



2013 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY 2012

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 3(2C) of the
Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the
Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011

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BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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The Speaker
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

24 January 2012

Dear Mr Chairman

1. As required by section 3(2B)(a) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended by the Parliamentary Voting System Act 2011), hereafter referred to as “the Act”, we are required to submit a report to you setting out the progress we have made with the preparation of the “pending boundary report”. As you will be aware, you are required by section 3(2C) to lay our report before Parliament.

2. It is my pleasure to inform you that we are on course to deliver our report on the review to the Deputy Prime Minister before the statutory deadline of “before 1st October 2013”. We have set out below the key actions and stages that we have undertaken and completed since the review commenced.

Start of the review

3. We wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 22 February 2011 to confirm that we had formally commenced the “2013 Review” and that, in accordance with the Act, the review date would be 1 December 2010. We also announced the start of the review by issuing a Newsletter (No.2/2011) on 4 March 2011 to our stakeholders and this, along with our other Newsletters, was made available on our website.

Electoral Regions and datasets

4. Our early considerations on the conduct of the review suggested that we should use the European Electoral Regions (EERs) as a template for the distribution of the 502 constituencies to be allocated to England. In Newsletter No.2/2011, we invited representations to be made to us about this proposal. The four week consultation resulted in strong support for our proposal and we confirmed in Newsletter No.3/2011 on 18 April 2011 that we would use the EERs for the review. We also provided information in Newsletters No.2 and No.3 about the electorate data and the local government boundaries that we would use.

Representatives of the Parliamentary Political Parties

5. Newsletter No.2/2011 also confirmed that we would meet with the representatives of the English Parliamentary political parties, as we had done at previous reviews of parliamentary constituencies, to discuss the statutory rules and broad issues of policy. The meeting took place on 4 April 2011 and minutes of the meeting were placed on our website. We held a second meeting with the representatives on 17 May 2011, at which we discussed proposals for the conduct of the Public Hearings provided for by the Act. Again, the minutes of the meeting were placed on our website.

A Guide to the 2013 Review

6. We decided that, as with previous reviews, we should publish a booklet to explain how the process for the 2013 Review would work. The booklet, entitled "A guide to the 2013 Review", was sent to every Member of Parliament representing an English constituency on 28 June 2011. It was also made available to all local authorities in England, those on our general mailing list, and it was published on our website. It was also made freely available on demand and at the Public Hearings we conducted (see paragraph 9 below).

Our initial proposals

7. We published our initial proposals for 502 constituencies in England on 13 September 2011. As required by the Rules in Schedule 2 to the Act, 500 of the 502 constituencies had electorates within 5% (72,810 - 80,473) of the electoral quota (76,641).

8. The two constituencies allocated to the Isle of Wight are not required to have electorates within 5% of the electoral quota: the two constituencies we proposed for the Island had electorates of 56,253 and 54,671 respectively. We decided that whilst the Rules did not require us to propose two constituencies for the island with electorates close to one another, it would be in keeping with the spirit of the Act for us to do so.

9. Our initial proposals retained 77 (14.5%) of the existing 533 constituencies without change.

Assistant Commissioners

10. Prior to the publication of the initial proposals, we ran a selection exercise, in conjunction with the Appointments Commission, for the appointment of Assistant Commissioners (ACs) who would be required to assist us with the discharge of our functions. This process resulted in us recommending twenty-seven individuals to the Deputy Prime Minister for appointment. The appointments were made in accordance with paragraph 6(1) of Schedule 1 to the Act.

11. The ACs have been appointed not only to conduct the public hearings (see below) but also to consider the representations (both oral and written) made in respect of our initial proposals, during the initial consultation period, and the counter-representations made during the secondary consultation period. In due course, the ACs will submit reports to us with their recommendations as to whether we should revise our initial proposals.

12. During September 2011, we ran seven induction courses for the Assistant Commissioners who were briefed on the requirements of the Act and our initial proposals for each EER.

Initial consultation period

13. We invited written representations to be made to us about our proposals during the statutory twelve week period which ran from 13 September - 5 December 2011 inclusive. By the close of the representation period, we had received in excess of 22,000 unique representations.

Public Hearings

14. Section 5(1)(b) of the Act requires us to hold public hearings during the twelve week initial consultation period: beginning in the fifth week and ending in the tenth week. During this six week period, we held a total of 36 public hearings across the EERs in England. Each hearing was completed within the statutorily required two days and each was chaired by an AC. The hearings were held between 11 October and 18 November 2011 at the locations set out in Annex A. A Commissioner attended the lead hearing in each EER to observe the public hearing process in action.

Secondary consultation period

15. The next stage of the review will see us publish on the website the transcripts of the oral representations made at the hearings together with all written representations received by email, via the website and by post.

16. When that occurs (in the Spring) we will alert the media and other stakeholders simultaneously, inviting people to consider these materials and make written representations about the written and oral representations submitted to us during the initial consultation period. There will be a period of four weeks for people to submit such written representations.

Next report

17. We will submit a further report to you in January 2013 on the further progress we make with the review during 2012.

The Hon. Mr Justice Sales
(Deputy Chairman)

Mr David Elvin QC

Mr Neil Pringle

Annex A

Region	Location	Date	Representations made
Eastern	Colchester	31 October-1 November	13
	Norwich	3-4 November	19
	Luton	7-8 November	28
	Cambridge	10-11 November	<u>33</u> 93
East Midlands	Derby	27-28 October	36
	Northampton	31 October-1 November	27
	Lincoln	3-4 November	<u>25</u> 88
London	Kensington	17-18 October	12
	Brent	20-21 October	20
	Lewisham	24-25 October	45
	Newham	27-28 October	25
	Wandsworth	31 October-1 November	<u>52</u> 154
North East	Newcastle upon Tyne	14-15 November	38
	Darlington	17-18 November	<u>29</u> 67
North West	Manchester	11-12 October	47
	Chester	13-14 October	44
	Carlisle	17-18 October	32
	Liverpool	20-21 October	47
	Preston	24-25 October	<u>34</u> 204
South East	Reading	20-21 October	9
	Milton Keynes	24-25 October	17
	Portsmouth	27-28 October	42
	Crawley	31 October-1 November	24
	Maidstone	3-4 November	<u>67</u> 159
South West	Bristol	7-8 November	34
	Truro	10-11 November	32
	Bournemouth	14-15 November	16
	Exeter	17-18 November	<u>22</u> 104
West Midlands	Birmingham	3-4 November	77
	Ludlow	7-8 November	30
	Warwick	10-11 November	46
	Stafford	14-15 November	<u>77</u> 230
Yorkshire and the Humber	Leeds	13-14 October	26
	Sheffield	17-18 October	5
	Northallerton	20-21 October	21
	Hull	24-25 October	<u>18</u> 70
		Total	1169