

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Monday 19 July 2021

Boundary Commission Initial Review

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Administration Committee consider the contents of this report and decides if it wishes to make any representations to the Boundary Commission for England.

Summary

This report seeks to advise the Committee as to the process and timetable associated with the 2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies.

Statutory Powers

Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992)

Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 ('the 2020 Act')

Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

Background

1. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is the independent organisation responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The BCE has the task of periodically reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England. It is currently conducting a review on the basis of rules most recently updated by Parliament in 2020. The rules mean that the BCE must make recommendations for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries by 1 July 2023.
2. While retaining the overall number of constituencies across the UK at 650, the rules apply a distribution formula that results in an increase in the number of constituencies in England (from 533 to 543).
3. Accordingly, every recommended constituency across the UK – apart from five specified exceptions (two of them in England) – must have an electorate as at 2 March 2020 that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062 achieving a more even distribution of electors in every constituency across England.
4. The BCE has stated that achieving a more even distribution of electors in every constituency across England, together with the increase in the total number of constituencies, means that a significant amount of change to the existing map of

constituencies is inevitable. As well as the primary rule that constituencies must have no fewer than 69,724 electors and no more than 77,062, the legislation also states that, when deciding on boundaries, the Commission may take into account:

- Special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- Local government boundaries as they exist on the most recent ordinary council-election day before the review date;
- Boundaries of existing constituencies;
- Any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies;
- The inconveniences attendant on such changes.

5. The review process is heavily informed by public consultation (<https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>). On 8 June 2021 the BCE published their initial proposals for how the 543 constituencies for England could be drawn up. This commenced a statutory consultation period of eight weeks closing on 2 August 2021. The BCE is asking the public to share their views on the extent to which the proposals reflect the local ties in the area and if people disagree with their proposals, details of how they think they should be amended. There are to be two further rounds of public consultation. The timeline for the review is as follows:

- 5 Jan 2021: Publication of headline electorate figures by ONS, BCE begin development of initial proposals;
- 24 March 2021: Publish complete ward-level electorate figures (i.e. including 'prospective' wards);
- 10 May 2021: Publish 'Guide to the 2023 Review';
- 8 June 2021: Publish initial proposals and conduct eight-week written consultation;
- Early 2022: Publish responses to initial proposals and conduct six-week 'secondary consultation', including between two and five public hearings in each region;
- Late 2022: Publish revised proposals and conduct four-week written consultation;
- June 2023: Submit and publish final report and recommendations.

Initial Proposals for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton

6. The South East region comprises of the counties Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex. The region has a mixture of district and county councils and unitary authorities.
7. The initial proposals put forward by the BCE is to increase the number of constituencies in the South East to 91, which is an increase of seven. In seeking to create these constituencies the approach is to attempt to group local authority areas together in sub-regions, whilst trying to respect county boundaries wherever possible and in achieving obvious practical groupings such as those dictated in some places by the geography of the area.
8. Eastleigh is contained in the sub-region of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. This sub-region currently has 37 constituencies, 20 of which have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The sub-region as a whole is mathematically entitled to 38.81 constituencies, and so the BCE propose an allocation of 39 constituencies, an increase of two.
9. There are currently 18 constituencies in Hampshire and 13 are within the permitted electorate range. To avoid significant change to the existing pattern of constituencies, including the need to change most of the 13 that are within the permitted electorate range, BCE have therefore proposed a constituency that crosses the boundary with Surrey, so as to better preserve existing constituencies within Hampshire.
10. In respect of Hampshire and Eastleigh Borough area, the BCE proposal states “We propose that the Winchester constituency, which also currently falls within the permitted electorate range, be changed so that it would fall entirely within the City of Winchester district. We propose that the constituency extend southwards to include the town of Bishop’s Waltham, and that the Chandler’s Ford and Hiltingbury wards of Eastleigh district be transferred to the Eastleigh constituency.”
11. The BCE propose that the Eastleigh constituency consists of the remainder of the Eastleigh local authority, including the town of Eastleigh itself, as well as the Valley Park ward from the Test Valley local authority. The BCE noted that the town of Valley Park is situated within the greater built-up area around Eastleigh and Chandler’s Ford. Total proposed electorate for the Eastleigh Borough Constituency is 69,982.
12. The BCE proposes a more substantial reconfiguration of Eastleigh and Fareham constituencies in the area of Hampshire. They state “we propose a constituency that would pair the towns of Fareham and Portchester with the town of Waterlooville, including rural elements of the lower Meon Valley that sit between those two settlements. This constituency would be called Fareham and Waterlooville. The remainder of the Borough of Fareham, including Titchfield, would be included in a constituency situated around the River Hamble, extending north-west to include the town of Hedge End from Eastleigh district and the community of Whiteley from the Winchester local authority. We propose that this

constituency would be called Hedge End County Constituency". The total proposed electorate for Hedge End County Constituency is 76,902.

13. Please see appendix 1 (Eastleigh Borough Constituency) and appendix 2 (Hedge End County Constituency) for maps of the area with the proposed boundary changes.

Financial Implications

14. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report as the decision does not relate to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

16. There are no proposals within this report to assess with regard to climate change and environmental implications.

Conclusion

17. Councillors are invited to comment on the BCE proposals and to decide if they wish to submit a response to the BCE.

SAM JONES
SENIOR ELECTIONS OFFICER

JO CASSAR
MONITORING OFFICER

Date: 8 July 2021
Contact Officer: Sam Jones/Jo Cassar
Tel No: 023 8068 8015
E-mail: sam.jones@eastleigh.gov.uk
joanne.cassar@eastleigh.gov.uk
Appendices Attached: Two

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material

extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

(Initial Proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the South East region) from Boundary Commission.