

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Sue Lyons (Head of Democratic and Legal Services)	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A16/015	
Wards Affected	All	27 th October 2016	
Title	REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES		

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lloyd Bunday

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To formulate a response to the consultation relating to the Boundary Commission for England's (BCE) proposals in respect of the review of Parliamentary Constituencies in the United Kingdom published on 13th September 2016, in particular as to how they relate to the Kettering Borough area, and to submit that response for approval to the Council's Executive.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 Following the introduction of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, the BCE has the task of periodically reviewing parliamentary constituencies in England and submitting a final report on the review to Government in September 2018. The rules governing the review require the Commission to make a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England (from 553 to 501 and requires that every constituency – apart from two specified exceptions – must have an electorate that is no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507.) The UK electoral quota per Constituency for the 2018 review is 74,769. The 2016 Parliamentary electorate for Kettering at 1st December 2015 stood at 68,296. (NB: This is the date which provides the electorate figure on which all the reviews are being based.)

2.2 The BCE must apply the defined number of constituencies and a plus or minus 5% electoral parity target. These are the two main statutory requirements and it has absolutely no discretion in respect of either matter. Those areas where the Commission does have some discretion are:

- special geographical considerations,
- local government boundaries as they existed on 7th May 2015,
- boundaries of existing constituencies and
- any local ties that will be broken by the changes made to the existing constituencies are all subordinate to these two main statutory requirements.

Factors that the BCE will not consider are

- impact on future election results
- any new local government boundaries

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- changes to electorates after the review date

2.3 In order to allocate the required number of constituencies to England and to ensure a manageable and familiar framework within which the detailed mapping of constituencies can proceed, BCE will use the electoral regions, which are already defined in legislation for the purposes of European elections and the recent Referendum, as a template for grouping and allocating the 501 constituencies across The Commission's proposed approach would mean that it would first determine the number of constituencies to be allocated to each electoral region. Currently, there are 46 constituencies in the East Midlands. The BCE proposals are for 44 constituencies in the Region under the new arrangements.

2.4 The BCE is also required by statute to specify a name and designation for each proposed constituency, although the Act contains no guidance on this matter.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 BCE, having prepared proposals on the basis detailed above, published them on Tuesday 13th September 2016. A copy of the documentation and maps for the Kettering area has been made available in the Customer Services area, and links to the documentation on the BCE website has been placed on the Council's website.

3.2 The Council is a consultee in respect of this matter, and holds documentation to assist members of the public and interested organisations to respond to the BCE.

3.3 The BCE are asking for views structured around the following questions :

- Do you support the initial proposals?
- Making use of the resources provided by BCE, outline your objections to the proposals and put forward counter-proposals which are in accordance with the rules within which the review has to take place.

3.4 There now follows a twelve-week period for written representations and public hearings which will end on Monday 5th December 2016. The public hearings for the East Midlands will take place as follows:

- Thursday 27th and Friday 28th October in Derby
- Monday 31st October and Tuesday 1st November in Northampton
- Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th November in Lincoln

3.5 As soon as possible after the initial 12 week consultation period, the BCE will publish all of the representations received for each region. There will then be a further four week period for written comments on the representations received during the initial consultation period. This will be likely to take place in spring

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2017. There will then follow a period in which BCE will consider all representations received within both periods and formulate its initial proposals, which will be published for consultation for a further eight weeks. This is likely to take place towards the end of 2017. Comments and evidence received from this period will be considered before BCE submits its final recommendations to the Government, who will present it, without amendment to Parliament for consideration. This must be done by September 2018.

- 3.6 The BCE will take all reasonable steps to publicise its proposals throughout each consultation, so that as many people as possible are aware of it and can take the opportunity to contribute.
- 3.7 At its meeting on 19th October, the Executive Committee considered the BCE proposals and its comments will be tabled at this meeting as **Appendix B**.

4 THE KETTERING CONSTITUENCY

- 4.1 The existing Kettering Constituency is coterminous with the boundary for the Borough Council area. However, to address the matter of the constituency's electorate figure falling outside the + or – 5% figure referred to in paragraph 2.1 above, this situation has to change.
- 4.2 The consultation published by the BCE on 13th September 2016, proposes that the constituency of Kettering be made up as follows:
- All the wards of the Borough of Kettering
 - The Finedon Ward of the Borough Council of Wellingborough (comprising the Parish of Finedon)

A plan of the proposed constituency is attached at **Appendix A**. The hatched area shows the Finedon Ward.

- 4.3 The 2016 Parliamentary electorate for Kettering at 1st December 2015 stood at 68,296 and the electorate for the Finedon Ward at that date was 3,210. This means an electorate for the Constituency based on the figures for those Wards as at 1st December 2015, of 71,506, which is -4.4% below the threshold figure of 74,769, and therefore within the tolerance levels of -5 to +5%.
- 4.4. The impact on the County as a whole is that Northamptonshire still retains the same number of Members of Parliament as it had prior to the proposals being published. To accommodate this, the BCE have transferred electors within the County and have increased the geographical area of the Daventry constituency to include five wards from Lutterworth and three wards from Harborough (both of which are of course in Leicestershire).

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5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Changes to the Parliamentary Constituency could impact on the Council in terms of representation of the Kettering Borough area in Parliament being diluted by an increase in the size of the constituency. This means that part of another local government area would also fall within the constituency area.

6. FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

See paragraph 5.1 above

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is a requirement of The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 that the constituency boundaries are reviewed as set out in the report.

8. RECOMMENDATION

To request the Research and Development Committee to consider this matter in order to formulate a response to the BCE to be agreed by the Executive at the November meeting.

Background Papers: Boundary Commission for England Initial Proposals
Title As above
Date 13th September 2016
Contact Officer Ian White ext 4200

Previous Minutes/Reports: None