

Final recommendations for the London region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the London region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 4,972 responses specific to the London region in this phase, giving a total of 12,663 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: The Conservative Party accepted the composition of 68 of the 75 revised proposal constituencies (if reluctant in parts). They proposed composition changes for seven constituencies, and name changes for four. The Green Party were largely satisfied with the revised proposals except in parts of Lambeth and Southwark. Labour accepted the revised proposals for the whole region apart from in the Borough of Havering, where they argued that the initial proposals were a better solution.

The Liberal Democrats accepted the composition of 63 of the 75 revised proposal constituencies. Propose composition changes for 12 constituencies, and name changes for 14. Of the handful of responses from individuals that addressed the region as a whole, actual changes to the revised proposals that these sought were suggested across groups of boroughs on both sides of the River Thames.

North East London: The decision to split the Emerson Park, Hacton and St Andrews wards between the Dagenham and Rainham, Hornchurch and Upminster, and Romford constituencies is largely supported in preference to the initial proposals'

Hylands ward split approach, although the original approach is preferred by the Labour Party. The transfer of Chadwell Heath ward to the Ilford South constituency continued to generate opposition.

Newham and Tower Hamlets: Some suggested name changes, but no new issues.

North Central London: Opposition to the reconfiguring of Enfield Southgate is the sub-region's, and London's, biggest issue, with the initial proposals preferred by many, but this is incompatible with the largely supported revised proposals for Barnet. The division of Haringay between four constituencies is also heavily opposed.

North West London: The division of Harlesden between two proposed constituencies caused some opposition to our Brent proposals, but suggested solutions failed to resolve it. The separation of Ruislip Manor from South Ruislip between two constituencies was opposed. This was part of our Harefield villages solution, which was largely not commented on. Opposition to including Whitton ward as an orphan in Brentford and Isleworth continued apace, but no viable solutions were identified.

South West London: Moving Kingston town centre was heavily opposed. No consensus on which Kingston upon Thames wards should be included in the Wimbledon constituency, with both our initial and revised proposals opposed. Opposition to the Merton Park ward being included in Mitcham and Morden instead of Cannon Hill, which had been opposed at the initial proposals stage.

South Central London: The removal of any identifiable Camberwell constituency was Lambeth and Southwark's biggest issue. Representations from Park Hill & Whitgift, and Woodside wards both say they look to Addiscombe, but solutions for both include undesirable knock-on effects.

South East London: The cross borough Eltham and Chislehurst constituency continued to be opposed, but no new solutions came up. Bromley and Biggin Hill received some small opposition, but the alternatives divide more wards, and communities.

London

1. London currently has 73 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 20 have electorates within the permitted range. The electorates of 20 constituencies were below the permitted range, while the electorates of 33 constituencies were above. Our proposals increase the number of constituencies in the region by two, to 75.
2. London comprises the 32 London boroughs and the City of London Corporation.¹
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for London — John Feavour QPM and Parjinder Basra — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Westminster: 24 – 25 February 2022
 - Havering: 28 February – 1 March 2022
 - Ealing: 3 – 4 March 2022
 - Merton: 7 – 8 March 2022
 - Bromley: 10 – 11 March 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of London of 5,550,454 results in it being mathematically entitled to 75.63 constituencies. The statutory formula for distribution of numbers of constituencies to different parts of the UK (and applied by us equally to the

¹ In the remainder of this document, general references to 'Borough' should be taken to include the Corporation, where the context permits, unless expressly stated otherwise.

English regions) allocated 75, rather than 76, constituencies to London – an increase of two from the current number. We then considered how 75 constituencies could be split across the region, seeking to respect the geographic boundary of the River Thames between ‘North’ and ‘South’ London.

5. We noted that the four boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest have a total electorate of 662,740, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 9.03 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate nine constituencies to these four boroughs, the same as the existing allocation, and treat them together as the North East London sub-region.
6. The two boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets have a combined electorate of 368,155, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 5.02 constituencies. We therefore proposed to treat these two boroughs together as a sub-region, with an allocation of five constituencies – an increase of one from the current number.
7. In formulating our initial proposals, we decided to treat the North Central and North West London areas together as a single sub-region, since our investigations showed that treating the North Central area as a stand-alone region meant its constituencies would have to be very near the maximum permitted electorate, significantly narrowing the options for building constituencies without needing to split multiple wards. We therefore proposed a North Central and North West London sub-region 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. The total electorate of this sub-region, at 2,397,559, results in a mathematical entitlement to 32.66 constituencies. We allocated the sub-region 32 constituencies, rather than 33, considering that this larger area would be the optimal place to accommodate the difference between London’s mathematical entitlement and allocation of constituencies, as mentioned above.
8. When exploring sub-region arrangements for South London, we noted that it would be possible to consider South Central and South West London separately. However, our investigations showed that it was difficult to

create a practicable scheme of constituencies in a stand-alone South Central sub-region without needing to split multiple wards. We therefore decided to treat the South Central and South West areas together to form a single sub-region consisting of 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. This sub-region has an electorate of 1,538,390, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 20.95 constituencies. We therefore allocated 21 constituencies to this sub-region.

9. The three boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, and Greenwich have a combined electorate of 583,610 and a mathematical entitlement to 7.96 constituencies. We therefore proposed to treat these three boroughs together as the South East London sub-region, with an allocation of eight constituencies.
10. We noted that the existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency crossed between our proposed South Central and South West, and South East sub-regions. However, given that our proposed sub-regions were each entitled to an almost whole number of constituencies, we considered that adhering to these sub-regions would enable a better reflection of the statutory factors across the whole of South London than if we retained the existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency.
11. The principle of maintaining the River Thames as a geographical boundary between North London and South London was mostly supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. Our North East London sub-region and Newham and Tower Hamlets sub-region received almost unanimous support. We did receive objections to the split of sub-regions elsewhere, particularly regarding North Central and North West London, and South Central and South West London, with alternative arrangements suggested such as: separate North Central and North West sub-regions, using the A5 (Edgware Road) as a geographical dividing line. Some respondents proposed breaking down the North Central and North West area into three or even four smaller sub-regions. We also received proposals to create standalone South West and South Central sub-regions, respecting the borough boundary between Croydon and Merton; and various different groupings of boroughs in the South Central and South East areas

12. In formulating our revised proposals, we were persuaded by the evidence received to divide the North Central and North West sub-region into two smaller sub-regions respecting the A5 road as a boundary. We 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. We were also persuaded by the evidence to treat South West and South Central London as separate sub-regions, considering that this approach allowed for improvements to the initial proposals in respect of the statutory factors. Mindful of some finely balanced arguments in the areas of South Central and South East London, we were ultimately not persuaded by the evidence to revise our initially proposed South East sub-region.
13. In response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we adopted in our revised proposals. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:
- North East London (Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest);
 - Newham and Tower Hamlets;
 - North Central London (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington);
 - North West London (Brent, the City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames (north), and Westminster);
 - South West London (Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (south), Sutton, and Wandsworth);
 - South Central London (Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark);
and
 - South East London (Bexley, Bromley, and Greenwich).

North East London

Initial proposals

14. Of the nine existing constituencies in the North East London sub-region, four had electorates within the permitted electorate range: Dagenham and Rainham, Ilford North, Romford, and Walthamstow. The two constituencies of Chingford and Woodford Green, and Leyton and Wanstead, were beneath the permitted range, while the three constituencies of Barking, Hornchurch and Upminster, and Ilford South fell above the permitted range.
15. In our initial proposals for the Borough of Havering, we proposed bringing the existing Hornchurch and Upminster constituency within the permitted electorate range by transferring Emerson Park ward from the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency to the Romford constituency. To keep the Romford constituency within the permitted range without consequential further disruption to neighbouring constituencies, we proposed splitting Hylands ward between the Hornchurch and Upminster, and Romford constituencies.
16. In the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, and Redbridge, we proposed transferring Valence ward from the Barking constituency to the Dagenham and Rainham constituency; Chadwell Heath ward from the Dagenham and Rainham constituency to the Ilford South constituency; and Cranbrook and Valentines wards from the Ilford South constituency to the Ilford North constituency.
17. Our initial proposals for the Borough of Waltham Forest retained the existing Walthamstow constituency wholly unchanged. The existing Leyton and Wanstead constituency – which spans the boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge – was adjusted to align with new local government ward boundaries in the Borough of Redbridge, and included the whole of South Woodford ward. The existing Chingford and Woodford Green constituency – also spanning the boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge – was realigned with new local government ward boundaries, and additionally included the Borough of Redbridge Bridge ward from the existing Ilford North constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

18. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, our rationale for splitting a ward in the Borough of Havering was broadly supported. However, we received strong opposition to our proposed transfer of Emerson Park ward from the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency to the Romford constituency, including almost 600 unique representations and two online petitions. Residents of Emerson Park argued that they consider themselves part of the Hornchurch community and look to Hornchurch, rather than Romford, for local amenities. Several respondents also contended that Emerson Park provides key geographical and road links between the northern and southern parts of the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency, therefore its removal would undermine the constituency's geographical cohesion.
19. Conversely, we also received notable support for our proposed transfer of Emerson Park ward, including over 150 representations and four petitions. Respondents argued that Emerson Park ward has strong community ties with its neighbouring Squirrel's Heath ward, part of the existing Romford constituency. In terms of geography, some argued that Emerson Park ward is separated from the rest of the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency by the geographic boundaries of the River Ingrebourne to the east and the railway line to the south, whereas there are no geographic dividers between Emerson Park and Squirrel's Heath.
20. We received a number of counter proposals and alternative suggestions for constituencies in the Borough of Havering. Some of these proposed transferring all or part of the Harold Hill area to the Romford constituency instead of Emerson Park. Others submitted that changes in the borough could be minimised by keeping Emerson Park ward in the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency, keeping Hylands ward wholly in the Romford constituency, and splitting Hacton ward between the Hornchurch and Upminster, and Dagenham and Rainham constituencies. Several representations advocated that we should consider Havering's new ward boundaries, for which the Order was made in September 2021. They argued that using the new boundaries would better reflect community ties, in particular uniting the Elm Park community, and would avoid splitting new wards and the confusion that may entail in the future.
21. Our initially proposed Barking, and Dagenham and Rainham constituencies attracted very few representations. However, our proposed

transfer of Chadwell Heath ward elicited a greater response, since our proposal would make Chadwell Heath an orphan ward from the Borough of Barking and Dagenham in the Ilford South constituency which is otherwise comprised of Borough of Redbridge wards, and would break community ties, as a petition told us that the Chadwell Heath community crosses the A118 into the neighbouring Whalebone ward. A counter proposal suggested moving Becontree ward into the Ilford South constituency instead, but this would also be an orphan ward, and divide the Becontree Estate. Our proposal did also receive a small amount of support, as the edge of the boroughs between Chadwell and Chadwell Heath wards is not considered a boundary by some.

22. The inclusion of the Borough of Redbridge wards of Cranbrook and Valentines in our proposed Ilford North was supported, as this was perceived to unite the area around Gants Hill. However, our proposal was also opposed by others who felt that it divided the area from central Ilford, and that we had not recognised the A12 as a significant barrier between these two wards and the rest of Ilford North.
23. There was some opposition to our proposed Chingford and Woodford Green, and Walthamstow configuration, largely focused on the A406 North Circular Road. Several representations suggested that we consider new ward boundaries for the Borough of Waltham Forest and use the A406 as the boundary. The order for this was made on 17 May 2021.
24. Our minor realignment of Leyton and Wanstead, to take account of ward boundary changes, was largely supported for recognising ties between Wanstead and South Woodford, with some opposition for breaking ties between South Woodford and the wider Woodford community.

Revised proposals

25. As we had already proposed splitting a ward in the Borough of Havering, our Assistant Commissioners considered that splitting the three existing wards of Emerson Park, Hacton and St Andrews along new ward boundaries would be an acceptable solution in light of the conflicting evidence received regarding the Dagenham and Rainham, Hornchurch and Upminster, and Romford constituencies.

26. They considered that swapping Chadwell Heath ward for a different but still orphan ward from the Borough of Barking and Dagenham to be added to Ilford South would not provide a better solution than the initial proposals, as this would move the disruption and broken ties from Chadwell Heath ward to Becontree ward.
27. Our Assistant Commissioners considered splitting the Borough of Waltham Forest wards of Chapel End, and Hale End and Highams Park at the A406, but felt that the test for doing so had not been met, and that this would result in change to the existing Walthamstow constituency which was not otherwise required. We agreed with their view, and so changed the configuration of Dagenham and Rainham, Hornchurch and Upminster, and Romford and retained the initial proposals for Barking, Chingford and Woodford Green, Ilford North, Ilford South, Leyton and Wanstead, and Walthamstow.

Consultation on the revised proposals

28. Our proposed splits of Emerson Park, Hacton and St Andrews were supported by those who wanted Emerson Park to stay as part of the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency, rather than to include it in the Romford constituency. Others felt that this resulted in more ward splits than necessary. There was a single request to take account of the new Havering-atte-Bower ward to further move the boundary between Hornchurch and Upminster, and Romford. A small number of respondents considered that although we had united the Elm Park community, which crosses the existing constituency boundary into Hacton and St Andrews wards, its community ties lie with Hornchurch, rather than with Dagenham, as we proposed.
29. A small number of representations cited our use of new ward boundaries in the Borough of Havering as precedent for a reconfiguration of the Barking, and Dagenham and Rainham constituencies on their new local government ward boundaries, as the Order for new boundaries in the Borough of Barking and Dagenham had been made on 15 December 2021. We received a small amount of opposition continuing the call for Chadwell Heath ward to be included in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency rather than the Ilford South constituency, but we did also receive some support for uniting the wider Chadwell area.

30. Opposition to South Woodford wards's inclusion in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency continued at a low level during the final consultation period, as was our decision not to divide wards between the Chingford and Woodford Green, and Walthamstow constituencies.

Final recommendations

31. We are not persuaded by proposals to divide existing wards along new ward boundaries in areas where there does not already exist a need to divide those wards in order to comply more closely with the statutory factors. As we set out in our policy on splitting wards at the beginning of the Review, we will only consider new ward boundaries made by Order after 1 December 2020 in instances where we are persuaded to split a ward between constituencies. There did exist a need to divide wards between Romford and Hornchurch and Upminster in order to minimise disruption across the sub-region, so it was appropriate to do so there, but not elsewhere in North East London. Having considered the evidence regarding other changes, we consider that sufficient justification for departing from our revised proposals has not been demonstrated.
32. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Barking, Chingford and Woodford Green, Dagenham and Rainham, Hornchurch and Upminster, Ilford North, Ilford South, Leyton and Wasntead, Romford, and Walthamstow. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Newham and Tower Hamlets

Initial proposals

33. All four constituencies in this sub-region have electorates above the permitted range. The boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets have a combined electorate of a little over 368,000, giving it an entitlement to 5.02 constituencies. We therefore allocated five constituencies to the sub-region, one of which was proposed to be Stratford and Bow, crossing the River Lee, which is also the boundary between the boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets. We tried to reflect the existing constituencies as closely as practical in proposing an East Ham constituency including eight wards from the existing. We added Beckton and Royal Docks wards to our proposed West Ham and Beckton constituency. Our proposed Poplar and Limehouse included nine wards from the existing constituency, and our Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency included the Spitalfields and Whitechapel areas.

Consultation on the initial proposals

34. Our proposed Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency generated little response during our first two consultation periods. Most of the comments received about Poplar and Limehouse were regarding the name, with suggestions that it should include a reference to Canary Wharf, Docklands, or Isle of Dogs. There was some concern at the inclusion of the Borough of Tower Hamlets ward of St Katherine's and Wapping in our Poplar and Limehouse constituency rather than in the Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency, but this proposal also received some support.
35. Having a constituency which crossed the River Lee in the north of the sub-region was more supported than opposed, with the balance of views being that there are more and varied crossings between the Stratford and Bow areas than could be achieved by a southern crossing, between Blackwall and Canning Town, where the river is wider. Having a constituency formed from parts of two boroughs was opposed here, as it was almost everywhere it was proposed.
36. Our East Ham proposal was almost unanimously supported, with the transfer of the Borough of Newham ward of Beckton to our proposed West Ham and Beckton at the A13 Newham Way considered a logical boundary.

There were some suggestions that the West Ham ward should be included in our proposed Stratford and Bow constituency due to its proximity to Stratford, and that we should consider the Borough of Newham's new ward boundaries, the order for which was made on 17 May 2021.

Revised proposals

37. Having considered the evidence, our Assistant Commissioners felt that the Borough of Tower Hamlets ward of St Katherine's and Wapping had a similar riverside nature to its neighbours in our proposed Poplar and Limehouse constituency, and was divided by the A1203 Highway from the rest of the Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency. Making such a change would also require the division of the Stepney area, which they considered would break community ties. They considered that adding any of the suggestions to the Poplar and Limehouse name would either be superfluous, as those areas are part of Poplar or, in the case of Docklands, would encompass an area crossing both the Lee and Thames.
38. Whilst acknowledging that the West Ham ward was felt by some to look towards the Stratford area, our Assistant Commissioners considered that removing it from the wider West Ham community would break ties here, and also across the Forest Gate area, as it would require the Green Street West ward being moved from the Stratford and Bow constituency into the West Ham and Beckton constituency. They felt that as our proposed East Ham constituency was widely supported, it should remain unchanged for the revised proposals. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that, as there was no suggestion that we would need to split any wards across either borough, it would not be appropriate to consider the new ward boundaries for Newham. We agreed with all their recommendations and therefore proposed retaining our initial proposals for the five constituencies of Bethnal Green and Stepney, East Ham, Poplar and Limehouse, Stratford and Bow, and West Ham and Beckton.

Consultation on the revised proposals

39. The only substantive request for Bethnal Green and Stepney was to change the name to Bethnal Green and Shadwell, to reflect that community's history and amenities. Poplar and Isle of Dogs emerged as the most popular suggested name for that constituency.

40. Opposition to the cross-borough constituency of Stratford and Bow continued at a low level. We received few responses to our proposals for East Ham, or West Ham and Beckton, with a single representation supporting East Ham's configuration, one reiterating West Ham ward's links with Stratford, and another suggesting that it be renamed Canning Town and Beckton.

Final recommendations

41. We consider that including Shadwell rather than Stepney in the name of the Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency runs counter to the fact that Shadwell is smaller than Stepney and that Shadwell also appears to extend into our proposed Poplar and Limehouse constituency. We consider that adding Isle of Dogs instead of Limehouse to the name of Poplar and Limehouse would not necessarily better reflect the configuration of the constituency given that the area and the former Borough of Poplar includes Isle of Dogs in its entirety. We were provided with very little evidence of any more viable alternative to the Stratford and Bow constituency. Our East Ham, and West Ham and Beckton proposals were largely supported.
42. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Bethnal Green and Stepney, East Ham, Poplar and Limehouse, Stratford and Bow, and West Ham and Beckton. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

North Central London

Initial proposals

43. Our initial proposals treated North Central and North West London as one sub-region. There are currently 32 constituencies across these parts of London, and our initial proposals were also for 32 constituencies. This section of the report focuses on the North Central area, covering the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington, which includes 13 existing constituencies, and the majority of another. Of these, Chipping Barnet, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, Hackney South and Shoreditch, Hampstead and Kilburn (which includes part of our subsequent North West London sub-region), Hendon, Holborn and St Pancras, Hornsey and Wood Green, and Tottenham are below the permitted electorate range. Edmonton, Enfield North, Enfield Southgate, and Islington South and Finsbury are above the range, and Finchley and Golders Green, and Islington North have electorates within the permitted range.
44. In our initial proposals, we proposed three constituencies that would cross the A5 road: Stanmore and Edgware, that would cross between the boroughs of Barnet and Harrow; Hendon and Golders Green, that would cross between the boroughs of Barnet and Brent; and West Hampstead and Kilburn, that would cross between the boroughs of Camden and Brent. The Borough of Barnet was divided into five constituencies in our initial proposals. In addition to the two constituencies spanning the A5, we proposed a Finchley and Muswell Hill constituency that would span the boroughs of Barnet and Haringey, and a Southgate and Barnet East constituency that would include two Borough of Barnet wards in an otherwise Borough of Enfield centred constituency. One proposed constituency, High Barnet and Mill Hill, was wholly contained within the Borough of Barnet.
45. In the Borough of Enfield, we proposed an Enfield North constituency and an Edmonton constituency that would be unchanged from the existing constituencies except for realignment with new local government ward boundaries. In the Borough of Haringey, we proposed a Tottenham constituency that would include two Borough of Hackney wards, while West Green and White Hart Lane wards were transferred to the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency. Our proposed Hackney North and Stoke

Newington, and Hackney South and Shoreditch constituencies were based on the existing Hackney constituencies, although the Borough of Hackney Dalston ward was included in the Islington North constituency under our initial proposals. We also proposed that Tufnell Park ward, from the Borough of Islington, be transferred to the Borough of Camden based Kentish Town and Bloomsbury constituency, which would result in two orphan wards in this area. We proposed that the City of London be paired with the Borough of Islington in a City of London and Islington South constituency. Our third proposed constituency covering the Borough of Camden (in addition to Kentish Town and Bloomsbury, and West Hampstead and Kilburn) was Camden Town and St John's Wood, that crossed the borough boundary with Westminster.

Consultation on the initial proposals

46. As described previously, this sub-region was largely opposed, due mainly to the breaking of community ties created by the number of borough boundaries that were crossed, and the consequent significant change to the existing pattern of constituencies. The A5 is considered by most to be a significant boundary to the communities on either side, between Barnet on the eastern side, and Brent and Harrow on the west. Others did note that the Edgware community includes a small part of the Borough of Harrow, but the majority of it lies in the Borough of Barnet. Our Hendon and Golders Green proposal was supported by community and faith groups, but opposed by those who felt that as well as the A5 road, the Welsh Harp reservoir was a further substantial geographic barrier.
47. Our proposed Finchley and Muswell Hill constituency received a mixed response, with those in support mentioning community, transport and faith ties across the area, while those who opposed it cited the lack of such ties, and that we were dividing the Muswell Hill area. We received strong opposition to the inclusion of East Barnet and Brunswick Park wards in the proposed Southgate and Barnet East constituency. The East Coast Main Line railway, which we had considered a physical boundary across the area, was felt by many to be a uniting feature, particularly at New Barnet, which includes areas on both sides of the line. We received counter proposals to reduce the number of constituencies including wards from outside of the Borough of Barnet from the initially proposed four, to one, which were supported for preserving more community ties.

48. Our initial proposals for the Borough of Enfield attracted few comments, which perhaps reflects the limited change we proposed here. Our proposals across the Borough of Haringey were largely opposed. Many asserted that West Green ward is an integral part of the Tottenham constituency, and counter proposed that Harringay ward should be transferred to the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency instead. A smaller number of people also said that White Hart Lane ward should remain in Tottenham, as part of it, the Tower Gardens Conservation Area, had been part of the constituency previously. A small number of counter proposals suggested splitting one or both of the West Green and White Hart Lane wards to keep those parts which identify most strongly as Tottenham within the proposed constituency. Some counter proposals also suggested linking Wood Green with Southgate, part of the Borough of Enfield, but these suggestions were also opposed, in part because Wood Green is considered the civic centre of the Borough of Haringey, and to link it with any part of the Borough Enfield would break community ties with the rest of the borough.
49. Our proposed inclusion of the two Borough of Hackney wards of Brownswood and Woodberry Down in the Tottenham constituency was almost unanimously opposed on the grounds of breaking community ties, particularly between Stamford Hill West and Woodberry Down wards. Some suggested that the Brownswood ward should be part of an Islington North constituency, and a small number suggested that the transfer of the two wards made sense due to the physical divide created by Clissold Park and the Woodberry Wetlands and reservoirs.
50. Our inclusion of the Borough of Hackney Dalston ward in our proposed Islington North constituency was opposed as this ward is considered by some as the heart of Hackney, and includes key community and cultural institutions for the Borough. These objections gave rise to counter proposals that De Beauvoir ward would be better transferred to an Islington based constituency if any part of the borough should be removed.
51. Including Tufnell Park in a Borough of Camden based Kentish Town and Bloomsbury constituency was strongly opposed by those who felt that the area looked to the Borough of Islington for all its services and that they have few connections with the Borough of Camden, or Kentish Town in particular, but there was also a small amount of support who did see some links.

52. The City of London's transfer to our proposed City of London and Islington South constituency was supported by those residents in the City who saw education, entertainment and shopping links with the Borough of Islington, but opposed by those who wished to maintain the long-standing links with the City of Westminster.
53. In the Borough of Camden, our proposed Camden Town and St Johns Wood, and West Hampstead and Kilburn constituencies were strongly opposed for dividing the close-knit Hampstead community, with many preferring a counter proposal for a Hampstead and Highgate constituency, similar to one which existed from 1983 to 2010. We did receive some support for our West Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, as some felt that the Kilburn High Road unites the areas on opposite sides of the boundary between the boroughs of Brent and Camden. Most counter proposals however chose to use the A5 road as the dividing line between North Central and North West London sub-regions. As previously described, our initial proposals for the Kentish Town and Bloomsbury constituency were largely opposed due to the inclusion of Tufnell Park ward as an orphan ward from the Borough of Islington. 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 our proposed constituency, however, in light of the challenges faced in north London.

Revised proposals

54. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the finely balanced and often conflicting evidence received during public consultation. Counter proposals in the Borough of Barnet focused on differences in which parts would need to be included with other boroughs whilst minimising change to existing constituencies. They recommended a pattern which retained Brunswick Park and East Barnet wards in the Chipping Barnet constituency, kept the Finchley and Golders Green constituency unchanged apart from such changes as necessary due to new ward boundaries, transferred Edgwarebury ward into Chipping Barnet from Hendon, and included Friern Barnet in a Hornsey and Friern Barnet constituency.

55. When considering the boroughs of Enfield and Haringey, our Assistant Commissioners considered that counter proposals which swapped the Borough of Haringey wards of West Green and Harringay would provide for a Tottenham constituency broadly similar in configuration to the existing. They accepted that there was no ideal solution for the Borough of Enfield, given the minimal change they recommended in the Borough of Barnet. They therefore recommended Edmonton and Enfield North constituencies similar to the existing, and a Southgate and Wood Green constituency to include parts from both boroughs, thereby restricting significant change to a single constituency.
56. Across the boroughs of Hackney and Islington, our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence to retain Islington North unchanged from its existing configuration, and to add the De Beauvoir ward from the Borough of Hackney In the Islington South constituency, which allowed them to recommend keeping Dalston ward in Hackney South and Shoreditch. They were unable to identify alternative patterns of constituencies which better reflected the statutory criteria than the initial proposals for Hackney North and Stoke Newington, particularly as it would result in significant consequential changes to the pattern of constituencies.
57. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that counter proposals for Borough of Camden constituencies based on the Hampstead and Highgate areas, and the existing Holborn and St Pancras constituency would provide for a coherent configuration. Their recommendations united the Hampstead area and both parts of Highgate even though one of the Highgate wards would be an orphan ward from the Borough of Haringey. We agreed with all their recommendations for the North Central London sub-region.

Consultation on the revised proposals

58. Our revised proposals were largely supported across the majority of the Borough of Barnet, with significant opposition to the Friern Barnet ward being transferred to a Borough of Haringey based constituency, with some suggesting that the ward should be divided at the A406 North Circular Road. There were a small number of counter proposals to either include the Edgwarebury ward in the Hendon constituency, or for the East Finchley ward to be the orphan ward added to a Borough of Haringey based constituency. Both options would be likely to create more disruption

to the Chipping Barnet, and Finchley and Golders Green constituencies than in the revised proposals.

59. In the Borough of Enfield our revised proposals were heavily opposed for a number of reasons. The reconfiguration of Enfield Southgate across three constituencies, one of which would extend from the north of the borough into the Borough of Haringey to create a Southgate and Wood Green constituency which crossed borough boundaries and the A406, which respondents told us has little community of interest spanning such a long and thin area. The transfer of the Winchmore Hill ward to the Edmonton constituency and the transfer of the Grange Park ward to the Enfield North constituency both elicited much opposition, in part because people felt that these two wards formed a single community, although the transfer of the Grange Park ward did also receive a small amount of support. There was a general feeling expressed that the initial proposals were better across the Borough of Enfield, causing less disruption to existing constituencies than the revised proposals.
60. Our revised proposals for the Borough of Haringey were largely opposed, and considered more disruptive to communities than our initial proposals as they split the borough across four constituencies, none of which would be entirely within the borough. Respondents opposed the division of the existing Hornsey and Wood Green constituency between three proposed constituencies, and our Southgate and Wood Green proposal which paired the civic centre of the Borough of Haringey with parts of the Borough of Enfield.
61. In the Borough of Camden, our Hampstead and Highgate constituency was well supported, but with mixed views expressed on our linking the Highgate wards from the boroughs of Camden and Haringey. Some respondents considered that Hampstead Heath is a unifying feature, and others considered it a physical divide, and those on each side look more to their own borough rather than across the Heath. There was some opposition to our separation of the Kentish Town North ward from the Kentish Town South ward, one suggested solution to that being Gospel Oak ward should be included in the Hampstead and Highgate constituency, and both wards of Kentish Town should be included in our Holborn and St Pancras proposal, but there was a counter argument that Gospel Oak should remain in the Holborn and St Pancras constituency. Apart from this, our revised Holborn and St Pancras constituency was largely supported,

although there was a suggestion that it should be called Holborn and Camden Town. There was some opposition to our return to using the A5 road as the sub-region boundary, as residents felt that at its southern end, it was a local high street rather than a dividing feature.

62. Our Islington North revisions were unanimously supported. Our Islington South proposal received mixed views, both with regard to the name, which some felt should remain as Islington South and Finsbury, and opposition to the inclusion of De Beauvoir as an orphan ward from the Borough of Hackney.
63. We received few responses to our proposals for two Borough of Hackney based constituencies other than as noted above regarding De Beauvoir ward being transferred to our proposed Islington South constituency. There was a suggestion that, as we had proposed dropping Finsbury from the name of Islington South, the two constituencies in this borough should be named Hackney North and Hackney South.

Final recommendations

64. We considered a number of counter proposals for the Borough of Barnet which sought to resolve opposition across the boroughs of Enfield and Haringey, by returning to something similar to our initial proposals. Our investigations indicated that resolving these matters would require changes to a number of constituencies across this sub-region, including different configurations to those we had previously proposed. We identified a counter proposal that would modify the pattern of constituencies in the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey. We noted that under this configuration, the boundary between the proposed Hendon and Golders Green constituency would be different, specifically, separating the Childs Hill and Golders Green wards for which we had received considerable evidence that these wards shared community ties. We therefore considered it necessary to visit the area. We noted little difference, and no discernible boundary between the two wards, which had the feel of a single community, and concluded that they should not be separated.
65. We also observed the boundary of the boroughs of Barnet and Enfield. In contrast, our visit to East Barnet ward showed us that, although the New Barnet community and shopping area straddles the East Coast Main Line and boundary with Barnet Vale ward, it also had a similar feel at its north

eastern corner with the Cockfosters ward in the Borough of Enfield, and the wider Cockfosters community, which appeared to us to cross that boundary. We observed that the railway is in a tunnel at the boundary between Brunswick Park and Whetstone wards, and so does not obstruct travel at all here. But, as at Cockfosters, Brunswick Park is extremely close to Southgate ward in the Borough of Enfield, and has a similar feel, particularly at its eastern corner. We felt that as both wards looked to both Barnet and Enfield boroughs in some regards, this might give us flexibility to resolve opposition to our Enfield and Haringey proposals. Having investigated alternatives we have not identified a different pattern of constituencies that would better reflect the statutory factors. We acknowledge the considerable number of representations received concerning our proposed Southgate and Wood Green constituency, some of which commented on the geographic extent and shape of our proposed constituency. However, we noted that the existing Enfield Southgate constituency is not too dissimilar in terms of shape or extent given it stretches from the north to the south of the borough. Finally, we have also been mindful of the support for the pattern of constituencies we proposed in our revised proposals in this part of the sub-region. As previously set out, this pattern would need to be completely reconfigured under any alternative.

66. However, we did reflect further on the evidence received suggesting that the Borough of Enfield wards of Grange Park and Winchmore Hill should be kept together in the same constituency, preferably in a Southgate based constituency. We were not able to identify an alternative configuration that would achieve this outcome without significant disruption to the pattern of constituencies as outlined above. However, we noted a counter proposal that identified that the aforementioned wards could remain together albeit as part of an Edmonton and Winchmore Hill constituency. This also required the transfer of the Ponders End ward from Edmonton to Enfield North to bring both constituencies within the permitted electorate range. Given the evidence received, we have decided to adopt this proposal as part of our final recommendations.
67. Although our revised proposals across the Borough of Haringey were largely opposed, we found that there was not persuasive evidence to depart from our revised proposals for Hornsey and Friern Barnet, and Tottenham, as further change here would create more disruption across the rest of the sub-region.

68. The division of Kentish Town between two Borough of Camden constituencies cannot be resolved by a simple exchange including the Gospel Oak ward, but we did find that a split of the Primrose Hill ward might resolve some of the concerns across this area. We investigated this alternative and visited the area. We observed in the Kentish Town area, that while the railway between the two wards was a substantial physical feature, it did not divide the area, with the main shopping area crossing the railway, and even graffiti artists on opposite sides proclaiming the area as Kentish Town. We visited the Primrose Hill ward to observe the proposed ward split and considered that the two sides of the ward are divided by the hill itself, with the Primrose Hill community being on the east side, and the west side being part of the wider Swiss Cottage area. Combined with transferring Gospel Oak ward into Hampstead and Highgate, both Kentish Town wards can be included in the Holborn and St Pancras constituency. We did not feel that a name change was appropriate, as Camden Town is not a new area for the constituency, which is broadly similar to the existing configuration. As views were divided regarding the Highgate wards, we felt that there was not persuasive evidence to make any further change to our Hampstead and Highgate proposal.
69. No additional evidence has been received to warrant changing our proposals for the Islington North constituency. We are persuaded that retaining the name Islington South and Finsbury is appropriate as it is similar to the existing constituency. Although this constituency includes the orphan De Beauvoir ward from the Borough of Hackney we do not consider an alternative pattern would better reflect the statutory factors. Therefore, we have decided not to modify our revised proposals in the Borough of Hackney and confirm them as final..
70. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Chipping Barnet, Edmonton and Winchmore Hill, Finchley and Golders Green, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, Hackney South and Shoreditch, Hampstead and Highgate, Hendon, Holborn and St Pancras, Hornsey and Friern Barnet, Islington North, Islington South and Finsbury, Southgate and Wood Green, and Tottenham. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

North West London

Initial proposals

71. As noted previously, our initial proposals treated North Central and North West London as one sub-region. This section of the report focuses on the North West area, covering the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, that part of Richmond upon Thames which lies north of the River Thames, Westminster and the City of London, which includes 18 existing constituencies, and part of another. Of these, Brent Central, Brent North, Brentford and Isleworth, Feltham and Heston, and Hampstead and Kilburn (which includes part of our subsequent North Central London sub-region) were below the permitted electorate range. Chelsea and Fulham, Cities of London and Westminster, Ealing Southall, Kensington, Twickenham and Westminster North were above the permitted range, and Ealing Central and Acton, Ealing North, Hammersmith, Harrow East, Harrow West, Hayes and Harlington, Ruislip Northwood and Pinner, and Uxbridge and South Ruislip had electorates within the permitted range.
72. In the Borough of Brent, we proposed a Brent Central constituency that was wholly within the borough, Hendon and Golders Green, and West Hampstead and Kilburn constituencies, both of which crossed the A5 into the boroughs of Barnet and Camden respectively, and a Kenton and Wembley West constituency, which included two wards from the Borough of Harrow. Our proposals for the Borough of Ealing were for minimal change. Ealing North was reconfigured solely to reflect new local government ward boundaries. We proposed moving Walpole ward from Ealing Central and Acton to our proposed Southall constituency, and the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham wards of College Park & Old Oak, and Wormholt into our proposed Ealing Central constituency. We paired the centre of Hammersmith with the Chiswick area of the Borough of Hounslow, and Fulham with part of Chelsea, to propose our Hammersmith and Chiswick, and Fulham and Chelsea West constituencies.
73. In the Borough of Harrow we proposed a configuration for the Harrow constituency taking account of new local government ward boundaries, and crossed the A5 to propose a Stanmore and Edgware constituency including two wards from the Borough of Barnet. Across the Borough of Hillingdon we proposed a Hayes and West Drayton constituency very

similar to the existing Hayes and Harlington, altered only to take account of new local government ward boundaries, and proposed minor changes to the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, and Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituencies for the same reason.

74. As we proposed including three Borough of Hounslow wards in the Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency, we needed to increase the number of electors in the Brentford and Isleworth constituency, and did so by including the Heston East ward, and the Borough of Richmond upon Thames ward of Whitton from the existing Twickenham constituency. As in our initial proposals we had paired the City of London with the Borough of Islington as described previously, we grouped the Borough of Westminster with the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and proposed Westminster and Chelsea East, and Kensington and Westbourne constituencies.

Consultation on the initial proposals

75. Our initial proposals in the Borough of Brent generated few responses in comparison to other areas, but were mostly opposed. The inclusion of the Alperton ward in the Brent Central constituency was opposed due to its separation from the rest of the constituency by the West Coast Main Line, London Overground and Underground, and Southern railways, and Wembley Brook. The division of the wider Wembley area between the Brent Central and Kenton and Wembley West constituencies was opposed for its breaking of community ties. The separation of the Harlesden community of Harlesden & Kensal Green, and Roundwood wards between the proposed Brent Central, and West Hampstead and Kilburn constituencies was also opposed for breaking community ties. We received counter proposals to either create separate constituencies for Wembley and Willesden, or to return to configurations more similar to the existing Brent North and Brent Central constituencies. A partial counter proposal which did not deal with any consequential effects was also received which tried to resolve the Harlesden issue.
76. We received strong opposition to our inclusion of the two Harrow wards of Kenton East and Kenton West in the Kenton and Wembley West constituency. Respondents argued that the boundary between the boroughs of 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 Borough of Harrow wards (and vice versa),

rather than in Brent. They contended that the initial proposals would break local ties in the southeastern part of the Borough of Harrow. We received counter proposals for Harrow and Brent that would retain Kenton East and Kenton West wards in a Harrow East constituency that would include all the wards in the existing Harrow East constituency, except for Wealdstone North ward, together with Queensbury ward as an orphan ward from the Borough of Brent. Respondents noted that the boundary between the Borough of Brent Queensbury ward and the Borough of Harrow 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 joined the Stanmore and Queensbury areas, but in a narrower and more elongated constituency that would divide Kenton East ward from Kenton West ward. The composition of our initially proposed Harrow constituency represented little change from the existing constituency and was well supported.

77. In the Borough of Ealing, we received considerable opposition to our proposed 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, did however support the inclusion of Walpole ward in the Southall constituency, describing Walpole ward's close ties with its neighbouring Hanwell Broadway and Northfield wards.
78. Response to our initially proposed Ealing Central and Acton constituency was mixed, with some objections to the inclusion of the two Borough of 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, other respondents cited many shared local ties – including transport links, shopping facilities, and community

organisations – across the boundary between the boroughs of Ealing, and Hammersmith and Fulham. They noted that Old Oak Common Lane, the borough boundary, is the principal shopping district for East Acton, a community that spans the two boroughs. Some respondents suggested that Old Oak should be included in the constituency name to recognise the expanding community in this area.

79. Response to our 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.
80. Some counter proposals suggested maintaining the existing Ealing Central and Acton constituency unchanged (except for minor realignment with prospective local government ward boundaries) – 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, but this required including North Hanwell ward in an Ealing Southall constituency, and the South Ruislip ward as an orphan from the Borough of Hillingdon in the Ealing North constituency. Another counter proposal suggested an unchanged Ealing Central and Acton constituency, and a Southall constituency that would include those parts of Heston East and Heston West wards (in the borough of Hounslow) that lie north of the M4 motorway, thus requiring the splitting of two wards between constituencies.
81. In the north of the Borough of Hillingdon, we received some opposition to the division of the Harefield community, since our initial proposals included Harefield Village ward in the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency and Ickenham & South Harefield ward in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency.
82. Counter proposals united Harefield by including Harefield Village ward together with Ickenham & South Harefield ward in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency, and including Ruislip Manor ward in the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency. While acknowledging that our initial proposals would divide Harefield, other respondents contended that this alternative would result in more disruption to the existing constituencies, and that including Ruislip Manor ward in a different constituency to South Ruislip ward would break ties between these two areas, and so supported our initial proposals.

83. Further south in the Borough of Hillingdon, the composition of our initially proposed Hayes and West Drayton constituency was largely supported. We did receive some representations advocating a return to the constituency's existing name of Hayes and Harlington, since our proposed constituency was almost identical to the existing constituency.
84. In the Borough of Richmond upon Thames (north), residents of the Whitton ward voiced strong opposition to our initial proposals, which would transfer Whitton ward from the existing Twickenham constituency to the Brentford and Isleworth constituency. Respondents argued that our initial proposals would divide the Whitton community, which also spans Heathfield ward. Despite being separated by a railway line, respondents referred to Whitton and Heathfield wards as one single cohesive community, with many local services and amenities shared between the wards. Concerns were also 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.
85. Some representations proposed ways in which Whitton ward could remain in the Twickenham constituency. One proposed transferring St Margaret's & North Twickenham ward to the Brentford and Isleworth constituency instead of Whitton ward, and other respondents proposed transferring Heathfield ward instead of Whitton ward. Another proposed 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 have close ties with Richmond. A further counter proposal suggested splitting both Whitton and Heathfield wards between the Twickenham, and Brentford and Isleworth constituencies.
86. A small number of representations did, however, support our initial proposals for the Brentford and Isleworth constituency, noting strong community links between Hounslow South and Whitton wards. Our proposed Feltham and Heston constituency was well supported in representations.
87. Our initial proposals for the Borough of 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.

88. In response to our proposed division of the Chelsea area into Chelsea East and Chelsea West, many representations drew attention to the King's Road – the 'historic central artery' of Chelsea – being divided into two constituencies. Respondents also argued that many quintessential Chelsea institutions and landmarks would be separated into different constituencies under our initial proposals, with the Royal Hospital (home to the Chelsea Pensioners) and Sloane Square, for example, being included in a constituency with parts of the City of Westminster. Respondents further noted that our proposals would divide several conservation areas and 'character areas' in Chelsea.
89. Representations about the South Kensington area highlighted that the three South Kensington wards – Brompton & Hans Town, Courtfield, and Queen's Gate – would be included in three different constituencies, therefore breaking local ties. Several respondents noted that South Kensington tube station and the three South Kensington museums (the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and the Victoria & Albert Museum) would be included in a City of Westminster-based constituency. Courtfield ward, proposed to be included in the Fulham and Chelsea West constituency, was seen as a core South Kensington residential neighbourhood. It was also noted that our initial proposals would divide South Kensington conservation areas and residents' associations between constituencies.
90. There was some support for our initial proposals, particularly for the Kensington and Westbourne constituency, but the evidence in support was limited compared to the evidence against our initial proposals.

91. We received a strongly supported counter proposal closely which sought to reflect the existing Chelsea and Fulham constituency, thereby keeping the Chelsea community together. It would include a proposed Kensington and Bayswater constituency that would keep the South Kensington community together, too, and link Kensington with the City of Westminster wards of Bayswater and Lancaster Gate rather than the three wards to the north of the borough. Residents in support of this cited extensive community ties between the Notting Hill and Bayswater areas, noting that the borough boundary was far more porous here than further north.
92. Another counter proposal suggested the same Chelsea and Fulham constituency as above, but joined Kensington with the two City of Westminster wards of Westbourne and Knightsbridge & Belgravia, rather than the Bayswater and Lancaster Gate wards. Residents of Knightsbridge & Belgravia ward opposed this counter proposal, arguing that their community ties were with southern parts of Westminster rather than Kensington.
93. Some representations expressed concern over the inclusion of the whole of Brompton & Hans Town ward in a Kensington-based constituency as the ward comprises two historically distinct areas: the northern Brompton part that identifies as South Kensington, and the southern Hans Town part that identifies as Chelsea. Some respondents proposed that 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 bring both constituencies within the permitted electorate range. While noting that it was regrettable that the Hans Town area would not be included in a Chelsea constituency, others did not support such a split-ward solution.
94. 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 the City of Westminster. The majority of counter proposals presented a Cities of London and Westminster constituency based on the existing constituency. Some counter proposals suggested that the City of London should be joined with wards from the Borough of Camden as well as the City of Westminster. These respondents cited cultural, business, and transport links between the two Borough of Camden wards of Bloomsbury, and Holborn & Covent Garden, and the surrounding areas in the cities.

95. Given the approach taken by many counter proposals to treat the A5 road as a dividing line until the City of Westminster, we received several proposals for a constituency crossing between the City of Westminster and the Borough of Brent – joining the most southern wards of Brent with the northwestern wards of Westminster, albeit in different configurations. These noted the clear divide of the A5 between the boroughs of Brent and Camden contrasted with the residential roads that mark the Borough of Brent and City of Westminster boundary, with good transport links such as the A404 Harrow Road and the Bakerloo Line linking Edgware Road in the City of Westminster to Harlesden in the Borough of Brent.

Revised proposals

96. Our Assistant Commissioners recognised that the counter proposals for two constituencies wholly within the Borough of Brent described earlier could be interchanged without affecting the wider pattern of constituencies. They noted that the counter proposal for Brent Central and Brent North constituencies would reflect the existing constituencies more closely than the Wembley, and Willesden and Kingsbury constituencies counter proposal, but also that under the former, the Alperton ward would still be included in the Brent Central constituency, as in our initial proposals, and isolated from the rest of the constituency. They were persuaded by the evidence provided in representations that this arrangement would break local ties in the Alperton ward and would not reflect the geography of the area. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the inclusion of all the Wembley wards in one constituency would make considerable sense, reflecting those representations that had emphasised the cohesiveness of the Wembley wards. The Assistant Commissioners also noted that this would use the River Brent and an extensive portion of the A4140 road as a boundary between the Wembley, and Willesden and Kingsbury constituencies, which appeared a logical geographic boundary. They acknowledged that under both counter proposals the Harlesden & Kensal Green ward would be included in a different constituency to Roundwood ward, therefore local ties would potentially be broken in the Harlesden area. However, they considered that any alternative constituency configurations that kept the two wards together would result in knock-on disruption and the breaking of local ties elsewhere.

97. On balance, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the second counter proposal for Brent would better reflect the statutory factors overall than the first. They recommended, however, that the Willesden and Kingsbury constituency simply be named Willesden, since it would not encompass all of the Kingsbury community.
98. Our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded that the Harrow East constituency as proposed by several respondents would address the concerns from residents of Kenton East and Kenton West wards, and would present an arrangement similar to the existing Harrow East constituency. While acknowledging it would not be ideal to include Queensbury ward as an orphan ward from the Borough of Brent, they considered that the ward would make 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 recommended that the counter proposal for a Harrow East constituency, as outlined above, should be adopted.
99. Since the composition of our initially proposed Harrow constituency was well supported, and represented little change from the existing constituency, our Assistant Commissioners did not recommend any revisions to the composition of this constituency. However, they recommended naming the constituency Harrow West, as they considered that the name should be retained because the constituency would remain largely unchanged, and that it made sense to mirror the compass point designator for the Harrow East constituency.
100. In light of their assessments across the boroughs of Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham, our Assistant Commissioners recommended no changes to our initial proposals for the constituencies of Ealing North, Ealing Central and Acton, and Southall, except for reverting the name of our initially proposed Southall constituency to Ealing Southall. They also recommended no changes to our initial proposals for the Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency.
101. Our Assistant Commissioners saw merit in the counter proposal which united both Borough of Hillingdon Harefield wards in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency, and transferred Ruislip Manor ward to the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency. They noted that this solution

would address representations from the Harefield area and, while they acknowledged concerns over local ties being broken between Ruislip Manor and South Ruislip wards, they observed that Ruislip Manor ward is geographically divided from South Ruislip ward by Yeading Brook and the Chiltern Main Line railway line. They also considered that the alternative solution would unite more of Ruislip town centre in the same constituency. Conversely, the Assistant Commissioners did acknowledge that the alternative solution would represent greater change from the existing constituencies than our initial proposals, and would pair the densely populated Uxbridge area with rural Harefield. Emphasising the finely balanced nature of the decision, the Assistant Commissioners recommended that the alternative solution for the constituencies of Uxbridge and South Ruislip, and Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, should be adopted: they considered that this would provide a better reflection of the local ties overall.

102. Further south in the Borough of Hillingdon, our Assistant Commissioners observed that the composition of our initially proposed Hayes and West Drayton constituency was largely supported; accordingly, they recommended no changes to the composition of this constituency, but in light of representations on the name they recommended that its existing name of Hayes and Harlington should be retained in light of this local support.
103. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the evidence in opposition to our initial proposals for Whitton ward was more compelling than that in support, but they found that the counter proposals to resolve this either left the Whitton community divided, as in the split ward or Heathfield ward solutions detailed earlier, created constituencies that were not within the permitted electorate range, or relied on constituencies being created which crossed the River Thames, which has been widely accepted as the sub-region boundary.
104. Following their analysis, and further noting that our proposed Feltham and Heston constituency was well supported in representations, our Assistant Commissioners concluded that no alternative option or counter proposal would better reflect the statutory factors overall than our initial proposals for Richmond upon Thames (north) and Hounslow. Therefore, the Assistant Commissioners recommended no changes to the initially

proposed constituencies of Brentford and Isleworth, Feltham and Heston, and Twickenham.

105. Recognising the strength of opposition to our initial proposals in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and the quality of evidence received, our Assistant Commissioners carefully considered the counter proposals received. They concluded that the widely supported counter proposal would effectively address the issues raised in representations and present 3a logical solution for the constituencies of Chelsea and Fulham, and Kensington and Bayswater. They considered that the proposal of which City of Westminster wards to include in the Kensington-based constituency, Bayswater and Lancaster Gate, would make more sense in terms of community ties than the alternative wards of Knightsbridge & Belgravia and Westbourne. They 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 there was insufficient justification for splitting a ward since there was no wider benefit to be gained beyond the immediate location. In light of their analysis, the Assistant Commissioners recommended that the more widely supported counter proposal for the constituencies of Chelsea and Fulham, and Kensington and Bayswater, be adopted.
106. Before settling on a recommendation for a constituency joining the City of London with Westminster, our Assistant Commissioners noted the proposal for a constituency that would join the City with parts of Camden and Westminster but as this would involve combining three local authorities in one constituency, and it would not align with their preferred new sub-regions, the Assistant Commissioners did not pursue this approach.
107. Our Assistant Commissioners observed that either Abbey Road ward or Church Street ward – both located directly to the east of the A5 – could be included in their Cities of London and Westminster constituency. Most representations supported including Abbey Road ward in a Cities of London and Westminster constituency, and Church Street ward in a Paddington and Kilburn constituency. Others included Abbey Road ward in a Paddibngton and Kilburn constituency and Church Street wards in a Cities of London and Westminster constituency.
108. Our Assistant Commissioners visited the area to help them decide which was the most appropriate solution for the Abbey Road and Church Street

wards. Their observations showed that the Church Street ward was somewhat separated from the wards to its north, south, and east by the Grand Union Canal, Marylebone Road, and the Chiltern Main Line. In contrast, they 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 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.

109. They recommended, however, that the Paddington and Kilburn constituency be named Queen's Park and Little Venice, to reflect the community of Queen's Park spanning the Brent-Westminster borough boundary, and to capture an identifiable area of the Westminster part of the constituency.

Consultation on the revised proposals

110. Our revised proposals attracted a mixture of support and opposition across the Borough of Brent. Whilst our Wembley and Willesden constituency proposals were largely supported, the division of the Harlesden community between both constituencies was opposed, and counter proposals were received which attempted to keep them together. One of these provided constituencies broadly similar to ours in the Borough of Brent, but which in consequence created an almost discontinuous Harrow West constituency. Another sought to split the ward of Harlesden and Kensal Green in order to minimise the division of the area, but did so at the centre of Harlesden's shopping area.
111. The names of our proposed Wembley and Willesden constituencies were opposed by those who considered the existing names of Brent North and Brent Central were appropriate given their similar configuration to the existing constituencies. Others considered that the Willesden constituency should be named Brent, without any further designator. Both the name and configuration of our Queen's Park and Little Venice constituency were opposed. Some wanted Kilburn mentioned in the name, and others preferred Maida Vale, and arguments against its configuration focused on

the lack of a single community identity or coherence across the area, citing wealth disparities across its extent.

112. Our revised proposals for two constituencies in the Borough of Harrow were largely supported, with only little opposition to the Borough of Brent ward of Queensbury being included as an orphan ward. We received several alternative name suggestions for both, with the Harrow East constituency suggested to be named Stanmore and Queensbury, and for Harrow West to be named Harrow, Harrow Central, or Harrow on the Hill.
113. Opposition continued, albeit at a lower level, to our including the Borough of Ealing Walpole ward in the Ealing Southall constituency due to its proximity and ties with the Ealing Broadway ward and the rest of our Ealing Central and Acton constituency. We also received mixed views on the inclusion of the two Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham wards of College Park and Old Oak, and Wormholt, in our Ealing Central and Acton proposal, with competing views on whether this configuration reflected community ties. We also received suggestions that the Ealing North constituency should instead be named Greenford and Northolt, and that the Ealing Central and Acton constituency should be named Acton and Central Ealing, Ealing Acton, or Ealing and Acton.
114. We received continued support for our proposed Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency. We did also receive again the counter proposal to include the Borough of Ealing ward of Southfield, as this includes part of the wider Chiswick community, making this a three borough constituency, and to consequently transfer the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham wards of White City and Shepherd's Bush Green to the Ealing Central and Acton constituency. It was separately suggested that the White City ward be included in the Ealing Central and Acton constituency, and Wormholt ward in the Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency.
115. Very few comments were received regarding our proposed Borough of Hillingdon constituencies, other than to rename the Hayes and Harlington constituency as either Hayes and Heathrow, or Hayes and West Drayton. We received little further evidence regarding our including the Harefield and South Harefield villages in our proposed Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency. Rather we received evidence that the Ruislip Manor ward would have its strong local ties with the South Ruislip ward broken if we were to proceed with our revised proposals for this and the Uxbridge

and South Ruislip constituency. Those respondents who commented on this area largely supported we revert to the initial proposals.

116. Residents of the Borough of Richmond upon Thames ward of Whitton maintained their strong opposition to being included in the Borough of Hounslow based constituency of Brentford and Isleworth. We received further counter proposals to split the Whitton ward or the Hounslow West ward, or the Hounslow Central ward combined with a more significant reconfiguration to create constituencies of Feltham and Hanworth including the Heathfield ward, which includes part of the Whitton community, Heston and Isleworth, and a Twickenham constituency which would include the Whitton ward. It was also suggested that Brentford and Isleworth be named Brentford and Hounslow Town. Our proposals for Brentford and Isleworth, and Feltham and Heston constituencies received very few other comments.
117. Our revised proposals across the City of London, City of Westminster, and the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were largely supported. Returning the City of London to a City of London and Westminster constituency was welcomed, as were the Kensington and Bayswater, and Chelsea and Fulham constituencies. Residents of the Hans Town part of the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ward of Brompton and Hans Town maintained their suggestion to be included in the Chelsea and Fulham constituency, suggesting that the ward either be split, or that the Redcliffe ward be included in the Kensington and Bayswater constituency instead. A further counter proposal was received for a City of Westminster and Kensington South constituency including the City of London, and so include parts of three boroughs, and a Kensington North constituency including the City of Westminster wards of Harrow Road, Queen's Park, and Westbourne. Two name changes were suggested, Fulham and Chelsea, as Fulham would be the larger part of the reconfigured constituency, and Kensington and Lancaster Gate.

Final recommendations

118. We visited Harlesden in the Borough of Brent in order to ascertain whether the proposed split of the Harlesden and Kensal Green ward might help to avoid dividing the wider Harlesden community, travelling on into the Roundwood ward to observe links between the two wards. We observed that Harlesden has an extensive and busy town centre area, contained

within Harlesden & Kensal Green ward, whereas Roundwood ward is more residential, with some smaller parades of shops along Church Road (A407). We noted that the counter proposal that suggested the ward split would use Park Parade and part of Harlesden High Street as a constituency boundary. On visiting these areas, we observed that they are very much part of Harlesden's cohesive town centre, with shops and local amenities either side of the roads. Therefore, we considered that dividing the ward as such would divide the centre of Harlesden, and accordingly we were not persuaded by this counter proposal. The alternative counter proposal to keep both wards together and in a single constituency created substantial disruption to the existing pattern of constituencies across the Borough of Harrow. Therefore we were not persuaded by this alternative proposal. We therefore concluded that our revised proposals provided the most appropriate configuration across the borough. We considered the names for the two Brent constituencies and concluded that their orientation directed us to name them Brent East, and Brent West. Our deliberation of the evidence provided found that our Queen's Park and Little Venice constituency crossed the A5 where it formed a community shopping area for both sides of the road, and had good transport links between otherwise disparate areas, but agreed with those who considered that Maida Vale should be included in the name.

119. Our revised proposals for the Harrow East and Harrow West constituencies were largely supported. We do not consider the suggested names to be any more appropriate than those we proposed, and consider that the compass point designators provide for appropriate distinction between the constituencies, and the borough.
120. We are not persuaded that the evidence to change our revised proposals across the Borough of Ealing is persuasive, as attempting to resolve the inclusion of Walpole ward in the Ealing Central and Acton constituency would result in more substantial change to the existing constituencies than we propose. Nor are we persuaded to change any of our proposed names given that the configuration of each of the three constituencies are similar to the existing constituencies of Ealing Central and Acton, Ealing North, and Ealing Southall, and that the Acton community stretches across the boundary into the College Park and Old Oak, and Wormholt wards we are including from the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

121. Our revised proposals across the Borough of Hillingdon were largely supported, apart from concerns that our revised proposal now divided the communities in the Ruislip Manor area. We have considered the evidence received concerning the Harefield and Ruislip Manor areas in all consultation periods. We considered that the evidence received concerning Ruislip Manor to be more persuasive. Therefore, under our final recommendations we have reverted to our initial proposals for the two constituencies of Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner and Uxbridge and South Ruislip. It was suggested by some respondents that this constituency be named Uxbridge but, as it is similar in configuration to the existing constituency, we considered that it would not be appropriate to remove the name of a substantial part of the constituency.
122. We have not received sufficient persuasive evidence to change our revised proposals for the Borough of Hounslow. We note the opposition to including the Borough of Richmond upon Thames ward of Whitton in the Brentford and Isleworth constituency, but consider that the counter proposals continue to divide the wider Whitton area, either by splitting this ward by including the Heathfield ward in a neighbouring constituency instead of the Whitton ward, or cross the sub-region boundary at the River Thames when this boundary is widely accepted as appropriate to the wider pattern of constituencies.
123. When considering the evidence for further change across the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and the City of Westminster, we note that the counter proposal including the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ward of Brompton and Hans Town in the Chelsea and Fulham constituency would also move much of the South Kensington area including its London Underground station, and the museums and galleries that we were told should remain in a Kensington based constituency. Dividing the ward might mitigate this, but we consider that this would not resolve any larger issues across the sub-region or region, and so does not meet our criteria for doing so. With regard to the names, as Bayswater is a larger area than Lancaster Gate, and the proposed Chelsea and Fulham constituency is so similar to the existing configuration, we consider our revised proposal names to be the most appropriate in light of all the evidence received. We note the broad support for our revised Cities of London and Westminster constituency, and propose no further change.

124. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Brent East, Brent West, Brentford and Isleworth, Chelsea and Fulham, Cities of London and Westminster, Ealing Central and Acton, Ealing North, Ealing Southall, Feltham and Heston, Hammersmith and Chiswick, Harrow East, Harrow West, Hayes and Harlington, Kensington and Bayswater, Queen's Park and Maida Vale, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, Twickenham, and Uxbridge and South Ruislip. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

South West London

Initial proposals

125. Our initial proposals treated South Central and South West London as one sub-region. There are currently 19 constituencies across these parts of London, and most of another. Our initial proposals were for 21 constituencies. This section of the report focuses on the South West area, covering the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames, Merton, that part of Richmond upon Thames which lies south of the River Thames, Sutton, and Wandsworth, which includes nine existing constituencies. Of these, Putney and Wimbledon fell below the permitted electorate range. Battersea, Kingston and Surbiton, and Richmond Park were above the permitted range, and Carshalton and Wallington, Mitcham and Morden, Sutton and Cheam, and Tooting had electorates within the permitted range.
126. In the southern part of the Borough of Richmond upon Thames, we proposed a Richmond Park constituency including three wards from the Borough of Kingston upon Thames, one more than currently. We proposed a Kingston and Surbiton constituency entirely within the Borough of Kingston upon Thames. We included two Borough of Kingston upon Thames wards in our proposed Wimbledon constituency, which was otherwise made up of wards from the Borough of Merton. We proposed a Mitcham and Morden constituency which included the Cannon Hill ward, and transferred the Longthornton ward to our proposed Croydon North constituency as an orphan ward from the Borough of Merton. Our proposed Cashalton and Wallington, and Sutton and Cheam constituency, both wholly within the Borough of Sutton, were changed solely to reflect new local authority ward boundaries. In the Borough of Wandsworth, we were able to retain the Tooting constituency unchanged, and bring the Battersea, and Putney constituencies within the permitted electorate range by splitting the Fairfield ward, moving a single polling district between them at the A214 road.

Consultation on the initial proposals

127. In the Borough of Merton, we received over 200 representations opposing our proposed transfer of Longthornton ward from the Mitcham and Morden constituency to the Croydon North constituency. Residents argued 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. Our initial proposals were therefore said to break local ties in Longthornton ward. Concern was also expressed over the ward becoming an orphan ward in a Croydon constituency. Respondents also contended that transferring Longthornton ward to the Croydon North constituency would leave its neighbouring Pollards Hill ward geographically isolated. Several counter proposals sought to include Longthornton ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency, thus addressing this feedback from representations.

128. Elsewhere in the Borough of Merton, we received notable opposition to our proposed transfer of Cannon Hill ward from the Wimbledon constituency to the Mitcham and Morden constituency. Residents contended that our initial proposals would break community 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.
129. 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) would be included in our proposed Wimbledon constituency rather than the Mitcham and Morden constituency. Although Merton Park ward is in the Wimbledon constituency currently, respondents took the view that all of Morden town centre should be in the Mitcham and Morden constituency.
130. One counter proposal included Cannon Hill ward in the Wimbledon constituency and divided Merton Park ward between the Wimbledon, and Mitcham and Morden constituencies. It noted that polling district data was not available for the Borough of Merton, since the wards were prospective, but they observed that the new Merton Park ward was very similar to the existing one. They therefore proposed transferring the existing 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 the Wimbledon constituency to the Mitcham and Morden constituency. A number of respondents supported this. Other counter proposals included the whole of Merton Park ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency, in place of Cannon Hill ward, and did not suggest transferring Wandle ward. The proponents of this counter proposal argued that Merton Park ward would be a better fit

with the Mitcham and Morden constituency than Cannon Hill ward because Merton Park contains part of Morden town centre.

131. Representations acknowledged that the Wimbledon constituency needed to gain electors from the Borough of Kingston upon Thames in order to bring it within the permitted electorate range. Our initial proposals to include St. James and Old Malden wards, however, were almost unanimously opposed. Respondents noted that St James ward in particular looks to New Malden High Street (in Beverley ward) for local services, shopping, and community facilities. Residents of Old Malden ward said that they gravitate to Worcester Park (in the Borough of Sutton) or New Malden for local shopping and amenities – and if travelling further afield, they would look to Kingston Town or even Epsom and Ewell in Surrey, rather than Wimbledon. The railway line connecting Malden Manor with Wimbledon was seen as a physical barrier rather than a unifier and that most people regard it as a hard boundary to road traffic because of the railway level crossing at West Barnes Lane.
132. Respondents put forward the same counter proposal for the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames, albeit with different constituency names. They proposed including the Borough of 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 generally well supported in representations. Residents argued that the two Coombe wards are a single community which would be divided into different constituencies under our initial proposals and that they look to Wimbledon for retail and leisure services. Respondents drew attention to Coombe Lane (A238) as a road and bus link between Coombe and Wimbledon, and emphasised that Wimbledon Common was a shared amenity, in addition to other shared amenities such as schools and Kingston Hospital. 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, making it a shared political and financial connection.
133. Others expressed some concern at the proposed transfer of Coombe Hill and Coombe Vale wards to the Wimbledon constituency. While acknowledging that it was no more disruptive than our initial proposals, they were concerned that Wimbledon Common and the A3 road, which at

this point is a six-lane highway, divides the Coombe wards from Wimbledon.

134. Under this counter proposal, in choosing to transfer the Coombe wards rather than the Malden wards to the Wimbledon constituency, Grove ward, comprising Kingston town centre, was transferred to the Richmond Park constituency. It was argued that Grove ward has coherent 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. It was noted that Norbiton ward, directly east of Grove ward, could also be considered for transfer to the Richmond Park constituency, but respondents suggested that Norbiton's links northwards were much poorer than Grove's links northwards. In arguing the case for including Grove ward in the Richmond Park constituency, it was asserted that this arrangement would unite Kingston town centre. Concern was expressed that the transfer of Grove ward would distance Kingston town centre from its surrounding communities such as Surbiton, which look to Kingston for their main services and amenities.
135. Another counter proposal submitted that Beverley and St. James wards should be included in the Wimbledon constituency, thereby retaining Old Malden ward in a Kingston and Surbiton constituency, whilst supporting our initial proposals for the Richmond Park constituency and therefore did not transfer Grove ward. Other counter proposals received for this part of London were primarily those that suggested crossing the River Thames in one or more constituencies. We received some requests from respondents in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames to consider using the new local government 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.
136. Our 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 continued to wholly align to their respective borough boundaries.
137. In the Borough of Wandsworth, respondents accepted that our proposed split of Fairfield ward was necessary in order to prevent a reconfiguration

of all three Wandsworth constituencies. One highlighted that splitting the ward along the A214 road, as we proposed, would actually better reflect community ties in the area, since the road represents a natural boundary between the Battersea and Wandsworth communities. Others advocated using the Borough of Wandsworth's new local government 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. Others considered that the new boundaries need not be considered. We received a request to incorporate the northern tip of the existing Earlsfield ward into the Putney constituency, to avoid the creation of a polling district containing one elector for future general elections.

Revised proposals

138. In assessing the representations and counter proposals received for the boroughs of Merton, Kingston upon Thames, and Richmond upon Thames, our Assistant Commissioners first noted that it was possible to retain Longthornton ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency without any consequential implications to the overall pattern of constituencies in the Borough of Merton. They were persuaded by the many representations from Longthornton ward that it should be included in a constituency with Mitcham, not with Croydon. They were also persuaded by the evidence that Cannon Hill ward has ties to Raynes Park and the wider Wimbledon area. They considered that Merton Park ward would make a better fit with the Mitcham and Morden constituency than Cannon Hill ward, since Merton Park ward encompasses parts of Morden town centre.
139. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the proposed split of Merton Park ward had some merit in terms of community ties at the northern and southern extents of the ward, but that it would divide the residential Merton Park neighbourhood in the middle of the ward. The split would also require the transfer of Wandle ward from the Wimbledon constituency to the Mitcham and Morden constituency, but the Assistant Commissioners considered that Wandle ward has stronger ties to Wimbledon. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the split of Merton Park ward was not necessary for the integrity of the that counter proposal: Merton Park ward 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.

140. In determining which Borough of Kingston upon Thames wards to include in the Wimbledon constituency, our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence that the two Coombe wards would make a more logical extension to the constituency than the initially proposed Old Malden and St. James wards. They considered that the counter proposal would keep the three Malden wards together, and the two Coombe wards together, and they considered that there was persuasive evidence of community ties between Coombe and Wimbledon. They considered the counter proposal to transfer Beverley and St. James wards to the Wimbledon constituency would present some of the same issues as the initial proposals, in terms of dividing the Malden community. Furthermore, they considered it would also make Old Malden ward particularly isolated.
141. While acknowledging it may not be ideal to transfer Grove ward to the Richmond Park constituency, given the potential breaking of local ties between Kingston town centre and its surrounding communities in Surbiton, Norbiton, and further afield, our Assistant Commissioners ultimately considered that the counter proposal would enable a pattern of constituencies in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames better reflecting the statutory factors than our initial proposals. If one ward was required to be transferred to the Richmond Park constituency, they considered that Grove ward would make a more logical choice than Norbiton ward. They noted that the narrow salient extending at the east of Grove ward accommodated a waste disposal centre rather than a residential area, so they were not concerned by the unusual shape of the resultant constituencies.
142. In light of their assessments, our Assistant Commissioners recommended the adoption of the counter proposal for the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames, namely, a Richmond Park and Kingston Town constituency, and a Surbiton and The Maldens constituency. They noted the requests we had received to consider the new ward boundaries in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames, but determined that it was necessary given they were not persuaded to split any ward. The Assistant Commissioners subsequently recommended the adoption of a Wimbledon and Coombe constituency retaining the Wandle ward and not including any part of the Merton Park ward. They then

recommended a Mitcham and Morden constituency including the whole of the Merton Park ward.

143. Given the support received for our proposed Carshalton and Wallington and Sutton and Cheam constituencies, our Assistant Commissioners recommended to not change them as part of the revised proposals.
144. Our Assistant Commissioners noted those representations suggesting a pattern of constituencies using the new ward boundaries in the Borough of Wandsworth but, as was the case with the Borough of Kingston upon Thames, they were not persuaded that splitting multiple wards across the borough was necessary. They recognised, however, that Commission policy allows for the consideration of new ward boundaries when determining exactly how to split a ward, and therefore investigated whether the existing Fairfield ward could be divided in a different way to better align with Wandsworth's new ward boundaries. They discovered, however, that such a solution was not practicable. In light of their assessments, our Assistant Commissioners recommended no changes to our initial proposals for the Borough of Wandsworth, and we agreed.
145. We agreed with our Assistant Commissioners' recommendations for the Borough of Merton, but had reservations over whether their recommendations for the Borough of Kingston upon Thames marked an improvement over our initial proposals, noting that the A3 road in this area presents a significant barrier between Coombe and Wimbledon. We also had concerns regarding the transfer of Grove ward to a Richmond-based constituency, since this ward contains Kingston town centre and therefore provides key services and amenities for residents across the existing Kingston and Surbiton constituency. We did accept, however, our Assistant Commissioners' arguments that their recommendations responded to consultation feedback, and did not break ties within the distinct Malden community and within the distinct Coombe community, and included them in our revised proposals in order to consult on them publicly. However, we proposed that their recommended Richmond Park and Kingston Town constituency should be called Richmond Park and Kingston Central.
146. We agreed with their assessments and proposed that our initial proposals for the boroughs of Sutton and Wandsworth should be maintained.

Consultation on the revised proposals

147. Our revised proposals in the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames, and Richmond upon Thames were strongly opposed. Respondents informed us that including the Grove ward from the Borough of Kingston upon Thames in a Richmond-based constituency would separate the main shopping area for the borough from many of its users across the Surbiton area, and from the Norbiton ward in particular, which looks towards the Grove ward for their local services. Residents across the Borough of Kingston upon Thames were concerned that Kingston Hospital would now be in the Wimbledon and Coombe constituency, as this lies within the Coombe Hill ward. There was also a feeling expressed that our proposed Surbiton and The Maldens constituency lacked cohesion and identity, as its local centre would now be part of the Richmond Park and Kingston Central constituency whilst the new constituency would have no centre. There was a small amount of support for the Coombe wards to be included in a Wimbledon based constituency, but this was mainly from residents of the Wimbledon area, rather than from Coombe residents. Suggestions to use the new ward boundaries for the Borough of Kingston upon Thames were repeated.
148. The inclusion of the Borough of Merton ward of Merton Park in our proposed Mitcham and Morden constituency was strongly opposed, with residents saying that their ties, both economically and culturally, were all with Wimbledon rather than Morden, in spite of the close proximity of the ward to the rest of Morden, and that it includes Merton Civic Centre, Morden station, and much of Morden's shopping area. Counter proposals were suggested which split Merton Park and Wandle wards, or included the Cannon Hill ward in the Mitcham and Morden constituency instead of Merton Park, as in our initial proposals, which had been previously opposed..
149. We received very few comments on our proposals for the Borough of Sutton. Those we did receive supported our revised proposals for constituencies of Carshalton and Walington, and Sutton and Cheam. We received a few responses in opposition to our revised proposals in the Borough of Wandsworth, some continuing the request to use the new ward boundaries, and one to avoid the potential creation of a polling district for a single elector at the northern tip of the Earlsfield ward, but we received no detailed counter proposals departing from our revised proposals for constituencies of Battersea, Putney and Tooting.

Final recommendations

150. As both our initial and revised proposals for which wards from the Borough of Kingston upon Thames should be included in a Wimbledon based constituency were heavily opposed, we decided to visit both the Old Malden and Coombe areas, to assess for ourselves the physical divides between them and the Borough of Merton. We travelled from Motspur Park station into St. James ward along West Barnes Lane and Motspur Park. We observed that the local authority boundary between the boroughs of Merton and Kingston upon Thames appears to be indistinct at this point and that the community of Motspur Park spans both sides of the boundary, with the station and other amenities in West Barnes ward in the Borough of Merton, while the park itself and Motspur Park road is in St. James ward, in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames. We continued along Malden Road through New Malden in order to observe the boundary between St. James ward and Beverley ward, noting that New Malden's high street begins in Beverley ward. We considered that residents of St. James ward, at least those north of the A3 road, might look to New Malden for local amenities, but that the high street itself did not cross the boundary between the St. James and Beverley wards. However, we observed that Beverley ward was highly integrated with Coombe Vale ward, at least in the area south of Clarence Avenue/Langley Grove. Reaching Coombe Hill ward, we observed Coombe Lane and proceeded to Wimbledon on the A238 Coombe Lane. We crossed the A3 and considered that it was a significant barrier, with six lanes of fast-moving traffic and no obvious pedestrian alternative. Our conclusion after considering our observations alongside the evidence received across three public consultations was that the Old Malden and St James wards were the most appropriate to include in a Wimbledon constituency. We considered these wards have the best physical links amongst the options explored, and that this pattern would also allow us to keep the Grove ward with the Norbiton ward, and the wider Surbiton community.
151. Given the strong evidence received across all our public consultations that both Cannon Hill and Merton Park wards should be included in a Wimbledon based constituency rather than a Mitcham and Morden constituency and again investigated the various counter proposals submitted.

152. We noted that the counter proposal to include both wards in the Wimbledon constituency required the transfer of the Wandle ward to the Mitcham and Morden constituency. We considered this configuration would separate that community, as most residents of the Wandle ward live on the west bank of the River Wandle, and that part which lies in the east side of the river only has one road link, which is back across the river towards Wimbledon. We also investigated the possibility of splitting either or both of the Cannon Hill or Merton Park wards, but considered that as this would provide no wider sub-regional benefit, it did not meet our threshold for dividing a ward.
153. We therefore considered that the only options available to us were the configurations of the initial proposals and revised proposals. We decided to visit both wards in order to see for ourselves their links with Morden and Wimbledon. We observed the John Innes conservation area in the northern part of the Merton Park ward and we also noted the proximity of much of the ward to Morden. We considered that most of the ward was geographically closer to Morden town centre than to Wimbledon town centre. On visiting Cannon Hill ward, we noted that the main roads across the ward, Martin Way and Hillcross Avenue, both lead to Morden town centre. We considered that both wards have ties to both Wimbledon and Morden but, in having to determine a pattern of constituencies that are all within the permitted electorate range, we considered that the links of Cannon Hill ward to the Mitcham and Morden constituency were better. We propose as part of our final recommendations that Cannon Hill ward be included in the Mitcham and Morden constituency, and that Merton Park be included in the Wimbledon constituency.
154. We considered again whether it would be appropriate to use new ward boundaries for the Borough of Wandsworth in order to devise a more future-proofed configuration of constituencies but, given the high levels of support for our proposals at the earlier two consultation stages, we concluded that this would not justify us departing from the December 2020 boundaries. We also considered the potential difficulties in creating a small polling district and concluded that this would be entirely manageable within the local authority election team. We therefore propose no further change here.
155. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Battersea, Carshalton and Wallington, Kingston and

Surbiton, Mitcham and Morden, Putney, Richmond Park, Sutton and Cheam, Tooting and Wimbledon. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

South Central London

Initial proposals

156. As outlined previously, our initial proposals treated South Central and South West London as one sub-region. This section of the report focuses on the South Central area, covering the boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, which includes 10 existing constituencies and most of the existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency. Of the existing constituencies, Bermondsey and Old Southwark, Camberwell and Peckham, Croydon Central, Croydon North, Croydon South, Dulwich and West Norwood, Lewisham Deptford and Streatham fell above the permitted electorate range. Lewisham East, and Lewisham West and Penge had electorates within the permitted range, and Vauxhall was above the permitted range.
157. In the Borough of Croydon we proposed constituencies of Croydon East and Croydon South which were entirely within the borough, a Croydon North constituency which included the orphan ward of Longthornton from the Borough of Merton, and a Norwood constituency which included two wards that make up the West Norwood area from the Borough of Lambeth. As part of our initial proposals, we proposed to split the Borough of Croydon ward of Waddon between constituencies.
158. We proposed constituencies of Clapham and Brixton, and Streatham within the Borough of Lambeth, and a Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency which included three wards from the Borough of Southwark. In the Borough of Southwark we proposed constituencies of Bermondsey and Borough, and Peckham, similar to the existing constituencies of Bermondsey and Old Southwark, and Camberwell and Peckham, and a Dulwich and Sydenham constituency which had four wards each from the boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark. We proposed constituencies of Deptford, and Lewisham East in the Borough of Lewisham, changed from the existing in order to take account of new local government ward boundaries.

Consultation on the initial proposals

159. Our initial proposals for the Borough of Croydon were received with a mixture of support and opposition. Our proposed Croydon South

constituency was widely supported, with respondents noting that our initial proposals kept together the communities of Purley, Coulsdon, Kenley, Sanderstead, Croham, and South Croydon, which are of a similar character and well-connected by key transport arteries such as the A23 road and Southern rail routes. Very little concern was expressed over our proposed split of Waddon ward.

160. We did, however, receive opposition from the Woodside and Addiscombe community regarding our 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 look south to Addiscombe for shopping, health and community services, and had transport links towards central Croydon. Including Woodside in a different constituency to Addiscombe would therefore break long standing local ties. Respondents also highlighted that the Brighton Main Line represented a 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 and Canal Walk in the southwestern corner of the ward. We received a petition expressing concern that Davidson Road, lying parallel to Towpath Way and Canal Walk, would be divided between two constituencies under our initial proposals.
161. However, some respondents argued that Woodside ward shares local ties with the South Norwood area to its north, pointing out that South Norwood leisure centre, country park, social club and mosque are all located in Woodside ward. They contended that the Brighton Main Line is permeable around South Norwood town centre – and noted that South Norwood ward in fact spans the railway line to the north of Norwood Junction station, whereas the tram line running along the southern edge of Woodside ward presents a hard boundary. Several representations highlighted that Croydon Council's Local Plan designated South Norwood and Woodside as one place, with Addiscombe as another distinct place. One counter proposal included the Woodside ward in a Croydon North East and Penge constituency, which would cross the borough boundary with the Borough of Bromley.
162. We received another counter proposal in which Woodside ward would remain together with Addiscombe in the Croydon East constituency, and

consequently Selsdon Vale & Forestdale ward would be transferred to the Croydon South constituency. This counter proposal would not require Waddon ward to be split. A similar arrangement for Croydon East and Croydon South constituencies was presented in another counter proposal which included splitting the South Croydon ward in order to bring the Croydon North constituency into the permitted electorate range.

163. 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. 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. Our initial proposals would therefore break community ties in these areas, particularly in Herne Hill, which would be divided into three constituencies, and also in West Norwood, whose town centre and high street would be divided into two constituencies.
164. Other arguments in opposition contended that our 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.
165. One counter proposal addressed many of these concerns by presenting a Dulwich and West Norwood constituency based on the existing constituency, that would include the communities of Herne Hill, Dulwich, Dulwich Village, Gipsy Hill, West Dulwich, and West Norwood together in the same constituency. This was well supported in representations. Another proposed a similar Dulwich West constituency, but included the Borough of Lambeth ward of Tulse Hill in place of the Champion Hill ward from the Borough of Southwark, and split Knight's Hill ward from the Borough of Lambeth between proposed Dulwich West, and Norwood and Streatham constituencies. Another suggested configuration rather than crossing the boundary between the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, proposed a Norwood constituency that would consist of the Borough of Lambeth wards of the existing Dulwich and West Norwood constituency

(plus two additional Borough of Lambeth wards), and a Dulwich and Sydenham constituency similar to our initial proposals. Others took a similar approach to this in the Borough of Lambeth then paired Dulwich with Camberwell in a constituency that would be wholly within the Borough of Southwark. Others supported our initial proposals for the Dulwich and Sydenham constituency, and separated the Borough of Lambeth wards currently in the Dulwich and West Norwood constituency into two different constituencies: Norwood, and Brixton East and Camberwell.

166. We received representations from two campaigns relating to the proposals for the Borough of Lambeth as a whole. One campaign opposed our initial proposals here for being unnecessarily disruptive and that they 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 our 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 above which presented three constituencies that would be wholly within the Borough of Lambeth, two of which (Streatham and Vauxhall) would be very similar to the existing constituencies. Conversely, there were representations supporting our initial proposals for the Streatham constituency and opposing any counter proposals that would remove the Tulse Hill or Brixton Hill wards from the Streatham constituency, on the grounds that these counter proposals would break local ties.
167. Several respondents from the Borough of Lambeth expressed concern that our initial proposals did not take into account their new local government ward boundaries. The Order for new wards in the Borough Lambeth was made in January 2022 – well after the statutory cut-off date.
168. A number of themes emerged regarding our initial proposals for the Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency, which would span the northern part of the boundary between the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. Opposition was expressed by some residents of the St. George's ward in the Borough of Southwark that they would be separated from their neighbouring areas of Elephant and Castle, and Borough. Most representations also noted the developments and regeneration taking place around Elephant and Castle, arguing that the related issues would be best tackled under one Member of Parliament.

169. Camberwell residents voiced strong opposition to the prospective division of the Camberwell area between constituencies. Respondents outlined strong community ties, shared local services, and a shared sense of identity between these two wards. A number of respondents also opposed the Borough of Southwark ward of Camberwell Green being linked with the Vauxhall area, arguing that Camberwell as a whole has much stronger links with Peckham than with Vauxhall.
170. Several counter proposals sought to retain the two Camberwell wards together in a single constituency and include St. George's ward from the Borough of Lambeth in a Bermondsey-based constituency. A different suggestion proposed a Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency identical to our initial proposals except for the transfer of St. George's ward to a Bermondsey-based constituency.
171. One representation supported the inclusion of the two Borough of Southwark wards of Camberwell Green and Newington in a Vauxhall constituency, highlighting that Newington ward contains Kennington underground station, and many residents of the existing Vauxhall constituency (especially in the Borough of Lambeth Prince's ward) use this station regularly. This response also argued that the inclusion of Newington ward from the Borough of Southwark would bring together the entirety of Kennington Park and its surrounding housing estates, and further outlined school links between Camberwell Green ward and its neighbouring Lambeth wards, as well as the uniting thread of Camberwell New Road, which is used as a shopping district by residents of Camberwell Green ward and the two Borough of Lambeth wards of Newington and Vassal. This, and a number of other responses proposed, however, that the existing constituency name of Vauxhall should be retained, since the Camberwell part of the constituency would not be significantly larger than any of the other communities currently within the Vauxhall constituency.
172. The composition of our initially proposed Bermondsey and Borough constituency was generally well supported, but we received some opposition to the proposed name. Respondents either argued for the retention of the existing name (Bermondsey and Old Southwark), or advocated for the inclusion of Rotherhithe in the name of the constituency, contending that Rotherhithe is an important (and growing) population centre with its own distinct identity.

173. Our initial proposals for the Lewisham East constituency and the Deptford constituency did not generate much comment, since they would be unchanged from the existing constituencies except for realignment with new local government ward boundaries. Some respondents expressed opposition to a counter proposal for the Borough of Lewisham, particularly noting it would be divided into five constituencies, only one of which would be contained wholly within the borough boundary. Respondents highlighted that this counter proposal would break local ties between Lee Green and Hither Green in the east of the borough, and also contended that Lee Green and Grove Park wards, which would be included in the counter proposal's Eltham and Blackheath constituency which have no ties to Eltham despite their proximity.
174. A different counter proposal for the Borough of Lewisham, however, was supported. Although it would represent more change from the existing constituencies than our initial proposals, respondents generally supported the proposed transfer of Bellingham ward to the Lewisham East constituency, and Blackheath ward to the Deptford-based constituency. It would also unite Beckenham Place Park in one constituency, and better reflect community ties.. It was argued that the Blackheath population has become more oriented towards central Lewisham and the boundary between the areas is blurred, therefore it would make sense to include Blackheath ward in a constituency with Lewisham Central ward.
175. Others were critical of counter proposals which would divide both the Brixton and Streatham communities between multiple constituencies.

Revised proposals

176. When considering potential revisions to our initial proposals in the boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark, our Assistant Commissioners recognised that the approach they decided to pursue for Croydon and Lambeth would ultimately dictate their choices for Southwark and Lewisham. They noted that counter proposals were not easily interchangeable as they were in parts of North London, since the counter proposals tended to present significantly different solutions.
177. In assessing the options for the boroughs of Croydon and Lambeth, the Assistant Commissioners observed that those counter proposals that

suggested configuring the Borough of Lambeth with coterminous constituencies all consequently proposed a constituency including wards from the boroughs of Croydon to Bromley in the Crystal Palace area. However, those counter proposals that did not treat Borough of Lambeth as a self-contained area all proposed constituencies crossing between the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, and the boroughs of Lambeth and Croydon.

178. Our Assistant Commissioners saw the merit in the counter proposals to treat the Borough of Lambeth as self-contained, with three whole constituencies aligned to the borough boundaries. They noted that some of those proposals would also closely reflect the boundaries of the existing Vauxhall and Streatham constituencies. They considered that this arrangement for Lambeth would therefore strongly reflect the statutory factors within that borough. They also considered, however, that this would have significant knock-on consequences for the Borough of Southwark such as dividing the Peckham community and that the Borough of Lewisham would be divided into five different constituencies. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the Borough of Lewisham's Bellingham ward would become an orphan ward in the Beckenham and Bromley Town constituency. The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded that Bellingham's links were overwhelmingly with Lewisham rather than Beckenham or Bromley. Taken together, this evidence convinced our Assistant Commissioners to recommend keeping the sub-regions as initially proposed.
179. When assessing other counter proposals for the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham, our Assistant Commissioners considered that the proposal to retain a Dulwich and West Norwood constituency had merit, given the persuasive evidence received. While noting that the proposed arrangement for a Dulwich and West Norwood constituency would necessitate some significant change to the existing Vauxhall and Streatham constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners considered that it would enable a pattern of constituencies in the rest of Southwark and Lewisham more similar to the existing arrangement than other counter proposals. The Borough of Lewisham would be divided into only three constituencies under this counter proposal, closely reflecting the existing pattern. While the Borough of Southwark would be divided into five constituencies under the this pattern of constituencies, two would be wholly contained within the borough – and the Assistant Commissioners

considered that the proposed Bermondsey and Borough constituency, Peckham constituency, and Dulwich and West Norwood constituency would all be clearly related to the pattern of existing constituencies.

180. The Assistant Commissioners further considered that this proposal's Lewisham West and East Dulwich constituency would unite the Forest Hill and Honor Oak communities in the same constituency, although acknowledging that East Dulwich would be separated from Dulwich Village.
181. Our Assistant Commissioners observed that the Brixton area is currently divided into three constituencies, and that this counter proposal accordingly appeared, to them, to represent an improvement for Brixton compared with both the existing pattern and our initially proposed Clapham and Brixton constituency. They also considered that other counter proposals would continue to divide the Brixton community.
182. The Assistant Commissioners observed that this counter proposal's Streatham and Thornton Heath constituency comprised the four core Streatham wards, therefore would not divide the Streatham community, but they recognised that we had received very few representations from the Norbury area, so they were not in a position to make an informed judgement about local ties of the Norbury community.
183. Turning their attention further south in the Borough of Croydon, the Assistant Commissioners saw the benefits of including Woodside ward and the Addiscombe wards together in the same constituency, given the strength of the representations outlining community ties between Woodside and Addiscombe, and the significant barrier of the Southern Main Line railway. They noted that counter proposals to keep Woodside and Addiscombe wards together in a Croydon East constituency, included its consequential transfer of Selsdon Vale & Forestdale ward to the Croydon South constituency, which would divide the town of Selsdon into two constituencies and break local ties in the Selsdon community.
184. While favouring this counter proposal, on the whole, above the other counter proposals received for the South Central London area, the Assistant Commissioners did recognise some of its potential drawbacks, including the division of Selsdon, the Thornton ward split, and the separation of the two Norbury wards. They identified, however, that it was possible to amend the counter proposal to address these issues: Waddon

ward in the Borough of Croydon could be split instead of Thornton ward in the Borough of Lambeth (by transferring two polling districts, WDN5 and WDN6, to the Croydon South constituency, rather than just WDN6 as in our initial proposals); Norbury & Pollards Hill ward could then be transferred from the Croydon North constituency to their Streatham and Thornton Heath constituency, to bring the two Norbury wards together in the same constituency; and consequently Woodside ward could be transferred from the Croydon East constituency to the Croydon North constituency, to enable both Selsdon wards to remain together in the Croydon East constituency. The Assistant Commissioners recognised that this plan would separate Woodside from Addiscombe, but they noted the evidence we had received in support of Woodside being linked with South Norwood ward to its north. To help them understand the practical implications of this revised version of the counter proposal, our Assistant Commissioners visited the area.

185. On visiting Waddon ward, our Assistant Commissioners were not convinced that dividing the ward along the western boundary of the WDN5 polling district would present a desirable solution. They considered that the resultant constituency boundary would run through residential streets and divide a homogeneous neighbourhood. The Assistant Commissioners then visited Norbury & Pollards Hill ward and Norbury Park ward, observing a strong sense of the Norbury community identity. They considered that the railway line was not a significant barrier between these two wards, since the road continued directly under the railway line and the houses on either side of the railway were similar in appearance. The Assistant Commissioners therefore considered that the two Norbury wards were strongly linked, and including them together in the same constituency would represent an improvement on the counter proposal.
186. Crossing the borough boundary from the Norbury area to the Streatham area, our Assistant Commissioners considered that the areas merged together with little discernible difference from Norbury Park ward to Streatham South ward. In contrast, driving along Crown Lane (the A214, which is also the borough boundary between Croydon and Lambeth in the Upper Norwood / West Norwood area) they observed that the summit of the Norwood Ridge marked a notable topographical boundary between the West Norwood area and Croydon, as representations had outlined. Therefore, they considered that a cross-borough constituency between

Norbury and Streatham made more sense 'on the ground' and better reflected the statutory factors.

187. When visiting Woodside ward, our Assistant Commissioners considered that the railway lines did, on the whole, present a significant physical barrier between Woodside ward and South Norwood ward to its north. They considered that the railway line was not such a strong divide around Norwood Junction station, since South Norwood Hill merged into Portland Road here and there continued to be shops and services on either side of Portland Road southeast of the railway. However, to the south of Norwood Junction the railway line was a much more significant barrier, with a single road bridge over it and, on visiting Canal Walk / Towpath Way, our Assistant Commissioners accordingly sympathised with residents' 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.
188. Following their site visits, the Assistant Commissioners explored further options for the Waddon and Woodside areas. They alighted upon a solution that would enable the whole of Waddon ward to remain in a single constituency, and that would enable 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 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. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the WDS1 polling district, in the northeastern corner of the ward, was the one part of Woodside that could be said to link seamlessly with South Norwood ward – which traverses the railway line in this area – to the extent that residents of this part of the ward would likely identify more with the South Norwood community than the Woodside community. Regarding Park Hill & Whitgift ward, they considered that much of the residential area of the ward was an extension of the South Croydon neighbourhood, and therefore made a logical addition to the Croydon South constituency.
189. In light of their assessments, and mindful of the careful balancing of a number of issues, our Assistant Commissioners recommended the adoption of an amended version of this counter proposal for the Borough of

Croydon and part of the Borough of Lambeth, as outlined in the solution above. Given the reconfiguration proposed, they also recommended that the names Croydon East and Croydon South should be retained.

190. In the Borough of Lambeth, the Assistant Commissioners recommended a Lambeth Central constituency closely aligned with the counter proposal's Clapham and Brixton constituency, but including the whole of Thornton ward. Since the constituency would not encompass all of the Brixton community, our Assistant Commissioners considered that Lambeth Central would be a more appropriate name. They acknowledged those representations encouraging us to take account of the Borough of Lambeth's new local government ward boundaries, but they considered that using post-December 2020 ward boundaries across the borough was not necessary given they were not persuaded to split any wards.
191. The Assistant Commissioners subsequently recommended the adoption of a counter proposal for the rest of the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham – namely, the constituencies of Dulwich and West Norwood, Vauxhall and Camberwell, Bermondsey and Borough, Peckham, Lewisham West and East Dulwich, Lewisham East, and Lewisham North and Deptford. They recommended, however, that the Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency should simply be named Vauxhall, in light of the arguments presented for the retention of this name. They also recommended that the Bermondsey and Borough constituency should be named Bermondsey and Old Southwark, maintaining its existing name. They considered that this would be in greater accordance with the Commission's policy on naming than would the inclusion of Rotherhithe in the name, since the shape and character of the revised constituency would reflect that of the existing constituency. While acknowledging that this configuration would maintain the division of the Camberwell community – an issue that had generated notable opposition in the consultation periods – the Assistant Commissioners considered that no other counter proposal would better reflect the statutory factors across the sub-region as a whole. We agreed with their recommendations.

Consultation on the revised proposals

192. Our revised proposals across the Borough of Croydon were both supported and opposed. Residents of the Park Hill and Whitgift ward considered that their ties lay to the north, citing transport links across the

ward into the two Addiscombe wards to support their request that they should not be included in the Croydon South constituency.

Representations regarding the Woodside ward were mixed, with some supporting our split of the ward, with the southern part of the ward being linked with the two Addiscombe ward in our proposed Croydon East constituency. However, others opposed the split, arguing that this would divide a close knit community, and that the entire ward should be included in the Croydon East constituency. Still others considered that the entire ward belongs with the South Norwood ward rather than with the Addiscombe East and Addiscombe West wards.

193. We received several counter proposals to attempt to resolve these issues in different ways. One included the Park Hill & Whitgift ward in a Croydon East constituency, the Woodside ward in a Croydon West and South Norwood constituency, and split the Waddon ward at the A232 Duppas Hill Road between the two to bring both within the permitted electorate range. Another kept the wards of Addiscombe East, Addiscombe West, Park Hill & Whitgift, and Woodside together in a Croydon North East constituency with the South and Upper Norwood areas, but created an elongated Croydon West and Purley constituency in order to achieve this. One counter proposal kept the Park Hill & Whitgift ward in the Croydon South constituency as we proposed, but included the two Addiscombe wards in a Croydon West configuration, and the Woodside ward in a Croydon East constituency reaching from South Norwood to New Addington. Another alternative suggested splitting the Waddon ward as we had in our initial proposals, and the Woodside ward in a different way to our revised proposals, linking more of it with the South Norwood ward. The final counter proposal received for this area split the Waddon ward along the A232 Duppas Hill Road as described above, and the Broad Green ward between a Croydon North constituency including the Addiscombe East, Addiscombe West, South Norwood and Woodside wards, and included the Park Hill and Whitgift ward in a Croydon Central constituency stretching from the split Broad Green and Waddon wards to New Addington in the south of the borough.

194. Some of our proposed constituency names in the Borough of Croydon were opposed, with suggestions that the Croydon East constituency should be named Addington and Addiscombe, and that Croydon South should be named Coulsdon and Purley, but these attracted little support. There was some opposition to the name of our proposed Croydon West and South

Norwood constituency, with the most popular alternative being Croydon West, with Croydon North, and Croydon and South Norwood also suggested. A small number of representations opposed our Streatham and Croydon North revised proposal for pairing parts of the Borough of Croydon with the Borough of Lambeth, but no viable counter proposals were provided at the final consultation stage to resolve this. It was suggested that the constituency might instead be called Streatham and Upper Norwood, Croydon North and Streatham, or Streatham and Croydon North.

195. The biggest issue across the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark was the substantial opposition to the lack of any Camberwell centred constituency and the consequent breaking of communities ties, as both our initial and revised proposals divided this area between three constituencies. Residents of the Champion Hill ward in the Borough of Southwark drew particular attention to our revised proposal to include them in the Dulwich and West Norwood constituency. They preferred our initial proposal for the ward to be included in the Peckham constituency, with which they considered they had strong ties, entirely within the Borough of Southwark, rather than the two borough constituency of Dulwich and West Norwood where they considered their issues would be forgotten within the much larger areas of the majority of that constituency. The majority of representations received also objected to none of the proposed successor constituencies including Camberwell in their names. Suggested alternative names for our Peckham constituency included Peckham and Camberwell, Peckham and East Camberwell, and Camberwell, Peckham and Walworth. Alternatives for our proposed Vauxhall constituency included Camberwell and Vauxhall, Vauxhall and West Camberwell, and Waterloo.
196. Other than from the Champion Hill ward, our proposed Dulwich and West Norwood constituency was supported for resolving concerns raised at earlier stages of consultation by residents of Dulwich, Gipsy Hill, Herne Hill, West Dulwich and West Norwood. One respondent suggested that our Dulwich and West Norwood constituency should instead be named Dulwich and Brixton.
197. We received a small amount of opposition to our proposed Lewisham West and East Dulwich constituency as it was suggested it broke community ties between Dulwich and East Dulwich. We also received alternative proposals for the constituency name. There were suggestions that it should

instead be named East Dulwich and Forest Hill, Forest Hill and East Dulwich, Sydenham and East Dulwich, or Lewisham West and Dulwich Hill.

198. Our revised Bermondsey and Old Southwark constituency elicited little response other than a proposal to change the name to Bermondsey and North Southwark. We received a counter proposal for five constituencies in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, to be reconfigured as Brixton and Clapham, Camberwell and Peckham, Dulwich and West Norwood, Lewisham West and Nunhead, and Vauxhall, making the case that this would reunite Camberwell, avoid a division of Nunhead, keep East Dulwich together with Dulwich, unite all of Brixton, and unite Stockwell.
199. Apart from the previously mentioned Lewisham West and East Dulwich, responses to our revised proposals for the Borough of Lewisham, other representations commented on constituency names. Alternatives received included that, our proposed Lewisham East should instead be named Lewisham South East, that Lewisham North and Deptford should be named Deptford, Lewisham North or Lewisham Deptford, as it is currently.

Final recommendations

200. As outlined above, we received further calls to consider the new local government ward boundaries in the Borough of Lambeth. However, we would only consider aligning with new ward boundaries in instances where we propose to split a ward. Therefore, we have decided not to modify the proposed constituency boundaries.
201. Given the opposition to our proposals for the Park Hill & Whitgift ward in the Borough of Croydon, we considered whether any of the counter proposals put forward might resolve these concerns. None of them appeared to us to resolve the issue without creating knock on effects, such as the previously opposed separating of the Woodside ward from the Addiscombe area, or pairing Croydon town centre with the more distant Purley through what might be considered a bottleneck. We found that none of the alternatives were demonstrably more in accordance with the statutory factors than our revised proposals. We considered that the evidence to change the configuration of our proposed Streatham and Norbury constituency was not extensive, and no credible alternatives were provided. We did however find that some of the suggested names were

more representative of their borough identity, and so recommend that Croydon West and South Norwood should be named Croydon West, and Streatham and Norbury should be named Streatham and Croydon North.

202. We found that the five constituency counter proposal for the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark had some merit, but did result in significant consequential modifications being required. Although it appeared that it might unite the Stockwell area, and the Brixton area within separate constituencies, our Lambeth Central proposal was not opposed in these areas. Although the counter proposal included most of the East Dulwich area in its Dulwich and West Norwood configuration, it excludes the Borough of Southwark Dulwich Hill ward into which that area extends. We also considered that it divided the centre of the Peckham area by including the Borough of Southwark Nunhead & Queen's Road ward and Rye Lane ward in different constituencies. The Newington ward from the Borough of Southwark would also be an orphan ward in a Vauxhall constituency otherwise made up of Borough of Lambeth wards. Whilst this configuration would provide for a constituency including Camberwell, we considered that the counter proposal was likely to break community ties in a number of areas.. However, we do propose to rename the Lambeth Central constituency as Clapham and Brixton Hill, as we consider this constituency better reflects the areas comprising the constituency. Similarly, we noted that a number of representations commented on Camberwell no longer being included in a constituency name. We considered that as the proposed Vauxhall constituency includes the Camberwell Green area this constituency should be named Vauxhall and Camberwell Green.
203. Given the lack of any substantive opposition to our proposals for the rest of the Borough of Lewisham, we recommend no change to the configurations of constituencies here. However, we are minded to rename the two constituencies entirely within the borough Lewisham East and Lewisham North. We consider these constituency names better reflect the areas comprising the constituencies.
204. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Bermondsey and Old Southwark, Clapham and Brixton Hill, Croydon East, Croydon South, Croydon West, Dulwich and West Norwood, Lewisham East, Lewisham North, Lewisham West and East Dulwich, Peckham, Streatham and Croydon North, and Vauxhall and

Camberwell Green. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

South East London

Initial proposals

205. Of the nine existing constituencies in the South East London sub-region, the constituency of Lewisham West and Penge, which includes wards from the Borough of Lewisham, had an electorate within the permitted range. The seven constituencies of Beckenham, Bexleyheath and Crayford, Bromley and Chislehurst, Eltham, Erith and Thamesmead, Old Bexley and Sidcup, and Orpington are currently beneath the permitted range, while the constituency of Greenwich and Woolwich fell above the permitted range.
206. In the Borough of Greenwich, we proposed a Greenwich and Woolwich constituency that would be changed from the existing constituency only by the transfer of Glyndon ward to the Erith and Thamesmead constituency. Spanning the boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley, our proposed Erith and Thamesmead constituency was based on the existing constituency, but also included the Shooters Hill ward from the existing Eltham constituency. We proposed two constituencies that would be wholly within the Borough of Bexley – Bexleyheath and Crayford, and Sidcup and Welling – these largely follow the existing arrangement in the borough, albeit with boundaries realigned to new local government ward boundaries.
207. In the Borough of Bromley, we proposed three constituencies that would be wholly contained within the borough boundaries: Beckenham, Bromley, and Orpington. Given the borough's mathematical entitlement to 3.24 constituencies, one additional constituency has to cross the boundary with a neighbouring borough. We proposed an Eltham and Chislehurst constituency that would span the boundary between the boroughs of Bromley and Greenwich, noting the continuous residential development and numerous road links across that boundary.

Consultation on the initial proposals

208. In the Borough of Greenwich, our initial proposals for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency were strongly supported. Respondents acknowledged that the existing constituency was above the permitted electorate range, and they supported the proposed transfer of Glyndon ward to the Erith and Thamesmead constituency. Many respondents

considered that our initial proposals would maintain the integrity of the Greenwich, Woolwich, and Charlton communities, and they provided much detailed evidence of strong and long standing community ties between these areas.

209. Additionally, many respondents specifically expressed opposition to counter proposals that would divide the Greenwich and/or Woolwich communities. Particularly strong opposition was voiced to counter proposals which would involve splitting at least one ward in the Woolwich area. Under one counter proposal, Woolwich Riverside ward would be divided between a Greenwich and Deptford constituency, and an Erith and Thamesmead constituency, while Woolwich Common ward would be included in an Eltham constituency. Under another counter proposal, both Woolwich Riverside and Woolwich Common wards would be divided between constituencies. Both of these counter proposals would result in the Woolwich area as a whole being divided into three constituencies.
210. Some respondents put forward counter proposals for constituencies crossing the northernmost part of the Greenwich-Lewisham borough boundary, thereby pairing parts of the Greenwich and Deptford areas. In opposition to this approach, respondents pointed out the geographical 'barrier' of the Deptford Creek and River Ravensbourne dividing Greenwich from Lewisham, as well as the open space of Blackheath and the A2 road.
211. We received a number of representations from residents of Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward, arguing that the Hornfair part of the ward (polling districts KH1 / KH2, north of Shooters Hill Road) is part of the Charlton community and should be included in the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency – with the rest of Charlton – rather than an Eltham-based constituency (as in both the current arrangement and our initial proposals). Residents argued that they identify with Greenwich and use facilities in the Greenwich area, rather than in Eltham. Some respondents also noted that under Greenwich's new ward boundaries, the Hornfair area is included in the new Charlton Hornfair ward, with its boundary aligned to Shooters Hill Road. The Order for new wards in Greenwich was made in December 2021 – well after the statutory cut-off date.
212. Our initially proposed Erith and Thamesmead constituency, which would span the boundary of Greenwich and Bexley (as in 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. Our 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 welcomed that our initial proposals would unite Plumstead in a single constituency.

213. It was noted, however, that Plumstead extends only partially into Shooters Hill ward, and the remainder of the ward identifies separately as a 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 potentially 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. We also received a campaign from Shooters Hill residents opposing their proposed removal from the Eltham constituency.
214. Recognising that Shooters Hill ward contains two distinct communities, some respondents said that we should consider using Greenwich's new ward boundaries, which separate Plumstead and Shooters Hill into different wards.
215. In response to comments from the residents of Shooters Hill and Plumstead, and comments from the residents of Hornfair, one counter proposal split both Shooters Hill ward and Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward using existing polling districts. Polling districts SH1, SH2, and SH3 from Shooters Hill ward (which cover the Shooters Hill community) would be included in the Eltham-based constituency, while polling districts SH4, SH5, SH6, and SH7 (largely covering the Plumstead part of the ward) would remain with the Erith and Thamesmead constituency. Polling districts KH1 and KH2 from Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward (covering the Hornfair area) would be included in the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, while polling districts KH3, KH4, KH5, and KH6 would remain in the Eltham-based constituency. It was argued that splitting the wards in this way would address residents' concerns about community ties, and would mean the constituency boundaries would align more closely – although not exactly – with the Borough of Greenwich's new ward boundaries.

216. Our 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 would be 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 would enable 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 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.
217. We received a counter proposal which supported our initial proposal for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, but provided a counter proposal for the remainder of the boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley. This counter proposal would retain Shooters Hill ward in an Eltham constituency, resulting in consequential changes to the Bexley constituencies: the two Welling wards would be included in different constituencies, and Chislehurst ward from the Borough of Bromley would be included as an orphan ward in a Sidcup and Chislehurst constituency. It noted the good road connections across the A20 road between the two areas, and their similar characters. Others opposed this view, considering the A20 to be a significant barrier, and separation of the two Welling wards, arguing that this proposal would break community ties in Welling. The counter proposal also transferred Slade Green & Northend ward from the Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency to the Erith and Thamesmead constituency; this was opposed by those who argued that the ward's ties are primarily south to Crayford rather than west to Erith.
218. Other counter proposals, similar to the above, sought to retain Shooters Hill ward in an Eltham constituency, but would then involve significant changes to the existing constituencies in the Greenwich and Woolwich areas and across the Borough of Bexley. Notably, these would adhere to the borough boundary between Greenwich and Bexley in the Thamesmead area (contrary to the existing constituency arrangement). This was opposed by those who considered that the boundary here is porous and

indistinct, and that the Thamesmead community includes parts of both boroughs.

219. Our initial proposals for the Eltham and Chislehurst constituency would combine the Eltham area of the Borough of Greenwich with the Chislehurst area of the Borough of Bromley. We received over 300 representations opposing this proposed constituency, with most respondents arguing that Eltham and Chislehurst are 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 the Borough of Greenwich, was referenced as a strong dividing line. Chislehurst residents said that they look to Bromley for social activities, shopping, community groups, and local services, so our initial proposals would break local ties between Chislehurst and Bromley.
220. There was considerable support (over 150 representations) for a counter proposal for a Chislehurst and Mottingham constituency, which was identical in configuration to another counter proposal's Chislehurst and Bromley Common constituency. The counter proposal would join the Chislehurst area with other wards in the Borough of Bromley and one ward – Coldharbour and New Eltham – from the Borough of Greenwich. Respondents argued that the borough boundary between Bromley and Greenwich is indistinct and the A20 road (and, to a lesser extent, the Dartford Loop Line railway that acts as the northern boundary to Coldharbour and New Eltham ward) represents the actual dividing line between communities. Respondents from Mottingham 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, a number of respondents argued that the counter proposal would divide the New Eltham community, which lies either side of the Dartford Loop Line, and thus either side of the proposed constituency boundary.
221. To accommodate their proposed Chislehurst and Mottingham / Chislehurst and Bromley Common constituency, the counter proposal included an Eltham and Blackheath constituency that would cross the borough boundary between Greenwich and Lewisham. It argued that there is a continuous urban area at the crossing point, and that the constituency would be connected internally by two railway lines. They also highlighted

that the Eltham constituency already contains a part of Blackheath, so their proposal would unite more of the Blackheath community (which spans Greenwich and Lewisham boroughs) in one constituency. As previously noted, there was opposition to this proposal from respondents in the Borough of Lewisham.

222. In the Borough of Bromley, we received strong opposition to our initial proposals regarding Petts Wood and Knoll ward, which would be transferred from the existing Orpington constituency to our proposed Bromley constituency. It was contended that our initial proposals would break community ties, since 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 above counter proposal in this area, which would keep Petts Wood and Knoll ward in the Orpington constituency, and split the neighbouring Cray Valley West ward between their proposed Orpington, and Chislehurst and Bromley Common constituencies. Some representations proposed 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. Alternatively, other counter proposals suggested splitting Darwin ward (situated further south in the Borough of Bromley) and transferring part of Darwin ward and the whole of Biggin Hill ward from the Orpington constituency to the Bromley constituency, so that Petts Wood and Knoll ward could remain in the Orpington constituency.

223. We received few comments regarding the rest of our proposed Bromley constituency, but there was some support for our proposed inclusion of Bickley ward, and Plaistow and Sundridge ward in our Bromley constituency, given the wards' proximity to and ties with Bromley town centre. Some concern was expressed over the inclusion of Hayes and Coney Hall ward in our Bromley constituency, which contended that the Coney Hall community looks to West Wickham – which was included in the Beckenham constituency in our initial proposals.

224. Our initially proposed Beckenham constituency, which would join together the Beckenham and Penge areas, was greeted with a mixed response. Some Penge residents outlined that they identify more closely with Lewisham or Crystal Palace / Upper Norwood in terms of culture,

socio-economic status, and outlook. Conversely, others argued that Penge and Beckenham make a natural fit, and share many local services and recreational amenities, such as Crystal Palace park and Beckenham Spa. Respondents noted that our initial proposals would unite all of Beckenham town centre in a single constituency (part of Beckenham town centre and high street lies in Clock House ward, which is currently in the Lewisham West and Penge constituency). Others also supported the proposed inclusion of Clock House ward in the Beckenham constituency. Some respondents pointed out that our initial proposals would reflect the pre-2010 Beckenham constituency. Many respondents argued that, if our initial proposals were to be adopted, Penge should be included in the constituency name, to recognise this sizeable and historic community. We also received some counter proposals which suggested constituencies linking parts of the boroughs of Bromley and Croydon in the Crystal Palace area.

225. As for central Bromley and Beckenham, we received a counter proposal for a Beckenham and Bromley Town constituency that would join Bromley Town ward with the Beckenham area to its west and include Bellingham ward from Lewisham. The proponent of this counter proposal considered that the Bromley Town ward, currently part of the Bromley and Chislehurst constituency, has links with the wards of Copers Cope, and Shortlands to its west. Respondents welcomed the proposed inclusion of Hayes and Coney Hall ward and West Wickham ward in the same constituency under this counter proposal. Others were highly critical of this counter proposal for the Borough of Bromley as a whole, as every constituency would include parts of other boroughs, two would include orphan wards, another would include a split ward, and Bromley town centre would be separated from nearby residential areas that look to it for shopping and local services.

Revised proposals

226. When considering whether to recommend any revisions to our initial proposals for the South East London sub-region, our Assistant Commissioners first noted the overwhelmingly positive response to our initial proposals for Bexley borough, and for the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency. They agreed with respondents from Greenwich and Woolwich that the counter proposals would break strong local ties across the Greenwich and Woolwich areas and, in some cases, result in significant disruption to other existing constituencies.

227. Regarding Shooters Hill ward, our Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the differing views put forward by residents of Plumstead and Shooters Hill. They recognised that dividing the Shooters Hill ward along the new ward boundaries, as some respondents had suggested, would make sense in terms of community ties. They also acknowledged the representations from Hornfair residents and appreciated that they would gravitate more naturally towards Charlton and Greenwich than towards Eltham. Our Assistant Commissioners carefully considered the counter proposal to divide both Shooters Hill and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards using existing polling districts. They observed that it was also possible to include the Shooters Hill part of Shooters Hill ward in the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, rather than the Eltham-based constituency, noting that residents of Shooters Hill had cited ties with Woolwich as well as with Eltham. The Assistant Commissioners however ultimately considered that splitting these wards – whether using existing or new boundaries – would present very isolated benefits and therefore would not meet our criteria to justify ward splitting. They further considered that splitting Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward would represent a greater change to existing constituency boundaries, since the whole ward is currently part of the Eltham constituency.

228. The Assistant Commissioners also assessed those counter proposals that would keep the whole of Shooters Hill ward in an Eltham-based constituency, as in the existing arrangement. They noted the counter proposal keeping the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency the same as in our initial proposals, but they considered that the resultant changes to the Bexley constituencies would break a number of local ties in the Borough of Bexley. They considered that other counter proposals would result in even more disruption to existing constituencies and local ties in the Borough of Bexley, as well as significant disruption to the existing Greenwich and Woolwich constituency. They agreed that, despite its being divided by a borough boundary, the community of Thamesmead should remain united in an Erith and Thamesmead constituency. The Assistant Commissioners observed that other counter proposals divided the Woolwich community, splitting at least one ward in Woolwich, and caused knock-on disruption elsewhere in South London.

229. On balance, our Assistant Commissioners were minded to recommend maintaining our initial proposals for the four constituencies of Bexleyheath

and Crayford, Erith and Thamesmead, Greenwich and Woolwich, and Sidcup and Welling. While acknowledging that the Shooters Hill community would potentially be better placed in a constituency with Eltham (or Woolwich) rather than with Erith and Thamesmead, they considered that our proposal to include Shooters Hill ward in the Erith and Thamesmead constituency would at least unite the Plumstead area – a move which had been well supported in representations.

230. Before settling their recommendations for the Borough of Bexley and the north of the Borough of Greenwich, however, our Assistant Commissioners considered the strong opposition to our initial proposals for the Eltham and Chislehurst constituency. They recognised the merits of counter proposals in joining the Chislehurst community with other parts of Bromley, and including the Eltham area in a separate constituency to Chislehurst, but noted that some of the main arguments put forward in support of this counter proposal also applied to our initial proposals. For example, many respondents supported one counter proposal on the grounds that it would unite the Mottingham community, which spans the Greenwich-Bromley boundary. Our Assistant Commissioners observed that our initial proposals would unite the Mottingham community in the same way. We had also received many representations from residents of the streets south of the A20 in the southeastern part of Coldharbour and New Eltham ward (such as Brownspring Drive and Domonic Drive), supporting the counter proposal on the basis that they look to Chislehurst rather than Eltham for their local services; our Assistant Commissioners noted that our initial proposals would again address these residents' views, by joining Coldharbour and New Eltham ward with both Chislehurst ward and Mottingham and Chislehurst North ward.
231. Understanding that the A20 is considered a hard boundary by many respondents living in the area, our Assistant Commissioners noted that the A20 does not align with the boundary of Coldharbour and New Eltham ward, but runs through the ward, with the Dartford Loop Line representing the actual ward boundary. No counter proposals had suggested splitting Coldharbour and New Eltham ward to reflect the A20 as a hard geographic barrier. However, recognising that the community of New Eltham spans the railway line in the eastern parts of Coldharbour and New Eltham ward and Eltham South ward, our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by those representations expressing concern that counter proposals would divide the New Eltham community and break local ties in this area.

232. Furthermore, our Assistant Commissioners noted that the counter proposal would pair the core Eltham wards with three wards in Lewisham borough, and in light of the representations received from Lewisham, they considered that this approach would break local ties in the Lee Green and Hither Green areas and cause significant disruption to the existing constituency arrangement in Lewisham and Southwark. While accepting the argument that their proposed Eltham and Blackheath constituency would unite more of the Blackheath community in the same constituency, our Assistant Commissioners observed that Blackheath Westcombe ward would still remain in the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, and therefore the commercial centre of Blackheath and a significant portion of the surrounding residential area would still be divided across different constituencies. They therefore considered that the counter proposal arrangement would not represent a significant improvement upon our initial proposals for this area.
233. When assessing counter proposals for the Borough of Bromley, the Assistant Commissioners noted that other counter proposals would not traverse either the Bromley-Greenwich or the Bromley-Bexley borough boundary. These proposed a Bromley and Chislehurst constituency that would be wholly within the Borough of Bromley and similar to the existing Bromley and Chislehurst constituency. Others would both join parts of the boroughs of Bromley and Bexley in their proposed Orpington and Sidcup constituency, but also proposed a Bromley and Chislehurst constituency that would be wholly within the Borough of Bromley. Our Assistant Commissioners considered, however, that all these counter proposals would cause significant consequential disruption elsewhere. They saw merit in a suggested Orpington constituency, in that it would retain Petts Wood and Knoll ward, and also acknowledged the advantages of the proposed Beckenham and Bromley Town constituency in terms of keeping Hayes and Coney Hall ward and West Wickham ward together. Our Assistant Commissioners were, however, concerned by the proposed separation of Bromley Town ward from its surrounding wards of Bickley, and Plaistow and Sundridge – and also Bromley Common and Keston – since these wards would all have close ties to Bromley town centre.
234. In assessing the representations in response to our initial proposals for the three constituencies contained wholly within the Borough of Bromley, our Assistant Commissioners 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 identify alternative patterns of constituencies that would enable Petts Wood and Knoll ward to remain in the Orpington constituency. Their investigations indicated that this would not be possible without splitting at least one ward in the borough. A potential solution involved splitting Farnborough and Crofton ward (currently in the Orpington constituency) between the Orpington and Bromley constituencies, and splitting Shortlands ward (currently in the Beckenham constituency) between the Bromley and Beckenham constituencies – allowing Petts Wood and Knoll ward 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, they visited the area.

235. Having visited the area they considered that a split of the Darwin ward would enable the formulation of the pattern of constituencies that best reflected the statutory factors.. Their investigations confirmed that it was possible to avoid splitting both Shortlands ward and Petts Wood and Knoll ward by splitting only Darwin ward instead: this would involve transferring the DA1 polling district, and the whole of Biggin Hill ward, from the Orpington to the Bromley constituency. Since Darwin ward encompasses a largely rural area, the Assistant Commissioners considered that the split would be unlikely to divide an individual community, as was more likely in the built-up area. 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. Due to the shape of Biggin Hill ward, however, the Assistant Commissioners noted that transferring the ward to the Bromley constituency would divide part of the Biggin Hill community in the southeast of the town. A solution was identified in the Borough of Bromley’s new ward boundaries, since the new Biggin Hill ward unites 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, as would those parts of polling districts DA5 and DA7 that lie in the new Biggin Hill ward. The remainder of Darwin ward would be included in the Orpington constituency. They considered that this solution had merit in that it would require only one ward to be split (under both the existing and new boundaries), rather than two wards in other

potential solutions, and would enable the whole of Petts Wood and Knoll ward to remain in the Orpington constituency.

236. In light of their site visits and their analysis of representations and counter proposals across the South East London sub-region, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we adopt an amended version of our initial proposals for the Bromley and Orpington constituencies as outlined above – which would keep Petts Wood and Knoll ward in the Orpington constituency, and transfer Biggin Hill ward and part of Darwin ward to the Bromley constituency in alignment with the new ward boundary surrounding Biggin Hill. They also recommended that we should maintain our initial proposals for the Beckenham constituency, noting the support for the uniting of Beckenham town centre, but that we should change the name to Beckenham and Penge in recognition of the significant Penge community.

237. Regarding the boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley, our Assistant Commissioners recommended no changes to our 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 of Old Bexley and Sidcup. They were persuaded by evidence of the historical significance of the Old Bexley name and noted that our proposed constituency was relatively unchanged from the existing constituency. Finally, our Assistant Commissioners did not recommend any changes to our initially proposed Eltham and Chislehurst constituency. They acknowledged the strong opposition to the joining of the Eltham and Chislehurst communities in a constituency, but they considered that any practicable alternatives would result in significant consequential disruption to other existing constituencies and the breaking of community ties elsewhere. We agreed with the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners

Consultation on the revised proposals

238. We continued to receive support for our proposed Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, and opposition from the Plumstead and Shooters Hill areas for the same reasons as described earlier. We received a counter proposal to split the Glyndon ward along the new ward boundaries for the Borough of Greenwich so that what was considered by some residents to be the Woolwich part of that ward could be included in the

Greenwich and Woolwich constituency. We also received a small number of suggestions that our proposed Erith and Thamesmead constituency should instead be named either Plumstead and Erith, or Thamesmead and Plumstead.

239. We received few responses to our proposed Bexleyheath and Crayford, and Old Bexley and Sidcup constituencies, other than suggestions to also add Welling to the latter and name it Old Bexley, Sidcup and Welling. We did receive a counter proposal to split the Borough of Bexley wards of West Heath, and St Mary's & St. James, in order to avoid including the Shooters Hill ward from the Borough of Greenwich in the Erith and Thamesmead constituency. We continued to receive opposition to our proposed Eltham and Chislehurst constituency due to the perceived lack of ties between these areas across the local authority boundary between the boroughs of Bexley and Bromley, but no new counter proposals to address this were received.
240. Our proposed Bromley and Biggin Hill constituency generated responses with both a little support, but mostly opposition. Some Bromley residents considered that they had little connection with Biggin Hill, and some Biggin Hill residents considered their town to have a similar character to Orpington, but that if their postcode were to change from TN to BR, they would welcome being included in a Bromley and Biggin Hill constituency. Some supported our Assistant Commissioners' previously rejected consideration to split the Petts Wood and Knoll, and Shortlands wards between alternative Bromley and Orpington constituencies, as some respondents considered this would maintain an urban Bromley constituency and a more rural Orpington constituency. Some residents of the Orpington constituency concerned about noise from London Biggin Hill Airport supported including Biggin Hill in the Orpington constituency so that both it and they were in a single constituency, allowing for a single Member of Parliament who could deal with the issue on their behalf.
241. We received few comments regarding our proposed Beckenham and Penge constituency other than regarding its name. Some were concerned that when abbreviated it might be confused with the initials of a political party, and suggested that it might alternatively be named Penge and Beckenham, or Beckenham.

Final recommendations

242. We have considered again the suggestion to use new local authority ward boundaries across the Borough of Greenwich and concluded that we are able to recommend a configuration which meets the statutory factors without splitting local authority wards as they existed on 1 December 2020. Little new or compelling evidence has been received to justify amending further either the Greenwich and Woolwich, or Erith and Thamesmead constituencies
243. We considered that the otherwise unsupported counter proposal to split wards in the Borough of Bexley had little merit, as it appeared to us to consider only the transfer of electors between constituencies, and not the other statutory factors. Little other evidence regarding the configuration of the Bexleyheath and Crayford, and Old Bexley and Sidcup constituencies was received. We considered that it would be inappropriate to add Welling to the name of the Old Bexley and Sidcup constituency, as the configuration is close to that of the existing constituency.
244. We noted the continuing opposition to our proposed Eltham and Chislehurst constituency, but our investigations found that the counter proposals were all more disruptive to the pattern of constituencies than our revised proposals, and would divide the Motttingham community, which is currently divided across the local authority boundary between the boroughs of Greenwich and Bromley.
245. We considered that responses to our proposed Bromley and Biggin Hill, and Orpington constituencies had received competing evidence during the consultation periods.. We noted that including the Petts Wood and Knoll ward in a Bromley constituency was opposed at the first two consultation stages for breaking that ward's ties with the centre of Orpington, but a split of that same ward, and of the Shortlands ward, is supported by those who oppose our revised proposal for the Bromley and Biggin Hill constituency. Those who opposed our revised proposals made no mention of ties being broken between Biggin Hill and Orpington, asserting instead that they were of a similar character. We noted that Biggin Hill's road links are more directly with Bromley than with Orpington, using the A233, and that public transport routes connected Bromley and Biggin Hill. The counter proposal to divide the Shortlands, and Petts Wood and Knoll wards would do so using polling district boundaries, and not the new local authority ward boundaries for which an Order was made on 1 April 2021. This contrasts

with our proposed split of the Darwin ward, which does make use of the new ward boundaries. On the balance of the evidence provided, we consider our Bromley and Biggin Hill constituency and Orpington constituency to be an appropriate configuration when considering the statutory factors and our own guidance.

246. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Beckenham and Penge, Bexleyheath and Crayford, Bromley and Biggin Hill, Eltham and Chislehurst, Erith and Thamesmead, Greenwich and Woolwich, Old Bexley and Sidcup, and Orpington. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the North East region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the North East region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 678 responses specific to the North East region in this phase, giving a total of 3,065 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: Three of the four qualifying political parties in England supported or accepted the boundaries and names set out in the revised proposals report in their entirety. The Green Party proposed a split of the Longhorsley ward between the Berwick and Morpeth, and Hexham constituencies in Northumberland. Of the handful of responses from individuals that addressed the region as a whole, actual changes to the revised proposals that these sought were limited to relatively small scale areas apart from some suggestions to revert to something more like our initial proposals for the North of Tyne sub-region, or the earlier Labour counter proposal.

North of Tyne Combined Authority: The division of the City of Newcastle between five constituencies, with only one wholly within the city boundary was heavily opposed, particularly at Callerton and Throckley, although this did get some small support also. The Green Party proposal to divide Longhorsley ward was supported.

North East Combined Authority: Splitting Gateshead into four constituencies, with only one wholly within the borough, was strongly opposed, but this was necessary in

order to minimise disruption to the City of Durham and Sunderland, which was supported. Opposition to the division of North West Durham is linked with this, across our proposed Blaydon and Consett constituency.

Tees Valley Combined Authority: No new issues raised, although a cross-region solution to keep one of the Darlington villages with the rest of Darlington, and to not divide Thornaby was provided.

North East

1. The North East region currently has 29 constituencies. Of these, six are within the permitted electorate range, 21 constituencies currently fall below the permitted range and the electorates of just two constituencies are above. The North East region comprises 1,952,999 electors, giving it a mathematical entitlement to 26.61 constituencies. Our initial proposals for the North East region are for 27 constituencies, a reduction of two.
2. The North East region comprises the unitary authorities of County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, and Sunderland.
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for the North East — Tim Foy OBE and Simon Barnes — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Newcastle: 28–29 March 2022
 - Middlesbrough: 31 March – 1 April 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the North East of 1,952,999 results in it being entitled to 27 constituencies, a reduction of two. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
5. We noted that the electorate of the North of Tyne Combined Authority of just under 597,000, comprised of the unitary authorities of Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland, results in a mathematical entitlement of 8.13 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate the

North of Tyne Combined Authority eight constituencies, and treated it as a stand-alone sub-region. Similarly, we noted that the Tees Valley Combined Authority, made up of the unitary authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees, has an electorate of just under 495,000, which results in an entitlement of 6.74 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate seven constituencies to Tees Valley, and treat it as a stand-alone sub-region also.

6. The electorate of the Borough of Gateshead is a little under 145,000, which results in the area being mathematically entitled to 1.97 constituencies. In formulating our initial proposals, we decided to allocate Gateshead two constituencies and we again decided to treat it as a sub-region.
7. County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland, form part of the North East Combined Authority (the Borough of Gateshead also forms part of the combined authority). Together, County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland has electorate of just under 717,000, resulting in a mathematical entitlement of 9.77 constituencies. We therefore proposed allocating ten constituencies to the sub-region without crossing out of the North East Combined Authority.
8. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. We also received objections to the split of sub-regions with an alternative arrangement suggested as a North East Combined Authority sub-region which comprised the areas of County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland, due to the disruptive impact of proposing Gateshead as a separate sub-region. Respondents considered our initially proposed sub-regions did not allow for a pattern of constituencies that best reflected the statutory criteria, particularly in the areas of County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland.
9. In formulating our revised proposals, we were persuaded by the evidence received to adopt an alternative sub-region combining County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. We considered that this sub-region allowed for improvements to the initial proposals in respect of the statutory factors, notably the improved configurations across the City of Durham, Jarrow, and the district of Sunderland. This is discussed further in the North East sub-region section later in this report.

10. In response to our revised proposals, we received support for our modified sub-regions, however, we did also receive opposition to our revised pattern, particularly in regards to its impact on the pattern of constituencies in the Borough of Gateshead. We also received a counter proposal that proposed combining parts of Tees Valley with the Yorkshire and the Humber region. We are not persuaded by the evidence for either of these alternatives. Firstly, in regards to our North East sub-region we received support for a number of constituencies in this sub-region, particularly that our revised pattern better reflected community ties. In regards to the cross-region proposal, our investigations suggested crossing the regional boundary in North Yorkshire did not create a pattern of constituencies that better reflected the statutory factors in either the North East or Yorkshire and the Humber regions. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:

- North of Tyne (including Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, and Northumberland);
- North East (including County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland); and
- Tees Valley (including Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees).

North of Tyne

Initial proposals

11. Of the nine existing constituencies in North of Tyne, none were within the permitted electorate range. The existing constituencies of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth Valley, Hexham, Newcastle upon Tyne Central, Newcastle upon Tyne East, Newcastle upon Tyne North, and Wansbeck all fell below the permitted electorate range. The existing constituencies of North Tyneside and Tynemouth were both above the permitted electorate range.
12. In our initial proposals, we proposed that the existing Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency was expanded southwards to include the town of Morpeth and the Pegswood ward. As a result of the configuration of the

constituency, we proposed it be named Berwick and Morpeth. We proposed a Blyth and Ashington constituency, that included both towns and also the areas of Bedlington, Choppington and Newbiggin. We proposed a Hexham constituency that was expanded to include the Callerton and Throckley ward from the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, and the Longhorsley ward from the Unitary Authority of Northumberland.

13. We also proposed changes to the existing constituencies in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. In our initial proposals we proposed a Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency that was expanded to include the ward of Arthur's Hill, and all of the Monument, and Dene & South Gosforth wards, which are currently divided between constituencies. Our proposed Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency was reconfigured to the east to include the Killingworth area of the Borough of North Tyneside and no longer included the Callerton and Throckley ward. We proposed a Newcastle upon Tyne West constituency that was comprised of 10 City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards. To the east of the City, we proposed a reconfigured Tynemouth constituency which was comprised of 10 Borough of North Tyneside wards, including the areas of Tynemouth in the east and Wallsend in the east. Our final proposal for the sub-region was a Whitley Bay and Cramlington constituency, that was comprised of five Borough of North Tyneside wards and nine Unitary Authority of Northumberland wards.

Consultation on the initial proposals

14. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed composition of constituencies across North of Tyne was both supported and opposed.
15. The boundary between our proposed Berwick and Morpeth, and Hexham constituencies was largely opposed in the Longhorsley ward, with counter proposals suggesting that the ward should be included in full or in part in the Berwick and Morpeth constituency. Respondents cited the close geographic proximity of the village of West Thirston in Longhorsley to the village of Felton in Shilbottle ward to the north. Some respondents also expressed concern at the exclusion of Alnwick from the name of the constituency. Those who made this argument noted that Alnwick is the county town for Northumberland and that it should be included in the constituency name. We also received other alternatives for the name of the constituency, including the proposal to name it North Northumberland.

16. Our proposed Blyth and Ashington constituency was largely supported for keeping the coastal communities together. However, we received a small amount of opposition to the configuration of this constituency, which sought to include the areas of Bedlington and Choppington in a counter proposal for the Hexham constituency.
17. The core of our proposed Hexham constituency was supported, but the inclusion of the wards of Longhorsley, and Callerton and Throckley were largely opposed, with a number of counter proposals provided in order to resolve these two issues. Those who opposed the inclusion of the Callerton and Throckley ward in the Hexham constituency indicated that the ward had community ties to the City of Newcastle and identified that the ward included places associated with the City, such as the airport. However, we also received some support for the inclusion of the Callerton and Throckley ward in the Hexham constituency with respondents citing community ties with Heddon-on-the-Wall.
18. The five proposed constituencies which included wards from the City of Newcastle upon Tyne and Borough of North Tyneside were largely opposed because of the perceived breaking of community ties and the crossing of borough boundaries. We received opposition to our proposed Whitley Bay and Cramlington constituency, with respondents outlining that Whitley Bay had shared community ties southwards along the coast to Tynemouth, rather than northwards towards Cramlington. We received some support for our proposed Newcastle upon Tyne East and Tynemouth constituencies.

Revised proposals

19. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence received and they were not persuaded to recommend to us changes to the boundaries of the proposed constituencies of Berwick and Morpeth, Blyth and Ashington, and Hexham. They noted the opposition to the inclusion of the Longhorsley ward in the proposed Hexham constituency but they were not persuaded by the counter proposals to include the ward in the Hexham constituency, including those that proposed splitting the ward between the Berwick and Morpeth and Hexham constituencies.

20. Further south in the sub-region they were persuaded to propose changes to the initial proposed pattern of constituencies. They considered that evidence had been received to suggest that the initial proposals broke community ties. Having investigated the counter proposals received from respondents they were not completely satisfied that these would resolve all the issues. They had particular concern that the counter proposals that better reflect community ties in the City of Newcastle, were at the detriment of breaking community ties in the areas of Bedlington and Choppington. They therefore investigated their own counter proposals which sought to reflect the community identity evidence received. In doing so, they considered that providing the best balance between the statutory factors could be achieved by splitting a number of wards between constituencies. They proposed dividing the Castle ward between a reconfigured Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency and a Cramlington and Killingworth constituency. This allowed Brunswick Village, and Hazelrigg, both of which are divided between the boroughs of Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside to not be divided. They proposed for Whitley Bay to be included in a modified Tynemouth constituency, which they considered reflected the community identity evidence received and better reflected the configuration of the existing constituency. They proposed that the Riverside ward be divided at the significant boundary that is the A19 between the constituencies of Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend, and Tynemouth. Finally, they proposed that the Kingston Park South & Newbiggin Hall ward be divided at the A696 between Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West, and Newcastle upon Tyne North.
21. Having considered the evidence we agreed with their proposal. We considered the alternative configuration of constituencies they proposed better reflected community ties and in some cases more closely resembled the existing pattern of constituencies.

Consultation on the revised proposals

22. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we continued to receive opposition to the inclusion of the Longhorsley ward in the Hexham constituency rather than the Berwick and Morpeth constituency. We again received representations on the name of the Berwick and Morpeth constituency, with respondents suggesting that the name for this constituency should either include Alnwick or be changed to North

Northumberland. We received evidence that the village and civil parish of Longhorsley lies on the road between Pegswood and Shilbottle wards, both of which are proposed to remain with the Berwick and Morpeth constituency. We received further evidence that West Thirston, part of the Thirston civil parish, forms a single community with Felton, joined by two bridges across the River Coquet, and shares a church, school, community groups and shops.

23. We considered several counter proposals, one which would have required us to allocate the Bedlington and Choppington areas to Hexham, which we had already considered and rejected as a possible solution to the orphan ward of Callerton and Throckley being transferred from a Newcastle upon Tyne constituency into Hexham. Another would have split the Castle ward between Hexham, and Newcastle upon Tyne North, dividing both Brunswick Village and Hazelrigg. We considered swapping the entire Longhorsley ward for Rothbury between the Berwick and Morpeth, and Hexham constituencies but found that, as the bulk of the population of Rothbury lies in the eastern side of that ward, and is separated from the Hexham constituency by the Northumberland National Park, this was not sufficiently compliant with the statutory factors. A further counter proposal to include two polling districts from Longhorsley ward in Berwick and Morpeth, B38LON and B44THI, the civil parishes of Longhorsley, and Thirston, would allow us to retain the rest of the revised proposals. This counter proposal also suggested including W17HEP and W18MIT, the civil parishes of Hepscoth and Mitford, but these areas did not generate sufficient representations to warrant any change here.
24. We received a small amount of opposition to the Blyth and Ashington proposal, from those concerned about the breaking of ties between Blyth and the Cramlington and Lynemouth areas. However, we again received support for this proposed constituency.
25. Our revised proposal for Cramlington and Killingworth was opposed due to the crossing of the boundary between the Unitary Authority of Northumberland and Borough of North Tyneside, and the consequent breaking of community ties across the existing Blyth Valley constituency. However, no counter proposal was received during the consultation on the revised proposals that suggested an alternative configuration of the constituency.

26. We continued to receive some opposition to the inclusion of the Callerton and Throckley ward in the Hexham constituency, with respondents considered this broke community ties with Newcastle upon Tyne, and the crossing of the local authority boundary, but the counter proposals to resolve this caused the breaking of community ties between Beldington and Choppington, and Blyth and Ashington.
27. We received further opposition to our revised proposals across the City of Newcastle upon Tyne and Borough of North Tyneside, with the main issue being the crossing of local authority boundaries. Those who sought to formulate a different pattern of constituencies in this part of the sub-region generally submitted counter proposals identical to those received during earlier consultations. These included linking Whitley Bay and Cramlington to form a constituency, or including the areas of Bedlington and Choppington in the Hexham constituency.

Final recommendations

28. Having considered the evidence received, we are persuaded to amend the boundaries of two of our proposed constituencies in North of Tyne, and one of the constituency names.
29. We have reflected on the evidence received in regards to Longhorsley and the arguments submitted that our revised proposals divide community ties in this area. We have again considered the counter proposals received and are not persuaded to adopt the configurations that transfer whole wards as we consider doing so breaks community ties and also does not reflect the geography of the area, particularly that of Northumberland National Park. Therefore, we consider that only way to reflect community ties, while avoiding significant changes to the proposed pattern of constituencies in the sub-region is to divide the Longhorsley ward between constituencies. We propose that polling districts B38LON and B44THI be included in the Berwick and Morpeth constituency, with the remainder of the ward being included in the Hexham constituency. Furthermore, we have decided to rename the Berwick and Morpeth constituency, North Northumberland. We consider this name better reflects the geographic area of the constituency.
30. We are not persuaded to modify our revised proposals in the remainder of the sub-region. We consider that counter proposals submitted would not better reflect the statutory factors.. Our final recommendations in this

sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Blyth and Ashington, Cramlington and Killingworth, Hexham, Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West, Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend, Newcastle upon Tyne North, North Northumberland, and Tynemouth. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

North East

Initial proposals

31. Our initially proposed Gateshead sub-region was based on the boundaries of the Borough and contained two existing constituencies, Blaydon and Gateshead. Both have electorates below the permitted range, and at present two of the Borough wards, Pelaw and Heworth and Wardley and Leam Lane, are included in the Jarrow constituency. Jarrow is discussed below. We proposed expanding both of the Blaydon and Gateshead constituencies slightly eastwards, resulting in the sub-region being co-terminous with the Borough of Gateshead.
32. This sub-region contained nine existing constituencies, and most of the Jarrow and Sedgefield constituencies. Of the existing constituencies, City of Durham, North West Durham and Sunderland Central are all within the permitted electorate range. Bishop Auckland, Easington, Houghton and Sunderland South, Jarrow, North Durham, Sedgefield, South Shields, and Washington and Sunderland West are all below the range.
33. When formulating our initial proposals we retained the Sunderland Central constituency unchanged. However, we proposed modifications to all the other constituencies in the sub-region. Our proposed South Shields constituency was similar to the existing though now also included the Borough of South Tyneside ward of Cleadon and East Boldon. We proposed that the remaining wards in the Borough of South Tyneside, including the town of Jarrow, be included in a Jarrow and Sunderland West constituency. This constituency included three wards from the City of Sunderland. We proposed a Washington and Sunderland West constituency, which was comprised of only City of Sunderland wards, including the five wards covering the town of Washington.

34. Our proposed North Durham constituency was again similar to the existing, though now also included the Burnopfield and Dipton ward. We proposed a North West Durham constituency that had been modified to reflect new local government ward boundaries. We proposed similar modifications to the existing Bishop Auckland constituency but proposed it include the Brandon ward and no longer the Shildon and Dene Valley ward, which we proposed be included in a Newton Aycliffe and Sedgfield constituency. Our proposed Seaham and Peterlee constituency was comprised of 12 County of Durham wards and the City of Sunderland ward of Doxford. We proposed a City of Durham constituency which included six County of Durham wards, including those covering the City of Durham and three City of Sunderland wards, Copt Hill, Hetton, and Houghton. We noted that in formulating our initial proposals that the City of Sunderland had been divided between five constituencies.

Consultation on the initial proposals

35. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received significant support for both our proposed Blaydon and Gateshead constituencies. Opposition was also received, which focused on the knock-on effect across the County Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland sub-region, caused by our use of a Gateshead sub-region.
36. Our proposed Bishop Auckland and North West Durham constituencies were largely opposed because of the separation of Crook and Tow Law from Willington, which together form the Three Towns Area Action Partnership. One counter proposal received to resolve this did so by creating a detached part of the Bishop Auckland constituency, only accessible through neighbouring constituencies. Another relied on the retention of our Gateshead sub-region.
37. Our proposed City of Durham constituency was opposed, both in its extension to the east to include wards from Sunderland where representations detailed the lack of any existing links, and the exclusion of County Durham wards to the south and west, which representations told us share community ties with the city.
38. Including City of Sunderland wards to create a Jarrow and Sunderland West constituency was opposed by many who saw no connection between these two areas. We also received opposition to our proposed Washington

and Sunderland South constituency with respondents concerned that it broke community ties.. Our proposal to retain the existing Sunderland Central constituency unchanged was widely supported. Similarly, our proposed South Shields constituency was largely supported.

39. The proposed Newton Aycliffe and Sedgefield constituency was opposed. Many respondents commented on the Coxhoe ward, outlining that due to its proximity it had links with the City of Durham and rather than any similar links to Sedgefield to the south.
40. We received few comments on our North Durham proposal, perhaps due to the limited change suggested here, the addition of the single ward of Burnopfield and Dipton.
41. Our initial proposal for Seaham and Peterlee was largely opposed, due to the inclusion of Doxford, an orphan ward from City of Sunderland, in a constituency which is otherwise made up of County Durham wards. Representations outlined that the Doxford ward looks to the City of Sunderland, with which it shared community ties. Some representations also commented on the proposed name of the Seaham and Peterlee constituency, outlining that given its similarity to the existing Easington constituency, that it should retain that name.

Revised proposals

42. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for the North East sub-region.
43. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the initial proposals for five constituencies including wards from the City of Sunderland were disruptive to local ties across all except the Sunderland Central constituency. They compared these to the support received for the Blaydon and Gateshead constituencies, and counter proposals to instead divide the Borough of Gateshead between four constituencies and the City of Sunderland between three. Broadly speaking, the choice was to either disrupt Sunderland and Durham, or Gateshead. They concluded that dividing Gateshead in this way would help to reduce the breaking of community ties across Durham, Jarrow, Sunderland and Washington. They investigated a number of counter proposals received and considered that the statutory

factors in the sub-region could best be reflected by splitting a single ward - Trimdon and Thornley - between constituencies.

44. They therefore recommended: a Blaydon and Consett constituency, which would pair the two towns across the Borough of Gateshead with County Durham; a Gateshead and Whickham constituency, to include three wards around the Whickham area; a Jarrow constituency to include four Borough of Gateshead wards and seven Borough of South Tyneside wards; a South Shields constituency as initially proposed; and a Washington constituency that was comprised of seven City of Sunderland wards and two Gateshead wards, Birtley and Lamesley.
45. Our Assistant Commissioners proposed to retain a Houghton and Sunderland South constituency unchanged from the existing, other than to additionally include the City of Sunderland St Anne's ward. They recommended no change to the Sunderland Central constituency as initially proposed, particularly given this had been largely supported during the consultation.
46. They recommended: a Bishop Auckland constituency that extended further north than the existing to include the County of Durham wards of Crook, Tow Law and Weardale. They proposed a City of Durham constituency similar to the existing, entirely within the County of Durham boundary and reflected the community ties of the Coxhoe ward. They proposed; an Easington constituency extended slightly to its west including part of of the Trimdon and Thornley ward; a Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor constituency including a split of the Trimdon and Thornley ward with the Easington constituency which allowed for the unification of Spennymoor in a single constituency; and a North Durham constituency that was similar to the existing though now also included the Lanchester ward. agreed with their recommendations. We recognised that while this pattern divided the Borough of Gateshead between four constituencies, we considered it resulted in a pattern of constituencies that were most closely aligned with the existing configuration and better reflected the community ties evidence received.

Consultation on the revised proposals

47. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received a mixture of support and opposition to our pattern of constituencies.

48. Our proposals across the Borough of Gateshead were largely opposed. Our proposed Blaydon and Consett constituency was opposed because of the crossing of local authority boundaries, the lack of links between the two areas, and the inclusion of the Castleside area in our proposed North Durham constituency in spite of its close proximity and links with Consett. Our Gateshead proposal was largely opposed because of its dividing of the town of Gateshead, although there was a small amount of support. Our proposed Jarrow constituency was opposed due to the inclusion of four Gateshead wards with which residents on opposite sides of the borough boundary felt no affinity.
49. Our proposed South Shields constituency was largely supported, although some respondents considered the configuration divided East and West Boldon between constituencies. Washington constituency received some opposition due to its crossing of local authority boundaries. Some respondents also had concerns that the constituency crossed the A1 road however, during earlier consultation stages we received evidence of historic community ties crossing the A1. As under our revised proposals the Borough of Gateshead had been divided between four constituencies, we received some opposition to only one of the proposed constituencies including Gateshead in the name, and to Washington not including the name of any part of the proposed configuration, such as Birtley, Gateshead, or Sunderland, which were all suggested to be included.
50. Our Houghton and Sunderland South, and Sunderland Central constituencies were largely supported, with the addition of the St Anne's ward to Houghton and Sunderland South noted as a suitable addition.
51. We received some opposition to our Bishop Auckland proposal which was twofold: the division of the well-liked existing North West Durham constituency into four constituencies and the consequent breaking of community ties; and the separation of the wards of Crook and Tow Law from Willington in the previously mentioned Three Towns Area Action Partnership. There were a small number of calls for the constituency name to be changed to include South and/or West Durham or Weardale, but without any consensus as to what that name should be. Our proposed City of Durham constituency was largely supported, particularly the central core of the constituency, but was both supported and opposed with the addition of the rural wards of Deerness, Esh and Witton Gilbert, and Willington and

Hunwick to the west, and opposed because of the inclusion of Coxhoe ward in the Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor constituency. Our Easington constituency was largely supported, apart from a small number of suggestions for it to be renamed East Durham. There was some opposition to the addition of the Lanchester ward in the North Durham constituency, which was otherwise supported.

Final recommendations

52. We noted the representations regarding whether we should revert to our initial proposals for the Blaydon and Gateshead constituencies. We consider that the disruption in the initial proposals to community ties across the boroughs of South Tyneside and Sunderland, and to the City of Durham, is greater than that to the boroughs of County Durham and Gateshead in our revised proposals. We note that we also received representations supporting our revised pattern of constituencies, with respondents outlining how they better reflected community ties. Having considered the evidence received, we are not recommending any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for the North East sub-region. We are persuaded to change the names of three constituencies including parts of the Borough of Gateshead, to make them more representative of their areas. These are Gateshead Central and Whickham, Jarrow and Gateshead East, and Washington and Gateshead South.
53. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Bishop Auckland, Blaydon and Consett, City of Durham, Easington, Gateshead Central and Whickham, Houghton and Sunderland South, Jarrow and Gateshead East, Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor, North Durham, South Shields, Sunderland Central, and Washington and Gateshead South. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Tees Valley

Initial proposals

54. 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. The remaining four all are below the range. The Tees Valley Combined

Authority has an electorate of a little under 495,000, giving a mathematical entitlement to 6.74 constituencies. Under the initial proposals the number of constituencies in this sub-region would remain at seven. In the initial proposals, we proposed changes to all of the existing constituencies in this area apart from Hartlepool, which we retain unchanged..

55. We added a single ward, Heighington and Coniscliffe, to create our proposed Darlington constituency. The boroughs of Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland have new local government ward boundaries and, although two of the three constituencies have electorates within the permitted range, all three had to be changed in order to reflect that. In addition to the required ward boundary changes, we included two Thornaby wards to our proposed Middlesbrough constituency in order to avoid crossing the River Tees, Marske-by-the-Sea to Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, and Ladgate and Marston East to Redcar and Eston. We included Parkfield and Oxbridge ward in our proposed Stockton North constituency, and included Western Parishes ward in our proposed Stockton West which also included the Borough of Darlington wards of Hurworth, and Sadberge & Middleton St George.

Consultation on the initial proposals

56. The inclusion of the wards of Hurworth, and Sadberge & Middleton St George in a Stockton West constituency was opposed by residents in both wards, as they feel that they are part of Darlington and all their links, both economic and social, lie with that town. Our retention of the existing Hartlepool constituency was widely supported.
57. The addition of two of the three Thornaby wards to a Middlesbrough constituency was strongly opposed as residents told us their links are with Stockton rather than Middlesbrough, and that it should remain in a single constituency, but no counter proposals to achieve this were received. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the only way to achieve this would be to have a constituency to include most of Middlesbrough, and part of Stockton, crossing the more significant boundary of the River Tees. We did receive a small number of representations that considered Thronaby should be reflected in the constituency name. We received counter proposals for Middlesbrough, Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, and Redcar and Eston which sought to more closely align to the existing

constituencies and rename Redcar and Eston to its existing name of Redcar to reflect that greater similarity.

58. The proposed constituencies of Stockton North and Stockton West were opposed as noted above, but also supported in regards to the wards moving between the two existing Stockton constituencies.

Revised proposals

59. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that while the initial proposals were opposed across most of the sub-region, few practical solutions existed within the sub-region and region boundaries, which had been widely supported and respected the physical geography of the area. Our Assistant Commissioners investigated adding the Hurworth ward to the Darlington constituency and noted that this would require including the Heighington and Coniscliffe ward from the west of the Borough of Darlington to the Stockton West constituency. This proposal was not suggested during consultation and our Assistant Commissioners considered that, given its proximity, it is clearly linked to Darlington rather than any part of Stockton, whereas the wards of Huworth and Sadberge & Middleton St George do sit between the two towns.
60. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the counter proposals for the Middlesbrough, Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, and Redcar and Eston constituencies and recommended them due to their greater similarity to the existing constituencies than our initial proposals. This transferred the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland wards of Longbeck, Saltburn and St Germain's to a proposed Redcar constituency, and the Borough of Middlesbrough wards of Ladgate, Marton East, and Park End & Bedfield to the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. We accepted their recommendations and adopted these constituencies as part of our revised proposals, including reverting to the name of Redcar rather than Redcar and Eston.
61. Therefore, our revised proposals for Tees Valley were for constituencies of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Thornaby East, Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, Redcar, Stockton North and Stockton West.

Consultation on the revised proposals

62. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received some support for our revised pattern, and continued opposition to the inclusion of part of Thornaby in our Middlesbrough and Thornaby East constituency, and to the villages between Darlington and Stockton being included in the Stockton West constituency. A single counter proposal to resolve the Thornaby issue, and the Hurworth part of the Darlington villages issue was received, which required crossing the sub-region and region boundary into the Yorkshire and the Humber region. Other counter proposals attempted to attach the Thornaby ward of Village to Stockton, but did so where there is no crossing of the River Tees. We received further opposition to the configuration of all three constituencies across Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland, but no counter proposals were forthcoming to resolve this.
63. We received small amounts of opposition to our proposed Hartlepool constituency which was otherwise supported, from residents of Wynyard, which is divided by borough boundaries between Hartlepool and Stockton.
64. There were some suggested name changes such as Middlesbrough Central rather than Middlesbrough and Thornaby East, Guisborough rather than Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, and South Tees instead of Redcar, but none attracted more than a modicum of support.

Final recommendations

65. We have considered the evidence received and are not making changes to the boundaries of our proposed constituencies in Tees Valley. We recognise the opposition received regarding Hurworth, and Sadberge Middleton St George, but conclude that there is no satisfactory configuration which might resolve this while ensuring constituencies are all within the permitted electorate ranges. Similarly, we note the concerns regarding the division of Thornaby and Wynyard between constituencies. We did investigate alternative proposals but found that the issues in Wynyard relate to local authority services being divided across the village, which would not be resolved by both parts being in a single Parliamentary constituency. The division of Thornaby between constituencies is regrettable, but the only solution would require changes to the otherwise supported Tees Valley sub-region and the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions.

66. Our final recommendations for Tees Valley are therefore for constituencies of: Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Thornaby East, Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, Redcar, Stockton North and Stockton West. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the South East region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the South East region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 3,854 responses specific to the South East region in this phase, giving a total of 11,410 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: All four qualifying political parties in England broadly supported the revised proposals, but each submitted counter proposals for limited areas in the region. The Conservative Party made counter proposals for two constituencies in Berkshire, seven constituencies in Sussex, and five constituencies in Kent; the Green Party advocated restoring the initial proposals for three constituencies in Kent and two on the Isle of Wight; the Labour Party made a counter proposal affecting nine constituencies in Berkshire and Hampshire (including an additional county crossing); and the Liberal Democrat Party made counter proposals for three constituencies in Buckinghamshire, three constituencies in Surrey, and four constituencies in East Sussex.

Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey: Broadly well-received, though the Labour Party strongly opposed the decision not to adopt their counter proposal as the revised proposals, and submitted a new counter-proposal. The revised proposal to include the Ewhurst ward in the Dorking and Horley constituency was poorly received.

Buckinghamshire: By far the largest issue was the revised proposals for the Chesham and Amersham constituency, which divides Gerrards Cross. Other issues include the split of the Chiltern Ridges ward (which was problematic in the initial proposals too), and the names of the proposed constituencies in the City of Milton Keynes.

East Sussex and West Sussex: A very large response was received from both parts of Sussex. In East Sussex the primary issue was the separation of villages to the north of Lewes from the town - we received two counter proposals which sought to address this issue. We requested feedback on the precise location of the split of the Hanover and Elm Grove ward, and the name of the Brighton Kemptown constituency, in both cases the suggested amendments were positively received. In West Sussex the strongly positive reception to the revised proposals for Arundel and South Downs was matched by an approximately equal number of representations opposing the revised proposals for Chichester. Several plausible alternatives exist, but each requires a number of new split wards.

Kent: A number of issues which attracted a modest number of representations each. A number of issues in West Kent which were raised in the initial proposals consultation were again commented on, though the inclusion of the King's Hill and Wateringbury wards in the Maidstone and Malling constituency attracted far more responses in opposition than previously. The Herne Bay and Sandwich constituency (formerly West Thanet) was again unpopular, and the Conservatives submitted an amended version of their counter proposal, which would retain the existing North and South Thanet constituencies fundamentally unchanged.

Oxfordshire: Very low number of representations, as previously, though the suggestion made in the revised proposals for an alternative name for the Henley constituency was positively received.

Isle of Wight: Broad support for the revised proposals.

South East

1. The South East currently has 84 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 37 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of two constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of 45 constituencies are above. Our proposals increase the number of constituencies in the region by seven, to 91, including the two protected constituencies allocated to the Isle of Wight.
2. The South East comprises the counties of Berkshire (including the boroughs and districts of Bracknell, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham), Buckinghamshire (including the City of Milton Keynes), Hampshire (including the boroughs of Portsmouth and Southampton), the Isle of Wight, Kent (including the Borough of Medway), Oxfordshire, Surrey, East Sussex (including the City of Brighton and Hove), and West Sussex, and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
3. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the South East — Howard Simmons and Simon Tinkler — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Crawley: 14-15 March 2022
 - Portsmouth: 17-18 March 2022
 - Reading: 21-22 March 2022
 - Ashford: 24-25 March 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the South East of 6,634,518 results in it being entitled to 91 constituencies, an increase of six. Additionally, the rules that govern how we must allocate constituencies state that two must be allocated to the Isle of Wight, and that neither of these is required to have an electorate that is within the permitted range. We then considered how the remaining number of constituencies could be split across the region.
5. We noted that Berkshire's electorate of just over 635,000 results in a mathematical entitlement of 8.65 constituencies; however, we felt that we would not be able to adequately reflect the statutory factors with an allocation of nine constituencies. Although both Hampshire and Surrey, with respective mathematical entitlements of 18.44 and 11.72 constituencies, could have stood alone as sub-regions, we noted that combining both with Berkshire in a single sub-region enabled the preservation of a number of existing constituencies, particularly along the coast of Hampshire. We therefore

decided to allocate 39 constituencies to the sub-region of Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey, an increase of two on the current allocation.

6. The City of Milton Keynes has an electorate of 188,273, which is too large to allocate two whole constituencies: it is therefore necessary to pair it with Buckinghamshire, for a combined mathematical entitlement of 8.00 constituencies. We therefore proposed to allocate eight constituencies to this sub-region, an increase of one.
7. Oxfordshire's electorate of nearly 500,000 results in a mathematical entitlement of 6.81 constituencies. We were therefore able to treat Oxfordshire as a sub-region in its own right, with an allocation of seven constituencies, an increase of one.
8. Similarly, the electorate of Kent, including the Medway unitary authority, is 1,325,000, equating to a mathematical entitlement of 18.05 constituencies, and we therefore proposed a Kent sub-region with an allocation of 18 constituencies, again an increase of one on the existing allocation.
9. The City of Brighton and Hove has just over 200,000 electors, and a mathematical entitlement of 2.75. Given the city's historic links with East Sussex, and the existing configuration of constituencies, we considered it appropriate to include both in a single sub-region. Given East Sussex's electorate of 414,451, this pairing has a combined mathematical entitlement of 8.40 constituencies. As in Berkshire above, we felt that, while mathematically achievable, it would be prohibitively difficult to propose eight constituencies which reflected the statutory factors. We therefore decided to include West Sussex, with a mathematical entitlement of 8.81 constituencies, in a wider 'Sussex' sub-region, with an allocation of 17 constituencies, an increase of one.
10. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. We did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions with alternative arrangements suggested such as:
 - A sub-region which comprised the areas of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire
 - A sub-region which comprised the areas of Surrey and Kent
11. We also received proposals from some respondents that supported our proposed sub-regions, but suggested alternative crossings between the counties involved. These proposals largely involved the inclusion of a constituency crossing between Berkshire and Hampshire, either in addition to the crossings proposed, or in order to allow Surrey to be self-contained.
12. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose a different configuration of sub-regions. We assessed whether crossing from Berkshire into either Buckinghamshire or Hampshire would improve our proposals across the

region. We noted that this would assist in creating a scheme of constituencies in the Reading area that is closer to the existing constituencies; however, such a scheme would be reliant on a geographically large cross-county constituency, and disrupt several constituencies which were well received during the consultation on the initial proposals. We also had concerns how this counter proposal would impact on the number of local authorities divided between constituencies. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on the same sub-regions as those of our initial proposals

13. In response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we adopted in our revised proposals; however, we were persuaded by the evidence to propose a constituency that crossed the county boundary between Berkshire and Hampshire (discussed in the relevant section below). Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:

- Berkshire, Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton), and Surrey
- Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes)
- East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove) and West Sussex
- Isle of Wight
- Kent (including Medway)
- Oxfordshire

Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey

Berkshire

Initial proposals

14. Of the eight existing constituencies in Berkshire, three are currently within the permitted electorate range: Reading East, Reading West, and Windsor. The remaining five constituencies: Newbury, Wokingham, Bracknell, Maidenhead, and Slough, are all above the permitted range. Under our initial proposals we proposed changes to all existing constituencies in Berkshire. We proposed a single constituency containing most of the borough of Reading, with three borough wards in the west and two in the south being included in the Mid Berkshire and Earley and Woodley constituencies respectively. As a result of this configuration, we proposed Newbury and Wokingham constituencies respectively comprising the areas of the District of West Berkshire and District of Wokingham not otherwise included in the Mid Berkshire and Earley and Woodley constituencies.
15. As the existing Slough constituency is above the permitted range, we proposed to include the wards of Langley Kedermister and Foxborough in the Windsor constituency. We also, for the reasons outlined above, proposed that the Windsor constituency include two wards from Surrey, namely Egham Town and Egham Hythe. As the Bracknell constituency was within the permitted range without the area of Wokingham borough included in the existing constituency,

and after some minor changes to realign to new local government ward boundaries, we proposed no additional changes. Consequentially, we proposed that the remainder of the District of Bracknell Forest area be included in the Maidenhead constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

16. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed constituencies across Berkshire were broadly supported, except in Reading where they were opposed by some who recommended returning to a two seat configuration and leaving the existing Reading West and Reading East constituencies wholly or mostly unchanged. We received a counter proposal which achieved this by including a constituency which crossed the boundary between Berkshire and Hampshire.
17. The proposed Mid Berkshire constituency was mostly opposed by residents of the Borough of Reading, who argued that the wards of Kentwood, Norcot, and Tilehurst have little in common with the remainder of the constituency; however, representations from the West Berkshire component of this constituency were more favourable. Another objection made about the proposed Mid Berkshire constituency was that it contained the Ilsey villages, which some felt have more commonality with the proposed Newbury constituency (which was otherwise little commented on).
18. The proposed Earley and Woodley constituency also received a mix of representations, though the greater number were in support of our proposals. The proposed Wokingham constituency was strongly supported.
19. We received opposition to our proposal to include the Langley Kedermister and Foxborough wards in the proposed Windsor constituency, though those that acknowledged that some part of Slough borough would have to be included in a Windsor constituency to avoid crossing the boundary between Berkshire and Buckinghamshire generally agreed that the initial proposals were the strongest option. The proposed crossing of the boundary between Berkshire and Surrey in the Windsor constituency was also unpopular, both as a matter of general principle and specifically the choice of the two Egham wards.
20. A small number of representations were received opposing the proposed Maidenhead constituency, with some respondents suggesting this constituency could contain less of the Bracknell Forest council area. We received a counter proposal that split wards to achieve this.

Revised proposals

21. In light of the evidence received, our Assistant Commissioners considered recommending changes in Berkshire; however, they concluded that no counter proposals had been received which improved the scheme of constituencies across the county as a whole. In particular, they felt that counter-proposals which crossed the county boundary between Berkshire and Hampshire would

have weaker community links than the initial proposals, and noted that such counter-proposals necessary disrupted the well received initial proposals for Earley and Woodley and Wokingham constituencies.

22. They therefore did not recommend any changes to any of the initially proposed constituencies that are wholly within Berkshire (though they did propose changes to the Surrey component of the Windsor constituency, see below). We accepted the Assistant Commissioners' recommendation, and therefore the revised proposals for Berkshire were unchanged from the initial proposals.

Consultation on the revised proposals

23. As no changes were made to our initial proposals for Berkshire, most responses to the revised proposals consultation, whether in support or opposition, simply restated the same points made during the earlier consultation phases. We did, however, receive a new proposal which retained the existing Reading East constituency wholly unchanged, and the existing Reading West constituency changed only by the exclusion of the Theale ward. This proposal recommended a constituency that crosses the county boundary between Berkshire and Hampshire, and also includes the towns of Earley and Shinfield, thereby dividing the existing Wokingham constituency into two proposed constituencies, rather than three, as in our revised proposals.
24. The changes which we made to the proposed Windsor constituency were well supported by residents of the Berkshire component of this constituency, though some suggested that Windsor Great Park would be more reflective of the area the proposed constituency would comprise.

Final recommendations

25. Having considered the evidence received, we are persuaded of the need to amend our revised proposals for Berkshire, in particular by extending the Mid Berkshire constituency south, to cross the county boundary with Hampshire, and east to include the town of Earley. Doing so allows us to retain the Reading East constituency wholly unchanged, and the Reading West constituency changed only by the exclusion of the Theale ward. Making these changes negates the need to divide the Downlands ward, which can be retained wholly in the Newbury constituency, and include the Coronation and Sonning wards in the Wokingham constituency. We acknowledge that there may be weak ties between the Bramley and Tadley & Pamber wards in Hampshire and the Berkshire component of this Mid Berkshire and Tadley constituency; however, we feel that the benefits to the scheme in Berkshire, namely the retention of both existing Reading constituencies fundamentally unchanged, and the elimination of the split of the Downlands ward, and in Hampshire (discussed below) means that our final recommendations are an overall improvement on the revised proposals.
26. Our final recommendations in Berkshire are therefore for constituencies of Bracknell, Maidenhead, Mid Berkshire and Tadley, Newbury, Reading East,

Reading West, Slough, Windsor, and Wokingham. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Hampshire

Initial proposals

27. Of the 18 existing constituencies in Hampshire, 13 are currently within the permitted electorate range, one constituency is below the permitted range, Romsey and Southampton North, and four are above, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Fareham, and North West Hampshire. We proposed a constituency, Farnham and Bordon, that included parts of both Hampshire and Surrey, as doing so enabled us to propose a number of constituencies wholly unchanged. The initially proposed Farnham and Bordon constituency included six wards from the District of East Hampshire, the remainder of which was proposed as the East Hampshire constituency.
28. Our initial proposals included Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth North, Portsmouth South, Southampton Itchen, Southampton Test, East New Forest, and West New Forest constituencies which were unchanged from their existing configurations, although we did make a minor adjustment to the names of the latter two constituencies. Additionally, we proposed an Aldershot constituency changed only to align to new local government ward boundaries.
29. We proposed some changes to the existing Basingstoke and North East Hampshire constituencies, most significantly the inclusion of the entire ward of Basing & Upton Grey in the latter. In order to ensure both of these proposed constituencies were within the permitted electorate range, we divided the Oakley & The Candovers ward between the two, largely aligning the boundary with the M3 motorway.
30. As we proposed that North West Hampshire include the Tadley & Pamber and Sherborne St John & Rooksdown wards, it was necessary to reduce the electorate in the west of the existing constituency. We therefore proposed that the Anna, Bellinger, and Charlton & the Pentons wards be included in the Romsey and Southampton North constituency, the only other change to which being the exclusion of the Valley Park ward, which we proposed in the Eastleigh constituency.
31. In order to reduce the electorate of the Eastleigh and Fareham constituencies, we proposed a Hedge End constituency comprised of areas around the River Hamble, including Titchfield, Shedfield, and Bursledon. We also proposed a Fareham and Waterlooville constituency which included the eponymous towns and rural areas of the lower Meon Valley between the two. Our proposed Winchester constituency extended further south than the existing constituency to include the remainder of the City of Winchester local authority.

Consultation on the initial proposals

32. The response to our initial proposals for Hampshire was broadly positive, particularly for the eight unchanged constituencies along the coast of Hampshire, although the proposed name changes for the two New Forest constituencies were opposed, with respondents expressing a strong preference for retaining the existing constituency names, which use compass points as a suffix. It was also suggested that the proposed Havant constituency should be designated as a county constituency to reflect the less accessible areas of this constituency.
33. Our proposals for Aldershot, North East Hampshire, Basingstoke, North West Hampshire, and Romsey and Southampton North were objected to by several respondents. Among the issues raised were the division of Yateley between the proposed Aldershot and North East Hampshire constituencies, the exclusion of the Old Basing and Rooksdown areas from the Basingstoke constituency, and the inclusion of the Charlton & the Pentons ward in the Romsey and Southampton North constituency. The inclusion of the Bassett and Swaythling wards from the City of Southampton in this constituency was also opposed, although this aspect of the proposed constituency is unchanged from the existing configuration. We received a number of counter proposals which addressed some of these issues; however, some respondents noted in support of our proposals that it is difficult to resolve all of these concerns without resorting to a number of split wards.
34. We received a large number of representations in support of our proposed Winchester constituency, many of which commented that our proposals for this constituency were better aligned with local authority boundaries than the existing constituency. We did, however, receive representations which regretted the lack of an obvious successor to the existing Meon Valley constituency. This view was widely shared among residents of the Denham and Southwick & Wickham wards, which we proposed as part of the Fareham and Waterlooville constituency. This constituency was also opposed by residents of both eponymous towns, who argued that there is no community of interest between the two, with residents of Fareham in particular expressing a preference for an alternative that would more closely resemble the existing configuration. We received a number of counter proposals which sought to propose a constituency similar to the existing Meon Valley, though many of these necessitated dividing Fareham between two or more constituencies.
35. The proposed Eastleigh constituency attracted few representations, except for a small number in opposition to the inclusion of the Valley Park ward. The proposed Hedge End constituency received a mix of representations in support and in opposition; however, the most common concern was that the name of this constituency was not sufficiently representative, with some suggesting Hamble Valley to reflect the river that is central to the proposed constituency.
36. The largest number of representations in Hampshire during the initial proposals consultation were made concerning the proposed East Hampshire and Farnham and Bordon constituencies. While a number of responses were supportive of our proposals for East Hampshire, particularly noting the inclusion of additional areas of the East Hampshire district in this constituency, a greater

number were opposed to the inclusion of wards in the Farnham and Bordon constituency. These representations centred on two key themes: general opposition to any constituency containing parts of both Surrey and Hampshire, and specific opposition to the division of the Bordon and Whitehill area, which many respondents felt is a single settlement. Some that accepted the principle of a county crossing constituency suggested that including the Whitehill Hogmoor and Greatham ward in the proposed Farnham and Bordon constituency would be a solution to this latter concern.

Revised proposals

37. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we make changes to our initial proposals for Hampshire.
38. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the many counter proposals we received which affected constituencies in Hampshire. As above, they did not feel that there was merit in recommending a constituency which crossed the boundary between Hampshire and Berkshire. They also felt that none of the other counter proposals which sought to address issues in the north of Hampshire represented an improvement on the initial proposals.
39. Consideration was also given to counter proposals which suggested retaining a close analogue to the existing Meon Valley constituency. The Assistant Commissioners noted that adopting this counter proposal would require changes to our proposed Winchester constituency that have been supported during the consultations. On balance, they were not persuaded to modify the proposed Winchester constituency and therefore did not recommend modifying the configuration of constituencies in this part of the county.
40. The division of the Bordon and Whitehill area under the initial proposals was acknowledged by the Assistant Commissioners to be problematic. While they agreed with the substance of our initial recommendation that the proposed Farnham and Bordon constituency should contain parts of both Surrey and Hampshire, they agreed with a counter proposal which suggested that the Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham ward should be included in this constituency too. This counter proposal balanced the electorate of the proposed East Hampshire constituency by including all of the Oakley & The Candovers ward, thereby reuniting a ward which we proposed to be split in the initial proposals. The Assistant Commissioners did not agree with this aspect of the counter proposal, as they felt that the split ward had been broadly well received, and that the resulting East Hampshire constituency would have poor connectivity. They therefore recommended retaining the split of Oakley & The Candovers from the initial proposals, but transferring the part proposed in the North East Hampshire constituency to the revised East Hampshire constituency. This counter proposal also had some consequential effects to constituencies in Surrey, which are discussed below.
41. The Assistant Commissioners were also persuaded by representations made concerning the names of the proposed Hedge End, West New Forest, and East New Forest constituencies, and recommended that we revise the names of

these constituencies to Hamble Valley, New Forest West, and New Forest East respectively.

42. We agreed with these recommendations, and therefore we confirmed the initial proposals for twelve constituencies in Hampshire, proposed boundary changes for three constituencies (East Hampshire, Farnham and Bordon, and North East Hampshire), and proposed name changes for three constituencies (Hamble Valley, New Forest West, and New Forest East).

Consultation on the revised proposals

43. In the revised proposals consultation, the proposed eight unchanged south coast constituencies were again supported, in particular the revised names of the two New Forest constituencies.
44. Few responses were received concerning our revised proposal to include part of the Oakley & The Candovers ward in East Hampshire, but those we did receive generally opposed our proposal. The division of Yateley between Aldershot and North East Hampshire, the exclusion of areas of urban Basingstoke from the Basingstoke constituency, and the inclusion of Charlton & the Pentons in Romsey and Southampton North rather than North West Hampshire were again commented upon by a small number of respondents, including in new counter proposals which suggested splitting one or more wards in order to resolve some of these issues.
45. We received a number of responses supportive of our proposal to include the Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham ward with the remainder of the Bordon and Whitehill area in the Farnham and Bordon constituency, although these responses generally expressed regret that our proposals did not avoid crossing the boundary between Surrey and Hampshire altogether. Some respondents suggested that the name Wey Valley would be a more descriptive name for this constituency.
46. We again received a sizeable number of representations in support of the proposed Winchester constituency, offset by a smaller number which preferred a version of the existing Meon Valley constituency - counter proposals to this effect were again advanced, but without substantively new evidence in support of such a configuration. The proposed Fareham and Waterlooville constituency was again negatively received, though the only new suggestion was that we consider Forest of Bere as an alternative name for this constituency.
47. The proposed Eastleigh constituency again attracted only a small number of representations, which expressed opposition to the inclusion of Valley Park and West End, which respondents felt are better suited to the constituencies of Romsey and Southampton North and Hamble Valley respectively. Our revised name for the Hamble Valley constituency was broadly supported, though the reaction to the proposed boundary was again mixed.

Final recommendations

48. Having considered the evidence, we are persuaded to make changes to our revised proposals for Hampshire. As discussed above, we propose that the Bramley and Tadley & Pamber wards are included in the county-crossing Mid Berkshire and Tadley constituency. As a consequence, we are able to propose that the Yateley East ward be included in the North East Hampshire constituency, thus avoiding the need to divide the town. We are also able to propose that the Charlton & the Pentons ward be included in the North West Hampshire constituency, preserving ties between this ward and Andover. We considered whether changes should be made to our proposed division of the Oakley & The Candovers ward; however, we feel that, although mathematically possible, including the entire ward in the East Hampshire constituency would be a poorer reflection of community ties than the revised proposals.
49. We note the sustained opposition to our proposed Fareham and Waterlooville constituency. We again considered whether or not to make changes to this constituency; however, we note that counter proposals received either divide Fareham in half, or else disrupt the large number of constituencies on the Hampshire coast that could otherwise be retained wholly unchanged. We have therefore concluded that the revised proposals best reflect the statutory factors.
50. Finally, we considered alternative names for constituencies in Hampshire. While we note the support for Forest of Bere as an alternative name for the Fareham and Waterlooville constituency, we feel that this name is not sufficiently descriptive of the area covered by the constituency, and therefore have retained the name Fareham and Waterlooville in our final recommendations. Similarly, while we acknowledge support for the name Wey Valley instead of Farnham and Bordon, we feel that this name would not reflect the Hampshire component of this county-crossing constituency, and hence have retained the name Farnham and Bordon in our final recommendations.
51. Our final recommendations in Hampshire are therefore for constituencies of Aldershot, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham and Waterlooville Gosport, Hamble Valley, Havant, New Forest East, New Forest West, North West Hampshire, North East Hampshire, Portsmouth North, Portsmouth South, Romsey and Southampton North, Southampton Itchen, Southampton Test, Winchester. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Surrey

Initial proposals

52. Of the 11 existing constituencies in Surrey, five are currently within the permitted electorate range (Mole Valley, Reigate, Runnymede and Weybridge, Spelthorne, and Woking), and the remaining six are above (East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Esher and Walton, Guildford, South West Surrey, and Surrey Heath). As discussed above, we initially proposed two constituencies which

contained parts of Surrey and another county: the proposed Windsor constituency, which included the Surrey wards of Egham Town and Egham Hythe, and Farnham and Bordon, which combined the western part of the Borough of Waverley with six wards from Hampshire.

53. We proposed that the Spelthorne and Woking constituencies be coterminous with the local authorities of the same names. In the former case, this represents no change from the existing configuration, and in the latter case, changed only by the exclusion of the Normandy and Pirbright wards, which we proposed be included in the Surrey Heath constituency, along with the whole of the Surrey Heath district.
54. As this proposed Surrey Heath constituency could not accommodate the wards of Ash Vale, Ash Wharf, and Ash South and Tongham, we proposed that these wards be included in a Godalming and Ash constituency, along with the wards of Pilgrims, Shalford, and Tillingbourne, and the eastern part of the Borough of Waverley. This allowed us to propose a Guildford constituency that would be wholly within the borough of the same name.
55. As the proposed Weybridge and Chertsey constituency, renamed from Runnymede and Weybridge, would no longer include the two Egham wards (we proposed these wards be included in the Windsor constituency), we proposed to extend this constituency to the south, to include the wards of Cobham & Downside, Weybridge St George's Hill, and the whole of the Oatlands & Burwood Park ward. The exclusion of these same wards were the only changes we proposed to the existing Esher and Walton constituency under our initial proposals.
56. We noted that a proposed Epsom and Ewell constituency could continue to include all of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell; however, we proposed that this constituency should extend further south, rather than east as at present, to include the town of Leatherhead. Consequently, we proposed that the Reigate constituency include the Nork and Tattenham Corner & Preston wards, and that the Dorking and Horley constituency be comprised of the majority of the District of Mole Valley (excluding Ashted and Leatherhead) and the south of the Borough of Reigate and Banstead. Our proposed East Surrey constituency contained all of the District of Tandridge, and the Borough of Reigate and Banstead ward of Hooley, Mestham & Netherne.

Consultation on the initial proposals

57. As discussed above, both proposed constituencies which crossed county boundaries drew representations in opposition; however, among residents of the Surrey component of the constituency, our proposed Farnham and Bordon constituency attracted little comment beyond generalised opposition to the principle of crossing the boundary between Surrey and Hampshire. The proposed inclusion of the two Egham wards in the proposed Windsor

constituency drew greater opposition, with many suggesting that the connections of these wards are much stronger with Surrey, particularly Runnymede, than with Berkshire. We received a counter proposal which suggested that the two Englefield Green wards and the Virginia Water ward would be a better fit in a Windsor constituency, and allow the Egham wards to be included in the Weybridge and Chertsey constituency. Additionally, we received several counter proposals which removed either or both of our proposed county crossing constituencies, by proposing alternative configurations of sub-regions.

58. Our proposal to include the Cobham & Downside ward in Weybridge and Chertsey was very unpopular, with a great many respondents arguing that this ward and the neighbouring Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon ward form a single community, particularly noting that Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon share a train station. We received a counter proposal which suggested that both of these wards should be included in the Esher and Walton constituency, as at present, and that instead the Hersham Village ward should be included in Weybridge and Chertsey; however, this was itself strongly opposed by some representations made during the secondary consultation. Some respondents also objected to our proposed name for the Weybridge and Chertsey constituency, most of whom felt that the existing Runnymede and Weybridge constituency name was sufficiently descriptive of this new constituency.
59. We received very few representations concerning our proposals for Spelthorne and Woking, but those we did receive were supportive of these constituencies aligning to local authority boundaries. Our proposed Surrey Heath constituency was also little commented on, although we did receive a small number of representations opposed to the inclusion of the Normandy and Pirbright wards in this constituency. Respondents generally indicated that these wards share a greater community of interest with the Guildford constituency, which was otherwise supported by nearly all representations received.
60. Our proposed Godalming and Ash and Dorking and Horley constituencies were both opposed, albeit in relatively small numbers. The primary theme of responses from these constituencies was the lack of community ties between the eponymous towns in both instances. We received a number of counter proposals which affected these constituencies, some of which suggested alternative pairings of large settlements in this area, such as Ash and Guildford, or Reigate and Horley. The inclusion of the Hooley, Merstham & Netherne ward in our proposed East Surrey constituency was also opposed by a small number of respondents.
61. The changes which we proposed to the existing Epsom and Ewell constituency were broadly well received, with respondents commenting that Leatherhead has good connections with Epsom and Ewell. Supportive representations also noted that this proposal would reduce the number of local authorities in the Epsom and Ewell constituency from three, at present, to two.
62. By far the largest number of responses to our initial proposals in Surrey concerned the exclusion of the South Park & Woodhatch ward from the Reigate

constituency. We received more than 700 responses in opposition to the proposal to include this ward in the Dorking and Horley constituency, with many commenting that the ward forms an integral part of the town of Reigate. We received a number of counter proposals which included this ward in a Reigate constituency, ranging from small single ward transfers between constituencies, to widespread reorganisation of constituencies in Surrey, such as those discussed above.

Revised proposals

63. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for Surrey.
64. Having visited the area, our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded that the areas of Virginia Water and Englefield Green would have a greater community of interest with the proposed Windsor constituency than the two Egham wards, and they therefore recommended that these wards be exchanged. They also agreed that our proposal to name the constituency Weybridge and Chertsey was unnecessary, as the existing name of Runnymede and Weybridge would still accurately describe the proposed constituency.
65. Our Assistant Commissioners also agreed with respondents that the wards of Cobham & Downside and Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon reflect a single community, and therefore these wards should be represented together. They also, however, considered it essential that the Hersham Village ward be retained in the Esher and Walton constituency, given the ward's clear ties to both towns, and did not feel that sufficient evidence had been presented that the same ties exist between Esher, Walton, and the rural areas to the south. Our Assistant Commissioners therefore recommended that the Cobham & Downside and Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon wards be included in the Runnymede and Weybridge constituency, and that the Oatlands & Burwood Park ward be included in Esher and Walton.
66. Given both the quantity and quality of evidence received concerning the South Park & Woodhatch ward, our Assistant Commissioners felt that it was essential to make changes to our proposals, to ensure that this ward be included in the Reigate constituency. Although they considered counter proposals which more radically reconfigured constituencies in Surrey, they felt that these options would be less compliant with the statutory factors. They therefore recommended a counter proposal which included the South Park & Woodhatch ward in the Reigate constituency, the Ewhurst ward in the Dorking and Horley constituency, and the Elstead and Thursley ward in the Godalming and Ash constituency (as well as some consequential effects to constituencies in Hampshire, discussed above).
67. We agreed with all of the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners, and therefore we confirmed the initial proposals for six constituencies in Surrey (East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, and Woking), and proposed boundary changes to the Dorking and Horley, Esher and Walton, Godalming and Ash, Reigate, and Runnymede and Weybridge

constituencies. We also proposed a name change to the last of these, and boundary changes to the Surrey component of the Windsor constituency.

Consultation on the revised proposals

68. Responses from the Surrey component of the proposed Farnham and Bordon constituency were broadly negative, with several respondents noting that, while there is a strong community of interest between the Waverley borough wards in this constituency, those community ties do not extend across the county boundary. Although responses supported our proposal to include the two Egham wards in our revised proposal for Runnymede and Weybridge, and our revised Windsor constituency was generally well supported by residents of its Berkshire component (as discussed above), we did receive a small number of representations suggesting that Virginia Water and Englefield Green share no more of a community of interest with Windsor than Egham does, and so should not be included in a constituency which crosses county boundaries.
69. We again received almost no substantive representations concerning the proposed Woking and Spelthorne constituencies respectively, but representations which made general comments about the South East region were supportive of both constituencies.
70. Our revised proposals for Runnymede and Weybridge and Esher and Walton, which exchanged the Oatlands & Burwood Park ward for the Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon ward, were supported by more than 150 representations. Responses from both wards agreed with our assessment that the former's local government ties to Esher evidenced a clear local connection, and that respecting the latter's ties with Cobham & Downside should be prioritised over ties with Esher.
71. The response to our revised proposal for Reigate, including the South Park & Woodhatch ward, was positive; however, the consequential change to Dorking and Horley, which we proposed to include the Ewhurst ward, was unpopular, on the grounds that it broke ties between Ewhurst and Cranleigh. The other consequential change in the revised proposals, the transfer of the Elstead and Thursley ward to the proposed Godalming and Ash constituency, did not attract many representations. The lack of commonality between the named settlements in the Godalming and Ash and Dorking and Horley constituencies was again commented upon, and we received new counter proposals affecting these constituencies, including one which paired Godalming with Guildford, and another which paired Farnham with Ash and Aldershot, thereby crossing the boundary between Surrey and Hampshire in a different place.
72. Respondents from the Normandy and Pirbright wards again opposed being included in the proposed Surrey Heath constituency. We received a counter proposal which suggested transferring the former to the Guildford constituency, with Surrey Heath instead taking the ward of Longcross, Lyne & Chertsey South.

73. A small number of submissions were made concerning the proposed East Surrey, and Epsom and Ewell constituencies; however, no new arguments were advanced concerning either.

Final recommendations

74. Having considered the evidence, we are not persuaded to amend any of our revised proposals for Surrey. We note objections to the inclusion of the Ewhurst ward in our proposed Dorking and Horley constituency; however, including this ward in Godalming and Ash would require significant changes to constituencies which had been well supported. We considered dividing the Borough of Guildford ward of Tillingbourne between the proposed Dorking and Horley and Godalming and Ash constituencies in order to include the Ewhurst ward in Godalming and Ash; however, we were unpersuaded that this change would be less divisive for local communities than our revised proposals.
75. We also considered the counter proposals we received for alternative constituencies in Surrey. We do not feel that the evidence received suggested that pairing Guildford with Godalming, or Farnham with Ash, would be an improvement on our revised proposals. While we appreciate that the ties of the Normandy ward may be stronger with Guildford than with Surrey Heath, we note that including the Longcross, Lyne & Chertsey South ward in Surrey Heath would unnecessarily extend the constituency into a third local authority.
76. Our final recommendations in Surrey are therefore for constituencies of Dorking and Horley, East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Esher and Walton, Farnham and Bordon, Guildford, Godalming and Ash, Reigate, Runnymede and Weybridge, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, and Woking. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Buckinghamshire

Initial proposals

77. Only one existing constituency in Buckinghamshire, Chesham and Amersham, is within the permitted electorate range, the remaining six are all above the permitted range. As new local government arrangements for Buckinghamshire were approved shortly before the commencement of the review, the electoral divisions used for the Review were those of the now defunct Buckinghamshire County Council. As these electoral divisions were a placeholder arrangement, and their shapes and electorate sizes are particularly large, we took a pragmatic approach towards the splitting of wards in Buckinghamshire.
78. The City of Milton Keynes was not affected by changes to local government arrangements in Buckinghamshire; however, it is not possible to propose a whole number of constituencies coterminous with the local authority

boundaries. Therefore, without crossing regional boundaries, it was necessary to propose a constituency which contained parts of both the Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire unitary authorities - our initial proposal was for a Buckingham and Bletchley constituency containing four wards from each. We divided the remainder of the Milton Keynes unitary authority into two constituencies - Milton Keynes, which comprised the core urban area of the city, and Newport Pagnell, which comprised more rural and suburban areas to the north and west.

79. As our initial proposals allocated eight constituencies to Buckinghamshire, an increase of one on the existing allocation, it was necessary for us to propose a constituency without an obvious predecessor. We considered that the best way to accommodate this additional constituency was to propose a large rural constituency spanning central Buckinghamshire, which we called Princes Risborough. As we proposed that this constituency include the Ridgeway East, Ridgeway West, and Wendover, Halton and Stoke Mandeville wards, which are currently part of the Aylesbury constituency, we proposed that the Aylesbury constituency be reoriented to the north, to include the wards of Ivinghoe and Wing.
80. Our proposals for Aylesbury and Princes Risborough meant that we could retain the remaining three constituencies in Buckinghamshire with only minimal changes. We proposed a Marlow and South Buckinghamshire constituency which was changed from the existing Beaconsfield constituency only by the transfer of the Beaconsfield ward to Chesham and Amersham (though, for obvious reasons, it was necessary to amend the name of this constituency). Similarly, the proposed High Wycombe constituency differed from the existing Wycombe constituency only in the transfer of the Hazlemere ward to Chesham and Amersham, and a small amount of change to realign to the boundary of the West Wycombe ward; however, again we decided to change the name to reflect the largest settlement in this constituency, rather than the defunct local authority district.
81. With the inclusion of the Beaconsfield and Hazlemere wards, it was not possible to retain the existing Chesham and Amersham constituency otherwise unchanged. In order to minimise disruption, we decided to transfer the Great Missenden and Chiltern Ridges wards to the proposed Princes Risborough constituency; however, in the latter case we divided the ward to retain an area of central Chesham in our proposed Chesham and Amersham constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

82. Our proposed Buckingham and Bletchley constituency was mostly opposed during the consultation on the initial proposals; however, the majority of these representations were opposed to any constituency containing parts of both Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. Those that acknowledged the need for such a constituency broadly supported the pairing of Buckingham with Bletchley, though we did receive counter proposals which suggested using wards in the west of Milton Keynes instead.

83. The boundaries of the two constituencies which we proposed wholly within the City of Milton Keynes were generally supported; however, our proposed names were not. Newport Pagnell in particular was particularly considered to be unreflective of the full extent of this constituency, with the most commonly suggested alternative being to retain the existing name of Milton Keynes North. Supporters of this alternative acknowledged that this would necessitate a change to the name of our proposed Milton Keynes constituency, and again indicated that the existing name of Milton Keynes South would be suitable.
84. The proposed Aylesbury constituency received comparatively few representations; however, the inclusion of the Ivinghoe and Wing wards was generally well supported. Some representations expressed concern that closely connected settlements, such as Berryfields to the north, and Stoke Mandeville to the south, were excluded from this constituency.
85. There was general dissatisfaction with our proposals for Princes Risborough. Although some responses were supportive, and most counter proposals accepted that this was broadly the right area to accommodate the additional constituency, there was concern at the lack of a community of interest in this constituency, particularly from residents at its extremities. Our proposed split of the Chiltern Ridges ward was particularly unpopular, with residents in this ward arguing that it should be included in its entirety in Chesham and Amersham.
86. The inclusion of Hazlemere in Chesham and Amersham prompted a mixed response, and we received several counter proposals suggesting alternative constituencies for this ward - including Princes Risborough, in exchange for the remainder of the Chiltern Ridges ward, and Wycombe, in exchange for the Tylers Green and Loudwater ward, though neither of these counter proposals attracted more than modest support.
87. In the south of our proposed Chesham and Amersham constituency, the inclusion of the Beaconsfield ward was unpopular, as our proposals divided the Old Town (which is in the Gerrards Cross ward) from the majority of Beaconsfield itself. We received a counter proposal which suggested dividing the Gerrards Cross ward, including the majority of the ward in the Chesham and Amersham constituency, thus allowing the Beaconsfield ward, and the Old Town, to be included in the Marlow and South Buckinghamshire constituency.
88. Only a small number of representations were received concerning our proposed High Wycombe and Marlow and South Buckinghamshire constituencies, though a number of issues were raised in opposition. Some residents of Marlow Bottom felt that they should be included in the same constituency as nearby Marlow, though this is not the case in the existing scheme of constituencies. We received multiple counter proposals which suggested that the High Wycombe constituency should be made more clearly urban by excluding the Chiltern Villages ward. The names of both constituencies also attracted a number of representations, particularly in the case of our proposed High Wycombe constituency, which many felt was an unnecessary change from the existing name of Wycombe.

Revised proposals

89. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for Buckinghamshire.
90. Our Assistant Commissioners agreed that a constituency which crosses between the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes unitary authorities is unavoidable without breaching regional boundaries, and that our proposed Buckingham and Bletchley constituency was the most widely supported way of achieving this. Noting this, and the general support for the boundaries of our proposed Newport Pagnell and Milton Keynes constituencies, they recommended that we retain the initial proposals for these three constituencies, though they did recommend Milton Keynes North and Milton Keynes South as more appropriate names for these constituencies.
91. Considering the numeric and geographic constraints, our Assistant Commissioners also agreed that the proposed Princes Risborough constituency should be retained in the revised proposals. They did not feel that amending the split of the Chiltern Ridges ward would meaningfully improve this constituency with respect to the statutory factors. They did acknowledge concern about the sprawling nature of this constituency, and particularly felt that the name Princes Risborough did not adequately reflect its full extent; however, they did not recommend a specific alternative as they did not feel that the representations received pointed to a clear choice that would command local support.
92. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the counter proposal to include the Hazlemere ward in the High Wycombe constituency, and the Tylers Green and Loudwater ward in the Chesham and Amersham constituency. Having visited the area, they felt that, while Hazlemere shares a greater affinity to High Wycombe than to Chesham, the affinity between Loudwater and High Wycombe is greater still, with Loudwater forming an integral part of the town. They therefore recommended that the initial proposals for High Wycombe be retained, though they agreed with representations which suggested that the name Wycombe was more reflective of the constituency as a whole.
93. Our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence that our initial proposals divided the town of Beaconsfield. Noting the apparent connections between Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross, and the physical barrier of the M40 motorway to the south, they agreed that the town of Gerrards Cross would have a strong community of interest with the Chesham and Amersham constituency. They therefore recommended that we adopt a counter proposal to split the Gerrards Cross ward, including the majority of the ward in the Chesham and Amersham constituency, and including Beaconsfield Old Town and the parish of Hedgerley, as well as the Beaconsfield ward, in the Marlow and South Buckinghamshire constituency. Regarding this latter constituency, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that the existing name, Beaconsfield, be retained, given that the revised constituency would contain all of the town.

94. We agreed with all of the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners. Concerning the name of the proposed Princes Risborough constituency, we agreed that an alternative constituency name should be adopted for the revised proposals, and we felt that Mid Buckinghamshire was the name most likely to command local support. We therefore confirmed the initial proposals for the Buckingham and Bletchley and Aylesbury constituencies, and the boundaries of the renamed Mid Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes North, Milton Keynes South, and Wycombe constituencies. We proposed revisions to the boundaries of the proposed Beaconsfield and Chesham and Amersham constituencies, the former of which also with a name change.

Consultation on the revised proposals

95. Our revision to the name of the proposed Milton Keynes North constituency was supported; however, the corresponding change to the proposed Milton Keynes South constituency attracted some opposition. Some responses argued that, as this proposed constituency includes the Central Milton Keynes ward, the name is potentially misleading, and a better name would be Milton Keynes Central, with the Buckingham and Bletchley constituency correspondingly being renamed as Milton Keynes South and Buckingham, or some variant thereof. More responses were received opposing the pairing of Buckingham and Bletchley, but no new arguments or alternatives were advanced.
96. Again only a small number of representations were made concerning the proposed Aylesbury constituency, although we did receive a new counter proposal which suggested including Stoke Mandeville and excluding the Buckingham Park area.
97. The proposed Mid Buckinghamshire constituency attracted more representations in opposition, with some explicitly saying that their concerns were not allayed by simply revising the name of this constituency. A small number of representations suggested that the extent of this constituency could be limited by extending the proposed Buckingham and Bletchley constituency south into the Grendon Underwood ward. A number of representations were again received from the Chiltern Ridges ward, in particular the Chartridge parish, in support of including a greater proportion, if not all, of the ward in the Chesham and Amersham constituency.
98. Our decision to retain the boundaries of the initial proposals for the Wycombe constituency drew a mixed response, though more supportive than opposing representations were received concerning the Tylers Green and Loudwater ward. We received multiple new counter proposals suggesting that the Chiltern Villages ward be excluded from this constituency in order to create a more compact constituency focused on High Wycombe.
99. The revisions we proposed to the south of the Chesham and Amersham constituency, affecting Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross, were widely opposed. Responses noted that, just as the initial proposals divided Beaconsfield, the revised proposals divided the town of Gerrards Cross, a small part of which is

included in the Denham ward. Around 400 representations were received in opposition to our proposals, with many recommending that we revert to the initial proposals for these two constituencies, including from residents of Knotty Green, an area to the north of Beaconsfield which is already in the existing Chesham and Amersham constituency. Set against these representations, however, we did note a not insignificant level of support for our revised proposals, including a small number from Gerrards Cross which emphasised connections to Chalfont St Peter.

Final recommendations

100. Having considered the evidence, we propose an amendment to the boundaries of our revised proposals for the Beaconsfield and Chesham and Amersham constituencies. We acknowledge that our revised proposals divide the town of Gerrards Cross, part of which is included in the Denham ward. While we note that many representations requested that we revert to the initial proposals in this area, this would restore a division of Beaconsfield which we sought to resolve in our revised proposals. We also note that some representations suggested that there were good community ties between Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter, and that the inclusion of the town in the Chesham and Amersham constituency was sensible, notwithstanding the division of the town. We therefore propose to divide the Denham ward, including a single polling district in the Chesham and Amersham constituency - we note that this would unite the entire Gerrards Cross parish in a single constituency.
101. We also considered amending the northern boundary of the revised proposal for the Chesham and Amersham constituency. We noted that a greater area of the Chiltern Ridges ward, which we proposed dividing between the Chesham and Amersham and Mid Buckinghamshire constituencies, could be included in the Chesham and Amersham constituency; however, while we remain of the view that it is necessary to divide this ward to prevent the division of Chesham, we were not persuaded that similarly compelling reasons exist to extend this ward split to more rural areas of the ward. We consider that while the parish of Chartridge could be included in the constituency, we remain of the view that doing so is further likely to break community ties in the area, particularly as it is not possible to include the entirety of the ward in the Chesham and Amersham constituency.
102. Finally, we have considered whether to amend the names of constituencies in the sub-region. We accept that our proposed Milton Keynes South constituency extends significantly further north than the existing constituency of the same name, and therefore we agree that Milton Keynes Central would be a more accurate name for this constituency, and have decided to adopt it as part of our final recommendations. We also feel, however, that Bletchley is sufficiently descriptive of the area of the Milton Keynes unitary authority that is in the Buckingham and Bletchley constituency, and as such we have retained this name in our final recommendations.
103. Our final recommendations in Buckinghamshire are therefore for constituencies of Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Buckingham and Bletchley, Chesham and

Amersham, Mid Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes Central, Milton Keynes North, and Wycombe. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

East Sussex and West Sussex

East Sussex

Initial proposals

104. Of the eight existing constituencies in East Sussex (including the City of Brighton and Hove unitary authority), three are within the permitted electorate range, Brighton Pavilion, Hove, and Lewes, one is below the permitted range, Brighton Kempdown, and the remaining four are above, Bexhill and Battle, Eastbourne, Hastings and Rye, and Wealden. When formulating our initial proposals we decided that it would be beneficial to the pattern of constituencies as a whole for one constituency to contain parts of both East Sussex and West Sussex. We therefore proposed an East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency, the East Sussex portion of which was composed of wards from the west of the District of Wealden and the north of the District of Lewes.
105. We were able to propose minimal changes to the three constituencies in the City of Brighton and Hove. We proposed that Brighton Kempdown and Brighton Pavilion constituencies be changed only by transferring the Queen's Park ward from the former to the latter, and the Hanover and Elm Grove ward from the latter to the former. We retained the boundaries of the existing Hove constituency, though we proposed to rename this constituency Hove and Brighton West.
106. We proposed that the existing Hastings and Rye constituency be retained unchanged, other than to exclude the Brede & Udimore ward, and minor other changes to realign to new local government ward boundaries. As a result of these changes, we proposed that the Bexhill and Battle constituency did not extend as far west as the existing constituency does. Instead, we proposed that the area around Heathfield be included in a Hailsham and Crowborough constituency comprising most of the eastern parts of the District of Wealden.
107. As we proposed that areas in the north of the District of Lewes be included in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency, we proposed that the Lewes constituency should extend further east to include the areas of Stone Cross and Willingdon - this allowed us to propose an Eastbourne constituency that was coterminous with the local authority of the same name.

Consultation on the initial proposals

108. We received a mixed response to our initial proposals for the City of Brighton and Hove. Though there was support for our approach of making minimal change to these three constituencies, and there was particular support for preserving their external boundaries, it was also felt that what changes we had

proposed were more than was strictly necessary. Our proposed name for the Hove and Brighton West constituency was particularly unpopular, with many responses suggesting that Hove and Portslade would be a preferable alternative name if any change were necessary at all. We also received a counter proposal which suggested, rather than exchanging the Queen's Park and Hanover and Elm Grove wards, that the latter ward could be split between Brighton Kemptown and Brighton Pavilion, thereby retaining the majority of both wards in their existing constituency. Some responses were also received which suggested that Peacehaven should be included in the name of the proposed Brighton Kemptown constituency to reflect the fact that this constituency extends beyond the city boundary.

109. Only a small number of responses were received concerning the proposed Hastings and Rye and Bexhill and Battle constituencies, though the majority were supportive of the minor changes which we proposed to both. The majority of responses concerning the proposed Hailsham and Crowborough constituency were part of a campaign which broadly supported our proposals, but suggested that this constituency also include the Hartfield ward, and be called Sussex Weald.
110. The proposed Eastbourne constituency was positively received, though some objections were made by residents of the Lower Willingdon and Upper Willingdon wards. Those that recognised that some changes were necessary in order to bring the Eastbourne constituency into the permitted electorate range generally supported pairing these wards with Polegate in the proposed Lewes constituency.
111. The inclusion of wards to the north of Lewes in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency was strongly opposed. Respondents felt that villages such as Barcombe and Plumpton were strongly connected to Lewes and lacked any such connections to areas in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency. We received a counter proposal which suggested retaining these northern wards in the Lewes constituency, facilitated by alternative pairings of Hailsham and Uckfield, and East Grinstead and Crowborough as the constituency containing parts of East Sussex and West Sussex in this configuration.

Revised proposals

112. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for East Sussex.
113. Our Assistant Commissioners agreed that the initial proposals for the City of Brighton and Hove were unnecessarily disruptive. They therefore recommended a counter proposal to split the Hanover and Elm Grove ward between Brighton Kemptown and Brighton Pavilion, and include the entire Queen's Park ward in the Brighton Kemptown constituency. They also

considered seeking views on the exact boundary of the split ward would be valuable during the consultation on the revised proposals.

114. The Assistant Commissioners felt that the name Hove and Brighton West was clearly unsatisfactory, and they therefore recommended the alternative name Hove and Portslade as the most likely to command local support. The Assistant Commissioners also considered recommending renaming the Brighton Kemptown constituency to Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven; however, they did not feel that sufficient evidence had been received to recommend this change.
115. It was also accepted by our Assistant Commissioners that the ties of the Hartfield ward were closer to the Hailsham and Crowborough constituency than the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency. They therefore recommended that we transfer the Hartfield ward, and also amended the name of the Hailsham and Crowborough constituency to Sussex Weald.
116. Our Assistant Commissioners also considered making changes to the Lewes constituency to address concerns raised in consultation. Although they acknowledged that wards to the north of Lewes clearly share strong ties to the town, they were not persuaded that any counter proposal received would better reflect the statutory factors. They therefore recommended we retain the initial proposals for the Lewes constituency.
117. We agreed with all of the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners, and therefore we confirmed the initial proposals for the Bexhill and Battle, East Grinstead and Uckfield, Eastbourne, Hastings and Rye, and Lewes constituencies. We proposed changes to the boundaries of the proposed Brighton Kempton, Brighton Pavilion, East Grinstead and Uckfield, and Hailsham and Crowborough constituencies. We also proposed that the Hailsham and Crowborough and Hove and Brighton West constituencies be renamed Sussex Weald and Hove and Portslade respectively.

Consultation on the revised proposals

118. Our revised proposals for the City of Brighton and Hove were generally well received. In our revised proposals report, we suggested that the split of the Hanover and Elm Grove ward could be adjusted further to align to the Queen's Park Road, which representations had suggested was a natural topographical boundary - this suggestion was supported by several representations. We also requested representations on the subject of whether or not to change the name of the proposed Brighton Kemptown constituency to Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven. Again, responses we received on this question were largely supportive, as were responses to our revised name for the proposed Hove and Portslade constituency.
119. We did not receive any substantively new representations concerning the proposed Bexhill and Battle, Eastbourne, and Hastings and Rye constituencies.

A small number of representations were received supporting our revisions to the Sussex Weald constituency.

120. We received more than 400 responses objecting to our proposed Lewes constituency, far more than in the initial proposals consultation. These responses largely came from the Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey, Ditchling & Westmeston, and Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St. John wards, which we proposed be included in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency. We received a counter proposal which returned the latter two wards to the Lewes constituency, and transferred the Buxted ward from the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency to the Sussex Weald constituency. Another counter proposal replicated this proposal, but also included the Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey ward in Lewes, achieved by transferring the Hartfield ward from Sussex Weald to East Grinstead and Uckfield, thereby undoing a change made at the revised proposals stage. Both proposals additionally suggested that the Sussex Weald constituency include the Arlington ward, and the Bexhill and Battle constituency include the Stone Cross ward.

Final recommendations

121. Having considered the evidence, we propose changes to our revised proposals for East Sussex. We accept that the topography of Brighton shapes community ties on either side of Queen's Park Road, and as such we have adjusted our division of the Hanover and Elm Grove ward to align the boundary between the Brighton Kemptown and Brighton Pavilion constituencies to this road. We are also persuaded that Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven would be a more appropriate name, recognising that this constituency extends considerably beyond the boundary of Brighton.
122. We also note the large numbers of objections to our revised proposals for the Lewes constituency. We noted counter proposals which suggested that the Arlington ward be transferred to the Sussex Weald constituency, and the Stone Cross ward be transferred to the Bexhill and Battle constituency; however, we have not recommended these changes be made as there is little evidence in representations that such a change would be welcome, and these changes are not necessary to address the substantive issue, namely the exclusion of wards north of Lewes from the Lewes constituency.
123. We accept that the ties of the Ditchling & Westmeston; Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St. John; and Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey wards are to Lewes, and note that all three wards are part of the existing Lewes constituency. We note, however that it is not possible to recommend that all three wards be part of the Lewes constituency without disrupting the Sussex Weald constituency, and that including any subset of these wards in the Lewes constituency would result in poor internal connectivity in at least one of the East Grinstead and Uckfield and Lewes constituencies. Our investigations identified that while the Ditchling & Westmeston; Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St. John wards could be included in the Lewes constituency, we had concerns that the road access of these wards to Lewes was directly through the village of Offham, which is part of the neighbouring Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey ward, or

through the Brighton Pavilion constituency, via Ditchling Road, which traverses the geographic feature of Ditchling Beacon. We also identified that the Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey ward could be included in the Lewes constituency, but considered this would then isolate the areas of Ditchling and Plumpton from other parts in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency. Finally, we investigated whether the issues could be resolved by splitting the Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey between constituencies. However, splitting a ward in this instance would not provide wider benefits across East Sussex. On balance, therefore, we feel that the best available option is to retain the revised proposals for these constituencies.

124. Our final recommendations in East Sussex are therefore for constituencies of Bexhill and Battle, Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven, Brighton Pavilion, Eastbourne, East Grinstead and Uckfield, Hastings and Rye, Hove and Portslade, Lewes, and Sussex Weald. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

West Sussex

Initial proposals

125. Of the eight existing constituencies in West Sussex, two are within the permitted electorate range (Crawley and East Worthing and Shoreham), and the remaining six are all above (Arundel and South Downs, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex, and Worthing West). We retained the Crawley constituency wholly unchanged in the initial proposals.
126. As discussed above, we proposed that the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency contain parts of both East Sussex and West Sussex. The West Sussex portion of this constituency comprised ten wards in the north of the District of Mid Sussex the remainder of which we proposed be included in the Mid Sussex constituency. We proposed that the Horsham constituency contain only wards from the District of Horsham, and therefore our proposals for this constituency extended it slightly further south than the existing constituency, to include the Cowfold, Shermanbury & West Grinstead ward.
127. As it was necessary for the remaining five constituencies in West Sussex to have a very high average electorate, substantial changes to the existing pattern of constituencies was necessary. In particular, we decided to propose Arundel and Littlehampton and Shoreham constituencies which combined coastal areas with areas of the South Downs. We also proposed a Worthing constituency which contained the majority of the Borough of Worthing.
128. We proposed a Bognor Regis constituency which extended to the west to include the North Mundham & Tangmere, Selsey South, and Sidelsham with Selsey North wards. Other than these wards, and the Fittleworth ward which we proposed in the Arundel and Littlehampton constituency, we proposed that the Chichester constituency contain the remainder of the District of Chichester .

Consultation on the initial proposals

129. Our proposed East Grinstead and Uckfield and Mid Sussex constituencies attracted a mixed response. As elsewhere in the South East region, there was opposition to the principle of constituencies containing parts of more than one administrative county, though some representations noted that East Grinstead was historically part of East Sussex. Our proposal to extend the Mid Sussex constituency further south to incorporate Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint was well received, with respondents commenting that this arrangement would be an improvement on the existing pattern of constituencies, which includes these towns in the Arundel and South Downs constituency. Responses from the north of the proposed Mid Sussex constituency were more negative, particularly from the rural wards of Ardingly and Balcombe and High Weald. We received a counter proposal to include these wards in the Mid Sussex constituency, and instead transfer the Hassocks ward to the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency.
130. We received a small number of representations concerning the proposed Crawley and Horsham constituencies, but those comments we did receive were broadly positive. The remaining five constituencies in West Sussex collectively attracted more than 1,300 representations, the vast majority of which were in opposition to our proposals. The pairing of the built up coastal conurbation with areas of the South Downs in the Arundel and Littlehampton and Shoreham constituencies was particularly unpopular. Responses, particularly from the Pulborough, Coldwaltham & Amberley, Storrington & Washington, and West Chiltington, Thakeham & Ashington wards expressed a strong preference for being included in a single constituency focused on the South Downs.
131. The inclusion of the North Mundham & Tangmere, Selsey South, and Sidelsham with Selsey North wards in the Bognor Regis constituency was also vehemently opposed, on the grounds that the initial proposals broke local ties on the Manhood Peninsula. Responses from these wards emphasised a strong preference for retaining existing links to the Chichester constituency.
132. The proposed Worthing constituency received a mixed response. While some responses were supportive of the idea of including the majority of the Worthing borough in a single constituency, some responses noted that including the Cokeham and Peverel wards in this constituency meant that the Adur local authority area was unnecessarily divided, and also that two Worthing borough wards needed to be excluded from the proposed Worthing constituency rather than one.
133. We received several counter proposals concerning the constituencies in this area. Some counter proposals made relatively limited suggestions, such as transferring the Pulborough, Coldwaltham & Amberley and Storrington & Washington wards to the Arundel and Littlehampton constituency; the Cokeham, Peverel, and Offington wards to the Shoreham constituency; and the Salvington ward to the Worthing constituency. Others proposed a more substantial reconfiguration of constituencies in West Sussex, with the aim of better reflecting the existing constituencies.

Revised proposals

134. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for West Sussex.
135. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the response to the Crawley and Horsham constituencies was broadly positive, and therefore they recommended that the initial proposals be retained for these constituencies. They considered recommending that the Ardingly and Balcombe and High Weald wards be included in the Mid Sussex constituency; however, they did not feel that including the Hassocks ward in East Grinstead and Uckfield would be an acceptable consequence of accepting this proposal. They therefore also recommended that we retain the initial proposals for the Mid Sussex constituency, and the West Sussex portion of the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency.
136. The large response to our initial proposals for the Arundel and South Downs, Bognor Regis, Chichester, Shoreham, and Worthing constituencies was noted, and it was felt by our Assistant Commissioners that significant revisions to these constituencies were necessary to reflect the level of concern raised in consultation. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the two salient issues were the division of the Manhood Peninsula, and the need to restore a single constituency containing the majority of the rural South Downs; however, they felt that no counter proposal successfully resolved both issues without introducing unacceptable new issues.
137. Drawing on ideas from several counter proposals, the Assistant Commissioners recommended their own proposals for these constituencies. This proposal retained the existing East Worthing and Shoreham constituency unchanged, and restored the existing pairing of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, and now also included the town of Rustington in this constituency. The Arundel and South Downs constituency recommended in this scheme extended further west than the existing constituency to include wards in the north of the Chichester district. In order to keep all proposed constituencies within the permitted electorate range, the Assistant Commissioners proposed splits of the Goodwood and Felpham East wards.
138. We agreed with all of the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners, and therefore we confirmed the initial proposals for the Crawley, Horsham, and Mid Sussex constituencies, and the West Sussex portion of the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituencies. We made revised proposals for the Arundel and South Downs, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, Chichester, East Worthing and Shoreham, and Worthing West constituencies.

Consultation on the revised proposals

139. During the revised proposals consultation phase, we received around 200 representations concerning the Ardingly and Balcombe and High Weald wards, far more than in the earlier consultation phases. The counter proposal to

include these wards in the Mid Sussex constituency, and instead include the Hassocks ward in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency was again advanced, though this was also explicitly opposed by a number of other representations. We received very few new representations concerning the proposed Crawley and Horsham constituencies.

140. The remaining five constituencies in West Sussex again attracted the largest response of anywhere in the South East region, more than 1,000 representations in total. Our revised proposal to retain the East Worthing and Shoreham constituency wholly unchanged received a mixed response. While we received several representations which expressed support for this constituency having a singularly coastal focus, we received a surprising number of representations which suggested returning to a pattern of constituencies similar to the initial proposals. Responses to our proposed Worthing West constituency mainly focused on opposition to the inclusion of the rural Angmering & Findon ward, which many felt was more suited to the Arundel and South Downs constituency.
141. The response to our revised Arundel and South Downs constituency was highly positive from residents of the existing constituency; however, this was offset by considerable opposition to the revised Chichester constituency. Respondents suggested that the Easebourne, Fernhurst, Harting, and Midhurst wards do not have a shared community of interest with the rest of the South Downs. Our proposal to split the Goodwood ward was particularly unpopular, particularly as it divided the Goodwood estate between two constituencies. Many representations suggested that Pagham and Bersted would be a poor fit in the Chichester constituency, albeit this argument was only rarely advanced by residents of these wards themselves.
142. We again received a number of counter proposals for these constituencies. These proposals differed in a number of ways, but broadly agreed that the Chichester constituency should contain additional wards to the north, including some or all of the Eastbourne, Goodwood, Harting, and Midhurst wards, and that the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency should contain the Bersted and Pagham wards. Several of these proposals made alternative suggestions for split wards, including some which deviated from polling district boundaries.

Final recommendations

143. Having considered the evidence, we propose changes to our proposals for Arundel and South Downs, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, Chichester, and Worthing West. We note the strong objections to our revised proposals from residents to the north of Chichester, particularly to our division of the Goodwood ward, which would split the Goodwood estate between constituencies. We note the broad consensus of the several counter proposals received that the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton and Worthing West

constituencies should remain fundamentally unchanged, with ward splits suggested to balance the very high electorates in this part of the region.

144. We therefore propose that the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency is retained unchanged, except for the Yapton ward, which we propose to divide, transferring the villages of Yapton and Ford to Arundel and South Downs, and part of the Rustington West ward, the northern polling districts of which we propose be included in this constituency instead of Worthing West, which is otherwise also unchanged. Making these changes allows us to return the Goodwood, Harting, and Midhurst wards to the Chichester constituency, as well as most of the Easbourne ward (which is also divided in our final recommendations). Additionally, reflecting the balance of representations received, as well as the existing constituency boundaries, the Angmering & Findon ward is included in the Arundel and South Downs constituency, and the Pagham and Bersted wards are included in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency.
145. We recognise that under this pattern of constituencies the town of Rustington is divided between constituencies. However, as previously set out, dividing wards in West Sussex is required in order to ensure all constituencies are within the permitted electorate range. The proposed split of the Rustington West ward ensures that the coastal area to the south continues to be part of the Worthing West constituency. Our proposed constituencies also result in the District of Arun being divided now between three constituencies, rather than four in our revised proposals and also results in a pattern of constituencies across West Sussex which more closely resembles the existing pattern.
146. We considered again whether changes could be made to the boundary between the East Grinstead and Uckfield and Mid Sussex constituencies. While we acknowledge that community ties in the Mid Sussex district are broken by the necessity of a constituency which contains parts of West Sussex and East Sussex, particularly in places such as Handcross at the extremity of the Ardingly and Balcombe ward, we note the broad support for the Mid Sussex constituency, and correspondingly the lack of evidence that the Hassocks ward would be a better fit in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency than areas in the north of the Mid Sussex district.
147. Our final recommendations in West Sussex are therefore for constituencies of Arundel and South Downs, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, Chichester, Crawley, East Worthing and Shoreham, Horsham, Mid Sussex, and Worthing West. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Isle of Wight

Initial proposals

148. As set out in the legislation, the Isle of Wight is specifically allocated two whole constituencies, which do not have to be within the permitted electorate range.

While it is not stipulated that the two constituencies must have similar sized electorates, we considered that it would be a sound principle to seek to divide the island's electors broadly equally when formulating our initial proposals.

149. We considered various options for the Isle of Wight, and concluded that a division of the island into East and West would be most likely to command local support. We therefore proposed East Isle of Wight and West Isle of Wight constituencies, a key feature of which was the use of the River Medina as a natural boundary in the north of the island.

Consultation on the initial proposals

150. During consultation on the initial proposals, the principle of dividing the Isle of Wight on an east/west basis was broadly supported. We did receive a counter proposal which suggested a north/south division, broadly aligning with the former Medina and South Wight local authorities; however, we also received several responses opposing this approach.
151. Our proposed boundary between the two constituencies; however, was unpopular. Responses indicated a strong community of interest between Cowes and East Cowes, despite the boundary of the River Medina, and some also noted that including the Fairlee & Whippingham ward in the proposed East Isle of Wight constituency divided the town of Newport, the largest settlement in the West Isle of Wight constituency.
152. Several respondents submitted an identical counter proposal, which suggested including the East Cowes, Fairlee & Whippingham, and Osborne wards in the West Isle of Wight constituency, and the Newchurch, Havenstreet & Ashey, Ventnor & St Lawrence, and Wroxall, Lowtherville & Bonchurch wards in the East Isle of Wight constituency. We received many other responses endorsing this counter proposal.
153. As well as dissatisfaction with our proposed boundary on the Isle of Wight, we also received representations concerning the names of the two constituencies. We received a number of suggestions, though by far the most common was to use the compass point indicators as suffixes rather than prefixes, and thus call the constituencies Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West.

Revised proposals

154. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for the Isle of Wight.
155. Noting that several respondents had independently arrived at the same counter proposal, and the widespread support it received in other representations, our Assistant Commissioners recommended including the East Cowes, Fairlee & Whippingham, and Osborne wards in the western constituency, and the

Newchurch, Havenstreet & Ashey, Ventnor & St Lawrence, and Wroxall, Lowtherville & Bonchurch wards in the eastern constituency. They also felt that Isle of Wight West and Isle of Wight East would be more appropriate names for these two constituencies than those initially proposed.

156. We agreed with these recommendations from Assistant Commissioners, and therefore made revised proposals for Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West constituencies.

Consultation on the revised proposals

157. We note that by far the most frequently made point in the revised proposals consultation was opposition to the principle of dividing the island in two constituencies; however, as the legislation stipulates that two constituencies must be allocated to the Isle of Wight, we are unable to address this concern.
158. Those that commented specifically on our proposed constituencies were broadly supportive of our revised proposals. We received three counter proposals during this consultation phase, including one which suggested that we revert to the initial proposals, and another which proposed an alternative north/south division of the island.

Final recommendations

159. In light of the broad support for our revised proposals, we are not recommending any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for the Isle of Wight. Our final recommendations are therefore for constituencies of Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Kent

Initial proposals

160. Of the 17 existing constituencies in Kent, ten are within the permitted electorate range, and the remaining seven, Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Folkestone and Hythe, Rochester and Strood, Sittingbourne and Sheppey, and Tonbridge and Malling are all above the permitted range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed two constituencies, Gillingham and Rainham and Gravesham, to be wholly unchanged from their existing configurations, and two further constituencies, Canterbury and Dover and Deal to be changed only to realign with changes to local government wards, though we did amend the name of the latter to recognise that the two towns are similarly sized.
161. We additionally recommended three constituencies with minimal changes to remain wholly within their existing boundaries. We proposed a Rochester and Strood constituency which excluded the Rochester South and Horsted ward, a Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituency which excluded the West Downs and

Teynham and Lynsted wards, and a Tunbridge Wells constituency which excluded the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst ward, but all three were otherwise unchanged from their existing configurations.

162. As the existing Dartford constituency above the permitted electorate range, we proposed that the Darenth and Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley wards be included in the proposed Sevenoaks constituency, and that the Hartley and Hodsoll Street ward be included in the proposed Tonbridge constituency. We additionally proposed that the Ash and New Ash Green ward be transferred from the existing Sevenoaks constituency to the proposed Tonbridge constituency.
163. We proposed to pair the towns of Maidstone and Malling in a single constituency. This configuration necessitated the inclusion of the Aylesford South and Ditton wards from the existing Chatham and Aylesford constituency, which was otherwise changed only by the inclusion of the Rochester South and Horsted ward.
164. The allocation of 18 constituencies to Kent meant that it was necessary to propose a constituency without an obvious predecessor. We proposed that this constituency be comprised of the majority of the rural area of the Ashford local authority, as well as areas in the south of the Maidstone local authority, and in the east of the Tunbridge Wells local authority, to be called Weald of Kent. Four wards from the existing Faversham and Mid Kent constituency were proposed to be transferred to the Weald of Kent constituency, we proposed to balance the electorate of the proposed Faversham and Mid Kent constituency by including the Charing, Downs North, and Downs West wards, as well as the Teynham and Lynsted and West Downs wards discussed above.
165. As a consequence of our initial proposals for Faversham and Mid Kent and Weald of Kent, it was necessary to reorientate the existing Ashford constituency. We proposed that this constituency should extend east from the town of Ashford to include the wards of Bircholt, North Downs West, and North Downs East. Other than the transfer of these three wards to the proposed Ashford constituency, and the transfer of the Saxon Shore ward to the proposed Weald of Kent constituency, our proposed Folkestone and Hythe constituency was unchanged from the existing constituency.
166. Although both the existing North Thanet and South Thanet constituencies are within the permitted electorate range, changes to local government boundaries in the Canterbury local authority meant that it is not possible to retain the existing constituencies without splitting wards. We therefore proposed a compact East Thanet constituency, including the wards of Dane Valley, Margate Central, and Salmestone, and a rural West Thanet constituency including the wards of Little Stour and Ashstone and Sandwich.

Consultation on the initial proposals

167. During the initial proposals consultation, our proposals to retain the existing Gravesham and Gillingham and Rainham constituencies were received favourably, with the latter in particular attracting a sizable petition in support of our proposals. Our proposals for only minor changes to the Dover and Deal and Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituencies were similarly well received, with particular support for our proposed name in the former case.
168. Our proposed Canterbury constituency was well received other than by the residents of the Sturry ward, which we proposed be included in the West Thanet constituency. Residents of this ward argued that their community and local government ties are much closer with Canterbury than with Thanet. Other issues were raised concerning the proposals for West Thanet, including a lack of physical and community connectivity between the north and east Kent coasts, and the fact that such a constituency would contain parts of three local authorities. Our proposed East Thanet constituency; however, was received much more positively, with some comments suggesting that our proposals represented an improvement on the existing configuration, which divides Margate between constituencies. We received a counter proposal which suggested exchanging the Margate Central and Dane Valley wards for the Little Stour and Ashstone and Sandwich wards, which would restore the existing north/south configuration of constituencies in Thanet, with Salmestone being the only whole ward in a different constituency compared with the existing configuration.
169. Our proposal to exclude the Rochester South and Horsted ward from the Rochester and Strood constituency, and include this ward in Chatham and Aylesford, drew a mixed response. While some agreed with our initial proposals that this ward is the best to remove to bring the Rochester and Strood constituency within the permitted range, we also received a counter proposal that suggested that the River ward would be a better alternative to limit the division of Rochester. We received arguments for and against both propositions during the initial consultation phase.
170. We received a small number of representations concerning the proposed Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge constituencies, but those we did receive generally opposed our proposals. Most strongly opposed was the inclusion of the Darenth and Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley wards in the proposed Sevenoaks constituency - respondents noted that the former could be retained in the Dartford constituency without requiring consequential changes, and a counter proposal received proposed splitting the latter to retain as much within the Dartford constituency as possible. Similarly, respondents from the Ash and New Ash Green and Hartley and Hodsoll Street wards expressed a preference for being included in the Sevenoaks constituency instead of the proposed Tonbridge constituency, even though the latter is not part of the existing Sevenoaks constituency.
171. There was also a mixed but mostly negative response to our proposed Maidstone and Malling constituency. While a minority of supportive representations suggested there were strong links between the two towns, a greater number suggested that the former has closer ties to areas such as

Bearsted to the east, and the latter has a more rural focus, and thus should remain connected with Tonbridge, as in the existing scheme of constituencies.

172. The proposed Weald of Kent constituency was generally well received, except for the inclusion of the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst ward, which a small number of respondents felt disrupted the existing Tunbridge Wells constituency unnecessarily. We received a number of counter proposals suggesting wards which could be added to the Weald of Kent constituency from the proposed Faversham and Mid Kent constituency, in order to allow the existing Tunbridge Wells constituency to be retained wholly unchanged. One such proposal was to include the Charing, Downs North, and Downs West in the Weald of Kent constituency, given that the response to including these wards in the initially proposed Faversham and Mid Kent constituency was broadly negative.
173. Almost all the responses received concerning our proposed Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe constituencies came from the North Downs East and North Downs West wards, and were universally negative. Such representations argued that settlements such as Hawkinge and Lyminge are closely tied to Folkestone and have no community of interest with Ashford.

Revised proposals

174. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for Kent.
175. Our Assistant Commissioners agreed that the initial proposals unnecessarily disrupted the Tunbridge Wells constituency, which could have been proposed wholly unchanged. They therefore recommended we include the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst ward in the Tunbridge Wells constituency, and the Charing, Downs North, and Downs West wards in the Weald of Kent constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered whether further changes to the Weald of Kent constituency could be recommended to alleviate the concerns raised about the inclusion of the North Downs East and North Downs West ward in the proposed Ashford constituency. However, they concluded that, despite the opposition received, the initial proposals were the best way of sufficiently reducing the electorate of the Folkestone and Hythe constituency.
176. Consideration was also given as to whether or not to recommend changes to our initial proposals for constituencies in Thanet. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that it would be possible to retain the existing north/south division of these two constituencies; however, they felt that the resulting division of Margate would be unacceptable given the positive representations received concerning the East Thanet constituency. They therefore recommended retaining the initial proposals for East and West Thanet, though they did recommend that we adopt the name Herne Bay and Sandwich to reflect both coastlines of this proposed constituency.
177. Our Assistant Commissioners noted the several objections to the proposed Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge constituencies; however, they considered

that it would not be possible to meaningfully improve these constituencies with respect to the statutory factors without disrupting the neighbouring Gravesham constituency, which was proposed both unchanged from the existing constituency and coterminous with the Borough of Gravesend. In particular, they did not feel that there was justification for splitting wards in this area. They therefore recommended that the initial proposals be retained for these constituencies. Although the Assistant Commissioners noted concern over the exclusion of the Rochester South and Horsted from the Rochester and Strood constituency, they did not feel that including the River ward in Chatham and Aylesford instead would address concerns over the division of Rochester. They therefore recommended that the initial proposals be retained for these constituencies too.

178. We agreed with all of the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners, and therefore we confirmed the initial proposals for fourteen constituencies in Kent, and the boundaries of the West Thanet constituency, though we proposed the name of this constituency be revised to Herne Bay and Sandwich. We proposed revisions to the boundaries of three proposed constituencies (Faversham and Mid Kent, Tunbridge Wells, and Weald of Kent).

Consultation on the revised proposals

179. Our revisions to the proposed Faversham and Mid Kent and Weald of Kent constituencies attracted very few representations, though there was some support for our revised proposal to retain the existing Tunbridge Wells constituency wholly unchanged. We received a small number of representations suggesting that the Leeds ward be included in Faversham and Mid Kent instead of Weald of Kent, in order to better reflect the existing pattern of constituencies.
180. The proposed East Thanet and Herne Bay and Sandwich constituencies again drew a mixed response, the former being broadly well received and the latter largely opposed, with little sense that the name change which we proposed to the latter constituency had meaningfully alleviated concerns about its lack of internal connectivity. We received an amended counter proposal which proposed retaining the existing North Thanet and South Thanet constituencies unchanged except for small changes to realign to new local government ward boundaries. This proposal included a split of the Sturry ward, including the area south of the railway line in the Canterbury constituency. The breaking of ties between Sturry and Canterbury attracted a small number of representations in opposition to our proposals, as it had in the initial consultation phases. No new representations were received concerning the proposed Dover and Deal constituency.
181. As in the consultation on our initial proposals, the overwhelming majority of responses concerning the proposed Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe constituencies concerned the inclusion of the North Downs West and North Downs East wards in the former rather than the latter constituency. We received a new counter proposal which suggested retaining the northern part of the existing Folkestone and Hythe constituency unchanged by including the

New Romney, Romney Marsh, and Walland & Denge Marsh wards in the Ashford constituency.

182. Our decision to retain the initial proposals for the Chatham and Aylesford, Gillingham and Rainham, Gravesham, Rochester and Strood and Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituencies was broadly supported by the small number of responses we received concerning these constituencies.
183. We received additional representations concerning the proposed Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge constituencies, largely restating arguments made during consultation on the initial proposals. Although we did not propose any changes to our initial proposals for the Maidstone and Malling constituency, this constituency attracted a higher proportion of responses in the revised proposals consultation than previously. We received nearly 100 representations from the King's Hill and Wateringbury wards which suggested that community ties would be broken if the existing connection between this area and Tonbridge were to be ended.
184. Several counter proposals were received during the revised proposals consultation which suggested changes to our proposals in West Kent, including restating of counter proposals advocated during consultation on the initial proposals. Two different counter proposals suggested that the Darenth and Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley wards could be included in the Dartford constituency, and the Ash and New Ash Green and Hartley and Hodsoil Street wards could be included in the Sevenoaks constituency by including the Ebbsfleet ward in the Gravesham constituency, though these proposals disagreed on the consequential changes necessary for all constituencies to be within the permitted range. It was also noted that the Wateringbury ward could be included in the Tonbridge constituency with no other changes required, and that the King's Hill ward could also be included in Tonbridge if wider changes were made.

Final recommendations

185. Having considered the evidence received, we propose changes to our revised proposals for Kent. We noted that it may be possible to address concerns with our proposed Dartford, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge constituencies; however, resolving these issues required the inclusion of the Ebbsfleet ward in the Gravesham constituency. We had concerns with this proposal given Ebbsfleet had clear ties to Dartford and that it modified the unchanged Gravesham constituency which had been supported during the consultation periods. We noted, however, that the Darenth and Wateringbury wards could be included in the Dartford and Tonbridge constituencies respectively, without further changes to the pattern of constituencies. We therefore recommend both these changes, affecting the Dartford, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, and Maidstone and Malling constituencies.
186. We accept that including the Leeds ward in the Faversham and Mid Kent constituency, rather than in Weald of Kent, would better reflect the existing

pattern of constituencies, and so we have also accepted this counter proposal in our final recommendations.

187. We strongly considered dividing the Sturry ward in order to recommend that the existing North Thanet and South Thanet constituencies be retained with only minimal changes. We acknowledge that doing so would better reflect the existing pattern of constituencies; however, we also note that the revised proposals for the Canterbury and East Thanet constituencies have been broadly well received. While we recognise that there may be a lack of community ties between the Little Stour and Ashstone and Sandwich wards and the rest of the proposed Herne Bay and Sandwich constituency, we are unpersuaded that this is a sufficient concern to justify dividing the Sturry ward. We have therefore confirmed our revised proposals for Canterbury, East Thanet, and Herne Bay and Sandwich as our final recommendations.
188. Our final recommendations in Kent are therefore for constituencies of Ashford, Canterbury, Chatham and Aylesford, Dartford, Dover and Deal, East Thanet, Faversham and Mid Kent, Folkestone and Hythe, Gillingham and Rainham, Gravesham, Herne Bay and Sandwich, Maidstone and Malling, Rochester and Strood, Sevenoaks, Sittingbourne and Sheppey, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, and Weald of Kent. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Oxfordshire

Initial proposals

189. All six existing constituencies in Oxfordshire are above the permitted electorate range, and therefore it is not possible to retain any constituency wholly unchanged. In our initial proposals, we were, however, able to propose two constituencies with only minor changes from their existing configurations. The boundaries of our proposed Henley and Oxford East constituencies were realigned to new local government boundaries, and the latter additionally no longer included the Holywell ward, but were otherwise unchanged in our initial proposals.
190. The size of the electorates in the towns of Banbury and Bicester are such that it is no longer possible to include both in the same constituency. We therefore proposed separate Banbury and Bicester constituencies, each containing parts of the District of Cherwell and District of West Oxfordshire. As a consequence, we proposed that the Witney constituency, which is currently coterminous with the District of West Oxfordshire, extend further south to include five wards from the District of Vale of White Horse.
191. As a result of the transfer of these wards, and some minor changes to realign to local government boundaries, the existing Wantage constituency could be brought within the permitted electorate range. We therefore proposed this constituency, although we proposed that it be called Didcot and Wantage to reflect the name of the larger settlement, and that the Marcham ward be

transferred to our proposed Oxford West and Abingdon constituency, to balance the loss of the Kidlington wards in the north to the proposed Bicester constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

192. By far the greatest response to our initial proposals for Oxfordshire concerned our proposals for the Bicester constituency. Respondents from the West Oxfordshire component of this constituency, particularly the Eynsham and Cassington, Freeland and Hanborough, and North Leigh wards, strongly opposed being included in this constituency, noting that these wards are much closer to Witney, which they currently share a constituency with, than Bicester. Despite this opposition, we only received one counter proposal which sought to address this issue, though this was highly disruptive to constituencies in the rest of the county. As well as the exclusion of communities to the north, the extension of our proposed Witney constituency to include areas to the south was opposed by respondents who felt that wards in the District of Vale of White Horse have few ties to Witney. This point was made particularly by residents of the Stanford ward, and we received a counter proposal which suggested that this ward be included in the Didcot and Wantage constituency, which otherwise attracted few representations.
193. Our proposed Banbury constituency received a mixture of responses. As with the proposed Bicester constituency, there was opposition to including District of West Oxfordshire wards in this constituency; however, some respondents suggested that it was sensible to propose a constituency that included both Banbury and Chipping Norton. We received support for the proposed constituencies of Oxford East and Oxford West and Abingdon, particularly our proposal to use the River Cherwell as a boundary between the two constituencies.
194. The majority of representations received concerning the proposed Henley constituency focused on the name rather than the boundaries of this constituency. A number of representations suggested, given that Thame is now the largest popular centre in this constituency, that Henley and Thame would be a more appropriate name.

Revised proposals

195. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for Oxfordshire.
196. Our Assistant Commissioners considered whether changes could be made to the proposed Witney constituency in order to reflect concerns raised. Though they accepted that the Eynsham and Cassington, Freeland and Hanborough, and North Leigh wards are more closely connected to Witney than to Bicester, they noted that including these wards in the Witney constituency would necessitate substantial changes to the scheme of constituencies in the rest of Oxfordshire. Considering the evidence received, our Assistant Commissioners

felt that no alternative would result in a better overall pattern of constituencies, and they therefore recommended we retain the boundaries of our initially proposed Bicester constituency. However, they also recommended the alternative name Bicester and Woodstock, in order to reflect the District of West Oxfordshire component of this constituency.

197. It was noted by our Assistant Commissioners that the Stanford ward could be included in the proposed Didcot and Wantage constituency without additional knock-on effects. Given the evidence we received on this point, they recommended that we make this change in our revised proposals.

198. Given the broad support for our initial proposals for the Banbury, Henley, Oxford East, and Oxford West and Abingdon constituencies, our Assistant Commissioners recommended we retain these constituencies in the revised proposals. While they did see merit in the proposal of renaming the proposed Henley constituency as Henley and Thame, they did not feel that the evidence received was sufficiently compelling to recommend a name change at this stage.

199. We agreed with all of the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners. We therefore confirmed the initial proposals for the four constituencies listed above, and the proposed Bicester constituency with the new name Bicester and Woodstock. We also made changes to the boundaries of the proposed Witney and Didcot and Wantage constituencies, with the inclusion of the Stanford ward in the Didcot and Wantage constituency.

Consultation on the revised proposals

200. We received a number of additional representations in opposition to including wards from the District of West Oxfordshire in the Banbury and Bicester and Woodstock constituencies, although we received no new counter proposals which included more of these wards in the proposed Witney constituency. Some representations additionally opposed our proposed name for the proposed Bicester and Woodstock constituency, suggesting that, as Kidlington is larger than Woodstock, Bicester and Kidlington would be preferable.

201. The inclusion of the Stanford ward in the proposed Didcot and Wantage constituency was well received by the small number of representations we received concerning this constituency. We received a counter proposal which suggested including the Sandford & the Wittenhams ward, which we proposed in the Didcot and Wantage constituency, in the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency, and including the Holywell ward in the Oxford East constituency. This counter proposal did not receive any representations in support of it, and the general response to our proposed Oxford East and Oxford West and Abingdon constituencies was again positive.

202. In our revised proposals report, we requested additional feedback on the question of whether or not to revise the name of the proposed Henley constituency to Henley and Thame. We received a small number of

representations on this matter, but those that we did receive were nearly unanimous in their support for the proposed name of Henley and Thame.

Final recommendations

203. Having considered the evidence, we are not recommending any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for Oxfordshire. Although we acknowledge the clear ties between Witney and the Eynsham and Cassington, Freeland and Hanborough, and North Leigh wards, we have not received any counter proposals which demonstrate how these wards could be included in the Witney constituency without considerable disruption to the rest of the county.
204. Similarly, we are not persuaded of the need to revise the name of the proposed Bicester and Woodstock constituency. While we accept that Kidlington has a greater population than Woodstock, we feel that it is important to recognise that this constituency contains parts of the District of Cherwell and District of West Oxfordshire. We are satisfied that Woodstock is the most recognisable settlement in the West Oxfordshire component of this constituency, and have therefore retained the name of the Bicester and Woodstock constituency in our final recommendations.
205. Having requested further submissions on the name of our proposed Henley constituency, we are persuaded that the name Henley and Thame would be more reflective of the balance of population in this constituency, and we have therefore adopted it as part of our final recommendations.
206. Our final recommendations in Oxfordshire are therefore for constituencies of Banbury, Bicester and Woodstock, Didcot and Wantage, Henley and Thame, Oxford East, Oxford West and Abingdon, and Witney. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the East Midlands region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the East Midlands region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 686 responses specific to the East Midlands region in this phase, giving a total of 4068 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: The Green Party and Labour Party either supported or accepted the Revised proposals in full. The Conservative Party either supported or accepted the majority of the proposals although did submit a counter proposal for part of Nottinghamshire and a part of Northamptonshire. The Liberal Democrat Party either supported or accepted the revised proposals in most cases, although reserved judgement in some instances and submitted counter proposals for part of Leicestershire and nearly all constituencies in Northamptonshire.

Derbyshire: Very few responses, raising no new issues.

Nottinghamshire: Most of the responses were either focused on the proposed constituencies of Ashfield and Mansfield and Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley. In the case of the proposed Ashfield and Mansfield constituencies some representations proposed reverting to the initial proposals for both constituencies. Alternative patterns were proposed in the case of Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley.

Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland: We received a mixture of support and opposition to the proposed constituency that included all of Rutland and parts of both Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. We received two counter proposals that sought to reconfigure the proposed constituencies of Melton and Syston, Mid Leicestershire, and Loughborough. In Lincolnshire, the majority of representations only commented on constituency names.

Northamptonshire: The pattern of constituencies in Northamptonshire was most commented on. These representations were focused on two areas - the division of the Corby Rural ward between the Corby and East Northamptonshire, and Kettering constituencies and the pattern of constituencies in Northampton. A counter proposal was received which sought to reconfigure the pattern of constituencies to resolve the issues in respect of the split of the Corby Rural ward. In Northampton the representations that opposed the revised proposals suggested reverting to the configuration of constituencies put forward in the initial proposals.

East Midlands

1. The East Midlands currently has 46 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 17 have electorates within the permitted range. The electorates of seven constituencies currently fall below the permitted range, while the electorates of 22 constituencies are above. Our proposals increase the number of constituencies in the region by one, to 47.
2. The East Midlands comprises the counties of Derbyshire (including the City of Derby), Leicestershire (including the City of Leicester and County of Rutland), Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire (including the City of Nottingham), and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for the East Midlands — Peter Fish CB and Alison Blom-Cooper — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Nottingham: 7- 8 March 2022
 - Leicester: 10-11 March 2022
 - Northampton: 14-15 March 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the East Midlands of 3,481,126 results in it being entitled to 47 constituencies, an increase of one. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
5. We noted that Northamptonshire's electorate of just under 530,000 results in a mathematical entitlement^[LMJ1] ^[LMJ2] of 7.22 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate the county seven constituencies and treated it

as a stand-alone sub-region. Similarly, we noted that Derbyshire (including the City of Derby) has an electorate of 790,982, which results in an entitlement of 10.78 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate 11 constituencies to Derbyshire and Derby, the same as the existing allocation, and treat it as a stand-alone sub-region also.

6. The combined electorate of Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham is just over 823,000, which results in the area being mathematically entitled to 11.29 constituencies, the same as the existing number, and we again decided to treat it as a sub-region.
7. Lincolnshire has an electorate of 551,904, resulting in a mathematical entitlement of 7.52 constituencies. Therefore, it was necessary to pair Lincolnshire with a neighbouring constituency in order to develop a pattern of constituencies that all remain within the permitted electorate range. We identified that Rutland had a mathematical entitlement of 0.41 constituencies, which when paired with Lincolnshire resulted in a mathematical entitlement of 7.93 constituencies. We therefore proposed allocating eight constituencies to a sub-region formed of Lincolnshire and Rutland together.
8. In formulating our initial proposals we recognised that Rutland presently was included in a sub-region with Leicestershire (including the City of Leicester) but this was not necessary, given that Leicestershire and the City of Leicester, with an electorate of 754,549, resulted in a mathematical entitlement of 10.28. We therefore proposed allocating Leicestershire (including the City of Leicester) ten constituencies and treating it as a stand-alone sub-region.
9. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. We did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions with an alternative arrangement suggested as:
 - a sub-region which comprised the areas of Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire
 - a sub-region which comprised the areas of Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire

10. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose an alternative sub-region of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, particularly given the little changes required to the existing constituencies in Derbyshire. However, we were persuaded by the evidence received to adopt an alternative sub-region combining Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire. We considered that this sub-region allowed for improvements to the initial proposals in respect of the statutory factors.
11. In response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we adopted in our revised proposals. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:
 - Derbyshire (including City of Derby);
 - Leicestershire (including City of Leicester), Rutland, and Lincolnshire;
 - Nottinghamshire (including City of Nottingham); and
 - Northamptonshire.

Derbyshire

Initial proposals

12. Of the 11 existing constituencies in Derbyshire, eight were within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed retaining five existing constituencies: Chesterfield, Derby North, Derby South, Erewash and High Peak - although we proposed renaming the Erewash constituency Ilkeston and Long Eaton to reflect the main population centres of the constituency. Additionally, we proposed retaining the existing constituencies of Amber Valley, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire, with minor modifications to reflect changes to local government ward boundaries.
13. The existing constituencies of Mid Derbyshire and Derbyshire Dales both fell below the permitted electorate range and the existing constituency of South Derbyshire was above the permitted electorate range. As part of our

initial proposals, we therefore proposed that the South West Parishes ward be included in the Mid Derbyshire constituency, and the wards of Hilton and Hatton be included in the Derbyshire Dales constituency, which would then bring all three constituencies within the permitted electorate range.

Consultation on the initial proposals

14. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed composition of constituencies across Derbyshire was broadly supported, although we did receive a significant number of representations that objected to the name of the proposed Ilkeston and Long Eaton constituency, with respondents (both nationally and locally) suggesting that the current name of Erewash should be retained.
15. We did receive some opposition to the proposed High Peak and Derbyshire Dales constituencies, with the counter proposal that the ward of Bradwell should be included in the High Peak constituency. We also received some opposition to the proposed minor changes to the Derbyshire Dales, Mid Derbyshire and South Derbyshire constituencies to bring them within the permitted electorate range. The focus of these representations was to retain the wards of Hatton and Hilton in the South Derbyshire constituency.
16. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence received and they were not persuaded to recommend to us changes to the boundaries of the proposed constituencies in the county. They considered that doing so in the manner suggested in the counter proposals received would require substantial changes to a number of existing constituencies which would otherwise remain unchanged. However, they did recommend that the proposed constituency of Ilkeston and Long Eaton should retain the name Erewash. We agreed with their proposal.

Revised proposals

17. Our revised proposals for Derbyshire were, therefore, identical boundaries to those put forward in our initial proposals, although they now included the constituency name of Erewash.

Consultation on the revised proposals

18. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we continued to receive support for our proposed constituencies in Derbyshire, including support for our proposal to revert to the original constituency name of Erewash. We again received some objection to the inclusion of the Hatton and Hilton ward in the South Derbyshire constituency.

Final recommendations

19. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries or names of any of our proposed constituencies in Derbyshire. We do not consider that any further evidence or argument has been provided that might justify changing the constitution of our revised constituencies. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derby North, Derby South, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash, High Peak, Mid Derbyshire, North East Derbyshire, and South Derbyshire. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Nottinghamshire

Initial proposals

20. Of the existing 11 constituencies in Nottinghamshire, three were within the permitted electorate range: Broxtowe, Newark and Gedling. Two, Nottingham East and Nottingham North, fell below the range and six (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Nottingham South, Rushcliffe, and Sherwood) were above. Under our initial proposals we proposed changes to all the existing constituencies in Nottinghamshire. We proposed reconfigured Nottingham East and Nottingham South constituencies, both of which included only wards from the City of Nottingham. Our proposed Nottingham North and Kimberley constituency included six City of Nottingham wards and three wards from the Borough of Broxtowe (Watnall & Nuthall West, Kimberley, and Nuthall East & Strelley). As a result of this configuration, we proposed a Broxtowe constituency which ran further north than the existing one, to include the wards covering the community of Eastwood.
21. As the existing Ashfield constituency was below the permitted electorate range and the Mansfield constituency was above, we proposed including

the District of Mansfield wards of Brick Kiln and Grange Farm in the Ashfield constituency, which brought both constituencies within the permitted electorate range. In the remainder of the county, we proposed minor changes to the existing constituencies, including in some cases just to realign them with new local government ward boundaries: this was the case for the proposed Gedling, Rushcliffe and Sherwood constituencies. We included the District of Bassetlaw wards of Clayworth and Sutton in the proposed Newark constituency, which brought the Newark and Bassetlaw constituencies within the permitted electorate range. We also proposed renaming the Bassetlaw constituency Worksop and Retford, in order to reflect the main population centres included in the constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

22. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received some support for our proposed constituencies in Nottinghamshire. We received opposition to the proposed Nottingham North and Kimberley constituency, particularly the inclusion of the Borough of Broxtowe wards of Kimberley, Nuthall East & Strelley and Watnall & Nuthall West in the constituency. Some respondents objected to this proposal as it would include different communities in the same constituency and this part of Broxtowe was physically divided from Nottingham. The counter proposal received was to include the above three wards in the Broxtowe constituency and instead reconfigure the Nottingham North and Kimberley and Nottingham South constituencies, including the proposal to include the wards of Beeston Central, Beeston North and Beeston Rylands in the Nottingham South constituency. This counter proposal was supported locally, particularly by respondents from the Kimberley area. However, we also received support for our initial proposals with a number of representations concerned that the counter proposal divided the area of Beeston between constituencies.
23. We also received some opposition to our proposed Mansfield constituency, particularly that the wards of Brick Kiln and Grange Farm were in close proximity to Mansfield and thus should be included in the same constituency as the town. A number of counter proposals were received, some of which only sought changes between the Ashfield and Mansfield constituencies and some which also proposed changes to the neighbouring Sherwood constituency. However, we also received support for the initially proposed Mansfield constituency, with respondents

considering that this was the best solution available that was based on whole local government wards.

24. We received limited opposition to our proposed Newark constituency, with respondents suggesting that the District of Bassetlaw ward of Clayworth had close links with Retford and therefore should be included in the same constituency. The counter proposals received instead suggested that the Newark constituency could extend further north to include the ward of Beckingham. Our proposed name of Worksop and Retford was also opposed by respondents, with many of them suggesting the constituency should continue to be named Bassetlaw.
25. The remaining pattern of constituencies across Nottinghamshire was largely uncontroversial and generally supported. However, we did receive a proposal that the Sherwood constituency should be renamed Sherwood Forest.

Revised proposals

26. In light of the representations received, our Assistant Commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for Nottinghamshire.
27. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the initial proposals in Mansfield broke community ties, but after they visited the area to assess the alternative counter proposals, they were not persuaded by those alternative configurations that proposed changes between the Mansfield, Ashfield and Sherwood constituencies, as these alternatives divided the area of Hucknall. They considered that an alternative that included the wards of Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill and part of the Berry Hill ward was likely to better reflect community ties. Having considered the advice of our Assistant Commissioners, we adopted this alternative pattern of constituencies as part of our revised proposals.
28. Our Assistant Commissioners also considered the competing arguments in terms of the proposals for Broxtowe and Nottingham North. They observed after visiting the area that the counter proposal divided the Beeston area between constituencies. They recognised that the Kimberley, Nuthall and Watnall areas were a separate community to Nottingham, but combining two distinct areas in a single constituency was better than dividing one between constituencies. They therefore recommended no changes to our

initial proposals for either of these constituencies. We accepted their recommendations.

29. In light of the evidence received and advice from our Assistant Commissioners we did decide to amend the name of two proposed constituencies. We decided to rename the Sherwood constituency Sherwood Forest, as evidence received considered this name better reflected the whole area covered by the constituency. We also decided to retain the Worksop and Retford constituency's existing name of Bassetlaw as there was strong local support for this. We noted the concerns regarding Clayworth ward not being included in a Bassetlaw constituency, but considered that the reconfigurations required were too significant.
30. We did not propose any changes to our initially proposed constituencies of Gedling, Newark, Nottingham East, Nottingham South, and Rushcliffe.

Consultation on the revised proposals

31. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received broad support for the majority of the proposed constituencies. However, we did receive some opposition to the revised configuration of the Ashfield and Mansfield, and Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley constituencies.
32. In Ashfield and Mansfield, we received a counter proposal that we should revert to the initial proposals for these two constituencies. Proponents of this position considered that the District of Mansfield ward of Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill had poor road connections to the Ashfield constituency, with links via a rural road, whereas the wards of Brick Kiln and Grange Farm had good road connections to Ashfield along the A38. Residents of the Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill ward, particularly, in the eastern part of this ward, considered that they had close community ties with Mansfield.
33. Slightly south in the county, we received a counter proposal for the Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley constituencies. This counter proposal was different to those received during previous consultations, in that Beeston was no longer being divided between constituencies. The counter proposal sought to make a smaller change between the constituencies by proposing the division of the Watnall and Nuthall West ward, in order to include all of Greasley Parish in the

Broxtowe constituency. We also received some representations that advocated we adopt the counter proposal for the Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley constituencies, as outlined above.

34. We received a limited number of representations that commented on the proposed name of the Sherwood Forest constituency. Those that opposed the constituency name considered the change unnecessary. Our proposal to revert to the name Bassetlaw in our revised proposals was broadly supported.

Final recommendations

35. Having considered the evidence received, we are not recommending any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for Nottinghamshire. We noted the representations regarding whether we should revert to our initial proposals for the Ashfield and Mansfield constituencies. As we have set out above, the existing constituency of Mansfield is too large and therefore it must be reconfigured. During all consultations we have received evidence identifying local community ties in the area but it has not been possible to satisfy all the responses received.
36. We considered the different arguments and evidence received in regards to our initial and revised proposals for the Ashfield and Mansfield constituencies. In both cases, we received evidence suggesting that the area we proposed be transferred from the existing Mansfield constituency to Ashfield shared community ties with neighbouring parts of Mansfield. We also considered the evidence in regards to the road connections of the wards of Bull Farm and Pleasley Hill, Brick Kiln, and Grange Farm. We also considered the pattern of existing constituencies and that the initial proposal transferred a far greater number of electors from the existing Mansfield constituency. Having considered the evidence received during all consultations, we have decided to retain our revised proposals as our final recommendations. We consider that this pattern of constituencies achieves the best balance of the statutory factors.
37. We also reflected on the arguments put forward in regards to reconfiguring the Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley constituencies. We believe that splitting the Watnall and Nuthall West ward between constituencies would likely break community ties, particularly as the boundary proposed for the split ward would divide a number of residential

properties on Larkfield Road. Furthermore, in light of evidence received during the initial consultation, we consider that this split would likely break community ties between Kimberley, Nuthall and Watnall.

38. Finally, we have considered whether to amend the names of any constituencies in the sub-region. We note that some respondents considered that we should return to the constituency name Sherwood as opposed to our revised proposal of Sherwood Forest. We have decided to retain the name Sherwood Forest as part of our final recommendations as this has been supported locally.
39. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are therefore for constituencies of: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark, Nottingham East, Nottingham North and Kimberley, Nottingham South, Rushcliffe, and Sherwood Forest. The areas contained by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Leicestershire, Rutland, and Lincolnshire

40. As set out earlier in the sub-region report, under our initial proposals Lincolnshire and Rutland formed a sub-region, with Leicestershire forming a separate sub-region. However, in response to representations on the initial proposals, we decided to modify our sub-regions in this part of the East Midlands and our revised proposals were for a combined Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire sub-region.
41. This sub-region included one constituency - Rutland and Stamford - which included parts of Leicestershire and Lincolnshire and all of Rutland. As noted above in the report, we do not propose modifying this sub-region, therefore our final recommendations will continue to propose a constituency that includes parts of Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and all of Rutland. These are detailed later in this section.

Leicestershire

Initial proposals

42. Of the 10 existing constituencies in Leicestershire, only Leicester South was within the permitted electorate range, Leicester West fell below and

the remaining eight constituencies; Charnwood, Harborough, Leicester East, Loughborough, North West Leicestershire, Rutland and Melton, and South Leicestershire were all above. Under our initial proposals we proposed to modify all the existing constituencies in Leicestershire.

43. In formulating our initial proposals, we recognised that it was possible to allocate three whole constituencies to the City of Leicester, but that doing so provided little flexibility in formulating a pattern of constituencies in the remainder of the county. Therefore, as part of our initial proposals, we proposed a Leicester West and Glenfield constituency that included two District of Blaby wards of Elis and Fairestone - the two wards encompassing the town of Glenfield. We also proposed that this constituency include the City of Leicester ward of Belgrave and that the Leicester East constituency be reconfigured to include the ward of Spinney Hills. We likewise reconfigured the Leicester South constituency to include the ward of Westcotes.
44. To the west of the City, we proposed a North West Leicestershire constituency that was broadly similar to the existing one, although it would no longer include the District of North West Leicestershire wards of Appleby and Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe, with these wards included in a reconfigured Hinckley and Bosworth constituency. In the south of the county, we proposed a Harborough constituency that was coterminous with the Borough of Harborough, and a Blaby, Oadby and Wigston constituency which included all of District of Oadby and Wigby and seven wards from the District of Blaby.
45. In the north of the county, we proposed a Loughborough constituency that was similar to the existing one, although it no longer included the District of Charnwood wards of Sileby and The Wolds. We proposed that these wards, along with six other wards from the District of Charnwood and all of the Borough of Melton be included in a Melton and Syston constituency. Finally in the county, we proposed a Mid Leicestershire constituency that included the remaining five wards of the District of Charnwood, three wards from the District of Hinckley and Bosworth and nine wards from the District of Blaby District, including the towns of Fosse, Enderby and Narborough.

Consultation on the initial proposals

46. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received some support for these, specifically for the proposed constituencies of Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire and that we had treated Leicestershire and the City of Leicester as a single sub-region. However, concerns were raised in opposition to this approach, specifically the configuration of a constituency that included the area of Glenfield in a constituency with the City of Leicester. We also received opposition to the proposed configuration of constituencies in the City of Leicester. These representations were primarily concerned that the removal of the Belgrave ward from the Leicester East constituency broke community ties. On similar grounds, we also received representations that objected to the inclusion of the Spinney Hills wards in the Leicester East constituency, with representations outlining that the ward had local ties with wards in the Leicester South constituency.
47. We received a number of counter proposals that sought to address the concerns raised in regards to the City of Leicester. Many of these counter proposals sought to propose three whole constituencies for the City of Leicester and proposed no constituency that crossed the city boundary. As previously set out earlier in the report, some of these counter proposals suggested a constituency that combined parts of the counties of Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and all of Rutland.
48. In the east of the county, we received opposition to the proposed Melton and Syston constituency. Many of these representations were concerned that the Borough of Melton and Rutland County would no longer form a constituency. Respondents considered that these areas had shared community needs and challenges, with Melton and Syston having different community identities i.e. rural and suburban. Furthermore, we received opposition to the inclusion of The Wolds ward in the Melton and Syston constituency. Respondents considered this ward had close ties with Loughborough.
49. We received some support for the proposed Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Harborough and Mid Leicestershire constituencies. Those in support of these constituencies considered that the coterminosity of the Harborough constituency with the local authority was positive and that the constituency of Blaby, Oadby and Wigston comprised principally suburban areas. However, we also received significant opposition to these three proposed constituencies. We received evidence suggesting that the transport links of

these constituencies were incoherent, as under our initial proposals these constituencies were configured east-west, whereas representations considered that the major transport links were north-south. The representations also raised concerns that the initial proposals did not reflect community ties and were also a significant departure from the pattern of existing constituencies in this part of Leicestershire.

Revised proposals

50. We noted that the Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire constituencies had both been largely supported and therefore decided not to amend these constituencies when formulating our revised proposals. However, we considered that persuasive evidence had been received to reconsider the pattern of constituencies across the remainder of Leicestershire and the City of Leicester.
51. As noted above, we received different counter proposals, some which allocated three whole constituencies to the City of Leicester and some proposed crossing the City boundary. We noted the concerns raised regarding the inclusion of the Glenfield area in the Leicester West constituency, with alternatives to this proposing that two District of Oadby and Wigston wards (Oadby Grange and Oadby Uplands) be included in a reconfigured Leicester East constituency.
52. Our Assistant Commissioners investigated the alternatives and visited the area in order to better understand the issues. Having considered the evidence they recommended to us that the City of Leicester should be allocated three whole constituencies. They proposed that Belgrave ward be retained in the Leicester East constituency, the ward of Spinney Hills in the Leicester South constituency and the ward of Westcotes in Leicester West constituency. In order to bring the Leicester East and Leicester South constituencies within the permitted electorate range they proposed that the Evington ward be split between both constituencies, with the southernmost polling district (EVF) being included in the Leicester South constituency. We agreed with the recommendation of our Assistant Commissioners and included reconfigured constituencies of Leicester East, Leicester South and Leicester West in our revised proposals.
53. Our Assistant Commissioners then considered what changes needed to be made to other constituencies within Leicestershire. They considered that it

was very challenging to formulate a pattern of constituencies in the remainder of the county that were within the electorate quota and reflected the statutory factors. Therefore, they investigated alternative patterns of constituencies that combined parts of Leicestershire with all of Rutland and parts of Lincolnshire. They considered this arrangement enabled a pattern of constituencies across the sub-region that better reflected the statutory factors.

54. The Assistant Commissioners investigated the representations received concerning the inclusion of Melton Mowbray and Rutland in the same constituency. They noted that no valid counter proposals were received that included both local authorities in the same constituency. They also investigated counter proposals that included Melton Mowbray with Market Harborough in a constituency, but were not persuaded that this configuration would be an improvement on the initial proposals. They therefore proposed only a minor change to the initially proposed Melton and Syston constituency. They proposed that The Wolds ward be included in the Loughborough constituency rather than Melton and Syston, as had been proposed by respondents. We accepted this proposal.
55. The Assistant Commissioners also proposed some small changes to the Mid Leicestershire constituency. They recommended that this constituency now include the wards covering the Glenfield area and the five District of Blaby wards of Muxloe, Forest, Winstanley, Millfield, and Ravenshurst and Fosse. We noted that this configuration was closer to the existing constituency boundaries. We accepted the Assistant Commissioners' recommendations and adopted modified constituencies of Loughborough, Melton and Syston and Mid Leicestershire, as part of our revised proposals.
56. In the south of the county the Assistant Commissioners recommended more significant changes to the initial proposals, although changes that were more in keeping with the existing pattern of constituencies. They proposed a revised South Leicestershire constituency which had been expanded to now include the wards of Fleckney and Bosworth following changes to local government boundaries in the area. Rather than a coterminous Harborough constituency, they recommended a Harborough constituency that included all of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and seven wards of the Borough of Harborough, including those covering the town of Market Harborough. We noted that this configuration was very

close to the existing Harborough constituency. We accepted the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners and adopted these constituencies as part of our revised proposals. Finally, they recommended that the remaining three wards of the Borough of Harborough - Billesdon & Tilton, Nevill, and Thurnby & Houghton - be included in a cross-county constituency with all of Rutland County and parts of Lincolnshire County, details of which are set out in the Lincolnshire and Rutland section below.

57. Therefore, our revised proposals for Leicestershire were for constituencies of Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicester East, Leicester South, Leicester West, Loughborough, Melton and Syston, Mid Leicestershire, North West Leicestershire, and South Leicestershire.

Consultation on the revised proposals

58. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received some support for our revised pattern, including the modifications made to the sub-region which allowed the City of Leicester to be allocated three whole constituencies while minimising disruption to the rest of the county.
59. We received some opposition to the proposed Harborough constituency, with respondents stating that the areas of Oadby and Wigston had different characteristics to Market Harborough, and instead saying that we should revert to the initial proposals. Some respondents also proposed the constituency should be named Harborough, Oadby and Wigston to reflect that it combined parts of two local authorities. We also received a counter proposal which proposed that the Harborough constituency should include the Bosworth and Fleckney wards, and thus outlined consequential changes to the South Leicestershire constituency. The proponents of this counter proposal considered that it would better reflect community ties. However, we also received support for our proposed Harborough and South Leicestershire constituencies, particularly that they better reflected the existing constituency boundaries.
60. In Leicester we again received support for our proposed constituencies of Leicester East, Leicester South and Leicester West. Respondents were particularly supportive of Belgrave ward being included in the Leicester East constituency. We received limited opposition to the splitting of the Evington ward between constituencies, those that commented on the split considered that the whole ward should be included in a single

constituency. We received limited opposition to the proposed Leicester West constituency; those that commented considered that the Aylestone ward should be retained in a Leicester South constituency as it had community ties with the wards of Eyres Monsell and Saffron.

61. As during the initial proposals consultation, we received support for our proposed Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire constituencies. Those in opposition to this pattern commented that the Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe ward should be included in the North West Leicestershire constituency, although they did not submit any new counter proposals.
62. We mainly received support for our proposed constituencies of Loughborough, Melton and Syston, and Mid Leicestershire. Those in opposition largely commented again on the inclusion of Melton Mowbray and Syston in the same constituency. We did receive some counter proposals for all three constituencies. One of these counter proposals was identical to that received in earlier consultations which was to include the Silbey ward in the Loughborough constituency, Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle within the Mid Leicestershire constituency and the two Birstall wards in the Melton and Syston constituency. An alternative counter proposal was received which sought to split the Barrow and Silbey West ward to include the AK polling district in the Melton and Syston constituency in order to realign the constituency boundary with the new Borough of Charnwood ward boundaries. We also received some representations commenting on the name of the proposed Mid Leicestershire constituency, with an alternative suggestion of Charnwood in order to better reflect the local authority covered by some of the constituency.

Final recommendations

63. We have considered the evidence received and are not making changes to the boundaries of our proposed constituencies in Leicestershire. We recognise the opposition received regarding Melton Mowbray and Rutland not being in the same constituency, but consider that the counter proposals resulted in significant changes to other constituencies that had largely been supported.
64. Similarly, we note the concerns regarding the division of Sileby between constituencies and we did investigate alternative proposals.. We

considered that the counter proposal to reconfigure Loughborough, Melton and Syston and Mid Leicestershire constituencies, while better reflecting community ties in Sileby, would likely break community ties between the Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle ward and Loughborough. We also had concerns that this configuration would further extend the Melton and Syston constituency eastwards and require the crossing of the River Soar in the Thurmaston area, which we considered provided for an identifiable boundary. We also considered the alternative proposal to split the Barrow and Silbey West ward in order to reflect the new ward boundaries made by Order during the course of the Review, with the intention to also reflect the parish council boundary. We were not persuaded to split this ward as doing so provided no wider benefits to the pattern of constituencies in the area.

65. We note that some respondents have encouraged us to revert to our initial proposals for the constituencies of Blaby, Oadby and Wigston and Harborough, although we note that our revised pattern of constituencies for Harborough and South Leicestershire has also been supported during the consultation. However, we do propose modifying the name of the Harborough constituency. We are renaming the constituency Harborough, Oadby and Wigston to reflect the constituency including all of the latter local authority.
66. We are not minded to modify our revised proposals within the City of Leicester, as we consider that this pattern has been broadly supported and alternative proposals are likely to break community ties.
67. Our final recommendations for Leicestershire are therefore for constituencies of: Harborough, Oadby and Wigston, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicester East, Leicester South, Leicester West, Loughborough, Melton and Syston, Mid Leicestershire, North West Leicestershire, and South Leicestershire. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Lincolnshire and Rutland

Initial proposals

68. As previously set out, in formulating the initial proposals we identified that it was necessary to pair Lincolnshire with another county and as part of our

initial proposals we proposed a sub-region of Lincolnshire and Rutland to which we allocated eight constituencies, one more than the present number of constituencies in Lincolnshire. Of the existing constituencies, four; Boston and Skegness, Gainsborough, Lincoln and South Holland and The Deepings have electorates that were within the permitted electorate range, and three; Grantham and Stamford, Louth and Horncastle, and Sleaford and North Hykeham were above.

69. As part of our initial proposals we considered that the appropriate county crossing between Lincolnshire and Rutland was to include parts of the District of South Kesteven with Rutland. We therefore proposed a Rutland and Stamford constituency that comprised all of Rutland unitary authority and 11 wards from the District of South Kesteven, including the towns of Stamford and Market Deeping.
70. Consequently, we proposed modified constituencies of Grantham and Sleaford and North Hykeham to bring both within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals the District of North Kesteven wards of Heckington Rural and Osbournby were included in the Grantham constituency.
71. We proposed limited changes to the existing constituencies of Gainsborough and Lincoln. In Lincoln our only changes were to realign the constituency with the new local government ward boundaries. Our proposed Gainsborough constituency was realigned to be coterminous with the boundaries of the District of West Lindsey and thus transferred the Wragby ward to the proposed Louth and Horncastle constituency.
72. We proposed some further changes to the Louth and Horncastle constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range and to realign the constituency with new local government ward boundaries. We transferred from this constituency the wards of Chapel St Leonards and Willoughby with Sloothby to the proposed Boston and Skegness constituency. Consequently, some further changes were proposed to the Boston and Skegness constituency. We transferred from this constituency the wards of Five Villages and Swineshead and Holland Fen to a reconfigured South Lincolnshire constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

73. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals we received some support for our pattern of constituencies across Lincolnshire and Rutland. We received some support for our proposed Rutland and Stamford constituency, with those in support considering that Rutland and Stamford shared community ties. However, we also received significant opposition to this proposed constituency with respondents highlighting that Rutland had closer ties to Melton Mowbray and Leicestershire.
74. Our proposals for Boston and Skegness, Louth and Horncastle, and Gainsborough were all largely supported. However, we did receive some representations that opposed the changes we had made as part of our initial proposals, particularly the inclusion of the Five Villages and Swineshead and Holland Fen wards in the South Lincolnshire constituency.
75. A counter proposal was received that proposed modifications to some of the initially proposed constituencies in Lincolnshire, although a requirement of it was to alter the original sub-region. This counter proposal was for a sub-region of Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire. Rather than include the area of Market Deeping in a Rutland and Stamford constituency, this constituency would be expanded west to include the three Borough of Harborough wards of Billesdon & Tilton, Nevill, and Thurnby & Houghton. Consequently, under this counter proposal the existing South Holland and The Deepings constituency could be retained unchanged. Furthermore, the wards of Five Villages and Swineshead and Holland Fen could be returned to the Boston and Skegness constituency and the ward of Halton Holegate could be included in the Louth and Horncastle constituency.
76. Our proposals for Grantham, Lincoln, and Sleaford and North Hykeham were all broadly supported. We did receive some representations commenting on the boundaries of the Lincoln constituency. Alternative counter proposals were received. One considered that the villages on the northern edge of the City of Lincoln boundary should be included in the Lincoln constituency, whereas others considered that a different configuration should be proposed which reflected the community ties between North Hykeham and Lincoln. We also received some representations that commented on the name of the proposed Grantham constituency, with respondents suggesting that this constituency should be named Grantham and Bourne.

Revised proposals

77. Having considered the evidence received, we decided to revise our initial proposals for parts of Lincolnshire and Rutland. We were persuaded by the evidence to modify the sub-region and expand the Rutland and Stamford constituency westwards to include three District of Harborough wards. We recognised that this pattern did not include Rutland in a constituency with Melton Mowbray but as previously outlined we were not able to identify a pattern of constituencies that proposed this composition while formulating a pattern of constituencies across the wider sub-region that reflected the statutory factors.
78. Our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence that a revised Rutland and Stamford constituency allowed for the statutory factors to be better reflected across Lincolnshire. They noted that this revised sub-region allowed for the existing South Holland and The Deepings constituency to be retained unchanged, the return of the Five Villages and Swineshead and Holland Fen wards to the Boston and Skegness constituency, and the inclusion of the Halton Holegate ward in the Louth and Horncastle constituency, which again better reflected the existing boundaries of constituencies.
79. Our Assistant Commissioners also noted that these modifications did not require any changes to the Gainsborough, Grantham, Lincoln and Sleaford and North Hykeham constituencies which had all been broadly supported by respondents. Our Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded by the counter proposals to modify the Lincoln constituency, particularly as our proposals largely reflected the existing constituency. They were also not persuaded to propose the constituency name of Grantham and Bourne as both conurbations are within the District of South Kesteven.
80. Our revised proposals were therefore for constituencies of Boston and Skegness, Gainsborough, Grantham, Harborough, Lincoln, Louth and Horncastle, Rutland and Stamford, Sleaford and North Hykeham, and South Holland and The Deepings.

Consultation on the revised proposals

81. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received support for our revised constituencies in Rutland and Lincolnshire,

particularly our decision to retain the existing South Holland and The Deepings constituency and the inclusion of the Swineshead and Holland Fen ward in the Boston and Skegness constituency. However, we received some opposition to this constituency, with respondents considering that the inclusion of the Willoughby and Sloothby ward in this constituency did not reflect community ties.

82. We again received some opposition to the Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency with respondents suggesting that North Hykeham shared community ties with Lincoln and that we should have regard to the new District of North Hykeham ward boundaries.
83. While the boundaries of our proposed Gainsborough and Grantham constituencies were largely supported, we did receive some representations commenting on the names of both constituencies. Some respondents again proposed that the Grantham constituency should be renamed Grantham and Bourne in order to reflect the two largest settlements included in the constituency. Respondents who opposed the constituency name of Gainsborough considered that it should be renamed West Lindsey given the constituency was coterminous with the District of the same name.

Final recommendations

84. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Lincolnshire. We are not persuaded by the arguments to modify the boundaries of the Lincoln constituency as it is largely unchanged. Similarly, we are not persuaded to include Willoughby and Sloothby ward in the Louth and Horncastle constituency as doing so would require significant consequential changes to a number of constituencies across Lincolnshire, which have all been broadly supported.
85. We do, however, consider that persuasive evidence has been received to revise the names of the Grantham constituency. We recognise that the existing constituency name is Grantham and Stamford, with both settlements forming part of the District of South Kesteven. Therefore, adopting the name of Grantham and Bourne would not be inconsistent in reflecting two conurbations within the same local authority. Given this name has received local support we have decided to adopt it as part of our

final recommendations. However, we are not minded to modify the name of the proposed Gainsborough constituency. We note that the boundaries of this constituency are largely unchanged and that the alternative name of West Lindsey has not commanded significant support locally.

86. Our final recommendations for Lincolnshire and Rutland are therefore for constituencies of: Boston and Skegness, Gainsborough, Grantham and Bourne, Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford, Sleaford and North Hykeham, and South Holland and The Deepings. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Northamptonshire

Initial proposals

87. Of the existing seven constituencies in Northamptonshire, only the constituency of Kettering was within the permitted electorate range. The four constituencies of Corby, Daventry, South Northamptonshire and Wellingborough were above the range and both Northampton North and Northampton South were below. As part of our initial proposals we suggested changes to all the existing constituencies in the county.
88. In formulating our initial proposals we identified that both the recently established unitary authorities of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire were temporarily using the county electoral divisions (hereafter referred to as wards) of the now defunct Northamptonshire County Council, in lieu of a future review from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. 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, in formulating our initial proposals we considered it necessary to split a small number of wards.
89. Under our initial proposals, we proposed that the existing Northampton North and Northampton South constituencies be expanded southwards. To bring it within the permitted electorate range, the Northampton North constituency included the Riverside Park and Billing and Rectory Farm wards. The Northampton South constituency included the Abington and Phippsville ward and the remaining southernmost wards that covered the Northampton urban area. Consequently, we proposed a South

Northamptonshire constituency that was more rural in character as it no longer included parts of the urban area of Northampton. To bring this constituency within the permitted electorate range we proposed that it include part of the Irchester ward - the villages of Bozeat and Wollaston, the Bugbrooke ward and part of the Silverstone ward. The remaining part of the Silverstone ward was included in a reconfigured Daventry constituency that also included the Earls Barton ward.

90. As the existing Corby constituency was above the permitted electorate range, we proposed transferring from it the Raunds ward, which we included in a reconfigured Wellingborough constituency. Also included in the Wellingborough constituency was the remaining part of the Irchester ward and part of the Finedon ward. The remaining part of the Finedon ward was included in a Kettering constituency which was otherwise unchanged.

Consultation on the initial proposals

91. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received some opposition to our proposal to split three wards in formulating a pattern of constituencies across Northamptonshire. We received some counter proposals which sought to split fewer wards, and thereby proposed a different configuration of constituencies across the county.
92. We also received some support for our approach to formulating the initial proposals, with some respondents considering that the statutory factors could be better reflected by the splitting of more wards.
93. In Northampton we received a mixture of support and opposition to our initial proposals. Those in support considered that the A45 acted as a clear boundary and that the Northampton North and Northampton South constituencies reflected community ties. However, those in opposition considered that the proposed pattern did not reflect community ties or existing constituencies. The representations particularly commented that the wards of Abington and Phippsville, Castle and Dallington Spencer should all be included in a Northampton North constituency and the wards of Billing and Rectory Farm, and Riverside Park be included in a Northampton South constituency.

94. We received some opposition to our proposed Daventry constituency, with the majority of representations opposed to the inclusion of the Earls Barton ward in this constituency. Respondents considered that this ward shared closer links with Wellingborough.
95. We received substantial opposition to the proposal to include part of the Irchester ward, specifically the villages of Bozeat and Wollaston, in the South Northamptonshire constituency. Again, respondents stated that they had shared community ties with Wellingborough. We received little opposition to the proposal to split the Silverstone ward between the Daventry and South Northamptonshire constituencies.
96. In the east of the county, we received opposition to our proposed Corby and East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough constituencies. As previously mentioned, we received opposition to excluding the Earls Barton ward and part of the Irchester ward from the Wellingborough constituency. Similarly, we received opposition to the division of the Finedon ward between the Wellingborough and Kettering constituencies, with respondents suggesting that the whole ward should be included in a Wellingborough constituency.
97. We also received opposition to our proposed Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency, with respondents suggesting that the Irthlingborough ward should not be included in this constituency but Wellingborough, and that the Raunds ward should be included in this constituency rather than Wellingborough as we had initially proposed.
98. A number of respondents submitted counter proposals that sought to address these concerns. One counter proposal was for a revised Wellingborough constituency that included all of the Finedon ward and part of the Irthlingborough ward. Under this pattern the Raunds ward was included in a modified Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency and finally, it proposed to split the Corby Rural ward between the Corby and East Northamptonshire and Kettering constituencies. Under this proposal the parts of the Corby Rural ward containing Cottingham, East Carlton, Middleton, Little Stanion and Stanion would be included in the Kettering constituency. However, we did also receive some opposition to the split of the Corby Rural ward between constituencies, with those in opposition concerned that the ward had closer ties with Corby than with Kettering.

Revised proposals

99. Having considered the evidence received, our Assistant Commissioners investigated alternative configurations to constituencies in Northamptonshire and visited the area to observe the evidence received. They recognised that many of the villages surrounding Wellingborough wanted to be included in that constituency, but that it was not possible to include all of them, as doing so would result in a constituency over the permitted electorate range. They therefore investigated alternative configurations. They considered that it was not possible to include all of the Irchester and Earls Barton wards in the Wellingborough constituency as doing so had significant consequences on both the proposed Daventry and South Northamptonshire constituencies. We noted that including either of these wards in the Wellingborough constituency still required both the Daventry and South Northamptonshire constituencies to be modified, both of which had been broadly supported.
100. The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded to include all of the Finedon ward in the Wellingborough constituency, noting that the ward had strong community ties with the town. Consequently, accepting this proposal required revisions to the Kettering and Corby and East Northamptonshire constituencies. They proposed including part of the Irthlingborough ward in the Wellingborough constituency which allowed for the Raunds ward to be returned to the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency. In order to bring the constituencies within the permitted electorate range they proposed dividing the Corby Rural ward in the manner outlined above. They recognised that while the split of this ward had received some opposition, they considered that it enabled the best reflection of the statutory factors across the east of the county. We accepted their recommendations and proposed reconfigured constituencies of Corby and East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough in our revised proposals.
101. In Northampton, our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded to revise the initially proposed Northampton North and Northampton South constituencies. Having visited the area, they considered that the statutory factors were better reflected by including the wards of Billing and Rectory Farm and Riverside in the Northampton South constituency and the wards of Abbington and Phippsville, Castle and Dallington Spencer in the Northampton North constituency. The Assistant Commissioners considered

that this pattern better reflected community ties and the boundaries of the existing constituencies.

Consultation on the revised proposals

102. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received some support for our configuration of constituencies across the county. However, we also received some opposition to our revised proposals, including a counter proposal for the proposed constituencies of Corby and East Northamptonshire, Daventry, Kettering and Wellingborough. We also received some opposition to our proposal to split the wards of Corby Rural and Irthlingborough between constituencies. In terms of the Corby Rural wards respondents considered that the villages in this ward had community ties with Corby. The representations received in regard to the Irthlingborough ward considered that our proposed ward split divided the Crow Hill area from the remainder of Irthlingborough.
103. The above counter proposal suggested that all of the Corby Rural ward could be retained in the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency, subject to a number of consequential changes. These included splitting the Earls Barton, Irthlingborough and Thrapston wards between constituencies. This counter proposal also required modifications to the proposed constituencies of Daventry, Northampton South and South Northamptonshire. This counter proposal sought to resolve concerns that the parishes of Wellingborough and Irchester were divided and that we had divided the Corby Rural community under our revised proposals. However, as set out above, resolving these issues required changes to nearly all the constituencies in the county.
104. We also received another counter proposal that suggested splitting the Earls Barton ward between constituencies. This counter proposal only suggested that the polling district WGB be included in the Wellingborough constituency. The reason for this proposal was to incorporate new housing on the edge of Wellingborough town in the constituency of the same name. Some representations were also received that proposed we rename the Wellingborough constituency as Wellingborough and Rushden in order to reflect the two main conurbations included in the constituency.
105. In the area of Northampton town, we received some support for our revised proposals, with respondents considering that they better reflected

community ties. However, we also received some opposition to our Northampton North and Northampton South constituencies, with respondents urging us to revert to our initial proposals for both constituencies. Proponents of this pattern considered that the wards of Billing and Rectory Farm and Riverside were divided from other parts of the Northampton South constituency. Furthermore, some respondents considered that the revised proposals divided the town centre of Northampton between constituencies.

Final recommendations

106. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed constituencies in Northamptonshire. We recognised that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives.
107. We considered that the counter proposal that sought to include the Corby Rural ward in the Corby and East Northamptonshire had merit, particularly in terms of reflecting community ties in the Corby area and reflected the boundaries of the Parish of Irthlingborough. However, we also considered that this counter proposal was likely to break community ties, particularly the splitting of the Thrapston ward which is currently part of the Corby constituency. We also considered that including all of the Irchester ward in the South Northamptonshire constituency was likely to break community ties. We acknowledge that this ward was split under our revised proposals, however, evidence received during the consultations has suggested the ward shares community ties with Wellingborough.
108. We also again investigated alternatives that would resolve concerns received during the consultation on the revised proposals. However, our investigations identified that other configurations would divide communities or result in reverting to the initial proposals. We are not persuaded that reverting to our initial proposals in this part of the county would better reflect the statutory factors. Therefore, having considered the evidence received we are not minded to modify our revised proposals in this part of the county. However, we are minded to modify the Wellingborough to Wellingborough and Rushden in order to reflect the different areas comprising the constituency.

109. We recognised that both support and opposition had been received in regards to our proposed Northampton North and Northampton South constituencies. We therefore visited the area to observe both the initial and revised proposals. Having visited the area, we considered that both the Castle and Abington and Phippsville wards were an integral part of the city centre and shared community ties with the wards to the north. We also considered the boundary of the River Nene in this part of the city to be clear. We observed that the Billing and Rectory Farm and Riverside Park wards were similar in character and did share community ties, with each other and also with the Talavera ward to the north. We also observed that in this part of the city, the River Nene was easily traversed along the A45 (Nene Valley Way).
110. We also visited the Dallington Spencer ward given the evidence in representations that the ward shared community ties with Duston East. We considered that the ward shared community ties both with Castle and Duston East wards, though the A428 (Harlestone Road) provided for a clear boundary between the Dallington Spencer and Duston East wards, including the part of the boundary that does not follow the road. We specifically observed this boundary. Furthermore, we investigated other configurations of constituencies, including the transfer of the Dallington Spencer and River Park wards to the Northampton South constituency. We noted that this configuration of constituencies required a ward to be split to ensure both constituencies would be within the permitted electorate range. We considered it was not appropriate to split the Castle ward and considered whether it was possible to include the three southern polling districts of the Abington and Phippsville ward, bound by the A4500 (Wellingborough Road). Having visited the area we noted that splitting the ward along this boundary would divide a clear retail area and was likely to break community ties.
111. Having considered the evidence received and visited the area we have decided to retain our revised proposals for Northampton North and Northampton South as part of our final recommendations. We note the evidence received that this pattern may break community ties but consider this is unavoidable across the city in formulating a pattern of constituencies that are within the permitted electorate range. We note that both the initial and revised proposals to some extent reflect the existing pattern of constituencies, with the revised proposals transferring fewer electors from

the existing pattern. We therefore consider our revised proposals better reflect the statutory factors.

112. Our final recommendations for Northamptonshire are therefore for constituencies of: Corby and East Northamptonshire, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton North, Northampton South, South Northamptonshire, and Wellingborough and Rushden. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the South West region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the South West region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree to the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 1605 responses specific to the South West region in this phase, giving a total of 6337 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: Three of the qualifying political parties in England supported most of the boundaries and names set out in the revised proposals report in their entirety.

The Conservative Party had a positive response, with only minor revisions recommended for only three of the 58 proposed constituencies, along with three name changes. The sole exceptions were in Wiltshire. More specifically, the proposal suggests fully incorporating the Chiseldon and Lawn ward into the boundaries of Swindon South. There was also a proposal to split either one of two wards between constituencies.

The Labour Party gave complete support for the revised proposals in their entirety

The Liberal Democrat Party strongly welcomed the revised proposals, with suggestions made to only three of the 58 proposed constituencies: South Cotswolds, Chippenham, and Melksham and Devizes, and called for the splitting of the Calne Rural ward.

Aside from those provided by these political parties, there were no representations at the revised proposals which contained worked, or superior counter proposals across the entire region.

Wiltshire and Gloucestershire

Wiltshire and Gloucestershire continues to be a sub-region of contention, with both support and opposition. The complexity of this area, coupled with low electorates and the creation of new local government ward boundaries, have resulted in limited options for change without causing significant disruption to the sub-region as a whole.

The revised proposals for Chippenham constituency, as well as Melksham and Devizes constituencies, have received little support. There is widespread desire for Chippenham to remain unaltered, and significant opposition (~ 60 representations) to the inclusion of the Box and Colerne ward in Melksham and Devizes. Most are calling for the ward to be included in South Cotswolds or Chippenham. The Liberal Democrats and others have suggested that the Calne Rural ward be partially included in Melksham and Devizes, and that Kington be included in Chippenham, while also recommending that Box and Colerne be included in South Cotswolds. Opposition to the inclusion of Calne South ward in Melksham and Devizes instead of Chippenham is also noted.

Due to low constituency electorates, the town of Devizes was included in a new Melksham and Devizes constituency, having been transferred from what was to become East Wiltshire. This was very unpopular in the rural wards surrounding Devizes and was addressed in the revised proposals with the inclusion of the Urchfont and Bishop's Canning, The Lavingtons, and the Bromham, Rowde and Roundway wards in Melksham and Devizes. The Conservative Party has raised concerns regarding the boundaries of Melksham and Devizes, and additionally, they suggest either splitting the Urchfont and Bishop's Canning ward between Melksham and Devizes and East Wiltshire or alternatively, dividing the Wylve Valley ward between South West Wiltshire and East Wiltshire. In addition to this, their proposal suggests that the Chiseldon and Lawn ward be entirely located within the Swindon South area.

There is opposition to the inclusion of the Nadder Valley and Tisbury wards in Salisbury, but this is overshadowed by opposition to the inclusion of Till Valley in East Wiltshire. Some have suggested that all the Wylve Valley areas should be in the same constituency.

We again received representations commenting on the pattern of constituencies in Gloucestershire. Some of these representations continued to oppose our configuration of the Cheltenham and Gloucester constituencies, with representations concerned at the specific areas not included in either constituency. This was also a similar sentiment echoed in relation to our proposed Stroud constituency, with many areas of the Borough of Stroud wanting to be included in the constituency. However, this is not possible while ensuring all constituencies are within the permitted electorate range.

Dorset

Generally there was widespread support for constituencies across the whole of the Dorset sub region, although there were some key areas where opposition continued. The inclusion of Chickerell ward in the South Dorset constituency, and Upwey and Broadway ward in the West Dorset constituency, continues to be unpopular with many respondents arguing that this configuration disrupted the area's historic and local ties.

Despite no objections from any of the four qualifying political parties, the initial proposals faced opposition from over 250 objections concerning the Chalk Valleys ward. Residents in Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley areas were strongly opposed to their inclusion in North Dorset.

Chris Loder, MP for West Dorset, has proposed the splitting of two wards: West Purbeck and Chalk Valleys. By splitting West Purbeck, the Commission would create a Dorset sub-region with a similar existing pattern of constituencies, while also allowing the inclusion of the Upwey and Broadway Ward in South Dorset. Furthermore, a split in the Chalk Valleys ward would permit the inclusion of the Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley areas into West Dorset.

In the consultations, we had not proposed that Mr Loder's counter-proposal be adopted in view of the support for our proposals from the qualifying parties and others. However, local opposition is still strong. A further site visit was undertaken as we considered that part of Mr Loder's counter proposal had particular merit and would address much of the opposition.

We noted the opposition from the Bere Regis and Bloxworth areas (West Purbeck ward) who wished to remain in their existing constituency of Mid Dorset and Poole North. Splitting the ward here, along the existing constituency boundary would achieve this. However, this would also allow for the Upwey and Broadway ward to be included in its existing constituency of South Dorset, a source of much opposition in the representations. The splitting of the Chalk Valleys ward would not be required under this configuration.

Avon, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall

There was a degree of support for the constituencies in these areas and no significant new or compelling evidence for change. However, it is considered that the issue of the exchange of the Bruton, and The Pennards and Ditchat wards between constituencies should be revisited. This would eliminate an orphans ward and reduce the number of local authorities within the Frome constituency, without any further knock-ons for any constituency

It is suggested that the suggestions for name changes for the following constituencies should be considered: Taunton and Wellington; and Exmouth and Exeter East, and that the designation Filton and Bradley Stoke should be a Borough constituency.

South West

1. The South West currently has 55 constituencies. Of these, 23 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of seven constituencies currently fall below the permitted range, while the electorates of 25 constituencies are above. Our proposals increase the number of constituencies in the region by three, to 58.
2. The South West comprises the ceremonial counties of Avon (including Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire), Wiltshire (including Swindon), Cornwall (including the Isles of Scilly), Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay), Dorset (including Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole), Gloucestershire, and Somerset. The South West region is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for the South West — Anita Bickerdike and Vicky Smith – to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Exeter: 21-22 March 2022
 - Gloucester: 24-25 March 2022
 - Bath: 28-29 March 2022
 - Dorchester: 31 March-1 April 2022
4. Following Ms Smith's resignation, John Feavyour QPM was appointed Assistant Commissioner for the region.

Sub-division of the region

5. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the South West of 4,242,136 results in it being entitled to 58 constituencies, an increase of three. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
6. Gloucestershire's electorate of 483,442 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 was possible to formulate a pattern of constituencies within Wiltshire, we considered that pairing the two counties allowed us to create 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, we proposed the allocation of 14 constituencies, an increase of one constituency. We considered that the constituency crossing the county boundaries should not be between Gloucestershire and 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 a Gloucestershire local authority).
7. 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 Avon, the average electorate in the county would be 71,194, only 1,470 electors within the permitted electorate range, meaning that we would have 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 the county without significant disruption to local ties. We therefore proposed that the county be grouped with another county. Somerset has an electorate of 425,570, which results in a mathematical entitlement to 5.8 constituencies, and while it was possible to allocate a whole number of constituencies to both Devon and Somerset, we proposed that the two counties be grouped together. Given the limited flexibility in constructing constituencies within Avon, we proposed that it should form part of a sub-region with the other two counties, thereby creating a sub-region comprising Avon, 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. We therefore proposed three constituencies that cross county boundaries in this sub-region. Two would cross the county boundary between Avon and Somerset and the other would cross the county boundary between Somerset and Devon.

8. The unitary authorities in Dorset have a combined electorate of 587,471, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 8.0 constituencies. We therefore considered Dorset as a sub-region in its own right and allocated eight whole constituencies, which is the same as the existing allocation.
9. With an electorate of 438,354, Cornwall (including the Isles of Scilly) had a mathematical entitlement to 5.97 constituencies. We proposed to treat Cornwall as a sub-region in its own right and allocated to it six constituencies, which is unchanged from its existing number. Treating Cornwall as its own sub-region avoided the construction of a constituency that crossed the boundary between Cornwall and Devon, which was mathematically necessary in previous review
10. Counter-proposals were received that suggested alternative sub-regions. A key feature of some of these counter-proposals was to avoid crossing, where possible, existing county boundaries, or even the traditional 'shire' county boundaries that existed prior to the 1974 reorganisation of county boundaries:
 - Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and Bristol; Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and Somerset; Wiltshire, Dorset; Devon; and Cornwall.
 - One representation was for a region-wide counter-proposal that was the same as we had proposed, but split the Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch; constituencies and involved six county crossings.
 - Two counter-proposals suggested sub-regions of: Gloucestershire, Bristol and Somerset; Wiltshire; Dorset; Devon; and Cornwall.
 - Gloucestershire and Bristol; Somerset; Devon; Wiltshire; Dorset; and Cornwall. This counter-proposal added that the adoption of these sub-regions would require "some compromises".

11. In formulating our revised proposals, we noted that these counter-proposals for alternative sub-regions had some merit and aimed at minimising constituencies that crossed county boundaries. However, the use of the sub-regions we had proposed were largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals, particularly from those commenting on the whole region and from the four qualifying political parties. We concluded that in some cases the alternative sub-regions would result in more disruption to some existing constituencies and would not therefore better reflect the statutory factors in the region.
12. In the response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we adopted in our revised proposals, and we were not persuaded that the alternative proposals had garnered greater support in the secondary consultation. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose in our final recommendations are:
 - Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (including Swindon)
 - Dorset (including Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole)
 - Avon (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire), Somerset and Devon (including Plymouth, and Torbay)
 - Cornwall (including Isles of Scilly)

Gloucestershire and Wiltshire

Initial proposals

13. Of the 13 existing constituencies in the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire sub-region, five were within the permitted electorate range and the remaining eight existing constituencies were above the range. Furthermore, an increase in the total number of constituencies in the sub-region unavoidably results in significant change to many existing constituencies. We therefore proposed a cross-county boundary constituency that extended along most of the boundary between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. The constituency comprised wards that

were considered to be similarly rural in nature, from the existing The Cotswolds and North Wiltshire constituencies. Additionally, we proposed retaining the existing constituency of Forest of Dean, with minor modifications only to reflect changes to local government ward boundaries.

14. The electorate of the existing constituency of Gloucester is too large to form a single constituency, and had to be modified in order to bring it within the permitted range. We examined the possibility of including three wards comprising the Quedgeley community in The Cotswolds constituency, but considered that including wards from the northern area of Gloucester in a Tewkesbury constituency would better reflect the statutory factors. The City of Gloucester ward of Longlevens is not included in the existing current Gloucester constituency; our initial proposals retained this ward in the Tewkesbury constituency, as well as the City of Gloucester wards of Elmbridge and Barnwood.
15. The electorate of the existing Cheltenham constituency exceeded the permitted electorate range. The Borough of Cheltenham wards of Prestbury and Swindon Village are currently included in the existing Tewkesbury constituency, and we additionally included the Borough of Cheltenham ward of Springbank in the Tewkesbury constituency, in order to bring the Cheltenham constituency within the permitted range.
16. With an electorate of 83,818 the existing Tewkesbury constituency was above the permitted range. In formulating our proposals for Gloucester and Cheltenham, we had increased the electorate of the Tewkesbury constituency further. To bring it within the permitted range, we proposed the inclusion of seven District of Tewkesbury wards from the existing Tewkesbury constituency to the adjacent The Cotswolds constituency, including the Winchcombe and Isbourne wards, together with five wards that form the geographical area between our proposed Gloucester and Cheltenham constituencies.
17. The electorate of the Stroud constituency 84,573, required modifications as it considerably exceeded the permitted range. We therefore proposed the inclusion of four Stroud district wards, namely Hardwicke, Painswick and Upton, Bisley, and Chalford, in our proposed The Cotswolds constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the two Stroud district wards of Kingswood and Wotton-under-Edge in the Stroud constituency. Apart from the changes previously mentioned, we proposed significant changes to the

boundaries of the existing The Cotswolds constituency with the inclusion of 20 wards from the existing The Cotswolds constituency, which included the town of Cirencester, as well as seven wards from the North Wiltshire constituency, which included the town of Malmesbury. One of our objectives was not to cross the boundary with the unitary authority of Swindon. Currently, the unitary authority of Swindon has two constituencies. However, the North Swindon constituency has an electorate of 82,561, while the South Swindon constituency's electorate of 72,994 falls within the permitted range. Changes to local government wards result in the Mannington and Western, and Covingham and Dorcan wards being split between the two existing constituencies. We therefore proposed including the whole of Mannington and Western, and Covingham and Dorcan wards in the South Swindon constituency, which would bring the North Swindon constituency within the permitted range. However, this resulted in the South Swindon constituency having too large an electorate and needed to be reduced. To address this, we included the Borough of Swindon wards of Wroughton and Wichelstowe, and Ridgeway in our proposed East Wiltshire constituency.

18. Our revised Chippenham constituency included the towns of Chippenham, Royal Wootton Bassett, and Calne. The ward of Bromham, Rowde and Roundway was also included. We proposed a Melksham and Devizes constituency encompassing the towns of Corsham, Melksham, Bradford-on-Avon, and Devizes and consequently renamed the existing Devizes constituency East Wiltshire. Apart from the inclusion of the two Swindon wards, we also included in East Wiltshire the wards that comprise the town of Amesbury, to avoid its division between constituencies.
19. To increase the electorate of the Salisbury constituency, we included the whole of the Fovant and Chalke Valley ward and the Tisbury ward, which also allowed for the South West Wiltshire constituency to fall within the permitted range. We proposed that this constituency be renamed Trowbridge and Warminster.

Consultation on the initial proposals

20. There was support for our proposals in this sub-region, but considerable objection and a number of counter proposals were submitted.

21. The initial proposals for the Forest of Dean, which had effectively remained the same as the existing constituency, did not elicit a large number of representations.
22. Our proposals to include the Springbank ward in the Tewkesbury constituency were overwhelmingly opposed, with approximately 350 objections. Representations suggested the ward had no real connection to Tewkesbury and should remain in the Cheltenham constituency. Counter proposals suggested that the ward to be included in the Tewkesbury constituency (thereby not in the Cheltenham constituency) should be either Battledown, Pittville, or more particularly, St Paul's. This latter ward is in the same county division as the Swindon Village ward, currently in the existing Tewkesbury constituency, and it was argued that St Paul's should be included in the Tewkesbury constituency instead of Springbank. However, these suggestions came to the notice of many respondents who strongly opposed the exclusion of the St Paul's ward from Cheltenham and claimed that the counter proposals with respect to the St Paul's ward would see much of Cheltenham High Street excluded from the Cheltenham constituency.
23. Our initial proposals for Gloucester attracted a great deal of opposition with over 400 representations opposing the inclusion of either the Elmbridge or Barnwood wards in the Tewkesbury constituency. Furthermore, there were numerous representations calling for the Longlevens ward to be returned to the Gloucester constituency. Some suggested an alternative configuration that would place all three wards in question in the Gloucester constituency and include the three wards containing the community of Quedgeley in The Cotswolds constituency or Stroud.
24. Concerns were raised that our proposals would result in an irregularly-shaped Tewkesbury constituency, with the town of Tewkesbury isolated in a relatively small area in the far north of the constituency. However, there was both opposition and support for the inclusion of the Winchcombe ward in The Cotswolds constituency. There were also calls for the entirety of the town of Churchdown to be included in The Cotswolds constituency: the initial proposals had divided the town into two separate constituencies with, the Churchdown St John's ward included in the Tewkesbury constituency, and the Churchdown, Brookfield with Hucclecote ward included in The Cotswolds constituency.

25. There was considerable opposition to our proposed Stroud constituency, with numerous representations received suggesting alternate wards that should be included. We received approximately 110 representations objecting to the inclusion of the Chalford ward in The Cotswolds constituency, with proposals for the ward, and Minchinhampton ward to be included in Stroud. The inclusion of the Hardwicke ward in The Cotswolds constituency was opposed, with it being suggested that the Nailsworth ward would be a better fit in The Cotswolds constituency and that Hardwicke's links with Stroud were stronger than those of Nailsworth. However, this position was opposed in many representations which suggested that Nailsworth should not be included in The Cotswolds, and that of the two wards, Hardwicke's inclusion in The Cotswolds constituency was more appropriate. There was also opposition to the inclusion of the Bisley, and the Painswick and Upton ward in The Cotswolds, but support for the inclusion of the Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood wards in the Stroud constituency.
26. A significant number of representations were received in opposition to the proposed The Cotswolds constituency, but there was some support with the suggestions that it be renamed North Cotswolds. The Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituency was also opposed. The widely expressed sentiment was that the town of Cirencester, known as 'the Capital of the Cotswolds', could not be in a constituency with parts of Wiltshire. A counter proposal to include the Chedworth and Churn Valley ward in the same constituency as Cirencester was supported. A number of representations opposed the inclusion of Coln Valley ward, and in particular Northleach ward in the cross-country constituency, which it was said looked towards the north Cotswolds. A number of representations suggested that the constituency would be more acceptable if the name were changed, with South Cotswolds being a popular and widely suggested option.
27. The decision to treat Swindon as a separate entity and not to cross the county boundary between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire drew widespread support. Nevertheless, there were representations both supporting and opposing the initial proposals for the two Swindon constituencies, with objections raised about the inclusion of two Swindon borough wards in the East Wiltshire constituency.
28. The local government ward boundary changes in Wiltshire had posed challenges in maintaining as best we could the existing pattern of

constituencies and our initial proposals in Wiltshire were almost universally opposed. Nevertheless, there was some positive feedback regarding the proposed Chippenham constituency, and some support for the Melksham and Devizes constituency. A counter proposal was received that made substantial changes to the Chippenham, Melksham, and Devizes constituencies, with the primary objective to include Corsham in the same constituency as Chippenham. It proposed the inclusion of the Bromham, Rowde and Roundway ward in a Melksham and Devizes constituency alongside the Calne wards, Lyneham ward, and the three Royal Wootton Bassett wards. The reconfigured Chippenham constituency would comprise two Bradford-on-Avon wards, three Corsham wards, Box and Colerne, Hilperton, Holt, Melksham Without West and Rural, and the Winsley and Westwood wards. However, there was significant opposition to this counter proposal with it being claimed that the links between Corsham and Chippenham were overemphasised, and that Calne had closer ties with Chippenham. There were also concerns about the counter proposed Melksham and Devizes constituency, running from Royal Wootton Bassett south to Devizes and beyond.

29. The perceived separation of the rural wards surrounding Devizes from the town also elicited widespread opposition, particularly from the Urchfont and Bishop's Canning, and The Lavington wards. Devizes was located at the eastern end of the newly formed Melksham and Devizes constituency, and many representations from the renamed East Wiltshire constituency appeared to believe it was they that had been moved between constituencies and not the town of Devizes. The inclusion of the town of Amesbury in the East Wiltshire constituency was opposed with it being suggested that Amesbury identifies more closely with Salisbury than with the towns to the north of Salisbury Plain. There was a suggestion for the East Wiltshire constituency to be renamed Vale of Pewsey.
30. From the proposed Trowbridge and Warminster constituency there were few representations, but there was some support. The main issue was the call for a return of the existing constituency name of South West Wiltshire 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.

Revised proposals

31. Our Assistant Commissioners visited various areas in Cheltenham to investigate the conflicting evidence. From their observations they concluded that the St. Paul's ward was an essential component of the town centre and excluding it from the Cheltenham constituency would be disruptive, as would the exclusion of either the Pittville or Battledown wards. They considered that the Springbank ward's connections with the town centre were weaker than those of St. Paul's, Battledown, and Pittville. We agreed with them and did not revise our proposals for the Cheltenham constituency. Given the support for our initial proposals we did not revise the Forest of Dean constituency.
32. We noted that it was not necessary to include a further two Gloucester wards in the Tewkesbury constituency. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that, as the Longlevens and Elmbridge wards lay adjacent to each other, and Longlevens is already part of the Tewkesbury constituency, these two wards should remain included in the Tewkesbury constituency, and that the Barnwood ward would now remain in the Gloucester constituency. The Assistant Commissioners also considered the counter proposals suggesting the exclusion of the three southern wards of Gloucester comprising the town of Quedgeley. They visited the areas and considered that while the counter proposals had some merit, they were not persuaded that it should be part of The Cotswolds constituency rather than Gloucester, despite its relatively newer and self-contained nature. We agreed.
33. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the re-inclusion of the Isbourne and Winchcombe wards in the Tewkesbury constituency again was appropriate, and that this would also allow for the inclusion of the two wards encompassing the town of Churchdown within the same constituency.
34. With regard to the Stroud constituency, and following the site visit to the area by our Assistant Commissioners, we agreed with their recommendations and proposed a revised configuration for the Stroud constituency. We included the Chalford ward in the constituency, but not the Minchinhampton ward, which we considered was somewhat separated from Chalford and was not currently included in the existing Stroud constituency, nor the Bisley ward. We considered the evidence for the retention of the Nailsworth ward in the Stroud constituency to be stronger

than that of the Harwicke ward, which we proposed would continue to be included in The Cotswolds constituency, with the adjacent Painswick and Upton ward. Additionally, although we proposed that the Wotton-under-Edge ward continue to be included in the Stroud constituency, we included the Kingswood ward in the cross-county constituency between Gloucester and Wiltshire to accommodate the changes made. Both are District of Stroud wards but currently part of The Cotswolds constituency. Despite our thorough consideration of all the wards, we acknowledged that there is no perfect solution that would satisfy all residents of the District of Stroud.

35. We proposed the inclusion of the Northleach ward in The Cotswolds constituency rather than Cirencester and North Wiltshire, as well as the Coln Valley ward. Although we acknowledged the historical connections between the Chedworth and Churn Valley ward and the town of Cirencester, including it in the cross-county constituency would result in an abnormal shape for The Cotswolds, with a narrow strip of land linking its two parts, and its non-inclusion would result in a Cotswolds constituency with an electorate below the permitted range. We also renamed The Cotswolds, and Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituencies as the North Cotswold and South Cotswolds, respectively.
36. Following the Assistant commissioner's site visits to the area and their recommendations, we made some significant revision to our proposed constituencies in Swindon and Wiltshire. We aimed at producing a set of constituencies that sought to reflect the community identity evidence received. However, our Assistant Commissioners identified that no counter proposal received achieved this so they investigated alternative configurations. . They proposed a revised the Chippenham constituency, which would include Royal Wootton Bassett, Calne, and Corsham within the same constituency as Chippenham. They considered this would address many concerns raised in the representations and partially satisfy the conflicting counter proposals received.. Although we recognised the clear distinction between the urban area of Devizes and the rural wards of Urchfont and Bishop's Canning, and The Lavingtons, we acknowledged the large number of representations that suggested that these wards looked to Devizes. Amending the Chippenham constituency, as suggested above, allowed for both wards to be included in the Melksham and Devizes constituency, and the Bromham, Rowde and Roundway ward could be included without the need for a split. The Assistant Commissioners also

proposed including the Calne South ward in the Melksham and Devizes constituency. We agreed with the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners and considered the configuration of constituencies they had formulated better reflected the community identity evidence received.

37. Including the Urchfont and Bishop's Cannings, and The Lavingtons wards in the Melksham and Devizes constituency meant we had to find an alternative ward to include in the East Wiltshire constituency to bring it within the permitted range. Given that the electorates of all the constituencies in the county were so close to the minimum permitted, accomplishing this was a difficult task. However, we proposed the inclusion of the Till Valley ward in the East Wiltshire constituency from the Salisbury constituency. Our revised proposal maintained the town of Amesbury in the East Wiltshire constituency, despite the concerns in various representations. To accommodate these further changes, the Nadder Valley and Tisbury wards were included in the Salisbury constituency, as suggested in some of the representations, and to bring the Trowbridge and Warminster constituency - which we proposed revert to its existing name of South West Wiltshire - we included the Hilperton ward in this constituency, which, it could be argued is a part of Trowbridge
38. Following the site visit by our Assistant Commissioners to Swindon and their recommendations, we proposed that there be no revisions to the Swindon North constituency, for which we received relatively few representations. However, we had received a number of representations regarding the Swindon South constituency with support for the inclusion of each of the three wards of Wroughton and Winchelstowe, Chiseldon and Lawn, and Ridgeway in the constituency, instead of in East Wiltshire. However, due to the size of the ward electorates, and in order to allow for the other changes we were proposing, this was not possible. The Assistant Commissioners had considered that while the Wroughton and Winchelsowe, and Ridgeway wards were mostly rural in nature and should be included in the East Wiltshire constituency, the Chiseldon and Lawn ward, whilst also having a rural extent, had a significant urban element in the north of the ward that was in close proximity to the Lawn and Badbury areas and Swindon Old Town areas. They therefore recommended that the ward be split, with three urban polling districts (CLA, CLC, and CLD) lying to the north of the M4 motorway included in Swindon South, while the rural polling district of CLB would be included with the other two Swindon wards in the East Wiltshire constituency. We agreed with their recommendations

and considered that the split of the Chiseldon and Lawn ward allowed for greater benefits for the pattern of constituencies across the sub-region.

Consultation on the revised proposals

39. Although we received some support for not including the St Paul's ward in the Tewkesbury constituency instead of the Springbank ward, there was still some opposition, albeit much less, to the continued inclusion of Springbank in the Tewkesbury constituency. A small number of representations continued to suggest that Battledown ward should be excluded instead of Springbank, as an affluent area with a lower population density may be a better fit for Tewkesbury than Springbank. Elsewhere, we received support for the re-inclusion of the Barnwood ward in the Gloucester constituency in our revised proposals. However, there was still opposition to the exclusion of the Elmbridge and Longlevens wards from the Gloucester constituency.
40. A limited number of representations were received regarding the Forest of Dean constituency with some suggesting name changes of Forest of Dean and North Gloucestershire, or West Gloucestershire, and for the Tewkesbury constituency, which, it was suggested, be renamed North Gloucestershire. Only two representations were received in relation to the re-inclusion of the Isbourne and Winchcombe wards in the Tewkesbury constituency.
41. We received some support for the Stroud and North Cotswolds constituencies, as well as for the inclusion of the Nailsworth, Chalford, and Wotton-under-Edge wards in the revised Stroud constituency. However, a number of representations continued to suggest that the wards of Hardwicke, Minchinhampton, Bisley, and Painswick and Upton, which are currently part of North Cotswolds, should be included in the Stroud constituency instead. Unfortunately, it is not possible to include all District of Stroud wards within the Stroud constituency. One counter proposal suggested that the Severn ward should be in the North Cotswolds constituency from Stroud. There was little to no feedback regarding the reuniting of the two Churchdown wards in the North Cotswolds constituency.
42. Objections were received regarding the South Cotswold constituency. It was suggested by respondents that the Kingswood ward is closely linked

with Wotton-under-Edge and should also be included in the Stroud constituency, as we had done so in our initial proposals. A representation proposed a switch of wards, but this would significantly divide the Stroud constituency.

43. The revised proposals for the Chippenham, and Melksham and Devizes constituencies garnered little support. Most representations were in favour of keeping Chippenham as it is and there was significant opposition, with a large number of representations opposed, in particular, to the inclusion of the Box and Colerne ward in the Melksham and Devizes constituency. The majority of these respondents proposed that the ward be included in the South Cotswolds or Chippenham constituencies instead. A number of representations opposed the inclusion of the Calne South ward in the Melksham and Devizes constituency and drew attention to the fact that its inclusion in the constituency would separate the ward from the rest of Calne. We had included this ward in the Melksham and Devizes constituency as this enabled the configuration of constituencies that we had proposed in Wiltshire. A counter proposal suggested that the Calne Rural ward be split and partly included in Melksham and Devizes, while the Kington ward should be included in Chippenham. There were also calls to reverse the name of the Melksham and Devizes constituency to give prominence to the county town of Wiltshire, although population-wise, Melksham is the larger of the two towns.
44. While there was some minor support for including the Hilperton ward in South West Wiltshire, there was a slightly greater opposition, and little mention of the constituency name reverting back to the existing constituency name. The inclusion of the Nadder Valley and Tisbury wards in the Salisbury constituency was opposed, but this was overshadowed by the opposition to the inclusion of the Till Valley ward in the East Wiltshire constituency. Some representations suggested that all the areas of the Wylye Valley, including Nadder Valley and Till Valley should be in the same constituency. A further counter proposal was received suggesting that Nadder Valley should be retained in the South West Wiltshire constituency, while the Urchfont and Bishop's Canning ward should be split between the constituencies Melksham and Devizes, and East Wiltshire. At the initial proposals, almost all the representations from this ward supported its inclusion in the same constituency as Devizes, and, although few representations mentioned the ward in this consultation, those that did were mostly in support. Another counter proposal suggested for the

Chiseldon and Lawn ward be wholly located in Swindon South, with either Urchfont and Bishop's Canning being split between the constituencies of Melksham and Devizes, and East Wiltshire, or the Wyllye Valley ward being split between the constituencies of South West Wiltshire and East Wiltshire.

45. Few representations were received with regard to Swindon North. Some support was received for the inclusion of the northern part of the split Chiseldon and Lawn ward in Swindon South. Proposals to split the Wroughton and Wichelstowe ward received some support. Several representations considered that none of the three southern Swindon wards - Wroughton and Wichelstowe, Chiseldon and Lawn, and Ridgeway - should be included in the East Wiltshire constituency. While this suggestion may not be feasible, any further changes to the proposed boundaries would have significant consequences across Wiltshire.

Final recommendations

46. We considered that no significant new evidence had been received with respect to the proposed Swindon North and Swindon South constituencies that would not have significant knock-on effects and we propose no further changes to these two constituencies.
47. We considered also that no significant or new evidence had been received with respect to the Forest of Dean, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham, or Gloucester constituencies that would lead us to consider altering the configuration or names of these constituencies. We note the support for the inclusion of the Chalford and Wotton-under-Edge wards in Stroud and acknowledge the issues concerning the Stroud constituency and the desire from residents of each of the wards in the District of Stroud to be included in the Stroud constituency. However, this is not possible and we propose no further changes to this or the North Cotswolds constituency.
48. We note the concerns about the inclusion of the Kingswood ward in the South Cotswolds constituency but, although not ideal, we note that the ward is not currently included in the existing Stroud constituency.
49. We note, and to a degree, share the concerns about the inclusion of the Box and Colerne ward in the Melksham and Devizes constituency, but have not identified an alternative configuration that does not have a

significant impact on the other constituencies in Wiltshire. The same applies to the inclusion of the Calne South ward within the Melksham and Devizes constituency. The constituencies in Wiltshire have very low electorates - often barely above the permitted minimum - and any change of just a single ward would result in knock-on effects on other constituencies.

50. We noted the concerns about the inclusion of the Nadder Valley ward in the Salisbury constituency, but the electorate of the Salisbury constituency is already only 70,242 and could not accommodate the loss of a ward and remain within the permitted range.
51. With regard to the proposed inclusion of the Till Valley ward in the East Wiltshire constituency in our revised proposals, whereas we had included the ward in the Salisbury constituency (where it is currently located) in the initial proposals, we noted the significant degree of opposition and decided that a site visit should be undertaken to see if any alternatives could be adopted. We had noted that it would be possible, numerically, to exchange the Till Valley between constituencies with the Winterslow and Upper Bourne Valley ward from Salisbury.
52. It was observed that the villages of the Winterslow and Upper Bourne Valley, and Old Sarum and Lower Bourne Valley wards were linked along the A338 into Salisbury. It was also observed that although areas of the Till Valley in the south of the ward closest to Salisbury no doubt looked to the city, further into the ward was open countryside, in contrast to what had been observed in the other two wards under consideration. Also, the A36 was a much more significant road than the A338, and provided very good transport links to the north, and east and west along the A303. The A360 was considered to be a more minor road with no discernible communities along it until Salisbury itself.
53. From the observations we considered that, despite some links to Salisbury in the south, Till Valley is a large rural ward and the links to Salisbury are not as evident as those of the Winterslow and Upper Bourne Valley, and Old Sarum and Lower Bourne Valley wards. Although not an ideal solution, we considered that the inclusion of the Till Valley ward in the East Wiltshire constituency rather than in Salisbury was more appropriate than the inclusion of the Winterslow and Upper Bourne Valley ward in East Wiltshire.

54. Our final recommendations for Gloucestershire and Wiltshire are therefore for constituencies of: Cheltenham; Chippenham; East Wiltshire; Forest of Dean; Gloucester; Melksham and Devizes; North Cotswolds; Salisbury; South Cotswolds; South West Wiltshire; Stroud; Swindon North; Swindon South; and Tewkesbury. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

AVON, SOMERSET AND DEVON

Initial proposals

55. Our proposed sub-region of Avon, Somerset, and Devon has a combined mathematical entitlement of 29.97 constituencies, resulting in an allocation of 30 constituencies to the sub-region - an increase of two from the current arrangement. In our initial proposals, we suggested that five constituencies should cross county or unitary authority boundaries within the sub-region. Specifically, two constituencies would cross the boundary between Somerset and unitary authorities within the former Avon county area, two would cross the boundary between two unitary authorities within the former Avon county area, and one would cross the county boundary between Somerset and Devon.
56. Two of the four existing constituencies in Bristol exceed the permitted electorate range, notably Bristol West, which has an electorate of almost 100,000. We therefore allocated an additional, fifth, constituency to Bristol, which would have to cross local authority boundaries. While extending an existing Bristol constituency northwards into South Gloucestershire was considered to be too disruptive, we proposed a new Bristol North East constituency that stretched eastwards into South Gloucestershire. This proposed constituency would encompass the City of Bristol wards of Frome Vale, Eastville, and Hillfields from the existing Bristol East constituency, as well as the ward of Lockleaze from the existing Bristol North West constituency. Additionally, it would include the four South Gloucestershire wards of New Cheltenham, Kingswood, Woodstock, and Staple Hill and Mangotsfield and, we considered, would reflect community ties.
57. We included the Bishopston and Ashley Down ward in our proposed Bristol North West constituency, which was otherwise unchanged apart from the

transfer of the Lockleaze ward to the Bristol North East constituency and renamed the existing Bristol West constituency as Bristol Central. We significantly modified the existing Kingswood constituency by the inclusion of three wards from the existing constituency, along with the entire Staple Hill and Mangotsfield ward, into our proposed Bristol North West constituency. We included 11 Bath and North East Somerset wards from the current North East Somerset constituency with the four existing Kingswood constituency wards of Hanham, Longwell Green, Bitton and Oldland Common, and Parkwall and Warmley wards to create a new Keynsham and North East Somerset constituency.

58. Modest changes were made to the existing Thornbury and Yate, and Filton and Bradley Stoke constituencies in the South Gloucestershire unitary authority. These included realignment with new ward boundaries, as well as the inclusion of the Pilning and Severn Beach ward in Thornbury and Yate, and the Emersons Green ward in Filton and Bradley Stoke from the existing Kingswood constituency.
59. The low electorate of the existing Bath constituency was addressed by the inclusion of the wards of Bathavon North and Newbridge. We proposed to reduce the electorate of the existing North Somerset constituency by including the Yatton ward in our proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency. We also reduced the electorate of the Weston-super-Mare constituency by including the three North Somerset wards of Blagdon and Churchill, Banwell and Winscombe, and Congresbury and Puxton in our proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency.
60. Due to large constituency electorates, major configuration changes in Somerset was unavoidable. As previously mentioned, we proposed a new Wells and Mendip Hills constituency. In addition to the wards mentioned above, we included within it the East Polden and West Polden wards from the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency, but not the Ashwick, Chilcompton, and Stratton ward. We proposed a new Frome constituency which would cross the county boundary constituency between Avon and Somerset and would consist of six Bath and North East Somerset wards, including Midsomer Norton, and 13 wards from the existing Frome and Somerton constituency. The South Somerset district ward of Bruton would also be included, as well as the Ashwick, Chilcompton, and Stratton ward from the existing Wells constituency. We proposed a Glastonbury and Somerton constituency, which would consist of 15 wards from the existing

Frome and Somerton constituency, including Somerton town, and seven wards from the existing Wells constituency, including Glastonbury and Street. Additionally, we included the Hamdon, and The Pennards and Ditchheat wards in the Glastonbury and Somerton constituency.

61. We proposed minor changes to the Yeovil constituency in order to realign its boundaries with the new local government ward boundaries. Our proposals maintain the entirety of the town of Yeovil within the constituency. We addressed the large electorate of the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency by proposing a Bridgwater constituency that included 13 wards from the existing constituency and four wards from the existing Wells constituency. We proposed a Tiverton and Minehead constituency, crossing county boundaries, with wards from the Mid Devon, and Somerset West and Taunton local authorities, which included the remaining wards from the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency, eight wards from Tiverton and Honiton and three from the Taunton Deane constituency, and the whole of the divided South Quantock, and Wiveliscombe and District wards. We proposed the reconfigured Taunton Deane constituency be renamed Taunton since Taunton Deane district no longer exists. The changes proposed to the existing Tiverton and Honiton constituency led us to propose a Honiton constituency that included four wards from the existing East Devon constituency that also included the towns of Ottery St Mary and Sidmouth.
62. The electorate of the existing Exeter constituency was above the permitted range. We therefore proposed the inclusion of three wards that had been divided by changes to local government ward boundaries in our proposed Exmouth constituency, namely, Priory, St Loyes, and Topsham.
63. The existing North Devon constituency was unchanged from the existing constituency in our initial proposals, and only minor adjustments were proposed to the existing Newton Abbot, Torbay, and Central Devon constituencies to realign their boundaries with new local government ward boundaries. Our proposed Central Devon constituency would still contain wards from four local authorities. We proposed minor changes to the existing Totnes constituency by the inclusion of the Charterlands ward from the South West Devon constituency. The Torridge and West Devon, and South West Devon constituencies were largely unchanged in our proposals, apart from the inclusion of the Buckland Monachorum and Burrator wards from the existing Torridge and West Devon to our proposed

South West Devon constituency. Our proposed Torrridge and West Devon constituency would continue to encompass the whole of the District of Torrridge, along with nine District of West Devon wards, and was renamed Torrridge and Tavistock.

64. The electorate of the existing Plymouth Moor View constituency was below the permitted range, while that of the Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport constituency was above. Exchanging two wards would bring both within the permitted range, but would include rural areas in the same constituency as the historic port. To maintain community ties, we proposed the division of the Peverell ward along the Outland Road, resulting in the three polling districts of KA, KB and KC being included in Plymouth Sutton and Devonport and the KC and KD polling districts being included in the Plymouth Moor View constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

65. Our proposals for the Bristol constituencies were generally well-supported, and there was a consensus that the Bristol constituencies should not expand northwards into Filton and Bradley Stoke, but eastwards into the existing constituency of Kingswood. However, there was some limited opposition to the inclusion of parts of Knowle from the existing Bristol South constituency to our proposed Bristol East constituency with it being claimed this would divide communities.
66. There was some opposition to the relatively modest changes in South Gloucestershire, particularly from those who supported the counter-proposals that suggested for a reconfiguration of the South Gloucestershire constituencies into a broadly east/west arrangement: South Gloucestershire West would succeed Filton and Bradley Stoke and include the wards of Severn Vale and Thornbury from the existing Thornbury and Yate constituency, the entire Winterbourne ward, and the Pilning and Severn Beach ward. The South Gloucestershire East constituency would comprise six wards from the existing Thornbury and Yate constituency, along with the entire Boyd Valley, Frenchay and Downend, and Emersons Green wards.
67. A significant number of representations objecting to the proposed Keynsham and North East Somerset constituency were received. Most objected to the inclusion of the Bathavon South ward and the town of

Midsomer Norton in our proposed Frome constituency, that the existing Kingswood constituency would no longer exist in its current form, and for the lack of commonality between areas north and south of the river Avon. The name of the constituency was also criticised for being misleading as Keynsham was already part of North East Somerset. Most of the opposition to our proposed Frome constituency concerned the inclusion of the Bahavon South ward. However, there was also support for our proposed Frome constituency.

68. A significant level of opposition was received regarding our proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency. Some came from the Congresbury and Puxton ward, but most commented on the Yatton ward, lying adjacent to the Bristol Channel, with it being claimed that the constituency made no sense. However, support was received from others for our proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency. Under our initial proposals The town of Somerton was included in the newly configured Glastonbury and Somerton constituency. There was some limited objection, but also support for the proposed constituency. A counter proposed suggested that The Pennards and Ditchat ward should be included in Frome rather than Glastonbury and Somerton and exchanged with the Bruton ward.
69. Although there was general support for the proposed Bridgwater constituency, some concerns were raised regarding the inclusion of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station development in our proposed Tiverton and Minehead constituency, rather than in Bridgwater. Opposition to our proposed Yeovil constituency was limited, although it was proposed that the Northstone, Ivelchester and St Michael's ward, which is currently split between existing constituencies should be split with the area in the south that is currently part of the Yeovil constituency remaining in Yeovil.
70. The proposed Tiverton and Minehead cross-county boundary constituency was supported, with some representations saying that the proposed constituency was geographically cohesive, but this was outweighed by significant opposition to the inclusion of parts of two different counties in the same constituency. The proposed Taunton constituency was much opposed, with it being claimed that the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward was an integral part of the town of Taunton, with much compelling evidence presented. A number of representations suggested that the ward could be exchanged between constituencies, with the Upper Culm ward instead being included in Tiverton and Minehead, This would also restore

the link between the ward with the Lower Culm ward, which was already included in the proposed Tiverton and Minehead constituency.

71. The initial proposals for the Honiton constituency were largely supported and the inclusion of the town of Sidmouth in the constituency was welcomed. However, some representations claimed that the inclusion of Ottery St Mary in this constituency would separate it from the West Hill and Aylesbeare ward, with which there were strong links and which we had included in our proposed Exmouth constituency. There were also a number of representations proposing to rename the constituency Honiton and Sidmouth.
72. The proposals for the Exeter and Exmouth constituencies garnered a huge number of representations, with near unanimous opposition. More than 500 written representations and petitions containing 1,853 names were received. The primary point of objection was the inclusion of the Priory ward in the Exmouth constituency. Numerous representations were made, detailing the ward's historic links to the centre of Exeter with much detailed and compelling evidence. Many suggested that the Pinhoe ward, rather than Priory, should be included in the Exmouth constituency.
73. With regard to the Central Devon constituency, although the existing constituency had been unchanged in our initial proposals, there were proposals for the Exe Valley ward to be included in the Exmouth constituency, thereby eliminating its status as an "orphan ward" in Central Devon. It was also suggested that the Newton Poppleford and Harpford ward, given its close proximity to Sidmouth, should be included in the Honiton constituency. This change would allow for the inclusion of the Exe Valley ward in the Exmouth constituency, thereby eliminating the 'orphan' ward in Central Devon, and reducing the number of local authorities contained within the constituency from four to three.
74. In our initial proposals, there were no changes to the existing Newton Abbot, and Torbay constituencies, apart from minor alterations to realign constituency boundaries with changes to local government ward boundaries. Our proposals for these constituencies were not contentious, although there were suggestions for the Newton Abbot constituency to be renamed Teignbridge, which had been a former name of the constituency.

75. Despite the relatively minor changes proposed to the existing Totnes constituency, there was still some opposition. This largely came from residents in the Brixham area, who believed that they should be included in the Torbay constituency. However, due to the electorate of the Torbay constituency, this was not possible. Additionally, there were over 200 representations and a petition in support of renaming the Totnes constituency as South Devon.
76. The existing Torridge and West Devon, and South West Devon constituencies were largely unchanged in our initial proposals, but the inclusion of the Buckland Monachorum and Burrator wards in South West Devon was objected to in a number of representations. It was claimed that the wards' ties are with the town of Tavistock in our proposed Torridge and Tavistock constituency, and that the proposals would divide Dartmoor National Park across constituencies. However, there was also support for the proposed constituencies.
77. In Plymouth, a significant number of representations were received which fell roughly equally between support for and opposition to our initial proposals. However, we received counter-proposals that suggested a three-way split of Plymouth with Plymouth East, Plymouth North and Ivybridge, and Plymouth West constituencies. Our Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded by these, but considered that the proposals to split either the Peverell or Devonport wards had merit, but were also contentious. This was an area in which the Assistant Commissioners considered that a site visit might be required to observe both the proposed splits, and their implications "on the ground" before making any revised recommendations.

Revised proposals

78. In view of the degree of support for our proposed constituencies in Bristol, we considered that no further modifications were necessary for the constituencies of Bristol Central, Bristol East, Bristol North East, Bristol North West, and Bristol South. In South Gloucestershire, we noted the support for our initial proposals and opposition to the counter proposal for the two constituencies. We were not persuaded that the counter proposal, which suggested a significant reconfiguration of the constituencies which had been only modestly altered in our initial proposals, was a suitable alternative. We therefore proposed no amendments to the constituencies

of Filton and Bradley Stoke, and Thornbury and Yate, apart from an alteration to the designation of Filton and Bradley Stoke to a Borough Constituency in view of its high electorate density.

79. We noted both the support for, and opposition to, our proposed Keynsham and North East Somerset constituency and we acknowledged that our proposed name was not an accurate description of the constituency. Therefore, we recommended the name North East Somerset and Hanham, which was suggested as a more appropriate name. No other changes to the constituency were proposed. The electorate of the Bath constituency was such that it was not possible to also include the Bathavon South ward, as suggested in a number of representations. We therefore proposed no changes to the Bath constituency. We noted both the support and opposition (largely with regard to the Bathavon South ward) to our proposed Frome constituency, and the alternative names that had been suggested. One representation claimed that our proposals were much more coherent than the existing Somerton and Frome constituency. We were not persuaded to make any further changes to the constituency,
80. Relatively few representations were received with regard to the proposed Weston-super-Mare constituency. There was a greater degree of opposition to the proposed North Somerset constituency, but much of this was in opposition to the composition of the surrounding constituencies that had an impact on North Somerset, particularly the inclusion of the Yatton and Kenn areas (Yatton ward) in our proposed Wells and Mendip Hills constituency that crossed the boundary between North Somerset unitary authority and Somerset. However, we also received some support and we agreed with our Assistant Commissioners that neither constituency should be modified, as to do so would have knock-on effects elsewhere.
81. There was some limited objection to the proposed Glastonbury and Somerton constituency, but we had also received some support for our initial proposals. On balance our Assistant Commissioners were not minded to modify our initial proposals. We agreed with them.
- 82.
83. The proposed Bridgwater constituency was largely supported. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the issue of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station development, but noted that no-one had made a clear counter proposal that retained the power station in the Bridgwater constituency without causing disruption elsewhere. We were not

persuaded that the name of the Bridgwater constituency should be changed to Bridgwater Bay, Bridgwater and Burnham, or anything similar and therefore proposed no further changes to the Bridgwater constituency.

84. Opposition to our initial proposals for the Yeovil constituency was limited. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the suggestion that the southern part of the newly enlarged ward of Northstone, Ivelchester & St Michael's should be split, with the villages south of the A303 being retained within the Yeovil constituency was not feasible. The electorate of our proposed Glastonbury and Somerton constituency was just within the permitted range and could only tolerate the loss of 266 electors without further consequences affecting other proposed constituencies. We noted that there were 1,434 electors in the polling district that covers the village of Ilchester alone. The Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded of the merits of the proposed split ward, and in acknowledging the general level of support for the constituencies in this area, they proposed no change to the Yeovil constituency as initially proposed. We agreed with them and proposed no changes to our initially proposed Yeovil constituency.
85. The Assistant Commissioners noted the considerable opposition to the proposed cross-county constituency of Tiverton and Minehead, with a number of representations claiming that we had disregarded community ties and the boundaries of the historic counties of Somerset and Devon. However, there was also support, and some claimed that the new constituency was cohesive. Much of the opposition concerned the inclusion of the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward in this constituency rather than in the Taunton constituency: Detailed evidence was provided of the strong links of Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward with Taunton. We and our Assistant Commissioners found this evidence to be persuasive. A compensatory alteration to allow for the ward's inclusion would, however, be necessary. As proposed in a number of representations, we therefore amended our initial proposals to include the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward in the Taunton constituency, and the Upper Culm ward in the Tiverton and Minehead constituency, thereby uniting the ward with the Lower Culm ward. However, we were not persuaded to include Wellington in the name of the Taunton constituency, as had been suggested.
86. We agreed with those who proposed that the Honiton constituency be renamed Honiton and Sidmouth, to reflect the inclusion of this sizable town within the constituency. We also considered the evidence to include both

the West Hill and Aylesbeare, and Newton Poppleford and Harpford wards in the Honiton constituency to be persuasive, although we considered suggestions to also include the Budleigh and Rayleigh were not be feasible given the other changes that were being proposed. We also noted that these changes would allow for the Exe Valley ward to be included in the Exmouth constituency, leading to benefits for the Central Devon constituency that have been highlighted elsewhere in this report. We therefore proposed a reconfigured and renamed Honiton and Sidmouth constituency, and the changes to the Central Devon constituency as part of our revised proposals.

87. We noted the strength of opposition to our proposals for the Exeter and Exmouth constituencies, and in particular, the compelling evidence regarding the Priory ward. We therefore proposed that the Priory ward would remain in the Exeter constituency, in exchange for the Pinhoe ward, which would be included in the renamed Exeter East and Exmouth constituency.
88. We considered the rationale for the Totnes constituency to be renamed South Devon to be persuasive and also noted the considerable support for this change. We accordingly revised our initial proposals to change the name of the constituency to South Devon. We acknowledged the frustrations of those living in the Brixham area at not being included in the Torbay constituency. However, the electorate of Torbay is such that this is not possible. We noted the support for the Newton Abbot constituency, but were not persuaded that a change of name was required here. We therefore proposed no change to the Torbay and Newton Abbot constituencies, as initially proposed.
89. We did not consider the opposition, or the evidence received with regard to the South West Devon, and Torridge and Tavistock constituencies to be persuasive as to warrant any alterations to these constituencies.
90. In view of the contentious nature of our proposed Plymouth constituencies and the lack of consensus on which ward should be split, a site visit to the area was undertaken. We considered that the counter proposal to split the Devonport ward would divide the Devonport Docks effectively across the middle, excluding the administrative buildings and Headquarters of HM Naval Base Devonport from the maritime-focused Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency. We also struggled to see how, despite the counter

claims, the long-standing and historical reference to Devonport could continue to be appropriate for just one of the constituency names if the counter proposal were to be adopted. We considered that the splitting of the Peverell ward broadly along the A386 Outland Road, while not perfect, provided for a better pattern of constituencies. We therefore proposed no amendments to the Plymouth Moor View, and Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituencies, as initially proposed.

Consultation on the revised proposals

91. Few representations were received with regard to the Bristol constituencies with the only notable opposition, albeit minor, continuing to be some opposition to the inclusion of parts of Knowle from the existing Bristol South constituency to the proposed Bristol East constituency and the perceived division of the community between constituencies.
92. Of the representations received regarding the Thornbury and Yate constituency, the majority supported our proposed constituency. Few representations were received with regard to Filton and Bradley Stoke. Most of these were in objection to the inclusion of the Emersons Green ward from the former Kingswood constituency or contained general comments about the perceived northward expansion of Bristol.
93. The Bath constituency garnered widespread support, with very few representations received. However, among these, some continued to suggest the inclusion of the Midford, Monkton, Southstoke, and Claverton parishes (Bathavon South ward) in the Bath constituency.
94. We received few representations commenting on the configuration of the proposed North East Somerset and Hanham constituency. However, no alternative proposals with persuasive justification were received. There remained some disappointment about the proposed name, with suggestions that the largest town, Keynsham, should be incorporated into the name, citing Hanham as a small suburb
95. Very few representations were received with regard to the Weston-super-Mare constituency and no significant new evidence provided. The opposition to the North Somerset, and Wells and Mendip Hills constituencies was still significant, with approximately 70 representations across both constituencies, and continued to largely

concern (as in the responses to the initial proposals) the inclusion of the Yatton ward in Wells and Mendip Hill constituency. Aside from this issue, there was limited opposition to the revised proposals concerning other areas of the constituency. Some alternative names were proposed for the Wells and Mendip Hills constituency, including Mid Somerset, Wells and The Western Mendips, and simply Wells.

96. Few representations were received regarding the Glastonbury and Somerton, and Yeovil constituencies, and no significant new evidence presented. We received a mixture of support and opposition to our proposed Frome constituency. The issues raised in these representations were similar to those in the initial proposals and many concerned the name of the constituency, with a variety of names suggested that included Midsomer Norton and Frome, or East Somerset and Frome. One representation proposed a transfer of wards, with the ward of Bruton (an orphan District of South Somerset ward that had been included in the Frome constituency) being transferred from the Frome constituency to the Glastonbury and Somerton constituency, with The Pennards and Ditchat ward going from that constituency to the Frome constituency. This proposal would reduce the number of local authorities in the Frome constituency from three to two.
97. There remained some surprise that the Hinkley Point nuclear power station was not included in the Bridgwater constituency, but no concrete counter proposal was suggested. Our proposed Tiverton and Minehead constituency continued to attract some opposition, but these were now few in number. While there was strong support for the inclusion of the Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove ward in the Taunton constituency. However, we also received a number of representations that proposed the constituency be renamed Taunton and Wellington in order to reflect the different communities included in the constituency.
98. With regard to the North Devon, Newton Abbot, Torbay, and South Devon constituencies, there were a limited number of representations, mostly suggesting name changes, which apart from continued suggestions for Newton Abbot to be renamed Teignbridge, were not supported in other representations. However, objections persisted about including wards containing Brixham within the proposed South Devon constituency, as the town was claimed to be an integral part of the English Riviera and separating it from Torbay would be a disservice to the whole area.

99. Unlike the initial proposals, there were relatively few representations with regard to the proposed Exeter, and Exeter East and Exmouth constituencies, although there was some limited opposition to the exclusion from Exeter of the Pinhoe ward. However, a significant number of representations suggested the Exeter East and Exmouth constituency to be renamed Exmouth and East Exeter, or Exmouth and East Exeter, to reflect that the population of Exmouth surpasses the combined population of the three Exeter wards. One suggestion was to name it Exmouth and the Clysts, while another representation suggested that Exeter should be renamed Exeter West. Very few representations were received regarding the inclusion of the Exe Valley ward in the revised Exeter East and Exmouth constituency.
100. A small number of representations continued to be received regarding the Torridge and Tavistock, and South West Devon constituencies. There was generally some support for both constituencies, but we continued to receive representations opposing the inclusion of Buckland Monachorum and Burrator wards in South West Devon, rather than in Torridge and Tavistock. It continued to be claimed that the Dartmoor National Park would be divided between two constituencies in our proposals, although this is already the case with the existing constituency pattern.
101. In Plymouth, we received few representations, with the majority of these opposing our revised proposals, however, no significant new evidence was received.

Final recommendations

102. We noted that there continued to be calls for the inclusion of the Midford, Monkton, Southstoke, and Claverton parishes (Bathavon South ward) in the Bath constituency. This would entail significant changes to the Bath and surrounding constituencies, and we do not consider that there has been a clear or compelling rationale provided for how Bath would benefit from such an inclusion.
103. Having considered all the evidence received, we do not consider there is sufficient support or persuasive evidence for us to recommend any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for this sub-region, apart from in two areas. In the initial proposals a counter proposal had

suggested that the ward of Bruton (an orphan District of South Somerset ward that had been included in Frome) could be transferred from the Frome constituency to Glastonbury and Somerton, with The Pennards and Ditcheat ward going from there to Frome. This would remove the anomaly of an orphan ward and reduce the number of local authorities in the Frome constituency from three to two. At the time, our Assistant Commissioners had considered that there was insufficient support to do this. However, This issue also featured in a representation received in response to our revised proposals. In considering the suggestion and the evidence again, we consider that this suggestion has merit and we propose to revise further our proposals here and recommend that the Bruton ward be included in the Glastonbury and Somerset constituency, and that The Pennards and Ditcheat ward be included in the Frome constituency as part of our final recommendations.

104. We noted that a number of alternative names had been suggested for a number of constituencies. Most of these did not garner any particular support, although we noted that there was some degree of support for the Frome constituency to be renamed to include some reference to East Somerset. However, we were not persuaded that this was necessary.
105. However, there was a considerable degree of support for calls to include the town of Wellington in our proposed Taunton constituency. We noted that the town does have a significant population, we considered the evidence, and concluded that the proposal had merit. We therefore recommend that the Taunton constituency be renamed Taunton and Wellington. Similarly, we noted that there is significant support for renaming Exeter East and Exmouth to Exmouth and Exeter East. We noted that the population of Exmouth surpasses the combined population of the three Exeter wards. We therefore revise our proposals and change the name of the constituency to Exmouth and Exeter East. We acknowledge the logic of renaming Exeter as Exeter West, but the constituency, apart from minor readjustments, is otherwise unchanged from the existing constituency and we saw no support for this proposal.
106. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed constituencies in Avon, Somerset and Devon. We recognised that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives. However, having considered the

evidence received, we consider our revised proposals for the remaining constituencies in this sub-region continued to provide the best balance between the statutory factors.

107. Our final recommendations for Avon, Somerset and Devon are therefore for constituencies of: Bath; Bridgwater; Bristol Central; Bristol East; Bristol North East; Bristol North West; Bristol South; Central Devon; Exeter; Exmouth and Exeter East; Frome; Glastonbury and Somerton; Honiton and Sidmouth; Newton Abbot; North Devon; North East Somerset and Hanham; North Somerset; Plymouth Moor View; Plymouth Sutton and Devonport; South Devon; South West Devon; Taunton and Wellington; Thornbury and Yate; Tiverton and Minehead; Torbay; Torridge and Tavistock; Wells and Mendip Hills; Weston-super-Mare; and Yeovil. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Dorset (including Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch)

108. We considered Dorset as a sub-region on its own with an allocation of eight constituencies (the same as the existing number). In parts of the county we proposed only minor changes to the configuration of the existing constituencies.

Initial proposals

109. The sub-region encompasses the two unitary authorities of Dorset, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP). Of the eight existing constituencies, six are within the permitted electorate range, while the existing Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency has an electorate below the range, and the West Dorset constituency has an electorate above. All eight constituencies could remain entirely situated within the ceremonial county of Dorset without any need to cross county boundaries.
110. In formulating our initial proposals, we recognised that the Bournemouth East, Bournemouth West, Poole, and Christchurch constituencies currently have electorates within the permitted range. However, due to changes in local government ward boundaries, retaining these constituencies in their existing form would result in the splitting of several wards between constituencies. To avoid this, we realigned the constituency boundaries to

reflect the new local government ward boundaries. This was the only change we proposed for these constituencies.

111. The new West Purbeck ward in the Mid Dorset and Poole North constituency had been extended to the coast, resulting in the bisecting of the existing South Dorset constituency. We proposed the inclusion of the whole of West Purbeck ward in the South Dorset constituency. Furthermore, we proposed extending the Mid Dorset and Poole North constituency northwards to encompass the Stour and Allen Vale ward, which was previously in the North Dorset constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the whole of the Chalk Valleys, and Puddletown and Lower Winterborne wards in the North Dorset constituency.
112. To reduce the high electorate of the West Dorset constituency, we proposed a configuration that would not allow for the inclusion of both the Winterborne and Broadmayne, and Chickerell wards in the West Dorset constituency. Instead, we recommended transferring the Chickerell ward from the existing West Dorset constituency for the Upwey and Broadway ward from the existing South Dorset constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

113. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole unitary authority constituencies garnered a considerable amount of support, given that they remain unchanged except for the necessary realignment with new ward boundaries. Some respondents expressed their objection to the renaming of the Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency to Mid Dorset and Poole North, claiming this was unnecessary and that the name should remain unchanged.
114. The inclusion of Chickerell ward in the South Dorset constituency, and Upwey and Broadway ward in the West Dorset constituency, in particular, was very unpopular. Many representations argued that this configuration disrupted the area's historic and local ties, and that the exclusion of Upwey and Broadway from South Dorset and the inclusion of Chickerell did not take into account the geography and history of the area or the wishes of the people concerned. It was also suggested that Chickerell was a better fit in the West Dorset constituency and that its residents consider that they are not part of Weymouth and wish to be identified as a town in their own right, whereas Upwey and Broadway had always been considered to be a

part of Weymouth. Many representations therefore proposed for the Upwey and Broadway ward to remain in the same constituency as Weymouth, since the ward followed the traditional main route to Weymouth town centre and was surrounded on three sides by other wards of Weymouth.

115. Despite there being no objections from those commenting on the pattern of constituencies across the whole region, the initial proposals led to over 250 objections concerning the Chalk Valleys ward. Residents in the Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley areas were strongly opposed to their inclusion in the North Dorset constituency, as they felt their ties were with Dorchester and the West Dorset constituency. Many of these respondents considered that North Dorset and places such as Verwood, which were included in the North Dorset constituency, were far away and had little in common with their area.
116. We received representations from individuals offering an alternative configuration, as well as other counter proposals. It was generally accepted that there was no whole ward solution to resolve the issue, and most proposed that splitting wards between constituencies was the only way to properly address the constraints faced in the Dorset sub-region. It was claimed that local ties could be broken in many areas if we did not consider whether the circumstances in South Dorset, North Dorset, and West Dorset were exceptional enough to warrant constituencies that split wards. The counter proposal suggested the splitting of two wards: West Purbeck and Chalk Valleys. It was contended that a West Purbeck ward split would allow us to construct a Dorset sub-region with a similar pattern to existing constituencies, while also allowing the Upwey and Broadway Ward to be included in the South Dorset constituency. It was also suggested that a split in the Chalk Valleys ward would permit the Cerne Abbas and Piddle Valley areas to be included in West Dorset, the same constituency as the significant market town of Dorchester, with which the local residents claimed affinity.

Revised proposals

117. After carefully reviewing the initial proposals and the evidence received, including the option of ward splits, our Assistant Commissioners made a site visit to the area to observe for themselves the wards in question and the community ties that have been suggested exist.

118. They concluded that none of the evidence provided during the consultation provided a compelling reason to alter the composition of any of the Dorset constituencies as proposed in our initial proposals, or in particular, to split any wards. They noted the support for our proposed constituencies in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole unitary authority and considered that, although there was a significant degree of opposition to our proposals in the south and west of the county, particularly from the Chalk Valleys and Upwey and Boadwey wards, we had proposed a cohesive set of constituencies without the need to divide wards. They also noted the support for our proposals from the qualifying political parties. We agreed, and made no further changes. However, we did consider that those who suggested it was unnecessary to change the original name of the proposed Mid Devon and Poole North constituency were correct, and we revised our initial proposals to change the name of the constituency back to its existing name of Mid Dorset and North Poole.

Consultation on the revised proposals

119. We received only a few representations for Bournemouth and Poole; there was support for our revised proposals, and unanimous support for our decision to amend our initial proposals and retain the original name of the Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency. However, we did receive a number of representations, which whilst not suggesting a change to the configuration of the Christchurch constituency, called for it to be renamed Christchurch and East Dorset
120. We received no support for a previous proposal that sought to divide Dorset into two sub-regions. However, a number of representations were received from the West Purbeck ward, particularly, from the Bere Regis, Bloxworth and surrounding areas, that the ward should be split, with the areas in the north west of the ward being retained within the Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency.
121. We again received significant opposition to the inclusion of the Chalk Valley ward in the North Dorset constituency. Additionally, there was some additional opposition to the inclusion of the Chickerell ward in the South Dorset constituency, and there continued to be a significant number of representations still opposing the inclusion of the Upwey and Broadwey ward in the West Dorset constituency.

Final recommendations

122. We have considered the evidence received and propose no changes to the boundaries or names of the proposed two Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole constituencies.
123. After thorough consideration of all relevant factors and careful examination of the affected areas, we considered that it would be prudent to undertake a further site visit to the North, West and South Dorset constituencies.
124. In the Bere Regis and Bloxworth areas it was considered that these areas did indeed look eastwards towards the existing constituency and that the main lines of communication were east/west across this part of the ward.
125. Having visited the area, we considered that including Chickerell in a constituency with Weymouth was appropriate. We observed that along the Chickerell Road from Weymouth, the Charlestown area is at the eastern edge of the ward and was considered to be clearly an urban extension of Weymouth. We considered that the Chickerell Downs did not appear to be a dividing feature between Charlestown and Chickerell itself and, from the observations, and despite some of the claims in the representations, we considered Chickerell to also be suburban in nature and as much a part of the greater Weymouth area as was the Upwey and Broadwey ward. We therefore recommend no further amendments to our revised proposals with regard to the inclusion of the Chickerell ward with Weymouth in the South Dorset constituency
126. We also observed the ties of the Upwey and Broadwey ward. We noted that the community of Broadwey is in the south of the Upwey and Broadwey ward and was suburban in nature, and certainly part of Weymouth. Upwey in the north of the ward had a more village-like feel about it, but still looked to Weymouth as the boundary with the rural Winterbourne and Broadmayne ward to the north was clear. We also considered the large body of evidence that the communities of the ward overwhelmingly see themselves as part of Weymouth in the representations.
127. We visited the Chalk Valleys ward and observed it to be a very rural ward with scattered villages, lying some distance from the town of Dorchester (with the Charminster St Mary's ward lying between the ward and the town

of Dorchester). We again considered the large body of evidence that was submitted, and have no doubt that residents of this area of Chalk Valleys ward would look towards Dorchester for shopping and services, as it is the nearest big town, but our observations did not lead us to conclude that, despite the local opposition to our proposals, there were sufficient grounds to warrant a splitting of the ward.

128. However, we considered that our revised proposals did divide communities in the Weymouth area. We therefore considered that the statutory factors would be better reflected by the inclusion of the Upwey and Broadway ward in the South Dorset constituency. We investigated a number of configurations using whole wards in an attempt to find a solution that would resolve this issue, but considered these would be disruptive to the existing pattern of constituencies or would break community ties in the Dorchester area.
129. We therefore considered that splitting a ward between constituencies was justified. Having considered the evidence and visited the area, we concluded that splitting the West Purbeck ward between the South Dorset, and Mid Dorset and North Poole constituencies would better reflect the statutory factors and allow for the inclusion of the Upwey and Broadway ward in the South Dorset constituency, in which it is currently located. We also noted that a number of representations in the consultation on the revised proposals were received from the Bere Regis and Bloxworth areas and had suggested that they be included within the constituency in which they were currently located: Mid Dorset and North Poole. We therefore recommend that the WPU2 and WPU3 polling districts - which contain the Bere Regis, Bloxworth and surrounding areas, and which also form Bere Regis and Bloxworth civil parishes - be included in the Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency. Such a split would closely follow the existing constituency boundary in this area and would also provide the beneficial consequence of allowing for the inclusion of the Upwey and Broadway ward in the South Dorset constituency, as has been suggested in the majority of the representations that had been received.
130. We again considered whether it was necessary to split the Chalk Valleys ward, as had also been suggested by many respondents. However, we did not consider that the splitting of this ward was required in resolving the issues in either the Weymouth or north West Purbeck areas.

131. Our final recommendations for Dorset are therefore for constituencies of: Bournemouth East; Bournemouth West; Christchurch; Mid Dorset and North Poole; North Dorset; Poole; South Dorset; and West Dorset. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Cornwall

Initial proposals

132. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has a combined electorate of 438,354, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 5.97 constituencies. We did not consider that Cornwall needed to be paired with Devon and recommended that it be treated as its own sub-region and allocated six constituencies, the same as at present. Four existing constituencies have electorates that are within the permitted range. The two existing constituencies of St Austell and Newquay, and Truro and Falmouth have electorates above the permitted range. We therefore proposed relatively minor changes to the existing constituencies in the county. The existing North Cornwall constituency was wholly unchanged in our proposals, and the three existing constituencies of South East Cornwall, St Austell and Newquay, and St Ives were changed only to realign them with new local government ward boundaries. Under these proposals, the whole of the Roche and Bugle ward was included in South East Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly would remain in the St Ives constituency.
133. We proposed the inclusion of the whole of the Perranporth ward, and the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward in our Camborne and Redruth constituency, and included within the Truro and Falmouth constituency the Constantine, Mabe and Mawnan ward, and the whole of the Falmouth Trescobeas and Budock ward from the Camborne and Redruth constituency. In addition to the inclusion of the whole wards mentioned previously in our proposed Camborne and Redruth constituency, we further proposed the inclusion of the whole of the wards of Lanner, Stithians and Gwennap, and St Agnes, which are currently divided between existing constituencies following local ward boundary changes.

Consultation on the initial proposals

134. We received several counter proposals, offering alternative configurations to constituencies in the county. Our initial proposals included the whole of the Roche and Bugle ward in the South East Cornwall constituency, but many argued that doing so would divide the historic China Clay area between constituencies. Instead, it was suggested it be included with other China Clay wards in the St Austell and Newquay constituency. Two counter-proposals suggested the Fowey, Tywardreath, and Par ward should be included in the South East Cornwall constituency to accommodate the Roche and Bugle ward's inclusion in the St Austell and Newquay constituency.
135. We also received significant opposition to the inclusion of the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward in the Camborne and Redruth constituency. It was suggested that the ward should remain in the Truro and Falmouth constituency and respondents suggested that Threemilestone is a satellite village of Truro, with many local businesses considering themselves part of the greater Truro trading area. We again received differing counter proposals to resolve the inclusion of the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward in the Truro constituency.
136. While the initial proposals for the rest of the constituencies in the Cornwall sub-region were mostly uncontentious, there was some opposition to the proposed Camborne and Redruth and St Ives constituencies. Some argued that the town of Hayle should be included in St Ives, and the St Ives constituency should reference the Lizard Peninsula in its name.

Revised proposals

137. It had been suggested that, in order to accommodate the Roche and Bugle ward in St Austell and Newquay, the Fowey, Tywardreath and Par ward should be included in the South East Cornwall constituency. However, our Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded of this and considered that there was a 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 from this ward across the Fowey estuary. We agreed with their assessment and therefore did not accept these counterproposals, and proposed that the South East Cornwall constituency be unchanged from the existing constituency configuration. However, we did accept the evidence that the China Clay

area should be wholly contained within one constituency and included the Roche and Bugle ward in the St Austell and Newquay constituency, which we considered was best accommodated by including the St Columb Major, St Mawgan and St Wenn ward in the North Cornwall constituency.

138. We accepted the evidence and the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners that the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward be included again in the Truro and Falmouth constituency, with the Constantine, Mabe and Mawnan ward being included in the Camborne and Redruth constituency. In this configuration the two wards are exchanged, with both wards being included in their existing constituencies. We accepted that the Constantine, Mabe and Mawnan ward most likely looked towards the town of Falmouth, but noted that the ward was currently in the existing Camborne and Redruth constituency, and that there were distinct benefits of retaining the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward in Truro and Falmouth.
139. We did not consider that any further change to the Camborne and Redruth constituency, or to St Ives was necessary.

Consultation on the revised proposals

140. Although the revised proposals received overall support, some minor objections were raised regarding the inclusion of the St Columb Major, St Mawgan and St Wenn ward in North Cornwall as a compensation for the inclusion of Roche and Bugle in St Austell and Newquay. One representation repeated the suggestion that this ward should instead be included in St Austell and Newquay, with the Fowey, Par and Tywardreath ward being included in South East Cornwall. Another representation opposed the inclusion of the Constantine, Mabe and Mawmen ward in Camborne and Redruth, arguing that it should be included in Truro and Falmouth, which was the compensatory change made to return the Threemilestone and Chacewater ward to Truro and Falmouth.
141. A few representations continued to oppose the inclusion of the town of Hayle in Camborne and Redruth (although the town is in the existing Camborne and Redruth constituency), suggesting that it should be included in St Ives instead. Several representations proposed alternative names for the St Ives constituency, such as Penzance and Helston; West Cornwall and St Ives; West Penwith, Lizard and Scilly; or St Ives and The

Isles of Scilly. We also received some support for our pattern of constituencies, albeit with suggestions that we should further revise the boundaries to reflect new local government wards, which had been made by Order during the course of the 2023 Boundary Review.

Final recommendations

142. We did not consider that there was sufficient support for any of the suggested name changes. We also considered that the proposal to split wards to reflect the new local government wards that were made by Order during the course of the 2023 Boundary Review was not justified. We generally only consider such matters if there are broader benefits to be gained from splitting a ward. We do not consider that splitting of wards in this instance is necessary. Having considered the evidence received, we consider that our revised proposals for the Cornwall sub-region provide the best balance between the statutory factors.
143. Our final recommendations for Cornwall are therefore for constituencies of: Camborne and Redruth; North Cornwall; South East Cornwall; St Austell and Newquay; St Ives; and Truro and Falmouth. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the West Midlands region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the West Midlands region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 759 responses specific to the West Midlands region in this phase, giving a total of 5536 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: All four qualifying political parties in England supported or accepted the boundaries and names set out in the revised proposals report in their entirety, other than a Conservative request to amend the names of the two main constituencies proposed for Solihull. Of the handful of responses from individuals that addressed the region as a whole, actual changes to the revised proposals that these sought were limited to relatively small scale areas (in particular south Birmingham and Wolverhampton).

Birmingham and Solihull: The decision to split a ward between the Erdington and Perry Barr constituencies is supported in preference to the initial proposals' whole ward approach, but the decision of which ward to split is difficult, as there are now two significant opposing campaigns, each presenting sound local ties arguments for their preferred approach. This issue attracted the most responses in the region during the final consultation and will be the subject of a site visit by the Lead Commissioner.

Coventry: Very few responses, raising no new issues.

Herefordshire: Again very low number of responses, and only new issue raised was southerly location of Old Gore ward in the North Herefordshire constituency (as currently).

Shropshire: Significant - though not large in absolute terms - number of responses from two North Shropshire wards objecting to their inclusion in The Wrekin constituency. Only other significant numbers of responses from this sub-region appeared to be about a review of Telford and Wrekin ward boundaries. Commissioners will wish to benchmark their decision in respect of Shrewsbury housing in the extreme north of Severn Valley ward against their decision in relation to Streethay.

Staffordshire and the Black Country: The only other objectively large group of responses reflected continuing discontent with the proposed constituencies of: Kingswinford and South Staffordshire; Stone and Great Wyrley; and (to a lesser degree) Stafford. Whittington has requested to be added into Lichfield along with Streethay, which is numerically possible. Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton borough constituencies saw a very limited response, though Commissioners may wish to consider the counter proposal for Wolverhampton and/or the addition of Walsall references in the names of the eastern Wolverhampton constituencies. The reinstatement of Warley into the proposed name of Smethwick may also be welcomed. There was some support to restore the initial proposals (or a slight variation of those) in Walsall, but these were small numbers compared to those actively supporting the revised proposals here: Commissioners may wish to consider the alternative put forward of splitting St Matthews rather than Paddock ward.

Warwickshire: Small but significant number of responses objecting to being included in the proposed Kenilworth and Southam, rather than Warwick and Leamington, from two main areas: Budbrooke ward to the south and west (cannot be included without a split of the ward - previously considered), and Radford Semele ward to the east (not previously considered - can be taken in as a whole ward without a split).

Worcestershire: Very low number of responses overall, and no new issues raised.

West Midlands

1. The West Midlands region currently has 59 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 26 have electorates within the permitted range. The electorates of 25 constituencies currently fall below the permitted range, while the electorates of eight constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by two, to 57.
2. The West Midlands region comprises the ceremonial counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, and Worcestershire, and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for the East Midlands — Sir David Natzler KCB and Ruth Bagley OBE — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Birmingham: 28 February - 1 March 2022
 - Stafford: 3-4 March 2022
 - Worcester: 7-8 March 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the West Midlands of 4,169,012 results in it being entitled to 57 constituencies, a decrease of two. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
5. We noted that Herefordshire's electorate of 142,019 results in a mathematical entitlement to 1.94 constituencies and therefore considered Herefordshire as a sub-region in its own right, allocated two whole constituencies (the same as the existing allocation). The combined electorate of Shropshire (including) Telford and Wrekin is 376,136, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 5.12 constituencies, so we

considered Shropshire as a sub-region in its own right, allocated five whole constituencies (the same as the existing allocation). The electorate of Worcestershire is 447,152, providing it with a mathematical entitlement to 6.09 constituencies, so we also considered Worcestershire as a sub-region, allocated six constituencies (the same as the existing allocation). We also considered Warwickshire as a sub-region: its electorate of 432,462 results in a mathematical entitlement to 5.89 constituencies, so we allocated it six whole constituencies (no change from the existing allocation).

6. Due to the size of the electorate in the West Midlands combined authority, it is beneficial to further divide it by local authority where possible. The City of Coventry (electorate 217,818) and the City of Birmingham (electorate 729,944) could be allocated three and ten whole constituencies respectively, but the Borough of Solihull (electorate 162,614) is too large for two whole constituencies, and far too small for three. It is therefore necessary to pair Solihull with either Birmingham or Coventry. We considered that pairing Birmingham with Solihull minimises disruption to existing constituencies, and better reflects local ties, resulting in a Birmingham and Solihull sub-region allocated 12 whole constituencies (no change from the current allocation of constituencies across Birmingham and Solihull).
7. The remaining authorities in the West Midlands combined authority are the metropolitan boroughs of Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton, and Walsall, hereafter referred to as the Black Country. With a collective electorate of 827,975, the Black Country has a mathematical entitlement to 11.28, allowing 11 whole constituencies to be allocated. Similarly, Staffordshire (including Stoke-on-Trent) has a combined electorate of 832,892, giving a mathematical entitlement to 11.35 constituencies, also allowing 11 whole constituencies to be allocated. As allocating 11 to both would result in a total of 56 constituencies being allocated to the entire West Midlands region, one fewer than the 57 constituencies which it has been allocated, we considered it necessary to combine Staffordshire and the Black Country into one sub-region to which we allocated 23 whole constituencies (a reduction of two from the existing allocation). This ensures that the total allocation for the West Midlands region is 57 constituencies.
8. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals, including by those commenting on

the pattern across the region. We did, however, receive in consultation some alternative proposed sub-regions, including particularly:

- treating Birmingham as stand-alone, pairing Solihull with Warwickshire instead; and
 - treating Staffordshire as stand-alone, combining the Black Country with Birmingham.
9. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose any alternative sub-regions. In the first counter proposal above, we considered there was insufficient justification to disturb broadly well-received constituencies in Birmingham and Warwickshire, while in the second counter proposal above, we recognised the benefits that would arise to Staffordshire, but felt they would be outweighed by the degree of disruption this would require across the Black Country and Birmingham.
10. In response to our revised proposals, we received one counter proposal to add Shropshire to the Staffordshire and Black Country sub-region, entailing a constituency that would combine the Shifnal and Albrighton wards of Shropshire with Staffordshire wards across to Great Wyrley. We do not consider that this counter proposal provided persuasive evidence that the perceived benefits would outweigh the disruption to otherwise well supported Shropshire constituencies and the creation of an additional constituency that would cross a county boundary. Therefore, our final recommendations of sub-regions are:
- Birmingham and Solihull;
 - Coventry;
 - Herefordshire;
 - Shropshire (including Telford and Wrekin);
 - Staffordshire (including Stoke-on-Trent) and the Black Country;
 - Warwickshire;
 - Worcestershire.

Birmingham and Solihull

Initial proposals

11. Of the 12 existing constituencies in this sub-region, five were within the permitted electorate range, five below (all in Birmingham), and both constituencies in the Borough of Solihull were above. Under our initial proposals, no constituencies were proposed as completely unchanged from the existing boundaries, though in the case of Sutton Coldfield there was only a very minor change proposed, to reflect a change of local government ward boundary that affected no actual electors. We could not avoid more significant changes elsewhere, due to the changes to the local government ward boundaries that have taken place across Birmingham, and both Solihull constituencies being above the permitted range.
12. Although Birmingham Perry Barr was within the permitted electorate range, neighbouring Birmingham Erdington was well below, particularly when realigning the Perry Barr constituency boundary with the new boundary of its component Kingstanding ward. We therefore proposed adding the Aston and Lozells wards to Erdington to bring both constituencies within the permitted range. Having lost electors in the north and west, Birmingham Ladywood we proposed should include the wards of Alum Rock and Balsall Heath West. Birmingham Edgbaston was proposed to be changed essentially only to realign with new ward boundaries, though this did include taking in the whole of the North Edgbaston ward.
13. Significant realignment to changed ward boundaries in the west of Birmingham Yardley was balanced by transferring Garretts Green ward to Birmingham Hodge Hill. North East Birmingham we also felt was the best place for the necessary crossing of the local authority boundary with Solihull, in order to reduce the number of electors in the two purely Solihull constituencies: we therefore included the Solihull wards of Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood in the proposed Birmingham Hodge Hill constituency. Having lost its two northernmost wards, Meriden constituency was then proposed to include the wards of Elmdon and Silhill to leave both Meriden and Solihull constituencies within the permitted electorate range.
14. In order to avoid significant disruption across the existing Birmingham constituencies of Northfield, Selly Oak, and Hall Green, we felt there was sufficient widely spread benefit to justify splitting the Weoley & Selly Oak ward between Birmingham Selly Oak and Birmingham Northfield constituencies, and splitting the Brandwood & King's Heath ward between Birmingham Selly Oak and Birmingham Hall Green constituencies.

Consultation on the initial proposals

15. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received general support for our proposed Meriden and Solihull constituencies, though there was some concern at the inclusion of urban Solihull wards in the largely rural Meriden constituency: counter proposals were made to split wards to achieve constituency boundaries closer to the existing, and a change of name for both was suggested. We received a large number of responses opposing the inclusion of the two Solihull wards in Birmingham Hodge Hill constituency, asserting a lack of local ties with Birmingham.
16. The proposed constituencies of Selly Oak, Edgbaston, and Northfield were all largely supported, and those of Ladywood, Yardley, and Hall Green received few responses at all, though we received a counter proposal that would impact all those constituencies except Yardley. In respect of the proposed Birmingham Erdington and Birmingham Perry Barr, we received significant opposition grounded in the local ties connecting the Oscott and Kingstanding wards with the area of Erdington. We received support for maintaining the distinct boundaries of Sutton Coldfield, but a request to include 'Royal' in the constituency name, so as to match the town.

Revised proposals

17. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the request to add 'Royal' to the constituency name of Sutton Coldfield, but felt that the existing name was in line with our naming policy, particularly as there had effectively been no change to the constituency boundaries. They also noted that the Order for the local government wards or town council include the prefix. They considered the counter proposal covering the proposed constituencies of Ladywood, Hall Green, Selly Oak, Edgbaston, and Northfield, and recognised the benefit of avoiding any split wards, but did not endorse this alternative, as it would disrupt significantly a number of proposed constituencies that had been positively welcomed. They did not consider that any other counter proposals for these five constituencies or Yardley made a sufficiently persuasive case to amend the proposals.
18. The Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence of local ties between Oscott and Kingstanding wards and the Erdington area was strong, and having visited the area felt internal connections to the south were better in the east of the existing Erdington constituency than in the

west (though poor generally). They therefore recommended to us that the Oscott and Kingstanding wards be transferred to the Erdington constituency, and the Aston and Lozells wards be included in the Perry Barr constituency, along with three polling districts of the Stockland Green ward.

19. In respect of the Hodge Hill constituency, the Assistant Commissioners noted the strength of feeling in the two Solihull council wards that there were poor ties with the Birmingham wards of the proposed constituency, but they felt that no detailed or viable alternative had been identified that would not be more widely disruptive to surrounding areas. Similarly, they considered the alternatives put forward to split wards in Solihull to achieve boundaries for Solihull and Meriden constituencies that would be closer to existing, but did not feel that the case to do so was sufficiently strong. They also felt that the existing names for these constituencies complied with our naming policy, and the boundary changes were not significant enough to support the name changes requested.
20. We agreed with all the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners in this sub-region and therefore revised our proposals only in respect of amended boundaries between the proposed Birmingham Erdington and Perry Barr constituencies.

Consultation on the revised proposals

21. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received broad support for almost all the proposed constituencies.
22. We received further responses opposing the inclusion of Solihull council wards in the proposed Birmingham Hodge Hill constituency. We also received requests to at least recognise Castle Bromwich in the constituency name, as well as further requests to amend the names of the proposed Solihull and Meriden constituencies, to reflect the division of Solihull town centre between the two.
23. A large number of responses were received opposing the newly proposed split of the Stockland Green ward between Birmingham Erdington and Perry Barr, evidencing strong ties between the Slade Road area and central Erdington, which would be broken by our revised proposals. This opposition proposed an alternative that would retain all of Stockland Green

ward in Erdington constituency and instead split the Oscott ward, to retain four polling districts of that ward in the Birmingham Perry Barr constituency.

24. There were very few responses in respect of all the remaining seven proposed constituencies in the sub-region, which were generally accepted or actively supported. Specific alternatives that we were asked to consider were: two alternative configurations of wards between the proposed Birmingham Selly Oak and Hall Green constituencies; and a renaming of the Birmingham Hall Green constituency to reflect the large Moseley community.

Final recommendations

25. In light of the general support for our revised proposals for the following constituencies, we make them our final recommendations: Birmingham Edgbaston; Birmingham Ladywood; Birmingham Northfield; Birmingham Yardley; and Sutton Coldfield.
26. We considered the alternative configurations of wards put forward during revised proposals consultation for the Birmingham Selly Oak and Hall Green constituencies. The first of these uses whole wards, and eliminates the absence of internal road connections between the east and west of the proposed Selly Oak constituency. It would achieve this, however, at the cost of a number of changes to proposed constituencies across the south and west of Birmingham that have been actively supported (in particular Edgbaston and Northfield. It would also split the King's Heath and Moseley communities, ties between which we have previously received evidence in support of, and result in a largely isolated Bournbrook & Selly Park ward at one end of an east-west orientated constituency spanning to Small Heath ward, when the main road links run north-south. We do not consider the benefits of this alternative outweigh these negative aspects. The second alternative put forward was more limited in scope: including Brandwood & King's Heath ward wholly in Selly Oak constituency, and splitting instead the Billesley ward, to place all but two polling districts of that ward in the Hall Green constituency. While this would again address the narrow 'bottleneck' of the proposed Selly Oak constituency, it would - again - split the King's Heath and Moseley communities, and also split the Billesley community, about which we received significant evidence in consultation. We therefore do not consider this alternative to be an overall improvement

to our revised proposals. Having considered the evidence put forward for recognition of the Moseley community in the constituency name, we agree and therefore make a final recommendation for two constituencies: Birmingham Moseley and Hall Green; and Birmingham Selly Oak.

27. We recognise the continuing concerns of the residents of Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood wards about lack of ties to Birmingham. While we have not seen an alternative set of boundaries for this area that would produce a better pattern of constituencies overall, we agree that recognising Solihull wards in the constituency name would be appropriate to reflect the distinct identity of these wards, and consistent with our general approach in other constituencies that cross a local authority boundary. We therefore recommend a Birmingham Hodge Hill and Solihull North constituency. Similarly, we have reviewed again the request to rename the two constituencies wholly within the Solihull council area. As the main issue of concern in these proposals has been the division of the town centre of Solihull, while we have not seen a better alternative set of boundaries, it would be appropriate to recognise the existence of that central area in both constituencies in their names. We therefore recommend two constituencies of: Solihull West and Shirley; and Meriden and Solihull East (the ordering of the names in the latter reflecting the predominantly rural nature of the constituency).
28. We have considered very carefully the competing arguments in respect of the final two constituencies in the sub-region, and the lead Commissioner for this region visited the areas concerned in person. Across all three consultations we have seen good evidence of the links of both Oscott/Kingstanding and the Slade Road area with the core area of Erdington. Unfortunately, the whole of both cannot all be included in the Erdington constituency while remaining within the permitted electorate range, and our recommendations will inevitably disappoint one or other community. After considering all the evidence and the statutory factors, however, we recommend that the whole of Stockland Green ward together with all of Kingstanding ward and polling districts 4,5,7 and 8 of the Oscott ward be retained in the proposed Birmingham Erdington constituency. The remaining four polling districts of the Oscott ward (1,2,3 and 6) we recommend be included in the Birmingham Perry Barr constituency. While the local ties with Erdington were demonstrated in both options, Oscott (and particularly these westernmost polling districts) is undeniably significantly further geographically; strictly 'internal' transport links south

are poor at both the east and west ends of the area under consideration, but the western polling districts of Oscott adjoin the main A4041 Queslett Road giving easy access into Perry Barr; and, finally, Oscott is already in the existing Perry Barr constituency, so to retain part of it there would see less disruption to the existing constituency.

29. Our final recommendations for Birmingham and Solihull are there for constituencies of Birmingham Edgbaston; Birmingham Erdington Birmingham Hodge Hill and Solihull North, Birmingham Ladywood; Birmingham Moseley and Hall Green, Birmingham Northfield, Birmingham Perry Barr, Birmingham Selly Oak, Birmingham Yardley; Meriden and Solihull Easy, Solihull West and Shirley, and Sutton Coldfield. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Coventry

Initial proposals

30. Of Coventry's existing three constituencies, just one (Coventry South) is outside the permitted electorate range, sitting just below the minimum. The wards in Coventry have very high electorates, so it was not possible to transfer a single ward. Our initial proposals therefore exchanged Coventry South's Binley and Willenhall ward for the larger electorate of the Lower Stoke ward in the existing Coventry North East constituency (consequently proposing to change the name of the latter to Coventry East).

Consultation on the initial proposals

31. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, there was a mix of opposition and support. Opposition to the initial proposals included two counter proposals, both of which sought to transfer the Woodlands ward into Coventry South, as well as keep both the Upper Stoke and Lower Stoke wards in their existing constituency, but each moved different other wards in order to do so: one would transfer St Michael's ward to Coventry North West; the other would move Binley and Willenhall north and move Foleshill ward west into Coventry North West.
32. There was conflicting evidence received as to the strength of ties between various wards that would be separated or put together in the initial

proposals, or in either of the counter proposals. In particular there were differing views about the connection between: Binley and Willenhall ward and Cheylesmore ward; Lower Stoke and Upper Stoke; Lower Stoke, St Michael's and Cheylesmore wards; and St Michaels and surrounding wards.

Revised proposals

33. Our Assistant Commissioners considered all the evidence carefully and also visited the areas in person. They were persuaded that the ties of St Michael's ward were stronger with wards to the south and east of it, so it would not be appropriate to accept the alternative proposal that would transfer this ward to Coventry North West constituency. Similarly, they considered that the alternative proposal to move Foleshill ward into Coventry North West would break ties it had with wards to its east, as well as changing all three existing constituencies in Coventry, rather than only two. They accordingly recommended no revisions to our initial proposals for Coventry, and we agreed.

Consultation on the revised proposals

34. In the consultation on our revised proposals, we received a very low number of responses commenting specifically on the proposed constituencies for Coventry. Of these, however, the overwhelming majority accepted or actively supported the proposals, and no new arguments, evidence or counter proposals were received.

Final recommendations

35. In light of the general support shown for our proposed Coventry constituencies in the latest consultation, and the lack of any new opposing evidence, argument or alternatives, we recommend the following constituencies: Coventry East; Coventry North West; Coventry South. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Herefordshire

Initial proposals

36. Both of Herefordshire's existing constituencies are within the permitted electorate range, but their boundaries could only remain unchanged if we were to split the new local government wards in the county. Realignment of the constituency boundaries to new local government ward boundaries in our initial proposals included Stoney Street ward wholly within North Herefordshire, and Holmer ward wholly within the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency.

Consultation on the initial proposals

37. Although our initial proposals received a reasonable level of support, we also received a counter proposal to switch the allocation of the Stoney Street and Holmer wards, i.e. include Stoney Street in Hereford and South Herefordshire, and include Holmer in North Herefordshire. This was grounded in the importance of the River Wye as a boundary in the county, with Stoney Street ward lying mostly on the southern side of this significant geographical feature. Responses also noted that this alternative approach would see fewer electors moved from their existing constituency.

Revised proposals

38. Our Assistant Commissioners recognised the strength of the arguments put forward in respect of the natural geography and the ability to retain a closer approximation of the existing constituencies, and therefore recommended adoption of the counter proposal. We agreed with their reasoning and revised our proposals accordingly.

Consultation on revised proposals

39. In the consultation on our revised proposals, we received an extremely low number of responses commenting specifically on the proposed constituencies for Herefordshire. Of these, around half were actively supportive or accepting of the revised proposals. Of the remaining handful of responses, one sought to simply name the constituencies for their biggest urban centre (Hereford and Leominster respectively), while three raised a new issue: requesting that the Old Gore ward be transferred to the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency, due to its connections to Hereford, relative location in the county (more south than many of the wards in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency), and noting that the geographical feature of the River Wye means that the area from

the hamlet of Foy west has no direct physical connection to the rest of the constituency.

Final recommendations

40. We have carefully considered the new issue raised concerning the Old Gore ward. This ward is part of the existing constituency, so moving it would entail a substantive change to two constituencies changed otherwise only to realign with changed ward boundaries. A transfer of the ward from the North Herefordshire constituency takes the electorate below the permitted minimum, so another ward would have to be transferred the other way to compensate: while we could select such a ward, we do not consider we have evidence to suggest that transferring a different ward would reflect community ties. Furthermore, we do not believe a splitting of the Old Gore ward would be justified.
41. In respect of the naming of the two constituencies, while we would normally look to name a constituency for its main population centre(s), the highly rural nature of the vast majority of both these constituencies warrants an exception to that general approach. In addition there has been extremely limited substantive change to the boundaries of the constituencies, in which circumstances we would generally not look to amend the existing names.
42. As no other issues, evidence, argument or alternatives have been raised in relation to the remainder of Herefordshire, we accordingly recommend the following two constituencies: Hereford and South Herefordshire; North Herefordshire. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Shropshire

Initial proposals

43. Four of the five existing constituencies in Shropshire (including the Borough of Telford and Wrekin) are outside the permitted electorate range, but our initial proposals were able to move only four wards between constituencies to bring them all within range: two from Shrewsbury and Atcham to Ludlow; and two from North Shropshire to the Wrekin.

44. We also proposed some name changes to bring them more in line with our naming policy: Ludlow and Bridgnorth; Newport and Wellington; and Shrewsbury.

Consultation on initial proposals

45. In respect of the proposed boundaries, those for Ludlow and Bridgnorth, North Shropshire and Shrewsbury were broadly supported in consultation responses, though a counter proposal was received to keep the Severn Valley ward in Shrewsbury by transferring the Rea Valley ward to Ludlow and Bridgnorth proposed constituency. There was also opposition to the configuration of the proposed Telford and Newport and Wellington constituencies, where a counter proposal recommended exchanging the Priorslee and Hadley and Leegomery wards between the two proposed constituencies, on the basis of the ties of the latter ward with Telford, and connections of Priorslee with Shifnal.
46. We also received significant opposition to two of the proposed names in Shropshire. There was particularly strong local support for the retention of The Wrekin name, as it was a renowned local geographical landmark with which it was said local residents could identify better than with two relatively small towns. In a similar vein, many responses also felt that large parts of the proposed Ludlow and Bridgnorth constituency did not feel particular affinity to those relatively small population centres, and a more inclusive name for the constituency would therefore be South Shropshire.

Revised proposals

47. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the counter proposal to exchange the wards of Severn Valley and Rea Valley. While they recognised the somewhat anomalous position of residents at the extreme north of the Severn Valley ward not being included in the Shrewsbury constituency, they noted that the counter proposal had not received support, whereas the initial proposal had received active support from some respondents located in the south of the Severn Valley ward; they therefore recommended retention of the initial proposals in this case, and we agreed.
48. The Assistant Commissioners also considered the competing evidence put forward as to whether Priorslee or Hadley and Leegomery ward should be

included in the Telford constituency, with the other included in the proposed Newport and Wellington constituency. Overall, they considered that the case to retain Priorslee in the Telford constituency was the stronger, not least as the Telford constituency under this approach would only change to realign with local government ward boundary changes. They therefore recommended retention of the initial proposals, and we agreed.

49. In respect of names, the Assistant Commissioners recognised that notwithstanding the Commission's general policy to reference population centres in a constituency name, strength of local feeling would justify retention of the existing The Wrekin name, and a change to a more inclusive South Shropshire in the respective constituencies. We agreed.

Consultation on revised proposals

50. Although there had been little opposition to the proposed North Shropshire constituency in earlier consultation, we received a significant number of responses in the final consultation period to the proposed transfer of the Shropshire council wards of Hodnet and Cheswardine into The Wrekin constituency. This opposition referenced the ties of these wards to the town of Market Drayton (remaining in North Shropshire constituency), and the lack of links to the south.
51. We also received a significant number of responses from the Horton area (one part of the Hadley and Leegomery ward), stressing their connection to Telford, though as this specifically references a proposed transfer of their area into the 'Ercall Magna ward', we believe these responses actually relate to a contemporary recommendation of change to the Telford and Wrekin council ward boundaries, made by the separate Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
52. Finally, we received some further representation opposed to the proposed constituency boundary between Shrewsbury and South Shropshire, and particularly the effect this would have of excluding from the Shrewsbury constituency a small stretch of continuous housing within the A5.

Final recommendations

53. We have noted the latest consultation responses with evidence of local ties between Hodnet and Cheswardine wards and the North Shropshire town of

Market Drayton. North Shropshire constituency must, however, lose a large number of electors in order to bring it within the permitted range.

Notwithstanding the local ties to Market Drayton, responses from these two wards did not suggest any viable alternative configuration that would see them retained in the North Shropshire constituency without causing significant disruption to other constituencies and/or breaking local ties elsewhere. As no new evidence, argument or counter proposals were received in respect of the Telford constituency, we therefore recommend no change to our revised proposals for three constituencies of: North Shropshire; Telford; The Wrekin.

54. In respect of Shrewsbury and South Shropshire, we have reviewed again where the boundary between these two constituencies should lie, in light of the further representations received about the anomalous position of housing at the far north of the Severn Valley ward. While we remain of the view that an exchange of this ward with the Rea Valley ward would not be appropriate (not least because of the support for initial proposals from the south of the Severn Valley ward), we have considered the possibility of a split of the Severn Valley ward: a split of the ward along the natural boundary of the A5 would transfer just a few hundred electors from South Shropshire to Shrewsbury, which both proposed constituencies can sustain while remaining within the permitted electorate range. Set against this is our general policy against splitting wards other than in exceptional cases, and the fact that the ward boundary that our revised proposals follow reflects the boundaries of two civil parishes: Atcham and Berrington.
55. A close comparison elsewhere in the region would be our approach to the Streethay area of Lichfield council: a similarly built up area extending seamlessly from Lichfield, we were persuaded that this warranted a split of the Streethay and Whittington ward in our revised proposals, to include Streethay in Lichfield constituency. In that case, however, our revised boundary would follow the boundary of the Fradley and Streethay civil parish, whereas a constituency boundary drawn along the A5 would depart from the Atcham and Berrington parish boundaries. It is for this reason that we are not minded to recommend a split of the Severn Valley ward, and therefore recommend two constituencies of Shrewsbury and South Shropshire unchanged from our revised proposals.
56. Our final recommendations for Shropshire are therefore for constituencies of North Shropshire, Shrewsbury, South Shropshire, Telford and The Wrekin.

The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Staffordshire and the Black Country

Staffordshire

Initial proposals

57. Of the 12 existing constituencies in Staffordshire (including the City of Stoke-on-Trent), five are outside the permitted electorate range. Our initial proposals were able to keep two constituencies (Burton and Cannock Chase) wholly unchanged, and a further four (Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent North, and Tamworth) changed only to realign with new ward boundaries.
58. For the reasons described in the section above concerning sub-division of the region, one constituency had to be shared between Staffordshire and the Black Country, and our initial proposals set out a Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency, pairing the south of the county with the Kingswinford area of Dudley council.
59. As the existing Central and South constituencies of Stoke-on-Trent needed to expand significantly to be brought within the permitted electorate range, this in turn meant that there needed to be significant reconfiguration of the existing Stafford, Stone (renamed to include Great Wyrley), and - to a lesser degree - Staffordshire Moorlands constituencies.

Consultation on initial proposals

60. In consultation on our initial proposals, the boundaries of the proposed constituencies of Burton, Cannock Chase, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent Central, and Stoke-on-Trent North were generally supported.
61. There was a strong response in opposition to our initial proposals in Staffordshire, with many responses particularly opposing the pairing of Kingswinford with South Staffordshire, and the physical distance and lack of connections between Stone and Great Wyrley at the extreme ends of

the eponymous proposed constituency. Other responses opposed the inclusion of rural areas of Stafford and Staffordshire Moorlands with built up areas of Stoke-on-Trent in the proposed Stoke-on-Trent South constituency, while a large number of responses called for the retention of the Streethay area in Lichfield constituency instead of being included in Tamworth.

62. We received a number of counter proposals. As well as that already noted in the sub-division of the region section (which would treat Staffordshire alone and pair the Black Country with Bormingham), we received three counter proposals that would cross into the Black Country at alternative points: two crossing into Walsall (also impacting Lichfield); and another crossing into Stourbridge.
63. There were also a number of requests for changes to names received during the consultation process, seeking a change to: 'Stoke-on-Trent North, Kidsgrove and Talke'; 'Stoke-on-Trent South, Barlaston and Tean'; and 'Burton and Uttoxeter'.

Revised proposals

64. Our Assistant Commissioners considered carefully what alternative approaches might be possible and more acceptable across Staffordshire. We have already discussed (in the sub-division of the region section above) the consideration of the alternative approach that would treat Staffordshire as a stand-alone sub-region. While recognising the benefits in the south of the county of those counter proposals that would cross into the Black Country in the north, the Assistant Commissioners did not feel that these outweighed the disbenefits of the proposed crossings in the north, in opposition to which a number of responses had been received in consultation.
65. Considering then the counter proposal to cross into Stourbridge in the south, the Assistant Commissioners noted that when this counter proposal was followed through, the consequences of the full counter proposal were disruptive to generally supported proposed constituencies in Dudley, and also required the sub-region to include Birmingham and Worcestershire. We agreed that neither of these counter proposals would produce a better overall set of proposals: while arguably an improvement for Staffordshire

they simply shifted the difficulties to other parts of the region and caused more disruption overall than was necessary.

66. The Assistant Commissioners also looked at whether some of the rural wards of the District of Staffordshire Moorlands might be retained in the eponymous constituency, rather than be included in the Stoke-on-Trent South constituency as proposed, but the very low electorates of the constituencies made this impossible without significant disruption to other parts of Staffordshire. Accordingly they did not recommend a change to the initial proposals in this area.
67. The Assistant Commissioners also considered the concerns expressed in consultation regarding the distance and lack of ties between Stone and Great Wyrley. While recognising the geographic length of the constituency, and that transport routes from one end to another were not particularly strong, the Assistant Commissioners noted that many settlements throughout the constituency shared a common character, and that those who commented on the pattern of constituencies across the region as a whole had either accepted the constituency as initially proposed, or proposed a similar extensive 'Mid Staffordshire' constituency as integral to a wider pattern of constituencies across the area. Accordingly they did not recommend any revisions to this proposed constituency.
68. Considering the request to retain Streethay in Lichfield constituency, the Assistant Commissioners felt there was sufficient justification to recommend a split of the Streethay and Whittington ward in order to achieve this. This was on the basis that Streethay formed a continuation of the built up area of Lichfield with no clear break, and they were able to recommend a split of the ward using polling districts and aligning with the Fradley and Streethay civil parish boundary.
69. Finally, on consideration of the alternative names requested, while recognising that the Commission will often seek to recognise elements of both councils where a constituency crosses a local authority boundary, they felt that the requested alternative names for the proposed Stoke-on-Trent North and South only changed minimally to reflect new ward boundaries. As the constituency boundaries of Burton were proposed to be unchanged from the existing, the Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded to recommend a change of name.

70. We agreed with all of the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners in relation to Staffordshire.

Consultation on revised proposals

71. In the consultation on revised proposals, there were few responses in relation to Burton, but a number of these again argued for a recognition of Uttoxeter in the name. There were also very few responses in relation to Cannock Chase, though one or two of those called for Rugeley to be moved out and Great Wyrley to be included in the constituency. There was support for the inclusion of Streethay in Lichfield, but opposition to the continued inclusion of Whittington in the proposed Tamworth constituency.
72. There were also relatively few responses in respect of Newcastle-under-Lyme, the three proposed Stoke-on-Trent constituencies, and Staffordshire Moorlands. These mostly accepted the proposed constituencies, but included: a request to include more of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme wards in the eponymous constituency; more responses opposed to the inclusion of rural Staffordshire Moorlands wards in the proposed Stoke-on-Trent South constituency; and repeated calls for the recognition of areas beyond Stoke in the names of the proposed Stoke-on-Trent North and South.
73. Opposition to the proposed Kingswinford and South Staffordshire and Stone and Great Wyrley continued in the consultation on the revised proposals, as - to a lesser degree - did opposition to the proposed Stafford constituency. Only one detailed counter proposal was received, however, which relied on an extended sub-region including Shropshire (discussed in the sub-division of the region section above). There was also a request to include Penkridge in the name of the Stone and Great Wyrley constituency, claiming Penkridge as 'the beating heart of the rural area'.

Final recommendations

74. In respect of the name of the Burton constituency, we have looked again at whether an addition to the name would be justified. Notwithstanding that the boundaries of the proposed constituency will be unchanged from the existing, we are persuaded by the strength of local feeling displayed through the consultations that there is justification to include Uttoxeter in the name. We are not persuaded of the case to exchange Rugeley for

Great Wyrley in the Cannock Chase constituency, on the basis that the perceived benefit of this exchange would be at the cost of changing a constituency that would otherwise be completely unchanged from the existing, and also coterminous with the local authority boundary. We therefore recommend two constituencies of: Burton and Uttoxeter; and Cannock Chase.

75. We have considered the request to include Whittington as well as Streethay in Lichfield. Transferring the polling district that contains the village of Whittington is possible without seeing either Lichfield or Tamworth fall outside of the permitted electorate range. We do not, however, believe that the case for extending the location of the split is sufficiently strong. Although it would again be possible to align with a civil parish boundary (that of Whittington parish), unlike Streethay, Whittington is clearly a rural village at some distance from Lichfield, rather than a continuation of Lichfield's built-up environment: there are a large number of such villages and hamlets in similar situations around England where some evidence of local ties does not in itself justify the splitting of the ward. We therefore recommend two constituencies unchanged from our revised proposals, of Lichfield and Tamworth.
76. We have reviewed again the request for amendment to the names of the proposed Stoke-on-Trent North and South constituencies. There has been no new argumentation brought forward in the more recent consultation responses to support name changes, and we therefore recommend the Stoke-on-Trent constituencies with names as in our revised proposals: Stoke-on-Trent Central; Stoke-on-Trent North; Stoke-on-Trent South. Similarly, there has been no new evidence or alternatives put forward in respect to Staffordshire Moorlands, and we therefore recommend that constituency with no changes from our revised proposals.
77. We have considered the request to include additional wards of Newcastle-under-Lyme council in the constituency of the same name. These would need to be taken from the proposed constituency of Stone, which is already near the minimum of the permitted electorate range. Doing so would therefore trigger an undesirable domino effect of further change and disruption to the constituencies in rural central Staffordshire. We do not therefore propose to make further changes to this constituency and recommend a Newcastle-under-Lyme as in our revised proposals.

78. Although opposition has continued to the remaining three proposed constituencies in Staffordshire - in particular Kingswinford and South Staffordshire - we have seen no new evidence or alternatives that would not cause significant issues elsewhere. We do not therefore propose to change the boundaries of any of these constituencies. We are, however, persuaded by the request to add Penkridge to the name of the proposed Stone and Wyrley constituency, which will reflect the broad nature of this constituency. We therefore recommend three constituencies of: Kingswinford and South Staffordshire; Stafford; and Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge.
79. Our final recommendations for Staffordshire are therefore for Burton and Uttoxeter, Cannock Chase, Kingswinford and South Staffordshire, LichfieldNewcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent Central, Stoke-on-Trent North, Stoke-on-Trent South, Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge, and Tamworth. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Black Country

Initial proposals

80. Every constituency in the Black Country is below the permitted electorate range, so it was inevitable that some change would be experienced in every existing constituency. In developing the initial proposals, we sought to respect, as far as possible, the strong and distinct - but often highly localised - different community identities across the area.
81. In the Borough of Dudley, beyond the Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency discussed above, we proposed Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge constituencies centred around the well-known Black Country towns for which they are named, though due to the relatively low electorate, it was necessary for the proposed Halesowen to also include the Borough of Sandwell ward of Cradley Heath and Old Hill (and one polling district from the Blackheath ward).
82. In the Borough of Sandwell, we proposed to expand the West Bromwich East constituency southwards to include the St Pauls ward, and West Bromwich West westwards to include the Borough of Dudley ward of

Coseley East. The existing Warley constituency - having lost St Pauls ward - was then proposed to expand west to take in the Rowley ward and the remainder of the Blackheath ward, and was accordingly proposed to be renamed Smethwick and Rowley Regis.

83. The electorate of the three existing constituencies in the Borough of Walsall were sufficiently low that our initial proposals set out only two constituencies wholly within the centre and east of the council area: a Walsall constituency covering the south, and a Bloxwich and Brownhills constituency covering the north. The wards in the west of the Borough of Walsall were then proposed to be transferred into the Wolverhampton North East and South East constituencies. This in turn then required the final constituency in Wolverhampton to take in the Oxley ward in the north and the Blakenhall ward in the south, which warranted a slight change of name to Wolverhampton West.

Consultation on initial proposals

84. The initial proposals for constituencies in Dudley other than Kingswinford and South Staffordshire attracted a mix of support and opposition. The proposed Stourbridge constituency in particular attracted strong support. Although the proposed Halesowen and Dudley constituencies also received a good degree of active support, we also received specific counter proposals for these areas, though these were themselves subsequently opposed in the secondary consultation stage.
85. In contrast to this general support for proposed constituencies in the Dudley council area, those proposed in the Borough of Sandwell area attracted strong opposition, though a number of counter proposals were received for the area. There was particular opposition to our proposed transfer of the St Pauls ward, and two of the main counter proposals moved it back into the proposed Smethwick constituency. Two main counter proposals also proposed combining Wednesbury with Walsall wards, either at Darlaston or at Walsall itself. One main counter proposal would require separating the two Wednesbury wards into different proposed constituencies, while another would combine Tipton and Rowley Regis with Dudley.
86. Our proposals for the two main constituencies proposed in Walsall drew significant opposition, though also some support. There was particular

opposition to the general east-west orientation of the new constituencies: although some good ties were recognised in the northern proposed constituency between Bloxwich and Brownhills, there were said to be far fewer and weaker ties in the southern proposed constituency, between Aldridge and the town of Walsall, as well as opposition to the two named Aldridge wards being placed in different constituencies. Counter proposals generally shared a common approach of a more north-south orientation of the two constituencies. Two of the main counter proposals entailed dividing the four core wards of Walsall town between the two constituencies, while another (mentioned above) would cross the local authority boundary between Walsall and Wednesbury (as well as link Aldridge with Lichfield). A final counter proposal of note suggested a Walsall and Bloxwich constituency, and an Aldridge-Brownhills constituency largely unchanged from the existing, though this approach required a split of the Paddock ward.

87. In respect of our initial proposals for the three constituencies in Wolverhampton, we received a mix of opposition and support. Opposition to the initial proposals largely focused on the transfer of Blakenhall ward to the Wolverhampton West constituency, as its primary ties were said to be to the east of the ward, though we did also receive evidence of reasonable ties to the west of the ward as well. There were two main counter proposals received: one would keep Blakenhall with Bilston, but included the Bushbury wards into different constituencies; the other would keep Blakenhall and the Coseley East ward of Dudley in the Wolverhampton South East constituency, and not divide the Bushbury wards.

Revised proposals

88. The Assistant Commissioners considered the counter proposals put forward for the proposed Halesowen and Dudley constituencies, but were not persuaded that either of them represented an improvement on the initial proposals, noting the opposition they had attracted during the secondary consultation, the consequential disruption they would cause to local ties further across to Birmingham and Sandwell, and the active support that the proposed Stourbridge, Halesowen, and - to a lesser extent - Dudley constituencies had received from many other respondents. Consequently they recommended no revisions to the initial proposal for these three constituencies, and we agreed.

89. On the basis of the strength of opposition to the constituencies proposed in Sandwell, the Assistant Commissioners were keen to identify some revisions that would secure more support. In the south of the borough, they recognised the strength of the argument for a restoration of the St Pauls ward to the southern constituency, and in consequence removed the Rowley ward, reflecting evidence received of poor connections between this area and Smethwick. They recommended this constituency accordingly be named simply Smethwick. In the north of the borough they felt it was neither appropriate to divide the Wednesbury wards between constituencies, nor necessary to create a constituency crossing the local authority boundary with Walsall, as counter proposals had suggested. Instead, they recommended both Wednesbury wards be kept together with the Friar Park and Hateley Heath wards in a Tipton and Wednesbury constituency. The remaining Sandwell wards they recommended form a West Bromwich constituency. While recognising a certain lack of connection between the geographical extremes of the latter constituency, overall we agreed with these recommendations, as representing a pattern of constituencies that minimised division of communities across the borough.
90. In Walsall, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded that some form of reorientation of the two proposed constituencies onto a more north-south alignment would represent a better reflection of the stronger local ties in the borough, as well as being somewhat closer to the existing constituency configurations, and considered the different alternatives that had been presented. They ultimately recommended, following a site visit to the borough, a minor variation of the counter proposal that required a split of the Paddock ward: they felt a split ward would be justified, as it would enable an Aldridge-Brownhills close to the existing configuration, would avoid a more fundamental division of the four core urban Walsall wards between constituencies, and would also avoid the need for either constituency to cross the Borough of Walsall boundaries. We agreed with this reasoning and proposed two revised constituencies of Aldridge-Brownhills and Walsall.
91. In respect of Wolverhampton, the Assistant Commissioners noted the evidence that Blakenhall's ties were mainly east, but there was also evidence of ties to the west. They also took into account opposition expressed to the aspect of one main counter proposal that would require separating the Bushbury wards into different constituencies. While they

noted the other main counter proposal would retain Blakenhall in Wolverhampton South East and not divide Bushbury, they also noted that it had not attracted support from respondents in secondary consultation and would also generate knock-on effects to the pattern of constituencies further south. Overall, they decided there was not a sufficiently strong case to recommend any revisions to the proposals for the three Wolverhampton constituencies, and we agreed.

Consultation on revised proposals

92. In consultation on the revised proposals for the Dudley constituencies beyond Kingswinford and South Staffordshire (considered above), responses were generally favourable. There was a mix of views in relation to the proposed Halesowen, with opposition focused on the removal of Blackheath. No detailed counter proposals were put forward.
93. In the Sandwell area, the number of responses was relatively low, with opposition to the lack of ties between Blackheath and Smethwick, and the loss of Warley as a constituency name. A few responses opposed the inclusion of the Coseley East ward in the proposed Tipton and Wednesbury constituency, stating the ties of the ward went north or south rather than east. There were also a handful of responses opposed to the lack of connections between the extreme ends of the proposed West Bromwich constituency, but again no detailed counter proposal was received.
94. There was significant support received for the revised approach to forming the two constituencies in Walsall borough, though a slight amendment was suggested: to split the St Matthews ward rather than Paddock ward. There were also a small number of responses seeking a reversion to the initial proposals, or a small variation on those (either an exchange of the Pleck, and Aldridge North and Walsall Wood wards, or a split of the latter).
95. In respect of Wolverhampton, responses were mixed, with opposition to our proposals focused on the lack of ties between Wolverhampton and Walsall wards in the two eastern constituencies, and further responses asserting the ties between Blakenhall and Bilston that would be broken by including the former in the proposed Wolverhampton West constituency. We did receive a detailed counter proposal, which would rotate the configuration of wards in these three constituencies, so as to both keep the

Blakenhall and Bilston wards in the same constituency, and have only one constituency crossing the local authority boundary with Walsall.

Final recommendations

96. In Dudley and Sandwell, we have previously recognised the unfortunate need to split the Blackheath ward, and that the ties between this area and the north of the proposed West Bromwich constituency are not strong, but have seen no better alternative that resolves these issues without creating more issues elsewhere. Similarly, we have not been persuaded that Coseley East could be included in a constituency with Dudley or Wolverhampton without causing disruption and breaking local ties elsewhere. We therefore recommend six constituencies in these areas unchanged from our revised proposals: Dudley; Halesowen; Smethwick; Stourbridge; Tipton and Wednesbury; West Bromwich.
97. In Walsall, we have not been persuaded by the recent requests in some consultation responses to revert to the initial proposals or a slight variation of those. From all the evidence we have seen, Bloxwich has good local ties both east and south, but the revised proposals create two constituencies more clearly centred around Walsall and Aldridge respectively, and thus preserving local ties to those better overall than the initial proposals or recent variations on those would. We have considered the alternative of splitting the St Matthews ward rather than Paddock: they would appear to be of equal merit, but as the revised proposals have received a good deal of support, we believe the correct approach would be to retain the split in the revised proposals. Our recommendations are therefore for two constituencies unchanged from our revised proposals: Aldridge-Brownhills; Walsall and Bloxwich.
98. In respect of Wolverhampton, we have not been persuaded to amend our revised proposals. We have considered very carefully the counter proposal we received that would bring back together Blakenhall and Bilston, as well as leave only one constituency crossing the Wolverhampton-Walsall local authority boundary, as this would appear very attractive on both these counts. The full composition of these three constituencies, however, would be radically different from that in our revised proposals, and may not better reflect community ties.. We therefore recommend three constituencies unchanged from our revised proposals: Wolverhampton North East; Wolverhampton South East; Wolverhampton West.

99. Our final recommendations for the Black Country are therefore for constituencies of Aldridge-Brownhill, Dudley, Halesowen, Smethwick, Stourbridge, Tipton and Wednesbury, Walsall and Bloxwich, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton North East, Wolverhampton South East and Wolverhampton West. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Warwickshire

Initial proposals

100. Four of the six existing constituencies in Warwickshire are within the permitted electorate range, and our initial proposals suggested bringing the other two within the range by simply moving one ward - Budbrooke - from the Warwick and Leamington constituency into Kenilworth and Southam. The Stratford-on-Avon and Rugby constituencies were proposed with boundary changes only to realign with new local government wards, and the Bedworth and North Warwickshire, and Nuneaton constituencies were proposed with completely unchanged boundaries from existing (though we included Bedworth in the name of the former).
101. We did identify an opportunity to more closely align constituency boundaries with local authority boundaries across the county, but as this would require a greater degree of change from the existing constituencies than was otherwise necessary, we did not make this approach our formal proposal, but actively invited views on the option in the consultation.

Consultation on initial proposals

102. The four proposed constituencies that would see essentially no change were well supported in consultation, and the possible alternative of greater change to align better with local authority boundaries did not attract much active support.
103. Though there was some support for the proposed transfer of the Budbrooke ward, there was also strong opposition expressed to this, on the basis of the local ties of the ward to Warwick particularly (and lack of ties to either Kenilworth or Southam), and the effect the initial proposal

would have of creating a Kenilworth and Southam constituency that would completely encircle that of Warwick and Leamington. We received a counter proposal to split the Budbrooke ward, transferring to Kenilworth and Southam constituency only the Hatton Park area, while retaining the rest of the ward in the Warwick and Leamington constituency.

Revised proposals

104. Our Assistant Commissioners had little difficulty recommending the retention of the initial proposals for the four essentially unchanged proposed constituencies, given the large degree of support expressed for those, and we agreed.
105. The Assistant Commissioners considered carefully the counter proposal to split the Budbrooke ward, and visited the area as part of their considerations. While they agreed Hatton Park would be a suitable area to transfer to Kenilworth and Southam if the ward were to be split, they did not feel that there was a sufficiently strong case for splitting the ward in the first instance, as the M40 and A46 formed a sizable and distinct boundary between most of the inhabited areas of the ward and Warwick and Leamington. We agreed with their reasoning, and therefore retained our initial proposals for these two constituencies also.

Consultation on revised proposals

106. There was general support and very few responses overall received in respect of the four constituencies proposed essentially unchanged. The few opposing were mostly individual responses that sought a transfer of an individual ward (different in each case) between constituencies in the north of Warwickshire, or in some cases from the far south of the Stratford-on-Avon constituency into our proposed Banbury or North Cotswolds constituencies. There were, however, a number of responses that requested a reordering of the name of the proposed Bedworth and North Warwickshire constituency, highlighting that around two thirds of the population was located in the latter part.
107. We received, again, a significant number of responses in opposition to the transfer of the Budbrooke ward to Kenilworth and Southam, though raising no new evidence or alternatives (in fact a large proportion of these response stressed ties of the Hatton area with Warwick, contrary to the

counter proposal previously received). We also received around the same number of responses requesting the transfer of the Radford Semele ward from the Kenilworth and Southam constituency to Warwick and Leamington, largely on the basis of local ties. Finally in this area, we received a very small number of requests to transfer part of the Red Horse ward in the Stratford-on-Avon constituency, as well as a suggestion to rename Kenilworth and Southam to either Mid Warwickshire or South East Warwickshire..

Final recommendations

108. We have seen no persuasive evidence or support for amending the boundaries of our revised proposals in the north of the county, or in Stratford-on-Avon. Specifically, we do not see sufficient grounds to amend these otherwise essentially unchanged constituencies, and particularly not cross a regional boundary. We are, however, persuaded of the argument to reorder the name of our initially proposed Bedworth and North Warwickshire. We therefore recommend constituencies with boundaries as set out in our revised proposals: North Warwickshire and Bedworth; Nuneaton; Rugby; Stratford-on-Avon.
109. In respect of the remaining two constituencies, it remains the case that the whole of Budbrooke ward cannot be included in the Warwick and Leamington constituency, and we have received no new evidence or alternative to justify either a split of the Budbrooke ward, or an alternative ward being transferred out of Warwick and Leamington. We considered the request to transfer Radford Semele from Kenilworth and Southam to Warwick and Leamington. Unlike with Budbrooke, this ward can be included in the Warwick and Leamington constituency without the need to split it. This would represent a degree of additional change to both constituencies from their existing configuration, but we were persuaded by the evidence of local ties, and noted particularly that Radford Semele was in the Warwick and Leamington constituency until the boundaries were last changed. We were not persuaded that there was a sufficiently strong case to split the Red Horse ward in order to transfer the Tysoe area to Stratford-on-Avon, nor - in light of the relatively limited change to the constituency and the extremely low numbers of request for it - were we minded to change the name of the Kenilworth and Southam constituency. We therefore recommend amendments to the boundaries of the following constituencies: Kenilworth and Southam; Warwick and Leamington.

110. Our final recommendations for Warwickshire are for constituencies of Kenilworth and Southam, North Warwickshire and Bedworth; Nuneaton; Rugby; Stratford-on-Avon, and Warwick and Leamington. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Worcestershire

Initial proposals

111. Four of the six existing constituencies in Worcestershire are within the permitted electorate range, and three are coterminous with their local authority boundaries. The initial proposals therefore proposed to move only two wards (Dodderhill, and Harvington and Norton) from the existing Mid Worcestershire constituency to the Redditch constituency. We also proposed two name changes to better align with our naming policy: Droitwich and Evesham; and Kidderminster.

Consultation on initial proposals

112. Our initial proposals for the four unchanged constituencies were supported, other than significant opposition being received to the proposed name of Kidderminster, where respondents demonstrated strong local support for retention of the existing name of Wyre Forest.

113. There was a mix of support and opposition to our initial proposals for the remaining two constituencies, with opposition particularly coming from the two wards proposed to transfer into the Redditch constituency. There were two significant counter proposals received: one that would leave Harvington and Norton in Droitwich and Evesham, but transfer into Redditch instead the Alvechurch South ward from Bromsgrove; the other proposed a more radical reorientation of both the West Worcestershire, and Droitwich and Evesham constituencies.

Revised proposals

114. Taking account of the strong support received, the Assistant Commissioners recommended the retention of the initial proposals in full

for Worcester, and a change of name only for our initially proposed Kidderminster, to revert to Wyre Forest. We agreed.

115. Our Assistant Commissioners recognised the close ties of Harvington and Norton with Evesham, particularly as compared to Redditch, and considered carefully the counter proposals received that aimed to address this issue. They noted that a transfer of Alvechurch South ward to Redditch would divide the village of Alvechurch between constituencies and change the otherwise unchanged constituency of Bromsgrove, which was also coterminous with its local authority boundaries. As this counter proposal had also not received any other support, but had attracted a significant degree of opposition, they did not recommend it. Considering the other counter proposal, the Assistant Commissioners felt it caused far greater disruption to existing constituencies than the initial proposals, as well as having less regard for local authority boundaries: on this basis, and in light of the support in consultation for the initially proposed West Worcestershire constituency, they again did not recommend adoption of this alternative. We agreed with their reasoning and retained our initial proposals for the remaining four constituencies in Worcestershire.

Consultation on revised proposals

116. We received very few consultation responses in relation to the revised proposals across Worcestershire. Of these, there is mostly support for the constituencies as now proposed, with a handful of responses seeking the transfer of wards (or part wards) between constituencies whose boundaries have otherwise been proposed to remain unchanged from existing. The only issue that attracted more than a handful of responses was, again, the local ties between Norton and Harvington, and Evesham. These responses included a counter proposal to keep Harvington and Norton in Droitwich and Evesham, but instead transfer the ward of Lovett and North Claines into Redditch constituency.

Final recommendations

117. We have not been persuaded of the merit of any of the individual requests to change otherwise unchanged constituencies by the movement of individual wards or part wards.

118. We have considered the counter proposal to transfer the Lovett and North Claines ward into Redditch constituency instead of the Harvington and Norton ward. We do not agree that this would be an improvement on the revised proposals: not only would many of the residents of the Lovett and North Claines ward likely have as strong a claim to local ties with Droitwich as those of Harvington and Norton do to Evesham, but it would both create a particularly unusual shape for the Redditch constituency, and also completely detach the wards of Hartlebury and Ombersley from the rest of the Droitwich and Evesham constituency.

119. Accordingly, we recommend six constituencies for Worcestershire unchanged from our revised proposals: Bromsgrove; Droitwich and Evesham; Redditch; West Worcestershire; Worcester; Wyre Forest. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the Yorkshire and the Humber region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the Yorkshire and the Humber region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 1,358 responses specific to the Yorkshire and the Humber region in this phase, giving a total of 4,095 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: The revised proposals were largely supported or accepted by three of the qualifying political parties that responded to the consultation on the revised proposals. The Conservative Party suggested a counter proposal for the three constituencies wholly or partially within Kingston upon Hull unitary authority, and the constituencies of Leeds Central and Leeds East, as well as a name change in Humberside. The Labour Party suggested a counter proposal for the constituencies of Bradford East and Bradford South, as well as six name changes across the region. The Liberal Democrats suggested a minor amendment to the constituencies of Bridlington and The Wolds, and Goole and Pocklington, and a return to the initially proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough, and Wetherby and Easingwold constituencies, as well as a name change to five constituencies across Humberside and West Yorkshire. No representation was received from the Green Party during the consultation on the revised proposals. Few region-wide responses were received from individuals, although a couple made wide scale comments on constituency names. Two counter proposals were received for constituencies across the North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire sub-region.

Humberside: The proposed Goole and Pocklington constituency was strongly opposed, predominantly regarding the removal of Pocklington from the neighbouring Yorkshire Wolds towns, and its inclusion with Goole and other areas to the south. The Liberal Democrats proposed a slight amendment to the boundary between this constituency and the proposed Bridlington and The Wolds to follow new local government ward boundaries. The arrangement of the three constituencies wholly or partially within the unitary authority of Kingston upon Hull was less contentious than in the initial proposals, although the transfer of the village of Cottingham to the proposed Kingston upon Hull North constituency was mostly opposed. Multiple counter proposals were received for the three Kingston upon Hull-based constituencies, including from the Conservative Party. The arrangement of constituencies south of the Humber estuary garnered relatively few representations. In addition to the above, a number of the constituency names across Humberside were opposed, with various alternatives suggested.

South Yorkshire: The arrangement of constituencies across South Yorkshire resulted in relatively few representations which raised no new issues.

North Yorkshire: The proposed cross-county boundary constituencies of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold continued to be strongly opposed, for reasons outlined at previous consultation stages. Despite this, a significant number of representations were received in support of the arrangement, particularly suggesting it is superior to the Liberal Democrats' counter proposal which we requested opinions on in the revised proposals report. The transfer of the Bedale and Tanfield wards to the proposed Richmond and Northallerton constituency also continued to be highly contentious, although no new counter proposals which would satisfactorily resolve the issue were received. The other proposed constituencies in the county council area were mostly uncontentious.

West Yorkshire: The arrangement of constituencies across West Yorkshire was more supported than the initial proposals, with the main opposition confined to two issues. The transfer of part of the Marshfield community of the Little Horton ward to the proposed Bradford South constituency was strongly opposed, and the Bradford East Constituency Labour Party proposed an alternative arrangement involving splitting the Bowling and Barkerend ward instead, which was also supported by the national Labour Party. The split of the Temple Newsam ward between the proposed Leeds Central and Leeds Eas constituencies was also strongly opposed, although respondents from the Gipton & Harehills ward are in support of the revised proposals. The Conservative Party proposed returning to a split of the Gipton & Harehills ward, but using a different grouping of polling districts than in the initial proposals. The areas in Bradford and Leeds outlined above have been subject to a site visit by the Lead Commissioner. In addition, in Leeds, a number of representations were received commenting on the names of constituencies.

Yorkshire and the Humber

1. Yorkshire and the Humber currently has 54 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 22 have electorates within the permitted range. The electorates of 16 constituencies currently fall below the permitted range, while the electorates of 16 constituencies are above. Our proposals maintain the number of constituencies in the region at 54.
2. Yorkshire and the Humber comprises the county council area of North Yorkshire (including the unitary authority area of the City of York);¹ the boroughs of the metropolitan areas of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire; plus the four unitary authorities created from the former county council area of Humberside (East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, North East Lincolnshire, and North Lincolnshire).²
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for Yorkshire and the Humber — Professor Paul Wiles CB and Suzanne McCarthy — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Leeds: 10-11 March 2022
 - Hull: 14-15 March 2022
 - Northallerton: 17-18 March 2022

Sub-regions

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of Yorkshire and the Humber of 3,966,500 results in it being entitled to 54 constituencies, the same as the current number. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
5. We noted that Humberside's electorate of 684,294 means it could be allocated nine constituencies. However, this would have given an average constituency size of only 1,029 below the upper limit of the permitted electorate range,

¹ Hereafter together referred to as North Yorkshire.

² Hereafter together referred to as Humberside.

meaning there would be little flexibility in creating constituencies. In addition to geographical constraints caused by the shape of the sub-region, in particular the Humber estuary, this would make it extremely difficult to construct nine constituencies within the boundaries of Humberside. Therefore, we proposed to combine Humberside with South Yorkshire to form a sub-region. Combined, this sub-region has 1,691,686 electors, thus a mathematical entitlement to 23.05 constituencies. We therefore proposed allocating 23 constituencies to a sub-region formed of Humberside and South Yorkshire.

6. North Yorkshire, with an electorate of 620,874 would have a mathematical entitlement to 8.46 constituencies, which meant it could not be assigned a whole number of constituencies. Therefore it must be grouped with at least one other county. We 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 electorate size of metropolitan borough wards makes it difficult to create constituencies within the permitted electorate range without dividing towns between constituencies. For these reasons, we proposed allocating 31 constituencies to a sub-region comprising North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.
7. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was broadly supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. Despite this, we did receive one counter proposal which forwent sub-regions altogether and treated the region as one group of 54 constituencies, while a different counter proposal suggested an alternative arrangement of:
 - a sub-region comprising of South Yorkshire with the unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, as in the initial proposals;
 - a sub-region comprising of North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, plus the unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull.
8. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose alternative sub-regions in Yorkshire and the Humber. While the strength of elements of the alternative sub-regions outlined above were acknowledged, it was not considered that the alternative sub-region arrangement permitted a superior overall constituency arrangement based on the statutory factors.
9. In response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we previously adopted in our initial and revised proposals. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:

- Humberside and South Yorkshire;
- North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

Humberside and South Yorkshire

10. As previously set out, in formulating the initial proposals we grouped Humberside and South Yorkshire into a sub-region of 23 constituencies - one less than the existing arrangement. Of the existing constituencies, ten are within the permitted electorate range, 11 have electorates that are below the range and three have electorates above the range.
11. This sub-region included one constituency - Doncaster East and Axholme - which crossed the county boundary between South Yorkshire and the North Lincolnshire unitary authority.

South Yorkshire

Initial proposals

12. Of the 14 existing constituencies in South Yorkshire, eight fell within the permitted electorate range: Doncaster Central, Doncaster North, Don Valley, Penistone and Stocksbridge, Rother Valley, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, Sheffield Hallam, and Wentworth and Dearne. Five constituencies fell below the range: Barnsley Central, Barnsley East, Rotherham, Sheffield Heeley and Sheffield South East; while only Sheffield Central fell above the range.
13. In formulating our initial proposals, we began by considering the cross-county boundary constituency that was necessary between Humberside and South Yorkshire. We proposed a Doncaster East and Axholme constituency crossing the county boundary between the City of Doncaster and the unitary authority of North Lincolnshire. This constituency comprised the three wards covering the Isle of Axholme area (Axholme Central, Axholme North and Axholme South) and four City of Doncaster wards, covering the east of the local authority.
14. Including the three Axholme wards in a constituency with the City of Doncaster enabled the identification of further sub-divisions within South Yorkshire, which supported minimal change to the existing constituencies and a better respect for local government boundaries: the City of Sheffield and the Borough of Barnsley allocated eight constituencies; and the Borough of Rotherham and City of Doncaster (plus the three Axholme wards) allocated six constituencies.

15. Elsewhere in the City of Doncaster, we proposed that both the existing Doncaster Central and Doncaster North constituencies were changed only to realign with new local government ward boundaries, but with the former changed to be named Doncaster Town. Similarly, within the Borough of Rotherham, the existing constituencies of Rotherham and Rother Valley were changed only to realign boundaries to new local government ward boundaries. The remaining Borough of Rotherham wards were combined with the two remaining City of Doncaster wards (Conisbrough and Edlington & Warmsworth) in the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency.
16. Across the City of Sheffield and the Borough of Barnsley, we proposed no change to the existing constituencies of Penistone and Stocksbridge, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, and Sheffield Hallam, other than to realign their boundaries to new local government ward boundaries. The electorate of the existing Sheffield Central constituency would be reduced to within the permitted electorate range through the transfer of the Manor Castle ward to the proposed Sheffield Heeley constituency. In turn, the Richmond ward would be split between the Sheffield Heeley and Sheffield South East constituencies to bring these both within the permitted range. Aside from the Penistone and Stocksbridge constituency, in the remainder of the Borough of Barnsley we proposed a north-south arrangement, comprising the constituencies of Barnsley North and Barnsley South.

Consultation on the initial proposals

17. The initial proposals for the City of Doncaster were mostly opposed during the consultation periods, although they did receive some general support. The greatest source of contention was the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme. In particular, residents of the Thorne & Moorends ward preferred to be included in the proposed Doncaster North constituency rather than the Doncaster East and Axholme constituency. There was also some opposition to the proposed inclusion of the large rural ward of Tickhill & Wadworth with the urban centre of Doncaster in the proposed Doncaster Town constituency.
18. We received multiple counter proposals that put forward alternative arrangements for the City of Doncaster which attempted to resolve some of the issues highlighted, however most would result in extensive change across South Yorkshire and relied upon splitting wards.
19. The greatest source of representations regarding the Borough of Rotherham was the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency, predominantly due to the inclusion of the community of the south of Bramley (Bramley &

Ravenfield ward) in this constituency, rather than the Rother Valley constituency. Elsewhere there was also some opposition to the inclusion of the Rother Vale ward in the proposed Rother Valley constituency instead of in Rotherham, and counter proposals suggested the transfer of this ward.

20. Few representations were received regarding the initial proposals across the Boroughs of Barnsley and Sheffield, with the majority being in support.

Revised proposals

21. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the opposition to the proposed arrangement of constituencies across the City of Doncaster 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, they considered that South Yorkshire and Humberside should continue to be combined as a sub-region to allow for more flexibility when creating constituency arrangements across both county areas. In particular, they noted 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 would otherwise be minimal.
22. The Assistant Commissioners also acknowledged opposition to the inclusion of the Tickhill & Wadworth ward in the proposed Doncaster Town constituency, and the Thorne & Moorends ward in the proposed Doncaster East and Axholme constituency. Despite this, the Assistant Commissioners did not consider that the counter proposals better satisfied the statutory factors than the initial proposals did, particularly with regard to respect for the existing arrangement of constituencies and local government boundaries. Having reviewed all of the evidence received from the consultation process, the Assistant Commissioners therefore recommended no change to the composition of the constituencies across the City of Doncaster and the Isle of Axholme, as we had initially proposed. They did, however, suggest a name change of the proposed Doncaster Town constituency to Doncaster Central to acknowledge that Doncaster had acquired city status since the publication of the initial proposals.
23. In Rotherham borough, the Assistant Commissioners accepted the reasoning provided at consultation for the inclusion of the Rother Vale ward in the Rotherham constituency, from the proposed Rother Valley constituency, and suggested this ward transfer. Elsewhere, they acknowledged the opposition to the inclusion of part of the community of Bramley in the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency and accepted they likely have closer ties to the proposed Rother Valley constituency. However, they noted that all 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 the south of Bramley in the Rother Valley constituency would be to include the whole of the Bramley & Ravenfield ward, or split the ward between the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, and Rother Valley constituencies. The Assistant Commissioners considered that to include the whole ward would precipitate change across a wider area that would likely negatively affect community ties, and they did not consider that this proposal met our criteria for splitting a ward.

24. The Assistant Commissioners noted the limited opposition to the initial proposals in the Borough of Barnsley and City of Sheffield and the expressed support. Therefore, they considered that there was no significant or compelling reason to amend the constituencies in the two local authorities, and recommended retaining the initial proposals in their entirety across these authorities.
25. We accepted the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners in full for the 14 constituencies wholly or partially within South Yorkshire and adopted them as part of our revised proposals. Therefore, our revised proposals for the area were for constituencies of: Barnsley North, Barnsley South, Doncaster Central, Doncaster East and Axholme, Doncaster North, Penistone and Stocksbridge, Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rotherham, Rother Valley, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, Sheffield Central, Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield Heeley, and Sheffield South East.

Consultation on the revised proposals

26. As at other stages of consultation, the revised proposals across South Yorkshire resulted in few representations compared to other areas in the region. The arrangement of constituencies was largely supported in full by those commenting on the pattern of constituencies across the region, although some representations did propose alternative constituency names.
27. As previously, the pattern of constituencies in the City of Doncaster was mostly opposed by respondents to the consultation. The cross-county boundary nature of the proposed Doncaster East and Axholme constituency was opposed, as it was in the initial proposals, with respondents contending a lack of links between the City of Doncaster and the Isle of Axholme. One representation suggested the full name of 'the Isle of Axholme' should be acknowledged in the constituency name. There were no other significant issues raised regarding the revised proposals in the City of Doncaster during the consultation. The return of the Doncaster Central name was supported by the few representations commenting on it.

28. The proposed Rotherham and Rother Valley constituencies were mostly supported, including the inclusion of the Rother Vale ward in the former rather than Rother Valley as in the initial proposals. Respondents once again highlighted the links between the Rother Vale ward and the town of Rotherham, and contrasted these with the physical separation from the rest of the Rother Valley constituency. Only one representation was received which opposed the transfer of the ward and proposed a return to the initially proposed arrangement. The proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency was mostly opposed due to it crossing the local authority boundary into the City of Doncaster, although this garnered only a small number of representations. Some respondents also opposed the name of the proposed constituency, with most supporting a continued acknowledgement of the village of Wentworth in the constituency name.
29. As at previous consultation stages, relatively few representations were received in response to the revised proposals across the Borough of Barnsley and City of Sheffield, with no standout issues and no significant new evidence submitted.

Final recommendations

30. Having considered the evidence received, we do not recommend any changes to the boundaries of the revised proposals for South Yorkshire and the Isle of Axholme.
31. We acknowledge the continued opposition to the composition of the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme, however, we do not consider that any compelling new evidence to change the cross-county arrangement has been received. Therefore, we conclude that South Yorkshire and Humberside should continue to be combined as a sub-region to allow for more flexibility when creating constituency arrangements across both county areas, and that the Isle of Axholme is the most suitable area for such a cross-county boundary constituency. In particular, we consider 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 would otherwise be minimal. We also consider there to be insufficient evidence for us to change the composition of constituencies elsewhere in the City of Doncaster, and therefore we retain the composition of our revised proposals across the local authority.
32. However, we are persuaded to change the name of the proposed Doncaster East and Axholme constituency to acknowledge the full name of the Isle of

Axholme area. Therefore, we have decided to adopt the name of Doncaster East and the Isle of Axholme in our final recommendations.

33. In the Borough of Rotherham, we note the overall support for the transfer of the Rother Vale ward to the proposed Rotherham constituency, and the limited representations received with regard to any other issues. We acknowledge the representations in opposition to the cross-local authority nature of the Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency, but note a lack of viable counter proposals received which resolve this issue. We consider that efforts to avoid a crossing of the local authority boundary between Rotherham and Doncaster would result in wide-scale change across South Yorkshire. We also note that the inclusion of the part of Bramley south of the A631 Bawtry Road in the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency garnered very few representations in the revised proposals consultation, despite being a relatively significant issue at previous consultation stages. As such, we conclude there is no new compelling evidence to modify the pattern of constituencies in this part of the sub-region.
34. We were also not persuaded by the arguments to rename the proposed Rawmarsh and Conisbrough constituency to acknowledge the village of Wentworth. We consider the proposed arrangement has seen sufficient change from the existing to merit a change in constituency name, and we note that Rawmarsh is considerably larger than Wentworth by population. Therefore, the final recommendations across the Borough of Rotherham are unchanged from our revised proposals.
35. We considered the relatively small number of representations received regarding both the initial and revised proposals across the Borough of Barnsley and City of Sheffield and therefore retain the revised proposals in their entirety in the final recommendations.
36. Therefore, our final recommendations in South Yorkshire are for constituencies of: Barnsley North, Barnsley South, Doncaster Central, Doncaster East and the Isle of Axholme, Doncaster North, Penistone and Stocksbridge, Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rotherham, Rother Valley, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough, Sheffield Central, Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield Heeley, and Sheffield South East. The areas contained by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Humberside

Initial proposals

37. Of the ten existing constituencies in Humberside, only two fell within the permitted electorate range: Cleethorpes, and Haltemprice and Howden. Six constituencies fell below the range: Brigg and Goole, Great Grimsby, Kingston upon Hull East, Kingston upon Hull North, Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, and Scunthorpe; while two fell above the range: Beverley and Holderness, and East Yorkshire.
38. Due to the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme and the geography of the Humber estuary, River Trent, and regional boundary, the North East Lincolnshire unitary authority plus the remaining North Lincolnshire authority wards formed a self-contained sub-division of the sub-region in the initial proposals, with three constituencies. Meanwhile, the unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull were allocated six constituencies.
39. In the North East Lincolnshire unitary authority we proposed a Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes constituency that would bring together the centres and most of the constituent parts of the two towns. It would contain all of the existing Great Grimsby constituency except the Scartho ward, plus three wards from the existing Cleethorpes constituency (Croft Baker, Haverstoe and Sidney Sussex). We proposed that the remaining five North East Lincolnshire wards be combined with four North Lincolnshire wards in a newly named South Humber constituency. Finally, the existing Scunthorpe constituency would be brought within the permitted electorate range by expanding it northwards to include the ward of Burton upon Stather and Winterton, and westwards to include the ward of Burringham and Gunness.
40. Within the East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull unitary authorities, we proposed that the existing Kingston upon Hull East constituency be expanded eastwards to include the East Riding of Yorkshire ward of South West Holderness, while the existing Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency was expanded westwards with the addition of the two East Riding of Yorkshire wards of South Hunsley and Tranby. We proposed that the existing Kingston upon Hull North constituency be changed only to realign with new local government ward boundaries.
41. Three constituencies were then proposed wholly within the unitary authority of East Riding of Yorkshire. A coastal constituency would group the town of Bridlington with the remaining Holderness area to the south. The towns of Beverley, Driffield, Market Weighton and Pocklington would be combined in a

Beverley and The Wolds constituency. Finally, the proposed Goole and Haltemprice constituency would comprise the remaining nine East Riding of Yorkshire wards, grouping the town of Goole to the south of the River Ouse with the town of Howden to its north, and the communities to the east, up to the outskirts of Hull.

Consultation on the initial proposals

42. The three constituencies proposed to be wholly within the North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire unitary authorities received a mixed response during the consultation process.
43. Representations received in response to the proposed Scunthorpe constituency were mostly positive. Conversely, the proposed constituencies of Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and South Humber, were strongly opposed during the consultation periods with representations contending that the two towns are highly distinct areas with different identities and socio-economic needs, and for this reason they should be in different constituencies. Additionally, many representations objected to the proposed exclusion of the Scartho ward from a constituency with Grimsby, and the inclusion of the villages of Waltham, New Waltham and Humberston in a constituency with more industrial towns such as Immingham and Barton-upon-Humber, rather than Cleethorpes.
44. The name of the proposed South Humber constituency was also strongly opposed, with most of the opposition focused on the use of 'Humber' in the name.
45. A popular counter proposal was received for the composition of constituencies within the North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire unitary authorities, which respondents stated retained the centres of the two towns in separate constituencies: Grimsby would be grouped with Barton-upon-Humber, Brigg and Immingham, while Cleethorpes would be grouped with the villages of Humberston, Waltham and New Waltham to the south.
46. Moving north of the Humber estuary, the initial proposals for the arrangement of constituencies across Kingston upon Hull were particularly contentious during the consultation process. Significant opposition was received in response to the extension of the constituencies of Kingston upon Hull East, and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle into the East Riding of Yorkshire. Respondents from the South West Holderness ward referred to the distinct rural character of the communities of the ward compared to east Hull, and the very different problems each area consequently faces. Meanwhile, to the west of Hull, respondents opposed the prospective inclusion of the South Hunsley ward in the proposed

Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency, citing a distinct character and vastly different socio-economic setting compared to west Hull.

47. In the East Riding of Yorkshire unitary authority, we received some opposition to the proposed Goole and Haltemprice constituency, with representations stating that it would stretch too far east-west, grouping communities with very little in common. Respondents also contended that Cottingham would more appropriately be included in a Hull-based constituency due to close physical connections between the areas.
48. A smaller number of representations were received in opposition to the proposed Bridlington and Holderness constituency, with some respondents contending that there is little in common between the town Bridlington and the Holderness villages.
49. Multiple counter proposals were received for the six constituencies covering the East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull unitary authorities, which aimed to rectify some of the issues highlighted during consultation. Many of these proposed different configurations between Kingston upon Hull and the neighbouring East Riding of Yorkshire wards.
50. Other counter proposals suggested more wholesale change across the two unitary authorities. One such counter proposal suggested splitting a ward in the East Riding of Yorkshire using polling districts that mirror existing parish council boundaries. This allowed for a Beverley and Holderness constituency similar to the existing arrangement, although no longer including the North Holderness ward, and would avoid the inclusion of the 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.

Revised proposals

51. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the strength of opposition to the proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and South Humber constituencies, and the support for a counter proposal in the area. However, following a site visit to the towns and their surroundings, the Assistant Commissioners did not ultimately consider the counter proposal to be superior to the initial proposals and they recommended no change to the composition or name of the proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes constituency.
52. The Assistant Commissioners were sympathetic to respondents opposed to the proposed transfer of the Scartho ward from the existing Great Grimsby

constituency, and accepted that its exclusion from a constituency containing the town centre was not ideal. Nevertheless, they considered that no counter proposal, or alternative arrangements investigated, were able to satisfactorily resolve this issue without significant disruption and breaking local ties elsewhere.

53. With regard to the North East Lincolnshire villages to the south of Cleethorpes, while the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that they likely do look to Cleethorpes for their key services and amenities, they considered that the wards containing them have a distinctly more rural character, and noted that the majority of the proposed South Humber constituency would still be largely rural. They also noted that the villages are already included with more industrial areas to the north in the existing constituency. Following these considerations, the Assistant Commissioners recommended no change to the composition of the proposed South Humber constituency, but in light of the widespread opposition to the name, recommended it be called Brigg and Immingham instead.
54. We accepted the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners in full for the three constituencies wholly within the North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire unitary authorities and adopted them as part of our revised proposals.
55. The Assistant Commissioners also visited Hull and its surroundings in an effort to better understand the issues raised there. They noted the objection received from the South West Holderness ward and, although they observed that the main settlements of Hedon and Preston effectively act as dormitory settlements to the City of Hull, they agreed that the ward currently has a distinct character, with a large proportion of it highly rural and sparsely populated.
56. The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the evidence regarding South Hunsley ward being distinct from the City of Hull both in character and demographics. They also considered that the Haltemprice villages (Anlaby, Anlaby Common, Cottingham, Hessle, Kirk Ella, West Ella and Willerby) have very few ties to Goole and Howden with which they were grouped in the initial proposals, and act as suburbs of the city contained within the A164 ring road.
57. Having considered the representations and counter proposals received regarding the six constituencies covering East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull, the Assistant Commissioners concluded that the approach put forward in the counter proposal set out above that required the splitting of a ward, provided a superior arrangement of constituencies overall. Therefore, they recommended its adoption with a minor adjustment.

58. Specifically, the Assistant Commissioners recommended that the Wolds Weigh-ton ward be split between constituencies, along polling district boundaries that matched the parish council boundaries. This would allow 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, though no longer including the North Holderness ward. In turn, the North Carr ward would be included in the Kingston upon Hull East constituency, rather than in Kingston upon Hull North. To the west of Hull, the Assistant Commissioners recommended 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 recommended that the two wards comprising the village of Cottingham – Cottingham North and Cottingham South – should be included in the Kingston upon Hull North constituency. The Assistant Commissioners recommended a modification to the counter proposal, which would involve the Central ward being split, using polling districts, between the Kingston upon Hull North, and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituencies, which would allow for more of the centre of the City of Hull to be included in one constituency.
59. After considering the evidence received during the consultation process and the Assistant Commissioners' recommendations, we agreed that the counter proposal discussed previously was the superior arrangement in this area and adopted it in its entirety, but for three constituency names. We did not agree that the recommended split of the Central ward between the proposed Kingston upon Hull North, and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituencies was required to address the multiple issues raised by other representations, and did not propose this as part of the revised proposals.
60. Therefore, our revised proposals for the county area of Humberside were for constituencies of: Beverley and Holderness, Bridlington and The Wolds, Brigg and Immingham, Goole and Pocklington, Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, Kingston upon Hull East, Kingston upon Hull North, Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, and Scunthorpe.

Consultation on the revised proposals

61. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals across Humberside, we received a mixture of support and opposition.
62. The proposed Scunthorpe constituency was unchanged from the initial proposals and, as in previous consultation stages, resulted in very few representations.

63. The proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes constituency garnered considerably fewer representations than previously, with only one representation proposing the alternative arrangement popular during consultation on the initial proposals.
64. The proposed Brigg and Immingham constituency continued to be mostly opposed, as it was during the consultation on the initial proposals (the initially proposed South Humber constituency). The majority of the opposition was regarding the inclusion of the suburb of Scartho and the villages of Waltham, New Waltham and Humberston in this constituency, rather than in a constituency with Grimsby and Cleethorpes, respectively. The revised name of Brigg and Immingham appeared to be more popular than the previously proposed name of South Humber. However, some respondents were still opposed to it. Representations stated that the proposed name was not reflective of the whole constituency, and in particular did not acknowledge the southern extent. The most popular alternative name by number of representations was Northern Lincolnshire, in reference to the unitary authorities covered by the proposed constituency.
65. The revised proposals for the three constituencies covering the Kingston upon Hull unitary authority garnered a mixture of support and opposition. The newly proposed Kingston upon Hull East constituency was mostly supported, with respondents stating that the transfer of the North Carr ward was superior to the crossing of the local authority boundary to the east of the city through the inclusion of the South West Holderness ward. This was despite a possible division of the Bransholme Estate between constituencies, with respondents stating that the estate is already split between the existing Kingston upon Hull East and Kingston upon Hull North constituencies.
66. The proposed Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency was also similarly mostly supported. Respondents stated that the Willerby and Kirk Ella ward was a more appropriate fit in the constituency than the South Hunsley ward in the initial proposals, while others contended that it made sense to keep the wards of Willerby and Kirk Ella, and Tranby together in a constituency with the wards of west Hull due to their close physical links. However, some representations were received in opposition to the arrangement, contradicting this view and suggesting the East Riding of Yorkshire wards have a distinct character compared to the west of Hull, and have more in common with areas to their west. A handful of respondents suggested a name change to acknowledge Haltemprice in the constituency name, rather than just Hessle. It was contended that more of the population would identify with this amended name due to the proposed revised constituency boundary containing four distinct parishes of the historic Haltemprice area.

67. The revised composition of the Kingston upon Hull North constituency also resulted in a mixture of support and opposition. The transfer of the two wards comprising Cottingham to a predominantly Hull-based constituency was mostly opposed. However, a significant number of representations in favour of the arrangement were also received. Those in opposition referenced a distinct character to the large village of Cottingham, more like other East Riding of Yorkshire towns and villages to the west, rather than the City of Hull to the east. The '2014 referendum' on the subject of the extension of the City of Hull also featured heavily in representations, as it did at previous consultation stages. Those respondents in favour of the transfer of Cottingham referenced the close physical links to the Kingston upon Hull wards of Bricknell and University, as well as the close educational ties between the areas.
68. Although the composition of the proposed Kingston upon Hull North constituency resulted in a mixed response, the proposed name was strongly opposed. Almost 250 representations, including a large petition, were received which suggested a change to acknowledge Cottingham in the constituency name, if the arrangement was unchanged in the final recommendations. Respondents drew parallels to the acknowledgement of Hessle in the existing Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency name.
69. As during the consultation on the initial proposals, we received many counter proposals for the constituencies wholly or partially within the Kingston upon Hull unitary authority. Many of these counter proposals grouped most of the Haltemprice villages bordering Hull into one constituency. This included one which grouped all five of the wards to the west of Hull within the A164 Humber Bridge-Beverley road with three wards of the existing Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency (Boothferry, Derringham and Pickering) and one from the existing Kingston upon Hull North (Bricknell). The counter proposal then proposed a Kingston upon Hull Central constituency which would straddle the River Hull, and a Kingston upon Hull North constituency covering the north of the unitary authority. Other counter proposals suggested less radical change from the existing arrangement in the city, such as one that retained the Hessle ward in a constituency analogous to the existing Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency, with the other four Haltemprice wards to the west (Cottingham North, Cottingham South, Tranby, and Willerby and Kirk Ella) included with five wards of the existing Kingston upon Hull North constituency. One representation was also received which suggested the split of the Central ward between the proposed Kingston upon Hull North, and Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituencies proposed by the Assistant Commissioners previously, in an attempt to retain more of Hull city centre in one constituency.

70. Regarding the revised proposals consultation response to the three constituencies wholly within the East Riding of Yorkshire unitary authority, the transfer of the town of Pocklington (Pocklington Provincial ward) to the proposed Goole and Pocklington constituency was the greatest issue in the region, by number of representations. These included a petition of roughly 800 signatories. Respondents highlighted the strong ties between Pocklington and the Yorkshire Wolds area, in particular with the neighbouring market town of Market Weighton. They contended that it was inappropriate to break these ties and include Pocklington in a constituency with areas such as Goole with which it has very few links. The petition argued for a return to the initial proposals which included Pocklington and Market Weighton in a Beverley and The Wolds constituency.
71. The name of the proposed Goole and Pocklington constituency was also opposed, with East Riding and Rivers being the most popular alternative by number of representations. Other representations contended that Howden or Howdenshire should be acknowledged in the constituency name while one suggested the name Boothferry and South Hunsley.
72. The proposed Beverley and Holderness, and Bridlington and The Wolds constituencies resulted in comparatively very few representations, with no standout issues.
73. We did receive some representations which commented on the boundary between the proposed Bridlington and The Wolds, and Goole and Pocklington constituencies. It was brought to our attention that the parish boundaries of Skirpenbeck and Stamford Bridge parish had been changed and that our proposals would no longer follow the parish boundary. Furthermore, it was noted that the ward boundary of Market Weighton and Pocklington Provincial had been changed to reflect the new parish boundary and restore coterminosity. It was suggested that if we continued to adopt our revised proposal constituencies, then the boundary in this area should be modified in order to be coterminous with both the parish and ward boundaries.

Final recommendations

74. Having considered the evidence received regarding the revised proposals across Humberside, we have been persuaded to slightly amend two of the proposed constituencies, as well as two constituency names.
75. We note the lack of representations received regarding the proposed Scunthorpe constituency, which has also been a feature of previous consultations, and therefore propose retaining it in our final recommendations.

76. We note the smaller number of representations received regarding the proposed Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and Brigg and Immingham constituencies compared to previous consultation stages, but acknowledge the recurrence of some points regarding the grouping of the towns of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and the transfer of surrounding North East Lincolnshire areas away from their principal towns. Despite this, we do not consider any persuasive new evidence has been provided to persuade us to depart from our previous conclusions. Therefore, we make no change to the revised proposals for these constituencies in the final recommendations.
77. We also acknowledge some continued opposition to the name of the Brigg and Immingham constituency, however we are not persuaded by any of the alternative names given. We note Brigg and Immingham is more popular than the initially proposed name, and retain this in the final recommendations.
78. In the East Riding of Yorkshire we acknowledge the strong opposition from residents of the town of Pocklington and the surroundings to their inclusion in the proposed Goole and Pocklington constituency. Due to a lack of viable alternatives received during consultation or identified by ourselves when further investigating this area, we concluded that the arrangement for the three constituencies wholly within the East Riding of Yorkshire would have to be the revised proposals (with a possible minor amendment), or a return to something similar to the initial proposals. Although we are sympathetic to the views regarding the relationship between Pocklington and the wider Yorkshire Wolds area, when considered alongside changes that would be required around Kingston upon Hull, we have concluded that the revised proposals provide the best balance between the statutory factors.
79. We acknowledge the opposition from some to the transfer of Cottingham to the Kingston upon Hull North constituency. However, we have considered this alongside the support for such an arrangement; evidence regarding the lack of ties between Cottingham and areas in the initially proposed Goole and Haltemprice constituency; and arguments regarding the inclusion of the South West Holderness ward in the proposed Kingston upon Hull East constituency. Altogether we have not been persuaded to diverge from the conclusion that it is more appropriate to cross the Kingston upon Hull unitary authority boundary to the west, rather than the east.
80. Despite no wide-scale change to the constituencies wholly within the East Riding of Yorkshire, we have been persuaded to amend the split of the Wolds Weighton ward. This amends the boundaries of the Bridlington and The Wolds, and Goole and Pocklington constituencies to follow the new Pocklington Provincial and Wolds Weighton ward boundaries, thus restoring coterminosity between the respective boundaries

81. We note the relatively small number of representations received regarding the Bridlington and The Wolds, and Beverley and Holderness constituencies and therefore the only change to these constituencies, and the proposed Goole and Pocklington is the amended ward split as described above.
82. We also make no changes to the proposed names of the three previously mentioned constituencies. We acknowledge the opposition to the proposed Goole and Pocklington name, but we were not persuaded by any of the alternatives provided during the consultation.
83. Around the Kingston upon Hull unitary authority we acknowledge the range of counter proposals which aimed to retain all, or most of, the Haltemprice villages in one constituency. However, we consider these counter proposals would likely negatively affect community ties within the City of Hull, and also result in greater change from the existing arrangement. Therefore, we make no change to the composition of the three constituencies wholly or partially in the Kingston upon Hull unitary authority in our final recommendations.
84. However, we are persuaded by the groundswell of opinion to acknowledge Cottingham in the constituency name, and therefore adopt the name Kingston upon Hull North and Cottingham in our final recommendations. We are similarly persuaded by the arguments for acknowledging Haltemprice in the Kingston upon Hull West constituency name, and therefore adopt the name Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice in our final recommendations.
85. Therefore, our final recommendations in Humberside are for constituencies of: Beverley and Holderness, Bridlington and The Wolds, Brigg and Immingham, Goole and Pocklington, Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, Kingston upon Hull East, Kingston upon Hull North and Cottingham, Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice, and Scunthorpe. The areas contained by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

86. As previously set out, in formulating the initial proposals we grouped North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire into a sub-region of 31 constituencies - one more than the existing arrangement. Of the existing constituencies, 12 are within the permitted electorate range, five have electorates that are below the range, and 13 have electorates above the range.

87. This sub-region included two constituencies which cross the county boundary between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire: Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold.

North Yorkshire

Initial proposals

88. Of the eight existing constituencies in North Yorkshire, three fell within the permitted electorate range: Scarborough and Whitby, York Central, and York Outer and five constituencies were above the range: Harrogate and Knaresborough, Richmond (Yorks), Selby and Ainsty, Skipton and Ripon, and Thirsk and Malton.
89. We proposed that the county boundary between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire be crossed in two areas in the initial proposals. We proposed a Selby constituency that would include the City of Leeds ward of Kippax & Methley with all but two of the wards of the District of Selby, including the town of Selby itself. We also proposed a Wetherby and Easingwold constituency that would consist of two City of Leeds wards (Harewood and Wetherby); the remaining two District of Selby wards (Appleton Roebuck & Church Fenton and Tadcaster); three District of Hambleton wards (Easingwold, Huby and Raskelf & White Horse); and six Borough of Harrogate wards. This constituency would stretch from south of Tadcaster in the District of Selby to north of Easingwold in the District of Hambleton, while also including the population centres of Wetherby and Boroughbridge (from the City of Leeds and Borough of Harrogate respectively).
90. The transfer of the Borough of Harrogate wards of Boroughbridge, Claro and Ouseburn to the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency resulted in a more compact Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency in the initial proposals. Meanwhile, the proposed Skipton and Ripon constituency saw no further change beyond the transfer of the Bishop Monkton & Newby ward to the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency, and realignment to new local government ward boundaries.
91. To compensate for the inclusion of the three District of Hambleton wards in the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency (Easingwold, Huby and Raskelf & White Horse), the existing Thirsk and Malton constituency was reconfigured in the initial proposals to extend further westwards. The wards of Bedale and Tanfield would be transferred from the existing Richmond (Yorks) constituency to the Thirsk and Malton constituency. This was the only proposed change to the existing Richmond (Yorks) constituency, as well as realignment to new local government ward boundaries.

92. The proposed Scarborough and Whitby constituency was wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement under the initial proposals, while the York Central and York Outer constituencies were amended only to realign with new local government ward boundaries.

Consultation on the initial proposals

93. The cross-county boundary constituencies proposed in this sub-region were contentious. The inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Kippax & Methley in a predominantly District of Selby-based constituency was widely opposed in representations which stated that there is no commonality between the two areas, with Kippax instead being closely tied to the Leeds town of Garforth. The second cross-county boundary constituency in the sub-region, Wetherby and Easingwold, was also strongly opposed during consultation. Most of the opposition (excluding that regarding the inclusion of the Borough of Harrogate ward of Claro, which is discussed in detail below) made reference to the large geographical size of the proposed constituency and the fact it would cover four separate local authorities, grouping communities with little in common.
94. A counter proposal was received for the cross-county boundary arrangement which proposed two constituencies that would cover the same wards as the Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold constituencies in the initial proposals, but which distributed those 31 wards differently between the constituencies. The three City of Leeds wards of Harewood, Kippax & Methley and Wetherby would be included in a constituency with eight wards comprising the southern 'half' of the District of Selby, covering the villages of Eggborough and Sherburn in Elmet, among others. The remainder of the District of Selby would be grouped with the same Borough of Harrogate and District of Hambleton wards included in the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency.
95. The proposed inclusion of the Borough of Harrogate ward of Claro in the Wetherby and Easingwold constituency (as opposed to Harrogate and Knaresborough) was highly contentious during the consultation. Representations highlighted the strong connections between the Claro ward and the towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough, and relatively few links to Wetherby and Easingwold. Including the Claro ward in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency would have no wider knock-on effects – the initially proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency would remain within the permitted electorate range – and this was put forward in counter proposals.
96. The consultations identified that the proposed transfer of the Bedale and Tanfield wards was highly contentious. Respondents said that these wards are intimately linked to the towns of Northallerton and Richmond, with very few

links with the communities of Thirsk and Malton. Counter proposals were received that retained one, or both, of the Bedale and Tanfield ward in the proposed Richmond (Yorks) constituency, by exchanging them with one, or both, of the District of Hambleton wards of Great Ayton and Stokesley.

97. As well as opposition specifically regarding the Bedale and Tanfield wards, we received some opposition to the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency more generally. Respondents contended the constituency would be too large geographically and encompass too large a variety of communities. Meanwhile, aside from consideration of which wards to transfer between the Richmond (Yorks) and Thirsk and Malton constituencies, we received few representations about the former. Despite this, some respondents opposed the constituency name.
98. Very few representations were received regarding the Scarborough and Whitby, and Skipton and Ripon constituencies, while the arrangement within the City of York unitary authority of York Central and York Outer was mostly supported.

Revised proposals

99. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the counter proposal that grouped the wards of the initially proposed cross-county boundary constituencies into a different arrangement had merit, and would likely be superior to the initial proposals with regard to respect for local government boundaries. However, they had concerns regarding the unusual shape of the proposed Selby and Easingwold constituency, and the poor travel and transport connectivity within it. They also questioned the level of community ties between the City of Leeds wards of Wetherby and Harewood and the communities in the south of the District of Selby. Therefore, on balance, they concluded the initial proposals were superior overall with regard to the statutory factors, and did not propose any changes to the Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold constituencies.
100. The Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the extensive evidence presented in the representations for transferring the Claro ward from the Wetherby and Easingwold constituency to the proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency and recommended this to us. They did not recommend any further change to the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency.
101. Regarding the transfer of the Bedale and Tanfield wards to the Richmond (Yorks) constituency from Thirsk and Malton, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged 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 did not recommend any change to the composition of either the proposed Richmond (Yorks) or Thirsk and Malton constituencies. This was due to the lack of any counter proposal that they considered to be superior to the initial proposals with regard to the statutory factors. However, they accepted the arguments put forward in opposition to the name of the proposed Richmond (Yorks) constituency, and therefore recommended the name be changed to Richmond and Northallerton.

102. In view of the limited opposition to the proposed Scarborough and Whitby, Skipton and Ripon, York Central, and York Outer constituencies, the Assistant Commissioners recommended no change to the compositions or names of these constituencies.

103. We accepted the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners in full for the nine constituencies wholly or partially within North Yorkshire and adopted them as part of our revised proposals. Therefore, our revised proposals for the county council area were for constituencies of: Harrogate and Knaresborough, Richmond and Northallerton, Selby, Scarborough and Whitby, Skipton and Ripon, Thirsk and Malton, Wetherby and Easingwold, York Central, and York Outer.

Consultation on the revised proposals

104. The transfer of the Claro ward to the proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency was mostly supported, for the same reasons regarding its links to the principal towns as heard during earlier stages of consultation. Despite this, a smaller number of representations were received in opposition due to the relationship between the Claro and Boroughbridge wards within the new North Yorkshire unitary authority structure, which it is suggested would be broken by the revised proposals arrangement. Multiple respondents suggested we revert to our initial proposals in respect of the Claro ward.

105. The proposed cross-county boundary constituencies of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold continued to be opposed, for much the same reasons outlined during consultation on the initial proposals. Respondents continued to contend that there are few links between the District of Selby and the City of Leeds ward of Kippax & Methley. The proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency was strongly opposed, particularly from respondents in the District of Hambleton wards of Easingwold, Huby and Raskelf & White Horse. These representations contended that these areas have few links with the West Yorkshire wards in the proposed constituency (Harewood and Wetherby) and would instead be better included in a constituency with Thirsk and Malton, as they are currently.

106. Despite the opposition detailed above, we also received a significant number of representations in favour of the cross-county boundary arrangement. These representations contended that there are, in fact, links between the areas of West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire that are proposed to be grouped. Respondents also suggested that the proposed arrangement was superior to the counter proposal considered from the initial proposals consultation. Representations stated that, as a historic market town, Wetherby has more in common with areas in the proposed Wetherby and Easingwold constituency than compared to the former industrial areas in the south of the District of Selby, around Eggborough.
107. We received one new counter proposal for the cross-county boundary arrangement between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. This avoided the inclusion of the Kippax & Methley ward in a cross-county boundary constituency, instead including it in a predominantly Borough of Wakefield-based constituency. A proposed Selby constituency would subsequently include all of the wards of the District of Selby plus part of the Borough of Harrogate ward of Marston Moor. The rest of this ward would be included in a revised Wetherby and Easingwold constituency, similar to the proposed but with the addition of the City of Leeds ward of Cross Gates & Whinmoor - currently in the existing Leeds East constituency.
108. The transfer of the Bedale and Tanfield wards to the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency continued to be highly contentious, resulting in the most representations in North Yorkshire. The points raised were similar to those previously heard during consultation on the initial proposals: namely that Bedale and Tanfield have close ties to Northallerton and the Yorkshire Dales to the west, rather than the North York Moors to the east. One representation also stated that the Bedale and Tanfield wards are not uniquely linked, and it would be appropriate to split them into different constituencies.
109. The remaining proposed constituencies in North Yorkshire garnered significantly less representations, as they did during previous rounds of consultation. The addition of Northallerton to the Richmond and Northallerton constituency name was mostly welcomed, although one respondent suggested the existing name of Richmond (Yorks) be retained. Some respondents also argued that, as the larger town by population, Northallerton should come first in the name.
110. The arrangement within the City of York unitary authority was mostly uncontroversial. However, a few representations contended that the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward should be included in the York Central constituency. No significant issues were raised regarding the proposed Skipton

and Ripon constituency, while the proposed Scarborough and Whitby was wholly supported by the small number of representations it garnered.

Final recommendations

111. Having considered the evidence received, we do not recommend any changes to the boundaries or names of the revised proposals for North Yorkshire.
112. We acknowledge the continued opposition to the cross-county boundary constituencies of Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold, however, we do not consider that any compelling new evidence to change the arrangement, or superior counter proposals, have been received. We consider that any change to the cross-county boundary arrangement would result in an inferior composition overall, based on the statutory factors. We also note the support for the revised proposal arrangement over the counter proposal considered by the Assistant Commissioners, on which we had specifically invited views. Therefore, we retain both the proposed Selby, and Wetherby and Easingwold constituencies in the final recommendations.
113. As at previous consultation stages, we acknowledge the strength of opposition to the inclusion of the Bedale and Tanfield wards in the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency. Despite this, we do not consider persuasive new evidence has been received to modify this constituency and we conclude that the proposed arrangement best reflects the statutory factors. We are not persuaded by counter proposals that sought to separate either the Bedale and Tanfield, or Great Ayton and Stokesley wards, or the transfer of the latter two to the proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency. We note these two wards are geographically separated from the Thirsk and Malton constituency by the North York Moors. We are also not persuaded by the arguments for reordering the name of the proposed Richmond and Northallerton constituency. Therefore, we retain our revised proposals as our final recommendations for the constituencies of Richmond and Northallerton, and Thirsk and Malton.
114. We note that, despite some opposition, the transfer of the Claro ward to the proposed Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency was mostly supported, and therefore we retain this revised proposal in the final recommendations.
115. We acknowledge some suggestions that the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward should be included in the York Central constituency, from York Outer. However, we note that this could not be achieved without wider consequential changes. Furthermore, we note our proposals largely reflect the existing pattern of constituencies in the City of York and were supported by other responses. Therefore, we retain the proposed York Central and York Outer constituencies in the final recommendations, as is.

116. We note the proposed Scarborough and Whitby, and Skipton and Ripon constituencies have resulted in comparatively few representations throughout the consultation periods, and therefore retain them both unchanged in the final recommendations.
117. Therefore, our final recommendations in North Yorkshire are for constituencies of: Harrogate and Knaresborough, Richmond and Northallerton, Selby, Scarborough and Whitby, Skipton and Ripon, Thirsk and Malton, Wetherby and Easingwold, York Central, and York Outer. The areas contained by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

West Yorkshire

Initial proposals

118. Of the 22 existing constituencies in West Yorkshire, nine were within the permitted electorate range: Bradford East, Bradford West, Halifax, Hemsworth, Keighley, Leeds North East, Pudsey, Shipley and Wakefield. Eight constituencies were above the range: Batley and Spen, Calder Valley, Colne Valley, Dewsbury, Elmet and Rothwell, Leeds Central, Morley and Outwood, and Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford; while five were below the range: Bradford South, Huddersfield, Leeds East, Leeds North West and Leeds West.
119. Within the City of Bradford we proposed no change to the existing Bradford East constituency, and only minor realignment to new local government ward boundaries in the Keighley and Shipley constituencies. We proposed only the exchange of two wards – Clayton and Fairweather Green, and Great Horton – between the Bradford West and Bradford South constituencies, which would bring them both within the permitted electorate range.
120. Within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees, we proposed that the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward be transferred from the existing Calder Valley constituency to a proposed Batley and Hipperholme constituency – based largely on the existing Batley and Spen constituency. We also proposed the exchange of four wards between the Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies to bring them both within the permitted electorate range. To compensate for the inclusion of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward in Batley and Hipperholme, the Heckmondwike ward was included in a proposed Dewsbury constituency. This constituency also included part of the Dalton ward to bring it within the permitted electorate range. We proposed that the Dalton ward be split using polling districts, with the area around Kirkheaton being included in the proposed Dewsbury constituency, and the rest of the ward, centred on the Rawthorpe

area, remaining in the Huddersfield constituency. To compensate for the inclusion of the Kirkheaton area in the Dewsbury constituency, we proposed that the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward be included in the Huddersfield constituency from the existing Colne Valley constituency. This would bring both of the constituencies within the permitted electorate range. The only further change proposed to the existing Colne Valley constituency would be to realign its boundaries with changes to local government ward boundaries. The two remaining Kirklees district wards (Denby Dale and Kirkburton) would be grouped with four City of Wakefield wards in the proposed Ossett and Denby Dale constituency.

121. Within the City of Wakefield we proposed that the Normanton ward be removed from the existing Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford constituency, and the constituency be renamed Pontefract and Castleford accordingly. The Normanton ward would be transferred to the existing Hemsworth constituency in our initial proposals, while the Wakefield South ward would no longer be included, thereby bringing Hemsworth within the permitted electorate range: we consequently also proposed changing the name of the constituency to Normanton and Hemsworth to reflect these changes. In our proposals, the Wakefield South ward would be included with three more City of Wakefield wards (Horbury and South Ossett, Ossett, and Wakefield Rural) and two Borough of Kirklees wards (Denby Dale and Kirkburton) in the Ossett and Denby Dale constituency, as described previously. The remaining five City of Wakefield wards were grouped with the City of Leeds ward of Rothwell to create our proposed Wakefield constituency.
122. Seven constituencies were proposed wholly within the City of Leeds in the initial proposals. The Leeds North East constituency would be unchanged other than for minor realignment due to new local government ward boundaries. We proposed a Pudsey constituency that would comprise the Calverley & Farsley and Pudsey wards of the existing Pudsey constituency, plus the Bramley & Stanningley and Farnley & Wortley wards, currently within the existing Leeds West constituency. We proposed a Leeds North West constituency that would consist of the Guiseley & Rawdon and Horsforth wards, currently within the existing Pudsey constituency, plus the two wards of Adel & Wharfedale and Otley & Yeadon, currently within the existing Leeds North West constituency.
123. We proposed that the Middleton Park ward be transferred from the existing Leeds Central constituency, while the west of the Gipton & Harehills ward, centred on Harehills, would be included in it, following a split of this ward on polling districts between the proposed Leeds Central and Leeds East constituencies. The remainder of the Gipton & Harehills ward, centred on Gipton, would remain in our proposed Leeds East constituency, which we also proposed would extend to the south-east with the addition of the Garforth &

Swillington ward. This, along with minor changes to realign the constituency boundary with new local government ward boundaries in the Whinmoor area, would bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range. The Middleton Park ward, which would no longer be included in the Leeds Central constituency, was included in our proposed Morley constituency, which also contained the wards of Ardsley & Robin Hood, Morley North and Morley South. Finally, we proposed a Headingley constituency that comprised two wards from the existing Leeds North West constituency (Headingley & Hyde Park and Weetwood), and two from the existing Leeds West constituency (Armley and Kirkstall).

Consultation on the initial proposals

124. The initial proposals for the City of Bradford received a mixture of support and opposition during the consultation periods. The most significant issue regarded the exchange of wards between the proposed Bradford South and Bradford West constituencies, which respondents considered would damage community cohesion. A number of representations also raised the issue of the division of the community of Wibsey between the Bradford South and Bradford West constituencies in the initial proposals.
125. Multiple representations proposed splitting a ward in the City of Bradford to avoid the necessity of exchanging wards between Bradford South and Bradford West. Many suggested that just one polling district be included in the proposed Bradford South constituency from a neighbouring ward, to bring both constituencies within the permitted electorate range. Polling district 18H from the Little Horton ward was identified in some representations as the most appropriate polling district to be included due to supposed links with communities in the existing Bradford South constituency.
126. 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, while the majority of respondents approved of the minimal changes to the proposed Keighley constituency, but suggested it would be better named Keighley and Ilkley.
127. The initial proposals for the seven constituencies either wholly or partially within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees were widely opposed during the consultation. The most contentious proposed constituency across the whole Yorkshire and the Humber region was Batley and Hipperholme, with the majority of the opposition centring on the inclusion of the Borough of Calderdale ward of Hipperholme and Lightcliffe in a constituency with the Borough of Kirklees town of Batley and the communities of the Spen Valley. The exclusion of the Heckmondwike ward from the proposed Batley and

Hipperholme constituency was also strongly opposed during the consultation periods with respondents stating it has close links with communities across the existing Batley and Spen constituency.

128. In the Borough of Calderdale, the proposed constituencies of Calder Valley and Halifax were mostly opposed for linking areas with no community ties (Brighouse and Halifax), while breaking existing links between areas currently in the same constituency (Sowerby Bridge and Warley, and Halifax).
129. Multiple counter proposals sought to avoid the inclusion of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward in a predominantly Borough of Kirklees-based constituency. This could be achieved either by crossing the local authority boundary in a different area or, instead, by splitting a ward between the Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies, thus avoiding a cross-local authority boundary constituency altogether.
130. The Dewsbury constituency in the initial proposals also proved to be contentious, with the large majority of the opposition received from the part of the Dalton ward that would be included within it. Residents of this area indicated that they have very few links to the town of Dewsbury, and should remain in a constituency with Huddersfield. The proposed Huddersfield constituency itself was similarly opposed with almost all of the opposition related to the proposed transfer of the Crosland Moor and Netherton ward to the Huddersfield constituency, from the Colne Valley constituency.
131. The representations received regarding the proposed Ossett and Denby Dale constituency were more balanced between opposition and support. Some respondents suggested that the constituency grouped communities with few ties, and broke links within the City of Wakefield. Others supported the constituency on the grounds that it would group similar towns and villages. Several representations suggested a change of the constituency name due to it not being representative of many of the communities within the proposed constituency.
132. We received multiple counter proposals for some, or all, of the seven constituencies either wholly or partially within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees. Some of these proposed extensive changes to the arrangement across Kirklees, precipitated by a new cross-local authority boundary constituency with Calderdale. Others proposed multiple ward splits across the boroughs in an attempt to resolve some of the issues discussed above.
133. Very few representations were received during the consultation process 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. Almost all of the opposition regarded the inclusion of the City of Leeds 'orphan ward'³ of Rothwell.

134. The initial proposals in the City of Leeds received a mixed response during consultation. We received very few representations regarding the proposed Leeds Central, Leeds North East and Pudsey constituencies, while the proposed Leeds North West constituency was mostly supported. The proposed Leeds East constituency was the most contentious in the local authority. Respondents opposed the proposed division of the Gipton & Harehills ward, and the subsequent exclusion of the Harehills community from the Leeds East constituency, as well as the inclusion of the Garforth & Swillington ward. It was contended that the proposals would divide the east Leeds community and harm community cohesion.
135. The proposed Morley constituency was also opposed, with most of the representations received concerned with the proposed inclusion of the Middleton Park ward which it was suggested had poor links to the rest of the constituency, and would be more suitably included in the Leeds Central constituency.
136. The proposed Headingley constituency was also mostly opposed with the majority of representations objecting to the inclusion of the Armley ward. A smaller number of representations were also received that opposed the inclusion of the Weetwood ward.
137. Multiple counter proposals were received for some, or all, of the seven constituencies wholly within the City of Leeds. Most involved simple transfers of individual wards between constituencies to solve some of the issues raised regarding the arrangement to the west of the city. Others proposed more widespread change, particularly in an effort to avoid the division of the community of Harehills from the Leeds East constituency.

Revised proposals

138. In the City of Bradford, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the concerns regarding community cohesion and the breaking of community ties that could result from the exchange of wards between the initially proposed Bradford South and Bradford West constituencies. They therefore recommended adopting a counter proposal that would return the constituencies of Bradford East, Bradford South and Bradford West to the existing

³ 'Orphan ward' refers to a ward from one local authority, in a constituency where all the remaining wards are from at least one other local authority.

arrangement, other than the transfer of the 18H polling district from the Bradford East ward of Little Horton to the proposed Bradford South constituency. They recommended no change to the names of the three constituencies involved.

139. Elsewhere in Bradford, the Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the widespread support for retaining the proposed Keighley and Shipley constituencies changed only to realign with new local government ward boundaries, and as such recommended no change to their composition. They did, however, accept the strong support for the Keighley constituency name to be amended and therefore recommended that it be renamed Keighley and Ilkley. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's suggestions for the City of Bradford, and adopted them as our revised proposals.
140. The Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the widespread opposition to the initial proposals for the seven constituencies wholly or partially within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees, and the numerous and wide-ranging counter proposals for alternative constituencies. In particular, they noted 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 Spen Valley communities. They decided to visit the area to better understand the issues, and their observations accorded with the criticisms of the initial proposals that were heard during the consultation.
141. The Assistant Commissioners considered that an alternative arrangement for Calderdale and Kirklees boroughs which involved the split of three wards between constituencies had the most merit of any counter proposal received, or various other possible alternatives investigated by them for the area. Accordingly, they recommended to us that this counter proposal be adopted for the composition of constituencies wholly or partially within Kirklees borough, minus the Colne Valley and Huddersfield constituencies (which they recommended maintaining unchanged from the initial proposals).
142. The counter proposal recommended by the Assistant Commissioners involved a Spen Valley constituency that comprised the wards of Birstall and Birkenshaw, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Liversedge and Gomersal, and Mirfield, plus polling district DA06 of the Dalton ward (which covers the communities of Kirkheaton and Upper Heaton). A Dewsbury and Batley constituency comprised the wards of Batley East, Batley West, Dewsbury East, Dewsbury South and Dewsbury West, plus four polling districts of the Kirkburton ward, covering the north of the ward. Finally, no further change to the composition of the Ossett and Denby Dale constituency was recommended, other than the transfer of four polling districts of the Kirkburton ward to the Dewsbury and Batley constituency (as described above). The

Assistant Commissioners recommended the name of this constituency be changed to Wakefield West and Denby Dale, being persuaded by the comments that the initially proposed name was not sufficiently representative of many of the communities in the City of Wakefield part of the proposed constituency.

143. In the Borough of Calderdale, the Assistant Commissioners recommended splitting the Ryburn ward between the proposed Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies, with the three polling districts covering the town of Sowerby Bridge and the village of Triangle (MB, MC and MD) being included in the latter.
144. We agreed with the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners as described above, and proposed them in their entirety as our revised proposals for the constituencies wholly or partially within the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees.
145. Regarding the City of Wakefield, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the opposition to the cross-local authority element of the proposed Wakefield constituency. However, they considered that very few counter proposals received for this area adequately considered the consequential effects to the wider West Yorkshire arrangement of constituencies, and none were superior to the initial proposals based on the statutory factors. They also noted the limited number of representations received regarding the proposed Normanton and Hemsworth, and Pontefract and Castleford constituencies. Therefore, no change was recommended to these constituencies, or the proposed Wakefield, from the initial proposals. We agreed with the conclusions reached by the Assistant Commissioners and therefore proposed no change to the composition or names of the constituencies of Normanton and Hemsworth, Pontefract and Castleford, and Wakefield in our revised proposals.
146. In the City of Leeds, the Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the significant opposition regarding elements of the seven constituencies wholly within the local authority in the initial proposals. In particular, they noted the strong objections to the removal of the Harehills community from the proposed Leeds East constituency, and the inclusion of the Garforth & Swillington ward. The Assistant Commissioners visited the area. They acknowledged that the proposed division of the Gipton & Harehills ward did not follow any clear physical boundary, whereas the Garforth & Swillington ward is clearly separate from east Leeds. Despite this, although many representations put forward an alternative arrangement for Leeds East, the Assistant Commissioners considered that few accounted reasonably for the consequential effects on neighbouring constituencies, and none were superior to the initial proposals. Therefore, they did not recommend any change to the Leeds East constituency as initially proposed.

147. Elsewhere in Leeds, the Assistant Commissioners recommended adopting a counter proposal received for the Headingley, Leeds Central, Morley and Pudsey constituencies, although they recommended no change to the names of those constituencies as initially proposed. The counter proposal involved the transfer of the Armley ward from the proposed Headingley constituency to Pudsey, the Little London & Woodhouse ward from the proposed Leeds Central constituency to Headingley, the Farnley & Wortley ward from the proposed Pudsey constituency to Morley, and the Middleton Park ward from the proposed Morley constituency to Leeds Central. Cognisant of the small number of representations regarding the proposed Leeds North East constituency the Assistant Commissioners recommended no change to its composition or name.
148. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's suggestions for the constituencies of Headingley, Morley and Pudsey, and for no change to the proposed Leeds North East and Leeds North West constituencies, and adopted these in our revised proposals. We also agreed with the proposed exchange of the Little London & Woodhouse ward for the Middleton Park ward in the Leeds Central constituency, and adopted this in our revised proposals, although in addition to further change to this constituency, which is detailed below.
149. We considered the evidence received regarding our initial proposals breaking community ties in east Leeds was persuasive, and therefore we investigated alternative configurations. We proposed an arrangement which retained all of the Gipton & Harehills ward in the Leeds East constituency, and instead split the Temple Newsam ward between the Leeds Central and Leeds East constituencies. Therefore, our revised Leeds Central constituency consisted of the wards of: Beeston & Holbeck; Burmantofts & Richmond Hill; Hunslet & Riverside; Middleton Park; and eight polling districts from the Temple Newsam ward (covering the areas of Halton and Halton Moor). Our revised Leeds East constituency consisted of the wards of: Cross Gates & Whinmoor; Garforth & Swillington; Gipton & Harehills; Killingbeck & Seacroft; and the remaining four polling districts of Temple Newsam ward (covering the areas of Colton and Whitkirk). We acknowledged possible limitations of this arrangement, however, we considered it was the best alternative to the initial proposals that we were able to identify, and we welcomed views on the revised pattern during consultation.
150. Therefore, our revised proposals for the area of West Yorkshire were for the constituencies of: Bradford East, Bradford South, Bradford West, Calder Valley, Colne Valley, Dewsbury and Batley, Halifax, Huddersfield, Keighley and Ilkley, Leeds Central, Leeds East, Leeds North East, Leeds North West, Morley, Normanton and Hemsworth, Pontefract and Castleford, Pudsey, Shipley, Spennings Valley, Wakefield, and Wakefield West and Denby Dale.

Consultation on the revised proposals

151. The response to the revised proposals across West Yorkshire varied widely. In some local authorities the proposals were far less contentious than the initial proposals, however, elsewhere, new issues were identified.
152. Within the City of Bradford, the transfer of the 18H polling district of the Little Horton ward from Bradford East to the proposed Bradford South constituency was strongly opposed. The opposition included a petition of roughly 100 signatories contending there is no commonality between the community of Marshfield in the 18H polling district, and the rest of the proposed Bradford South constituency with which it would be grouped. We received a counter proposal which suggested an alternative ward be split between the Bradford East and Bradford South constituencies, with all of the Little Horton ward remaining in the former. The respondent suggested that the Bowling and Barkerend ward, currently within the existing Bradford East constituency be split, with the single polling district of 05F, covering part of the community of Tyersal, transferred to the proposed Bradford South constituency, and the remaining seven polling districts, covering the areas of Barkerend and East Bowling, remaining in Bradford East. They contended that this arrangement would be superior to the revised proposals as it would: avoid the division of the community of Marshfield between constituencies; unite the community of Tyersal in one constituency; and respect the major A6177 ring road (Smiddles Lane) as a constituency boundary better than either the existing arrangement or revised proposals would. This counter proposal was supported by a number of other respondents.
153. Although the transfer of the Little Horton ward polling district of 18H to the proposed Bradford South constituency in the revised proposals was overwhelmingly opposed, we did receive some representations in support of the proposal. These representations suggested the revised proposals were superior to the initial proposals in terms of retaining community ties and protecting community cohesion, and minimising the number of electors moved between constituencies.
154. Elsewhere in the City of Bradford, the revised proposals resulted in no other significant issues. A handful of respondents contended that the towns of Keighley and Ilkley should be in separate constituencies, while a smaller number opposed the addition of Ilkley to the constituency name. Both the proposed Bradford West and Shipley constituencies resulted in very few representations.

155. The revised proposals arrangement across the Borough of Kirklees was considerably less contentious than in the initial proposals, resulting in few representations and no single significant issue by number of representations. Respondents suggested the arrangement in the north of the local authority, across the proposed constituencies of Dewsbury and Batley, and Spen Valley, was an improvement on the initial proposals. In the latter, the remaining opposition tended to regard the Mirfield ward or the part of the Dalton ward proposed to be included within it. A small number of respondents from these areas contended that they look to Dewsbury or Huddersfield, and are not a part of the Spen Valley. We received a counter proposal which would transfer these areas, plus part of the Liversedge and Gomersal ward to a constituency with the town of Dewsbury, while the town of Batley would be removed and returned to a constituency with the Spen Valley communities.
156. The revised Wakefield West and Denby Dale constituency resulted in more opposition than the other proposed constituencies wholly or partially in the Borough of Kirklees. The proposed composition received a mixed response, for similar reasons as its predecessor in the initial proposals (Ossett and Denby Dale). The revised constituency name was opposed by respondents both in favour and opposition of its composition. Most pointed out that the ward of Wakefield West is not included in the proposed constituency, which could lead to confusion. The most popular alternative, by number of representations, was a return to Ossett and Denby Dale.
157. We received one counter proposal which suggested a slight amendment to the revised proposals arrangement for the Kirklees borough constituencies discussed above. The respondent suggested the Flockton area of the Kirkburton ward (polling district KB04) be transferred to the proposed Wakefield West and Denby Dale constituency, with the Howden Clough part of the Birstall and Birkenshaw ward (polling district BB03) being transferred from the proposed Spen Valley constituency to Dewsbury and Batley, in exchange. They contended that there are few ties between Flockton and either Dewsbury or Batley, while there are close links between the area of Howden Clough and Batley.
158. The proposed Colne Valley and Huddersfield constituencies, which were unchanged from the initial proposals, resulted in very few representations in the revised proposals consultation.
159. The revised arrangement within the Borough of Calderdale was considerably more popular than the initial proposals. The proposed Calder Valley constituency was strongly supported, almost entirely due to the retention of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward, which was transferred to a cross-local authority boundary constituency with the town of Batley in the initial proposals.

The proposed Halifax constituency garnered very few representations, with only two opposing the proposed split of the Ryburn ward. These representations contended that this would divide the village of Triangle between constituencies.

160. The two proposed constituencies wholly within the City of Wakefield were mostly opposed during the consultation on the revised proposals. Respondents opposed the separation of the towns of Altofts and Normanton into separate constituencies, with the latter linked with Hemsworth and other areas in the south of the local authority with which it was suggested it has few ties. We received one counter proposal which sought to retain Altofts and Normanton in the same constituency, along with the town of Castleford, while the towns of Hemsworth and Pontefract would be combined in a second constituency.
161. The composition of the proposed Pontefract and Castleford constituency garnered few representations, however, there were a number of suggestions to acknowledge the town of Knottingley in the constituency name. Respondents contended that the constituency contains three distinct towns which should all be acknowledged, and there is precedent for a three place-name constituency in the area due to the existing constituency name of Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford.
162. The inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Rothwell in the Wakefield constituency continued to be opposed, although in less numbers than at previous stages of consultation. A small number of representations contended that Rothwell should be included in the constituency name to acknowledge its cross-local authority boundary nature.
163. The revised proposals for the constituencies wholly within the City of Leeds received a mixture of support and opposition during the consultation period. The proposed split of the Temple Newsam ward between the proposed Leeds Central and Leeds East constituencies was very strongly opposed. Respondents contended that the revised proposals would sever ties between the Halton area and the rest of the Temple Newsam ward, as well as the wider Leeds East constituency, while transferring it to a Leeds Central constituency with which it has few ties. Representations also stated that the ward split was arbitrary and divided residential areas, particularly around the Templegates estate. In contrast, the revised Leeds East constituency was mostly supported for retaining all of the Gipton & Harehills ward within it. Many respondents stated that although the Leeds East composition is still not ideal, it is a vast improvement on the initial proposals.
164. We received a counter proposal which proposed, rather than splitting the Temple Newsam ward, an alternative split (to our initial proposals) of the Gipton

& Harehills ward between the Leeds Central and Leeds East constituencies. It proposed the ward be split using a different grouping of polling districts to that in the initial proposals: four polling districts in the east of the ward would remain in the proposed Leeds East constituency (GHA, GHB, GHD and GHI), while the remaining seven polling districts would be transferred to the proposed Leeds Central constituency. Those in support of this counter proposal contended that the resulting split of the ward was more logical than both the initially proposed split of the Gipton & Harehills ward, and the split of the Temple Newsam ward in the revised proposals. In particular, they suggested that Oak Tree Drive, which would form part of the constituency boundary in the counter proposal, is a distinct and well-known boundary between north and south Gipton. One representation went on to assert that the counter proposal is superior to the revised proposal arrangement due to the close ties between Harehills and the Leeds Central ward of Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, as well as it matching more closely how the wards are grouped into inner and outer areas by both the City of Leeds local authority and West Yorkshire Police.

165. Elsewhere in the City of Leeds, the revised compositions of the proposed Morley and Pudsey constituencies were mostly opposed, although not in substantial numbers. The inclusion of the Farnley & Wortley ward in the proposed Morley constituency was opposed by respondents who stated they have very few links with the town of Morley, and should instead remain in a constituency with the ward of Armley to their north. Similar arguments were made by respondents in the Armley ward regarding their inclusion in a constituency with the town of Pudsey, although in less numbers.
166. Few representations were received in the revised proposals consultation regarding the proposed constituencies of Headingley, Leeds North East and Leeds North West - with the latter being mostly supported.
167. Two counter proposals were received which suggested substantial change to the revised proposals arrangement across the City of Leeds. This included one which would result in Leeds North West, Leeds West and Pudsey constituencies similar to the existing, but with an additional ward split between Leeds West and Pudsey. The Morley constituency would be the same as in the initial proposals, through the inclusion of the Middleton Park ward.
168. Many representations were received regarding the proposed naming of one or more of the proposed constituencies in the City of Leeds. The greatest matter regarding a constituency name, by number of representations, was for the proposed Pudsey constituency to be renamed Leeds West and Pudsey. Respondents contended that the existing name would not be representative of the newly included wards of Armley and Bramley & Stanningley which have closer ties to the city centre. Similar arguments were received regarding the

existing name of Morley not being representative of all of the revised constituency, although in less numbers than those received regarding the proposed Pudsey constituency. There was also no single most popular alternative name suggestion for the Morley constituency, by number of representations.

169. Some representations were received regarding the proposed Headingley and Leeds Central constituency names due to the latter no longer containing much of the city centre of Leeds, following the transfer of the Little London & Woodhouse ward between these constituencies in the revised proposals. Respondents contended that the proposed Headingley constituency should acknowledge Leeds in the name, with Leeds North West being the most popular alternative name by number of representations. Such a change would need to be accompanied by a name change to the proposed Leeds North West constituency, which is discussed below. Meanwhile, the most popular alternative name by number of representations for the proposed Leeds Central constituency was Leeds South. Respondents contended that, not only did the proposed constituency no longer contain most of the city centre, many of the suburbs contained within it identified as 'south Leeds'.
170. In contrast to the proposed Headingley constituency, respondents contended that it would be anomalous for the Leeds North West constituency to have a Leeds suffix. Most respondents suggested an alternative name that included one or more of the major towns within the constituency: Guiseley, Horsforth, Otley and Yeadon, but no single name was most popular within the representations. Some alternatives received included Horsforth and Wharfedale, Horsforth and Otley, Guiseley and Otley, and Aireborough and Wharfedale.

Final recommendations

171. Having considered the evidence received regarding the revised proposals across West Yorkshire, we recommend a slight amendment to two constituencies, and a name change to a further seven.
172. In the City of Bradford, we acknowledge the strong opposition to the transfer of the Little Horton polling district 18H containing part of the Marshfield community to the proposed Bradford South constituency. We note the representations and petition contending that this community has little in common with the rest of the constituency in which it would be included and accept that the counter proposal which would instead transfer the 05F polling district of the Bowling and Barkerend ward may be superior. We decided to visit the area to compare the different options 'on the ground'.

173. We observed that the 18H polling district of the Little Horton ward is isolated from the Wibsey ward of the existing Bradford South constituency by the A6177 road (Smiddles Lane), which we considered to be a fairly busy and substantial road. We then observed the boundary between the Bowling and Barkerend and Tong wards (of the existing Bradford East and Bradford South constituencies, respectively). Here we considered the boundary between the two wards (Dick Lane) to be less substantial, and it appeared that the community of Tyersal spread across both sides of the boundary. Finally, we observed the boundary of the proposed ward split. We noted the split passes through mostly industrial areas, which make up the majority of the 05F polling district. The large majority of the housing is east of the A6177 road, somewhat separated from the rest of the Bowling and Barkerend ward by industrial land. We considered that this likely supports the suggestion that the part of Tyersal within the 05F polling district has links with the community on the other side of Dick Lane, in the Tong ward.
174. Considering our observations and the evidence received during consultation, we are persuaded of the limitations of our revised proposals for the Bradford East and Bradford South constituencies. We consider that the counter proposal to instead transfer polling district 05F of the Bowling and Barkerend ward to the proposed Bradford South constituency, while retaining all of the Little Horton ward in Bradford East, better reflects the statutory factors. Therefore, we propose this arrangement for the constituencies of Bradford East and Bradford South in our final recommendations.
175. Elsewhere in the City of Bradford, we make no further changes to the revised proposals in our final recommendations. We acknowledge a small amount of opposition to the grouping of the towns of Keighley and Ilkley in the same constituency. However, we note that the composition of this constituency has only been amended from the existing to align with new local government ward boundaries, and it was mostly supported across previous consultation stages. We also note that the opposition to the addition of Ilkley to the constituency name was greatly outweighed by representations in favour of such a change received in the initial proposals consultation stage. We note very few representations received regarding the proposed Bradford West or Shipley constituencies.
176. In the Borough of Calderdale we note the almost universal support for the revised proposals, and therefore retain the proposed Calder Valley and Halifax constituencies unchanged in our final recommendations.
177. We also acknowledge that the revised proposals arrangement for the Borough of Kirklees is more popular than the initial proposals were. We note some minor opposition to elements of the proposed Dewsbury and Batley, and Spen Valley

constituencies, as well as a mixed response to the composition of the proposed Wakefield West and Denby Dale constituency, as heard at previous consultation stages. Despite this, we are not persuaded to change the composition of the revised proposals in this area. We do not consider that the counter proposals received, which would involve more ward splits, better reflect the statutory factors overall than compared to the revised proposals. Therefore, we make no change to the proposed Dewsbury and Batley, and Spen Valley constituencies in our final recommendations, and no change to the composition of the proposed Wakefield West and Denby Dale. However, we have been persuaded to change the name of the latter constituency, and adopt a return to Ossett and Denby Dale in the final recommendations. This acknowledges the largest settlement by population in the City of Wakefield part of the constituency, and was the most popular alternative, by number of representations, across the consultation periods. We note very few representations regarding the proposed Colne Valley and Huddersfield constituencies, and retain them unchanged in our final recommendations.

178. We acknowledge the continued opposition to the inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Rothwell in the proposed Wakefield constituency, which has been contentious throughout the review process. However, we do not consider that we have received any compelling new evidence to persuade us to change the arrangement in the final recommendations. We are cognisant that changing the cross-local authority arrangement between the cities of Leeds and Wakefield would likely result in wide-scale change across the sub-region, which we consider would result in an inferior proposal overall, with respect to the statutory factors. This was the case regarding the counter proposal we received which involved an alternative cross-local authority boundary arrangement between Leeds and Wakefield, as well as an alternative arrangement between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. Therefore, we make no change to the composition of the proposed Wakefield constituency in the final recommendations. Despite this, we have been persuaded by respondents who argued it would be appropriate to include Rothwell in the constituency name, and therefore adopt the name of Wakefield and Rothwell in the final recommendations. We consider that this appropriately acknowledges the cross-local authority element of the proposed constituency.
179. Elsewhere in the City of Wakefield, we note that the proposed Normanton and Hemsworth, and Pontefract and Castleford constituencies were mostly opposed. Despite this, we have not been persuaded to change the composition of these constituencies, and still consider that the revised proposals are the superior arrangement in the area. We consider that, although a counter proposal we received would retain the towns of Altofts and Normanton in the same constituency, the arrangement would likely break similarly strong community ties elsewhere in the local authority, and would also result in more

extensive change from the existing arrangement. Despite making no change to the composition of the proposed Normanton and Hemsworth, and Pontefract and Castleford constituencies, we have been persuaded by the evidence regarding acknowledging the town of Knottingley in the name of the latter. Therefore we adopt the name Pontefract, Castleford and Knottingley in our final recommendations.

180. In the City of Leeds, we acknowledged the strong opposition to the proposed split of the Temple Newsam ward between the Leeds Central and Leeds East constituencies. We also noted the counter proposal received which would involve splitting the Gipton & Harehills ward instead, following a more clear boundary than that used in the initial proposals, according to respondents. We decided to visit the area to observe the boundaries of the proposed ward splits and to consider the various arguments made by respondents in regard to both options.
181. Having visited both the Gipton & Harehills and Temple Newsam wards, we recognised the limitations involved in splitting either in our final recommendations. We noted both would likely break community ties, and considered it to be a very finely balanced decision. Having considered all the representations received during all consultations, and our observations from visiting the area, we are persuaded with the evidence received regarding community ties within the Gipton & Harehills ward, and between Harehills and the wider east Leeds community. We concluded that the revised proposals involving the split of the Temple Newsam would result in a pattern of constituencies that better reflected the statutory factors overall. Therefore, we have decided to make no change to the composition of the Leeds Central and Leeds East constituencies in our final recommendations.
182. Elsewhere in the City of Leeds, we acknowledge some opposition to the proposed Morley and Pudsey constituencies, but note the arrangement is less contentious than in the initial proposals. We appreciate the merit of elements of the counter proposal which would return the west of the City of Leeds authority to an arrangement similar to the existing. However, we consider that this arrangement would reintroduce some of the issues identified in the initial proposals, as well as some limitations of the existing arrangement, such as the division of the community of Yeadon between constituencies. We also consider that the additional split of the Calverley & Farsley ward would likely break community ties. Therefore, on balance, we consider the revised proposals to be the superior arrangement for the constituencies of Morley and Pudsey, and make no changes to their composition in the final recommendations.
183. We note few representations regarding the proposed composition of the Headingley, Leeds North East or Leeds North West constituencies, and

therefore retain the arrangement of these constituencies in the final recommendations.

184. Despite making no change to the composition of the revised proposals in the City of Leeds, we acknowledge the opposition regarding many of the proposed constituency names. We were sympathetic to many of the arguments for alternative names, but noted that there was little consensus on what constituency names best reflected the configuration of constituencies. However, we recognised that, in a lot of cases, representations considered that reflecting Leeds in the constituency name was important. We therefore reflected on our proposed constituency names. We have decided to make no changes to the proposed Leeds East, Leeds North East and Leeds North West constituency names. We adopt the name Leeds Central and Headingley for the Headingley constituency of the revised proposals, to acknowledge that it contains most of the city centre, within the Little London & Woodhouse ward. In turn, we adopt the name Leeds South for the Leeds Central constituency of the revised proposals to reflect that most of this constituency lies to the south of the centre of the City of Leeds. Finally, we change the names of the proposed Morley and Pudsey constituencies to Leeds South West and Morley, and Leeds West and Pudsey, respectively. We consider that these constituency names acknowledge the areas of these constituencies which likely identify more closely with the city centre of Leeds itself, while still recognising the historically independent towns which feature in the existing constituency names.
185. Therefore, our final recommendations in West Yorkshire are for constituencies of: Bradford East; Bradford South; Bradford West; Calder Valley; Colne Valley; Dewsbury and Batley; Halifax; Huddersfield; Keighley and Ilkley; Leeds East; Leeds North East; Leeds North West; Leeds South; Leeds South West and Morley; Leeds West and Pudsey; Normanton and Hemsworth; Ossett and Denby Dale; Pontefract, Castleford and Knottingley; Shipley; Spen Valley; and Wakefield and Rothwell. The areas contained by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the Eastern region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the North West region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree to the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 2468 responses specific to the Eastern region in this phase, giving a total of 7824 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: The revised sub-regions of Norfolk with Suffolk, and Essex stand-alone have been supported by all qualifying political parties (if reluctantly by the Green Party). The Conservative Party supports all but four of the revised constituency boundaries (minor change between Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire, and between Southend Central and Leigh, and Rochford and Southend East), and propose three alternate names (North West Essex, Maldon and South Chelmsford, and Southern Central Bedfordshire). The Green Party proposes significantly more change in their counter proposal, moving 21 wards affecting 13 constituencies across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. The Labour Party supports all but six of the revised constituencies (swapping key wards around between Colchester,

Harwich and North Essex, and Witham; and similarly between Norwich North, Norwich South, and Broadland and Fakenham). The Liberal Democrats support all but two of the revised constituencies (exchanging two wards between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire: Responses in relation to Bedford are mostly positive and oppose any counter proposal that seeks to include the Kempston Rural ward. Some calls to change the name of the Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency. Some continuing opposition to Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency, but without any new evidence. Otherwise generally low response rate and no stand out issues for the county.

Very few representations received regarding the Hertfordshire constituencies, and no significant new issues. Some continuing opposition to the inclusion of the Northaw & Cuffley ward in the Hertsmere constituency. Overwhelming support for the name of South West Hertfordshire. Continuing calls for the Jersey Farm area of the Sandridge ward to be included in St Albans, although no new evidence or counter proposals. Little opposition to the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency, though some new arguments for the constituency to be renamed North West Hertfordshire.

Cambridgeshire: Some continuing opposition to proposals between Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire, though focus of this is now counter proposal for a ward swap between the two, to include Fletton & Woodston in Peterborough. North West Cambridgeshire otherwise largely supported, though a range of alternate names put forward.

Significant number of responses in opposition to the St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire constituency, though much of this includes a range of preferred alternate names. Mix of opposition and support for which wards have been included in Cambridge, but no real new evidence or arguments. Some calls for name changes for proposed East Cambridgeshire and North East Cambridgeshire.

Norfolk and Suffolk: Around 100 responses relating to configuration of wards between Broadland and Fakenham, and two Norwich constituencies. Most of the opposition to the South Norfolk constituency relates to the cross-county boundary Waveney Valley constituency, with the rest of the county otherwise seeing very few responses.

Some significant opposition to the cross-county boundary Waveney Valley constituency, claiming too large geographically, lack of ties, and consequential breaking of some existing ties. Generally low response level across the remainder of Suffolk, with particular support for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich.

Essex: Approximately 700 representations received about Colchester, Harwich and North Essex, and Witham constituencies - mostly in opposition, although nearly 200 in support. Key issue remains which wards (or part thereof) should be included, as not even all areas of built up Colchester can be included numerically. Various counter proposals putting forward different configuration of wards, as well as some alternate names for Harwich and North Essex, and Witham.

Few representations were received regarding the Thurrock, South Basildon and East Thurrock, Basildon and Billericay, Braintree, Brentwood and Ongar, Rayleigh and Wickford, Chelmsford, Maldon, Epping Forest, Harlow, Castle Point, and Saffron Walden constituencies, though there are some name change suggestions.

Around 90 representations opposed the transfer of two inland wards to Clacton from Harwich and North Essex, on the basis these would not be a suitable inclusion in a coastal constituency. One counter-proposal splits The Oakleys and Wix ward.

Around 400 representations have been received with regard to the Southend Central and Leigh, and Rochford and Southend East constituencies with a balance of support and opposition. Those in support agree that the A127 is a definitive boundary between constituencies, the shapes are logical, and support the retention of the core city centre wards together in one constituency. Those opposed mainly argue for the minimal change alternative, and claim revised proposals would break ties of Eastwood Park and St Laurence wards to Leigh.

Annex A - Eastern region

1. The Eastern region currently has 58 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 25 have electorates within the permitted range. The electorates of seven constituencies currently fall below the range, while the electorates of 26 are above. Our proposals increase the number of constituencies in the region by three, to 61.

2. The Eastern region comprises the the three unitary authority areas of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton; the county council areas of Cambridgeshire, and the unitary authority area of Peterborough; the county council area of Essex, and the unitary authority areas of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock; and the county council areas of Hertfordshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk.

3. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the Eastern region — Jane Kilgannon and David Brown QFSM — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included charring public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:

- Cambridge: 17-18 March 2022
- Southend: 21-22 March 2022
- Ipswich: 23-25 March 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the Eastern region of 4,482,126 results in it being entitled to 61 constituencies, an increase of three. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.

5. We noted that Cambridgeshire's electorate of 591,247 results in a mathematical entitlement to 8.06 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate the county eight constituencies, an increase of one and treated it as a sub-region. Similarly, we noted that the electorate of Norfolk of 675,778 results in a mathematical entitlement of 9.21 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate nine constituencies to Norfolk, the same as the existing allocation, and treat it as a sub-region.

6. The combined electorate of the unitary authorities in Bedfordshire is 467,322, which results in the area being mathematically entitled to 6.37 constituencies, meaning it is not possible to consider Bedfordshire as a standalone sub-region. We therefore considered how it could be combined with a neighbouring county to form a sub-region. Hertfordshire has an electorate of 841,457, resulting in a mathematical entitlement of 11.47 constituencies. While our investigations noted that it was possible to consider Hertfordshire as its own sub-region, in practical terms it would be very challenging to formulate a pattern of constituencies that best reflected the statutory factors. We therefore proposed combining Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire into one sub-region in our initial proposals, allocating it 18 constituencies, an increase of one.

7. Essex has an electorate of 1,348,788, resulting in a mathematical entitlement to 18.38 constituencies, meaning Essex could be considered as a sub-region on its own. We identified, however, that Suffolk, with an electorate of 557,535 had a mathematical entitlement to 7.60 constituencies, which meant it could not form a standalone sub-region. In our initial proposals we therefore decided to combine Essex and Suffolk into one sub-region, to which we allocated 26 constituencies, an increase of one.

8. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. We did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions with alternative arrangements suggested as:

- a sub-region which comprised the areas of Norfolk and Suffolk, resulting in Essex as a standalone sub-region
- a single sub-region which comprised all of Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk.

9. In formulating our revised proposals we considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose an alternative sub-region comprising all of Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, particularly as it was unnecessary to propose a sub-region that comprised three counties. However, we were persuaded by the evidence received to adopt an alternative sub-region of Norfolk and Suffolk, resulting in Essex forming a standalone sub-region. We considered this configuration of sub-regions allowed for improvements to the initial proposals in respect of the statutory factors.

10. In response to our revised proposals, we received some suggestions that we should revert to the sub-regions of the initial proposals. However, we consider that we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we adopted in our revised proposals. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:

- Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

- Cambridgeshire
- Essex
- Norfolk and Suffolk

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

Bedfordshire

Initial proposals

11. Of the six existing constituencies in Bedfordshire, only Bedford was within the permitted electorate range. Two constituencies (Luton North and Luton South) fell below the range and three (Mid Bedfordshire, North East Bedfordshire and South West Bedfordshire) were above. In formulating our initial proposals we proposed changes to all the existing constituencies in Bedfordshire. We proposed relatively minor modifications to the Bedford constituency in order to realign the constituency boundary with new local government ward boundaries. We included the Stopsley ward in our proposed Luton North constituency and the Eaton Bray ward in the Luton South constituency, from the existing South West Bedfordshire constituency. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the Stopsley ward had no direct road links to the Luton North constituency, as these were just outside of the constituency boundary. We proposed some further changes to the existing South West Bedfordshire constituency to realign the boundaries with new local government wards, and also renamed the constituency Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard to reflect the main population centres in the constituency.

12. In the north of the county, we proposed a reconfiguration to the existing North East Bedfordshire constituency, so it again realigned with new local government wards and included the Kempston Rural ward. We also proposed this constituency be renamed North Bedfordshire, as we considered this name was more appropriate for the constituency. To bring the Mid Bedfordshire constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the wards of Arlesey and Shefford be included in our cross-county Hitchin constituency (detailed further in the Hertfordshire section of this report). The only other change we proposed to the Mid Bedfordshire constituency was to realign the constituency boundary with new local government wards.

Consultation on the initial proposals

13. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals we received some support for our pattern of constituencies in Bedfordshire, particularly our proposed Mid Bedfordshire constituency, which was largely uncontentious. The majority of representations in the county were in regard to our proposed Luton North, Luton South and South Bedfordshire, and Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard

constituencies. Respondents opposed the Stopsley ward being included in the Luton North constituency, due to the lack of direct road access to the rest of the constituency and the geography of Bradgers Hill dividing the areas. We also received opposition to the inclusion of the Eaton Bray ward in the Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency, with respondents considering the area had shared community ties with Dunstable.

14. We received various counter proposals which sought to reconfigure our proposed constituencies of Luton North, Luton South and South Bedfordshire, and Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. One of the counter proposals was for the return of the Stopsley ward to Luton South, with Eaton Bray, along with the Caddinton ward being included in a revised South West Bedfordshire constituency, and wards that formed the town of Houghton Regis (Houghton Hall, Tithe Farm, and Parkside) to be included in the Luton North constituency. We received variations on this counter proposal, for example, that only the two wards of Tithe Farm and Parkside be included in the Luton North constituency. We also received some representations commenting on the name of our proposed Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency. These largely proposed that the constituency should only be named Luton South.

15. In the north of the county, we received a counter-proposal that suggested the Kempston Rural ward be included in the Bedford constituency, which would retain all the named Kempston wards in the same constituency. However, we received a number of representations in opposition to this counter proposal, citing that the Kempston Rural ward was different in character to Bedford and was more similar to the wards of the more rural North Bedfordshire constituency. We also received some representations suggesting that the Bedford constituency be renamed Bedford and Kempston.

Revised proposals

16. In light of the representations received our Assistant Commissioners investigated the various counter-proposals. Most of the counter-proposals received sought to retain the Stopsley ward in the Luton South constituency and the Eaton Bray ward in the South West Bedfordshire constituency, which our Assistant Commissioners considered had merit. However, these changes required consequential amendments to constituencies, particularly to our proposed Luton North, and Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituencies. They were not persuaded by the counter proposal to transfer the Tithe Farm and Parkside wards to the Luton North constituency, as they considered this would divide the town of Houghton Regis. They were also not persuaded by the counter proposal to transfer the Houghton Hall, Tithe Farm and Parkside wards to the Luton North constituency, as they considered doing so would not reflect the shared community ties between Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

17. As part of their investigations, our Assistant Commissioners also identified that it was possible to include the Stopsley ward in the Luton South constituency and Eaton Bray in South West Bedfordshire by splitting the Dunstable-Icknield ward, with the eastern part being included in the Luton North constituency and the western part in the Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency. While they considered this would reflect the community evidence received in terms of Stopsley and Eaton Bray, they were of the view that this alternative configuration would divide the town of Dunstable between constituencies.

18. Having investigated the alternatives and visited the area to observe the different configurations of constituencies, our Assistant Commissioners recommended to us that there be no changes to the Luton North, Luton South and South Bedfordshire, and Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituencies. They considered that the alternative configurations would disrupt local ties and result in constituencies with far greater change to the existing pattern of constituencies. Our Assistant Commissioners were also not persuaded to rename the Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency as Luton South, as they considered that the initially proposed name reflected that the constituency was formed of wards from two different local authorities. Having considered the evidence and analysis of our Assistant Commissioners, we agreed with them that no changes to the initially proposed constituencies of Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, Luton North, and Luton South and South Bedfordshire would best reflect the statutory factors.

19. Our Assistant Commissioners also investigated the counter proposal that sought to include the Kempston Rural ward in the Bedford constituency. They were persuaded by the evidence received suggesting this ward did not have shared community ties with Bedford, particularly as areas such as Turvey would be quite geographically distant from the constituency. They were also not persuaded to rename the Bedford constituency Bedford and Kempston, as they considered the existing constituency name was appropriate. They therefore recommended no changes to the initially proposed constituencies of Bedford and North Bedfordshire. We agreed with them.

20. Our revised proposals for Bedfordshire were therefore identical to the pattern of constituencies we proposed for our initial proposals.

Consultation on revised proposals

21. We received relatively few representations that commented on the proposed pattern of constituencies in the sub-region. Our proposed constituencies of Luton North, Mid Bedfordshire and North Bedfordshire received little comment, although those respondents commenting on the constituencies were generally in opposition.

22. Our proposed Bedford constituency was largely supported, with many respondents stating that to not include the Kempston Rural ward in the constituency was positive.

23. Our proposed Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency was mainly opposed, with respondents again concerned that the configuration of this constituency broke community ties. We received few comments on the proposed names of constituencies, although we received requests to rename our proposed Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency as Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable. An alternative was also received that proposed renaming the constituency Southern Central Bedfordshire.

Final recommendations

24. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries or names of any of our proposed constituencies in Bedfordshire. We do not consider that any further evidence or argument has been provided that might justify changing the constitution of our revised constituencies. Our final recommendations in this sub-region covering Bedfordshire are therefore for constituencies of: **Bedford; Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard; Luton North; Luton South and South Bedfordshire; Mid Bedfordshire; and North Bedfordshire**. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Hertfordshire

Initial proposals

25. Of the existing 11 constituencies in Hertfordshire, eight are within the permitted electorate range and three (Hertford and Stortford, South West Hertfordshire, and Watford) above it.

26. We proposed a cross-county boundary Hitchin constituency that combined the town of Hitchin with three Central Bedfordshire unitary authority wards (Stotfold and Langford, Arlesey, and Shefford). We considered these areas to have established road links and local ties with Hitchin. The existing constituencies of North East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield were unchanged in our proposals, except to realign the constituency boundaries with new local government ward boundaries. Relatively minor change was proposed to the existing Hertford and Stortford constituency, with the three wards of Stanstead Abbots, Great Amwell, and Hertford Heath transferring to the Broxbourne constituency. The only other change to the Broxbourne constituency was that it would no longer include the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield ward of Northaw and Cuffley, which we proposed be included in the Hertsmere constituency.

27. We considered that a substantial reconfiguration of the existing South West Hertfordshire constituency was necessary to limit further change elsewhere in the county. We therefore proposed a constituency named Harpenden and

Berkhamsted, which had an east–west configuration from Tring, through Berkhamsted, to Harpenden, as opposed to the north-south axis of the existing constituency. It would also include the two Borough of Dacorum wards of Watling and Ashridge.

28. The transfer of the Watling and Ashridge wards meant that, to bring the Hemel Hempstead constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the inclusion of the Bovington, Flaunden and Chipperfield ward from the existing South West Hertfordshire constituency. We also proposed that Hemel Hempstead should no longer include the Kings Langley ward, which we included in our proposed Three Rivers constituency. While this meant the Kings Langley ward would be the only Borough of Dacorum ward in a constituency otherwise wholly coterminous with Three Rivers district, it was necessary in order to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range, and united the village of Kings Langley - including the train station - in the same constituency.

29. We proposed a reconfigured Watford constituency that included no District of Three Rivers wards, but instead included the whole of the Borough of Watford, plus the Borough of Hertsmere ward of Bushey North. While this also created an orphan ward¹, it was necessary to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range. The only other change to the existing Hertsmere constituency was the inclusion of the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield ward of Northaw and Cuffley, from the existing Broxbourne constituency.

30. The existing St Albans constituency was unchanged except to realign the constituency boundaries with new local government ward boundaries.

Consultation on the initial proposals

31. Our proposed constituencies received a broadly even mix of supporting and opposing representations. We received relatively few counter proposals for alternative patterns of constituencies.

32. A significant number of representations objected to the inclusion of the Sandridge ward in the proposed Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency, from the existing Hitchin and Harpenden constituency. Many respondents considered that the ward, and in particular the Jersey Farm neighbourhood within it, should be included in the St Albans constituency, due to its close geographical proximity, shared local services, and community ties. Other representations regarding the proposed Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency were evenly divided between those supporting and opposing. Those in opposition stated that the two towns have little in common regarding local ties and transport links, and that the constituency is split into two parts by the M1 motorway. Conversely, those in support stated that

¹ We use this term to refer to a single ward of one local authority in a constituency where all other wards are from one or more other local authorities.

there are links between the towns, and that the new configuration would be no worse than the existing Hitchin and Harpenden constituency.

33. Some representations objected to the inclusion of the Northaw and Cuffley ward, in particular the village of Newgate Street, in our proposed Hertsmere constituency. The area of Newgate Street is in the existing Welwyn Hatfield constituency, but was not included in the constituency in the initial proposals, due to the realignment to new local government ward boundaries. It was argued that it should be retained in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency. However, as it was not possible to include the whole of the ward in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency without removing another ward currently in the constituency, a counter-proposal was received that proposed splitting the Northaw and Cuffley ward along the existing constituency boundary, to retain Newgate Street village in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency.

34. A number of representations received for the proposed Three Rivers constituency supported our proposed boundaries, but respondents also said that the proposed Three Rivers name was inappropriately unspecific. It was claimed 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 representations therefore proposed that the existing South West Hertfordshire name remained appropriate and should be retained. It was also noted that the constituency would not be wholly coterminous with the Borough of Three Rivers, as it would include the Borough of Dacorum ward of Kings Langley, and as such the existing name would be a more accurate name than Three Rivers, and would likely resonate more with both locals and those further afield.

35. While we received support for our proposed Hitchin constituency, two counter proposals suggested that the cross-county boundary constituency should instead include the wards that comprise the town of Biggleswade, with wards from the North Hertfordshire and East Hertfordshire local authorities. Furthermore, a number of representations said that as the proposed Hitchin constituency would cross the county boundary, both counties included should be reflected in the constituency name, with most proposing that either Stotfold, Shefford, or both be included in the name with Hitchin.

36. A number of representations were received regarding the proposed Hertford and Stortford, and Broxbourne constituencies. The majority of these were in opposition to the initial proposals, which included the three wards of Hertford Heath, Great Amwell, and Stanstead Abbots in the Broxbourne constituency, rather than with the town of Hertford as in the existing Hertford and Stortford constituency. It was suggested by respondents that the close proximity of Hertford Heath to the town, as well as shared amenities such as education services, demonstrated the need for the two areas to be included in the same constituency.

37. The initial proposals for the remainder of the constituencies in Hertfordshire - North East Hertfordshire, Stevenage, Watford, and Hemel Hempstead - did not elicit a large number of representations, and were largely uncontroversial and supported.

Revised proposals

38. While there had been some contentious areas in the county, most of them could not be readily addressed, either due to the electorate figures not allowing for it, or because they would necessitate far-reaching consequential changes to constituencies across other areas of the county where the initial proposals were supported.

39. While our Assistant Commissioners acknowledged the evidence of the links of the Sandridge ward with St Albans, including either the whole of the ward in the St Albans constituency, or only the polling district containing Jersey Farm, would result in the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency being below the permitted electorate range. This would then require significant consequential changes elsewhere in the county. Our Assistant Commissioners did not propose any changes to the proposed St Albans constituency, and we agreed with them for these reasons.

40. While our Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that some aspects of the proposed Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency are not ideal, they also noted that there was some support. The electorate figures are so tight in this area that any attempt to reconfigure the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency would have consequential knock-on effects across the county. They therefore recommended no change to the constituency, and we agreed.

41. With regard to the Northaw and Cuffley ward, we did not consider that the rationale for splitting this ward was persuasive; in particular we considered dividing the ward would not provide other benefits to the pattern of constituencies in the county. We therefore proposed no revisions to the proposed Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere constituencies.

42. We noted the evidence about the name of our proposed Three Rivers constituency. We agreed with our Assistant Commissioners that the evidence and arguments put forward were suitably compelling, and as such we proposed that the name of the constituency should revert to South West Hertfordshire as part of our revised proposals.

43. With regard to our proposed Hitchin constituency, we noted the counter proposals that the cross-county boundary constituency should instead include the wards that comprise the town of Biggleswade, with wards from the North Hertfordshire and East Hertfordshire local authorities. However, we considered that these counter proposals required significant consequential changes to proposed

constituencies that had been generally well supported in consultation. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that retaining the proposed name of Hitchin was preferable, as they considered both Stotfold and Shefford too small to be referenced 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 likely see the Hertfordshire towns of Hitchin and Letchworth as their biggest local towns. They therefore considered that the name Hitchin alone is suitably representative. We agreed and proposed no change.

44. Although we acknowledged the opposition to the proposed transfer of the three wards of Hertford Heath, Great Amwell, and Stanstead Abbots to the proposed Broxbourne constituency, due to the tight electorate figures in this area, we noted that any attempt to retain these wards in the Hertford and Stortford constituency would require a radical reconfiguration across a number of constituencies. For example, a counter proposal retained these three wards in a constituency with the town of Hertford, but only by splitting the towns of Hertford and Bishop's Stortford into two different constituencies, with changes required to constituencies across much of Hertfordshire. We considered that such a reconfiguration in this area was not warranted, and we proposed no change to the Hertford and Stortford, or Broxbourne constituencies.

45. As the initial proposals for the remainder of the constituencies in Hertfordshire North East Hertfordshire, Stevenage, Watford, and Hemel Hempstead did not elicit a large number of representations, and were largely uncontentious, we proposed no further alterations to these constituencies.

Consultation on the revised proposals

46. Relatively few representations were received for the constituencies of Hitchin, North East Hertfordshire, Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield, Hertford and Stortford, Hemel Hempstead, Watford and South West Hertfordshire, and those that were received were generally in support with there being no significant new issues.

47. There remained some opposition to the inclusion of the Northaw and Cuffley ward in the Hertsmere constituency, but there was overwhelming support for the name of the proposed Three Rivers constituency to return to the name South West Hertfordshire

48. There continued to be significant opposition to the St Albans constituency, mostly with renewed calls for the Jersey Farm area to be included in St Albans, although no significant new evidence or counter proposals were received. There was very little opposition to the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency, with some representations saying our proposals were better than the existing Hitchin and Harpenden constituency. One representation, however, suggested including the Kimpton ward in Harpenden and Berkhamsted, to allow Sandridge to be

included in St Albans, despite this creating an orphan ward. There were some new arguments for the constituency to be renamed North West Hertfordshire. Approximately 20 representations were received in opposition to the Broxbourne constituency, with around ten received that were still in opposition to the proposed Hertsmere constituency, but no new significant issues were raised in the representations. Generally, apart from the issue of the Sandridge ward and Jersey Farm area, the revised proposals generated relatively little opposition.

Final recommendations

49. We noted the overwhelming support for the name of the proposed Three Rivers constituency to return to the name South West Hertfordshire

50. We noted that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives. However, we also noted that in general, our revised proposals had generated relatively little opposition. There remained some opposition to the inclusion of the Northaw and Cuffley ward in the Hertsmere constituency, and more notably, opposition to our proposals to include the Sandridge ward in the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency. Much of this opposition continued to come from the Jersey Farm area, in particular. We considered again the representation suggesting the inclusion of the Kimpton ward in Harpenden and Berkhamsted, to allow Sandridge to be included in St Albans, although this would create an orphan ward. However, while we acknowledge the evidence of the links of the Sandridge ward with St Albans, to include either the whole or part of the ward in the St Albans constituency would have significant knock-on effects elsewhere in Hertfordshire. There was otherwise very little opposition to the Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency. However, there were some new arguments for the constituency to be renamed North West Hertfordshire.

51. Having considered all the evidence received and the general level of support that our proposals had garnered, we are not persuaded to modify our revised proposals in the county. We consider that a modification to the St Albans, and Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituencies would not provide for a pattern of constituencies in other parts of the county that best reflected the statutory criteria.

52. Our final recommendations for Hertfordshire are therefore for constituencies of: **Broxbourne; Harpenden and Berkhamsted; Hemel Hempstead; Hertford and Stortford; Hertsmere; Hitchin; North East Hertfordshire; South West Hertfordshire; St Albans; Stevenage; Watford; and Welwyn Hatfield.** The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Cambridgeshire

Initial proposals

53. Of the seven existing constituencies in Cambridgeshire, only Peterborough was within the permitted electorate range. The remaining six constituencies were all above the range. Therefore, as set out earlier in our report, Cambridgeshire was allocated eight constituencies in formulating the initial proposals, which largely resulted in significant changes to the existing pattern of constituencies.

54. In formulating our initial proposals, we retained the existing Peterborough constituency broadly unchanged, proposing the boundary be realigned with new local government wards. We identified when formulating our initial proposals that it was possible to configure the Peterborough constituency in a different manner, albeit significantly altered from the existing constituency and sought views on this alternative during consultation on our initial proposals.

55. We proposed a North East Cambridge constituency, that would be coterminous with the District of Fenland, no longer including the District of East Cambridgeshire wards of Downham Villages, Littleport and Sutton. We proposed that these three wards be included in a reconfigured East Cambridgeshire constituency, along with all the other District of East Cambridgeshire wards, and the two District of South Cambridgeshire wards of Cottenham, and Milton and Waterbeach.

56. In order to bring the Cambridge constituency within the permitted range, we proposed that the City of Cambridge ward of Cherry Hinton be included in the South Cambridgeshire constituency, to join the City of Cambridge ward of Queen Edith's already in the latter constituency. In formulating our initial proposals, we identified that either ward of Cherry Hinton or Trumpington could be included in the South Cambridgeshire constituency and specifically sought views on this possible alternative during the consultation on the initial proposals.

57. We proposed further changes to the South Cambridgeshire constituency, namely to include the District of South Cambridgeshire wards of Balsham, Fen Ditton and Fulbourn, and Linton in the constituency, and transferred the eight northern wards of the District to our proposed St Neots constituency, which was also proposed to take the District of Huntingdon wards covering the town of St Neots and village of Fenstanton from the existing Huntingdon constituency. In turn, we proposed transferring the wards of Holywell-cum-Needlingworth, Sawtry, Somersham and Warboys from the existing North East Cambridgeshire constituency into our proposed Huntingdon constituency, thereby bringing both the Huntingdon and North East Cambridgeshire constituencies within the permitted electorate range.

Consultation on the initial proposals

58. We received a significant number of representations commenting on our initial proposals for Cambridgeshire. The majority of these were in regard to our proposed Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire constituencies. We received a counter proposal that suggested these two constituencies be reconfigured to form Peterborough North and Peterborough South constituencies. A large number of representations were received in support of this counter proposal, with respondents citing that a constituency crossing the River Nene was not an issue. However, we also received a significant number of representations in opposition to this counter-proposal, with respondents saying that they considered this counter proposal broke local ties in the City of Peterborough and that the River Nene provided an easily identifiable boundary. We received some other counter proposals for the Peterborough area, which generally sought to configure a more compact and urban focused Peterborough constituency.

59. We received some other representations commenting on our proposed North West Cambridgeshire constituency. Some of these considered the constituency should be renamed to include a reference to the City of Peterborough, given the constituency included a number of electors from the City. We also received some representations that considered our proposed North West Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon boundary would break close ties between 'the Giddings' villages of Great Gidding, Little Gidding, Steeple Gidding and Hamerton. We received a counter proposal that suggested dividing the Alconbury ward in order for all the above villages to be included in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency.

60. In the City of Cambridge we received a mixture of support and opposition to our initial proposals, with a number of respondents proposing alternative configurations. We received a large number of competing representations, arguing for the inclusion of one or other of the Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's or Trumpington wards in the Cambridge constituency. While the Queen Edith's ward is not included in the existing Cambridge constituency, some respondents considered this broke community ties in the area, particularly as the ward included local facilities and services such as Homerton College and Addenbrooke's Hospital. Evidence in relation to strong community ties to Cambridge was, however, also received in relation to the Cherry Hinton and Trumpington wards: Cherry Hinton had a long association with Cambridge and was home to a number of cultural events, while Trumpington was highlighted as the site of significant development and therefore presented a more continuous urban character flowing from the city centre. We also received other counter proposals for Cambridge that proposed the City be split into two constituencies with the surrounding rural areas.

61. We received some representations that were concerned that our proposed East Cambridgeshire constituency was discontinuous due to a small part of the Milton and Waterbeach ward being detached from the constituency. Some respondents sought to resolve this matter in counter proposals, through either reconfiguring constituencies or splitting the Milton and Waterbeach ward.

62. We received approximately 200 representations commenting on our proposed St Neots constituency. Some of these representations were supportive of our proposal. However, we also received opposition to the configuration of the constituency, particularly that it included wards from the District of South Cambridgeshire. Respondents stated that residents in these wards shared few community ties with St Neots, but instead had connections with other parts of South Cambridgeshire and the City of Cambridge itself. Counter proposals either suggested a St Ives constituency or a reconfiguration of a number of constituencies in the south of the county. We also received a number of representations that commented on the proposed constituency name of St Neots. Many of these considered that the name of the constituency was not representative and proposed alternatives such as Mid Cambridgeshire or West Cambridgeshire.

63. The majority of representations received in relation to our proposed North East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon constituencies were supportive. In the case of the former constituency, however, there were requests to rename it as Fenland or the Fens.

Revised proposals

64. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire constituencies. They noted that a number of respondents supported the alternative proposal we had aired in the initial proposal report. These representations considered that the existing configuration of the Peterborough constituency was confusing. However, they also noted the significant number of representations that supported our initial proposals and opposed the alternative. Given the conflicting evidence received the Assistant Commissioners decided to visit the area. From their observations they considered that the alternative pattern would divide the centre of Peterborough between constituencies, breaking local ties in the city centre. They also considered that given the existing Peterborough constituency only required minimal change, the alternative presented significant disruption. They therefore proposed no changes to the initial proposals for Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire. They were also not persuaded to amend the name of the proposed North West Cambridgeshire constituency, as they considered this name reflected the geographic extent of the constituency.

65. They reflected on the evidence received that the initial proposals would break community ties in the Giddings. They investigated the counter proposals received, noting that the issue could be addressed by the transfer of the Alconbury ward to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency. However, they considered this configuration resulted in the aforementioned constituency and of Huntingdon being unsatisfactory. They also identified that the Alconbury ward could be split between constituencies. However, they were not persuaded to recommend this

proposal given the splitting of the ward in this instance provided no wider benefit to the pattern of constituencies in the county.

66. The Assistant Commissioners considered the competing arguments concerning the proposed Cambridge constituency. They noted that cases had been proposed for including each of the Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's and Trumpington wards. They were not persuaded to include the Queen Edith's ward in the Cambridge constituency, particularly as it was not part of the existing configuration. Having considered all the evidence presented in relation to the other two wards, they noted that Cherry Hinton shared community ties with Queen Edith's and felt that the inclusion of both wards in the proposed South Cambridgeshire constituency was better than the existing arrangement. They also noted the new developments in the Trumpington ward and considered that the ward was a better fit in an urban constituency than in rural South Cambridgeshire. Our Assistant Commissioners therefore recommended no change to either of the proposed Cambridge or South Cambridgeshire constituencies.

67. Our Assistant Commissioners assessed the evidence received in relation to the inclusion of the Milton and Waterbeach ward in the East Cambridgeshire constituency. They noted that the majority of the representations noted that this part of this ward was detached from the remainder of the constituency. Having considered the evidence, they were of the view that, while we would usually attempt 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 follows the local authority boundaries. They were therefore not minded to revise the proposed constituency.

68. The Assistant Commissioners considered the conflicting evidence received in relation to the proposed St Neots constituency. They were not minded to adopt any of the counter proposals received, as they considered these resulted in significant disruption to the pattern of constituencies in large parts of the county, for which we had received support during consultation. However, they did consider that the proposed name of St Neots did not adequately reflect the extent of the constituency. They therefore proposed the constituency be renamed St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire.

69. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the majority of representations received in relation to the proposed Huntingdon and North East Cambridgeshire constituencies were supportive. They noted the alternative names proposed for the North East Cambridgeshire constituency, but were not persuaded that the alternatives of Fenland or the Fens would be more representative. They therefore proposed no change to either constituency.

70. Having considered the evidence received we agreed with the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners. Therefore, the boundaries of our revised proposals were identical to those previously proposed, with the only change being the revised name of St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire.

Consultation on the revised proposals

71. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals we again received representations in relation to our proposed North West Cambridgeshire and Peterborough constituencies. The majority of representations in relation to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency were positive, particularly as it had only been minimally changed from the existing constituency. However, some opposition was received, including repeated concerns that the southern boundary of the constituency would split the Giddings villages between constituencies. We also received some representations that suggested the North West Cambridgeshire constituency should be renamed as North Huntingdonshire, or include a reference to Peterborough in the constituency name, such as West Peterborough and Ramsey.

72. Our proposed Peterborough constituency again received a mixed response during consultation. Those who opposed the configuration repeated concerns that the area to the north of the River Nene in the Fletton and Woodston ward was not included in the constituency. We received a counter proposal to resolve this, which suggested transferring the Fletton and Woodston ward to the Peterborough constituency, and the Eye and Thorney ward to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency.

73. We received over 100 representations in opposition to our proposed St Neots constituency. A number of these respondents put forward similar arguments to earlier consultations that the constituency did not reflect community ties. We also received a counter proposal, which suggested a reconfigured St Neots constituency that would cross the county boundary and include wards from North East Bedfordshire, which was stated to better reflect community ties and the local growth of the area. We also received some representations that commented on the proposed constituency name. While some were supportive, we received alternatives such as West Cambridgeshire, Mid Cambridgeshire, or Mid Cambridgeshire and St Neots.

74. In the City of Cambridge, we again received representations commenting on which of the Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's and Trumpington wards should be included in the constituency. As at previous consultations we received some support for the inclusion of Trumpington ward.

75. We generally received few representations commenting specifically on our proposed constituencies of East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon, North East Cambridgeshire, and South Cambridgeshire. However, among those

representations we received a representation requesting we rename North East Cambridgeshire as Ely and North East Cambridgeshire to reflect the prominence of the town in the constituency, and to also reflect consistency with our proposed St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire constituency. There was also a request that North East Cambridgeshire be renamed North Cambridgeshire.

Final recommendations

76. We again note the competing evidence received in relation to our proposed North West Cambridgeshire and Peterborough constituencies. We investigated the proposal that sought to transfer the Fletton and Woodston ward to the Peterborough constituency, and the Eye and Thorney ward to the North West Cambridgeshire constituency. We are not persuaded by the evidence received to adopt this proposal. We are particularly concerned that it would result in the North West Cambridgeshire being geographically odd in shape, given it would wrap around the northern part of Peterborough. We have again considered the representations in relation to the division of the Giddings villages by the southern boundary of the North West Cambridgeshire constituency. We remain unpersuaded that splitting the Alconbury ward would be justified given the lack of any wider benefits. Finally, we are not minded to amend the name of either the Peterborough or North West Cambridgeshire constituencies. We consider the names of both are representative of the areas represented in each.

77. We have considered the representations and counter proposal received in relation to the St Neots constituency. The counter proposal did not follow local government wards, would cross the county boundary, and would thereby significantly disrupt the pattern of constituencies in Bedfordshire, which had generally been supported. We are therefore not minded to modify the boundaries of the proposed constituency. We are also not minded to modify the name of the proposed constituency as we consider St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire to adequately reflect the geography of the constituency.

78. We again noted the competing evidence received in relation to our proposed Cambridge constituency, but in the absence of any persuasive new arguments or evidence being presented, we are not minded to modify our proposals. We consider that including the Cherry Hinton ward in the Cambridge constituency instead of Trumpington ward would likely break community ties between Cherry Hinton and Queen Edith's.

79. We note that our proposed constituencies of East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon, North East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire were all generally supported during the revised proposal consultation. However, we are minded to change the name of our proposed North East Cambridgeshire constituency to Ely and North East Cambridgeshire. We consider this name would better reflect the area encompassed by the constituency.

80. Our final recommendations for Cambridgeshire are therefore for constituencies of: **Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Ely and North East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon, North West Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire, and South Cambridgeshire**. These constituencies are composed of the areas listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Norfolk

Initial proposals

81. Of the nine existing constituencies in the county, three (Great Yarmouth, North West Norfolk, and Norwich South) were within the permitted electorate range. Two constituencies (Norwich South and North Norfolk) were below, and four constituencies (Broadland, Mid Norfolk, South Norfolk, and South West Norfolk) were above. In formulating our initial proposals we proposed changes to all constituencies in the county, but in the case of the North West Norfolk constituency we only proposed changes to realign the constituency boundary with new local government wards.

82. We noted that while the existing Great Yarmouth constituency was within the permitted electorate range, we considered that retaining this constituency unchanged would result in an overall pattern of constituencies across the county that would not best reflect the statutory factors. We therefore proposed to include the District of North Norfolk wards of Hickling and Stalham in a reconfigured Great Yarmouth constituency. This change resulted in the North Norfolk constituency falling below the permitted electorate range, so we proposed that the wards covering the town of Fakenham be included in a reconfigured North Norfolk constituency.

83. In Norwich, we proposed that the City of Norwich ward of Thorpe Hamlet be included in the Norwich North constituency, and the District of South Norfolk wards of New Costessey and Old Costessey be included in the Norwich South constituency.

84. We proposed the Mid Norfolk constituency include the District of South Norfolk ward of Easton, which resulted in the South Norfolk constituency being within the permitted electorate range. We proposed to extend the Mid Norfolk constituency further south to include three District of Breckland wards, and transfer the wards of Lincoln and Upper Wensum to our proposed Breckland constituency. These changes ensured that the Mid Norfolk, North Norfolk and South Norfolk constituencies were all within the permitted electorate range.

Consultation on initial proposals

85. The issue in Norfolk that received the most representations was the proposed transfer of the two North Norfolk wards of Stalham and Hickling to the Great Yarmouth constituency. The existing Great Yarmouth constituency did not need to be changed and this arrangement had been 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 majority of representations stated that the two wards were very different from the rest of the Great Yarmouth constituency and highlighted the differences in physical geography between the rural areas of these wards and the urban area of Great Yarmouth.

86. Few representations were received regarding the transfer of wards including the town of Fakenham from Broadland to North Norfolk constituency, although those that were received were largely supportive, saying that the town of Fakenham was one of the largest towns in the North Norfolk local authority, and that the five wards proposed to transfer had little in common with the rest of the existing Broadland constituency in which they are currently located.

87. While there were only a small number of representations regarding the two proposed Norwich constituencies, they presented robust views and evidence. Some representations supported the initial proposals, claiming that much of the Thorpe Hamlet ward 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 stated 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, and the area therefore had much closer ties with the rest of the city centre contained in the proposed Norwich South constituency. A number of counter proposals therefore supported the Thorpe Hamlet ward being retained in the Norwich South constituency, and the Old Costessey ward being retained in the South Norfolk constituency. In order to achieve the necessary changes to electorate numbers to bring both constituencies within the permitted range, one different counter proposals stated that either the two wards of Drayton North and Drayton South, or the ward of Spixworth with St. Faiths should be included in Norwich North.

88. Very few representations were received regarding the proposed South West Norfolk, Mid Norfolk, and South Norfolk constituencies, and there was no discernible groundswell of opposition to our initial proposals for these areas. Our proposed North West Norfolk constituency elicited few representations, and those received were mostly supportive.

89. While there was some support for the proposed sub-regions, many respondents suggested that Norfolk should be grouped with Suffolk to create a sub-region and that Essex should be the county to stand alone as a separate sub-region. It was claimed that this would have multiple benefits, though requiring some degree of change to constituencies in the south of Norfolk.

90. Most of the counter proposals suggesting that Norfolk be paired with Suffolk proposed a constituency crossing between the two counties over eastern reaches of the river Waveney, with slight variations. They considered that such a constituency would be a more coherent cross-county boundary constituency than the initially proposed Haverhill and Halstead constituency (between Essex and Suffolk), with established community ties, a shared local identity, and good transport links. One such counter proposal proposed a cross-county Waveney Valley constituency that would include the wards of Bressingham and Burston, Diss and Roydon, Beck Vale, Dickleburgh and Scole, Harleston, Bunwell, and Ditchingham and Earsham from the existing South Norfolk constituency. The proposed Waveney Valley constituency is discussed in further detail in the section on Suffolk below, as the majority of the proposed constituency would be composed of Suffolk wards.

91. However, support for a constituency crossing the county boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk was not unanimous. Some counter proposals suggested combining Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex together in a single sub-region. Among those that supported maintaining the sub-regions used in the initial proposals was the suggestion that should we be minded to consider a Suffolk/Norfolk sub-region, a cross-county boundary constituency including the towns of Newmarket and Thetford should be created. It was claimed that such a constituency would bring more of The Brecks (which crosses the county boundary) together, including Thetford Forest and the closely-linked towns of Brandon and Thetford, and the constituency would cross the county boundary where the river is a less significant boundary than it is nearer the coast.

Revised proposals

92. Having considered all the issues and reflected on the evidence received, our Assistant Commissioners accepted the rationale and the benefits contained in the counter proposals for altering the sub-regional grouping to instead join Norfolk and Suffolk as a sub-region, and treat Essex alone. They recommended that there be a Waveney Valley cross-county boundary constituency between the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, having been persuaded of the strong local ties, shared local identity, and good transport links. While they considered that a cross-county boundary constituency including the towns of Newmarket and Thetford had merit, they considered that such a constituency necessitated more disruption to the existing constituencies than a Waveney Valley constituency, and would also be unsatisfactory due to including the Suffolk town of Newmarket, with its close geographical proximity and local ties to Cambridgeshire, in a constituency with areas of Norfolk.

93. We accepted the recommendation of the Assistant Commissioners and therefore proposed that Norfolk and Suffolk be combined to form a sub-region and Essex to form a standalone sub-region. The change in sub-regions necessitated

change to the initial proposals across much of Norfolk (eight of the nine proposed constituencies), but less significant change to existing constituencies across the sub-region as a whole.

94. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the change in sub-region allowed the two wards of Stalham and Hickling to be retained in the North Norfolk constituency, while still allowing for a coherent pattern of constituencies across the county. This allowed the Great Yarmouth constituency to be both wholly unchanged and wholly coterminous with the local authority boundary. We agreed with this recommendation and proposed that the Stalham and Hickling wards be retained in the North Norfolk constituency, and that the Great Yarmouth constituency be unchanged from the existing arrangement.

95. As a consequence of the changes elsewhere in Norfolk, our Assistant Commissioners recommended to us that the five wards that comprised Fakenham and the surrounding areas be retained in the Broadland constituency. We acknowledged that a majority of respondents supported the initially proposed transfer of these five wards in the North Norfolk constituency, but we agreed with our Assistant Commissioners and considered that retaining them in the Broadland constituency would minimise disruption to the existing arrangement for both the North Norfolk and Broadland constituencies. The other change to the boundaries of the existing Broadland constituency was for the wards of Drayton North and Drayton South to be included in the Norwich North constituency (detailed below). However, our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by a proposal for a change of name for the constituency name. Taking account of the views given in consultation, they felt that the name Broadland was not reflective of the constituency as a whole, and that as Fakenham is an important town in the area, and one that is in the North Norfolk local authority rather than the Broadland local authority, this town should be included in the name. We agreed with this, and therefore proposed the constituency name be changed to Broadland and Fakenham.

96. During their site visit to the area, the Assistant Commissioners agreed that the ward of Thorpe Hamlet did contain a significant portion of the city centre, and that to include it in the Norwich North constituency, as initially proposed, while having some benefits, 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. They therefore recommended that we retain the Thorpe Hamlet ward in the Norwich South constituency, as in the existing arrangement. We agreed with that recommendation and revised our proposals to incorporate this change.

97. The Assistant Commissioners then considered which wards should be included in Norwich North instead. During their visit, they observed that despite the odd shape of the two Drayton wards, there were good transport links to the Norwich North constituency, and a similarly suburban character across both areas.

The peculiar shape of the two wards was largely due to their alignment with the boundary of Drayton Parish Council, and the areas of particular concern had few or no inhabitants. Conversely, the Spixworth with St. Faiths ward was almost entirely rural and the A1270 road separated much of the ward from the Norwich North constituency. They noted the historical precedent for the village of Drayton being included in a Norwich North constituency and therefore recommended that the two Drayton wards be included in the Norwich North constituency. We accepted that recommendation and revised our proposals, but considered that our decision was finely balanced, as we noted that the new constituency boundary may be considered to break ties between Drayton and the neighbouring village of Taverham, as well as seemingly dividing the Thorpe Marriott residential area. We also noted that despite the apparent physical barrier of the A1270, there appeared to be good direct road access from the main population centre of Spixworth village in the Spixworth and St. Faiths ward into north Norwich by both Buxton Road and North Walsham Road. We therefore particularly welcomed further views and evidence in the responses to our revised proposals, especially from local residents, as to which of these wards would be best included in the Norwich North constituency.

98. Following the site visit by our Assistant Commissioners, and the evidence that supported the argument for a cross-county constituency with Suffolk, we accepted their recommendations for a Waveney Valley constituency. The inclusion of the six Norfolk wards, as suggested in a counter proposal, in the Waveney Valley constituency meant that the South Norfolk constituency required additional electors from elsewhere. In accordance with the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners, we proposed that the Old Costessey ward, included in the initially proposed Norwich South constituency, and the Easton ward, included in the initially proposed Mid Norfolk constituency, both be retained in the South Norfolk constituency, as in the existing arrangement. Furthermore, as set out in numerous counter proposals, we accepted the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners and proposed that the town of Wymondham (comprising the Central Wymondham, North Wymondham and South Wymondham wards) – part of the existing Mid Norfolk constituency – be included in the South Norfolk constituency. While not currently included in the existing South Norfolk constituency, Wymondham is in the South Norfolk local authority, and while few representations were received regarding this area, there was support for 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 is considered to have strong links to other areas in the constituency.

99. The changes we proposed to the South Norfolk and Broadland constituencies had a consequential beneficial impact – in terms of the statutory factors – on both the Mid Norfolk and South West Norfolk constituencies. The Mid Norfolk constituency would now retain the wards of Necton, Launditch, Hermitage, Upper Wensum, and Lincoln (which are all in the existing constituency of Mid

Norfolk). The wards of Harling and Heathlands, and Guiltcross, would also be retained in the South West Norfolk constituency, as in the existing arrangement. Our revised proposals therefore allowed both constituencies to much more closely resemble their existing configurations, with the South West Norfolk constituency only being changed from the existing boundary to realign to new local government ward boundaries.

100. As the North West Norfolk proposed constituency elicited few representations, was largely uncontentious and mostly supported, we proposed no change to this constituency as initially proposed.

Consultation on revised proposals

101. In our revised proposals, the constituencies in Norfolk were considerably changed following the adoption of the new Norfolk-Suffolk sub-region. There were very few representations - largely supportive - regarding the proposed return of the Stalham and Hickling wards from Great Yarmouth to North Norfolk constituency. Very few representations were received relating to elsewhere in the proposed North Norfolk constituency, with no new key issues.

102. Approximately 100 representations were received, however, regarding the Broadland constituency, most of which concerned the proposed return to that constituency of the five wards comprising the town and area around Fakenham. These representations were split between those supporting or opposing the revised proposals. Those supporting were largely from the Spixworth with St Faiths ward, who were opposing the counter-proposals that had been submitted to include the ward in the Norwich North constituency. Those in opposition were mostly disappointed that Fakenham would no longer be included in North Norfolk as it had been in the initial proposals. Few comments were received regarding the constituency name change.

103. Few representations were received regarding the North West Norfolk, South West Norfolk and Mid Norfolk constituencies. Most of the opposition to the South Norfolk constituency was with regard to the proposed cross-county boundary Waveney Valley constituency.

104. In relation to Norwich, over 100 representations were received, mostly with regard to the Norwich North constituency. Those in support considered that the Drayton wards are a better fit in Northwich North and opposed the other main alternative - the inclusion the Spixworth with St Faiths ward - whereas those in opposition argued that Drayton is linked to Taverham (in particular the Thorpe Marriott area, which lies in both the Drayton North and Taverham North wards) and does not have good community ties to Norwich. We received counter proposals to split the Thorpe Hamlet ward, but this would result in Broadland and Fakenham being just a few electors over the permitted range if it included both Drayton wards,

and was otherwise unchanged from the revised proposals. Another counter proposal that would keep Norwich similar to the initial proposals was received, but this required consequential changes across the county.

105. Very few representations were received regarding Norwich South. There was support in the representations for the revised proposals retaining the Thorpe Hamlet ward in the constituency, although others argued that its links are to Norwich North.

106. More than 80 representations were received regarding the cross-county proposed Waveney Valley constituency. Although there was some support, the majority, by far, were in opposition. Most of these were very similar, claiming that the constituency is geographically too large, and combined too many local authorities. The representations claimed that there is no link between the various areas, especially in areas even a few miles away from the River Waveney. Others suggested that villages in Suffolk are now split, particularly Stowupland (Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden ward) from the town of Stowmarket. A request was received for the constituency to be renamed Eye and Diss.

Final recommendations

107. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed constituencies in Norfolk. We recognised that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives.

108. We received no significant new evidence supporting changes to our revised proposals for most of the constituencies in Norfolk, and therefore propose no alterations to the Broadland and Fakenham, North Norfolk, Great Yarmouth, Mid Norfolk, North West Norfolk, South Norfolk, and South West Norfolk constituencies

109. With regard to Norwich, although it would be possible to exchange the two Drayton wards with the Spixworth with St Faiths ward, it would not be possible to include the Drayton North ward alone in Broadland and Fakenham with no other changes, as this would leave Norwich North below the permitted electorate range. It would be possible to include the Drayton North ward in Broadland and Fakenham, with Spixworth with St Faiths being included in Norwich North, but this would divide the two Drayton wards between constituencies and would still not resolve the issue of the odd shape of the Norwich North constituency. Including the two Drayton wards in Broadland and Fakenham, and splitting the Spixworth with St Faiths ward along the A1270 would also not resolve the issue as there are not enough electors in the area south of the road to bring Norwich North up to within the permitted range. A potential solution could be for a split ward in Norwich. However, no ward had been identified as being suitable for splitting at this stage. The only other alternative would appear to be a complete reconfiguration of the constituencies in Norfolk that had previously been considered. A return to the initial

proposals would not be possible without decoupling Norfolk and Suffolk (the revised sub-region has been largely welcomed over the initial proposals' sub-region), with widespread consequences across the whole Eastern region). We therefore propose that there be no further revision to the Norwich North and Norwich South constituencies.

110. We noted that the cross-county constituency is a consequence of the changes made to the sub-regions, which have been supported by others and the arguments for which convinced both the Assistant Commissioners and us as the best solution for the region as a whole. We remain of the view that the sub-regions as set out in the revised proposals enable a pattern of constituencies that is superior to the initial proposals when set against the statutory factors. We have also seen no alternative proposal for either different sub-regions or a different constituency crossing the Norfolk-Suffolk boundary that would not require greater disruption across the region in terms of changes to existing constituencies and breaking of multiple local ties. We therefore do not propose to amend the sub-regions or change the proposed constituency crossing the county boundary (detailed below).

111. Our final recommendations for Norfolk (except for the constituency shared with Suffolk) are therefore for constituencies of: **Broadland and Fakenham; Great Yarmouth; Mid Norfolk; North Norfolk; North West Norfolk; Norwich North; Norwich South; South Norfolk; and South West Norfolk**. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Suffolk

Initial proposals

112. Of the existing constituencies in Suffolk, two (Ipswich and South Suffolk) are within the permitted electorate range: the other constituencies in the county are all above. In formulating our initial proposals, we retained the Ipswich constituency unchanged and only modified the South Suffolk constituency to reflect new local government wards.

113. As noted above, we initially proposed that Essex and Suffolk form a sub-region, with a cross-county boundary constituency of Haverhill and Halstead, which included 13 District of West Suffolk wards (including the town of Haverhill) and ten District of Braintree wards (including the town of Halstead).

114. We proposed a Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket constituency, which included 25 District of West Suffolk wards, including both towns. We proposed a North Suffolk constituency, which comprised wards from the District of West Suffolk, District of Mid Suffolk and District of East Suffolk. The formulation of this

constituency allowed us to retain the Suffolk Coastal constituency largely unchanged, subject to realignment with new local government wards. In the north of the county we proposed a Lowestoft constituency, that comprised nine District of East Suffolk wards, including those encompassing Lowestoft. Finally, we proposed an Ipswich North and Stowmarket constituency. Rather than expanding north to the county boundary, the constituency, now extended to the northern boundary of the Stoneham ward and was expanded westwards to include the towns of Stowmarket and Needham Market.

Consultation on initial proposals

115. As described in previous sections, there was significant opposition to the sub-regions as initially proposed. While there was also some support for them, many respondents suggested that joining Norfolk with Suffolk, and having Essex as a standalone sub-region, would have multiple benefits and allow for a potentially better solution regarding local ties in a number of areas.

116. The largest single issue in Suffolk by number of representations received was the proposed Haverhill and Halstead cross-county boundary constituency between Suffolk and Essex. Almost all of the representations received regarding this constituency were in opposition, with representations highlighting the lack of ties between the two towns, and particularly poor public transport links, which were said to be effectively non-existent. We also received evidence that many of the West Suffolk local authority wards that were included in the constituency look towards the towns of Newmarket or Bury St Edmunds and not south to Essex, while the Braintree local authority wards included look mostly towards the town of Braintree and not to Suffolk in the north. Other evidence pointed to the River Stour as a well-defined physical barrier.

117. Many of those who opposed the proposed Haverhill and Halstead constituency, instead supported a new sub-region pairing Suffolk with Norfolk, and generally supported one of two options to achieve this: either a Waveney Valley constituency in the east, or a Newmarket and Thetford constituency in the west. The rationale put forward in support of a Waveney Valley constituency was that it would better reflect the statutory factors, and 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 aligned with the largely east-west orientation of the proposed constituency. The reasons given in support of a Newmarket and Thetford constituency were that it would bring much of The Brecks into a single constituency, including Thetford Forest and the closely-linked towns of Brandon and Thetford, and the constituency would cross the county boundary where the river is a less significant boundary than it is further downstream nearer the coast. Some responses observed, however, that creating a constituency in the east also largely supported one of two options, with slightly different configurations. One counter proposal in particular would result in less change. In

this, the town of Stowmarket would be included in the Bury St Edmunds constituency, as in the existing arrangement, thereby minimising disruption to the existing constituencies and moving significantly fewer electors. This counter proposal also allowed for the towns of Wickham Market and Framlingham, two areas with close community ties, to remain in a constituency together. It also proposed a Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency which, despite some changes from the existing arrangement, would be more closely aligned to the existing constituency than either the initial proposals or some of the other counter proposals. This would Newmarket and Thetford constituency would cause more disruption to existing constituencies across both Norfolk and Suffolk. Furthermore, a number of representations were received from residents of Newmarket who stated that they should, in fact, be included with Cambridgeshire and not Suffolk, and therefore to include the town in a cross-county boundary constituency with Norfolk instead would go directly against local sentiment and cause even more disruption and confusion than the existing arrangement.

118. We also received counter proposals that proposed combining Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex together in a single sub-region. This would require an extra, unnecessary cross-county boundary constituency, and as such is considered to be less strongly reflective of the statutory factors than the initial proposals and the other counter proposals received during the two consultations.

119. Those supporting a Waveney Valley constituency also allow the ward of Kelsale and Yoxford to remain in the Suffolk Coastal constituency, linking it to the town of Saxmundham and to other areas with which it has community ties. Finally, the Risby ward would be retained in a West Suffolk constituency, thereby moving fewer electors from their existing constituency, giving the constituency a better shape, and more coherence than other counter proposals.

120. Relatively few representations regarding our initially proposed Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket constituency were received, although they were almost exclusively in opposition and drew attention to the fact that both the existing West Suffolk and Bury St Edmunds constituencies were significantly reconfigured in the initial proposals, with the existing Bury St Edmunds constituency in particular being divided between four proposed constituencies. Furthermore, the initial proposals resulted in areas like Rougham and Stowmarket being separated from Bury St Edmunds, with which they were said to have strong community ties. Many counter proposals utilising a Norfolk-Suffolk sub-region enabled constituencies that would be more similar to the existing West Suffolk and Bury St Edmunds constituencies, with only relatively minor changes required.

121. The North Suffolk constituency, which under the initial proposals would include a large number of rural wards from the West Suffolk, Mid Suffolk, and East Suffolk local authorities, elicited a small number of representations, with the majority being in opposition, claiming the constituency would be too vast, with poor internal transport links and no sizable town to act as a focal point. In a number of

counter proposals, the proposed North Suffolk constituency was largely stituecy, so should not be transferred out as proposed. A number of counter proposals also proposed a more radical reconfiguration, with the Suffolk Coastal constituency being split into two, and the town of Felixstowe forming a constituency with eastern Ipswich, which it was argued would be more compact than our proposed narrow Suffolk Coastal constituency.

122. The Ipswich constituency was wholly unchanged from the existing constituency in the initial proposals. Very few representations were received, mostly supportive, though a few felt Ipswich should be evenly divided between two constituencies.

123. The constituencies of South Suffolk – which was initially proposed to be unchanged other than to realign it with updated local government ward boundaries – and Lowestoft – the only change to which in the initial proposals would be to transfer out the Bungay and Wainford ward – were both largely uncontentious.

Revised proposals

124. Our Assistant Commissioners noted the strong opposition to the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Haverhill and Halstead and the well-supported counter proposals for an alternative sub-region. They decided to see the River Waveney area for themselves during a site visit, and observed that the physical geography and socio-economic characteristics on both sides of the river seemed to be similar, and noted the superseded by the Waveney Valley constituency, as discussed above.

125. In our initially proposed Ipswich North and Stowmarket constituency received some support, although the majority of respondents were in opposition to the proposals. The support drew attention to the connections between the two towns, with the A14 road providing a strong transport link, while those in opposition stated 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, representations said that the communities of Wickham Market and Framlingham have strong ties, and should be retained within the same constituency.

126. We proposed limited change to the existing Suffolk Coastal constituency, and this received relatively few representations, although some said that the village of Wickham Market has more links to Framlingham than to areas of the Suffolk Coastal constituency, and others stated that the ward of Kelsale and Yoxford has close links to Saxmundham and other wards in the Suffolk Coastal conevidence that had been provided of good and numerous community ties spanning the river. They did not consider that the river and county boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk would therefore be an impediment to a successful constituency here. They therefore concluded that a cross-county constituency be recommended to us here, and that it be called Waveney Valley.

127. After considering carefully all the different counter proposals that utilised a Suffolk-Norfolk sub-region, the Assistant Commissioners endorsed one that minimised change and disruption across the sub-region. It maintained the town of Stowmarket in the same constituency as Bury St Edmunds; allowed for the towns of Wickham Market and Framlingham to remain in a constituency together; proposed a Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency that would be more closely aligned to the existing constituency; allowed the ward of Kelsale and Yoxford to remain in the Suffolk Coastal constituency, linking it to the town of Saxmundham; and kept the Risby ward in a West Suffolk constituency. The Assistant Commissioners were not persuaded that a Newmarket and Thetford constituency would be a more suitable place for the cross-county boundary constituency, as they considered it would cause more disruption to existing constituencies across both Norfolk and Suffolk and would go directly against local sentiment.

128. We agreed with the assessment and recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners and therefore, in adopting the new sub-region, revised our initial proposals to adopt a cross-county boundary constituency of Waveney Valley.

129. For the same reasons, we accepted the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners to revise our proposals to include a West Suffolk constituency that would be changed only to include the Bardwell, Barningham, Stanton, and Ixworth wards, as well as small changes to realign it with updated local government ward boundaries, and a constituency that kept Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds in the same constituency. They were persuaded that this approach would not only minimise disruption to the existing constituencies, but also reflect the views expressed in representations stating that the two towns have much in common. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioners and revised our initial proposals to set out Bury St Edmunds, and West Suffolk constituencies.

130. In revising our proposals for a Bury St Edmunds constituency that would include the town of Stowmarket, our initially proposed Ipswich North and Stowmarket constituency, would need to be significantly reconfigured in consequence. Our Assistant Commissioners considered the representations that called for Wickham Market to be included in a Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency, and the Kelsale and Yoxford ward to be included in Suffolk Coastal, were sufficiently persuasive, and recommended we adopt these changes as our revised proposals for these constituencies. We agreed with their recommendation; the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency in our revised proposals would include all of the wards from the existing Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency, except for six wards in the north that would be included in the proposed Waveney Valley constituency.

131. We were not persuaded to alter our initial proposals by the representations that called for the Suffolk Coastal constituency to be split into two, with the town of

Felixstowe forming a constituency with eastern Ipswich. The Ipswich constituency was wholly unchanged in our initial proposals and we considered there were insufficient grounds to alter it, as this would represent an unnecessary departure from the existing arrangement, and would likely have negative implications across the county. We therefore proposed no revisions to the proposed Ipswich constituency.

132. Our proposals for the South Suffolk and Lowestoft constituencies were both largely uncontroversial. Our Assistant Commissioners recommended no changes to either constituency as initially proposed, and we agreed with them.

Consultation on revised proposals

133. As mentioned previously in the section on Norfolk, more than 80 representations were received with regard to the Waveney Valley constituency. Although there was some support, the majority, by far, were in opposition. Most of these were very similar, claiming that the constituency is geographically too large, with too many local authorities involved, and that there is no link between the various areas.

134. Very few representations were received to our revised proposals for the Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk constituencies, with most comments received being linked to the revised Waveney Valley constituency, and consequently, most were in opposition. One representation requested that Bury St Edmunds should be named Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket.

135. Very few representations were received with respect to the proposed constituencies of Ipswich, Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Lowestoft, Suffolk Coastal, and South Suffolk, with very low levels of objection and no new evidence or argument identified. The representations relating to Central Suffolk and North Ipswich were almost exclusively positive.

Final recommendations

136. The cross-county boundary proposed constituency of Waveney Valley is a consequence of the changes made to the sub-regions, which have been well supported, and the arguments for which convinced both the Assistant Commissioners and us as the best solution for the region as a whole. As noted above, we have seen no alternative that would enable a better pattern of constituencies across the region as a whole when measured against the statutory factors, with both our own initial proposals and other alternatives we have seen more disruption to existing constituencies and appearing to break local ties in multiple areas.

137. While we have considered new alternatives and evidence put forward against our revised proposals, we have also noted that, in general, our revised

proposals across Suffolk generated little opposition, other than in relation to the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Waveney Valley itself. While there has been conflicting evidence of the strength of community ties within this proposed constituency, we do not believe it is possible to create a better pattern of constituencies across the area as a whole and therefore propose to maintain our revised proposals. Although we have considered the request that the constituency be renamed Eye and Diss, we believe the Waveney Valley name is more reflective of the largely rural nature of the constituency, and has commanded greater support in consultation responses.

138. Our final recommendations for Suffolk are therefore for constituencies of: **Bury St Edmunds; Central Suffolk and North Ipswich; Ipswich; Lowestoft; South Suffolk; Suffolk Coastal; Waveney Valley; and West Suffolk.** The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Essex

Initial Proposals

139. There are currently 18 constituencies in Essex, ten of which have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range, three falling below and five above. In our initial proposals, none of the existing Essex constituencies were wholly unchanged, although two were changed only to realign with new local government ward boundaries. There was only minimal change to the majority of the existing constituencies. The most substantial change was to the existing Braintree constituency, as a result of the cross-county boundary constituency with Suffolk, which we called Haverhill and Halstead.

140. The only change to the existing Clacton constituency was to realign it with new local government ward boundaries. The neighbouring Harwich and North Essex constituency was also affected by these ward boundary changes, and in our proposals we made further changes to the west of the constituency. The Prettygate ward, in the existing Colchester constituency, was included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, thereby bringing the Colchester constituency within the permitted electorate range without any further changes required, other than the realignment with new local government ward boundaries to the south and west of the constituency. In noting a general lack of direct road access over the River Colne between the Mersea and Pyefleet ward and the rest of the Harwich and North Essex constituency, we proposed this ward be included instead in the Witham constituency. The only other changes to the existing Witham constituency were to realign the boundaries with the new local government ward boundaries and the transfer of the Braintree district ward of Hatfield Peverel and Terling to our proposed Braintree constituency.

141. The only change to the existing Chelmsford constituency in our initial proposals was to include the Galleywood ward in our proposed Maldon constituency, which in turn would transfer the Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon ward to the proposed Braintree constituency.

142. The electorate of the existing Castle Point constituency is currently below the permitted electorate range, and therefore an additional ward needed to be included. The Thurrock unitary authority wards to the west either have electorates that are too large or have no direct road links. The inclusion of any of the wards from the Rochford district to the north would divide the town of Rayleigh, and the Lodge ward has no direct road access. We therefore proposed to include the Southend-on-Sea unitary authority ward of West Leigh, currently in the Southend West constituency, in the Castle Point constituency. While we acknowledged this would not be ideal, we considered that no alternatives would provide a superior solution for the area as a whole, when taking into account the statutory factors.

143. The Southend West constituency was itself also under the permitted electorate range, and further change was therefore required. We proposed to transfer the Eastwood Park and St. Laurence wards from the Southend West constituency to the Rochford and Southend East constituency, with the A127 road to the south of the two wards forming a large part of the boundary between the two constituencies. In return, the St. Luke's, Victoria, and Milton wards would move from Rochford and Southend East to Southend West. We considered an alternative that would have divided the West Leigh ward between constituencies and would have minimised changes to existing constituencies in this area. However, this would have meant that only two polling districts from the Southend-on-Sea unitary authority would be included in a constituency that would otherwise be wholly coterminous with the Borough of Castle Point. We also proposed that the Roche North and Rural ward be included in Rochford and Southend East from the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency. No other changes were proposed to the existing Rayleigh and Wickford constituency, such that it would bring together parts of the town of Rochford in a single constituency, which would otherwise have been divided between constituencies due to local government ward boundary changes.

144. To reduce the electorate of the existing Thurrock constituency we proposed the inclusion of the two wards of Tilbury St. Chads, and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency, uniting the Tilbury Docks with the villages of West and East Tilbury. In order to bring the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency within the permitted electorate range, the Vange ward was included in the Basildon and Billericay constituency, which was otherwise unchanged.

145. We proposed a Saffron Walden constituency to include, from the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency, the two wards of Moreton and Fyfield, and High Ongar, Willingale and The Rodings. As we considered that this change made

the existing constituency name of Brentwood and Ongar less appropriate, we proposed it simply be called Brentwood. The only change we proposed to the existing Epping Forest constituency was to transfer the Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing ward to the Harlow constituency: we considered this ward to have links with the wards of Roydon and Lower Nazeing (currently within the Harlow constituency). This inclusion brought the electorate of the Harlow constituency within the permitted range without dividing the town of Waltham Abbey, or having knock-on effects on the proposed Saffron Walden constituency. No further changes were proposed to the existing Harlow constituency, other than minor realignments with new local government ward boundaries.

146. The electorate of the existing Saffron Walden constituency was significantly above the permitted range. As mentioned above, we proposed that two wards be transferred from the Brentwood constituency to the Saffron Walden constituency, enabling the four City of Chelmsford wards of Writtle, Chelmsford Rural West, Broomfield and The Walthams, and Boreham and The Leighs, to be transferred from the Saffron Walden constituency to the Braintree constituency. Ten wards from the existing Braintree constituency, including the town of Halstead, were included in the cross-county boundary Haverhill and Halstead constituency between Essex and Suffolk. Additionally, the Hatfield Peverel and Terling ward was included in our proposed Braintree constituency, with further changes to realign constituency boundaries with new local government ward boundaries. While the change to the existing Braintree constituency was significant, we considered it avoided a 'domino effect' of changes to a series of constituencies that would otherwise be caused by the cross-county boundary constituency. Furthermore, the town of Braintree would remain united within a single constituency.

Consultation on initial proposals

147. As mentioned previously in this report, a large number of representations and counter proposals supported Essex being treated on its own as a sub-region, with particular opposition to the proposed Haverhill and Halstead constituency that crossed the boundary between Essex and Suffolk.

148. Our initially proposed constituencies of Colchester, Harwich and North Essex, and Witham generated over 1,000 representations, making it one of the areas in the country as a whole with the most representations received. In the initial proposals we had proposed that the Lexden and Braiswick ward, part of which is included in the existing Harwich and North Essex constituency, be wholly included in Harwich and North Essex, along with the Prettygate ward, due to the latter's links to the Lexden and Braiswick ward. The majority of representations called for these two wards to be included in the Colchester constituency, as it was considered that both wards are physically very close to the centre of Colchester, have little to no connection to the coastal town of Harwich (which is on the far side of Colchester), and included numerous important transport and community links, such as a key arterial route into Colchester and numerous schools.

149. Over 150 representations were also received regarding the ward of Mersea and Pyefleet being included in the proposed Witham constituency, rather than being retained in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. Many representations said the ward's primary links were to Colchester, but if this could not be achieved, it was more suited to being included in a coastal constituency like Harwich and North Essex, rather than being included in a more inland rural constituency such as Witham. Poor transport links and community ties between the town of Witham and Mersea Island were also raised.

150. We received a number of counter proposals relating to the Colchester area, among which were: requests that the Prettygate ward be retained in the Colchester constituency (with Highwoods ward instead being included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency). Another counter proposal included the Stanway ward in Colchester, and transferred the St. Anne's and St John's ward to Harwich and North Essex. A further counter proposal proposed the inclusion of the Stanway ward in Harwich and North Essex, thereby bringing three wards containing areas of urban Colchester together (Stanway, Prettygate, and Lexden and Braiswick) in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. A more radical counter proposal created two Colchester constituencies, with the northern constituency including the town of Harwich, and the southern constituency including the Mersea and Pyefleet ward. While there was some support for this proposal, there was also opposition to this approach, with claims that the last time urban Colchester was split into two, the arrangement was disruptive, confusing and unpopular, and that a single, compact and wholly urban Colchester constituency, as is currently the case, should be retained with minimal change.

151. Our proposed Clacton constituency was wholly uncontroversial. However, counter proposals that proposed a sub-regional change often necessitated a small change to the proposed Clacton constituency. This would transfer the two wards of The Bentleys and Frating, and The Oakleys and Wix from the existing and initially proposed Harwich and North Essex constituency to the Clacton constituency.

152. The proposed constituencies of Castle Point, Southend West, and Rochford and Southend East generated over 700 representations, most of them in opposition. The proposed transfer of the West Leigh ward from the Southend West constituency to Castle Point was by far the most significant issue in the representations received, with the opposition being almost unanimous. Numerous reasons were provided as to why West Leigh should remain in a Southend constituency, including that West Leigh is intrinsically linked to both Leigh and the rest of Southend; it has little to no connection to much of the Castle Point constituency; and is separated from Castle Point by a natural geographical barrier of the Salvation Army fields to the west. One counter proposal transferred the Lodge ward from the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency to the Castle Point constituency, thereby avoiding splitting the town of Leigh. Another proposed splitting the Pitsea South East ward of Basildon Council, to include the DO polling

district (covering the villages of Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet) in the Castle Point constituency, and this alternative approach was well-supported.

153. There was opposition to the proposed transfer of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence wards to the Rochford and Southend East constituency, as it was said this would break ties of these wards with the town of Leigh. There were also a number of representations that argued that the city centre wards – generally considered to be Victoria, Milton and Kursaal – should be kept together in one constituency, ideally the more urban Southend West, with the wards of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence remaining, as initially proposed, in Rochford and Southend East. Other counter proposals each outlined slight variations from the initial proposals for the Southend West, and Rochford and Southend East constituencies, while still including the West Leigh ward in the Castle Point constituency. Additionally, some counter proposals suggested that the only change to the existing Southend West constituency should be for it to take the St. Luke's ward from the Rochford and Southend East constituency, while others called for Milton ward to transfer instead.

154. Few representations or counter proposals were received regarding the proposed 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. It was counter proposed 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 the Chadwell St. Mary ward instead included in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency. The rationale behind these proposals was that the town of Tilbury and the Tilbury Docks are closely linked to the town of Grays in the Thurrock constituency, with which they share transport links and community ties.

155. The Braintree constituency was significantly re-configured in our initial proposals and a large number of representations were received in opposition to this. Most of these stated that the proposed Braintree constituency was very different to the existing constituency, with a peculiar shape, and few links to the Chelmsford local authority wards that would be included (namely Writtle, Chelmsford Rural West, Broomfield and The Walthams, and Boreham and The Leighs). We received a counter proposal, for a constituency comprising the towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, and a Mid-Essex Rural constituency that would stretch from areas west of Chelmsford, to Mersea Island south of Colchester. Counter proposals that called for Essex to be considered as a sub-region in its own right generally proposed a Braintree constituency that would be either unchanged from the existing constituency (apart from to realign to new local government ward boundaries), or have minor changes, with The Colnes ward being included in the Witham constituency and The Sampfords, and Felsted and Stebbing wards being included from the Saffron Walden constituency.

156. We received a number of representations regarding the significant change proposed for Saffron Walden constituency, mostly during the second consultation, and these were almost exclusively in opposition to the proposal. Counter proposals retained the four Chelmsford wards of Writtle, Chelmsford Rural West, Broomfield and The Walthams, and Boreham and The Leighs in the Saffron Walden constituency, but required the Uttlesford local authority to be divided between three constituencies (rather than one as in the existing pattern): The Sampfords, and Felsted and Stebbing wards would be included in an alternatively configured Braintree constituency; and the Hatfield Heath, and Broad Oak and the Hallingburys wards would be transferred to the Harlow constituency from the existing Saffron Walden constituency, with Harlow including wards from three different local authorities. The Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing ward was proposed to be retained in the Epping Forest constituency, which would then be wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement.

157. The representations received regarding the proposed Brentwood constituency were mostly in opposition, but relatively few in number. We also received few representations or counter proposals regarding the Braintree constituency. Counter proposals that called for Essex to be a sub-region on its own proposed that the Maldon constituency retain the ward of Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon, and a number of representations included all of the wards from the Maldon local authority in a single constituency, as well as a number of wards from the Colchester local authority.

158. We received around 40 representations regarding the proposed Chelmsford constituency, split roughly equally between those supporting and opposing the initial proposals. Those supporting said that the Galleywood ward is the most appropriate ward to be included in the Maldon constituency, while opposing representations said that it should be retained by dividing the town of Chelmsford into two constituencies. Other representations said that the Goat Hall ward should no longer be included in the Chelmsford constituency

159. The inclusion of the Vange ward from South Basildon and East Thurrock was the only change to the existing Basildon and Billericay constituency and was largely uncontentious

160. There was little opposition to the inclusion of the whole of the Roche North and Rural ward in the proposed Rochford and Southend East constituency, and there were very few responses in relation to the proposed Rayleigh and Wickford constituency (essentially unchanged other than this ward transfer).

Revised proposals

161. Our Assistant Commissioners considered that the counter proposals and representations calling for Essex to be treated as a separate sub-region in its own right, and the views contained within them were sufficiently compelling, and they

recommended to us that Essex be treated as a sub-region on its own, rather than be paired with Suffolk, as in the initial proposals. They considered that there were numerous reasons for accepting this sub-regional change, with benefits across much of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. As previously outlined, we agreed with this recommendation and proposed Essex form its own sub-region as part of our revised proposals.

162. With Essex treated as a stand-alone sub-region, it is not possible for the Colchester, Harwich and North Essex, and Witham 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. In view of the conflicting evidence with regard to which wards should be included, or otherwise, in the Colchester constituency, our Assistant Commissioners decided to visit the area and to observe for themselves the links between the different wards and the city centre.

163. Our Assistant Commissioners noted that the River Colne divides the Mersea and 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. However, the Mersea and Pyefleet ward is currently included in the existing Harwich and North Essex constituency, whereas Stanway is currently in the Witham constituency. Furthermore, representations were clear that the Mersea and Pyefleet ward has poor links west towards the town of Witham, with the ward instead sharing a coastal and maritime character with a number of communities in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. They also noted that the River Colne has historically been a navigable river that linked the city of Colchester and its hinterland with the port of Brightlingsea. As such, they considered that the most suitable way to create a coherent pattern of constituencies across Essex would be for the Stanway ward to be included in the Witham constituency, and for the Mersea and Pyefleet ward to be included in the Harwich and North Essex constituency. They considered that this would most closely fulfil the statutory requirements of maintaining existing constituencies and local ties, despite the geographical considerations in the area.

164. Regarding the issue of the Lexden and Braiswick, and Prettygate wards, our Assistant Commissioners noted during their visit that these two areas appeared to be an integral part of Colchester, with strong transport links, close geographical proximity, historical links and community ties regarding schools and other establishments. They also considered, however, that the Lexden and Braiswick ward as a whole is geographically large, with a significant rural element, and the latter part could justifiably not be included in an urban Colchester constituency. They accordingly recommended that our initial proposals should be revised, and that this ward be split, with the three mostly urban polling districts (Colchester AQ, AS, and AT), which are divided from the rest of the ward by the A12 road and the railway line, being included in the proposed Colchester constituency, and the three rural polling districts (Colchester EJ, ET, and EU) remaining in the Harwich and

North Essex constituency. This would also allow the existing constituency boundary in this area to be retained.

165. Our Assistant Commissioners also recommended that the entirety of the Prettygate ward be included with Colchester, as it is in the existing arrangement. However, to accommodate the whole of the Prettygate ward and part of the Lexden and Braiswick ward in the Colchester constituency, it was necessary for another ward that was initially proposed to be included in the Colchester constituency to instead be transferred to the Harwich and North Essex constituency, in order to bring both constituencies within the permitted electorate range.

166. This issue was carefully considered by the Assistant Commissioners in their recommendations to us, and it was clear to us that none of the options is without negative consequences. We considered that the counter-proposal to divide the city of Colchester, including the separation of the closely-linked areas of Lexden and Prettygate, required an unnecessarily large departure from the existing constituency boundaries. We also considered that the counter proposals that included the Prettygate, and Lexden and Braiswick wards in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, were undesirable due to their close links to Colchester.

167. Based on the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners, we proposed the transfer of the ward of Old Heath and The Hythe to the Harwich and North Essex constituency. We noted that a significant portion of this ward, including all of the village of Rowhedge, is already included in the existing Harwich and North Essex constituency. Also, as the Mersea and Pyefleet ward was now proposed to remain in the Harwich and North Essex constituency, including the Old Heath & The Hythe ward would provide a stronger link between Mersea and 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. We acknowledge that a significant portion of the Old Heath and The Hythe ward is in the existing Colchester constituency and has close community ties to the city. However, this is true of any of the other options, such as the Greenstead, St. Anne's and St. John's, Highwoods, and Mile End wards, which our Assistant Commissioners also visited; 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.

168. Our initially proposed Clacton constituency was wholly uncontentious. With the change to a stand-alone Essex sub-region, however, the transfer of two wards to Clacton from the Harwich and North Essex constituency mentioned above became necessary. While this is further from the existing constituency than the initial proposals, and stretches the constituency further north, taking in parts of the A120 road, our Assistant Commissioners considered that the significant, wider benefits of the sub-regional change in other areas far outweighed the

disadvantages of these changes to the Clacton constituency, and therefore recommended this relatively small change to the constituency. We agreed and revised the initial proposals for the Clacton constituency.

169. One counter proposal transferred the Lodge ward from the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency to the Castle Point constituency. While this avoided splitting the town of Leigh, and gave more flexibility within the two Southend constituencies, it would divide the town of Rayleigh, and the ward has little to no direct transport links to the Castle Point constituency. We were therefore not persuaded to adopt this approach.

170. Our Assistant Commissioners visited the Southend and Castle Point areas. They considered that West Leigh was an integral part of Leigh-on-Sea and noted the considerable expanse of marshland and creeks that separates much of the ward from the Castle Point constituency. They also visited the Pitsea South East ward, and noted that while the A130 road lies between the communities of Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet in the ward, and the Castle Point areas to the east, the connecting A13 provides a direct transport link between the two, via the Sadlers Farm roundabout. They also noted a clear physical separation of open land between Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet and the towns of Pitsea and Basildon, and that a split ward here would bring North Benfleet and South Benfleet into a constituency together. To no longer include the West Leigh ward in the Castle Point constituency would also have the benefit of allowing more flexibility within the two Southend constituencies.

171. We considered all of the evidence and agreed with the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners. We believed that dividing the Pitsea South East ward in this instance was the right 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 wider surrounding area that overall better reflects the statutory factors. The initial proposals were strongly opposed by local residents, who demonstrated how they would break local ties; and the Lodge ward alternative was supported by only a few respondents, has very weak transport connections, and would significantly disrupt local ties in Rayleigh. We consequently considered the main alternatives put forward to be more disadvantageous.

172. The Assistant Commissioners considered that the option for the Southend West and Rochford and Southend East constituencies that took most account of the statutory factors would be to adopt the approach that kept the city centre wards together, but in the more urban Southend West constituency. They therefore recommended a constituency comprising the whole of the existing Southend West constituency except the wards of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence (which would transfer to the Rochford and Southend East constituency as in the initial proposals), with the additional inclusion of the three wards of Milton, Victoria and Kursaal. While we acknowledged it is possible to minimise change further, the Assistant Commissioners considered this was not preferable, given the less

optimal shape and accessibility of the constituencies that would result, and the strong ties of the city centre wards to each other and to the west that would be broken. In respect of the inclusion of Eastwood Park and St. Laurence in the Rochford and Southend East constituency, they noted evidence that these wards contained the residential parts of Southend-on-Sea closest to the airport, and arguments that there would therefore be value having both the airport, and those most likely to be impacted by it, represented by the same MP. While noting representations that stated these two areas have connections to Leigh, the Assistant Commissioners during their site visit to the area also felt that the A127 road does form a clear and readily identifiable boundary, and that the benefits gained overall from the distribution of wards they had recommended across the rest of the area outweighed the disadvantages.

173. Finally in this area, the Assistant Commissioners recommended that this more compact western Southend constituency be renamed Southend Central and Leigh, as they considered that this better reflected both the inclusion of the city centre wards and the distinct and strong community identity of Leigh in the west of the city. We agreed with their conclusions and proposed that the constituency be renamed.

174. Few representations or counter proposals were received regarding the proposed South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency. Our Assistant Commissioners were persuaded by the arguments to retain the two wards of Tilbury St. Chads, and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park in the Thurrock constituency, with the Chadwell St. Mary ward instead included in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency.

175. Counter proposals that called for Essex to be considered as a sub-region in its own right generally proposed a Braintree constituency that would be either unchanged from the existing constituency (apart from to realign to new local government ward boundaries), or have minor changes, with The Colnes ward being included in the Witham constituency and The Sampfords, and Felsted and Stebbing wards being included from the Saffron Walden constituency. Our Assistant Commissioners acknowledged that there were merits in the Braintree constituency being unchanged other than to realign to new local government ward boundaries. However, they considered that the changes put forward by counter proposals were preferable, as it would allow for a pattern of constituencies across the rest of Essex that more closely reflect the statutory factors, while still allowing the existing Braintree constituency to be mostly retained.

176. Overall, despite some disadvantages, such as the Uttlesford local authority being divided between three constituencies, our Assistant Commissioners accepted the counter proposals that retained the four Chelmsford wards of Writtle, Chelmsford Rural West, Broomfield and The Walthams, and Boreham and The Leighs in the Saffron Walden constituency: The Sampfords, and Felsted and Stebbing wards would be included in an alternatively configured Braintree

constituency; and the Hatfield Heath, and Broad Oak and the Hallingburys wards would be transferred to the Harlow constituency from the existing Saffron Walden constituency, with Harlow including wards from three different local authorities. The Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing ward would be retained in the Epping Forest constituency, which would then be wholly unchanged from the existing arrangement. We agreed with the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners and accordingly altered our initial proposals for these constituencies.

177. Our Assistant Commissioners noted the representations that opposed the changes to the Saffron Walden constituency. Reconfiguring the sub-regions meant that the Saffron Walden constituency no longer needed to include the two wards of Moreton and Fyfield, and High Ongar, Willingale and The Rodings, which could be retained in a Brentwood and Ongar constituency, as numerous counter proposals put forward. We accepted this revision, as it allowed for the Brentwood and Ongar constituency to be unchanged except to realign to new local government ward boundaries. As a consequence, we were able to retain the existing name of Brentwood and Ongar in our revised proposals.

178. Counter proposals called for the Maldon constituency to retain the ward of Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon, which would minimise disruption from the existing constituency, as every ward in the existing constituency would be retained and there would be the single addition of the Galleywood ward. The Assistant Commissioners found this sufficiently persuasive, and we subsequently adopted the change in our revised proposals.

179. With regard to the representations received about the proposed Chelmsford constituency, we noted that they were split roughly equally between those supporting and opposing the initial proposals. However, our Assistant Commissioners did not consider any change to the initially proposed constituency was necessary. We agreed and did not revise our proposals for this constituency.

180. The inclusion of the Vange ward from South Basildon and East Thurrock was the only change to the existing Basildon and Billericay constituency and was largely uncontentious. We agreed with the recommendations of our Assistant Commissionersto make no revisions to our initial proposals here.

Consultation on revised proposals

181. Approximately 700 representations on our revised proposals were received with regard to the Colchester, Harwich and North Essex, and Witham constituencies. Most were in opposition, but around 200 were in support.

182. Those in support argued that Prettygate and Lexden were now correctly included in Colchester, and that if one ward needed to be excluded from Colchester, Old Heath and The Hythe was the least worst option. Those

representations supporting the revised proposals also said that the estuary communities of Hythe, Rowhedge, Alresford, Wivenhoe, Brightlingsea, and Mersea were now kept together in a single constituency. Those in opposition argued that the Old Heath and The Hythe ward is an important historical area, with the old port, and Hythe station, and many links to Colchester, including simple proximity. Two petitions were received, both opposing the inclusion of the Old Heath and The Hythe ward in Harwich and North Essex.

183. One counter proposal included the Mile End ward (from Colchester) and the Stanway ward (from Witham) in Harwich and North Essex; the Old Heath and The Hythe ward was returned to Colchester; and the Mersea and Pyefleet ward was included in Witham (as in the initial proposals). Another counter proposal included the St Anne's and St John's, and Greenstead wards in Harwich and North Essex, the Stanway ward in Colchester, and the Mersea and Pyefleet ward in Witham. Many other counter proposals were received, among them those which instead excluded the Greenstead ward from Colchester. There were further counter proposals that included the Stanway and Greenstead wards in Harwich and North Essex, and the Mersea and Pyefleet ward in Witham; those which proposed a different split of Colchester; those which proposed a Colchester that is similar to the initial proposals; and those which involve further ward splits.

184. Few representations were received regarding the Harwich and North Essex, and Witham constituencies, other than regarding their relation to Colchester or to Clacton (in the case of Harwich and North Essex, as mentioned previously). Some suggested that Harwich and North Essex should simply be named North East Essex or North Essex, and that Witham be renamed Witham and West Colchester.

185. Around 90 representations were received regarding the revised Clacton constituency, almost all opposing the transfer in of the two wards of The Bentleys and Frating, and The Oakleys and Wix from the Harwich and North Essex constituency. The main thrust of this opposition was that residents here consider themselves as residing in inland wards, with links to other rural communities, and the wards would not be a suitable inclusion in a coastal constituency. One representation suggested that The Oakleys and Wix ward be split between constituencies.

186. Very few representations were received with regard to the Thurrock, South Basildon and East Thurrock, and Basildon and Billericay constituencies, although there was a request that South Basildon and East Thurrock be renamed Stanford and Pitsea.

187. We also received very few representations about the revised Braintree constituency, with no stand out themes, although one counter proposal argued for a change to Braintree and Saffron Walden. There were relatively few representations about the revised Saffron Walden constituency itself, although most were in opposition. Some of these proposed that the name be changed to

North West Essex to better reflect the totality of the constituency, much of which is not near Saffron Walden. We received two counter proposals, one calling for a small change, the other arguing that Felsted and Stebbing and The Sampfords should remain within Saffron Walden, and Boreham and The Leighs should be moved to the Witham constituency (thereby creating an orphan ward).

188. We received very few representations about the Brentwood and Ongar constituency, although one representation requested that The Rodings be kept together in the same constituency. We received around 15 representations about the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency, mostly in opposition, but no significant new evidence was raised.

189. We received significantly more representations - mostly in opposition - concerning the Chelmsford and Maldon constituencies. Many of these either mentioned both constituencies, or were submitted in connection with comments concerning other constituencies. However, these included no significant new evidence in relation to these constituencies. One counter proposal called for the Maldon constituency to be renamed Maldon and South Chelmsford.

190. We received very few representations about the Epping Forest constituency, and only a slightly higher number regarding Harlow. Although most were in opposition, there was also support. We received fewer than ten representations with regard to the Castle Point constituency: whilst there was some opposition, there was also praise for the split of the Pitsea South East ward, in view of the ward's separation from Basildon.

191. We received around 400 further representations concerning the Southend constituencies, with a slight numerical majority opposed to our revised proposals. Those in support agreed that the A127 is a definitive boundary between the proposed Southend Central and Leigh, and Rochford and Southend East constituencies, considered the shapes to be logical, and supported keeping the three city centre wards together in a predominantly urban constituency. Almost all those in opposition argued that including the St Luke's ward in Southend West, with no other changes, is the best solution on the basis of the minimal change involved. Those in opposition also suggest that the Eastwood Park and St Laurence wards have strong links to Leigh. Others stated that of the three wards proposed be moved from Southend East to Southend Central and Leigh, two are either wholly or largely east of The Pier and Victoria Avenue, which they contend are the natural borders between East and West Southend.

192. We received over 60 representations specifically about the Rochford and Southend East constituency, largely in support. Those in support argued that the revised proposals are a better reflection of their area, in that the mostly rural constituency contains more rural elements. However, some representations highlighted the difference between the Kursaal ward and Leigh, asserting they should not be included together in the same constituency. We received some

proposals for alternate names, including Southend East and Rochford, or Outer Southend and Rochford.

Final recommendations

193. In view of the continued significant opposition to our proposals in the Colchester and Southend constituencies, we undertook a further site visit to the areas.

194. Driving along the A127 it appeared that this road did form a significant boundary between the Eastwood Park ward - in particular - and the St Laurence ward with the rest of Southend. There are minimal crossings southwards and on entry into the Eastwood Park ward most of the roads appeared to run northwards or east/west, and not south to Southend. Also, on the south side of the A127 there was considerable residential development, whereas on the north side of the road, at least closest to the road, the land use was mainly industrial. The A127 continues as a boundary between the St Laurence ward and the rest of Southend. The proximity of Southend Airport to the A127 was observed (the airport runway actually crosses the boundary between the Roche South ward in Rochford and the St Laurence ward), and the A127 continues to mark the boundary between St Laurence and the Prittlewell ward to its south. However, the south east of the ward was observed to have closer links with the rest of Southend via the Prittlewell ward. Driving through the St Luke's ward it was considered that this ward was well linked to the Victoria and Kursaal wards, although it was also considered to have strong links to the St Laurence ward via the A1159 Eastern Avenue, which is effectively the extension of the A127.

195. Another key purpose of the site visit was to ascertain the links between the Milton, Victoria and Kursaal wards which had been stated to form the core of the city centre, and what might be considered the boundary between West and East Southend (as it had also been claimed). It seemed clear that Milton ward is the core of Southend, containing the main shopping and retail centre. The Victoria ward to the north was very close to the centre, as was the Kursaal ward, despite being separated from Milton by the A1160 road. It was noted that the three main railway stations were located in each of these three wards: Southend Central in Milton, Southend Victoria in Victoria, and Southend East located just inside the Kursaal ward. The three wards also come together at the A1160 roundabout, just metres from the main shopping district, and the pleasure beach extends seamlessly from the Milton ward across to Kursaal. We considered that the argument that the three wards were, in effect, the city centre carried strength. Although reflecting minimal change, the argument for the inclusion of two of these wards in the much more rural Rochford and Southend East constituency appeared to us to be less persuasive when considering the local ties of these three wards to each other, based on the observations.

196. We noted the opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives. However, as in our revised proposals, we concluded that, despite not being the minimal change option, the inclusion of the Eastwood Park, St Laurence and St Luke's wards in Rochford and Southend East, and the inclusion of the Millton, Victoria and Kursaal wards together in Southend Central and Leigh better reflected the other statutory factors of local ties and physical geography. We were not persuaded that there was a compelling case for alternative names to those we put forward in our revised proposals, and therefore propose no further revision to the Rochford and Southend East, and Southend Central and Leigh constituencies.

197. The site visit to the Colchester area involved the drive through the Stanway ward towards Colchester. This ward appeared largely rural in nature, except to the north in closer proximity to Colchester. The City of Colchester sign appears at the boundary between the Stanway and Prettygate wards. Driving through Prettygate and into Lexden and Braiswick, the links between these wards and the centre of Colchester were evident. Both are older and similar in nature to the centre of Colchester, particularly Lexden, which appears to be more historical in nature.

198. Driving through Mile End ward confirmed its position as being part of the core of Colchester, containing the main railway station and hospital. The Highwoods ward in the north of the city contains much new housing development, including Colchester Business Park, and the drive through this ward into the St Anne's and St John's ward was a seamless continuation of the built environment, although St Anne's and St John's is clearly more like 'old' Colchester.

199. Similarly seamless was the drive from St Anne's and St John's ward through the Greenstead ward. When driving south west along Avon Road, the built-up area of Colchester ended abruptly on the left (east) with a substantial rural element and higher terrain in the adjacent Wivenhoe ward. It appeared clear that Greenstead (which included Hythe railway station) looked westwards to Colchester.

200. On driving into the Old Heath and The Hythe ward, it was very evident that the north of the ward, which is currently in the Colchester constituency, and which comprises Hythe and Old Heath, is indeed very much a part of Colchester. There is a mix of substantial new residential building - much of it highrise - and much older, more traditional neighbourhoods that appeared to bear a close resemblance to the rest of Colchester and the city centre: the area had a distinctly urban feel. Driving south through open countryside, however, the existing constituency boundary was crossed, before arriving at the community of Rowhedge, which is currently in the existing Harwich and North Essex constituency. The southern part of the ward is therefore noticeably rural and shares many characteristics with the Mersea and Pyefleet ward to its south, which was also visited. Though these observations might support the case for a split of the ward, this is not feasible numerically: the electorate of the revised Colchester constituency is already 76,843, allowing for only around another 200 electors to be included, but there are almost 8,600

electors of the Old Heath and The Hythe ward (with most of these residing in the urban part that we would otherwise look to include in Colchester).

201. We fully acknowledge and understand the views of those who consider that the Old Heath and The Hythe ward is part of Colchester. However, the electorates in this area do not permit the inclusion of the Old Heath and The Hythe ward in the Colchester constituency without excluding another ward with at least as strong ties to the city. We therefore propose no change to our revised proposals for the Colchester, Witham, and Harwich and North Essex constituencies.

202. With regard to the remaining constituencies in Essex, in light of the generally low level of response to our revised proposals, and mix of support and opposition amongst those, we do not propose further change to our revised proposals.

203. Our final recommendations for Essex are therefore for constituencies of: **Basildon and Billericay; Braintree; Brentwood and Ongar; Castle Point; Chelmsford; Clacton; Colchester; Epping Forest; Harlow; Harwich and North Essex; Maldon; Rayleigh and Wickford; Rochford and Southend East; Saffron Walden; South Basildon and East Thurrock; Southend Central and Leigh; Thurrock; and Witham.** The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final recommendations for the North West region

Issue: Make final decisions and agree final report text in respect of constituencies in the North West region following the 2023 Review.

Recommendation: That you agree to the draft final report text appearing at **Annex A**, or agree such amendments to it as you consider appropriate in light of the evidence received throughout the review.

Background: The third and final statutory consultation period of the 2023 Review ended on 5 December 2022. We received 2350 responses specific to the North West region in this phase, giving a total of 9336 responses for the region throughout the review.

As with other regions, this paper serves to briefly highlight the main issues that arose in the responses on this region in the most recent phase of consultation. To maximise the efficient use of less secretariat resource in turning Commissioner decisions into the actual final report, substantive consideration and decisions in relation to each sub-region and constituency have been drafted at Annex A in the form they would appear as actual final report text for publication. The final decisions provisionally set out there reflect the initial view of the Lead Commissioner for the region: each will be discussed during the meeting, to ensure the Commission as a whole is content with the decisions and reasoning set out, or to agree appropriate amendments. The remainder of this cover paper highlights the areas and decisions that have been particularly contentious and/or finely balanced, so that the Commission can apportion their available time for analysis accordingly.

Region-wide and national party responses: Three of the qualifying political parties in England supported most of the boundaries and names set out in the revised proposals report in their entirety. We did not receive a representation from the Green Party in response to the consultation on the revised proposals.

The Conservative Party preferred the initial proposals for Cumbria and Lancashire, but accepted the remainder of the revised proposals for the North West region, apart from proposing ward splits in the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale, and the Brierfield East and Clover Hill wards. They proposed other ward changes in the Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, and Pendle and Clitheroe constituencies if the revised proposals are maintained, and suggested the Southport constituency be renamed Southport and Douglas.

The Labour Party suggested a counter proposal in Cumbria to avoid the division of the town of Workington between constituencies. They also made a separate proposal to maintain the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale ward in a Cumbrian constituency. They accept and support the remainder of the revised proposals for the

North West region, apart from a change of name for the proposed Mid Cheshire constituency to become Northwich and Winsford.

The Liberal Democrat Party strongly welcome the revised proposals and wholly support the remainder of the revised proposals for the North West region, apart from a change in Cumbria to avoid the division of the town of Workington.

Aside from those provided by the qualifying political parties, there were no significant representations or counter-proposals at the revised proposals for the whole region.

Cumbria and Lancashire

The decision to alter the initial proposals with regard to Cumbria were supported by many, particularly in the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, but opposed from the Penrith and Solway constituency. The Conservative Party favoured the retention of the initial proposals.

Concern was raised by many, and in the counter proposals suggested by the Labour and Liberal Democrat Parties, about the division of the port of Workington, with calls for the Seaton and Northside ward to be included in the Whitehaven and Workington constituency, or for the ward to be divided. This would require a consequential change affecting the Keswick ward and potentially the Crummock and Derwent ward. Both Labour and Conservative Parties support either the inclusion of the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale ward in the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, or that the ward be split.

In Lancashire, the Conservative Party preferred the initial proposals, despite the revised proposals maintaining more constituencies unchanged. They suggest the Brierfield East and Clover Hill ward be split between the Pendle and Clitheroe, and Burnley constituencies. They also propose changes to the Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, and Pendle and Clitheroe constituencies, around the Whalley area,

Elsewhere in Lancashire, there was continued objection in the representations, although some support, for the revised Ribble Valley, and Pendle and Clitheroe constituencies. There was also both support and some opposition to the revised Burnley constituency.

One significant area of objection concerned the inclusion of the Croston, Mawdsley and Euxton South, and Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard wards in the South Ribble constituency. These wards are currently divided between the Chorley and South Ribble constituencies and in the initial proposals, the whole of these wards were included in the Chorley constituency. The inclusion of the wards in South Ribble revised proposals allowed a configuration of constituencies across south Lancashire that closely matches the existing configuration of constituencies.

There continued to be calls for the Rufford ward to be included within the West Lancashire constituency rather than the Southport constituency and that the wards of Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, Rufford, and Tarleton, should be kept together. We had proposed this configuration as we considered it allowed for a better configuration of constituencies across there North West.

Merseyside and Cheshire

We received relatively few responses covering the constituencies in Merseyside and Liverpool and St Helens, apart from the issue of Southport. There was support for the two Warrington constituencies, and support, although some opposition, to the inclusion of the Lymm in the Tatton constituency and the splitting of the Lymm North and Thelwall ward between constituencies. Elsewhere in Cheshire (apart from Chester) there were few issues We received a considerable amount of support for the new Mid Cheshire constituency, although there were also calls, but no groundswell of support, to change its name to Northwich and Winsford, and further calls to rename the Runcorn and Helsby constituency, but no consensus on what that name should be.

The division of Chester along the River Dee, with the inclusion the Handbridge Park and Lache wards in the Chester South and Eddisbury constituency continued to be opposed, although it was widely acknowledged that little could be done here without multiple ward splits and a reconfiguration of constituencies here and on the Wirral. There continued to be objections to the splitting of the Upton ward between the Wallasey and Wirral West constituencies, with suggestions that the Moreton West and Saughall Massie ward instead be split, and that Wirral West be renamed Wirral Deeside. There was also some objection to the Ellesmere Port and Bromborough constituency which crossed between Cheshire West and Chester, and the Wirral, with some calls for the Willaston and Thornton ward to be split to retain Little Sutton in the Ellesmere Port and Bromborough constituency.

Greater Manchester

There was support for constituencies across the whole of the metropolitan county, although there were some key areas where opposition continued. However, the Leigh and Atherton, and Makerfield constituencies, which had generated so many representations of objection appear to no longer be an area of contention following the splitting of two wards here. There continued to be opposition to the inclusion of the town of Walkden in the proposed Bolton South and Walkden constituency, particularly from the MP for Worsley and Eccles South, Barbara Keely, although any change here would have ramifications across the whole of western Greater Manchester. There was also some opposition to the inclusion of Swinton and Pendlebury in the proposed Salford, and Worsley and Eccles constituencies

The proposals for Tameside and Odham were largely welcomed, although there was a much supported call for the Oldham West and Royton constituency to also include Chadderton in the name of the constituency. There was some opposition from the Burnage ward about its inclusion in the Gorton and Denton constituency. However, it could not be included in Manchester Withington without significant knock-on effects elsewhere.

The biggest issue in Greater Manchester concerns the splitting of the town of Middleton, with two wards included in the proposed Heywood constituency, and two in the proposed Manchester Blackley constituency. Although it is not feasible to include the whole of the town in a single constituency without very significant ramifications elsewhere, it is suggested that renaming the constituencies Heywood and Middleton North, and Blackley and Middleton South might be welcomed locally.

North West

1. The North West currently has 75 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 33 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 28 constituencies currently fall below the permitted range, while the electorates of 14 constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by two, to 73.
2. The North West comprises the counties of Cumbria, Lancashire (including the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool), the unitary authority areas of Cheshire: Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington, and the metropolitan areas of Greater Manchester and Merseyside (which are covered by metropolitan boroughs).
3. We appointed two Assistant Commissioners for the North West — Andy Brennan QPM and David Brown QFSM — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence directly from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
 - Manchester: 3-4 March 2022
 - Liverpool: 7-8 March 2022
 - Chester: 10-11 March 2022
 - Preston: 14-15 March 2022
 - Kendal: 17-18 March 2022

Sub-division of the region

4. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the North West of 5,222,612 results in it being entitled to 73 constituencies, a reduction of two. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
5. The distribution of electors across the three counties and two metropolitan areas of the North West region is such that allocating a whole number of

constituencies to each county and metropolitan area, while keeping each constituency within the permitted electorate range, is not possible.

6. 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, we could not consider it as a sub-region in its own right and it was therefore necessary for Cumbria to be paired with another county. Our options for pairing Cumbria with another county were limited by the Irish Sea to the west, and the border with Scotland to the north. Since we are not proposing that any regional boundaries should be crossed unless we have received compelling reasons to do so, we did not propose that Cumbria be paired with Northumberland or County Durham in the North East region, or North Yorkshire in the Yorkshire and the Humber region. We noted that Lancashire (with Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool) has an electorate of 1,114,043. With a combined electorate of 1,503,760, a sub-region of Cumbria and Lancashire would be mathematically entitled to 20.49 constituencies and would allow for 20 whole constituencies to be allocated to the sub-region, albeit with electorates that would be at the upper end of the permitted electorate range. We therefore proposed an allocation of 20 constituencies to the sub-region of Cumbria and Lancashire.
7. The electorate of the metropolitan area of Merseyside, of 1,049,947, results in a mathematical entitlement of 14.31 constituencies. However, 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 which are 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 which spans the River Mersey between the Wirral and the City of Liverpool. We noted that in previous reviews, the crossing of the River Mersey had been strongly opposed, so we proposed to cross the Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester boundary and treated Merseyside and the Cheshire Unitary authorities as a sub-region. Their combined electorate of 1,877,361 results in a mathematical entitlement of 25.58 constituencies, giving an allocation of 26 whole constituencies. We also proposed a second cross-county boundary constituency within this sub-region, using the natural geographic boundary of the River Mersey to bisect the Borough of Halton.

8. Despite considering Lancashire and Merseyside in separate sub-regions, we proposed a constituency which crossed the county – and sub-region – boundary, combining four wards of the District of West Lancashire with the town of Southport. Although this crossing is not required by the electorates, we considered that this allowed us to better reflect both local ties and the boundaries of existing constituencies, and results in a more appropriate pattern of constituencies across much of the North West region.
9. We noted that the electorate of Greater Manchester – of 2,000,429 – results in a mathematical entitlement of 27.26 constituencies. As such, we were able to allocate Greater Manchester 27 whole constituencies, which is the same as its existing allocation, and that it could be considered as a sub-region in its own right, with no requirement for any constituencies to cross the boundary of the metropolitan area.
10. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. We did receive some objections to crossing the boundary between Southport in Merseyside and the Borough of West Lancashire, with suggestions that the crossing of the local authority boundaries should be elsewhere. We also received counter proposals that crossed the boundaries of Greater Manchester, which effectively resulted in there being no sub-regions in the North West.
11. In formulating the revised proposals, while we acknowledged the opposition in some of the representations to the crossing between Southport and West Lancashire, we considered there were benefits of the crossing for the region as a whole and we did not recommend changing the sub-region groupings for the revised proposals.
12. In response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions to those we adopted in our revised proposals. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:
 - Cumbria and Lancashire (including Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool, with additionally, the crossing between Southport and West Lancashire);
 - Merseyside (including the Wirral), Halton, and the two unitary authorities of Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester;

- Greater Manchester

Cumbria and Lancashire (including Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool)

Initial proposals

13. Of the six existing constituencies in Cumbria, none were within the permitted range and it was necessary to cross the county boundary with Lancashire. Of the 16 existing constituencies in Lancashire, seven were within the permitted range, with two constituencies above the range, and seven under. The pairing of Cumbria with Lancashire as a sub-region results in an allocation of 20 constituencies, a reduction of two
14. Under our initial proposals the electorate of the City of Carlisle was such that the ward of Dalston and Burgh was included in the Workington constituency, and no further changes were proposed to the Carlisle constituency. We proposed a Workington constituency that is more closely aligned with the boundaries of the Allerdale district than the existing constituency and contained all the wards of Allerdale district, except the Crummock and Derwent Valley, and the Keswick wards, plus the Dalston and Burgh ward, as mentioned above
15. We proposed a Westmorland and Eden constituency, which contained the entirety of Eden district, and from South Lakeland district the wards of Sedburgh & Kirkby Lonsdale, Kendal Rural, and the five wards which constitute the town of Kendal itself. The Barrow and Furness constituency was extended eastwards across the Leven Estuary in order to avoid significant disruption. This was therefore largely the same as the existing constituency, but now included the Cartmel and Grange wards, and no longer included the Broughton & Coniston ward, which was included in the proposed Copeland and The Western Lakes constituency. This was similar to the existing Copeland constituency, but was extended eastwards to include the Broughton and Coniston, Ambleside and Grasmere, and Windermere wards. We proposed the division of the Bowness and Levens ward between the Copeland and the Western Lakes, and Morecambe and South Lakeland constituencies, so as not to divide Lake Windermere between constituencies.

16. Our proposed Morecambe and South Lakeland constituency crossed the county boundary between Cumbria and Lancashire and additionally included the Burton and Crooklands, and Arnside and Milnthorpe wards. We considered the existing Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency to be the most suitable for extension across the Cumbria and Lancashire county boundary, and, aside from the addition of the Cumbrian wards, the bulk of the constituency remains largely unchanged. We included the Upper Lune Valley and both the Skerton East and Skerton West wards in the Lancaster constituency, which is significantly different from the existing Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency and which would no longer extend across the River Wyre into Fleetwood. The town of Fleetwood was included in our proposed Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency, which would also contain the settlements of Cleveleys and Thornton.
17. In order to increase the electorate of the existing Blackpool South constituency we proposed that it be extended northwards to include the Claremont, Layton, Park, and Warbreck wards. We proposed relatively minor change to the existing Fylde constituency, but included three wards that comprise the town of Poulton-le-Fylde. We proposed that the Preston constituency should include the Garrison, Sharoe Green, Greyfriars, and Cadley wards, thereby including the Fulwood area, and that the two City of Preston wards of Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton be included within the Ribble Valley constituency. This constituency was significantly reconfigured and would no longer include most of the town of Bamber Bridge, nor the wards of East Whalley, Read and Simonstone, Whalley and Painter Wood, and Billington and Langho, which were included in our proposed Hyndburn constituency. This is largely the same arrangement as the existing constituency, but would no longer include wards from the Borough of Rossendale.
18. Although the existing constituencies of Hyndburn, Rossendale and Darwen, Blackburn, Chorley, South Ribble, and West Lancashire were able to remain unchanged, other than realigning constituency boundaries with changes to local government ward boundaries, we considered that maintaining all six of these constituencies unchanged would result in significant disruption across Lancashire and not best reflect the statutory factors. We therefore proposed a number of changes to the existing configuration of constituencies. Our proposed Blackburn constituency was otherwise unchanged apart from the realignment of the constituency boundary in the south to reflect local government ward changes, thereby

aligning the constituency boundary with that of the town's southern boundary, along the M65, and no longer dividing the town of Blackburn.

19. The existing constituencies of Burnley and Pendle required additional electors to bring them within the permitted range. We therefore included the three wards comprising Briercliffe, and Lanehead in the Pendle constituency, and extended the Burnley constituency south by including the five easternmost wards of the Borough of Rossendale and renamed it Burnley and Bacup. Following these proposed changes, the existing Rossendale and Darwen constituency was reconfigured to bring it within the permitted electorate range with the inclusion of the Greenfield and Worsley wards. We also proposed the inclusion of the Adlington and Anderton, and Chorley North East wards, from the Borough of Chorley, and renamed the constituency West Pennine Moors. In addition to the changes mentioned, we proposed that the Chorley constituency would include the Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard ward, and the Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South ward, thereby resulting in a Chorley constituency which remains contained wholly within the Borough of Chorley.
20. We proposed that the existing Southport constituency be extended across the county boundary into its rural hinterland within Lancashire. Although the existing Southport constituency could remain wholly unchanged, we consider that this would result in significant disruptive knock-on effects throughout the North West, with the consequences extending across Lancashire, Merseyside and Cheshire. The four Borough of West Lancashire wards of North Meols, Hesketh-with-Becconsall, Tarleton, and Rufford were therefore included in the proposed Southport constituency as we considered that these wards were already somewhat separated from the remainder of Lancashire by the River Ribble to the north, and the River Asland/River Douglas to the east. Our proposed South Ribble constituency contained the entirety of the town of Leyland, and most of the town of Bamber Bridge. Our proposals also allowed for a West Lancashire constituency which was wholly unchanged.

Consultation on the initial proposals

21. The initial proposals in Cumbria were supported in their entirety by some respondents, claiming they better reflected both local government ties and the existing constituencies across Cumbria than did any alternatives provided. However, opposition significantly outweighed the support.

22. There was some opposition to the inclusion of the Dalston and Burgh ward in the Workington constituency and proposals to retain the ward within the Carlisle constituency, at the expense of the Brampton and Fellside ward, or to split the Dalston and Burgh ward in some way. There were calls to change the name of the proposed Westmorland and Eden constituency to Penrith, Eden and Kendal, and the proposed Copeland and the Western Lakes constituency was described as 'geographically coherent'. The proposed Barrow and Furness constituency also received some support, despite assertions that the Cartmel Peninsula had nothing in common with Barrow.
23. However, two significant counter proposals and a large number of members of the public, provided evidence that the initial proposals had little to no regard to the physical geography or communities within Cumbria. Strong views were expressed that we had fundamentally misunderstood the geographical and demographic characteristics of the sub-region, and that our proposals in Cumbria, with the exception of Carlisle, were flawed and should not stand. There were particular concerns that the initial proposals paid no attention to what was the highest mountain range in England, and which formed a significant border between communities. It was also claimed that Kendal and Penrith have never before been in a constituency together. The counter proposals in opposition both followed the same fundamental approach, and instead of dividing the existing Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, kept most of it intact, with no inclusion of wards to the east of the Lake District with Whitehaven or Workington. These two towns would instead be included in the same constituency, while in the north of the county a constituency would stretch from Alston in the east to the Solway Firth in the west, including the town of Penrith, but none of the southern part of the Eden Valley.
24. The requirement for a cross-county constituency between Cumbria and Lancashire was broadly accepted, although there were differing views on how this could be achieved with both support and opposition to the proposed Morecambe and South Lakeland constituency.
25. There was support for the two wards of Skerton East and Skerton West to be united within the Morecambe and South Lakeland constituency. Conversely, others claimed that Skerton was part of Lancaster, including a petition in which 120 of the 121 signatories identifying as residents of

Skerton said that the wards should be together, but within the Lancaster constituency. There was further support for the exclusion from the Lancaster constituency of the town of Fleetwood. As the constituency would contain a geographically larger component from the Wyre borough than currently, it was proposed that its name be changed to reflect this. It was also suggested that the Elswick and Little Eccleston ward should be included within the same constituency as the Great Eccleston ward, which under our initial proposals were separated.

26. With regard to the Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde constituencies, relatively few representations were received with both support and proportionally little opposition. Of the representations that opposed the initial proposals, the majority came from residents of the Carleton ward who wished to be included in the same constituency as Poulton-le-Fylde, instead of Blackpool North and Fleetwood.
27. The south and east of Lancashire was one of the areas in the North West region that received the most representations, 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 rather than the Greyfriars and Sharoe Green wards, which comprise the Fulwood area, as in the existing constituency. Evidence was provided that the wards of Greyfriars and Sharoe Green were of a fundamentally different character to the rest of urban Preston
28. As mentioned previously, the existing constituencies of Hyndburn, Rossendale and Darwen, Blackburn, Chorley, South Ribble, and West Lancashire were all able to remain unchanged, other than to realign constituency boundaries with changes to local government ward boundaries. Although the only change we had proposed to the Blackburn constituency was the realignment of the constituency boundary in the south to reflect local government ward changes, there was substantial and overwhelming opposition from the Blackburn South and Lower Darwen ward, with the residents of the ward being unequivocal that they belong with Darwen, rather than Blackburn.
29. We received a large number of representations from east and South Lancashire. The proposals for the Ribble Valley and Pendle constituency were largely in opposition. Many respondents suggested that there were

no community ties between the Billington and Langho, East Whalley, Read and Simonstone, and Whalley and Painter Wood wards and the town of Accrington (which is included in the Hyndburn constituency), and that Whalley is intrinsically linked more to Clitheroe and the wider Ribble Valley than to Hyndburn. Many said that our proposals would arbitrarily divide the town of Whalley by retaining the Whalley Nethertown ward in the Ribble Valley constituency, whilst others stated that the Sabden area also had links to Whalley, and that all these areas should be considered as one in any revised proposals. The inclusion of the town and area around Bacup in a new constituency centred on Burnley was largely opposed.

30. The representations received for the proposed constituencies in the rest of south Lancashire were almost wholly in opposition. The West Pennine Moors constituency in particular was almost universally opposed and described as, 'anomalous'. It was claimed that this constituency would arbitrarily divide both Chorley and Rossendale and include parts of both boroughs with areas of Darwen, with which many respondents said they had little to nothing in common with. It was claimed there were no significant links of either transport or community between the Adlington and Anderton ward, the Chorley North East ward, and Blackburn with Darwen, and that these wards looked unequivocally to Chorley. However, there was some limited support for the approach taken here.
31. The South Ribble constituency was broadly well received at initial proposals, despite the newly proposed constituency including wards from two local authorities. However, it was suggested that the Walton-le-Dale East and Walton-le-Dale West wards should both be included within the South Ribble constituency, and that town of Bamber Bridge should be united in Ribble Valley, with both Bamber Bridge East and West wards being included in the same constituency as the Coupe Green & Gregson Lane ward.
32. There were some calls for the Rufford ward to be included within the West Lancashire constituency rather than the Southport constituency as proposed, with detailed evidence provided that the wards of Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, Rufford, and Tarleton, comprised the 'Northern Parishes' and should be kept together. There were also calls for the Southport constituency to be renamed Southport and Douglas, in order to reference areas in both local authorities.

Revised Proposals

33. Our Assistant Commissioners decided to visit Cumbria. They considered that there were, in effect, only two solutions for the larger part of Cumbria, which would have to be based on which of these seemingly mutually exclusive approaches better reflected the statutory criteria (aside from our proposed Carlisle constituency). These two main options proved to be a fundamentally difficult choice between different statutory factors: the initial proposals were arguably stronger with regard to respecting existing local government boundaries, while the alternative put forward would arguably be stronger in relation to community ties. Neither approach could be reasonably weighed over the other in regard to the existing constituencies, due to the scale of change in both, which required either the wholesale reconfiguration of the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency (as initially proposed), or at least one constituency having to stretch east-west across the whole county (in the alternative). None of the counter proposals received would be without disadvantages, but in view of the evidence received, neither were the initial proposals. Our Assistant Commissioners considered, however, that the initial proposals might not be the option to best respect the statutory criteria and proposed a pattern of constituencies that was a mixture of those proposed in the counter proposals. We agreed with the pattern proposed by our Assistant Commissioners, and adopted it as part of our revised proposals. Details of the reconfigured constituencies are set out below.
34. In the south west of the county, we decided to split the Broughton and Coniston ward along the boundary between the existing Barrow and Furness constituency, and the existing Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, thereby retaining an existing constituency boundary, and which was required for the alternative scheme to be adopted. However, we did not feel there were sufficient grounds to split the Black Combe and Scafell ward, which was proposed by some respondents, and we included the ward, and the Millom ward in the Barrow and Furness constituency, although this constituency would cross three local authorities and contain a split ward. The northern boundary of this constituency would follow the River Mite as far as Eskdale, where it would then follow the ridgelines of Illgill Head, Scafell Pike, and Great End. We proposed that the remainder of the split Broughton & Coniston ward should sit within a proposed 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. We considered that our revised proposals addressed many of the objections to the initial proposals in this area, as they avoided a division of the South Lakeland local authority and restored the majority of the existing Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency.

35. We proposed a Whitehaven and Workington constituency that would contain the entirety of Copeland borough, aside from the two wards in the Barrow and Furness constituency. It would also include both the Crummock and Derwent Valley, and Keswick wards, which are part of the existing Copeland constituency and included the remaining Allerdale borough wards south of the River Derwent.
36. We proposed no change to the Carlisle constituency and that the Dalston and Burgh ward be now included in a Penrith and Solway constituency, which would include all the remaining wards in the Eden Valley 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 as far as Broughton Cross, and then follow the ward boundaries to the south of Cockermouth, and the north of Keswick. This constituency would include areas from three local authorities, and the Dalston and Burgh ward would continue to be an 'orphan ward'. This constituency would stretch east to west across Cumbria, from Alston to the Solway Firth, an outcome that the initial proposals specifically sought to avoid, but we considered that it allowed for the formulation of constituencies across Cumbria overall that would better reflect the community identity evidence received. We considered that while our revised proposals for Cumbria may initially seem to be worse than the initial proposals with regard to local government boundaries, the incoming unitary authorities for Cumbria, which will replace the current authorities, will mitigate these concerns to a large extent.
37. We revised the cross-county constituency between Cumbria and Lancashire to propose that the existing constituency name of Morecambe and Lunesdale should be retained: the Arnside and Milnthorpe, Burton and Crooklands, and Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale wards would be the Cumbrian component of the constituency that would cross between

Cumbria and Lancashire. Our Assistant Commissioners visited the Morecambe and Lancaster areas and concluded that the Skerton East and Skerton West wards should both be included in the Lancaster constituency, which was renamed Lancaster and Wyre. We agreed with their recommendation. We were not persuaded that the Elswick and Little Eccleston ward should be included within the same constituency as the Great Eccleston ward, as this would result in both an orphan ward (Elswick and Little Eccleston), and the proposed Lancaster and Wyre constituency would contain elements of three local authorities.

38. In Blackpool and The Fylde, despite some opposition from residents of the Carleton ward who wished to be included with Poulton-le-Fylde, overall, the initial proposals were not particularly contentious in this area and we proposed no further change to the composition and names of the three constituencies of Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde.
39. Following the site visits by our Assistant Commissioners, we accepted that the Greyfriars and Sharoe Green wards, which comprised Fulwood, were suburban and of a fundamentally different character to the remainder of Preston. We therefore proposed that the Preston constituency should include the Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton wards, which our Assistant Commissioners had also visited and which appeared to them to be more akin to the urban core of Preston, and included the Greyfriars and Sharoe Green wards in the Ribble Valley constituency.
40. In the south of Lancashire, the representations were overwhelmingly in opposition to the initial proposals. The West Pennine Moors constituency in particular was almost universally opposed. The existing constituencies of Hyndburn, Rossendale and Darwen, Blackburn, Chorley, South Ribble, and West Lancashire were all able to remain unchanged, other than to realign constituency boundaries, and we subsequently proposed a revised configuration that more closely matched the existing constituencies, with the four existing constituencies of Blackburn, Chorley, Hyndburn, and Rossendale with Darwen all remaining unchanged, apart from the need to realign constituencies with new local government ward boundaries. This would also remove any requirement to split the Blackburn South and Lower Darwen ward, as had been proposed by some. We proposed that the Burnley constituency would be largely the same as the existing constituency, but in order to bring the constituency within the permitted

range, it would also include the two Pendle District wards of Brierfield East and Clover Hill, and Brierfield West and Reedley.

41. Maintaining the existing configuration of constituencies in the south of Lancashire also resulted in less change to the South Ribble constituency than in the initial proposals. We proposed that the constituency should continue to contain the two Chorley wards of Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South, and Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard, subject to their realignment to reflect local government ward changes, and the wards currently within the constituency that are within South Ribble borough, along with the Faringdon East and Faringdon West wards. This configuration would allow the Ribble Valley constituency to include both the Walton-le-Dale East and Walton-le-Dale West wards within the same constituency, and would also mean both Bamber Bridge East and West wards would be united and included in the Ribble Valley constituency along with the Coupe Green and Gregson Lane ward, which also contains some of the settlement's urban extent.
42. Our Assistant Commissioners visited the Ribble Valley, Pendle, and Burnley area. They were persuaded by the representations, and their observations, that suggested that the Whalley and Clitheroe areas were similar in nature, sharing rural characteristics and good transport and communication links, and that the wards comprising the town of Whalley and the surrounding areas had little in common with Hyndburn. We therefore accepted their recommendations and proposed a Pendle and Clitheroe constituency that would contain 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. The existing Ribble Valley constituency would therefore be significantly altered; and we acknowledged that the inclusion of Clitheroe and the Whalley area in Pendle and Clitheroe, instead of a Ribble Valley constituency might not be popular with some residents. However, we believed that our proposals here went some way to address concerns expressed in representations from both Hyndburn and Whalley, that the two areas have little to nothing in common and that the Pendle and Clitheroe constituency would contain a large enough Ribble Valley element that there would be no question of the area being 'overlooked', as was argued in some representations.
43. We were mindful of the calls for the Rufford ward to be included within the West Lancashire constituency rather than the Southport constituency and

that others contended that the wards that comprised the 'Northern Parishes' should be kept together. However, it remained our view that there is no suitable solution for the North West region without crossing the county boundary between Southport and the Borough of West Lancashire, although the existing Southport constituency can remain unchanged. We therefore made no further changes to the Southport and West Lancashire constituencies, and were not persuaded that the Southport constituency needed to be renamed.

Consultation on the revised proposals

44. There continued to be opposition to the exclusion of the Dalston and Burgh ward from the Carlisle constituency, with further suggestions to include it at the expense of either the Brampton and Fellside ward or the Longtown and The Border ward. There has also been a call to amend the name of the constituency to Carlisle and the Borders.
45. With regard to the revised Barrow and Furness constituency, it was suggested that Eskdale and Ravenglass look north to Whitehaven not south towards Millom, and there were calls for the splitting of the Black Combe and Scafell ward along the existing parish boundary of Eskdale Parish to resolve this. There was also a call to rename this constituency South West Cumbria to reflect its new composition.
46. We received a large number of representations informing us that by not including the Seaton and Northside ward in the revised Whitehaven and Workington constituency, the town of Workington was being effectively divided. A number of options to resolve this were proposed, including splitting the Seaton and Northside ward. There were suggestions that Keswick is intrinsically more linked to Penrith or Kendal than it is to Workington or Whitehaven, and calls to rename this constituency West Cumbria. The non-inclusion of the Seaton and Northside ward with the remainder of Workington has now become one of the largest single issues in the North West in the consultation on the revised proposals.
47. There were objections to the proposed Penrith and Solway constituency which stretched east-west across Cumbria, with many highlighting this fact and issues relating to physical geography, lack of communities and poor transport connections within the proposed constituency. The Alston ward

was often cited as an issue, having limited or no connection to the rest of the constituency. Conversely, we received considerable support for our revised Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, including from many who had objected to our initial proposals and who were of the view that we had 'got it right' this time.

48. As in previous consultation stages, the key opposition to our proposed cross-county Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency came from Cumbria, from where there were objections to the inclusion of wards - namely Arnside and Milnthorpe, Burton and Crooklands, and Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale - in the constituency. We received a representation calling for the division of the Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward, as well as calls for the ward to be retained within the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency.
49. Few representations were received to our revised proposals regarding the Lancaster and Wyre constituency, and there was support for the inclusion of the Skerton West and Skerton East wards in the same constituency. We had made no changes to the Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde constituencies in our revised proposals. Although there remained some opposition to the inclusion of the Carleton ward in Blackpool North and Fleetwood, and a number of alternative names being proposed (although no groundswell of support for name changes), overall there were very few representations from any of these constituencies at revised proposals.
50. In Preston, there was some opposition to our exchanging of the Fishwick and Frenchwood, and Ribbleton wards with Greyfriars ward and Sharoe Green wards, which comprise the Fulwood area and which we included in the Ribble Valley constituency in our revised proposals, but there was also significant support.
51. In South Lancashire, we had made significant revisions to our initial proposals and in our revised proposals, and changed all the constituencies so that they were closer in configuration to the existing constituencies. Very few representations were received with regard to Blackburn, where the issue of the Blackburn South & Lower Darwen ward was one of the largest single issues in the North West at the initial proposals stage.
52. There was a mixture of opposition, and support for the revised Burnley constituency. Among those representations in support, detailed evidence

was provided of the strong community links between Brierfield and Burnley. However, there was also opposition with calls for the Brierfield East and Clover Hill ward to be split. Regarding the Hyndburn, and Rossendale and Darwen constituencies, there was support for no change, apart from the realignment of the constituencies with local government ward boundary changes, but there has been opposition to the revised constituencies. In the initial proposals, the case was put strongly that the Whalley areas had little in common with Hyndburn and should not be included in the Hyndburn constituency; in the revised proposals, it was claimed that these wards do, in fact, have connections to Hyndburn and that they should be included in that constituency. There was also some opposition to the inclusion of the wards that comprise the town of Haslingden in the Hyndburn constituency, rather than in the Rossendale and Darwen constituency, although these wards are currently located in the existing Hyndburn constituency. There were also suggestions to rename the constituency Hyndburn and Haslingden. Similarly, with regard to the Ribble Valley, and Pendle and Clitheroe constituencies there was both considerable opposition and support with strong evidence and arguments made on both sides. Although a number of representations objecting made reference to the administrative town of the Borough of Ribble Valley - Clitheroe - being in the Pendle and Clitheroe constituency in our revised proposals, others, for example, highlighted the links of Clitheroe and Whalley with the communities of Barley and Colne, which are in the existing Pendle constituency.

53. In the revised proposals, we changed the initial proposals for the Chorley constituency, which would be the same as the existing constituency, apart from a realignment with local government ward boundary changes. This was well received in the Adlington and Anderton, and Chorley North East wards, and equally very poorly received in the large rural wards of Croston, Mawdesley and Euxton South, and Eccleston, Heskin & Charnock Richard where there was considerable opposition to the inclusion of the wards in the South Ribble constituency. These wards have been modified following a local government boundary review. In the initial proposals these two wards had been wholly included in the Chorley constituency, although significant areas of both wards are currently located in the South Ribble constituency.
54. We were mindful of the calls for the Rufford ward to be included within the West Lancashire constituency rather than the Southport constituency and that others contended that the 'Northern Parishes' wards should be kept together. Very few representations were received with regard to the West

Lancashire constituency, which had remained unchanged throughout the consultation stages.

Final recommendations

55. Our revised proposals for Cumbria had attracted both support, particularly for the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, and opposition, primarily to our proposed Penrith and Solway constituency. We had acknowledged previously that we had considered that in Cumbria there were, in effect, only two solutions for the constituencies in Cumbria, and we had to decide which of these seemingly mutually exclusive approaches to take across Cumbria (aside from Carlisle). We had agreed with our Assistant Commissioners who visited the county that these two main options would have to be based on a very difficult choice between different statutory factors. We significantly altered our revised proposals and considered that these represented the best solution for these two constituencies.
56. Elsewhere in Cumbria, we did not consider there were sufficient reasons to alter the proposed Carlisle constituency, or to rename it Carlisle and the Borders as every ward in the constituency was a City of Carlisle ward.
57. In the south west of the county, we had split the Broughton and Coniston ward along the boundary between the existing Barrow and Furness constituency, and the existing Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, thereby retaining an existing constituency boundary, and which was required for the revised proposals to be adopted. However, although it would be possible to split the Black Combe and Scafell ward without large scale knock-on effects, or to alter the Barrow and Furness constituency we had proposed, we did not consider that the underlying evidence and reasons for dividing this ward were sufficiently strong to meet the threshold for splitting wards as previously set out, especially as there would not be significant benefits generally to the constituencies in this area.
58. In the revised proposals consultation, a large number of respondents had expressed concern that by not including the Seaton and Northside ward in the revised Whitehaven and Workington constituency, the town of Workington was being effectively divided. A number of representations claiming to resolve this had been proposed, including splitting the Seaton and Northside ward. We do not consider that there are sufficiently strong

grounds to split the ward. However, we acknowledge that our revised proposals here do separate Seaton from the rest of Workington and effectively divide the port between constituencies. We therefore recommend the inclusion of both the Seaton and Northside, and Flimby wards in the proposed Whitehaven and Workington constituency. This entails the exchange of other wards to ensure all constituencies are within the permitted electorate range. We noted counter proposals and representations in which it was suggested that Keswick is intrinsically more linked to Penrith or Kendal than it is to Workington or Whitehaven. However, we felt that the Keswick ward was also intrinsically linked to the neighbouring Crummock and Derwent Valley ward, and that, if the Keswick ward were to be included in the Penrith and Solway constituency, so should Crummock and Derwent; this would allow for the Seaton and Northside, and Flimby wards to be included in the Whitehaven and Workington constituency. We consider that this would be an improvement on the revised proposals and would include all these areas in the new unitary authority that will be implemented in this part of Cumbria. We accordingly recommend these changes. However, we were not persuaded to rename the Whitehaven and Workington constituency West Cumbria.

59. We noted the opposition and counter proposals to the cross-county boundary Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency, particularly concerning the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale ward and that there have been calls for the ward to be divided with the larger part retained in the Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency. However, we considered that this would leave other parts of the ward detached from the rest of the ward and that the River Lune extended well into the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale ward.
60. In Lancashire, we considered that there had been sufficient support and no new or significant evidence to persuade us to change the Morecambe and Lunesdale, Lancaster and Wyre, Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde constituencies. We acknowledge the large body of representations received about the inclusion of the Croston, Mawdsley and Euxton South, and the Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard wards in the South Ribble constituency. These wards are currently divided between the Chorley and South Ribble constituencies and in the initial proposals, the whole of these wards were included in the Chorley constituency. In our revised proposals, we included these wards in the South Ribble constituency. We recommend no further change to the South Ribble and Chorley constituencies with respect to these two wards as it

allows a configuration of constituencies across south Lancashire that closely matches the existing configuration of constituencies.

61. The configuration of the Preston, Blackburn, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Darwen, and Burnley constituencies were largely the same as the existing constituencies in our revised proposals. We did not consider that a sufficiently strong case had been made to split the Brierfield East and Clover Hill ward, which was included with the Brierley West and Reedly ward in the proposed Burnley constituency. Although there were calls for some areas of the Borough of Ribble Valley to be included with Hyndburn in the revised proposals, we had altered our initial proposals due to the significant amount of opposition received. We do not consider there are sufficient grounds to alter our revised proposals for either the Ribble Valley, or Hyndburn (which would be unchanged from the existing constituency) constituencies. We note the representations from Haslingden opposed to the inclusion of the town in the Hyndburn constituency instead of in Rossendale and Darwen, but this is the existing arrangement. Furthermore, as the Hyndburn constituency would be unchanged from the existing constituency, we do not recommend that its name be changed to include reference to the town of Haslingden.
62. There continued to be opposition to our proposed Ribble Valley, and Pendle and Clitheroe constituencies, although there was some support, particularly from the proposed Pendle and Clitheroe constituency. We acknowledge that the inclusion of the town of Clitheroe and the Whalley area in Pendle and Clitheroe, instead of a Ribble Valley constituency, is not popular with some residents and noted the alternative suggestions that had been made. However, we consider that there had to be change in this area, and, although both constituencies are significantly reconfigured, we judge that our revised Ribble Valley, and Pendle and Clitheroe constituencies both better meet the statutory factors for the whole of Lancashire than did our initial proposals or the alternatives that have been suggested. We also consider the inclusion of both the Walton-le-Dale East and Walton-le-Dale West wards, and also both Bamber Bridge East and West wards in the Ribble Valley constituency, along with the Coupe Green & Gregson Lane ward, to be a positive outcome for these wards.
63. Apart from the issues of the inclusion of the Croston, Mawdsley and Euxton South, and the Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard wards in the South Ribble constituency, relatively few representations were received

with regard to the South Ribble constituency and we recommend no further change. We note the calls for the Rufford ward to be included within the West Lancashire constituency rather than the Southport constituency and that the wards of Hesketh-with-Beaconsall, North Meols, Rufford, and Tarleton, should be kept together. Very few representations were received with regard to the West Lancashire constituency which had remained unchanged throughout the consultation.

64. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed constituencies in Cumbria and Lancashire. We recognised that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives.
65. Our final recommendations for Cumbria and Lancashire are therefore for constituencies of: Barrow and Furness; Blackburn; Blackpool North and Fleetwood; Blackpool South; Burnley; Carlisle; Chorley; Fylde; Hyndburn; Lancaster and Wyre; Morecambe and Lune Valley; Pendle and Clitheroe; Penrith and Solway; Preston; Ribble Valley; Rossendale and Darwen; South Ribble; West Lancashire; Westmorland and Lonsdale; and Whitehaven and Workington. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Merseyside (including the Wirral) and Cheshire (Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester).

Initial proposals

66. As a consequence of our proposals for the Southport constituency, the existing Sefton Central constituency, which could be left wholly unchanged, was subject to minor change in our initial proposals. The proposed Sefton Central constituency included the Ainsdale ward from the existing Southport constituency, and no longer included the Molyneux ward, which we included in our proposed Liverpool Norris Green constituency. The Bootle constituency was wholly unchanged.
67. In the City of Liverpool, all the wards have large electorates and we had to propose fairly significant changes in order to formulate constituencies which were within the permitted range. Although it still contained the

Walton area, we proposed that the existing Liverpool Walton constituency be largely reconfigured and would no longer contain the Everton or Anfield wards, and would include the Croxteth and Norris Green wards. We also proposed that it would include the Molyneux ward from the Borough of Sefton. We acknowledged that this ward is largely rural in nature but we considered that there were no reasonable alternatives in view of the other constituencies we proposed on Merseyside. We also proposed that this constituency be called Liverpool Norris Green.

68. Our proposed Liverpool Riverside constituency largely followed the form of the existing constituency, but was more centred to the west. It included both the Everton and Anfield wards, but no longer the existing constituency's three southeastern wards of Greenbank, Mossley Hill, and St. Michael's, which were included in the proposed Liverpool Wavertree constituency. This constituency remained centred on Wavertree, but in order to return the constituency to within the permitted range, we no longer included the Church or Old Swan wards in the constituency. The Church ward was included in our proposed Liverpool Garston constituency. This constituency is mostly the same as the existing Garston and Halewood constituency, except for the addition of the Church ward and was wholly contained within the City of Liverpool authority, as it no longer extended into the Halewood area of the Borough of Knowsley.
69. Our proposed Liverpool West Derby constituency was also similar to the existing configuration. It included the Old Swan ward, and no longer included the Norris Green or Croxteth wards. It extended into the Borough of Knowsley, incorporating the wards of Page Moss and Swanside. As the City of Liverpool cannot be allocated a whole number of constituencies which would lie entirely within its boundaries, one constituency must cross into the Borough of Knowsley. We considered that this was the best 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, our proposed Knowsley constituency was otherwise unaltered.
70. Although the St Helens North constituency could remain unchanged, we proposed modifying it 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 range. As such, our proposed St Helens North constituency no longer included the Parr ward, but did include the Town Centre ward. Our 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. We considered various configurations of constituencies in this and the surrounding area, but judged these would be more disruptive and not best reflect the statutory factors.

71. We proposed using the natural physical boundary of the River Mersey to divide the Borough of Halton between constituencies. 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 extended 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. We considered that this proposed Widnes and Halewood constituency resulted 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. We acknowledged that Whiston would therefore be divided between two constituencies, and that this was not an ideal solution, but we considered that there was no reasonable alternative.
72. On the southern bank of the River Mersey, the town of Runcorn formed the largest urban area of our 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 would contain the four wards of Frodsham, Helsby, Gowy Rural, and Sandstone from that authority, which follows the southern bank of the River Mersey, the Manchester Ship Canal, and the M56 and A56. We considered that having the entirety of Widnes and Runcorn in separate constituencies resulted in a practicable configuration and distribution of constituencies across Cheshire and Merseyside.
73. The proposed Warrington North constituency was unchanged from the existing constituency, except to realign the constituency boundary with local government ward changes. The existing Warrington South constituency had an electorate considerably over the permitted range. We therefore proposed a Warrington South constituency which no longer

included the Lymm North and Thelwall, or Lymm South wards. These two wards, which constitute the entire town of Lymm, were included within the Tatton constituency, along with the Dane Valley ward from the Cheshire East unitary authority. The inclusion of these wards meant that no wards from the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority would be included within a Tatton constituency.

74. We proposed that a new constituency be constructed, which would be centred around, and named, Northwich, and 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.
75. The configuration proposed for the Northwich and Tatton constituencies resulted in minor changes within the rest of the Cheshire East unitary authority. The Macclesfield constituency was wholly unchanged, and our proposed Congleton constituency was also very similar to the existing configuration. The latter no longer included the Dane Valley ward, but aside from that was unchanged, except to realign the constituency boundary with local government ward changes. Our proposed Crewe and Nantwich constituency was also only changed by just one ward, except for realignment with local government ward changes: it no longer included the Wybunbury ward.
76. The existing Eddisbury constituency was significantly reconfigured under our proposals. Although it would still span the two unitary authorities of Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester, the constituency was now more compact. The Wybunbury ward was the only new inclusion within the constituency. However, the changes affecting Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority wards were more pronounced. The town of Winsford was mostly included in the Northwich constituency and the constituency no longer extended so far north towards the River Mersey, as that area was now within our proposed Runcorn and Helsby constituency. As the changes to the existing Eddisbury constituency had been significant we named this constituency South Cheshire, which we considered to be more reflective of the nature and geographical extent of the constituency. We also used the River Dee as the constituency boundary between South Cheshire, and the Chester North and Neston constituency. The two wards to the south of the river – the Handbridge Park and Lache wards – were included within the South Cheshire constituency.

77. The five wards which constitute the northern portion of the City of Chester were included in a constituency with the Saughall and Mollington, and Willaston and Thornton wards, as well as the three wards which comprise the town of Neston. We considered the most accurate name for this constituency to be Chester North and Neston. Although we sought not to divide Chester, the River Dee does form a clear geographic boundary between constituencies and the difficulties caused by not dividing the city of Chester are considerable, with knock-on effects throughout both Cheshire West and Chester, and the Wirral. A key reason for these changes is that there cannot be a whole number of constituencies that are contained within the boundary of the Borough of Wirral. Although there are currently four whole constituencies, the Wirral now only has the electorate for an allocation of three whole constituencies, and one part constituency. As we did not wish to propose a constituency which spanned the River Mersey between the Wirral and the City of Liverpool, it was necessary for a constituency to extend into the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority. We proposed that this county-crossing constituency be centred around Ellesmere Port, which, as it would no longer incorporate Neston, or the Gowry Rural ward, would now extend along the southern bank of the River Mersey, and would include the Eastham and Bromborough wards from the existing Wirral South constituency. To take account of these changes, our proposed constituency was simply called Ellesmere Port.
78. Our proposals for the remainder of the Wirral sought to minimise changes wherever possible. To achieve this we divided the Upton ward along the boundary of the A5027, with the northern half of this ward, consisting of the Upton community, included within our 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 gained the Heswall and Clatterbridge wards. Our proposed Birkenhead constituency was changed only by the inclusion of the Bebington ward. We considered that the benefits provided by the division of the Upton ward considerably outweighed the disadvantages of not doing so. It enabled us to retain with minimal change three of the existing four constituencies on the Wirral, and all alternative configurations of constituencies within this area that we examined paid far less heed to local and community ties.

Consultation on the initial proposals

79. We received a large number of representations in opposition to the inclusion of the Ainsdale ward in the Sefton Central constituency, with detailed evidence provided that this ward should be included with Southport. Some of these representations highlighted that both the Southport and Sefton Central constituencies are within the permitted electorate range and therefore do not need to change. However, crossing the county boundary was supported and it was generally acknowledged that this county crossing would enable a pattern of constituencies across much of the North West that would result in less disruption overall and better reflect the statutory factors than a pattern based on no such crossing.
80. A very large number of representations were received with regard to the Liverpool Norris Green constituency, with overwhelming opposition to the proposed name in particular. Many representations highlighted the importance of Walton to the local community and the fact that Walton is an historic town, pre-dating Liverpool. The other key issue in this constituency concerned the Molyneux ward. This would be an 'orphan ward' from the Borough of Sefton. It was stated that its inclusion within the Liverpool Norris Green constituency would not only arbitrarily divide the town of Maghull, but add an unrepresentative rural spur to an otherwise urban Liverpool constituency. Some respondents proposed that splitting the ward along the prominent boundary of the M57 north of Aintree would resolve this issue.
81. The remaining constituencies in Liverpool generated relatively few representations and were largely supported, although there was some opposition, with counter proposals submitted for alternative configurations of constituencies in Liverpool. Our proposed configuration for Liverpool Wavertree was largely supported. There was opposition to our proposed Liverpool West Derby constituency from those who objected to the inclusion of the Borough of Knowsley wards of Page Moss and Swanside. It was stated that Huyton (covered by these latter wards) was fundamentally a part of Knowsley, not Liverpool, although others were unable to identify an alternative solution.
82. Very few representations were received regarding the Bootle constituency, although among the representations the issue of the town of Crosby being divided between constituencies was raised. Although a counter proposal

had merit, adopting it would not only require further splitting of wards where proposed constituencies were broadly uncontroversial, it would also alter the otherwise unchanged Bootle constituency. Representations were also received calling for the reunification of the Croxteth and West Derby wards within the same constituency, to avoid the division of Croxteth Hall and Country Park.

83. There was opposition to the initial proposals in St Helens, particularly with regard to the Town Centre ward. Evidence was provided that the Town Centre ward was 'the historical and civic centre of the original St Helens town, most of which is now found in St Helens South' and that St Helens North comprises many other towns and urban areas. A counter proposal returned the Town Centre and Parr wards to their existing constituencies and resulted 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 also be included in the constituency. The split of this ward would follow the Liverpool to Manchester railway line, a recognisable physical feature that the counter proposal stated has been used 13 times as a ward or polling district boundary in the Knowsley Council area.
84. The use of the River Mersey to bisect the Borough of Halton and create two constituencies centred on Widnes and Runcorn respectively was broadly well received. We had proposed that 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. There was support in the representations, highlighting that Halewood had a strong historic association with Widnes, although a number of representations from Halewood argued the opposite case.
85. Our configuration of our proposed Runcorn and Helsby constituency was broadly supported, but a counter proposal for constituencies elsewhere in Cheshire proposed six split wards (Christleton and Huntington, Goway Rural, Handbridge Park, Marbury, Sandstone and, Willaston and Thornton) some of which would affect the Runcorn and Helsby constituency. Alternative names were also proposed: Runcorn and Weaver; Runcorn, Frodsham and Helsby; North West Cheshire, while others called for a

neutral name to be used, and referred to the Sandstone Ridge that was located in the constituency. There were also calls for the village of Sutton Weaver, in the Marbury ward, to be included in the same constituency as Runcorn, citing both geographic proximity and community links.

86. Very few representations regarding the Warrington North constituency were received. We had proposed that to bring the electorate of Warrington South within the permitted range, the constituency would no longer include the Lymm North and Thelwall, or Lymm South wards, which would, instead, be included within the Tatton constituency, along with the Dane Valley ward from the Cheshire East unitary authority. We received objections to both these proposals. However, there was also appreciable support. Evidence was provided 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 and that the Lymm North and Thelwall ward should be split in order to retain more electors in their existing constituency, and avoid the division of the Thelwall community.
87. We had proposed that a new constituency be constructed, which would be centred around – and named – Northwich. The initial proposals in this area garnered significant support, in particular, for the inclusion of the Davenham, Moulton and Kingsmead ward, and the Weaver and Cuddington ward in the constituency. However, we received a large number of representations in opposition to the division of the town of Winsford as of the five named Winsford wards, only four would be included within the proposed Northwich constituency, with the Winsford Over and Verdin ward within the proposed South Cheshire constituency. But, as the ward contains not just part of the urban extent of Winsford, but also a large rural component, some representations suggested that the ward should not be included with the more urban centred Northwich constituency. There were also objections from residents of Allstock in the Shakerley ward, who felt that the M6 was a natural boundary between themselves and Northwich, and that they looked northwards to Knutsford instead. A counter proposal was received which exchanged the Winsford Over and Verdin ward for the Weaver and Cuddington ward, and representations highlighted in detail the community ties in central Cheshire, and proposed an alternative configuration of constituencies to unite the three Mid Cheshire towns of Northwich, Middlewich and Winsford within one constituency, contending that Middlewich's presence in Cheshire East was anomalous.

88. Elsewhere in Cheshire, the proposed Macclesfield constituency which was entirely unchanged, was strongly supported. Our proposed Crewe and Nantwich constituency was changed by just one ward, except for realignment with local government ward changes, with the Wybunbury ward being included in the proposed South Cheshire constituency. A significant number of representations were received stating that the Wybunbury ward should be included within the Crewe and Nantwich constituency, with the Leighton ward transferred out instead. There was, however, also limited support for the initial proposals, with others proposing splits of the Haslingden ward, and both the Bunbury and Wrenbury wards, to accommodate new housing developments in Nantwich.
89. In drawing up our initial proposals, we went to great lengths to try to avoid dividing the City of Chester, but this proved to be elusive, and the consequential problems caused by not dividing the city would have been considerable. We therefore proposed that the city be divided, with the River Dee forming a clear boundary between the South Cheshire, and Chester North and Neston constituencies. We considered that to name the constituency Chester North and Neston would be the most accurate and appropriate name for this constituency.
90. The initial proposal to not include the Lache and Handbridge Park wards in the same constituency as the remainder of Chester was overwhelmingly opposed. Although the River Dee is a clear geographic boundary, residents feel it is an arbitrary line, and does not reflect any true divide in the local community. Despite the near unanimous opposition, however, it was broadly accepted by some that there was no better solution that would support a cohesive scheme of constituencies in the wider area. One counter-proposal, as previously mentioned, suggested splitting six wards to maintain the existing City of Chester constituency. One counter proposal called for the splitting of the Gowy Rural ward alone to retain Mickle Trafford with Chester. It was also proposed that South Cheshire be renamed Chester South and Eddisbury.
91. The proposal to split the Upton ward between the Wallasey and Wirral West constituencies, although supported by some respondents, was strongly opposed in over 100 representations. A detailed counter proposal arguing for a split of the Moreton West and Saughall Massie ward instead of the Upton ward was received. Apart from the representations with

respect to the Upton ward, relatively few representations were received with regard to the Wallasey, Wirral West, and Birkenhead constituencies. The proposed Ellesmere Port constituency did not elicit a large number of representations, and, although there was some support, there was also a counter proposal that would split the Willaston and Thornton ward to retain Little Sutton in the Ellesmere Port constituency.

Revised proposals

92. In respect of the Liverpool Norris Green constituency, we restored the name Liverpool Walton, having found the evidence provided particularly persuasive and helpful in understanding the importance of Walton to the local community, and the history of Liverpool as a whole. We also considered that proposals to split the ward of Molyneux had some merit. Our Assistant Commissioners, who had visited the ward found it to be extensive, containing both urban and rural elements, and small segments of the town of Maghull, with the M57 forming a large and recognisable physical boundary between the rural area to the north, and urban Aintree to the south. We also noted that – unlike Aintree – Maghull has never been associated in a constituency with Liverpool. We were mindful that splitting the ward would result in ‘orphan’ polling districts from Sefton being included in an otherwise Liverpool constituency, but we acknowledged that following the existing ward boundaries in this area under the initial proposals would divide the town of Maghull, and thus likely break community ties there. Although the split of the ward would not result in extensive wider benefits elsewhere in Merseyside, we considered that, in this instance, it would enable greater adherence to the statutory factors overall, and result in a better configuration for both constituencies involved. We did, however, note that the Waddicar area appeared to be an unusual inclusion in the Molyneaux ward, seeming to be separate from both Sefton and Aintree, and instead forms a continuous built up area with the Kirkby area of Knowsley. We proposed that the Molyneux ward be split, with polling districts C4, C5, and C6, covering Aintree, being included in the Liverpool Walton constituency, with the boundary here following the River Alt as opposed to the motorway. The remainder of the ward was included in the Sefton Central constituency, where the whole ward is currently located.

93. Although the issue of the town of Crosby being divided between constituencies was raised, the Bootle constituency had been unchanged in our initial proposals, and we decided to make no further changes. There were also some calls for the 'reunification' of the Croxteth and West Derby wards within the same constituency, to avoid the division of Croxteth Hall and Country Park. However, we did not consider it was essential for the park to be contained within a single constituency
94. Apart from the revised proposals for the Liverpool Walton constituency, we considered that there was no persuasive evidence to amend any of the other constituencies in the City of Liverpool.
95. In St Helens, we considered that the counter proposal that returned the Town Centre and Parr wards to their existing constituencies and resulted in the St Helens North constituency being entirely unchanged from its existing configuration had considerable merit, and, in order to bring the St Helens South constituency within the permitted range, polling district WC5 from the Whiston and Cronton ward would also be included in the constituency. We agreed that the counter proposal would result in less disruption than the initial proposals and amended both the St Helens North, and St Helens South and Whiston constituencies as described. Our revised proposal for the two South Helens constituencies had an impact on the Widnes and Halewood constituency, insofar as polling district WC5 of the Whiston and Cronton ward would no longer be included in the constituency. In view of the relatively few representations, we proposed no further changes to the Widnes and Halewood constituency.
96. The proposed Runcorn and Helsby constituency was broadly supported. Some representations highlighted that the village of Sutton Weaver, in the Marbury ward, would fall outside of this proposed constituency and called for this area to be included in the same constituency as Runcorn, citing both geographic proximity and community links. This would involve the splitting of the Marbury ward, and while we considered that this had some merit, we considered that doing so would not provide sufficient benefits to either of the proposed constituencies. A number of alternative names were suggested, but we considered there were insufficient grounds to amend either the configuration or name of the Runcorn and Helsby constituency as initially proposed, and made no changes.

97. Very few representations were received regarding the Warrington North constituency, largely due to the lack of change and we therefore proposed no changes to the constituency. Few representations were also received with regard to the Warrington South constituency, apart some opposition to the Dane Valley ward being included in this constituency and objections to the Lymm wards no longer being included in a Warrington constituency. Following their visit to the area, our Assistant Commissioners considered the counter proposal to split the Lymm North and Thelwall ward had merit as they considered that Thelwall was an intrinsic part of central Warrington, separated from the rural market-town of Lymm by empty land and the M6 motorway. They also considered that the initial proposals here would break community ties in the area. We agreed with their assessment and therefore revised the initial proposals and adopted the suggestion to split the ward with four polling districts which align with the boundaries of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish – SNC, SND, SNE, SNF – remaining within the Warrington South constituency. The remainder of the Lymm North and Thelwall ward, comprising Lymm, would be included in the Tatton constituency. This would also allow for the Marbury and Shakerley wards to be included in the Tatton constituency, which would then be the same as the existing constituency, except for the addition of the town of Lymm, and realignment of the Tatton constituency with changes to local government ward boundaries. This would result in fewer electors moving from existing constituencies than in the initial proposals. It would also address the concerns of the residents of Allostock over their links with Knutsford, without requiring another ward split. We were not persuaded to split the Gawsforth ward to enable the Tatton constituency to remain within two local authorities. We therefore revised our initial proposals and split the Lymm North and Thelwell ward.
98. Our proposed Northwich constituency garnered some support and in particular, for the inclusion of the Davenham, Moulton & Kingsmead ward and the Weaver and Cuddington ward in the constituency, and for it to be located entirely within one local authority. However, we also received a large number of representations in opposition to the division of the town of Winsford and some opposition to proposals to include the Winsford Over and Verdin ward in the more urban Northwich constituency. We considered that a counter-proposal to include the Winsford Over and Verdin ward, originally included in the proposed South Cheshire constituency in exchange for the Weaver and Cuddington ward, had considerable merit, as did the representations proposing that the three key Mid Cheshire towns of

Northwich, Middlewich and Winsford should be contained within the same constituency. Although Middlewich would be an 'orphan' ward, this would enable the Dane Valley ward to be returned to the Congleton constituency. We therefore amended our initial proposals for the configuration of the Northwich constituency, which we renamed Mid Cheshire, and for the consequential changes to the configuration of the Tatton and Congleton constituencies.

99. Our proposed Macclesfield constituency, which was entirely unchanged under the initial proposals, attracted a great deal of support, and we proposed that there be no change.
100. We considered the representations that suggested that the Leighton and Wybunbury wards should be exchanged between the South Cheshire and Crewe and Nantwich constituencies. Our Assistant Commissioners visited the two wards; they observed that Leighton is clearly an extension of the urban area of Crewe and that Wybunbury is a large rural ward, and although they acknowledged the evidence that had been presented of the links of the Wybunbury ward with Crewe (not least in relation to the development of HS2), they were overall not persuaded that the counter proposal to exchange the wards would be a better alternative. Similarly, they considered that splitting either the Bunbury or Wrenbury wards to include all new elements of Nantwich within the constituency would not be sufficiently beneficial. We agreed and proposed no changes to the Crewe and Nantwich constituency as initially proposed.
101. Our initial proposals, in which we had used the River Dee as the constituency boundary between the proposed Chester North and Neston, and South Cheshire constituencies and had not included the Lache and Handbridge Park wards in the same constituency as the remainder of Chester, were overwhelmingly and strongly opposed. However, although we had no doubt that the Lache and Handbridge Park wards looked to and were part of Chester, we considered that a better solution to our initial proposals was particularly challenging and noted some local representations who whilst not actively supporting the proposals, had reluctantly accepted that there was no better solution that would support a cohesive scheme of constituencies in the wider area. We did not consider the counter proposals that split multiple wards in order to retain a constituency centred on the City of Chester had merit. We therefore proposed no further changes to the proposed Chester North and Neston

constituency. However, we did accept the reasoning in the suggestions that the South Cheshire constituency be renamed Chester South and Eddisbury; the change of name would reflect the inclusion of the Lache and Handbridge Park wards from Chester, and that, in having a Chester North constituency it would be sensible to also have a constituency named Chester South. Furthermore, the constituency would also include significant areas from the existing Eddisbury constituency. We therefore proposed this name change as part of our revised proposals.

102. Our proposals for the remainder of the Wirral had sought to minimise change to the existing pattern of constituencies. We noted the broad level of support for our proposed constituencies, and also the opposition to the proposed split of the Upton ward, and the detailed counter proposal, arguing for a split of the Moreton West and Saughall Massie ward instead. We considered that the split of a ward on the Wirral was unavoidable if there were not to be significant consequences for constituencies widely across the southern portion of the North West region and noted the merits in the counter proposal that was submitted. However we considered that the resulting constituencies would be unnecessarily disruptive to the existing configuration of constituencies on the Wirral, and we proposed no further changes to the Birkenhead, Wallasey, and Wirral West constituencies, but we did rename the Ellesmere Port constituency as Ellesmere Port and Brombrough, to recognise the presence of that community in the constituency.

Consultation on the revised proposals

103. There was continued opposition to the Southport and Sefton Central configurations, on both the grounds of the extension across the county boundary, and the fact Ainsdale remained outside the constituency. However, no new compelling evidence, or viable counter proposals were received. There were further calls to rename Southport to Southport and Douglas.
104. In our revised proposals report, we requested responses concerning the split of the Molyneux ward, seeking views as to whether to leave it as in the revised proposals, or also include polling district C2 as well, which covers Waddicar. Few representations were received, but they were unanimously in favour of the boundaries we proposed in our revised proposals. Almost

no representations were received with regard to the Bootle constituency, aside from those opposing the composition of the existing constituency.

105. In Liverpool we received few representations commenting on the configuration of constituencies. However, we did receive some representations commenting on the proposed constituency names. There have been calls to rename Liverpool Garston as Liverpool South, some suggestions to use the new local government wards in Liverpool, and a suggestion that Wavertree itself is not in the proposed Liverpool Wavertree constituency. Aside from these there have been very few representations across the entire area.
106. Aside from suggestions to use new local government ward boundaries in the area of Whiston and Cronton, where we have split the ward between the St Helens South and Whiston, and Widnes and Halewood constituencies, very few representations were received.
107. We received relatively few representations in regards to the two Warrington constituencies, although there was still some opposition to the removal of some part of Warrington South from the constituency in order to bring it within the permitted range.
108. We received a considerable amount of support for the new Mid Cheshire constituency, although there are also some suggestions, but no groundswell of support, to change the constituency name to Northwich and Winsford. There was both support and opposition to the splitting of the Lymm North and Thelwell ward between the Warrington South and Tatton constituencies. The Tatton constituency was largely supported and few representations were received regarding our proposed Runcorn and Helsby constituency, other than continued proposals to change its name.
109. There was support for the proposed Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton, and Macclesfield constituencies. There remained some suggestions for the Wybunbury ward to be exchanged with the Leighton ward and included in Crewe and Nantwich, but no new evidence was presented and the number of representations were now relatively few in number.
110. Although we received some support for our approach, including evidence, against the splitting of multiple wards to create a single Chester constituency (as had been suggested in previous consultation stages), the

division of Chester and the inclusion of rural wards with the urban element of the Chester North and Neston constituency, and the inclusion, in particular, of the Lache and Handbridge Park wards in our proposed Chester South and Eddisbury constituency, continued to be very strongly opposed. There were also suggestions for further name changes, including removing Eddisbury from the name entirely and for the constituency to be merely South Cheshire or South West Cheshire.

111. There was support for our approach on the Wirral and for all four constituencies of Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port and Bromborough, Wallasey, and Wirral West, But there was still considerable opposition from the Upton ward to the splitting of the ward between the Wallasey and Wirral West constituencies. The geography and electorate of the Wirral had meant that splitting a ward somewhere had effectively been unavoidable. Some representations suggested an alternative arrangement that, whilst splitting a ward, would affect three constituencies. Other opposition has focused on the crossing onto the Wirral, and the fact that Little Sutton remained divided between the Ellesmere Port and Bromborough, and Chester North and Neston constituencies There were also suggestions for name changes on the Wirral, with proposals that Birkenhead be renamed Wirral East and Wirral West renamed Wirral Deeside.

Final recommendations

112. Throughout Merseyside we do not consider that there has been a significant level of opposition to our revised proposals, nor any significant or new evidence. We note the calls for the cross-county boundary constituency of Southport to be renamed Southport and Douglas, but do not consider that this change of name is either suitable or required as we considered that reference to Douglas would mean little to anyone other than to those living in the immediate area. Few further representations were received with regard to the split of the Molyneux ward or the Sefton Central or Bootle constituencies
113. In the areas of Liverpool and Knowsley, there have been few further representations commenting on the pattern of constituencies. We considered the suggestion to rename Liverpool Garston to Liverpool South but considered this would not better reflect the area covered by the

constituency, and that Garston forms part of an existing constituency name.

114. Aside from proposals to use new local government ward boundaries in the area of Whiston and Cronton, where we split the ward between the St Helens South and Whiston, and Widnes and Halewood constituencies, very few representations were received; neither did we receive many representations regarding the two Warrington constituencies or Widnes and Halewood.
115. Within Cheshire, no significant further opposition or new evidence was presented. We continued to receive representations about the name of the Runcorn and Helsby constituency, but there appeared to be no consensus on alternative names and we do not recommend that there be any change to the constituency as in our proposals.
116. There was still very significant opposition to our proposed Chester and North Neston, and Chester South and Eddisbury constituency. However, even among those who opposed our proposals, there was an acceptance, albeit reluctant, that there was no other solution that did not cause serious disruption across the whole area with the multiple splitting of wards. There had been support for the four constituencies on Wirral, but this was not overwhelming. There continued to be opposition to the division of the Upton ward, but we consider that an alternative split ward here would be more disruptive to the existing pattern of constituencies. We also note opposition that has focused on the crossing onto the Wirral, and that Little Sutton is divided between the Ellesmere Port and Bromborough, and Chester North and Neston constituencies. However, we do not consider that an alternative proposal here would offer a better solution. We do not recommend that Birkenhead be renamed Wirral East, or that Wirral West be renamed Wirral Deeside and recommend that the existing names be retained.
117. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed constituencies in Merseyside and Cheshire. We recognised that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives.
118. Our final recommendations for Merseyside and Cheshire are therefore for the constituencies of Birkenhead; Bootle; Chester North and Neston;

Chester South and Eddisbury; Congleton; Crewe and Nantwich; Ellesmere Port and Bromborough; Knowsley; Liverpool Garston; Liverpool Riverside; Liverpool Walton; Liverpool Wavertree; Liverpool West Derby; Macclesfield; Mid Cheshire; Runcorn and Helsby; Sefton Central; Southport; St Helens North; St Helens South and Whiston; Tatton; Wallasey; Warrington North; Warrington South; Widnes and Halewood; and Wirral West. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Greater Manchester

Initial proposals

119. 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 left seven of the existing 27 constituencies wholly unchanged.
120. Our proposed Stockport constituency included the Reddish North and Reddish South wards. The Manor ward, which was formerly within the Stockport constituency was included within the proposed Hazel Grove constituency, which was otherwise unchanged. The existing Cheadle constituency was wholly unchanged. This configuration resulted in three constituencies contained wholly within the boundaries of the Borough of Stockport.
121. We proposed that the two existing Borough of Trafford constituencies – Stretford and Urmston, and Altrincham and Sale West – would remain wholly unchanged. The existing Wythenshawe and Sale East constituency, spanning the boundaries of Trafford and the City of Manchester, would also remain wholly unchanged. Although the existing Manchester Withington constituency could 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. We therefore changed the constituency only to realign it with these new wards. The existing Manchester Gorton constituency has been similarly subjected to local government ward changes, and as a result would no longer include the

Gorton and Abbey Hey ward in our proposals. We proposed that the revised constituency be called Manchester Longsight.

122. We were able to consider the four geographically contiguous boroughs of the City of Salford, Wigan, Bolton and Bury as a group with an allocation of ten constituencies, thereby allowing us 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.
123. Our 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 our proposed Worsley and Eccles constituency, as was the Astley Mosley Common ward, from the Borough of Wigan - the only ward from Wigan that was included within a Salford-based constituency. Within the Borough of Wigan, we proposed that the existing Wigan constituency be wholly unchanged. The existing Makerfield constituency could have remained unchanged, but was modified due to changes to the existing Leigh constituency, which had an electorate over the permitted range. The Makerfield constituency was amended to include the Leigh West ward in exchange for the Ashton ward, which was included in our proposed Leigh South and Atherton constituency, which would include the Atherton ward. We acknowledged 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, we considered that some division of communities in this area was unavoidable.
124. Our proposed Bolton West constituency was largely unchanged, but included the Hulton ward to bring it within the permitted range, as the Atherton ward would no longer be included, and would be wholly contained within the Borough of Bolton. The proposed Bolton North East constituency differed from the existing constituency only by the inclusion of the Little Lever and Darcy Lever ward. As the Bolton South constituency would no longer include the Little Lever and Darcy Lever or Hulton wards, we included the Salford wards of Walkden North, Walkden South, and Little Hulton, in order to bring it within the permitted range, this also enabled us

to keep the town of Walkden in one constituency. We proposed naming this constituency Bolton South and Walkden.

125. The electorate of the existing Bury North constituency is below the permitted range. We therefore proposed the inclusion of the Radcliffe North ward. As the Bury South constituency would no longer include this ward, we included the Kersal and Broughton Park ward from the City of Salford within the Bury South constituency. Although this would be an orphan ward, we considered it to have better physical links with the Sedgley area of Bury than the City of Salford itself.
126. The electorate of the existing Rochdale constituency is above the permitted range. We proposed a Rochdale constituency without the Spotland and Falinge ward, which would be included in a Heywood constituency. However, as the existing Heywood and Middleton constituency already had an electorate that is above the electorate range, we further proposed that the wards of South Middleton and East Middleton be included in the renamed Manchester Blackley constituency. This constituency would no longer contain any wards from the City of Salford, nor the Cheetham ward from the City of Manchester, but would include the Moston ward. We acknowledged that our proposals in this area were not ideal, but considered that the extensive disruption that would be caused by the alternatives would not provide a better solution overall for this area.
127. Within the Borough of Oldham, we proposed that both the existing Oldham East and Saddleworth, and Oldham West and Royton constituencies remain wholly unchanged. However, we sought views on an alternative which would exchange the Alexandra, and St Mary's wards (currently within the existing Oldham East and Saddleworth constituency), with the Royton North and Royton South wards (currently within the existing Oldham West and Royton constituency), thereby providing a more compact urban constituency to the west, which would contain a greater proportion of Oldham town centre, and a constituency to the east that would have a more suburban and moorland character.
128. The existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency could have remained unchanged, but, we considered that maintaining it resulted in a less than ideal configuration across the east of Greater Manchester. We therefore proposed that the constituency would not include the Mossley, Stalybridge North and Dukinfield Stalybridge wards, but would include the Denton

North East, Denton West and Denton South wards, the entirety of the town of Denton. The constituency would remain wholly within the Borough of Tameside, and was named Denton and Hyde.

129. To increase the electorate of the existing Ashton-under-Lyne constituency, we included the three wards of Mossley, Stalybridge North and Dukinfield Stalybridge, and the Dukinfield ward, as it contains an urban community that directly borders the centre of Ashton-under-Lyne, and was previously included within the Denton and Reddish constituency. The inclusion of all four of these wards would give the Ashton-under-Lyne constituency an electorate that was above the permitted range, so we proposed to no longer include the Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards, or the Droylsden East and Droylsden West wards within the constituency. We proposed that these four wards, along with the Audenshaw ward, would form a Failsworth and Droylsden constituency, and would also include the Clayton and Openshaw, and Gorton and Abbey Hey wards from the City of Manchester. Furthermore, we proposed dividing the Miles Platting and Newton Heath ward between this constituency and our proposed Manchester Central constituency, with the Miles Platting area, to the west of the A6010, being included in Manchester Central, and the Failsworth and Droylsden constituency, containing the Newton Heath area to the east of this road. The Manchester Central constituency also included the Cheetham ward, as mentioned previously. We 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.

Consultation on the initial proposals

130. Our proposals for the Stockport constituencies were widely supported. Relatively few representations - predominantly positive - were received with regard to the Altrincham and Sale West, and Stretford and Urmston, Manchester Withington, and Wythenshawe and Sale East constituencies, with no counter proposals submitted.
131. Our proposed Salford constituency was supported. However, our initial proposals for the remaining constituencies that included part of the City of Salford were considerably less well supported in representations, with proposals for the existing Worsley and Eccles South constituency to remain unchanged. It was stated that there was no commonality between the Astley Mosley Common ward and Salford borough, and that it was

unsuitable to include the Walkden area of Salford in a constituency with Bolton. However, there was some support for our initial proposal.

132. Very few representations were received regarding the proposed Wigan constituency. We had recognised that the inclusion of the West Leigh ward in the Makerfield constituency, and the Ashton ward in the Leigh South and Atherton constituency, would mean that the towns of both Leigh and Ashton-in-Makerfield would be divided between constituencies, but considered that configurations of wards in this and the surrounding area meant that some division of communities was unavoidable. A substantial number of representations were received in opposition to the proposals for these two constituencies, and petitions opposing our proposals were also received. In particular, there was overwhelming opposition to the proposed inclusion of the Leigh West ward (which contains Leigh Town Hall and a significant proportion of Leigh town centre) in the Makerfield constituency, and the Ashton ward (which contains half of the town of Ashton-in-Makerfield) in the Leigh South and Atherton constituency. Whilst highlighting a positive element of the initial proposals for the constituencies, in that they would unite the town of Atherton, which had previously been divided between the Leigh and Bolton South constituencies, counter proposals for alternative configurations were submitted. Among these were proposals to exchange the Golborne and Lowton West, and Lowton East wards for the Hindley and Hindley green wards, although a number of petition representations were against this counter proposal.
133. Also contained within the counter proposals was the inclusion of the Ashton ward in the Makerfield constituency, and the Leigh West ward in the Leigh and Atherton constituency, and a splitting of both the Atherleigh and Leigh West wards (using polling districts LCA and LDA respectively). Under this counter proposal 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 split wards.
134. The Bolton West, Bolton North East, and Bolton South and Walkden constituencies were all broadly supported, with few representations received, apart from those from the Walkden area, with a number of representations providing evidence that Walkden is an integral part of

Salford borough and should not be included within a constituency alongside wards from Bolton.

135. There was support for the inclusion of the Radcliffe North ward in the proposed Bury North constituency, but there were suggestions for the Unsworth ward to be included in the Bury North constituency instead. Opposition to our initial proposals from respondents highlighted the strong links between the Unsworth ward and Whitefield. We also received some support for the inclusion of the Kersal and Broughton Park ward (from the City of Salford) in the proposed Bury South constituency, and there was a suggestion for the name of the constituency to be changed to Bury South and Kursaal.
136. The proposals for the Heywood and Manchester Blackley constituencies were very much opposed, with a large number of representations received from the town of Middleton which was divided between constituencies in our proposals., any of those objecting stated that Middleton is an historic town with a clear and long-established identity, and proposed for it to remain united within one constituency.
137. The responses received with regard to the two Oldham constituencies were fairly equally spread There were also calls for the inclusion of Chadderton within the name of the western constituency.
138. We received some support for our proposed Manchester Longsight constituency, although some respondents considered that the constituency should be renamed.
139. There was considerable opposition to our proposals for constituencies in Tameside, with two key issues raised by representations. The first was that the existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency did not need to be changed, and secondly, in the newly proposed Denton and Hyde constituency, these two towns are separated by the River Tame, so they should not be included together. Concerns were also raised that the proposed Failsworth and Droylsden constituency would cross three local authorities, and contain a split ward. We received a considerable body of weight and quality of evidence that Failsworth and Droylsden do not share a community of interest, and are in fact geographically separated by the River Medlock. Evidence was provided that the Denton area and east Manchester are well linked both physically and in community terms.

Otherwise, the initial proposals for Manchester did not garner a large number of representations

Revised proposals

140. In view of the support for the three proposed constituencies in Stockport - Stockport, Cheadle and Hazel Grove - we proposed no changes in our revised proposals. Similarly, in view of the support for the proposed Altrincham and Sale West, Stretford and Urmston, Wythenshawe and Sale East, and Manchester Withington constituencies, we proposed no further change to these constituencies.
141. With regard to our proposals for the boroughs of City of Salford, Wigan, Bolton and Bury, we made no changes to the Salford constituency, as initially proposed as it had been well supported. However, we considered that representations for the existing Worsley and Eccles South constituency to remain unchanged, although providing evidence to support the existing constituency, did not propose alternative configurations of constituencies that did not have significant impacts on a number of surrounding constituencies, which would be less in keeping with the statutory factors than the initial proposals.
142. We received very few representations regarding the Wigan constituency and consequently decided to recommend no further changes. We noted the significant opposition to our proposed Makerfield constituency and the overwhelming opposition to the proposed inclusion of the Leigh West ward in the constituency, and the Ashton ward in the Leigh South and Atherton constituency. A counter proposal to exchange the Golborne and Lowton West, and Lowton East wards (which we had included in the Leigh and Atherton constituency) for the Hindley and Hindley Green wards (which we had included in Makerfield), while self contained, would not, in our view, constitute a resolution to the issue of divided communities, as evidenced by the receipt of a number of petition representations against this counter proposal. We did not consider that another counter proposal met our policy for splitting a ward, as we considered that it appeared to be balancing the numbers, rather than being based on evidence of community ties.

143. Our Assistant Commissioners visited the area and recommended the inclusion of the Ashton ward in the Makerfield constituency, and the Leigh West ward in the Leigh and Atherton constituency, and, in order to bring the latter within the permitted range, they recommended the splitting of both the Atherleigh and Leigh West wards (using polling districts LCA and LDA respectively), as proposed by respondents to the consultations. 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 split wards.
144. We were mindful that 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. We considered that splitting the LCA polling district here would mean that although this would be splitting the two 'existing' wards of Atherleigh and Leigh West in this way, it would actually only be splitting a single incoming ward, Leigh West. From their observations of the area, the Assistant Commissioners concluded that Westleigh Brook is a recognisable feature, and would be a suitable boundary along which to split the polling district. Similarly, they felt that the Dangerous Corner area was no more linked to Leigh than it was to Hindley, and that Pickley Green was similarly suitable to be included within the Makerfield constituency. They therefore recommended the further division of the LCA polling district itself. We acknowledged the issues caused by the initial proposals here and that they are deeply unpopular as a number of local ties would be broken. We agreed with the recommendations of our Assistant Commissioners and revised the Makerfield, and Leigh and Atherton constituencies, as detailed above, splitting two wards, noting that this will, in practice, only split one incoming ward, and maintain the existing centres of Ashton and Leigh within their respective constituencies.
145. As our proposed Bolton West, Bolton North East, and Bolton South and Walkden constituencies were all broadly supported, apart from those from the Walkden area, we proposed no revision to these three constituencies as initially proposed. We also agreed with the evidence provided, and considered that the Radcliffe North ward is better suited than the Unsworth ward to be included in the Bury North constituency. However, we did not consider there was a need to change the name of the Bury South

constituency and proposed no change to the proposed Bury North and Bury South constituencies.

146. We noted the considerable body of objections – and the quality of the evidence – from Middleton residents opposed to the division of their town between the Heywood and Manchester Blackley constituencies. We acknowledged that the division of the town would not be an ideal outcome, but considered that the alternatives would cause extensive disruption to neighbouring constituencies and therefore failed to provide a better overall pattern of constituencies for this wider area. We also considered whether the name of Middleton should be referenced in the name of either proposed constituency, but were ultimately not persuaded that it should be, and considered that the use of incoming ward boundaries within the borough of Rochdale would not have any impact on resolving issues such as the division of Middleton between constituencies. We therefore recommended no revisions to the initially proposed constituencies of Heywood, Rochdale, and Manchester Blackley.
147. Within the Borough of Oldham, we noted that the representations in support and opposition to our initial proposals were broadly equal. We were persuaded by the quality of the evidence presented that maintaining both of the Oldham constituencies entirely unchanged would be the solution most in keeping with the statutory factors. As such, we proposed no changes to the initial proposals for Oldham East and Saddleworth, and Oldham West and Royton. As neither constituency would be changing, we were not persuaded of the case for referencing the town of Chaddington in the Oldham West and Royton constituency name.
148. There was significant opposition to our proposals in Tameside, and we noted the major counter proposals for the area and that there was significant disagreement amongst these about the best solution. Following site visits undertaken to this area by our Assistant Commissioners and their recommendations to us, we considered that a significant change from the initial proposals in the east of Greater Manchester would be appropriate. We therefore revised our initial proposals. The existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency would remain entirely unchanged, and we proposed an Ashton-under-Lyne constituency containing all the remaining Tameside wards, barring the three Denton wards of Denton North East, Denton South, and Denton West. These wards would be included with four wards from the City of Manchester: Burnage, Gorton and

Abbey Hey, Levenshulme, and Longsight in a reconfigured Gorton and Denton constituency. We considered that there was very persuasive evidence provided in the representations that the Denton area itself was originally overspill from east Manchester, and that the areas are well linked both physically and in community terms. We also recommended 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. These wards are all to the south of the Mancunian Way, and are all of a similar character.

149. We also revised the proposed 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 would be broadly similar to the existing composition of the constituency, with the addition of Failsworth. We were persuaded by evidence that Failsworth is closely linked to east Manchester, and site visits undertaken by our Assistant Commissioners to the area confirmed this. We also noted that our revised proposals for these constituencies would remove from the east of Greater Manchester any constituency crossing three local authorities, and eliminate any requirement for a split ward, while reflecting and addressing the key issues in the objections received to initial proposals across this area.

Consultation on the revised proposals

150. The Altrincham and Sale West, Cheadle, Stretford and Urmston, and Wythenshawe and Sale East constituencies were unchanged at the initial and revised proposals and very few responses were received in response to the revised proposals with no new evidence or arguments presented. Similarly, with respect to the Hazel Grove, and Stockport constituencies, very few responses were received, although a single counter-proposal suggested alterations to the Hazel Grove constituency in which, it is claimed, the town of Hazel Grove is divided between constituencies.
151. In the City of Manchester and the Borough of Tameside, we had made significant changes to the initial proposals in our revised proposals for the area.

152. The new configuration for these constituencies was generally well received, particularly with regard to Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge and Hyde (which was now unchanged from the existing constituency), and Manchester Withington constituencies (although there was a call to rename the constituency Chorlton and Didsbury). The Manchester Rusholme constituency was supported with it being claimed that the wards gel well with many similarities including a wide population diversity in each ward. There was a suggestion that the constituency be renamed Manchester South Central, but another representation said the name Manchester Rusholme is 'inspirational'. However, there was some opposition to the Gorton and Denton constituency, particularly from the Burnage ward, where a number of respondents consider there to be no real link geographically or in community terms to Denton.
153. In the Borough of Oldham, no changes had been made to either existing Oldham constituencies in the initial or revised proposals. Despite opposition in our initial proposals, there was very little response to our revised proposals not to change the Oldham constituencies. However, although largely content with its configuration, there were further representations for Chadderton to be included in the name of the Oldham West and Royton constituency
154. Very few responses were received regarding the revised proposals for the Rochdale constituency, although there was a suggestion to rename it Rochdale East. However, there remained significant opposition to our proposed Heywood and Manchester Blackley constituencies, almost all concerned the splitting of the town of Middleton between constituencies. Many of the representations made reference to the historic nature of the town of Middleton and its clear and long-established identity, and that it should remain wholly within one constituency. Many respondents were also opposed to the town of Middleton no longer featuring in a constituency name.
155. We had proposed relatively minor changes to the Bury North, and Bury South constituencies in our proposals. In the responses to our revised proposals, there were some calls to split the Radcliffe North ward and to rename one or both constituencies, but overall there were very few representations commenting on the borough of Bury.

156. Our proposals for the Bolton West, and Bolton North East, had been subject to only relatively minor change. However, the Bolton South constituency had been considerably changed with the inclusion of the three wards of Walkden North, Walkden South, and Little Hulton, comprising the town of Walkden and had been renamed Bolton South and Walkden. This had largely maintained the town of Walkden in a single constituency rather than dividing it. Counter-proposals had been submitted during the initial consultation, but we had made no further changes in our revised proposals as we considered no practical counter-proposal was provided. Opposition to the inclusion of Walkden continued in the revised proposals consultation, but no viable solution was provided that did not result in wholesale knock-on changes across the whole of western Greater Manchester.
157. Opposition to our proposed Worsley and Eccles constituency, as mentioned previously, concerned the inclusion of the town of Walkden in the Bolton South and Walkden constituency, and that the Astley Mosley Common ward from Wigan borough was included within the proposed Worsley and Eccles constituency. As with Bolton South and Walkden, no suitable alternative counter proposal was provided despite opposition from respondents.
158. The existing Wigan constituency was retained wholly unchanged in both the initial and revised proposals and garnered minimal representations at either consultation stage. In our initial proposals, the towns of both Leigh and Ashton-in-Makerfield were divided between our proposed Leigh and Atherton, and Makerfield constituencies and were strongly opposed. Our revised proposals, which split both the Leigh West, and Atherleigh wards, continued to generate some opposition from the Westleigh area of Leigh, which it was claimed was still not within the same constituency as Leigh. We had acknowledged that our solution here was not perfect, but opposition to our revised proposals was significantly less in number in comparison to our initial proposals.
159. The Salford constituency, as initially proposed, garnered very few representations at initial proposals. However, in the revised proposals consultation, a few representations were received suggesting that Swinton and Pendlebury have been divided by the proposed Salford, and Worsley and Eccles constituencies, but no viable counter proposals were submitted.

Final recommendations

160. The revised proposals did not generate a large degree of opposition or significant and new evidence. There was support for the constituencies contained within the Boroughs of Stockport, Trafford and Tameside, and Manchester, albeit with a few exceptions.
161. There remained opposition to the inclusion of the town of Walkden in the Bolton South and Walkden constituency, but a notable lack of alternatives were submitted. Elsewhere, there was little opposition to the other constituencies we had proposed for boroughs of Bolton and Bury. In the City of Salford, the Salford constituency garnered very few further representations, although there continued to be some objection to the division of Swinton and Pendlebury by the proposed Salford, and Worsley and Eccles constituencies, but we do not propose to change these constituencies further.
162. In the Borough of Wigan, although there had been few representations throughout the consultations with regard to the Wigan constituency, there had been very significant opposition to the Makerfield and Leigh South and Atherton constituencies, as initially proposed. Following consideration of these objections, we had revised our proposals and split the Leigh West, and Atherleigh wards. However, as following our revisions, we received very few further representations with regard to these two constituencies, we consider that this low level of opposition suggests that our changes have been welcomed.
163. In the Borough of Rochdale, whilst the Rochdale constituency was largely non-contentious, the same cannot be said for our proposed Heywood and Manchester Blackley constituencies, in which the town of Middleton is divided between the constituencies. We have been unable to find another solution that meets the statutory criteria and does not have major ramifications to surrounding constituencies. However, we do propose to change the name of both constituencies to Heywood and Middleton North, and Blackley and Middleton South to reflect the significance of the town of Middleton.
164. In the Borough of Oldham, relatively few representations were received, apart from continued suggestions to include Chadderton in the name of the

Oldham West and Royton constituency, although proposing for such a change did not desire to see the town of Royton dropped from the constituency name. We acknowledge that there is a lot of support for the inclusion of Chadderton in the constituency name, and that Chadderton is an appreciably larger town (in terms of population) than Royton. We therefore recommend that the constituency be renamed Oldham West, Chadderton and Royton.

165. There was support for our revised constituencies in the Borough of Tameside, which largely reflect the existing configurations of constituencies, and we purpose no change. In the remainder of the constituencies in the City Manchester, we note both support, and some opposition, particularly with regard to the inclusion of the Burnage ward in a constituency with Denton. However, we note that Burnage is well linked to the Levenshulme and Longsight wards to its north and that there is no way of amending this one small area and including Burnage in the Manchester Withington constituency without consequential changes throughout this part of Manchester, or effectively reverting to the initial proposals.
166. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to our proposed constituencies in Greater Manchester. We recognised that we had received some opposition to our revised proposals and therefore investigated the alternatives.
167. Our final recommendations for Greater Manchester are therefore for constituencies of: Altrincham and Sale West; Ashton-under-Lyne; Bolton North East; Bolton South and Walkden; Bolton West; Bury North; Bury South; Cheadle; Gorton and Denton; Hazel Grove; Leigh and Atherton; Makerfield; Manchester Central; Manchester Rusholme; Manchester Withington; Oldham East and Saddleworth; Rochdale; Stalybridge and Hyde; Stockport; Stretford and Urmston; Wigan; Worsley and Eccles; and Wythenshawe and Sale East. The areas covered by these constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

Final communications campaign

Overview of communications activities

1. The Boundary Commission for England held a final four-week statutory consultation on its revised constituency boundary proposals between 8 November and 5 December 2022. The Commission also undertook a national communications campaign, aimed at raising awareness of the 2023 Boundary Review and encouraging members of the public to comment on the proposals.
2. This paper provides an overview of the campaign strategy and communications activities undertaken by the Commission in preparation for and during the final consultation period. The following evaluation report sets out the impacts of these activities, along with any recommendations which could be taken forward in future reviews.
3. Among other activities, the Commission held an extensive advertising campaign on social media, Google, and other websites; placed print advertisements in national newspapers; provided local authorities with information and materials to help raise local awareness; and took part in interviews with national and regional media. The strategy implemented by the Commission during the final consultation is shown below, with activities divided between the following campaign sections: paid-for advertising, media, stakeholder engagement, and organic communications.

Paid-for advertising

- Print advertising was placed in 11 national newspapers on 8 November (with one advert running on 9 November due to a booking error by the agency)
- Digital display banner and video advertising was distributed on websites via Ozone and MiQ
- Video and static adverts were used on the streaming platform Spotify, including the use of 'sponsored sessions'
- Video and static adverts were displayed on Facebook and Instagram
- A search campaign was run on Google, with advertising delivered to those who searched for set key terms or related phrasing

Media

- Proactive engagement with members of the media, including a press release circulated to announce the date of the final consultation, and on the campaign launch

- A media briefing was held to provide information on the final consultation and provision of embargoed materials
- Distributed proposal materials under embargo online via download links on a dedicated webpage, and circulated these through the Government platform Notify
- Commission spokespeople took part in 15 national and regional interviews over the final consultation period, with the majority taking place on the day of launch
- Written responses provided to press queries throughout the consultation period
- Coverage was monitored and tracked for evaluation purposes; in a couple of occurrences the Comms Manager also reached out to journalists to correct factual errors in their articles

Stakeholder engagement

- Designed and distributed a 'Partner Toolkit' of information and resources to help local authorities promote the final consultation
- A briefing event for stakeholders was held for the first time, inviting Chief Executives and communications officers to attend
- Organised for promotional content to be distributed via stakeholder channels, e.g. websites and newsletters
- Gathered feedback from stakeholders on comms activities

Organic communications

- Produced news releases; published blogs from Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission and Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner, on the BCE website
- Posted content regularly on BCE social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

Communications campaign evaluation report

Introduction

1. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is required by Parliament to undertake an independent and impartial review of all constituencies in England. The 2023 Boundary Review will rebalance the number of electors in each parliamentary constituency.
2. Initial proposals were published by the Commission on 8 June 2021, and during an eight week consultation period over 34,000 responses were received from the public. In February 2022, the Commission published these representations and over a six week period from 22 February, invited the public to submit views on them. During this secondary consultation, which also included 32 public hearings across the country, over 11,000 comments were received. Feedback from the first and secondary consultations was taken into consideration by the Commission in its development of new, revised proposals, and a third and final four week consultation took place between 8 November and 5 December 2022.
3. Over the course of the final consultation, the Commission received 18,881 representations, providing a total of nearly 65,000 responses submitted across the three consultation periods. This is a significant increase compared to the approximately 37,000 representations made during the 2018 Boundary Review.
4. By making it easy for people to submit their views online, the Commission followed the Government's commitment to services that are 'digital by default'. This resulted in over 90% of responses being sent in via the consultation website.

Objectives

5. The aim of the communications campaign undertaken by the Commission were as follows:
 - **Engage** with the public; encouraging as many people as possible to view the initial proposals and provide their responses in writing via the consultation portal, letter, or email; moreover, enable stakeholders such as local authorities and MPs to raise awareness of the review and provide clear information.
 - **Educate** constituents about the role of the Commission. Increase awareness that the boundary review is a fair and open process which is based on evidence and data. Position the process as a genuine consultation process, rather than having a predetermined outcome.

- **Inform** constituents and stakeholders that the boundary review is taking place. Ensure as many people as possible know they have the opportunity to have their say and how to do this.
- **Reassure** constituents that 'day-to-day life' (for instance, bin collections and local schools) will not change.

Key messages

6. The following key messages were again used to develop and underpin communications:
 - **Have your say:** Your local insight and knowledge can affect the boundaries being reviewed, and we consider every piece of feedback that is received. This is your chance to tell us whether or not you support our proposals, and if you can propose an alternative.
 - **Easy to do:** Through our portal, it is easy to view the proposed boundaries for your local area and provide feedback.
 - **Critical part of our democracy:** Reviewing constituency boundaries is an essential process to make sure that individual votes are of broadly equal weight.
 - **Fair and impartial:** Boundary Commission for England is an independent and impartial public body.

Strategy

7. In its mid-2021 population dataset, ONS reported an estimated 46 million people aged 16+ living in England, and 23 million households. To reach as wide an audience as possible within the budget available, the Commission implemented a range of paid-for and organic channels to distribute cost-effective and comprehensive communications. The communications campaign aimed to inform members of the public about the 2023 Boundary Review and the final consultation, and persuade them to visit the consultation website bcereviews.org.uk to view the revised proposals and make a representation.
8. As the best method of distributing advertising to as many people as possible, the largest share of the budget was allocated to social media platforms. A large proportion was also allocated to banner advertising on websites via a digital display campaign, due to its strength in broad awareness-raising, and a smaller portion of the budget was spent on Google search advertising. Image or text-based clickable adverts on these channels directed users to the consultation website. The digital advertising strategy built on learning from the previous campaigns to strengthen its impact, including exploring new methods such as incorporating Sponsored Sessions on Spotify. The final consultation period was the shortest at four weeks in length, thus presenting a potential

challenge for the ability of the online advertising channels to make optimisations during the campaign period and for the adverts themselves to 'pick up speed'. While print advertising was not used in the secondary campaign, the strategy for the final consultation made use of the higher budget available, as in the first consultation, to circulate half-page adverts to a wide audience via national newspapers on the launch date.

9. In addition to paid advertising, the Commission made effective use of stakeholder relationships, engagement with the press, and organic communications on Commission-owned channels as part of the overall campaign strategy. Press releases, advertising copy, materials sent to stakeholders and organic social media posts all made use of the idea that it was an individual's last chance to get involved, recognising this as a powerful incitement to take action by making a representation. This messaging was used to persuade stakeholders such as local authorities to increase their engagement with the campaign, despite their own workloads. To help stakeholders promote the campaign and to ensure consistent and clear content was distributed across the country, the Communications Manager developed and circulated a 'Partner Toolkit' with ready-made promotional materials, and organised a briefing event for Chief Executives and other local authority representatives.
10. Interest in the final consultation could be built due to the release of new materials in the form of the revised proposals. To capitalise on this, the Commission engaged proactively with the media, distributing releases and holding a press briefing, and the increased interest in the review is reflected in the coverage. All communications with the media, whether via releases, responses or interviews, were provided with a strong awareness of the key messages of the campaign in order to incite good quality coverage in line with its aims.

Paid-for advertising

11. We worked closely with the Government media buying agency, OMD, who distributed advertising on the Commission's behalf across various channels. The share of the budget used on each channel was decided by taking into account learnings from the previous campaigns. The largest proportion (nearly 40%) of the available budget was allocated to social media advertising, which has shown to deliver the most engagement. A higher budget available for the final consultation also allowed for the use of print advertising, which had been implemented for the same cost at the launch of the first consultation in June 2021.
12. It was decided to use the same suite of adverts, rather than spend more of the budget available on renewing the creative. However, updates were made

in-house by the Communications Manager to change the dates displayed on certain adverts, and to add in new static advertising with the tagline 'Last chance to have your say'.

13. When submitting a response via the consultation website, users were prompted to state where they had heard about the review. Most selected 'Other' or did not answer, however, from the responses provided, 'Facebook' was the most popular visit source, followed by 'local newspaper', and 'other social media'. This corresponds with the answers provided during the previous consultations, and indicates both the success of the Meta digital marketing campaign and the value of proactively engaging with both national and regional media as covered in this report. As stated in the previous evaluation, 'Other' may refer to stakeholder materials distributed through councils, flyers distributed locally through interested groups, or simply information spread through word of mouth within communities.

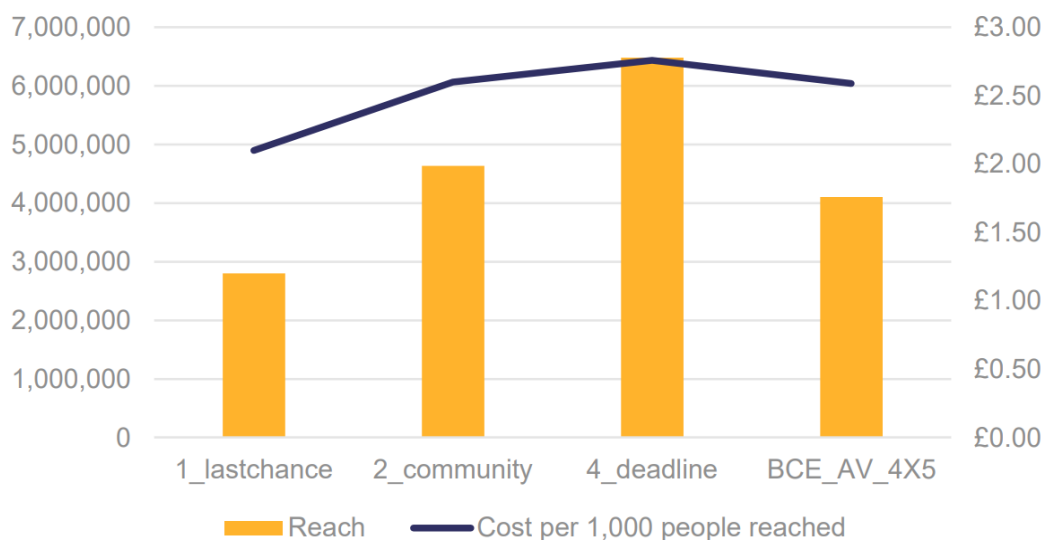
Print

14. We planned for a half-page advert to be shown in the following 11 national newspapers on the day of launch: Daily Mirror, Daily Star, Daily Express, Evening standard, Metro, Daily Mail, I Newspaper, Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Sun, and The Times. Due to an error with the booking completed by the media buying agency, The Times ran its advert on the next day instead.
15. The print advertising reached an estimated circulation of 4,318,488, with all adverts running towards the front of the newspapers to increase viewability.
16. Print advertising is expensive, and it is not possible to evaluate its impact to the same extent as with clickable online adverts; however, its advantage is the large audience it can reach nationally on the day of launch. While our campaign follows the Government's 'digital by default' commitment, advertising in newspapers is a key avenue for a non-digital channel of paid advertising. Alongside organic, non-paid means of promoting the consultation, for example by proactively encouraging local authorities and other stakeholders to display posters or other materials around local venues, this approach helps prevent the exclusion of digitally isolated individuals.

Social media

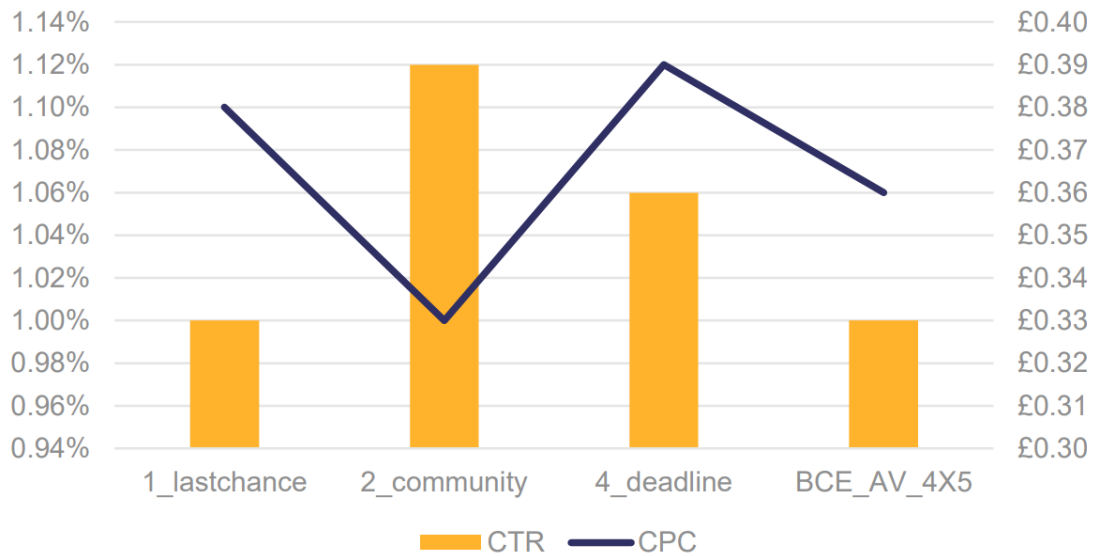
17. The largest share of the budget was allocated to social media (nearly 40%), due to its proven success during previous campaigns in reaching wide audiences. As before, Meta was used to access its Facebook and Instagram platforms. Overall, the communications campaign reached 11,640,857 unique users via Meta, driving 138,912 clicks in total to the campaign website.

18. In previous campaigns, advertising was delivered based on either a traffic (aimed at driving clicks) or reach (aimed at reaching wide audiences) objective. For the final campaign, to distribute advertising to as wide an audience as possible as well as driving clicks towards the consultation website, we decided to take the opportunity of the budget available by optimising the campaign towards both objectives - implementing a traffic and a reach strand and spending equal amounts on each. This strategy was successful in helping to drive engagement, enabling the final campaign to outperform those ran previously.
19. The social media campaign used three static graphics and 1 video. An optimisation was made to trim a fourth graphic from the set of assets due to it not performing as well as the others. These assets were largely the same as previously used, with the exception of an additional 'last chance to have your say' asset created by the Communications Manager and an update to the 'deadline' graphic. The most successful graphic differed between the reach and traffic campaigns. For the reach campaign, which focussed Meta's algorithm on pushing out the advert to as many people as possible, the asset which achieved the most reach was the 'deadline' graphic, No.4, which had the text: 'Help us draw the line, you've got til 5 Dec':
20. *Reach campaign: Graph showing reach vs cost per 1000 people reached:*



On the other hand, the best performing asset for the traffic campaign - achieving the highest click through rate of 1.12% with a low cost per click of 33p - was No.2, which displayed the line: 'Help us draw the line/ Your community is'.

Traffic campaign: Graph showing the click through rate vs cost per click



Audiences responded well to the direct call to action of ‘draw the line’ highlighted in blue on both posts; the appeal to an individual’s reluctance to miss out on taking part in something that others in the community have got involved in; and the sense of urgency conferred by the deadline in asset No.4. Future campaigns would need to keep in mind the continually changing nature of digital marketing and adapt accordingly; however, in a similar landscape using four assets per audience and optimising towards the best performing assets would continue to be the recommended strategy.

21. The final campaign showed increased costs, which we were advised by OMD has been seen across the board due to a competitive market in that quarter (particularly given it was the build-up to Christmas period) and a subsequent increase in the CPM (cost per impressions, which is used as the benchmark cost metric for the market). In June 2021, the CPM was lower at £2.67, compared to £4.02 during the final campaign. Future campaigns may wish to consider this, and where allowed by the legislation avoid holding a consultation in the lead-up to Christmas which can be a saturated period. The cost per click or CPC of £0.38 achieved was within the set benchmark, but showed an increase in comparison with the first campaign, which had had a CPC of £0.27 for the traffic strand. However, while the cost per impressions did increase the cost per click, it did not have a subsequent effect on the overall click through rate of 1.05%, which surpassed both the benchmark of 0.86% and the rate achieved during the first campaign for the traffic strand (0.98%). The campaign delivered a total of nearly 40m impressions across both campaign strands, which also surpassed the benchmarks set. We therefore saw higher engagement with the final campaign, but with increased costs due to market factors outside of our control. Our benchmarks were set by OMD, and based on the expectations set by our previous campaigns, other government campaigns, and current industry standards.

22. Our advertising was split into three separate groups, allowing us to monitor engagement with these audiences across the campaign: a younger (16-44) age group, an older (45+) age group, and an ethnic minorities audience - to keep note of how well our messaging reached underrepresented communities. Of our three advertising 'audiences', the 45+ group engaged the most with the campaign, with a very high click through rate of 2.28% (far exceeding the benchmark of 1.5%). This is followed by the ethnic minorities audience, which achieved a click through rate of 0.98% (above the 0.90% goal set). Historically, we have generally seen lower engagement with the campaign from younger audiences. To improve this and make the campaign more cost effective in reaching these demographics, a new approach was implemented based on learning from the secondary campaign: Instagram was used for the younger audience only, and Facebook for the older. This succeeded in improving the click through rate for the 16-44 age group, which increased from 0.56% in 2021 to 0.68% in the final campaign and well exceeded the goal set. This strategy also helped to decrease the cost per 1000 people reached (from £5.99 in the first campaign to £4.69). Among responses to the survey asking where those making representations had heard about the review, the share of respondents who chose 'Instagram' increased from the previous campaigns, although far exceeded by those who selected 'Facebook' from the list of options (18.4%).

Digital display

23. After social media, the second largest share of the budget was used in advertising across digital display and OLV (online video advertising) channels. With an equal budget split, digital banners and the 15 second campaign video were used to advertise the campaign on the music and podcast streaming platform Spotify, as well as on news websites via the advertising networks Ozone and, due to issues with Ozone encountered during the campaign, MiQ. This strategy of advertising on both Spotify and Ozone had been used during the first campaign, while during the secondary campaign only Spotify was used to maximise the impact of the lower budget available.

Spotify

24. Over the course of the consultation period, advertising was distributed to Spotify users via digital banner adverts overlaid on screens; video takeovers, in which adverts are delivered only when the user's screen is in view; and, for the first time, sponsored sessions. This strategy, which was taken based on recommendations from the secondary campaign, means that a single advert is aired for a time period on Spotify and generates high engagement. Overall, Spotify reached 645,688 unique users, generating over 14,000 clicks on the adverts and 1,053,131 impressions. There were also nearly 845,000 completed views of the video-style adverts.

25. Sponsored sessions advertising were the most effective in achieving engagement, and by far out-performed the benchmark (of 0.67%) with a click-through rate of 1.05%. It was successful in reaching a younger audience, unusually attaining a similar click through rate for the younger and older audience strands (1.05% and 1.04% respectively). Given the success of this method, its use in a similar campaign would be recommended.
26. The phone and desktop overlay campaigns both exceeded the set benchmarks. The adverts performed better on phones than laptops - compared to the secondary campaign where the opposite effect was seen. However, the video takeover strand was less effective than before, seeing a lower click through rate of 0.29% compared to the 0.67% rate achieved in the previous campaign. Due to the short consultation period, Spotify struggled with the time available for their algorithm to collect the data. To mitigate this, during the campaign some of the budget from the retargeting line was moved to the sponsored sessions strands, which had proved to be the most effective method of engaging audiences on Spotify.
27. In future campaigns, should the budget be available, it is recommended that both audio and video adverts are developed to make use of a multi-format campaign. In this way, audio adverts will help to drive awareness while engaging video formats would help lead to more clicks.

Ozone and MiQ

28. On advice from our media buying agency, digital billboard-style advertising was distributed on news websites via the advertising network Ozone, which had also been used during the first campaign. During the campaign, as Ozone was underperforming for a period, the use of this network was paused and advertising was instead distributed via the media partner MiQ. Through MiQ, we were able to place advertising on over 400 trusted websites, thus expanding our reach. On switching, our media buying agency was given an amount of free credit by the media partner. This meant that it managed to keep the same level of impressions as originally planned, but by spending less.
29. On Ozone, the campaign reached 1,263,729 people; via MiQ, on which it ran for a shorter period from 28th November to 5th December, our advertising reached 723,384 people. The channels achieved nearly 4,000 clicks in total across the campaign. The campaign's viewability, a metric measuring how visible an advert is to a user, surpassed the benchmark of 70%, with the Ozone standard display and outstream strands achieving 84.9% and 76.32% viewability, and the MiQ campaign reaching 76% overall. Ozone also showed a good video completion rate for the 15 second video advert. On MiQ, the campaign well exceeded the benchmark in terms of impressions, reaching 1.2m impressions against the goal set of 770k. However, the number of clicks

and therefore the click through rate on MiQ was slightly lower than planned for, reflecting the challenge of building momentum during the short campaign period. This is something to consider in future advertising campaigns; by running advertising for a longer period, it would allow for optimisation of the best performing domains and the addition of other strategies to help boost engagement.

30. The audience data for the Ozone campaign showed that the performance of the display adverts was similar between the younger and older audiences, and it is suggested that there would not be a need to split them in the future. Interestingly, desktop devices outperformed handheld devices such as phones and tablets.
31. It is possible to identify the content that audiences who engaged the most with our adverts were interested in, from the pages on which those adverts appeared. These categories were real estate, personal finance, and home and garden.
32. The results from the campaign also highlighted the importance of the regional press in disseminating information, as the top performing domains included several regional news outlets including the Sunderland Echo and the Northampton Chronicle.

Search

33. On Google, we placed text adverts directing people to the consultation website when they searched for certain words or phrases. This part of the digital marketing campaign had the lowest spend. Based on recommendations from the secondary campaign, to optimise the search campaign the Communications Manager developed an increased number of headline and description options for the RSA (responsive search adverts). This meant that Google could test different combinations and learn which combinations perform best over time. These options were also revised throughout the campaign to maximise its impact. Updated copy was also included which capitalised on the idea that the final consultation was the last chance to have a say on the boundary proposals, as a powerful incitement to find out more.
34. Due to an error by the media agency, Google over delivered on the adverts meaning that the money was spent early in the campaign instead of being paced equally across the full period. This was then rectified by the media agency who sourced credits to fund and restart the Google search campaign over the rest of the consultation at no expense to the Commission.
35. In spite of the slight disruption, the Google campaign did well, exceeding the number of clicks which had been planned (9,945 clicks, over a benchmark of

5,081), the volume of impressions (48,791, surpassing its goal of 28,692), and the click through rate (which achieved a rate of 20.38%, higher than the 17.71% CTR planned). The cost per click was also lower than had been estimated, which may have been due to low competition on the selected keywords as well as the optimisations made to the RSA ad copy options described above.

36. The highest performing adverts included keywords around 'Constituency' and 'Boundary Commission'. In terms of cost efficiency, the DSA (dynamic search adverts) format drove the lowest cost per click.

Media

37. The media strategy for the final consultation planned to capitalise on the expected interest in the release of new revised proposals (which had taken into account responses from previous consultations), as well as the fact that the consultation period represented the final chance for members of the public to have their say.
38. The Commission undertook the approach of engaging proactively with the press in order to encourage news outlets to publish good-quality coverage of the final consultation. Using the Government distribution platform Notify, the Communications Manager circulated a press release to all contacts announcing the date of the final consultation, and on the launch of the campaign.
39. All press contacts were invited to a media briefing organised by the Communications Manager, which took place over Teams shortly before the campaign launch. During the briefing, the Secretary to the Commission and other senior staff introduced the work of the BCE and the purpose of the boundary review, the process of the final consultation, and how the revised proposals would be disseminated under embargo. The briefing aimed to provide information about the consultation to demonstrate its 'newsworthiness', encourage factual and good quality coverage, and, while we were unable to discuss the content of the proposals prior to their release, provide the opportunity to ask general questions.
40. The Communications Manager undertook early preparation to develop a plan for providing materials under embargo to the media as smoothly and as securely as possible. A particular challenge was developing how the largest files could best be kept and sent. Working with the Commission's website provider, an S3 bucket was set up on AWS (Amazon Web Services) to store the largest files, with smaller files saved in the consultation site's backend media library. The web provider was able to put in place appropriate security measures such as removing the files from the site's search function. These

download links were then placed together on a dedicated press page on the corporate website. Before the launch, a link to this page, together with the press release, was distributed via Notify to all press contacts with an embargo notice.

41. The Communications Manager prepared key messages and lines to take for Commission spokespeople prior to the launch. From 8 November onwards, the Commission participated in 16 interviews (most of which took place on the launch date) for national and regional TV, radio and print media. This exceeds the number of interviews which took place during the first and secondary consultations (totalling 9 and 5 interviews respectively), demonstrating the high level of interest in the revised proposals and the impact of the media strategy.
42. Interviews took place with ITV News, BBC News, Talk TV, LBC, BBC Radio 4, Times Radio, and a number of regional BBC radio stations. It is likely that more coverage took place than could be monitored due to the difficulty of tracking certain mediums (especially radio). While a number of presenters were interested in the political outcomes of the boundary review, the Commission spokespeople handled this challenge well and brought the conversation back to the key messages and the topic of the public consultation. The interviews resulted in good quality coverage of the consultation, with 84% including the key message of explaining why the boundary review was taking place, i.e. the need to rebalance elector numbers.
43. Press and public interest in the final consultation has also been reflected in the volume of coverage produced in print and online. Over the course of the consultation period, a total of 173 articles were published in print or online, with a further 19 recorded pieces of coverage on TV or radio. The table below recording the volume of coverage published shows a significant increase compared to the previous consultation period earlier this year, as well as a higher uptick at the end of the short final consultation.

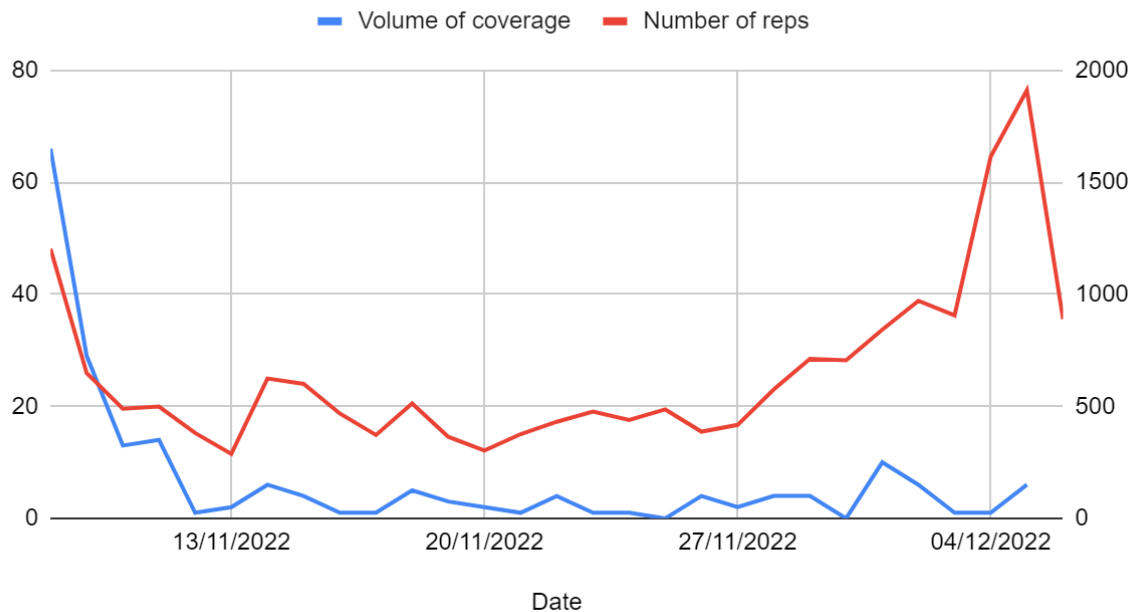
Table: Coverage published per week

Date	Coverage (first consultation)	Coverage (secondary consultation)	Coverage (final consultation)
Week 1	370	44	132
Week 2	19	24	17
Week 3	5	11	15
Week 4	10	10	28
Week 5	7	19	-

Week 6	7	17	-
Week 7	18	-	-
Week 8	21	-	-

Chart: Volume of coverage compared with representations per day

Volume of coverage and number of reps per day



44. The coverage was largely of an effective quality, as can be judged by whether the key messages were delivered through the content of a piece: did journalists signpost towards the consultation portal; was the Commission affirmed as independent or impartial or the process stated as fair; did the article explain why the boundary review needed to take place, instead of presenting the changes as imposed upon constituents without context; and finally, did the article state that local views would be taken into account or that members of the public had an opportunity to have a say.
45. Of the online or print coverage, 60% appeared to use or been directly influenced by the press release. In measuring the sentiment of the pieces, almost all were balanced or positive in tone. There was a slight increase in the share of coverage which highlighted the independence or impartiality of the Commission compared with the previous consultation; however, the delivery of other key messages decreased to some extent. This may be due to a larger proportion of articles which mentioned rather than centred on the review, for example, by focussing largely on the impacts for political leaders.

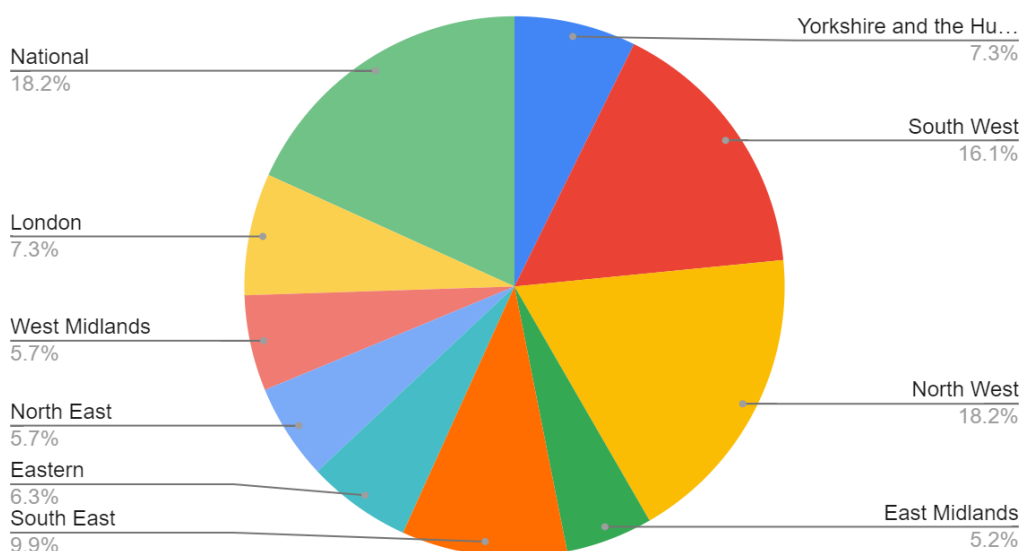
Table: Evaluation of coverage against delivery of key messages

Key message	% included during final consultation	% included during final consultation (radio/TV only)
Consultation website	54%	58%
Fair/ impartial/ independent	28%	32%
Why - equal weight, rebalance numbers etc	71%	84%
Taking local views into account	83%	68%

46. Coverage was proactively monitored by the Communications Manager, who twice contacted BBC journalists to correct factual errors in publications and ensure an accurate picture of the boundary review process.
47. On 8 November, the BBC ran an article on the proposals, '[Boundary review: Tories could make modest gains from new election map](#)', which made it to the BBC News homepage, drawing in thousands of comments and, because it included a link to the consultation website, a spike in visitor numbers. ITV News' article, '[Why is the electoral map changing now?](#)', which embedded their news video, also helped give the campaign a wide reach. The Times, Evening Standard and I newspapers also ran coverage in the first two days of the campaign. A number of articles were published by regional BBC News pages, e.g. '[Londoners could vote for two more MPs at an election](#)'. High numbers of articles by local news outlets continued to be published throughout the consultation period, drawing and sustaining interest at a local level.
48. The highest volume of coverage was published by national, North West and South West outlets (during the secondary consultation, this title was held by the Yorkshire and the Humber region, followed by outlets from the South West and North West).

Chart: Articles published by region of news outlet

Final consultation



Stakeholder engagement

49. Engagement with stakeholder groups formed a key part of the communications strategy for the final consultation, as an effective and low-cost way of reaching wide audiences at a local level.
50. In surveys conducted after the previous consultation periods, local authorities had raised the issue of their high workloads as a hindrance to participation in the campaign. To tackle this and improve local authorities' engagement, the Communications Manager identified the need for and organised a briefing aimed at Chief Executives and communications teams. The event was well attended, with just under 400 attendees. The Secretary of the Commission spoke at the event to flag the upcoming consultation and speak about the work of the BCE more generally, providing the opportunity for questions; the Communications Manager then introduced the Partner Toolkit and encouraged the local authority staff to use it to promote the consultation during the upcoming campaign period. This strategy of persuading Chief Executives to ask their staff to get involved with the campaign resulted in a high level of engagement from councils across England who continually posted content on their websites and social media channels, thus driving forward public awareness.
51. The Partner Toolkit was designed and developed by the Communications Manager for use by stakeholders during the final consultation, and contained ready-made communications materials to ease promotion of the campaign and to ensure consistent and clear content was published across the country. This included template posts for social media channels, text for websites,

newsletters or bulletins, an FAQ sheet and more. In order to help the campaign reach an offline audience, the toolkit included posters and flyers with instructions to place these in local venues such as council offices and libraries. Additionally, to help ensure any communications activities took into account underrepresented audiences, the toolkit encouraged councils to reach out to Diversity Officers, if available. [The Partner Toolkit can be downloaded from the Commission's website here.](#)

52. The Commission built on relationships with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Local Government Association (LGA), and the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), and organised for content to be distributed to members in their bulletins during the consultation.
53. After the closure of the final consultation, the Communications Manager sent a survey to local authorities, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to give feedback on the toolkit and briefing. Of the 40 responses received:
 - 76% used the text for websites and bulletins
 - 73% used the sample posts (text and/or images) for social media
 - 48% used the press release (made available via the BCE website after the launch)
 - 23% used the factsheet provided
 - 18% used the FAQ page
 - 15% used the poster and/or flyer
54. Asked whether they found the toolkit understandable and useful, 90% responded 'Yes', with the remaining 10% responding that they had not been aware of the toolkit.
55. Asked to provide further feedback on the toolkit, respondents said:
 - *Made the info easy to understand*
 - *The toolkit was very informative, concise and easy [to] follow.*
 - *Pretty comprehensive - there was nothing I could not find.*
 - *Simple language and easy to 'manipulate' information for our audiences digitally and internally.*
 - *This was really a helpful way of enabling us to promote your consultation in our area*
 - *The toolkit was really useful and we used nearly all of the resources, the website, bulletin and social media templates was really useful, as it helped to make sure our content was consistent and we didn't have to spend lots of time creating images and writing content to issue across our channels.*
 - *It's hugely helpful to be able to share nationally approved content/artwork and graphics for matters which have a political edge to them such as this yet we carry a responsibility to inform and educate, and have greater access to, a local audience. Just as with the Voter ID*

campaign, the uniformity provided by a national campaign provides a neutrality which is welcomed.

56. Of the survey respondents who reported that they had attended the briefing, 95.5% answered 'Yes' to finding the information provided on the boundary review and consultation helpful.
57. The survey also asked local authorities how they had promoted the consultation, if able to do so. Social media was the most used platform, with 80% responding that they had used this to publicise the campaign; 63% had published a news article or press release; 60% shared information via newsletters or bulletins; 28% put up hard copy materials such as posters; 30% contacted local media outlets; and 20% shared the toolkit with other organisations. Few reported any challenges in promoting the consultation when prompted, with time constraints being one of the issues raised.
58. A separate survey was also sent to places of deposit (PoDs), where hard copies of the proposals were stored for public use during the consultation period. These materials were used very infrequently; just under 90% of the PoDs who responded to the survey estimated that they had only had between 0-10 visitors to the materials.
59. As an invaluable method of reaching the public, relationships with stakeholder organisations should continue to be identified and strengthened. The Commission has continued to maintain these relationships; for example, by attending the recent AEA national conference in Birmingham. The Commission has also raised the profile of its work by exhibiting at Civil Service Live in July 2022, with a stand organised by the Communications Manager and several of the Secretariat in attendance to speak with other delegates.

Organic communications

60. Both the paid-for advertising and organic communications directed members of the public to the consultation website bcereviews.org.uk to view the revised proposals and others' comments from previous consultations, and to have their say. Between 8 November and 5 December, 180,860 sessions were opened on the consultation website by 145,719 users (of which most - 145,426 or 86% - were 'new' users). The highest volume of visits occurred on 8 November (35,026 sessions). The bounce rate, which measures the share of visitors who view only a single webpage on the site before exiting, while slightly higher than the previous consultations, which had a bounce rate of 35.08% (first) and 33.49% (secondary), was within the optimal range at 37.97%. It must be noted that acquisition data can be unreliable because, as the website asks for permission before gathering information via cookies, and

as most visitors decline, we cannot track media attribution accurately. For example, we are aware that on the day of the publication of the revised proposals the data indicated significant increase in the portal database requests, meaning considerably more people than the number above were accessing the site. However, we can see that as expected, users seem to be often directed from Meta, Spotify, Ozone, bbc.co.uk, and a number of local authority, regional news or political representatives' websites.

61. Between 8 November and 5 December, there were 59,418 sessions and 113,096 unique page views on the corporate website, with the peak of these visits (35,026) occurring on the launch date. The data shows 44,115 users, of which 42,834 were 'new'. At 23.84%, the bounce rate was significantly lower than the first and secondary consultations at 41.82% and 50.97% respectively, meaning that a higher proportion of visitors stayed to view the content on the page after navigating to the website either via adverts or other websites. Available acquisition data indicates that a proportion of users navigated to the website via bcereviews.org.uk, Twitter, Facebook, bbc.co.uk, parliament.uk, lgbce.org.uk, Instagram, Politico, and commonslibrary.parliament.uk.
62. Engaging content was published by the Communications Manager at planned intervals to build and maintain interest in the review process. This included a news article announcing the date of the launch, and [a further article published on the day of the launch](#) (which linked to the national press release) was viewed 9,759 times during the consultation. Halfway through the final consultation, a blog was published from Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner, encouraging members of the public to participate before it closed: [We're halfway through our final consultation on revised constituencies: Have you had your say yet?](#) This was followed after the closure of the consultation by a blog from Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission, [which provided information on the next steps in the review process](#).
63. The Commission's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels were also used to provide information and help drive engagement with the campaign. The tweet on 8 November launching the campaign was seen by the widest audience, with 185,725 impressions and 7,752 engagements. On Facebook, the launch post generated 70,567 impressions, reaching 66,833 people and achieving 4,641 engagements.

Conclusion

64. The Commission received a high level of engagement during the 2023 review of parliamentary constituency boundaries. Across three consultation periods, almost 65,000 unique responses were sent in by members of the public. This

is a significant increase in participation from the 2018 Review, during which approximately 37,000 unique consultation responses were sent in.

65. An interactive map on the bcereviews.org.uk consultation website enabled members of the public to easily take a look at our proposals, compare them with existing constituency or ward boundaries, and read comments submitted by others in their local area. The postcode search tool on the website homepage, which takes visitors directly to the map of proposed changes in their local area, helped to drive public interest in the boundary review and encourage participation in the consultation.
66. By making it easy for people to submit their views online, resulting in over 90% of responses being sent in via the consultation website, the Commission has followed the Government's commitment to services that are 'digital by default'. As well as being more widely accessible, the website has enabled a more cost-effective and efficient approach to the consultation process. Representations via email or letter, or made orally at one of 32 public hearings held around the country during the secondary consultation, were also accepted by the Commission and treated with equal weight to those submitted via the website.
67. To spread the word about the constituency boundary review and how people could have their say on the proposed new map, the Commission held an extensive advertising campaign on social media, in national newspapers, Google, and other websites. We also provided local authorities with information and materials to help raise local awareness, and took part in TV, radio and print interviews for both regional and national news outlets. The wide-reaching public interest in the boundary review process is reflected in the use of the bcereviews.org.uk website. In the first week of the initial consultation alone, there were nearly 130,000 visits to our consultation website, and during the final four week consultation on our revised map, over 145,000 unique users visited the website.
68. By proactive engagement with the press and strengthening stakeholder relationships, alongside an effective digital marketing strategy, the Commission undertook a communications campaign demonstrated to be both cost-effective, wide-reaching, and successful in its aims of informing the public of the boundary review and widening participation in the consultation process.