

COMMITTEE REPORT

30 NOVEMBER 2016

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The Boundary Commission for England is seeking comments/representations on its proposals for changes to Parliamentary constituency boundaries for England in 2018. Views were sought from Members, and it was recommended by the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee that, given the level of possible impact on Middlesbrough, a representation should be submitted on behalf of the Council.

BACKGROUND

Parliamentary Boundary Review

2. The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 required that the Boundary Commission conduct a review of the Parliamentary constituencies. The Act requires that the current 650 constituencies in the UK be reduced to 600.
3. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is presently conducting a review of the boundaries for all parliamentary constituencies in England on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament. This will result in a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England (from 533 to 501), of these, two constituencies are allocated to the Isle of Wight as per the Act.
4. The BCE has subsequently distributed the remaining 499 constituencies between the regions used for European Parliamentary elections.
5. The proposals in the review which are currently being consulted on are designed to ensure that each constituency contains a similar number of registered electors and, with two exceptions, propose that each constituency will be based on an electorate no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507.
6. The table below gives the following allocation of constituencies between the regions:

Eastern	57
East Midlands	44
London	68
North East	25
North West	68
South East	81*
South West	53
West Midlands	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	50
* Plus the two constituencies for the Isle of Wight	

7. When considering the revised boundaries the Act provides for a number of factors that the BCE may take into account in establishing a new map of constituencies for the 2018 Review, specifically:
 - special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015;
 - boundaries of existing constituencies; and
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies.
8. While the BCE proposes to identify constituencies by reference to local authority external boundaries as far as practicable, it is nevertheless often necessary to cross these boundaries in order to form constituencies that comply with the statutory electorate range.
9. The BCE uses wards (in district and borough council areas) as the basic building block for designing constituencies.
10. All existing constituencies in the North East region will be affected by the changes. The region has been allocated 25 constituencies (4 less than at present).
11. As soon as possible after the initial 12-week consultation on the initial proposals, the Boundary Commission will publish all of the representations which it has received for each region on its web site (including the records of the public hearing). Once the representations have been published there is a further statutory four-week period, during which written comments can be submitted on the representations received by Boundary Commission during the initial consultation. There will be no public hearings at this stage.
12. Following consideration of all representations received in the initial consultation period, and all written representations made in the four week secondary consultation period, the Boundary Commission will consider a report on each region, and determine whether and to what extent revisions should be made to its initial proposals. A notice will be published in each region stating whether revisions have been made to the initial proposals for that region.
13. If the proposals are revised, then the Act provides for a further period of eight weeks for written representations to be made to the Boundary Commission on the revised proposals for that area. There would be no public hearings at this stage, nor there a repeat of the four week period for commenting on the representations of others.
14. When the Commission has decided on its final recommendations for the whole of England, it drafts, publishes and submits a formal report to the government and this ends the formal review process.
15. The procedure to implement new constituencies is the responsibility of Government and Parliament

Ward Implications

16. The Boundary Commission England proposals will impact on all wards in Middlesbrough and the surrounding local authorities.

Proposed Constituencies

17. Maps of the proposed constituencies affecting Middlesbrough are attached to this report (Appendix A 1-3).

18. A large A0 map and an A4 booklet have also been received and are available for inspection at the Town Hall Reception which provide further details of the initial proposal for the North East.

19. The Commission also hosted a number of public hearings across England.

Local implications and proposed submission

20. Middlesbrough will see an increase from two, to three Parliamentary constituencies

- Middlesbrough North East and Redcar constituency will take on areas from Middlesbrough
- Middlesbrough West and Stockton East constituency will take on areas from Middlesbrough and Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, and also Stockton South
- Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency will retain part of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, the remaining part being transferred to Redcar constituency.

21. The proposed changes in allocation of the electorate are based on the 2015 electoral register:

Existing Constituencies (Middlesbrough share)	Current split of Mbro Ward Electorate	Proposed Constituencies	Proposed split of Mbro Ward Electorate
Middlesbrough	59,774	Middlesbrough North East and Redcar	29,281
		Middlesbrough West and Stockton East	30,493
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	30,388	Middlesbrough West and Stockton East	6,230
		Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	24,158
Total	90,162		90,162

22. Following a briefing with Members and considerations at Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee there were a number of concerns, and a strong feeling that under these proposals Middlesbrough would lose its identity, and therefore Middlesbrough Council should make a representation to the Boundary Commission England. The proposed submission is attached (Appendix B) for Members' consideration and support. Representations should be submitted through the Commissions website by 5 December 2016. Further representations were sought from Group Leaders, and these have been included, where practicable.

Recommendations

23. In order to voice its strong concerns, Council support the attached submission to the Boundary Commission England.

Background Papers

24. Boundary Commission for England Consultation Paper and associated plans.

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