

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: The 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in England
Committee: City Council
Date: 3 December 2012
Cabinet Member:
CMT Member: Assistant Director for Democracy and Governance
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Ref: E3/Parliamentary Review 2012
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

This report advises on revised proposals published by the Boundary Commission for England relating to the review of parliamentary constituency boundaries as affects the City of Plymouth. The City Council is invited to consider any representations it wishes to make in respect of those revised proposals before the 10th December 2012.

Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015:

This report complies with statutory obligations and requirements. There is no specific relationship with the Corporate Plan.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Nil

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

It is unclear at this stage whether the revised proposals will have a specific impact on these matters.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

That Council consider what representations it wishes to make to the Boundary commission on the revised proposals.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

N/A

Background papers:

All background papers and information – available from Boundary Commission for England website
<http://consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

Sign off:

Fin	PG/CorpSFDCI 213003.07.11.12	Leg	16030/ DVS	HR	N/A	Corp Prop	N/A	IT	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating SMT Member: Tim Howes											

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has the task of periodically reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England.

1.2 It is currently conducting a review on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament in the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011. The new rules mean that there will be substantial changes to Parliamentary constituencies. These include: -

- Reducing the total number of constituencies from 533 to 502 (Overall in the United Kingdom from 650 to 600), and
- Making sure that each constituency contains a similar number of registered electors

This Act specifies that every constituency must have an electorate that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota (apart from specified exceptions such as the Isle of Wight). The UK electoral quota for this review is 76,641. This means that every constituency will have an electorate no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473. There are a number of other factors the BCE may take into account, specifically: -

- Special geographical considerations
- Local government boundaries
- Boundaries of existing constituencies
- Local ties

The BCE has published a guide to the 2013 review which describes in detail the overall requirements and policy in developing the parliamentary boundary proposals. A copy of this report can be downloaded from: -

<http://consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

2.0 The Review Process and General Timetable

2.1 The review began in March 2011 with the BCE publishing breakdowns of the electorate for each ward, local government area and constituencies. Initial proposals were published for consultation on 13 September 2011.

2.2 At Stage 2 of the review the BCE published 'initial' proposals, which were open to public consultation until the 5 December 2011. This consultation included holding 36 public hearings and receiving over 22,000 written representations.

2.3 Following Stage 2 the BCE published all representations received and conducted further consultation on the proposals over a four week period. A further 572 written representations were received. During Stage 3, following careful consideration of the evidence presented, the BCE decided that it was appropriate to revise initial proposals in some areas.

2.4 On the 16 October 2012 (the current Stage 4) the BCE published revised proposals, with a consultation period running until 10 December 2012.

2.5 At Stage 5 (final stage) the BCE will consider all representations received, before making a final recommendation to the Government. This must be undertaken by 1 October 2013.

- 2.6 The Government will then present legislation to Parliament, for approval.
- 2.7 Implementation is scheduled from the next General election.

3.0 The Revised Proposals – As affecting Plymouth

- 3.1 Under the changes to the initial proposals the two Plymouth constituencies will each swap a ward. It is proposed to move Eggbuckland ward from the new Plymouth Devonport Borough constituency to the new Plymouth Sutton Borough constituency, with St Peter and the Waterfront ward moving in the opposite direction.

The proposed constituency of Tavistock and Plympton will be made more Plymouth facing and focus on the Plymouth travel to work area. The revised seat will lose Okehampton to the north, while gaining Ivybridge and Wembury/Brixton wards in the South Hams.

3.2 Composition of the Plymouth Devonport Borough Constituency

Ward	Electorate
Budshead	9,660
Devonport	9,616
Ham	9,631
Honicknowle	10,298
St Budeaux	9,642
St Peter and the Waterfront	9,390
Southway	9,713
Stoke	9,359
Total	77,309

The initial proposal included Eggbuckland ward in this constituency (see below)

Current constituency: The current equivalent constituency would be Plymouth, Moor View, comprising Budshead, Eggbuckland, Ham, Honicknowle, Moor View, St Budeaux and Southway.

Plymouth Sutton Borough Constituency

Ward	Electorate
Compton	9,311
Drake	4,520
Efford and Lipson	9,322
Eggbuckland	10,355
Peverell	10,154
Plymstock Dunstone	9,828
Plymstock Radford	9,822
Sutton and Mount Gould	9,564
Total	72,876

The initial proposals included St Peter and the Waterfront ward in this constituency (see above) and Wembury and Brixton (see below).

Current constituency: The nearest current equivalent to this constituency is Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport, comprising Compton, Devonport, Drake, Efford and Lipson, Peverell, St Peter and the Waterfront, Stoke and Sutton and Mount Gould.

Tavistock and Plympton County Constituency

Ward	Electorate
Moor View	9,257
Plympton Chaddlewood	6,219
Plympton Erle	6,914
Plympton St Mary	10,113
Bickleigh and Shaugh	3,738
Cornwood and Sparkwell	1,918
Ivybridge Central	1,985
Ivybridge Filham	3,958
Ivybridge Woodlands	3,423
Newton and Noss	1,566
Wembury and Brixton	3,759
Yealmpton	1,721
Bere Ferris	2,509
Buckland Monachorum	2,726
Burrator	1,264
Lydford	1,250
Mary Tavy	1,391
Milton Ford	1,351
Tamarside	1,304
Tavistock North	4,348
Tavistock South	3,453
Tavistock South West	1,720
Thrushel	1,376
Walkham	2,481
Total	79,744

The proposed Tavistock and Plympton constituency is completely new and comprises three local authority areas: -

- Plymouth City Council (32,503 electors)
- South Hams District Council (22,068 – initial proposals was 5,656 electors) , and
- West Devon Borough Council (25,173 – initial proposals was 33,720 electors)

The revised proposal also differs considerably from the initial proposals: -

Out go the wards of Broadheath, Forest (Torrige District Council – 2784 voters), Bridestowe, Lew Valley, Okehampton East, Okehampton West (West Devon Borough Council – 8,547 voters):

Maps of the proposed new boundaries are attached or can be viewed on the BCE website or in the Electoral Services Office.

<http://consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

4.0 How does this affect the administration of a Parliamentary General election?

- 4.1 Section 24 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 specifies who the Returning Officer and Acting Returning Officer appointed to run a Parliamentary General election should be.
- 4.2 In the case of a borough constituency which is wholly contained in a local authority area, the duty will fall to the Chairman of the Council and appointed Electoral Registration Officer. This will apply to the proposed Plymouth Devonport and Sutton borough constituencies and the role would be undertaken in Plymouth.
- 4.4 In the case of designated county constituencies, the Sheriff of the county is appointed as Returning Officer. However, the Acting Returning Officer is designated by the Secretary of State. This applies to the proposed Tavistock and Plympton county constituency.

As Plymouth has the greater part of the electorate for this constituency it is more than likely that the Secretary of State will designate the role of Acting Returning Officer to Plymouth.

5.0 What is the next step in the review process?

- 5.1 The BCE commenced the consultation on the revised proposals on Tuesday 16 October and is encouraging everyone to use the opportunity to “help finalise the design of the new constituencies”.

The main focus of the BCE during this consultation will concern comment on the ‘revised proposals’. They will consider representations on the initial proposals but will need ‘compelling’ further evidence or submissions to persuade them to make changes to proposals that have already ‘withstood intensive scrutiny’.

- 5.2 The BCE have also emphasised that anyone ‘making a representation on a specific area to bear in mind the knock-on effects of their proposals’ (i.e. consider the impact of counter-proposals on neighbouring constituencies and possibly those further afield).
- 5.3 During previous Parliamentary constituency boundary reviews it has been the practice for the political parties to submit representations directly or to make comments about proposals directly to the BCE.

There are two ways to submit views on the initial proposals either in writing, by email or by using the BCE consultation website. Representations need to be submitted by the 10th December 2012.

- 5.4 On the 5th December 2011, the following motion was presented to Council in respect of the initial proposals, ‘This Council objects in the strongest terms to the Boundary Commission proposals for the redrawing of Parliamentary Boundaries in so far as they affect wards in the City of Plymouth.’ Following consideration of an amendment the motion was withdrawn.