

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: 21st NOVEMBER 2022
title: 2023 BOUNDARY REVIEW – FINAL CONSULTATION
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: JAQUI HOULKER – PRINCIPAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present committee with information about the Boundary Commission's 2023 review of Parliamentary constituencies within England.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Community Objectives – How residents are represented by an MP in Parliament
 - Corporate Priorities – is an important part of the democratic process in the
 - Other Considerations – United Kingdom.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body, which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.
- 2.2 The Commission is undertaking an independent review of all constituencies in England as requested by Parliament. The number of electors within each constituency currently varies widely due to population changes since the last boundary review. The 2023 Boundary Review will rebalance the number of electors each MP represents, resulting in significant change to the existing constituency map. As part of the review, the number of constituencies in England will increase from 533 to 543. Each must also contain a number of electors that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.
- 2.3 The review process is informed by public consultation. The Boundary Commission published their initial proposals for the new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England on 8 June 2021, two rounds of statutory consultation has taken place and all the comments received have been taken into account in developing revised proposals. A final four-week consultation on the revised proposals started on 8 November 2022 and will run to 5 December 2022. Final recommendations will be submitted to Parliament by 1 July 2023.
- 2.4 The Government must turn the recommendations of the BCE (and those of the equivalent Commissions for the other three parts of the UK) into an 'Order in Council' that implements the recommendations. The constituencies set out in the Order will then be implemented for the next General Election after the date on which the legislation is approved.
- 2.5 The electorate figures that are to be used for this review are the Parliamentary electors as they were in the electoral register on 2 March 2020. The BCE has published all the base electorate data for the 2023 Review on its website.

The distribution of constituencies

- 2.6 There is to be a fixed number of 650 constituencies for the whole of the UK. The number of constituencies allocated to England for the 2023 Review is 543.
- 2.7 This results in the following allocation of constituencies between the regions:

	Existing constituencies	Proposed constituencies
Eastern	58	61
East Midlands	46	47
London	73	75
North East	29	27
North West	75	73
South East	84	91*
South West	55	58
West Midlands	59	57
Yorkshire and the Humber	54	54

*Includes the two constituencies for the Isle of Wight

Statutory electorate range

- 2.8 All recommended constituencies must have no less than 69,724 Parliamentary electors and no more than 77,062 (except those 'protected' constituencies mentioned above). By law, these electorate figures relate to the electorates as they were on 2 March 2020.

Other statutory factors

- 2.9 BCE may take the following factors into account in establishing a new map of constituencies for the 2023 Review:
- special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - Local government boundaries which exist, or are prospective, on the review date.
 - boundaries of existing constituencies;
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies; and
 - the inconveniences attendant on such changes.
- 2.10 The BCE uses wards (in district and borough council areas) or electoral divisions (in areas of unitary authorities that have a county status) as the basic building block for designing constituencies. Wards are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. Any division of a ward between constituencies would therefore risk breaking local ties, as well as adding complexity to the task of Returning Officers in administering a Parliamentary election.
- 2.11 The BCE intends to have regard generally to existing constituencies as far as possible, as it does not consider that it would be appropriate to start from a 'blank sheet of paper'. However, this does not mean that an existing constituency should be automatically considered to be 'protected from change', simply on the basis of its electorate figure already falling within the statutory range.

Impact on future election results

- 2.12 The BCE is a politically independent and impartial body. It emphasises very strongly that existing voting patterns and the prospective fortunes of political parties should not and do not enter its considerations during a review.

Designating

- 2.13 Each constituency is designated as either a 'county constituency' or a 'borough constituency'. The BCE considers that, as a general principle, where constituencies contain more than a small rural element they should normally be designated as county constituencies. In other cases, they should be designated as borough constituencies. The designation is suffixed to the constituency name and is usually abbreviated: BC for borough constituency and CC for county constituency. The designation generally determines who shall act as Returning Officer for Parliamentary elections. The Returning Officer in borough constituencies is a district or borough council chairman or mayor. For county constituencies it is the high sheriff.

The Proposals

- 2.14 Map A (attached) shows the **initial proposal** for Ribble Valley County constituency. Electorate 73,362.

- *Ribble Valley area electorate (48,803).*
- *Seven wards proposed for the new Ribble Valley constituency from Preston and South Ribble (31,898):*
 - Fishwick & Frenchwood (Preston 5432)
 - Preston Rural East (Preston 6027)
 - Preston Rural North (Preston 4860)
 - Ribbleton (Preston 5420)
 - Coupe Green & Gregson Lane (South Ribble 3491)
 - Samlesbury & Walton (South Ribble 3284)
 - Walton-le-Dale West (South Ribble 3384)

- *Three wards moved from Ribble Valley to the new Hyndburn constituency (less 7,339):*
 - Ribbleton (Hyndburn 2674)
 - East Whalley, Read & Simonstone (Hyndburn 2266)
 - Whalley & Painter Wood (Hyndburn 2399)

- 2.15 Map B (attached) outlines the **revised proposals** for Ribble Valley constituency. Electorate 75,993

- *Ribble Valley area electorate (48,803).*
- *Eleven wards added to the new Ribble Valley constituency from Preston and South Ribble (48,801):*
 - **Greyfriars (new addition from Preston 6344)**
 - Preston Rural East (existing addition from Preston 6027)
 - Preston Rural North (existing addition from Preston 4860)
 - **Sharoe Green (new addition from Preston 6206)**
 - **Bamber Bridge East (new addition from South Ribble 3467)**
 - **Bamber Bridge West (new addition from South Ribble 3095)**
 - Coupe Green & Gregson Lane (existing addition from South Ribble 3491)
 - **Lostock Hall (new addition from South Ribble 5179)**
 - Samlesbury & Walton (existing addition from South Ribble 3284)
 - **Walton-le-Dale East (new addition from South Ribble 3464)**
 - Walton-le-Dale West (existing addition from South Ribble 3384)

Map C (attached) shows how the ten wards listed are proposed to be removed from Ribble Valley and added to the new Pendle & Clitheroe constituency (less 21,611):

- Chatburn (1155)
- East Whalley, Read & Simonstone (2266)
- Edisford & Low Moor (2724)
- Littlemoor (2478)

- Primrose (2547)
- Sabden (1240)
- Salthill (2696)
- St Mary's (2442)
- Whalley & Painter Wood (2399)
- Wiswell & Barrow (1664)

Latest Proposals and Final Consultation

General

- 2.16 On the 8 November, the Boundary Commission for England published new revised proposals for constituencies across the country and opened a final month-long consultation, giving the public a last opportunity to send in their views.

The Commission has taken into consideration over 45,000 comments sent in by the public during the previous two stages of public consultation and has changed nearly half of its initial proposals based on this feedback. A third and final consultation on the new map of revised constituency proposals is open from 8 November to 5 December 2022.

Final recommendations and report

- 2.17 The BCE takes into consideration any written representations made in the four-week consultation period about the revised proposals, and then makes its final decisions about whether further modifications need to be made in light of those representations.
- 2.18 When the BCE has decided on its final recommendations for the whole of England, it then drafts and submits a formal written report to the Speaker of the House of Commons. The report, which is also published once the Speaker has laid it before Parliament, contains a description of the review in each region, a textual description of all the final recommendations, and a set of maps to illustrate the existing boundaries and those proposed by the final recommendations.
- 2.19 The submission of the formal final report concludes the BCE's involvement in the constituency review process. The procedure to subsequently implement new constituencies is the responsibility of the Government.
- 2.20 A detailed description of the process can be found in the [Guide to the 2023 Review](#) on the Boundary Commission website - <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>
- 2.21 The website can be used to:
- view current constituency and local authority boundaries;
 - view the proposals for new constituency boundaries; and
 - submit a response directly to the BCE about the proposals (during a defined consultation period).
- 2.22 From the second consultation period onwards, you will also be able to:
- view the responses submitted by others; and
 - submit a comment directly to BCE, supporting or contesting a response from somebody else.
- 2.23 The Final Consultation is currently open until Monday 5 December 2022.

Working Group

- 2.24 Policy and Finance Committee created a small working group consisting of Councillor Atkinson, Councillor Fletcher, Councillor Hindle and Councillor Peat, who are due to meet on Monday, 21 November to consider the Council's response. An update will be shared with the Policy and Finance Committee on their deliberations.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 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.

4 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

4.1 Consider how committee wish to respond to the consultation.

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Marshal Scott
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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

For further information please ask for Jaqui Houlker, extension 4421