



City of Westminster

General Purposes Committee

Date:	18 October 2011
Classification:	For General Release
Title:	Review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries by the Boundary Commission for England
Report of:	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Management of the Council
Financial Summary:	The cost of administering UK Parliamentary elections is met from the Government grant for administering these elections. Any cost applicable to making City Council representation at this review would need to be met from the appropriate budget
Report Author and Contact Details:	Martin Pyroyiannos Tel: 020 7641 2732 Email: mpyroyiannos@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') is the independent public body that reviews all Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England every five years. The Commission is currently carrying out a review under new rules laid down by Parliament. This Review, which concludes in 2013, means substantial changes to Parliamentary constituencies in England: reducing the total number of constituencies from 533 to 502 in England and making sure that each constituency has similar numbers of registered electors. In almost all cases this meant a redrawing of the existing constituency boundaries.
- 1.2 The London region has been allocated 68 constituencies- a reduction of five from the current arrangement. The initial proposals leave four of the 73 existing constituencies unchanged.
- 1.3 The Commission is consulting on its initial proposals for a 12-week period from 13 September 2011 to 5 December 2011.

- 1.4 The Commission has stated that any proposed alternatives for areas that are disagreed with must meet the statutory rules set out in their report.
- 1.5 The Statutory Rules are set out in Schedule 2 of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). A précis of the Rules is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.6 The Rules include that – apart from four specified exceptions- every constituency **must** have an electorate (as at the review date) that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the 'UK electoral quota'. The UK electoral quota for the 2013 Review is, to the nearest whole number, 76,641. Accordingly, every constituency in England must have an electorate as at the review date that is no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee note the challenging and complex set of criteria being applied to this review.
- 2.2 That the Committee consider whether a representation should be made by the City Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 requires that the Boundary Commission for England conduct a review of parliamentary constituencies in England and submit final reports on the reviews to Government before "1st October 2013". The Boundary Commission for England wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 22 February 2011 to confirm that it had formally commenced its review.
- 3.2 The Boundary Commission must allocate a precise number of constituencies to England (calculated from a fixed total for the whole UK of 600 constituencies), and it must ensure that every constituency has an electorate that is within 5% of the 'UK electoral quota'. The number of constituencies in England will be reduced by 31.
- 3.3 Under the legislation for the 2013 Review, the Commission will be required to base its recommendations on the number of electors whose names appear on the register of parliamentary electors published on 1st December 2010.
- 3.4 The UK electoral quota is, to the nearest whole number, 76,641. Therefore, every constituency in England, with the specific exemption of the two constituencies to be created on the Isle of Wight, must have an electorate that is no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473. Following some preliminary modelling work, the Commission concluded that implementing the new statutory framework was likely to require very extensive and wide-ranging changes to be made to the existing pattern and composition of constituencies.

- 3.5 What may the Boundary Commission take into account?.The Commission may take into account the local government boundaries as they existed on 6 May 2010. Where either new wards or changes to ward boundaries take effect after this date, these changes will not be taken into account by the Commission in the recommendations that it will be submitting to the Secretary of State.
- 3.6 The Commission's building blocks. In considering its policies for the 2013 Review, the Commission decided that it would be desirable to use whole wards to create constituencies where it is feasible to do so, having regard to the 5% statutory requirement.

The Commission will use nine regional building blocks for England, of which the London region is one. London will be allocated 68 constituencies.

- 3.7 The current parliamentary constituencies covering the City of Westminster are made up of the following City of Westminster wards:

(a) Cities of London and Westminster constituency:

Bryanston & Dorset Square
Churchill
Hyde Park
Knightsbridge & Belgravia
Marylebone High Street
St James's
Tachbrook
Vincent Square
Warwick
West End
and the City of London

(b) Westminster North constituency:

Abbey Road
Bayswater
Church Street
Harrow Road
Lancaster Gate
Little Venice
Maida Vale
Queen's Park
Regent's Park
Westbourne

4. Boundary Commission for England Proposals

- 4.1 On 13 September 2011 The Boundary Commission for England published initial proposals for new constituency boundaries in England. This publication marked the start of a 12-week period of consultation on the initial proposals, ending on Monday 5 December 2011. Information on this review can be found at information@bcommengland.x.gsi.gov.uk.

The initial proposals, in respect of the City of Westminster, are as follows;

Camden and Regent's Park is comprised of four Westminster wards (Bryanston and Dorset Square, Church Street, Marylebone High Street, Regent's Park, plus seven London Borough of Camden wards. (The electorate is given as 79,897)

Paddington is comprised of nine Westminster wards (Abbey Road, Bayswater, Harrow Road, Hyde Park, Lancaster Gate, Little Venice, Maida Vale, Queen's Park, Westbourne) plus four Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea wards. (The electorate is given as 80,251)

Westminster and Kensington is comprised of seven Westminster wards (Churchill, Knightsbridge and Belgravia, St James's, Tachbrook, Vincent Square, Warwick , West End) plus eight Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea wards (The electorate is given as 78,616).

5. Additional Draft Legislation

- 5.1 In addition the Government has published draft legislation for pre-legislative scrutiny by Parliament (the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee will consider the proposals) which will make changes to the timing of polling places and district reviews in Great Britain to bring them in to line with the proposals to set Parliamentary terms to 5 year periods, and the five year cycle for UK Parliamentary boundary reviews implemented by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.

6. Consultation and Representation

- 6.1 Initial proposals were published on Tuesday 13 September 2011 and the Boundary Commission for England's initial consultation period ends on 5 December 2011. There is a secondary consultation period after this and if changes are made to the initial proposals the possibility of a further consultation period after that. A final report is then laid before Parliament. The Boundary Commission for England must do this by 1 October 2013. The process and criteria being applied are well documented. A good source for this information is the Commission's website - search online for 'boundary changes' or go to

www.consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk

- 6.2 What the City Council is doing to make the detail of the initial proposals known to its residents and other interested bodies or persons

There was a WIB item published on Friday 16 September. Information in respect of the review was placed on www.westminster.gov.uk web pages. A public inspection of documents (including maps) facility is being provided by Electoral Services on the 15th floor of Westminster City Hall. Information leaflets and summary documents, which can be taken away by members of the public, are available at City Hall reception and at Harrow Road and Church Street One Stops.

- 6.3 Representation

The Boundary Commission for England has advised that local authorities are welcome to make representation in writing and at hearings both jointly and solely. All representations will be published on the Boundary Commission for England's website.

Where representations are made, it will be necessary to consider the "ripple effect" that would flow if the proposals put forward were to be accepted, given the criteria applied by the Commission. Local authorities making a representation may wish to consider doing so jointly or in co-operation with other authorities.

- 6.4 The City Council may make representations "where it considers it expedient for the promotion or protection of the interests of the inhabitants of their area", and may appear at any public inquiry that is held – Section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972.

7. Precedent

- 7.1 The last review was commenced in February 2000

A City Council representation was made. It was very much focussed on getting two seats back - i.e. without needing to be joined with The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea or The London Borough of Brent. The case was mainly centred around population and electorate numbers to achieve this, so any other issues were subsidiary. Tim Straker QC was engaged by the City Council.

The Commission's report then can be seen at

http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm70/7032/7032_i.pdf

- see Page 42 onwards re Westminster. It rehearses the key arguments re the neighbouring Boroughs. This rationale has been set to one side at this review.

Since 1949 Cities of London and Westminster have always been together and this has been a starting point of any Commission Review since.

The Commission's provisional recommendation last time was to pair Westminster and Brent. There were strong arguments against that pairing from various sources, not just Westminster City Council- that there is no affinity between Westminster and Brent.

- 7.2 The City Council's presentation at the review commenced in February 2000 is shown as Appendix B.

8. Administrative Implications for Westminster City Council

- 8.1 A preliminary piece of pan-London work has been carried out by the London Borough of Ealing, see Appendix C, which shows a position based on lead status being enjoyed by those authorities who have the most electors within each of the constituencies. In this model Westminster City Council leads on two of the initially proposed Parliamentary constituencies 1) Paddington and 2) Westminster and Kensington. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is the only authority, apart from the City of London, which has no lead borough in a constituency responsibility.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 As set out in the report.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 The cost of administering UK Parliamentary elections is met from the Government grant for administering these elections. Any cost applicable to making City Council representation at this review would need to be met from the appropriate budget.

Background Papers:

1. Appendix A, Boundary Commission for England Rules for redistribution of seats (Schedule 2 to 'the 2011 Act')
2. Appendix B, Westminster City Council November 2001 presentation
3. Appendix C, Pan-London breakdown of constituency administration by London borough.

Background Information

**If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact
Martin Pyroyiannos on 020 7641 2732
Email: mpyroyiannos@westminster.gov.uk**