



## **Report to Council**

**Subject:** Boundary Commission for England 2013 Review Update

**Date:** 5 October 2011

**Author:** Head of Strategy and Performance

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- To inform Council of the initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituencies in England put forward by the Boundary Commission for England
- To seek views on whether, and if so, how, the Council might wish to respond to consultation on the proposals

### **2. Background**

This report updates my earlier report to Cabinet (4 August 2011) on this issue, following publication by the Boundary Commission of its initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituencies in England, published on 13 September 2011.

The Coalition Government is committed to reducing the number of parliamentary constituencies and standardising their size. Consequently, the Boundary Commission for England launched the Sixth Periodic Review of Westminster constituencies (known as the '2013 Review') on 4 March 2011. (Separate processes were simultaneously launched by the Boundary Commissions for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.) The review is the process by which constituencies will be reformed to comply with these revised rules, and will be completed by October 2013.

The relevant legislation<sup>1</sup> requires that every constituency in England (with the exception of the two Isle of Wight seats) must have an electorate of between 72,810 and 80,473 (that is 5% either side of the electoral quota of 76,641). Both

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011

constituencies currently covering Gedling Borough would need to be increased in size to meet the criteria (at the 2010 general election, Gedling constituency had 70,886 electors; Sherwood had 72,111 electors). This is also the case for all three current Nottingham City constituencies.

The Boundary Commission's initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituencies in England, published on 13 September 2011, are the first result of this review and are the subject of consultation until 5 December 2011. They can be found at

<http://consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/whats-proposed/east-midlands/>

### **3. Summary of Boundary Commission's Initial Proposals and impact on Gedling Borough**

The Boundary Commission's initial proposals would introduce significant changes to existing Parliamentary boundaries.

Overall, there will be a reduction in the number of constituencies as follows:

- UK Parliament – from 650 to 600
- National (England) – from 533 to 502
- Regional (East Midlands) – from 46 to 44

The Commission has broken down the East Midlands into three sub-regions (Derbyshire; Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire/Leicestershire/Northamptonshire). This split appears purely to be based on the fact that the electorates of Derbyshire and Lincolnshire divide relatively tidily into the electoral quota of 76,641 per constituency, whereas those for the other three counties do not. The resultant sub-region of Nottinghamshire/Leicestershire/Northamptonshire sees a reduction in constituencies from 28 to 27.

The proposals would alter the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire constituency map more radically than had been anticipated. They would also result in most local MPs representing constituents from more than one local authority area.

Gedling Borough would fall into four different parliamentary constituencies – Nottingham East; Nottingham North and Hucknall; Sherwood and Newark. Gedling constituency would disappear – Sherwood remains, but with its boundaries substantially altered.

- Netherfield & Colwick, Carlton, Carlton Hill, Valley, Phoenix, Gedling, St James, Porchester and Woodthorpe wards would become part of a new Nottingham East constituency, which would also include the City wards of

Dales, Mapperley and St Ann's - more than half of the electorate in this new Nottingham East would be current Gedling electors.

- Bestwood Village, Bonington, Daybrook, Newstead and Ravenshead wards would become part of a new Nottingham North and Hucknall constituency, which would also include Hucknall Central, East, North and West wards in Ashfield District and the city wards of Bestwood, Bulwell and Bulwell Forest.
- Calverton, Killisick, Kingswell, Lambley, Mapperley Plains, St Mary's and Woodborough wards would become part of a new Sherwood constituency, which stretches into north east Bassetlaw (5 Bassetlaw wards east of Retford are included), along with 6 wards in Newark and Sherwood district.
- Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph ward would become part of a Newark constituency, which also includes wards in Newark, Southwell and the Trent Valley from Newark and Sherwood and the Bingham, Radcliffe and Vale of Belvoir wards from Rushcliffe.

In coming to its draft conclusions, the Commission must give primary and overriding regard to the requirement for a constituency to be of the required size as set out in (2) above. However, with regard to the Gedling proposals specifically and the Nottinghamshire proposals generally, it appears to have paid little regard to the other criteria it may take into account<sup>2</sup>.

In particular in Gedling: -

- There is concern at the loss of identity for the Borough with the loss of the Gedling constituency and dropping its name entirely – this could be addressed in part by renaming the proposed Nottingham East constituency "Nottingham East and Gedling".
- The proposed split of Arnold between two constituencies, and in particular at the inclusion of Killisick, Kingswell, Mapperley Plains and St Mary's in the huge and largely rural new Sherwood constituency, is significantly at odds with the Commission's requirement to consider whether local ties would be broken by changes in constituencies
- The proposed inclusion of Ravenshead, Newstead and Bestwood Village in the largely urban Nottingham North and Hucknall constituency seems similarly to disregard local ties.

#### **4. Consultation on the Initial Proposals**

Consultation responses can take the form of written representations (hard copy or email) or through attendance at one of three regional hearings, attendance at

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<sup>2</sup> These include the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency; local government boundaries @ 6 May 2010; boundaries of existing constituencies and any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies – para 7; East Midlands Initial proposals

which must be pre-registered. For the East Midlands, these are being held in Derby, Lincoln and Northampton in late October/early November.

The Commission is specifically seeking views on the following issues: -

- Do you agree in full, in part or not at all with our initial proposals for the East Midlands region?
- Which sub-regions do you agree with and why?
- Which sub-regions do you disagree with and why?
- What are your alternatives for areas you disagree with that meet the statutory rules required for the review?

## **5. Resource Implications**

There are no specific resource implications arising directly from the initial recommendations. However, should the proposals be implemented, they have the potential to significantly complicate the administration of elections, in particular when general and local elections are held on the same day (as is planned for 2015), with the associated risk of an increase in costs.

## **6. Recommendation**

Members' comments are invited.

Should Council be minded to respond to the consultation, it is **recommended** that the Leader of the Council be authorised to respond to the consultation on the Council's behalf, following consultation with the Leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups.