
PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY REVIEW

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Bill Dixon, Leader

Responsible Director - Ada Burns, Chief Executive

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Members views on the Parliamentary Constituencies Review and put forward any comments as part of the consultation on the proposals.

Summary

2. The independent Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has published initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England and launched a consultation on those proposals. The BCE's consultation, which will include hosting a number of public hearings across England including one in Darlington on 17th November 2011, will enable people to have their say in the design of the new constituency boundaries.
3. The review of constituency boundaries is being carried out after Parliament decided that there should be a reduction in the number of constituencies across the UK, and that there should be similar numbers of electors in each constituency. The number of constituencies in England is being reduced from 533 to 502. Every constituency must have an electorate that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota of 76641 electors. Under the BCE's initial proposals 77 of the existing constituencies are unchanged. The BCE has published regional reports and maps, which are available on its website and in a number of local authority offices and libraries around the country. The consultation closes on 5th December 2011.
4. The North East region has been allocated 26 constituencies – a reduction of three from the current arrangement. The proposals leave none of the existing constituencies unchanged; however, there are a number of constituencies where there are only minor changes to enable compliance with the new rules. Darlington, with an electorate of 78,463, is the only other area of the North East that could be allocated a whole number of constituencies within its boundary. There is a proposal for a further constituency that contains parts of Darlington, Stockton-on-Tees, and Durham. The County of Durham currently has six constituencies. The proposals create four constituencies wholly contained within the county, one constituency that contains two wards from the County of Northumberland, and one constituency that contains wards from the County of Durham, the Borough of Darlington, and the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members agree that any response to the Parliamentary Constituency consultation should support the proposals as currently drafted and in particular the proposal relating to Darlington.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To ensure appropriate democratic representation in Parliament for the residents of the Borough of Darlington.
 - (b) To improve the conduct of parliamentary elections for the Borough.

Ada Burns
Chief Executive

Background Papers

The North East Initial Proposals report of the Boundary Commission for England

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

Catherine Whitehead : Extension 2306

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications arising from the decision.
Health and Well Being	There are no implications arising from the decision
Carbon Impact	There are no implications arising from the decision
Diversity	There are no implications arising from the decision
Wards Affected	The rural wards Heighington and Coniscliffe, Hurworth, Middleton St George and Sadberge & Whessoe.
Groups Affected	None
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not propose a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report relates to a statutory consultation
Efficiency	This report does not propose any efficiencies.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The independent Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has published initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England and launched a consultation on those proposals. The BCE's consultation, which will include hosting a number of public hearings across England including one in Darlington on 17th November 2011, will enable people to have their say in the design of the new constituency boundaries. The review of constituency boundaries is being carried out after Parliament decided that there should be a reduction in the number of constituencies across the UK, and that there should be similar numbers of electors in each constituency. The number of constituencies in England is being reduced from 533 to 502.
8. Every constituency must have an electorate that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota of 76641 electors. Under the BCE's initial proposals 77 of the existing constituencies are unchanged. The BCE has published regional reports and maps, which are available on its website and in a number of local authority offices and libraries around the country. The consultation closes on 5th December 2011.

The Proposals for Darlington

9. The Borough of Darlington proposals are that a Darlington constituency that includes all the wards in the existing Darlington constituency with the addition of the wards of Heighington and Coniscliffe, and Hurworth, which are currently in the Sedgefield constituency.
10. In relation to the remaining Darlington wards it is proposed that a Sedgefield and Yarm constituency is created which crosses the county boundaries between the County of Durham and the Borough of Darlington, and the County of Durham and the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. It includes the Middleton St George, and Sadberge and Whessoe wards of the Borough of Darlington. To compensate for the transfer of the Heighington and Coniscliffe, and Hurworth wards to Darlington constituency, it is proposed that the Sedgefield and Yarm constituency is extended to include wards to the west and south of the town of Stockton-on-Tees, including the towns of Yarm and Ingleby Barwick from the existing Stockton South constituency. This proposed constituency is served by major roads that link the parts of the two boroughs and county that are included in the constituency.
11. The electorate for the wards of the proposed Constituency of Darlington.

Darlington BC	73324
Bank Top Darlington	2695
Central Darlington	2772
Cockerton East Darlington	4126
Cockerton West Darlington	2937
College Darlington	3256
Eastbourne Darlington	4567
Faverdale Darlington	2116
Harrowgate Hill Darlington	4666
Haughton East Darlington	3106
Haughton North Darlington	2740

Haughton West Darlington	4167
Heighington and Coniscliffe Darlington	2967
Hummersknott Darlington	2936
Hurworth Darlington	2881
Lascelles Darlington	2917
Lingfield Darlington	2904
Mowden Darlington	3134
Northgate Darlington	2796
North Road Darlington	4363
Park East Darlington	4266
Park West Darlington	2978
Pierremont Darlington	4034

The electorate for the wards of the proposed constituency of Sedgefield and Yarm

Sedgefield and Yarm CC	73210
Middleton St George Darlington	3514
Sadberge and Whessoe Darlington	1625
Aycliffe East Durham	5042
Aycliffe North Durham	6338
Aycliffe West Durham	5666
Sedgefield Durham	5644
Sildon East Durham	6799
Eaglescliffe Stockton-on-Tees	8288
Ingleby Barwick East Stockton-on-Tees	7498
Ingleby Barwick West Stockton-on-Tees	7457
Parkfield and Oxbridge Stockton-on-Tees	4953
Western Parishes Stockton-on-Tees	2630
Yarm Stockton-on-Tees	7756

Other Proposals in the North East

12. The BCE propose a Consett and Barnard Castle constituency that crosses the county boundary between Northumberland and County Durham by including the wards of Haltwhistle and South Tynedale. The constituency also includes a number of wards from the existing North West Durham and Bishop Auckland constituencies. Although this constituency is very rural in nature, there are a number of roads across the county boundary that link the north and south of the constituency.
13. There is a proposal for a significantly altered Bishop Auckland constituency which includes the towns of Crook and Spennymoor. The proposed constituency no longer extends westwards to the boundary with Cumbria. The proposed Chester-le-Street constituency is similar to the existing North Durham constituency and includes all the wards from that constituency as well as the Burnopfield and Dipton ward from the existing North West Durham constituency. The BCE propose the change of name to reflect the community in this part of County Durham.

14. The proposed Durham constituency now includes the Ferryhill and Trimdon wards but does not extend beyond the west of Brandon, as the existing constituency does. The proposed Easington constituency remains largely unchanged, but with the inclusion of the Thornley and Wingate wards from the existing Sedgefield constituency; this has been done to increase its electorate.
15. As a result of the proposals, four wards from the existing Stockton South constituency have been included in a new Stockton and Billingham constituency. This enables almost all of the town of Stockton-on- Tees to be included in a single constituency. The three wards of the Borough of Stockton-Tees, which cover the Thornaby-on-Tees area, are now included in the proposed Middlesbrough constituency.
16. Eleven wards from the existing Middlesbrough constituency are included in the proposed Middlesbrough constituency. In addition, the proposed Middlesbrough constituency includes the two wards of Ladgate and Marton of the Borough of Middlesbrough, from the existing Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency, and three wards of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, which are in the existing Stockton South constituency. Four wards from the existing Middlesbrough constituency are included in the proposed Redcar constituency.
17. As a consequence of the changes, the proposed Redcar constituency also contains the Park End ward of the Borough of Middlesbrough, from the existing Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. The three wards of Normanby, Ormesby, and St Germain's of the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland are included in the proposed Middlesbrough South and Guisborough constituency which, apart from these additions and the transfer of the Park End ward, is unaltered. There is a proposal that this new constituency's name be changed from Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland.
18. The proposed Hartlepool constituency has just one change from the existing constituency – the addition of the Billingham North ward of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

Consultation

19. I have consulted with Group Leaders and members of the Wards specifically omitted from the proposed new constituency namely Middleton St George and Sadberge and Whessoe and have received no requests for any alternative proposals to be put forward.

Analysis

20. The proposals represent an improvement on existing arrangements for Darlington. It would be possible within the population limitations outlined by the Boundary Commission to have the other two wards of Middleton St George and Sadberge as part of the Darlington constituency bringing a total electorate of 78463 which is within the 105% of 76641 stipulated (ie 80473). This proposal would be a whole Darlington constituency which would make administration of the election more straightforward. This proposal is likely to be outweighed by the wider need to ensure electorate in the neighbouring Sedgefield and Yarm constituency. If the two wards were removed the electorate would be 68071 below the required 72808. The consultation invites responses. Members can decide to submit a

response in support of the proposals, submit an alternative proposal or submit no response. The Assistant Director Resources has liaised with colleagues in the Tees Valley who have indicated that they will be submitting comments, although there has been no indication of responses to the proposals which suggest a change to proposed constituency of Darlington.