

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

22 July 2021

Title: Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): N Redfearn

Report from Service

Area: Law and Governance

Responsible Officer: Bryn Roberts, Director of Law and Governance (Tel: (0191)6435339)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is currently conducting a review of the boundaries of all the Parliamentary constituencies in England, and will report to Parliament on its recommendations for boundary changes in July 2023.

This report outlines the initial proposals of the BCE in relation to the North East, in particular to the two Parliamentary Constituencies located within the Borough of North Tyneside, and provides information about the process for consultation on those proposals.

At its meeting held on 28 June 2021, Cabinet considered the BCE's proposals in relation to the North Tyneside and Tynemouth Parliamentary Constituencies and agreed that the views of full Council be sought before the Elected Mayor responds to the BCE on behalf of the Authority.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Council consider whether or not to support the initial proposals of the review of the Boundary Commission for England in relation to the Parliamentary Constituencies within the North Tyneside Council area.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This item first appeared on the Forward that was published on 2 July 2021.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report does not directly relate to any of the priorities in the Our North Tyneside Plan.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The BCE has the task of periodically reviewing the boundaries of all the Parliamentary constituencies in England.

1.5.2 The 2023 Review

On 8 June 2021, the BCE published its initial proposals for the review of Parliamentary Constituency boundaries. It is currently conducting a review on the basis of legislative rules, most recently updated by Parliament in 2020. Those rules specify that recommendations for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries must be made by 1 July 2023. 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). The rules also require that every recommended constituency across the UK – apart from five specified exceptions (two of them in England) – must have an electorate that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.

The North East region has been allocated 27 constituencies – a reduction of two from the current number. The proposals leave two of the 29 existing constituencies unchanged and 11 with only minor substantive changes of one to two wards.

As it has not always been possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties, the BCE has grouped some county and unitary authority areas into sub-regions, based on the relatively recently created combined authorities, which encompass the entire North East region. The number of constituencies allocated to each sub-region is determined by the combined electorate of the included authorities.

Consequently, it has been necessary for the BCE to propose some constituencies that cross county or unitary authority boundaries, but none of the proposed constituencies cross any combined authority boundaries.

There are currently nine constituencies in the Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland sub-region, none of which are within the permitted electorate range. With an electorate of 596,886, the sub-region is entitled to 8.13 constituencies, and has been allocated eight constituencies, a reduction of one.

In relation to the current constituencies of North Tyneside and Tynemouth which both have an electorate above the permitted electorate range, the proposals of the BCE are as follows:

North Tyneside

The constituency would be divided up and its wards allocated between the proposed Tynemouth constituency (see below) and Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency.

The Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency would comprise five wards within the North Tyneside Council area - Benton, Camperdown, Killingworth, Longbenton and Weetslade wards - together with four wards within the Newcastle City Council area - Castle, Fawdon and West Gosforth, Gosforth and Parklands - with an electorate of 74,087.

Tynemouth

The Tynemouth constituency would comprise ten wards – Battle Hill, Chirton, Collingwood, Cullercoats, Howdon, Northumberland, Preston, Riverside, Tynemouth and Wallsend with an electorate of 76,984.

Whitley Bay and Cramlington

The BCE also proposes the creation of a Whitley Bay and Cramlington constituency that crosses the Northumberland boundary into North Tyneside.

The constituency would comprise five wards within the North Tyneside Council area - Monkseaton North, Monkseaton South, St Mary's, Valley and Whitley Bay wards – together with nine wards within the Northumberland County Council area – Cramlington East, Cramlington Eastfield, Cramlington North, Cramlington South East, Cramlington Village, Cramlington West, Hartley, Holywell and Seghill with Seaton Delaval – with an electorate of 74,510.

1.5.3 Cabinet – 28 June 2021

At its meeting held on 28 June 2021, Cabinet considered the BCE's proposals in relation to the North Tyneside and Tynemouth Parliamentary Constituencies, but also agreed that the views of full Council be sought before the Elected Mayor responds to the BCE on behalf of the Authority.

Cabinet's views on the proposals, as expressed at that meeting, are summarised below:

Cabinet do not agree with the proposals for the following reasons:

- The primary aim of the proposals appears to be a numeracy exercise to ensure constituencies are more equally balanced in terms of voter numbers rather than recognising the identity and ties of local communities.
- North Tyneside Council is committed to enabling delivery of sustainable communities that have a sense of place and identity and protecting the character and attractiveness of existing communities. The proposals are detrimental to communities in North Tyneside. The proposed new constituencies will cut across and split a number of the Borough's established neighbourhoods and communities. The proposals ignore local ties, sense of place and identity and will be disruptive to many communities. For two of the proposed constituencies they also propose to combine a number of existing wards in the Borough with wards outside of the North Tyneside area with which they have no connection.
- The proposed boundaries and constituency sizes do not take into account future population growth and housing development. With some significant strategic housing developments expected to be built, for example at Murton Gap, Killingworth Moor and on the Newcastle side of the proposed Newcastle North constituency boundary, and the consequent likely growth in population in those areas, the size of those constituencies will potentially be considerably higher than the upper limit set for the Boundary Commission's review.
- North Tyneside Council has been used to operating with two Parliamentary Constituencies wholly within its boundary. Under current arrangements the residents of North Tyneside are well served by having two MPs focussing on the

issues that have a major impact on the Borough. Under the new proposals the Borough would be split across three parliamentary constituencies compared to the current two. The new proposals could cause problems for the Council in liaising with three separate members of Parliament as well as for MPs in dealing with more than one local authority and such change would also cause confusion for residents.

1.5.4 Statutory Procedure for consultation

The BCE is consulting on its initial proposals for an eight-week period, from 8 June 2021 to 2 August 2021. Views can be given initially in writing, and the BCE encourages responses through its interactive consultation website at www.bcereviews.org.uk

1.5.5 Secondary consultation period

The BCE will publish all the responses it receives on its initial proposals. This publication will mark the start of a six-week 'secondary consultation' period, which is currently planned to take place in early 2022.

The purpose of the secondary consultation is for people to see what others have said in response to the initial proposals and to make comments on those views, for example challenging or supporting what others have said.

Between two and five public hearings will be held in each region where there will be an opportunity to give views directly to a BCE commissioner. Details of those hearings will be made available nearer the time.

1.5.6 Development of revised proposals

Once it has all the representations and comments from both the initial and secondary consultation periods, the BCE will analyse those representations and decide whether changes should be made to the initial proposals.

If it decides, on the basis of the evidence presented, to change its initial proposals, it must publish its revised proposals for the areas concerned and consult on them for a further period of four weeks. This is likely to be towards the end of 2022. When it consults on its revised proposals there will be no further public hearings. All revised proposals will be published on the BCE website and an opportunity will be given for people to give views on the website.

1.5.7 Final recommendations and report

Following the consultation on revised proposals, the BCE will consider all the evidence received at this stage, and throughout the review, before determining its final recommendations. When the BCE has decided on its final recommendations for the whole of England, it then drafts and submits a formal written report to the Speaker of the House of Commons. The report, which is also published once the Speaker has laid it before Parliament, contains a description of the review in each region, a textual description of all the final recommendations, and a set of maps to illustrate the existing boundaries and those proposed by the final recommendations.

The submission of the formal final report concludes the BCE's involvement in the constituency review process. The procedure to subsequently implement new constituencies is the responsibility of the Government.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

Option 1

Agree to the recommendations set out in 1.2.

Option 2

Not agree to the recommendations set out in 1.2.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

This will enable the views of the Authority to be submitted to the Boundary Commission for England by the deadline of 2 August 2021.

1.8 Appendices:

Maps of the proposed boundaries for Newcastle upon Tyne North, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay and Cramlington constituencies.

Full details of the BCE's proposals can be found in the link shown under section 1.10 of the report – Background Information.

1.9 Contact officers:

Bryn Roberts, Director of Law and Governance (Tel. 643 5339)

Dave Brown, Law and Governance (Tel: 643 5358)

Janice Gillespie, Director of Resources (Tel.6435701)

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the links below:

- Boundary Commission for England – Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries
<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-06-08-Initial-Proposals-North-East-Region.pdf>
- [Report to Cabinet 28 June 2021: Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial or other resource implications arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended in 2020) requires the four Boundary Commissions for the UK to carry out a review of constituencies and to submit final reports to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Details of the consultation process for responding to the BCE's proposals are contained in the main body of the report. Full Council will be consulted on the proposals at its meeting on 22 July 2021 by virtue of this report.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Director of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Assistant Chief Executive