the electors involved' (Thomas Hughes). As such, it was proposed in multiple representations that just one polling district be included in the proposed Bradford South constituency from a neighbouring ward, to balance the numbers and bring its electorate within the permitted range. Polling district 18H from the Little Horton ward is identified as the most appropriate polling district to move by the Bradford South Constituency Labour Party (BCE-74857) and Thomas Hughes. This would involve the movement of under 1,000 electors, and this would be the only change to the composition of constituencies across the Bradford local authority, other than realignment to new local government ward boundaries. Polling district 18H contains the Marshfield community, which the Bradford South Constituency Labour Party states has close links to the Bradford South communities of Bankfoot and Odsal), and stated by the Sandale Trust as previously part of the Bradford South constituency. Both the Conservative (BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) and Labour (BCE-95675 and BCE-96982) parties agree that dividing a ward in this area may be justified to minimise disruption.

The initial proposals across the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees were widely opposed during the consultation periods. The most contentious constituency across the whole Yorkshire and the Humber region, based on the number of mostly opposing representations, was Batley and Hipperholme. Around 285 representations were received opposing the inclusion of the Calderdale borough ward of Hipperholme and Lightcliffe in a constituency with the Kirklees borough town of Batley and the communities of the Spen Valley. Representations such as those from Graham Holmes (BCE-71974), the Batley and Spen Constituency Labour Party (BCE-76466) and Councillor George Robinson (BCE-83445) contend that there are very few links between the communities of Calderdale and Kirklees in this area. They state that the M62 motorway and the highland of Hartshead Moor act as physical dividing features between the two local authorities. Instead it is suggested that the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward is intrinsically linked to the town of Brighouse - the two areas 'bound at the hip' according to Councillor George Robinson (BCE-97143) - due to

their historical and cultural links. For this reason Councillor Robinson, among others, suggests that the ward should stay in a Calderdale borough-based constituency with Brighouse.

The exclusion of the Heckmondwike ward from the proposed Batley and Hipperholme constituency was also strongly opposed during the consultation periods. Representations such as BCE-69887 and BCE-70327 suggest the town of Heckmondwike has close links to communities across the existing Batley and Spen constituency. In particular, it is claimed that Heckmondwike is the hub of the local transport system - BCE-70327 states that it is not possible to travel between the towns of Cleckheaton and Batley without travelling through Heckmondwike. For this reason, Kim Leadbeater, MP for Batley and Spen (BCE-97130), maintains that it is essential to keep the centre of Heckmondwike and the A638 road within a constituency with Batley and the Spen Valley.

In Calderdale borough, the proposed constituencies of Calder Valley and Halifax were mostly opposed, although resulting in considerably fewer representations during the consultation periods than the neighbouring Batley and Hipperholme. Representations such as BCE-53462 and BCE-55934 state there are no community ties between Brighouse and Halifax, while the community of Bailiff Bridge, which is closely linked to Brighouse would partially be in another constituency (the proposed Batley and Hipperholme). The proposed transfer of wards from the existing Halifax constituency to Calder Valley was similarly contentious. Residents of the Sowerby Bridge and Warley communities claim they are an integral part of the town of Halifax, and have few links with the communities of the Calder Valley. Representations such as those from Linda Oswin (BCE-60232) and BCE-95516 highlight the close proximity and ample transport links between the communities of Warley and Sowerby Bridge and Halifax town centre. Holly Lynch, MP for Halifax (BCE-73792) highlights the strong local ties between the eastern part of Warley ward and Park ward, where a significant ethnic minority community lives and uses shared facilities in both wards.

The existing Calder Valley constituency must lose electors to bring it within the permitted electorate range. Both the Conservative (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) and Labour (BCE-79525, BCE-95675 and BCE-96982) parties, and Jonathan Stansby (BCE-64225 and BCE-87147) propose that it is more appropriate to achieve this by including the Rastrick ward in a cross-local authority boundary constituency with Kirklees borough, rather than the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward, as in the initial proposals. Jonathan Stansby acknowledges that the Rastrick ward is divided from Huddersfield by the M62 motorway, but highlights that the two areas are connected by the A641 road. The exclusion of the Rastrick ward brings the Calder Valley constituency within the

permitted electorate range, while the existing Halifax constituency is already within the range, and both Jonathan Stansby and the Labour Party propose no further adjustments to the arrangement within Calderdale borough. The Conservative Party meanwhile propose adjusting both the Calderdale borough-based constituencies into a lower and upper valley arrangement, which they propose to name Brighouse and Ryburn, and Halifax and the Upper Calder, respectively. Both the Conservative and Labour Party counter-proposals received similar levels of support during the consultation periods.

It is also possible to avoid a cross-local authority boundary constituency between Calderdale and Kirklees boroughs by dividing a ward between the Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies. This was proposed in multiple representations during the consultation periods, and there are many viable solutions: the Heavy Woollen District Independents (BCE-54492) and Councillor Aleks Lukic (BCE-96027) propose dividing the Sowerby Bridge ward; BCE-60759 and BCE-87777 propose the division of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward, while BCE-82102 proposes the division of either the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe, or Luddendenfoot wards.

The Dewsbury constituency in the initial proposals proved to be contentious at consultation, with the large majority of the opposition coming from the part of the Dalton ward that is included within it - around 45 representations. The Dalton ward is currently included within the existing Huddersfield constituency, and in the initial proposals it was divided between the Huddersfield and Dewsbury constituencies. Residents of the village of Kirkheaton claim they have very few links to the town of Dewsbury, and should remain in a constituency with Huddersfield. BCE-60239 highlights the physical distances between Kirkheaton and Huddersfield (3.5km) compared to Dewsbury (over 8km) and suggests that the village is part of the 'continuous eastern sprawl of Huddersfield town' but is separated from Dewsbury by a 'large expanse of farmland'. John Worsley (BCE-79723) also states that the proposed division of the Dalton ward using polling districts would divide the village of Kirkheaton between constituencies.

Elsewhere in Kirklees borough, the proposed Huddersfield constituency was similarly opposed during the consultation periods. Almost all of the opposition - roughly 45 representations - relates to the proposed transfer of the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward from the Colne Valley constituency into Huddersfield. Representations such as that from the Colne Valley Constituency Labour Party (BCE-85005) claim that the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward is the 'centrepiece of the Colne Valley constituency'. They state that it sits between the Colne and Holme Valleys, with most people travelling through the ward to move between them, and therefore to remove it 'would leave a hole at the heart of the constituency' (Councillor Matthew McLoughlin, BCE-82132). Many

representations, such as that from Councillor McLoughlin and BCE-79919, suggest that the Lindley ward has closer ties with the town of Huddersfield than Crosland Moor and Netherton does, particularly with regard to public transport and education links. These wards cannot be exchanged, as it would leave the Colne Valley constituency below the permitted electorate range. However, many representations propose a solution that divides a ward. The Green Party (BCE-96981) and Councillor McLoughlin propose dividing the Lindley ward, with the majority of it being included in the Huddersfield constituency, except the LD02 and LD05 polling districts that would remain in the Colne Valley constituency. These polling districts contain the Mount and Salendine Nook areas, which respondents suggested are the most closely linked to the rest of the Colne Valley. The division of the Lindley ward allows for the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward to remain within the Colne Valley constituency. Although the above split ward solution was popular at consultation, it was not universally supported. Jason McCartney, MP for Colne Valley (BCE-97013) and Councillor Adam Gregg (BCE-97281) support the Colne Valley constituency as in the initial proposals, and the Conservative Party (BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) consider there is 'no justification' for splitting a ward in the area.

The proposed Ossett and Denby Dale constituency, which crosses the local authority boundary between the Borough of Kirklees and City of Wakefield, received a more balanced response during the consultations than the constituencies of Calderdale and Kirklees borough discussed above. Andrew Macdonald (BCE-63691) suggests that the constituency would contain people who identify with four different towns (Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Penistone and Wakefield), while the poor public transport links between communities in the area are highlighted in BCE-58302. Multiple representations, including BCE-65434, also suggest that Wakefield South ward should be in the Wakefield constituency rather than in the proposed Ossett and Denby Dale. However, in BCE-76862, the Wakefield South ward is described as the most 'geographically isolated' of the wards containing what could be considered central Wakefield, due to the natural boundary of the River Calder. As such it is suggested that it is a logical inclusion in the proposed Ossett and Denby Dale constituency. Other representations, including BCE-71879, support this constituency on the grounds that it groups 'similar-sized rural and semi-rural towns and villages which are well-connected'. It is notable that, even among those that supported the composition of the proposed Ossett and Denby Dale constituency, many representations called for a change to its name. Representations such as BCE-52532 claim that the proposed constituency contains many communities closely related to Wakefield that wouldn't be represented by the inclusion of Ossett in the name.

Multiple counter-proposals were received for the seven constituencies either wholly or partially within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees. As previously mentioned, the Conservative Party proposed crossing the local authority boundary between Calderdale and Kirklees boroughs through the inclusion of the Rastrick ward in a predominantly Kirklees-based constituency of Huddersfield. They then proposed extensive change to the arrangement across Calderdale borough. The Rastrick ward is proposed to be included in a Huddersfield constituency that includes the same wards as the Huddersfield constituency in the initial proposals, except all of the Dalton ward (which is no longer included to account for the additional electors of Rastrick ward). The Dalton ward is included in a proposed Spenn Valley constituency that includes the communities of Birstall, Cleckheaton and Mirfield, among others, and the southern part of the Heckmondwike ward. This ward is divided, using polling districts, between the proposed Spenn Valley constituency and a Batley and Dewsbury constituency. No change was proposed by the Conservative Party to the Colne Valley, and Ossett and Denby Dale constituencies of the initial proposals.

Similarly, the Labour Party proposed to include the Rastrick ward in a cross-local authority boundary constituency, but suggested no further change to the existing arrangement across Calderdale borough. They proposed the Rastrick ward be included in a Huddersfield constituency that includes all of the Dalton ward, but not the Almondbury ward, which is included in a proposed Horbury and Denby Dale constituency. This constituency is similar to the composition of Ossett and Denby Dale in the initial proposals, however the Almondbury ward replaces Ossett, which is included, in their counter-proposal, in a cross-local authority boundary constituency with Dewsbury, Mirfield, and the southern part of the Heckmondwike ward (which is once again proposed to be divided between constituencies). The northern part of the Heckmondwike ward is proposed to be in a Batley and Spenn Valley constituency identical to the existing constituency, minus part of the Heckmondwike ward. The Labour Party proposed no change to the Colne Valley constituency of the initial proposals.

BCE-87777 discusses several counter-proposals for the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees, which divide multiple wards in an attempt to solve some of the issues identified during the consultation stages. The Assistant Commissioners identified one counter-proposal within this representation which they considered to be superior to the others. This recommends dividing a ward between the Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies, and several such possible wards are considered. This avoids the need for any Calderdale borough ward to be included in a cross-local authority boundary constituency. As a result, this respondent recommended no change to the Huddersfield constituency from the initial proposals, retaining the proposed division of the Dalton

ward. However, rather than the part of the Dalton ward covering the village of Kirkheaton being grouped with Dewsbury (as in the initial proposals), it would be included in a Spenn Valley constituency. Finally, this response proposes splitting the Kirklees borough ward of Kirkburton between the Dewsbury and Batley, and Ossett and Denby Dale constituencies, using polling districts. BCE-87777 proposed no change to the Colne Valley constituency of the initial proposals.

Very few representations were received concerning the two proposed constituencies wholly within the City of Wakefield local authority - Normanton and Hemsworth, and Pontefract and Castleford. However, the cross-local authority boundary constituency of Wakefield was considerably more contentious, with almost all of the opposition regarding the City of Leeds 'orphan ward' of Rothwell - roughly 50 representations. BCE-68953, among others, questions the level of community ties between the ward and Wakefield local authority, highlighting that the M62 motorway creates a clear division between them. Despite this, a smaller number of representations were received in favour of the proposed Wakefield constituency, including BCE-57995. This representation claims that, despite being an 'orphan ward' in the initial proposals, Rothwell has good historical ties and physical transport links with the City of Wakefield - better than with areas such as Wetherby with which Rothwell ward is currently grouped in the existing Elmet and Rothwell constituency.

Few counter-proposals were received for this area. The Conservative Party propose that Rothwell ward be left wholly in a City of Leeds-based constituency, with the Wakefield constituency instead including the City of Wakefield ward of Altofts and Whitwood to the east, and the part of the City of Leeds ward of Kippax & Methley that covers the area of Mickletown. Representations including BCE-87777 suggest this would be a preferential arrangement for the ward of Rothwell, but it has 'significant downsides', as it splits the town of Castleford between constituencies. This is also highlighted by Yvette Cooper, MP for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (BCE-95811), who emphasises that the constituency boundary proposed by the Conservative Party would cut straight through the centre of the town, 'severing historical, cultural and civic links'.

Regarding the seven constituencies wholly within the City of Leeds authority, very few representations were received regarding the proposed Leeds Central, Leeds North East, and Pudsey constituencies. Meanwhile, the proposed Leeds North West constituency was mostly supported, with representations such as BCE-52791 praising it for uniting the community of Yeadon within one constituency.

In excess of 70 representations were received regarding the proposed Leeds East constituency, making it the most contentious within the City of Leeds. Representations such as those from the East Leeds History and Archaeology Society (BCE-65843 and BCE-96984) and Richard Burgon, MP for Leeds East (BCE-85477), make reference to a distinct 'east Leeds community' with a clear identity, character and history. They suggest that the community is well reflected by the existing Leeds East constituency, but that the changes proposed in the initial proposals would break the link between community identity and Parliamentary constituency. In particular, the proposed division of the Gipton & Harehills ward, and the subsequent exclusion of the Harehills community from the Leeds East constituency is strongly opposed. Mr Burgon MP highlights that Harehills is the most diverse area in the City of Leeds and that its removal would fundamentally alter the diversity and character of the Leeds East constituency, with a negative effect on community cohesion and the loss of 'the ethnic minority voice ... from the democratic channels' of the community. He maintains that, for these reasons, Gipton & Harehills 'is the most inappropriate ward in the city of Leeds to split'. Many representations, such as that from Councillor Katie Dye (BCE-97011) and BCE-85443, also highlight that the Harehills area contains many services and facilities utilised by the whole east Leeds community, most prominently the Bilal Mosque and Fearnville Sports Centre.

As well as the exclusion of Harehills from the proposed Leeds East constituency, the subsequent inclusion of the Garforth & Swillington ward was strongly opposed. Many representations, such as that from the East Leeds History and Archaeology Society and BCE-85534, point out that Garforth & Swillington ward is separated from east Leeds by the M1 motorway and the proposed HS2 railway, as well as an expanse of countryside. They also highlight a distinct character and socio-economic status between this ward and the rest of the proposed Leeds East constituency. Rather than replacing the Harehills area with the Garforth & Swillington ward, many representations suggest that the electorate of the existing Leeds East constituency be brought within the permitted range through the inclusion of part of the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward. BCE-85453 states that this ward used to be part of the Leeds East constituency and is still 'very much part of the fabric of east Leeds'. This representation, among others, proposes that the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward could be split following the clear physical divide of the A64 dual carriageway, with the Burmantofts area to the north of the road being included in the Leeds East constituency.

Despite a considerable number of representations opposing the proposed Leeds East constituency, and many suggesting an arrangement involving the division of the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward, very few counter-proposals were received that provided an arrangement for east Leeds while also taking into account the wider knock-on effects to neighbouring constituencies. These knock-on effects are considerable, due to the large electorates of the City of Leeds wards. The Labour Party proposed the split of the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward as described above. However, their proposed Leeds East constituency also omits the Temple Newsam ward and replaces it with the Roundhay ward of the existing Leeds North East constituency. This constituency was unchanged in the initial proposals, other than for realignment to new local government ward boundaries. In turn, wards are exchanged between the proposed Headingley (becoming Leeds Central), Leeds North East and Leeds North West constituencies. The remaining wards are included in a proposed Leeds South East constituency, comprising of: the part of the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward south of the A64 dual carriageway; the existing Leeds Central constituency wards of Beeston & Holbeck and Hunslet & Riverside, and Garforth & Swillington and Temple Newsam wards from the Leeds East constituency of the initial proposals.

The proposed Morley constituency was also opposed during the consultation periods, with around 30 representations received regarding the inclusion of the Middleton Park ward. The Morley and Outwood Conservative Association (BCE-68953 and BCE-97133) claim that the Middleton Park ward is 'wholly incorporated into the urban sprawl of the City of Leeds', and is now 'so firmly linked ... via Belle Isle that it is almost indistinguishable'. This is in contrast to Morley, which has a unique identity and the feel of a market town, according to BCE-76804. The Morley and Outwood Conservative Association also highlight the poor transport links between Middleton Park and the rest of the proposed Morley constituency. They state there are no infrastructure links between Middleton Park and the wards of Morley North and Morley South, and only a few minor roads linking it with the Ardsley & Robin Hood ward. The Conservative Party suggest linking the Rothwell ward to Morley, rather than the Middleton Park ward, which remains in a Leeds Central constituency - returning over 18,000 electors to their existing constituency. This arrangement is supported by multiple representations that point out that the towns of Morley and Rothwell have been in a constituency together in the past, and both are isolated from Leeds city centre by green belt land, so have retained a similar identity as an 'independent suburban settlement' (Morley and Outwood Conservative Association, BCE-68953).

The proposed Headingley constituency was also mostly opposed during the consultation periods, with the majority of representations - around 25 - objecting to the inclusion of the Armley ward. Representations such as that from Jonathan Long (BCE-96987) and BCE-55659 suggest that the Armley ward has limited ties with the rest of the proposed constituency, and highlights that the River Aire acts as a significant physical barrier here, with only one crossing point over it between the Armley and Kirkstall wards. Representations such as that from John Withill (BCE-58262) suggest that much of the Armley ward, particularly to the west, has greater community ties with the ward of Bramley & Stanningley than with the proposed Headingley constituency. Elsewhere, a smaller number of representations were received that opposed the inclusion of the Weetwood ward in a Headingley constituency. Katie Lowes (BCE-71366), among others, says that Weetwood has a significantly different demographic to the 'students and young professionals' who make up much of the rest of the proposed constituency.

Multiple counter-proposals were received that exchanged wards between some or all of the proposed constituencies of Headingley, Leeds Central, Morley, and Pudsey in an attempt to resolve some of the issues discussed above. The Green Party (BCE-83616 and BCE-96981) proposed that the Armley ward be transferred from the proposed Headingley constituency to Pudsey, with the Bramley & Stanningley ward moving the other way. They reference greater links between Armley and Wortley (part of the Farnley & Wortley ward) than with Kirkstall. Jonathan Stansby also proposes that the Armley ward be included in the Pudsey constituency, highlighting its isolation from the rest of the proposed Headingley constituency. The moving of this ward is compensated for by transferring the Little London & Woodhouse ward to the Headingley constituency and the Farnley & Wortley ward to Pudsey. Similarly, Brandon Ashford (BCE-88682) proposes transferring Armley ward to the Pudsey constituency, and Little London & Woodhouse ward to Headingley, but suggests that the Farnley & Wortley ward be included in a constituency with Morley, with Middleton Park remaining in Leeds Central as in the existing arrangement.

Recommendations

Having considered the representations and counter-proposals received to the initial proposals in West Yorkshire (less the wards included in the cross-county boundary constituencies of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold), the Assistant Commissioners recommend changes from the initial proposals to the boundaries of 12 constituencies and the name of an additional one.

Across the five constituencies that comprise the City of Bradford, the Assistant Commissioners recommend changes to the composition of three from the initial proposals, and to the name of an additional one. They recommend adopting the counter-proposal submitted by the Bradford South Constituency Labour Party (BCE-74857) and Thomas Hughes (BCE-97114). This returns the constituencies across Bradford to the existing arrangement, other than the transfer of the 18H polling district from the Bradford East ward of Little Horton to the proposed Bradford South constituency. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the concerns regarding community cohesion and the division of the community of Wibsey between constituencies as a result of the transfer of wards in the initial proposals. Furthermore, they were particularly persuaded by the comparison in number of electors moved across the local authority when dividing a ward rather than moving two wards - moving just under 1,000 electors between constituencies rather than over 22,000 in the initial proposals, to solve an imbalance of around 400.

The Assistant Commissioners do not recommend any further changes to the composition of constituencies across the rest of the City of Bradford. Whilst acknowledging some minor opposition to the initial proposals elsewhere in the local authority, they do not consider the evidence to be persuasive to consider changes to the existing arrangement. As such, the transfer of a single polling district would be the only change to the existing constituencies across the local authority (other than changes to realign with new local government ward boundaries).

Despite no change to the composition, the Assistant Commissioners recommend a name change for the proposed Keighley constituency. They acknowledge the strength of feeling regarding the name and recommend it be renamed Keighley and Ilkley, as suggested by numerous responses.

The Assistant Commissioners acknowledge the widespread opposition to the initial proposals for the seven constituencies wholly or partially within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees. In particular, they note the strength of opposition to the proposed inclusion of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward in a cross-local authority boundary constituency with Batley and the Spenn Valley communities. They decided to visit the area in person to better understand the issues, and their observations accorded with the criticisms of the arrangement heard during the consultation periods. The Assistant Commissioners accept that Bailiff Bridge, and the wider Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward, is isolated from the rest of the proposed Batley and Hipperholme constituency, and that both the M62 motorway and the difference in elevation between the communities act as significant physical barriers. They also

accept that including the Rastrick ward in a cross-local authority boundary constituency, rather than the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward, enables an arguably superior arrangement of constituencies in Calderdale borough. With the inclusion of the Rastrick ward in a predominantly Kirklees-based constituency, no further change is required to the Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies, meaning the latter is wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement - as proposed by the Labour Party (BCE-79525, BCE-95675 and BCE-96982) and Jonathan Stansby (BCE-64225 and BCE-87147). The Assistant Commissioners consider this to be a superior arrangement to the initial proposals, particularly regarding the opposition received during consultation from the Brighouse, Sowerby Bridge, and Warley wards. They do not consider the extensive change proposed for the arrangement in Calderdale borough by the Conservative Party (BCE-85514, BCE-96439 and BCE-96980) to better meet the statutory factors than other options do.

Despite acknowledging the possible benefits that would result from the inclusion of the Rastrick ward in a cross-local authority boundary constituency, the Assistant Commissioners would be reluctant to recommend such an arrangement. The Rastrick ward is separated from Huddersfield by the M62 motorway and they considered the division between these communities to be substantial on a visit to the area. Not only does the M62 run between the boroughs, but it is flanked by rural land on either side and there is a substantial elevation increase between the village of Rastrick and the Kirklees ward of Ashbrow with which it would be linked. Travelling through Brighouse and Rastrick, the Assistant Commissioners also found them to be one continuous urban area, albeit with the River Calder running between them. For these reasons, the Assistant Commissioners consider that creating an 'orphan ward' of Rastrick ward would likely trigger a similar response to that received from the residents of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward.

The Assistant Commissioners considered that the Conservative and Labour Party counter-proposals had further weaknesses. They consider that the Conservative Party proposal would unacceptably divide the community of Huddersfield by including the Dalton ward in a different constituency. Upon visiting the area they observed that this ward contains part of Huddersfield town centre; extending right to the inner ring road (A62) at its western edge. Elsewhere, they considered that the Conservative Party counter-proposal to split the community of Heckmondwike was not an appropriate solution, although this split could be amended to follow the River Spennings for most of its length (as in the Labour Party counter-proposal), with no wider knock-on effects.

The Assistant Commissioners also considered that the Labour Party counter-proposal would divide the community of Huddersfield through the inclusion of the Almondbury ward in a proposed Horbury and Denby Dale constituency. In turn, Ossett ward would be included in a Dewsbury constituency, creating an additional local authority boundary crossing between the Borough of Kirklees and City of Wakefield. This would also make Ossett an 'orphan ward'. In addition, the Assistant Commissioners considered the division of communities between the Ossett, and Horbury and South Ossett wards was not an appropriate proposition. These communities consider themselves to be a single conurbation (BCE-88789) and this view was reinforced during a visit to the area by the Assistant Commissioners. Finally, they identified connectivity issues between the southern part of the Heckmondwike ward and the rest of the Dewsbury constituency with which it would be included.

The Assistant Commissioners consider that the counter-proposal of BCE-87777, as previously described, has the most merit of any counter-proposals received, or various other possible alternatives investigated by the secretariat and Assistant Commissioners for the Calderdale and Kirklees area. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners recommend adopting the counter-proposals of BCE-87777 for the constituencies wholly or partially within Kirklees borough, minus the Colne Valley and Huddersfield constituencies (which they recommend maintaining unchanged from the initial proposals).

The Assistant Commissioners recommend a Spenn Valley constituency comprising the wards of Birstall and Birkenhead, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Liversedge and Gomersal, and Mirfield, plus polling district DA06 of the Dalton ward (which covers the communities of Kirkheaton and Upper Heaton). This arrangement retains the unpopular split of the Dalton ward as in the initial proposals. While acknowledging this opposition, the Assistant Commissioners did not consider any alternative arrangements that did not divide the Dalton ward to better meet the statutory factors overall. They also visited the area in person, and while they accept that the residents of the village of Kirkheaton would likely have close ties to Huddersfield, given their relative proximity, they contest that the village is part of the continuous urban sprawl eastwards from the town (BCE-60239). In fact, they found polling district DA06 of the Dalton ward to have a significantly different character to that of the west of the ward, closer to the town centre. They also noted no discernible difference between communities when travelling from the Dalton ward into the neighbouring Mirfield ward.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend a Dewsbury and Batley constituency comprising the wards of Batley East, Batley West, Dewsbury East, Dewsbury South, and Dewsbury West, plus four polling districts of the Kirkburton ward, covering the villages of Flockton, Grange Moor, and Lepton, among others. The division of this ward is in a rural area and follows a small stream (Beldon Brook) for most of its length.

No further change is recommended to the composition of the Ossett and Denby Dale constituency, other than the transfer of four polling districts to the Dewsbury and Batley constituency (as described above). Despite this, the Assistant Commissioners recommend the name of this constituency be changed to Wakefield West and Denby Dale, being persuaded by the comments regarding the name of Ossett and Denby Dale not being representative of many of the communities in the City of Wakefield part of the proposed constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to the proposed Colne Valley and Huddersfield constituencies. They acknowledge the opposition to the transfer of Crosland Moor and Netherton ward to the Huddersfield constituency from Colne Valley, but note that the only viable solution to avoid this involves dividing a ward between constituencies. They do not consider there is justification for dividing a ward in this area.

In Calderdale borough the Assistant Commissioners recommend dividing a ward between constituencies, as proposed in multiple representations. They consider that the benefits of not crossing the local authority boundary between Calderdale and Kirklees to be significant enough to justify dividing a ward. They recommend the Ryburn ward be split between the proposed Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies, with the three polling districts (MB, MC and MD) covering the town of Sowerby Bridge and the village of Triangle being included in the latter. This unites Sowerby and Sowerby Bridge in one constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend no change to the proposed Normanton and Hemsworth, and Pontefract and Castleford constituencies, noting the limited number of representations received during the consultation periods regarding them. They acknowledge the opposition to the inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Rothwell in the proposed Wakefield constituency, but recommend no change to this arrangement, or the proposed name - noting the limited number of counter-proposals for the constituencies in this area. They acknowledge the benefits of parts of the Conservative Party counter-proposal, but note that it is

reliant upon a vastly different cross-county boundary arrangement and, in turn, a different sub-region grouping. As such, the counter-proposal would have to be implemented wholesale and they did not consider it would better meet the statutory factors overall. They also agreed that the Conservative Party counter-proposal in this area would divide the town of Castleford.

Across the seven constituencies wholly within the City of Leeds authority, the Assistant Commissioners recommend change to the composition of four. They recommend no change to the proposed Leeds East constituency, despite the strong opposition regarding the division of Gipton & Harehills ward and the inclusion of Garforth & Swillington. They strongly sympathise with those who have provided evidence, particularly with regards to community cohesion, and visited the area to see it for themselves. They acknowledged that the division of the Gipton & Harehills ward as proposed does not follow any clear physical boundary, whereas Garforth & Swillington ward is clearly separate from east Leeds over the M1 motorway. They also recognised the distinctly more rural character of the latter ward. Despite this, they noted the limited number of counter-proposals received that attempt to amend the Leeds East constituency, while also accounting for the knock-on effects on neighbouring constituencies: multiple alternative schemes produced internally by the secretariat - including split ward options, and using polling districts as the building blocks rather than wards - could also not identify a solution that addressed the east Leeds issue without significantly disrupting other constituencies across the city. They acknowledge that dividing the Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward along the physical boundary of the A64 dual carriageway, with the Burmantofts area to the north being included in the Leeds East constituency - as suggested in multiple representations - is a logical solution that produces a coherent Leeds East constituency. However, they also note that the Garforth & Swillington ward cannot be transferred, either wholly or partially, to any of the neighbouring cross-local authority boundary constituencies. Therefore, the Garforth & Swillington ward would have to be included with the wards of the proposed Leeds Central constituency. The Assistant Commissioners were not minded to include Garforth & Swillington ward with the central Leeds wards due to the limited links between them: Garforth & Swillington and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill wards only have a short section of the M1 motorway as a boundary between them, with expanses of non-residential land either side. The Assistant Commissioners consider this grouping to be inferior to that of the Garforth & Swillington and Temple Newsam wards in the initial proposals since, although these wards are separated by the M1, the residential areas of both are linked by Austhorpe Interchange.

The Assistant Commissioners also did not consider the Labour Party counter-proposal to better fulfil the statutory factors than the initial proposals. While they accept that retaining the communities of Gipton and Harehills together is an advantage, they note that

this counter-proposal suggests change to the Leeds North East constituency that can otherwise be left unchanged from the existing arrangement, other than to realign to new local government ward boundaries. In turn, change would also be necessary to the Leeds North West constituency, which was mostly supported during the consultations. The Assistant Commissioners visited the boundary between the Leeds East wards and Roundhay ward, which would be grouped together in the Labour Party counter-proposal. They considered the Easterly Road to be a clear boundary, which corroborated what was heard during the consultations regarding the east Leeds community being bordered by the York Road in the south and Easterly Road in the north (Councillor Jessica Lennox, BCE-97124). They also noted a distinctly different character in the Roundhay ward, compared to the rest of east Leeds, observing more affluent housing and greenspace. Finally, they noted that the Labour Party counter-proposal still divides the community of east Leeds, as the Temple Newsam ward would be included in a separate Leeds South East constituency.

The Assistant Commissioners were made aware of other arrangements for the Leeds East constituency, including dividing the Temple Newsam ward between Leeds East and Leeds Central, rather than the Gipton & Harehills ward. They considered this to be a very finely balanced decision, but, after careful consideration, they felt this was no better than the initial proposals. They noted in particular the relatively poor connections between the Temple Newsam and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill wards, the boundary between them being Pontefract Lane - a dual carriageway with semi-industrial land on either side - or a railway line with only one vehicle crossing point. This is in contrast to the Burmantofts and Harehills areas, where there is no discernible boundary between the communities.

Due to the small number of representations regarding the proposed Leeds North East constituency, and the fact the Assistant Commissioners are not minded to adopt the Labour Party counter-proposal, they recommend no change to its composition or name. Similarly they recommend no change to the proposed Leeds North West constituency, noting the overall support it received over the consultation periods.

The Assistant Commissioners recommend adopting the composition of the Headingley, Leeds Central, Morley, and Pudsey constituencies as outlined in the counter-proposal submitted by Brandon Ashford (BCE-88682), although no change is recommended to the names. This involves: the transfer of the Little London & Woodhouse ward to the proposed Headingley constituency; the transfer of the Armley ward to the proposed Pudsey constituency; the transfer of the Farnley & Wortley ward to

the proposed Morley constituency, and the transfer of the Middleton Park ward to the proposed Leeds Central constituency. The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence of Middleton Park ward being part of the urban sprawl of Leeds city centre, with poor physical ties to the rest of the initially proposed Morley constituency. They also agreed that the isolation of the Armley ward south of the River Aire made it a poor fit in the initially proposed Headingley constituency. Finally, they were persuaded by the arguments for combining the Headingley & Hyde Park and Little London & Woodhouse wards in the same constituency, as made in multiple counter-proposals. This unites the student population (Brandon Ashford) and avoids the division of the Little London estate between constituencies (David Salinger, BCE-96993).

Appendix

Revised proposals: overview of changes from initial proposals

	Number	Percentage
Constituencies changed from initial proposals	26	48%
- Changed in composition and name	6	11%
- Changed in composition only	16	30%
- Changed in name only	4	7%

Recommended constituency changes

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Barnsley North	No	No
Barnsley South	No	No
Beverley and Holderness	Yes	Yes
Bradford East	Yes	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Bradford South	Yes	No
Bradford West	Yes	No
Bridlington and The Wolds	Yes	Yes
Brigg and Immingham	No	Yes
Calder Valley	Yes	No
Colne Valley	No	No
Dewsbury and Batley	Yes	Yes
Doncaster Central	No	No
Doncaster East and Axholme	No	No
Doncaster North	No	No
Goole and Pocklington	Yes	Yes
Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes	No	No
Halifax	Yes	No
Harrogate and Knaresborough	Yes	No
Headingley	Yes	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Huddersfield	No	No
Keighley and Ilkley	No	Yes
Kingston upon Hull East	Yes	No
Kingston upon Hull North	Yes	No
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	Yes	No
Leeds Central	Yes	No
Leeds East	No	No
Leeds North East	No	No
Leeds North West	No	No
Morley	Yes	No
Normanton and Hemsworth	No	No
Penistone and Stocksbridge	No	No
Pontefract and Castleford	No	No
Pudsey	Yes	No
Rawmarsh and Consibrough	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Richmond and Northallerton	No	Yes
Rother Valley	Yes	No
Rotherham	Yes	No
Scarborough and Whitby	No	No
Scunthorpe	No	No
Selby	No	No
Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough	No	No
Sheffield Central	No	No
Sheffield Hallam	No	No
Sheffield Heeley	No	No
Sheffield South East	No	No
Shipley	No	No
Skipton and Ripon	No	No
Spennings Valley	Yes	Yes
Thirsk and Malton	No	No

Recommended constituency name	Boundaries changed from initial proposals (yes/no)	Names changed from initial proposals (yes/no)
Wakefield	No	No
Wakefield West and Denby Dale	Yes	Yes
Wetherby and Easingwold	Yes	No
York Central	No	No
York Outer	No	No

Analysis of ward splits recommendations for Revised Proposals

Ward split recommendations from Assistant Commissioners for all nine English regions have been brought together in this paper¹, to support the ability of Commissioners particularly to ensure they are adopting a consistent approach and application of their policies. To further aid that process, the secretariat has also included a number of ward splits suggested by respondents to the initial proposals, for which Assistant Commissioners felt there was insufficient evidence for them to be recommended.

Commissioners' policy on ward splits is stated in paragraphs 31-32 of the published Guide to the 2023 Review (replicated for ease of reference at **Annex A**). In practice, difficult decisions about when to accept a split ward boil down to a conflict between one 'Rule 5 statutory factor'² - 'local government boundaries' - and one or more others, usually 'local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies'.

The policy makes clear that the Commission looks more favourably on a potential ward split if it brings benefits to a wider area than just the immediate two constituencies that the ward in question would be split between. For this reason, in **Annex B** we have divided the ward splits either recommended or not recommended by Assistant Commissioners into three broad categories: 1) recommended splits that bring a benefit to a wider area than just the immediate two constituencies; 2) unrecommended splits that appear to only impact the two immediate constituencies; and 3) unrecommended splits that appear to only impact the two immediate constituencies. Category 1 cases would, the secretariat believes, all seemingly fit well into the Commission's policy, so Commissioners' attention will best be focused on the reasoning to support whether individual cases fall into either Category 2 (likely accepted) or Category 3 (likely not accepted).

The strength of the case to maintain 'existing' wards whole becomes weaker when it becomes clear that such wards will be replaced in the foreseeable future, albeit after the statutory cut-off date³. In this case, there is an understandable desire to 'future-proof' the Commission's changes, by aligning to such known incoming ward boundaries. The Commission needs to take care in doing so, however, both on a legal basis (in terms of strictly what the Act allows the Commission to take account of), and in terms of practical issues (electorate data on the basis of the new wards is generally not readily available, and the process to ensure proposals fall within the strict numerical limits accordingly becomes exponentially slower). The interplay of splitting existing wards and consideration of new wards is therefore set out in paragraphs 39-40 of the Guide: in essence, the case for whether to split a ward must be built without regard to new boundaries, but if that case is otherwise established, those new boundaries may be used in determining exactly where in the existing ward the split should be drawn.

¹ We have not included again here the ward splits and name changes previously agreed by Commissioners as initial proposals, where these have been endorsed by Assistant Commissioners.

² The statutory factors that the Commission "may take into account" under Rule 5 of Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended.

³ For the 2023 Review, local government boundaries that the Commission "may take into account" are defined as those that existed - or were 'prospective' by virtue of a made Order - on 1 December 2020.

Annex A - 'Guide to the 2023 Review' extracts

Ward splitting

31. Wards are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. Any division of a ward between constituencies would therefore risk breaking local ties, as well as adding complexity to both the task of Returning Officers in administering a Parliamentary election in the area, and the 'grass roots' co-ordination of political party activism. The BCE's view is therefore that wards should continue to be the default building block for constituencies. However, the BCE recognises that there may be circumstances where the splitting of a ward may be necessary to achieve a scheme of constituencies locally that better meets the 'Rule 5' statutory criteria overall (see paragraph 26 above). In limited circumstances, we would therefore consider the splitting of a ward between constituencies. Those circumstances are:

- Where splitting a ward would significantly enhance the ability of the BCE to adhere to existing or prospective local authority boundaries (i.e. avoid constituencies crossing local authorities), maintain existing constituencies unchanged, and/or preserve local ties, without causing consequential significant problems for surrounding constituencies.
- Where the division of a ward would avoid the alternative of a significant 'domino effect' of change to a wide area if wards were to be kept whole. This is likely to be an issue in metropolitan areas, where wards often have large electorates: an example from a previous Review was the BCE's recommendation to split three wards in the West Midlands metropolitan area, which minimised the need to cross local council boundaries, and prevented an otherwise radical 'domino effect' of change across the whole metropolitan area and beyond.
- Where the division of a ward would avoid otherwise unacceptable outcomes forced by local geographical factors: an example from a previous Review was the BCE's acceptance of the need to split a rural ward near Tewkesbury to avoid a proposed Forest of Dean constituency otherwise having to take in an urban area of Gloucester.

32. Additionally, where the splitting of wards is proposed, BCE would wish to adhere to the following policies:

- The number of such ward splits should be the smallest number possible, commensurate with achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 31 above.
- The split of a ward should generally be done on the basis of the boundaries of the component polling districts that form part of that ward, as polling districts are an existing recognised unit of electoral administration (but see paragraph 40 below).
- Wherever possible, the splitting of a ward should be done such that the separated parts of the ward will nonetheless remain in constituencies where the returning officer for each of the constituencies is likely to be the same individual (i.e. ward splits should where possible be contained within a single local authority area): this is consistent with our policy in relation to 'orphan wards' below.

New local government boundaries

39. As mentioned above, the local government boundaries that the BCE may have regard to for this review are those that existed or – where relevant – were in prospect (due to being

made by an as-yet-unimplemented Order) as at 1 December 2020. Consequently, the BCE will not generally take into account new boundaries after this date.

40. However, in the limited circumstances where the BCE may be considering the splitting of a ward (as it existed or was in prospect on 1 December 2020) between constituencies in order to meet the statutory electorate range, in considering how to split that ward, the BCE is prepared to take into account, as appropriate, any new ward boundaries introduced after 1 December 2020.

Annex B - ward split categories

Category 1 (Assistant Commissioner recommended, wider benefits)

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
Irthlingborough, North Northants, East Midlands	Goes together with Corby Rural split below. Provides for a pattern of constituencies that better respects local ties and moves fewer electors across east Northants, addressing a number of separate issues raised in response to initial proposals
Corby Rural, North Northants, East Midlands	Goes with Irthlingborough above.
Evington, Leicester, East Midlands	Allows for three constituencies wholly contained within Leicester, and allows a number of local ties to be restored that initial proposals would break. Best whole ward alternative that would achieve this would be very disruptive to existing constituencies.
Pitsea South East, Basildon, Eastern	Allows ties of West Leigh with Southend not to be broken, avoiding disruption to neighbouring constituencies and some beyond. Also allows either less change to Southend East, or potentially improvements to constituencies in Southend (e.g. uniting city centre wards).
Emerson Park, Havering, London	Part of a three-ward-split solution (with Hacton and St Andrew's below) to replace a single split ward already included in the initial proposals (Hylands) that recognised the need to split a ward to avoid a highly disruptive domino effect across NE London. Accordingly, it provides the key to allow minimisation of change across the sub-region. Prima facie justification for splitting a ward allows use of new wards (mostly).
Hacton, Havering, London	Goes with Emerson Park above.
St Andrew's, Havering, London	Goes with Emerson Park above.
Woodside, Croydon, London	Allows the majority of the ward to be retained with southern neighbours, where responses said local ties lay, but also provides the key to allow an optimal pattern of constituencies across the whole South Central London sub-region.
Castle, Newcastle upon Tyne, North East	Individually addresses specific local ties issues, but is also part of a three-ward-split solution for the whole of Newcastle and North Tyneside (and areas of Northumberland immediately to the north), which together avoids the breaking of local ties, crossing of council boundaries, and

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
	disruption to existing constituencies that initial proposals and other whole ward solutions result in across the area.
Kingston Park South & Newbiggin Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne, North East	Goes with Castle above.
Riverside, North Tyneside, North East	Goes with Castle above.
Trimdon and Thornley, County Durham, North East	Provides the key to unlock a sequence of improvements to the initial proposals across County Durham (including keeping University and nearby villages with City of Durham), without need to split Spennymoor community.
Broughton and Coniston, South Lakeland, North West	The need for a split ward in South Lakeland was already accepted and included (a different ward) in initial proposals: this would replace that. Re-aligns a boundary to an existing constituency boundary, but also provides the key to unlock an alternative set of constituencies across the whole of Cumbria that overall appears to reflect local ties and physical geography better than initial proposals.
Lymm North and Thelwall, Warrington, North West	Split recognises the different ties of the two parts of the ward: Thelwall to urban Warrington; Lymm to rural Cheshire (also uniting Lymm). Allows for improvements to other areas in central Cheshire, reflecting concerns raised at initial proposals.
Goodwood, Chichester, South East	Part of a pair of split wards (with Felpham East below), that individually reflect local ties and different communities, but also together provide the key to unlock a pattern of constituencies across most of West Sussex that better respects local ties, physical geography, and existing constituencies, responding to issues identified in many consultation responses.
Felpham East, Arun, South East	Goes with Goodwood above.
Chiseldon and Lawn, Swindon, South West	Split recognises the different ties of the two parts of the ward: north of the M4 contains significant urban areas extending close to the centre of Swindon, while south of the M4 is indistinguishable from rural Wiltshire. The split also provides the key to unlock a pattern of constituencies across the whole of Wiltshire and into Gloucestershire that allows a large number of issues raised in opposition to the initial proposals to be addressed.
Stockland Green, Birmingham, West Midlands	Allows local ties to be better respected in four wards around M6/'Spaghetti Junction', while avoiding significant disruption across the City that would be caused by any whole ward

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
	solution aiming to achieve this.
Ryburn, Calderdale, Yorks & Humber	Individually addresses specific local ties issues, but is also part of a three-ward-split solution (with Dalton and Kirkburton below) for an improved pattern of constituencies across the whole of Calderdale and Kirklees area, responding to a number of issues raised against initial proposals, particularly as regards local ties
Dalton, Kirklees, Yorks & Humber	Goes with Ryburn above. (This particular ward split was individually included in the initial proposals, but with a slightly different composition)
Kirkburton, Kirklees, Yorks and Humber	Goes with Ryburn above.
Wolds Weighton, East Riding of Yorkshire, Yorks & Humber	Part of a pair of ward splits that together allow for an improved pattern of constituencies across the whole of the East Riding of Yorkshire, and Hull in respect of local authority boundaries, local ties and existing constituencies.
Central, Kingston upon Hull, Yorks & Humber	Goes with Wolds Weighton above.

Category 2 (localised benefit, Assistant Commissioner recommended)

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
Berry Hill, Mansfield, East Midlands	Allows Brick Kiln and Grange Farm wards to return to Mansfield from Ashfield, by moving part of Berry Hill and the whole of another Mansfield ward to Ashfield. Localised to two constituencies. Split ward would likely be shared between different returning officers at election, as part of a Mansfield ward would be in Ashfield-run constituency (would also be the case with whole wards).
Lexden & Braiswick, Colchester, Eastern	Allows urbanised Lexden part of ward to remain in Colchester, as well as Prettygate ward, while the rural Braiswick part remains out (as well as Old Heath & the Hythe ward). Localised to two constituencies. Split ward would likely be shared between different returning officers at election, as part of a Colchester ward would be in a Tendring-run constituency (would also be the case with whole wards).
Darwin, Bromley, London	Allows Petts Wood and Knoll ward to be retained in Orpington (request of many consultation responses), without

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
	significant disruption elsewhere. Also would unite the Biggin Hill area when using new ward boundaries for the split, as recommended. Both constituencies the ward was split between would be run by Bromley.
Molyneux, Sefton, North West	Avoids splitting of Maghull urban area, while retaining Aintree in Liverpool. Localised to two constituencies. Split ward would likely be shared between different returning officers at election, as part of a Sefton ward would be in a Liverpool-run constituency.
Whiston and Cronton, Knowsley, North West	Allows two St Helens constituencies to be almost unchanged, and keeps St Helens Hospital in a single ward. Benefit is localised to the two St Helens constituencies, but split ward to enable it is in a neighbouring authority, so ward would likely be shared between different returning officers at election: part Knowsley ward in a St Helens-run constituency.
Atherleigh, Wigan, North West	Part of a pair of ward splits (with West Leigh below) that resolves the breaking of different local ties in the proposed constituencies of Leigh South and Atherton, and Makerfield. Whole ward solution to retain these local ties would be disruptive to a number of constituencies across east of Greater Manchester. Split is localised to these two constituencies, but both are contained in the same authority, so would likely be the same returning officer. Split would likely follow new ward boundaries, so in practice would functionally not operate as a ward split.
West Leigh, Wigan, North West	Goes with Atherleigh above.
Hanover and Elm Grove, Brighton & Hove, South East	Split recognises the different ties of the two parts of the ward: Hanover to central Brighton, and Elm Grove to the city suburbs. Split would make constituencies closer to existing ones, and reflect physical geography. Split is localised to two constituencies, but both are contained in the same authority, so would likely be the same returning officer.
Gerrards Cross, Bucks, South East	Allows Beaconsfield to be united, which is not feasible with whole ward solutions, due to the large ward sizes in Bucks. Split is localised to two constituencies, but both are contained in the same authority, so would likely be the same returning officer.
Paddock, Walsall, West Midlands	Allows for an optimal configuration of the two constituencies wholly contained within Walsall, in particular allowing Aldridge to be kept together in one. Split is localised to two constituencies, but both are contained in the same authority, so would likely be the same returning officer.

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
Whittington and Streethay, Lichfield, West Midlands	Respects local ties of Streethay with Lichfield, an issue on which a large number of responses were received. Localised to two constituencies. Split ward would likely be shared between different returning officers at election, as part of a Lichfield ward would be in a Tamworth-run constituency.
Little Horton, Bradford, Yorks & Humber	Moving one polling district allows Bradford South and West constituencies to remain otherwise unchanged, moving far fewer electors, and allowing local ties to be unbroken (particularly in Wibsey). Split is localised to two constituencies, but both are contained in the same authority, so would likely be the same returning officer.

Category 3 (localised benefit, Assistant Commissioner not recommended)

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
Sandridge, St Albans, Eastern	Would unite the Jersey Farm area with St Albans, but the split would require knock-on changes in the county that would not be justified
Northaw & Cuffley, Welwyn Hatfield, Eastern	Would return Newgate Street village to Welwyn Hatfield, but was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Alconbury, Huntingdonshire, Eastern	Would unite 'the Giddings' villages, but was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Chapel End, and Hale End and Highams, Waltham Forest, London	Splits would follow new ward boundaries, which align with (rather than cross) the North Circular Road, but would change an otherwise unchanged Walthamstow constituency.
White Hart Lane, Haringey, London	Would unite Temple Gardens area with Tottenham, but was a localised issue and whole ward alternatives were available that were less disruptive to the wider area.
Whitton or Heathfield, Richmond, London	Would retain more of the Whitton community with Twickenham, but still leave it divided.
Merton Park, Merton, London	While respecting local ties in the south of the ward, it would split the residential neighbourhood in the middle of the ward, and a good whole ward alternative was available.
Shooters Hill, Greenwich, London	Would respect that Shooters Hill in south of ward looks to Eltham, while Plumstead community in north looks to Greenwich, was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to

Ward(s), Authority and Region	Reasoning
	meet Commission criteria.
Callerton & Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne, North East	Would reflect the ties of the ward both with the 'Outer West' area of Newcastle and nearby Northumberland towns and villages, but was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Marbury, Cheshire West and Chester, North West	Would include Sutton Weaver with Runcorn and Helsby, but was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Various suggested ward splits across Berkshire, South East	Various localised improvements, but no wider benefits, and the net effect of required consequential changes would be worse than the initial proposals across the wider area as a whole.
Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley, Dartford, South East	Would most of the ward with Dartford, but was an isolated benefit, and would also leave an orphan part-ward in the neighbouring constituency.
West Purbeck and Chalk Valleys wards, Dorset, South West	Would primarily allow various rural areas north of Dorchester to be in the same constituency as it, but appeared to be an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Northstone, Ivelchester & St Michael's, South Somerset, South West	Would allow the area in the south of the ward to be retained in Yeovil constituency, but appeared to be an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Budbrooke, Warwick, West Midlands	Would reflect the difference in local ties between the areas of the ward north and south of the M40, but was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.
Bramley & Ravenfield, Rotherham, Yorks & Humber	Would respect local ties of areas in the south of the ward south to Rother Vale, but was an isolated benefit, which did not seem to meet Commission criteria.