

Amendments to Commissioners' agreed scheme

17 June 2011

This note outlines the Secretariat's proposed amendments to the Commissioners' agreed scheme, by region. These are categorised as follows:

Minor – changes affecting only two constituencies, with fewer than five wards affected

Medium – changes affecting only two constituencies but with more than five wards

Major – changes affecting whole counties or sub-regions

For the avoidance of doubt, the terminology used in this document is as follows:

- **'5th review constituencies'** is used to describe the constituencies as they exist currently, and to which the Commission may have regard
- **'Commission agreed'** constituencies describes those agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 8 June 2011
- **'Amended'** constituencies or proposals describes the Secretariat's recommended proposals outlined in this report

There are no amendments proposed to the London and North East regions.

Minor amendments

1) **Harborough (East Midlands region)**

- a) The Commission agreed a Market Harborough and Wigston CC and a Daventry CC. Transferring one ward (Bosworth) from Daventry CC would result in the **retention of the 5th review Harborough CC**. This would also respect better the local authority boundaries, notably the county boundary between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. There is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does.

2) **Congleton (North West)**

- a) The Commission agreed a Congleton CC and a Northwich CC. Transferring one ward (Middlewich) from Northwich CC to Congleton CC, replacing it with Alderley ward, would result in the **retention of the 5th**

review Congleton CC. This would also better reflect the local government boundary between Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester unitary authorities. There is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does.

3) West Lancashire (North West)

- a) The Commission agreed a West Lancashire CC and a South Ribble CC. Transferring one ward (Rufford) into South Ribble CC would result in the **retention of the 5th review West Lancashire CC.** This does not affect the levels of coterminosity between constituency and local authority boundaries, as neither the Commission's agreed scheme nor the 5th review constituencies are coterminous in this area. There is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does.

4) Worthing West (South East)

- a) The Commission agreed a Worthing West BC and a Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC. Transferring one ward (Beach) into Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC would allow the **retention of the 5th review Worthing West BC.** This does not affect the levels of coterminosity between constituency and local authority boundaries, as neither the Commission's agreed scheme nor the 5th review constituencies are coterminous in this area. There is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does.

5) Gosport (South East)

- a) The Commission agreed a Gosport BC and a Fareham and Horndean CC. Transferring one ward (Titchfield) into Fareham and Horndean CC would allow the **retention of the 5th review Gosport BC.** The resulting Fareham and Horndean CC would increase in geographic size; however, the Secretariat noted that the constituency the Commission has already agreed was of large geographic size and unusual shape, due to the significant amount of change required in the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton sub-region.
- b) This does not affect the levels of coterminosity between constituency and local authority boundaries, as neither the Commission's agreed scheme nor the 5th review constituencies are coterminous in this area

6) South Dorset (South West)

- a) The Commission agreed a South Dorset CC and a Blandford and Wimborne CC. Transferring one ward (Wareham) into Blandford and Wimborne CC would allow the **retention of the 5th review South Dorset CC**. While the town of Wareham has communication links with the 5th review South Dorset constituency, there is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does.
- b) This does not affect the levels of coterminosity between constituency and local authority boundaries, as neither the Commission's agreed scheme nor the 5th review constituencies are coterminous in this area.

7) Tiverton and Honiton (South West)

- a) The Commission agreed a Tiverton and Honiton CC and an East Devon CC. Transferring one ward (Feniton and Buckerell) from East Devon CC would result in the **retention of the 5th review Tiverton and Honiton CC**. There is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does.
- b) This does not affect the levels of coterminosity between constituency and local authority boundaries, as neither the Commission's agreed scheme nor the 5th review constituencies are coterminous in this area.

8) South Staffordshire (West Midlands)

- a) The Commission agreed a South Staffordshire CC and a Stafford CC. Transferring one ward (Wheaton Aston, Bishopswood and Lapley) into Stafford CC would allow the **retention of the 5th review South Staffordshire CC**. While this reduces slightly the incidence of coterminosity between constituency and local authority boundaries, it is not possible to respect the local authority boundaries in their entirety in this area. On balance, the Secretariat considers that the retention of the 5th review constituency provides a better balance of the factors the Commission must take into account.

Medium amendments

9) South Norfolk (Eastern)

- a) The Commission agreed a South Norfolk CC and Thetford and Swaffham CC. Transferring six wards from South Norfolk CC to Thetford and Swaffham CC, replacing them with seven wards from Thetford and Swaffham CC, will result in the **retention of the 5th review South Norfolk CC**.
- b) While significant in the number of wards affected, those wards are generally similar in their nature – a number of rural wards and the towns of Wymondham (to the north) and Diss (to the south). There is no evidence that local ties would be any better reflected by departing from the 5th review constituency, as the Commission's agreed scheme does. While coterminosity between constituencies and local authorities would be lost to the north, it would be reinstated to the south.

Major amendments

10) Oxfordshire and Berkshire (South East)

- a) The Commission agreed a scheme that grouped the counties of Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire, and the unitary authorities covering Berkshire. That scheme resulted in the county boundary of Oxfordshire and Berkshire being crossed by two proposed constituencies, and only two 5th review constituencies being retained.
- b) The Secretariat has identified what it considers to be a significant improvement to the Commission's agreed scheme. The Secretariat has established that it is possible to **retain six 5th review constituencies in Berkshire** – Bracknell CC, Maidenhead CC, Newbury CC, Reading East BC, Reading West CC and Wokingham CC – and **one additional 5th review constituency in Oxfordshire** – Wantage CC. This also improves coterminosity between local authority and constituency boundaries; most notably by no longer crossing the Oxfordshire/Berkshire county boundary.
- c) There are consequential changes to a further four of the Commission's agreed constituencies in Oxfordshire, with wards transferred between Abingdon and Oxford North CC, Henley and Reading North CC, Oxford BC and Wallingford and Kidlington CC. The effect of these changes would be to revert to a Henley CC that is similar to the 5th review constituency, which would replace the Commission's agreed Wallingford and Kidlington CC. All other changes would result in constituencies that are closer in shape to the 5th review seats than the Commission's current agreed scheme.
- d) The Buckinghamshire constituencies are not affected by these changes and remain unchanged from the Commission's agreed scheme.

- e) On balance, the Secretariat considers that these significant changes to the Commission's agreed scheme provide for a much improved set of proposals for Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

11) Gloucestershire and Somerset (South West)

- a) The Commission agreed a scheme that grouped the county of Gloucestershire with the county of Somerset, and the unitary authorities of South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset. The unitary authorities of Bristol and North Somerset were considered separately as the electorates of both allowed the containment of whole constituencies within the UAs with minimal, if any, change to 5th review constituencies. Five 5th review constituencies were retained in the Commission's agreed scheme.
- b) The Secretariat has identified an improvement to the Commission's agreed scheme. The Secretariat has established that considering the county of Gloucestershire separately from the unitary authorities of South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, and the county of Somerset it is possible to **retain the 5th review boundaries of a further three constituencies** – Tewkesbury CC, The Cotswolds CC and Stroud CC. The county boundary between Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire unitary authority can also be respected.
- c) Consequential alterations are required to the Commission's agreed scheme in South Gloucestershire, North East Somerset, and the county of Somerset. The effect on local authority boundaries in Somerset is negligible; the Commission's agreed scheme did not achieve high levels of coterminosity between local authority and constituency boundaries, nor does the amended scheme do so. While the amended scheme constituencies differ from the Commission's agreed scheme in a number of areas, it is notable that the significant towns or population centres remain in the same constituencies as those agreed by the Commission previously.
- d) The constituencies covering the unitary authorities of Bristol and North Somerset are not affected by these amendments and remain unchanged from the Commission's agreed scheme.
- e) The Secretariat considers that, despite the level of change required to the Commission's agreed proposals in Somerset, the improvements to the proposals in Gloucestershire are strong enough to justify these amendments. Notably, it is difficult to construct constituencies in Somerset that are similar to the 5th review constituencies – this was the case with the Commission's agreed scheme, and remains so. However, the strengths of reverting to a further three 5th review seats, respecting the Gloucestershire county boundary, and the fact that there is no evidence at this stage that

local ties are adversely affected, means the Secretariat can strongly recommend these amendments.

12) Doncaster (Yorkshire and the Humber)

- a) The Commission agreed a scheme that grouped the metropolitan area of South Yorkshire with the unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, and treated the unitary authorities of East Riding and Kingston upon Hull together as a separate review area. The Commission's agreed scheme did not cross the boundary between East Riding and North Lincolnshire.
- b) However, having reconsidered whether further 5th review constituencies could be retained, the Secretariat has identified that, by transferring one ward (Axholme North) from the Commission's agreed Doncaster North CC to a Goole and Cottingham CC, and making minor changes to other constituencies in East Riding and Kingston upon Hull we can **retain the 5th review Doncaster North, Doncaster Central and Don Valley constituencies**. While the Goole and Cottingham CC would cross the East Riding/North Lincolnshire boundary, it should be noted that this occurs under the existing arrangements (in the 5th review's Brigg and Goole CC).
- c) In addition, this amendment allows for a better reflection of 5th review constituencies in Kingston upon Hull than under the Commission's agreed scheme, with the internal boundaries between the three Hull constituencies differing by only one ward.
- d) The South Yorkshire metropolitan area is not affected by these amendments and remains unchanged from the Commission's agreed scheme.
- e) On balance, the Secretariat considers that the improvements to the proposals (in keeping a further three 5th review constituencies in Doncaster and better reflecting the 5th review constituencies in Hull) justify this amendment.