

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.9

meeting date: 25 OCTOBER 2016
 title: BOUNDARY COMMISSION – PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 As you are aware the Boundary Commission has commenced a review of Parliamentary constituencies within England. The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's response to the Commission's initial proposals.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives - } How residents are represented by an MP in Parliament is an important part of the democratic process in the United Kingdom
- Corporate Priorities - }
- Other Considerations - }

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 A Parliamentary boundary review examines the existing constituencies and makes recommendations for any changes that might be needed to make sure constituencies comply with legal requirements. Those legal requirements are intended to keep the number of electors in each constituency broadly equal, whilst also taking into account factors such as local community ties.

2.2 For the 2018 Review, the Commission must make its final report and recommendations in September 2018. Those final recommendations will be informed by a series of open consultations with the public, to capture the knowledge and expertise of local people as part of the process of refining the initial proposals.

Why is the Boundary Commission doing a review?

2.3 Parliament has specified that the 2018 Review must reduce the number of constituencies in the UK to 600 (from the current 650). As independent and impartial bodies, the Parliamentary Boundary Commissions are required to review and recommend where the boundaries of those new constituencies should be, with the law requiring that every new constituency (except four specified island constituencies) must have roughly the same number of electors: no fewer than 71,031 and no more than 78,507.

2.4 The law requires the 600 constituencies to be allocated to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales using a specific distribution formula known as the 'Sainte-Lague method', and the number of Parliamentary electors as at 1 December 2015. Applying this means the number of constituencies in England will reduce from 533 to 501 in the 2018 Review. This produces the following distribution within England:

Region	Electorate	Existing constituencies	Proposed constituencies
Eastern	4,242,266	58	57
East Midlands	3,275,046	46	44
London	5,118,884	73	68
North East	1,874,396	29	25
North West	5,074,302	75	68
South East	6,067,475*	83*	81*
South West	3,930,770	55	53
West Midlands	3,989,320	59	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,722,035	54	50
Total	37,294,494*	532*	499*

* figures exclude one current Isle of Wight constituency and its electorate, and two proposed Isle of Wight constituencies, which are protected under the Act and removed from the calculation to allocate constituencies.

2.5 The Commission's proposals and final recommendations will therefore be drawn up on the basis of this distribution of constituencies.

3 THE PROPOSALS

3.1 The Commission published, on 13 September 2016, initial proposals for new constituencies in England. The '*Initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the North West*' report can be found at Appendix A. Maps outlining the two constituencies (ward level) which would cover the borough of Ribble Valley are at Appendix B (North Lancashire) and C (Clitheroe and Colne).



3.2 Lancashire is entitled to 14.06 constituencies and results in a reduction from 16 to 14 constituencies. Only three constituencies have electorates that are within 5% of the electoral quota (Chorley, South Ribble, and Ribble Valley), and the electorates of many of the remaining constituencies are significantly below the electoral quota (such as Blackpool South at 54,607, Blackpool North and Cleveleys at 60,324, and Pendle at 62,891).

3.3 The existing Pendle constituency has an electorate that is already well below the lower 5% limit, and as a result of proposals elsewhere, the electorate falls much further. Although the existing Ribble Valley constituency with an electorate of 75,348 did not need to be altered, it was considered that it would have to change in order to accommodate change elsewhere and the reduction of two constituencies in the

county. It is therefore proposed that the remainder of the existing Pendle constituency be included with a number of wards from the existing Ribble Valley constituency to form a geographically smaller constituency, which is proposed to be named Clitheroe and Colne. This constituency extends along the A59 towards the town of Bamber Bridge.

- 3.4 The physical geography, geographically large ward sizes and small ward electorates in the northern part of the county have led the Boundary Commission to propose a new constituency stretching from the borders with Cumbria and North Yorkshire, to the estuary of the River Lune, and to the outskirts of the city of Preston and encompassing the remainder of the borough of Ribble Valley. In view of its large size and extent, it is proposed that the constituency be called North Lancashire.

4 THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

- 4.1 Members of the public (and the Council) can have their say by giving the Commission their views on these proposals during the 12-week consultation period, either [via the consultation website](#) or in person at public hearings being held in every region.

- 4.2 Following the Council meeting on 27 September 2016 we have already provided an initial response to the Commission that:

- The Council rejects the Boundary Commission's proposals for Ribble Valley
- Urges the Commission to consider counter proposals that keep the Ribble Valley Borough in one parliamentary constituency to be called Ribble Valley.
- We have also advised the Commission that we will be submitting proposals that:
 - Are based upon community interest keeping the new constituency within the borough
 - Will avoid the new constituency covering more than two local authority areas
 - Will keep the numbers in the new constituency within the tolerance level of 71,031 and 78,507
 - Will minimise the amount of change and voter movement from the existing Ribble Valley Parliamentary constituency to the proposed new one.

- 4.3 The Council meeting asked the Boundary Review working group, together with the Chief Executive, to finalise the Council's proposals. The working group will meet on 20 October and a verbal report will be given at the meeting.

- 4.4 The deadline for responses is 5 December 2016.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – None
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None
- Political – None
- Reputation – None
- Equality & Diversity – None

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Consider any further response the Council wishes to make to the Commission regarding the Parliamentary boundary review in respect of the Ribble Valley Constituency.

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PRINCIPAL POLICY AND
PERFORMANCE OFFICER

JANE PEARSON
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BACKGROUND PAPERS (if any)

For further information please ask for Michelle Haworth, extension 4421.