

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

29 July 2021

Subject: **BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND REVIEW OF
PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – 2023 REVIEW**

Report of: **Head of Democratic Services**

SUMMARY

The Boundary Commission for England is tasked to periodically review all Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The current review, which must report to Parliament in July 2023, is being carried out under rules laid down in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020.

A public consultation was launched on 8 June 2021 to encourage everyone to contribute to the design of the new parliamentary constituencies. The 8-week statutory consultation period ends on 2 August 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the draft consultation response as set out in appendix B to the report, including the amendments recommended by the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee as set out from paragraph 21; and agrees that the response is formally submitted to the Boundary Commission for England.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is the independent organisation responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.
2. The BCE is currently conducting a review on the basis of legislative rules contained within the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020. Those rules require the BCE to make final recommendations for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries by 1 July 2023.
3. 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).

BACKGROUND

4. Previous Parliamentary Boundary reviews were commenced and published for consultation in 2011 and 2016. In both cases, the initial proposals were not carried through and no changes to English parliamentary constituencies have been implemented since 2010.
5. The number of electors in each parliamentary constituency varies greatly across England and therefore the BCE are working to statutory rules meaning that all recommended constituencies must have no less than 69,724 Parliamentary electors and no more than 77,062 (except those 'protected' constituencies set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 – locally, the Isle of Wight is one of these). By law, these electorate figures relate to the electoral registers as they were on 2 March 2020.
6. This is a significant change to the old rules under which Parliamentary boundary reviews took place, in which achieving as close to the average number of electors in each constituency was an aim, but there was no statutory fixed minimum and maximum number of electors.
7. 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 which existed, or were prospective, on 1 December 2020;
 - boundaries of existing constituencies;
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies; and
 - the inconveniences attendant on such changes.
8. A detailed description of the process can be found on the Boundary Commission's webpage: <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/guide-to-the-2023-review-of-parliamentary-constituencies/>

INITIAL PROPOSALS

9. The South East has been allocated 91 constituencies – an increase of seven from the current number. This includes two protected constituencies on the Isle of Wight.
10. The BCE's division of the South East into sub-regions is a practical approach but the distribution of electors across the nine counties of the South East is such that allocating a whole number of constituencies within each county, each falling within the permitted electorate range, is not possible.
11. There are currently 18 constituencies in Hampshire. Of the existing constituencies, 13 are within the permitted electorate range. Of the remaining five constituencies, one is below the 5% limit (Romsey and Southampton North) and four are above the 5% limit (Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Fareham, and North West Hampshire).
12. The full details of the initial proposals for the South East region can be viewed via the BCE website here: [Initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the South East region | Boundary Commission for England | Page 5 \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)
13. The specific initial proposals affecting the Borough of Fareham are as follows:
14. "In order to reduce the number of electors in the two constituencies of Eastleigh and Fareham, we propose a more substantial reconfiguration in this area of Hampshire. 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; we particularly welcome representations on whether an alternative name would be more appropriate."
15. "We recognise that the configuration of these two constituencies divides the Fareham local authority and that our proposals include an orphan ward.⁹ However, we consider that other configurations of constituencies in this and the surrounding area would not better reflect the statutory factors, particularly with regard to the unchanged constituencies that make up the rest of the south Hampshire conurbation."
16. "We 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. Although this is another orphan ward, we noted that the town of Valley Park is situated within the greater built-up area around Eastleigh and Chandler's Ford."
17. The effects of the initial proposals can be seen in the following electorate tables:

Fareham and Waterlooville CC 77,036

Ward	Local authority	Electorate
Fareham East	Fareham	5,930
Fareham North	Fareham	5,621
Fareham North-West	Fareham	5,548
Fareham South	Fareham	5,505
Fareham West	Fareham	5,403
Portchester East	Fareham	8,883
Portchester West	Fareham	5,608
Cowplain	Havant	7,434
Hart Plain	Havant	7,657
Waterloo	Havant	8,163
Denmead	Winchester	6,494
Southwick & Wickham	Winchester	4,790

Gosport BC 73,763

Ward	Local authority	Electorate
Hill Head	Fareham	5,980
Stubbington	Fareham	5,552
Alverstoke	Gosport	3,532
Anglesey	Gosport	2,998
Bridgemary North	Gosport	3,453
Bridgemary South	Gosport	3,556
Brockhurst	Gosport	3,728
Christchurch	Gosport	3,910
Elson	Gosport	3,488
Forton	Gosport	3,341
Grange	Gosport	4,022
Hardway	Gosport	4,211
Lee East	Gosport	4,643
Lee West	Gosport	4,123
Leesland	Gosport	3,469
Peel Common	Gosport	3,327
Privett	Gosport	3,301
Rowner and Holbrook	Gosport	3,256
Town	Gosport	3,873

Hedge End CC 76,902

Ward	Local authority	Electorate
Botley	Eastleigh	4,782
Bursledon & Hound North	Eastleigh	6,908
Hamble & Netley	Eastleigh	7,970
Hedge End North	Eastleigh	7,501
Hedge End South	Eastleigh	8,790
Locks Heath	Fareham	5,648
Park Gate	Fareham	7,137
Sarisbury	Fareham	6,018
Titchfield Common	Fareham	6,052
Titchfield	Fareham	5,926
Warsash	Fareham	5,536
Whiteley & Shedfield	Winchester	4,634

18. For a visual representation of the new constituency boundaries drawn by the initial proposals, please refer to the map image at Appendix A to this report.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

19. Members have the opportunity to feedback their responses to the consultation directly to the Boundary Commission for England via the consultation website but in order to meet the consultation deadline of the 2 August 2021, the Council is also able to submit a formal response.

20. The formal consultation response is attached at Appendix B

LICENSING & REGULATORY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

21. This report and the draft consultation response was presented to the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee at its meeting on 20 July for consideration.

22. In reviewing the initial proposals being put forward for consultation by the Boundary Commission for England, the Committee felt very strongly that there would be a negative impact on Fareham's identity and community cohesion and would cause significant confusion for residents in having 3 MPs representing the Borough.

23. The Committee unanimously agreed that the alternative consultation response, as outlined at Appendix B to the report, was a far better proposal and agreed to recommend the consultation response to Council for approval, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) Paragraph 7 be amended to reflect the significant, natural topographical barrier that Portsdown Hill creates between Waterlooville and Fareham.
- (ii) The wording at paragraph 11 be strengthened to highlight that the early stages of the Local Government Boundary Review are now under way and that the projected forecasts of growth at a local level will mean that the BCE review of parliamentary constituencies will be based on incorrect data and does not take into account any changes this is likely to bring.
- (iii) The table on pages 24 and 25 of the report which provides the proposed number of electors in the Gosport constituency be changed to show the individual elector numbers for FS3 and FS4 areas, as well as the Stubbington ward electorate.
- (iv) The Gosport constituency data table be moved so that it is directly after the Fareham consistency data table to emphasise the local community link between the two Boroughs.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- 24. There are significant risk considerations in relation to the initial proposals published by the BCE as they may add pressure to Fareham's existing resources for managing electoral registers throughout the year and in the run up to parliamentary elections.
- 25. The number of parliamentary constituencies that cross council boundaries is set to increase by a third, potentially creating more complexity for councils running elections and applying for government funds.
- 26. The Electoral Registration Officer for Fareham Borough Council currently gives away the electorate of 2 wards to Gosport Borough Council. The proposals would mean that FBC will still give away to Gosport but in addition would take on electorate from Havant Borough Council and Winchester City Council to administer the new Fareham and Waterlooville constituency and either give away or take on from Eastleigh Borough Council and Winchester City Council to administer the new Hedge End constituency.
- 27. Dealing with electoral administration amongst 5 Local Authority electoral register during the preparation for a parliamentary election is an unwelcome additional burden for the Electoral Registration Officer and his staff.

CONCLUSION

- 28. Members are invited to consider the various maps, proposal documents and the Boundary Commission's website in order to contribute to the Council's response to the consultation.
- 29. Council is asked to review the draft consultation response as set out in Appendix B, adding any proposals or comments before the response is formally submitted to the Boundary Commission for England.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Initial Proposals map

Appendix B - Draft Consultation response

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers:

Boundary Commission for England 2023 Review: [2023 Review | Boundary Commission for England \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)

Boundary Commission for England Consultation Website: [BCE Consultation Portal \(bcereviews.org.uk\)](#)

Contact: For further information please contact Leigh Usher. (Ext 4553)