

Minutes of Commission meetings 20-24 March 2023

20 March - Final recommendations on London region (paper 1)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Commissioner
Sarah Hamilton, Lead Commissioner for London region
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

North East London

Commissioners agreed there were no persuasive arguments for any further amendments in this sub-region.

Newham and Tower Hamlets

There was broad acceptance of constituencies proposed in this sub-region, so Commissioners agreed no changes to the revised proposals.

North Central London

After considering all the evidence from consultation responses and visiting various sites in the sub-region, Commissioners did not feel able to meet all of the issues raised about the revised proposals in southern Enfield without significant disruption elsewhere. However, they did agree to have Grange Park ward join Winchmore Hill in a newly named Edmonton and Winchmore Hill constituency (transferring Ponders End ward to Enfield North).

Commissioners agreed to add Finsbury to the Islington South constituency name in light of local support. They also accepted arguments for a transfer of the Gospel Oak and Kentish Town North wards between Hampstead and Highgate, and Holborn and St Pancras constituencies, which also required a split of the Primrose Hill ward in order to avoid significant negative knock-on effects.

North West London

Commissioners agreed a number of name changes in light of local support, to: Queen's Park and Maida Vale; Brent West; and Brent East.



Commissioners accepted the more persuasive arguments and evidence were in favour of reverting to the initial proposals for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, and Uxbridge and South Ruislip.

South West London

Commissioners noted the competing alternatives for constituencies in the Kingston-upon-Thames area in particular. Although the arguments were finely balanced, having considered all the evidence from consultation and a further site visit, Commissioners felt that overall the more persuasive arguments favoured a reversion to the initial proposals for constituencies of: Kingston and Surbiton; Richmond Park; and Wimbledon (the latter impacting the western boundary of Mitcham and Morden).

South Central London

Commissioners agreed the following amended constituency names, in light of local support in consultation responses: Croydon West; Streatham and Croydon North; Clapham and Brixton Hill; Lewisham North; Vauxhall and Camberwell Green.

South East London

Commissioners noted general support for the proposed constituencies, and were not persuaded by those arguing for further changes.



20 March - Final recommendations on North East region (paper 2)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Commissioner
Sarah Hamilton, Lead Commissioner for North East region
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

North of Tyne

Commissioners agreed a change of constituency name to North Northumberland in light of local support. Although they considered at length the case for splitting the Long Horsley ward, they did not ultimately feel there was a persuasive enough case for doing so.

North East sub-region

Commissioners agreed to rename constituencies to: Gateshead Central and Whickham; Washington and Gateshead South; and Jarrow and Gateshead East.

Tees Valley

Commissioners agreed there was no persuasive evidence to warrant further change in this sub-region.



21 March - Communications evaluation (paper 10)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Commissioner
Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Communications Manager

The Communications Manager presented the evaluation of the various strands of the communications campaign that had been conducted through the course of the 2023 Review to raise awareness of and engagement with the public consultations in particular, as set out in the paper.

Commissioners noted the findings of the evaluation, and particularly the increasing effectiveness of digital marketing compared to more traditional approaches. They specifically noted the high cost and poor take-up of hard copy consultation materials required by statute to be made available in all proposed constituencies, and agreed that the highly questionable value for money of this requirement be specifically identified in the text of the final report, with a view to the government removing the requirement for future reviews.

Commissioners thanked the Communications Manager for her effective work throughout the 2023 Review, as reflected in the higher than ever number of responses received in consultation.



21 March - Final recommendations on South East region (paper 3)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Lead Commissioner for South East region
Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

Berkshire/Hampshire/Surrey

Commissioners considered very carefully the counter-proposal to keep Reading constituencies closer to their existing configuration and although the matter was finely balanced, they ultimately determined that retention of the revised proposals was the approach that aligned best with the statutory factors for the area as a whole, and noted that the alternative would split the Tadley community. They did agree to a change of the proposed constituency names, to Reading West and Mid Berkshire, and Reading Central.

Commissioners were not persuaded by arguments to make further changes to the proposals for Hampshire or Surrey.

Buckinghamshire

Commissioners agreed to a split of the Denham ward, which allowed Gerrards Cross to be kept within a single constituency without causing significant negative consequential impacts elsewhere. They also agreed to change the name of the proposed Milton Keynes South to Milton Keynes Central in light of local support. Commissioners were not persuaded by the case to extend the proposed split of the Chiltern Ridges ward, to add additional rural areas into the Chesham and Amersham constituency.

Isle of Wight

Commissioners saw no persuasive evidence to make changes to the revised proposals for the island.

Kent

Commissioners accepted the evidence - from both consultation and a site visit - for some transfers of wards as follows: Darenth ward to Dartford; Wateringbury ward to



Tonbridge; and Leeds ward to Faversham and Mid Kent. Commissioners considered carefully the counter proposal for constituencies in north east Kent, and although a finely balanced decision, felt that retention of the revised proposals for East Thanet, and Herne Bay and Sandwich, was the better approach, noting that the alternative would split the Sturry community.

Oxfordshire

Commissioners agreed a constituency name change, to Henley and Thame, but were otherwise not persuaded to make any further changes to the proposals for this county.

Sussex

Commissioners agreed the amended split of the Hanover and Elm Grove ward in Brighton, and a name change to Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven, reflecting support for those changes in the consultation responses. They gave very careful consideration to how to address the continuing concerns of areas to the north of Lewes, deciding that there was insufficient justification to split a ward, but agreed the transfer of Buxted ward to East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency, and the transfer of two wards to from that constituency to Lewes (Ditchling & Westmeston, and Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington and St John).

In West Sussex, Commissioners acknowledged the continuing difficulties of achieving a satisfactory solution for the pattern of constituencies between Southwick and Chichester on the coast, and the South Downs rural area inland. After careful consideration of multiple alternatives, and taking account of evidence from both representations and a site visit, Commissioners ultimately determined that retention of the revised proposals was the best possible solution across the area as a whole, even if it continued to have negative aspects for specific areas. They saw no persuasive arguments to amend the revised proposals elsewhere in the county.



21 March - Final recommendations on East Midlands region (paper 4)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Commissioner
Sarah Hamilton, Lead Commissioner for East Midlands region
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

Derbyshire

Commissioners agreed there were no persuasive arguments to change the revised proposals in this county.

Nottinghamshire

Commissioners noted the opposition to the proposed Ashfield and Mansfield constituencies, although agreed there were no persuasive arguments to change the revised proposals in this county.

Leicestershire/Lincolnshire/Rutland

Commissioners agreed two constituency name changes in light of local support: Harborough, Oadby and Wigston; and Grantham and Bourne. Otherwise, they were not persuaded by arguments for further change in this sub-region.

Northamptonshire

Commissioners considered carefully the competing arguments for the configuration of constituencies in Northampton, but taking account of all the evidence from consultation and a site visit, felt that retention of the revised proposals was the best approach. Although they were unpersuaded by arguments for further configuration change in the east of the county, they did agree to change a constituency name to Wellingborough and Rushden.



22 March - Final recommendations on South West region (paper 5)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Commissioner
Sarah Hamilton, Lead Commissioner for South West region
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager
Review Officer

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

Gloucestershire

Commissioners agreed there were no persuasive arguments to support change to the revised proposals in this county.

Wiltshire

After reviewing the evidence from consultation and a further site visit to the county, Commissioners agreed there was no better alternative pattern of constituencies for the county, and therefore agreed to retain the revised proposals.

Dorset

Commissioners considered carefully again the opposition to proposed constituencies in South and West Dorset. They agreed the proposal to split the West Purbeck ward, which allowed its two north-eastern polling districts to be included in Mid Dorset and North Poole, and also facilitated the transfer of Upwey & Broadwey ward into South Dorset. However, while they did not agree there was an equally strong case to split the Chalk Valleys ward, under this alternative pattern they identified that the whole of the Chalk Valleys ward could be included in the West Dorset constituency.

Cornwall

Commissioners considered there were no persuasive arguments received to make further changes to the proposals for Cornwall.

Avon/Somerset/Devon

Commissioners accepted the arguments and evidence to transfer the Bruton ward from a renamed Froome and East Somerset constituency to Glastonbury and Somerton constituency, in exchange for The Pennards and Ditcheat ward. They also agreed name changes to: Taunton and Wellington; and Exmouth and Exeter East.



22 March - Final recommendations on West Midlands region (paper 6)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Lead Commissioner for West Midlands region
Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

Birmingham/Solihull

Commissioners considered carefully the competing arguments and evidence for the configuration of the Perry Barr and Erdington constituencies, including that of a site visit to the area. They ultimately agreed that the best reflection of local ties would be to restore the whole of the Stockland Green ward to Erdington, even though this required the Oscott ward to be split, with its most western and southern polling districts retained in Perry Barr constituency. Commissioners also agreed constituency name changes to: Birmingham Hodge Hill and Solihull North; Meriden and Solihull East; Solihull West and Shirley; and Birmingham Hall Green and Moseley.

Coventry

Commissioners felt there were no persuasive arguments for further change to the proposed constituencies for the city.

Herefordshire

Commissioners felt there were no persuasive arguments for further change to the proposed constituencies for the county.

Shropshire

Although noting the opposition from wards in the north east of the county to their inclusion in The Wrekin constituency, Commissioners had seen no better alternative pattern of constituencies proposed for the area as a whole, and therefore agreed no changes to the revised proposals.



Staffordshire and The Black Country

Commissioners did not feel that any better alternatives had been received for an improved pattern of constituencies. However, they did agree constituency name changes to: Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge; and Burton and Uttoxeter.

Warwickshire

Commissioners accepted the case for a transfer of the Radford Semele ward into the Warwick and Leamington constituency on the basis of its local ties. They also agreed with arguments for amendment of a constituency name, to North Warwickshire and Bedworth.

Worcestershire

While recognising the proposals cut across the ties of the Norton and Harvington ward with Evesham, Commissioners were not persuaded that the alternative approach would present a better solution for the sub-region as a whole, and therefore agreed to retain the revised proposals.



23 March - Final recommendations on Yorkshire and the Humber region (paper 7)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Lead Commissioner for Yorkshire and the Humber region
Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager
Review Officer

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

South Yorkshire and Humberside

Commissioners agreed the amendment of a constituency name to Doncaster East and the Isle of Axholme, but otherwise saw no persuasive arguments to change the revised proposals.

Commissioners agreed a minor modification to the split of the Wolds Weighton ward, and constituency name changes to: Kingston-upon Hull North and Cottingham; and Kingston-upon-Hull West and Haltemprice.

North and West Yorkshire

Commissioners felt there was insufficient evidence presented to make any changes to the revised proposals for North Yorkshire.

In West Yorkshire, after reviewing all the evidence from consultation and a further site visit, Commissioners agreed to change which ward was split between Bradford East and South - making that Bowling and Barkerend ward instead of Little Horton. They also accepted the case for constituency name changes, to: Ossett and Denby Dale; Pontefract, Castleford and Knottingley; and Wakefield and Rothwell. The composition of constituencies in Leeds continued to be very difficult. After considering all the evidence from consultation and a further site, Commissioners decided that the revised proposals should be retained, but agreed some constituency name changes, to: Leeds Central and Headingley; Leeds West and Pudsey, Leeds South West and Morley; and Leeds South.



23 March - Final recommendations on Eastern region (paper 8)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Commissioner
Sarah Hamilton, Lead Commissioner for Eastern region
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

Cambridgeshire

Commissioners felt there was not persuasive evidence to change the composition of any of the revised proposals, but agreed a change of constituency name, to Ely and East Cambridgeshire.

Bedfordshire

Commissioners felt there had been no convincing arguments to change the revised proposals in the county.

Hertfordshire

Commissioners were not persuaded by arguments for change to the revised proposals in the county.

Norfolk and Suffolk

In Norfolk, Commissioners agreed there was no convincing evidence to change the revised proposals in the county. In Suffolk, Commissioners agreed to amend a proposed constituency name, to Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket, but there were no persuasive arguments to change the configuration of any constituencies in the revised proposals.

Essex

Commissioners considered very carefully the competing arguments and evidence for the configuration of the Southend and Rochford constituencies: on balance they agreed that the statutory factors would be best reflected by adopting the alternative that saw minimal change to the existing constituencies, simply adding St Lukes onto a renamed Southend West and Leigh constituency. They also accepted the argument to rename Saffron Waldon to North West Essex. While recognising the concerns of Old Heath & The Hythe ward at their omission from the Colchester



constituency, and similar concerns of inland wards at their inclusion in the Clacton constituency, Commissioners had not seen an alternative that provided a better overall alternative for north east Essex.



24 March - Final recommendations on North West region (paper 9)

Mr Justice Lane, Deputy Chair
Colin Byrne, Lead Commissioner for North West region
Sarah Hamilton, Commissioner
Tim Bowden, Secretary to the Commission
Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews
Head of Corporate Services
Review Manager

The review staff talked Commissioners through the responses received to the revised proposals consultation, and the amendments to those recommended in consequence, as set out in the paper.

Cumbria and Lancashire

In Cumbria, Commissioners accepted the arguments that the wards of Flimby, and Seaton & Northside should be included in the Whitehaven and Workington constituency on the basis of local ties, and that this meant that the wards of Crummock & Derwent Valley, and Keswick could only be kept together in the Penrith and Solway constituency. Commissioners felt there were no persuasive arguments to change the revised proposals for Lancashire.

Merseyside and Cheshire

Commissioners had seen no convincing arguments to change the revised proposals in this sub-region.

Greater Manchester

Commissioners did not see persuasive arguments for any change to the configuration of the revised proposals constituencies, but agreed to the following name changes: Heywood and Middleton North; Blackley and Middleton South; and Oldham West, Chadderton and Royton.