

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 7TH NOVEMBER 2017
title: BOUNDARY COMMISSION PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW –
REVISED PROPOSALS
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
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OFFICER

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 update the Council on the revised proposals published on 17 October 2017.
- 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.

3 REVISED PROPOSALS FOR THE NORTH WEST

- 3.1 The Boundary Commission have revised the composition of 25 of the 68 constituencies they proposed in September 2016. After careful consideration, they have decided not to make any revisions to the composition of the remaining 43. In some instances, however, they have revised the proposed names for these constituencies. Under the revised proposals, 13 constituencies in the North West would be the same as they are under the existing arrangements.
- 3.2 In Lancashire, the Boundary Commission has reconfigured nine constituencies, one of which also has an alternative name proposed.
- 3.3 Of the 16 existing constituencies currently within Lancashire, three (Chorley, South Ribble, and Ribble Valley) have electorates that are within the permitted range, and many of the remaining constituencies have electorates that are significantly lower than the permitted range.
- 3.4 Although the electorate of the existing Ribble Valley constituency was within the permitted electorate range (75,348), as a result of the loss of two constituencies in the county and of changes made elsewhere, the Boundary Commission suggested that the remainder of the existing Pendle constituency be combined with a number of wards

from the existing Ribble Valley constituency and included them in a Clitheroe and Colne constituency.

Summary of Responses to the Initial Proposals

- 3.5 The initial proposals for Lancashire were supported in full by the Labour Party and accepted by the Liberal Democrat Party. The Conservative Party supported three of the proposed constituencies (Chorley, Blackburn, and Rossendale and Darwen) and submitted counter-proposals for the remaining 11 constituencies. The Green Party did not submit a counter-proposal for any of the 14 constituencies.
- 3.6 In respect of the North Lancashire constituency, the Boundary Commission noted that several respondents commented on the geographical size of the constituency, the lack of community links, and the number of local authorities that were contained within the constituency. The Conservative Party remarked that although the Boundary Commission had indicated in the initial proposals that they had linked the towns Morecambe and Lancaster to avoid the creation of a 'geographically huge constituency that would wrap around the City of Lancaster', by doing so 'the Commission's proposed North Lancashire constituency does exactly this. It is huge being 44% of the area of County of Lancashire.' This view was shared by the Green Party, and also by Terry Lagan, who stated that 'BCE's proposed North Lancashire constituency contains parts of four boroughs and is constructed from parts of four existing constituencies. Such a multiple hybrid constituency strongly indicates a considerable degree of broken ties and insufficient respecting of local government boundaries and the boundaries of existing constituencies', and by Lancaster City Council, who said 'the proposed new North Lancashire constituency is too geographically spread across communities served by four local authorities.'
- 3.7 Other objections to the proposed North Lancashire constituency came from residents in the towns of Carnforth and Silverdale, who also expressed concerns regarding the size of the constituency.
- 3.8 Others, such as the Labour Party, did not share this opinion. In their representation, the Labour Party asserted that 'we do not accept that the acreage of the proposed North Lancashire CC is by itself a significant objection to it. It reflects the fact that this is a sparsely populated area, and that the electorate in the county of Lancashire is unevenly distributed, heavily concentrated in the south and west of the county.' Some residents of areas proposed to be included in the North Lancashire constituency were supportive of the proposals.
- 3.9 In the boroughs of Ribble Valley and Pendle, the Commission noted that there was significant opposition to the initial proposals. In the Ribble Valley constituency they noted the opposition of several parish councils to the initial proposals, for example that of Chatburn Parish Council, Grindleton Parish Council, and Wilpshire Parish Council. A recurrent theme among these representations was the concern that the communities within the existing Ribble Valley constituency would be divided between the North Lancashire, and Clitheroe and Colne constituencies.
- 3.10 As stated by Nigel Evans 'I have studied the submissions made by the people of the Ribble Valley – these vary from members of the public to clerks of Parish Councils. The overarching theme of the comments is that they do not wish to see the Ribble Valley disappear because they share an affiliation and a community spirit with the area. Residents of Clitheroe do not share the same interests and identity as residents of Colne. In the same way, a person living in Gisburn does not consider him or herself to be part of the same area as a person from Silverdale.'
- 3.11 Other comment, expressed concern at being included in such a large constituency (the proposed North Lancashire constituency) with no focal point.

- 3.12 Representations commenting on the proposed Clitheroe and Colne constituency were critical of the shape. These concerns were also shared by residents of the existing Pendle constituency some questioned the ability of an MP to effectively 'represent their local people when the constituency is spread so far along.' Other criticisms included the opposition to the breaking of ties within the constituency.
- 3.13 Some representations opposed the division of Bamber Bridge, noting that, while the Bamber Bridge East ward was included in the proposed Clitheroe and Colne constituency, the Bamber Bridge West ward was proposed to be transferred to the South Ribble constituency. Some respondents proposed the transfer of Bamber Bridge East ward into the South Ribble constituency, as doing so would leave both constituencies still within the permitted electorate range. Others suggested that in addition to the transfer of Bamber Bridge East to South Ribble constituency, that the Walton-le-Dale East ward should be transferred to Clitheroe and Colne.

Summary of the Counter Proposals Put Forward

- 3.14 The Boundary Commission assistant commissioners investigated the counter-proposals that had been put forward. Many counter-proposals for the Ribble Valley constituency, including that of the Conservative Party, suggested that the entirety of the Ribble Valley Borough area should be contained within a single constituency and should be joined with several wards from the Hyndburn Borough (with differing wards from this district proposed to join the constituency in each counter-proposal) in a Ribble Valley and Hyndburn West constituency or Ribble Valley and Accrington West. Several representations from within Ribble Valley Borough supported the proposals of the Conservative Party, but also some representations from within Hyndburn Borough objected to any proposal that included it in a constituency with Ribble Valley.
- 3.15 The assistant commissioners noted the submissions that had objected to the configuration of the proposed Clitheroe and Colne constituency, many of which commented that it was not possible to travel easily across the constituency. In light of representations received the assistant commissioners visited the area. Beginning in Preston town centre, and primarily using the A59 to travel through the constituency, the assistant commissioners observed that many of the towns that lie within the proposed constituency had a similar feel, including Barnoldswick and Colne, which are part of the Pendle local authority area. They also observed that, while it is not possible to traverse the whole constituency on major trunk roads without exiting into the proposed North Lancashire constituency, they did not consider this an issue with alternative routes available around Pendle Hill.
- 3.16 The assistant commissioners did consider that persuasive evidence had been received to unite the Bamber Bridge area in the South Ribble constituency. They noted that the Bamber Bridge East ward can be transferred to the South Ribble constituency (thus uniting the area in a single constituency) without consequent changes being required elsewhere. They recommended this modification be included in the revised proposals.
- 3.17 They also suggested that the proposed Clitheroe and Colne constituency would be more appropriately named Pendle and Ribble Valley due to the constituency containing numerous wards from both local authorities.
- 3.18 The Pendle and Ribble Valley Constituency would be made up of the following wards:

43. Pendle and Ribble Valley CC			73,788
Barrowford	Pendle		3,823
Blacko and Higherford	Pendle		1,424
Boulsworth	Pendle		4,071
Coates	Pendle		3,984
Craven	Pendle		4,073
Earby	Pendle		4,605
Foulridge	Pendle		1,299
Higham and Pendleside	Pendle		1,414
Horsfield	Pendle		3,668
Old Laund Booth	Pendle		1,225
Vivary Bridge	Pendle		4,028
Waterside	Pendle		3,574
Billington and Old Langho	Ribble Valley		2,414
Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave	Ribble Valley		2,082
Edisford and Low Moor	Ribble Valley		2,358
Langho	Ribble Valley		1,890
Littlemoor	Ribble Valley		2,371
Mellor	Ribble Valley		2,228
Primrose	Ribble Valley		2,501

Read and Simonstone	Ribble Valley		2,080
Sabden	Ribble Valley		1,192
Salthill	Ribble Valley		2,308
St. Mary's	Ribble Valley		2,274
Whalley	Ribble Valley		3,078
Wilpshire	Ribble Valley		2,077
Wiswell and Pendleton	Ribble Valley		1,244
Coupe Green & Gregson Lane	South Ribble		3,449
Samlesbury & Walton	South Ribble		3,054

3.19 The North Lancashire Constituency would be made up of the following wards:

Constituency	Ward	Local authority	Electorate
41. North Lancashire CC			71,284
	Carnforth & Millhead	Lancaster	4,446
	Elfel	Lancaster	3,276
	Halton-with-Aughton	Lancaster	1,947
	Kellet	Lancaster	1,639
	Lower Lune Valley	Lancaster	3,525
	Silverdale	Lancaster	1,616
	University & Scotforth Rural	Lancaster	2,065
	Upper Lune Valley	Lancaster	1,878
	Warton	Lancaster	1,604
	Preston Rural East	Preston	3,552
	Preston Rural North	Preston	5,328
	Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley	Ribble Valley	1,134
	Alston and Hothersall	Ribble Valley	2,070
	Bowland, Newton and Staidburn	Ribble Valley	1,074
	Chatburn	Ribble Valley	1,063
	Chipping	Ribble Valley	1,111
	Derby and Thornley	Ribble Valley	2,394
	Dilworth	Ribble Valley	1,986
	Gisburn, Rimington	Ribble Valley	1,083
	Ribchester	Ribble Valley	1,265
	Waddington and West Bradford	Ribble Valley	2,527
	Brock with Cattarall	Wyre	3,058
	Calder	Wyre	1,676
	Garstang	Wyre	5,280
	Great Ecclestone	Wyre	3,073
	Hambleton & Stalmine	Wyre	3,500
	Pilling	Wyre	1,907
	Preesall	Wyre	4,615
	Wyresdale	Wyre	1,592

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 revised proposals during the **8-week consultation period**, [via the consultation website](#).

4.2 The Council may wish to:

- Reject the Boundary Commission's revised proposals for Ribble Valley
- Urge the Commission to re-consider the counter proposals previously submitted that keep the Ribble Valley Borough in one parliamentary constituency to be called Ribble Valley. These proposals were:
 - Based upon community interest keeping the new constituency within the borough

- Avoided the new constituency covering more than two local authority areas
- Kept the numbers in the new constituency within the tolerance level of 71,031 and 78,507
- Minimised the amount of change and voter movement from the existing Ribble Valley Parliamentary constituency to the proposed new one.

5 NEXT STAGES

5.1 Stage four – publication of revised proposals

Having considered the evidence presented to them, the Boundary Commission have decided that the evidence is such that it is appropriate to revise their initial proposals in some areas. Therefore, as they are required to do (under the legislation) they published revised proposals for new constituency boundaries in the North West – alongside eight others, one for each of the other regions in England. They are consulting on the revised proposals for the statutory eight-week period, which closes on **11 December 2017**. Unlike the initial consultation period, there is no provision in the legislation for further public hearings, nor is there a repeat of the four-week period for commenting on the representations of others.

5.2 Stage five – final recommendations

Once the consultation on revised proposals has closed on 11 December 2017, the Boundary Commission will consider all the representations received at this stage, and throughout the review, before making final recommendations to the Government. The legislation states that they must do this during September 2018. Further details about what the Government and Parliament must do to implement the recommendations are contained in their Guide which is available on their website.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

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

7 DECISION

7.1 Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Working Group, any further response to the Commission regarding the Parliamentary boundary review in respect of the Ribble Valley Constituency.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

REF:

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