

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Governance and Ethics Committee

24 November 2022

Report title	2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review Update	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
Originating service	Electoral Services	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Election Board	December 2022

Recommendation for action or decision:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Returning Officer response to the consultation.

Recommendation for noting:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is asked to note:

1. That the consultation closes on 5 December.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To provide an update on the Parliamentary Constituencies Boundary Review and to share the Returning Officers draft response to the consultation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Parliament requires The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) to undertake an independent and impartial review of all constituencies in England. This is to rebalance the number of electors in each constituency.
- 2.2 Population changes mean constituency sizes are very different since the last boundary review. The new map proposed by BCE will make sure each constituency has between 69,724 and 77,062 electors. This means that each MP represents roughly the same number of electors.
- 2.3 The 2023 Boundary Review also requires that the number of constituencies in England increase from 533 to 543.
- 2.4 The BCE may take into account local government boundaries that were in place on 1 December 2020. Consequently, their guidance states that they will not generally take into account new boundaries after this date.

3.0 Proposals for Wolverhampton

3.1 The revised proposals for Wolverhampton constituencies have not changed since the initial proposals. A summary of the changes has been provided in the table below:

Constituency	Wards in constituency	Changes from existing constituency
Wolverhampton North East	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bushbury North (part)2. Bushbury South and Low Hill3. Fallings Park4. Heath Town5. Oxley (part)6. Short Heath7. St Peters (part)8. Wednesfield North9. Wednesfield South10. Willenhall North	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking in 2 wards from Walsall (Willenhall North and Short Heath)• Part of Oxley moving to Wolverhampton West.• Part of St Peters now in this constituency.
Wolverhampton South East	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bentley and Darlaston North2. Bilston North3. Bilston South4. Darlaston South5. East Park6. Ettingshall North7. Ettingshall South and Spring Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking in 3 wards from Walsall (Willenhall South, Bentley and Darlaston South and Darlaston South)

	8. St Peters (part) 9. Willenhall South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blakenhall moving to Wolverhampton West • Part of St Peters now in this constituency.
Wolverhampton West	1. Blakenhall 2. Bushbury North (part) 3. Graiseley 4. Merry Hill 5. Oxley (part) 6. Park 7. Penn 8. St Peter's (part) 9. Tettenhall Regis 10. Tettenhall Wightwick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name change from Wolverhampton South West • Taking in part of Oxley from Wolverhampton North East • Taking in Blakenhall from Wolverhampton South East • Part of St Peters now in this constituency.

3.2 The parliamentary constituencies are coterminous with the existing ward boundaries. However, they will not be coterminous with the new ward boundaries that come into effect in May 2023. Please see the maps in appendix 1 and 2 to see how the parliamentary constituencies fit with the new wards and polling districts for Wolverhampton. Another polling district review would need to commence to align the polling districts to the proposed parliamentary constituencies as they are currently aligned to the existing constituencies.

3.3 During the last round of consultation, the Returning Officer Tim Johnson responded to the consultation to inform them that Wolverhampton has just concluded a Local Government Boundary Commission review and requested that they reconsider the proposals so that whole wards are placed in a constituency as they have just been through a review process to reflect communities of identity. The full response can be viewed on the BCE website [here](#)

4.0 Consultation

4.1 A final round of public consultation is open until 5 December 2022. This is the last chance to provide views on the new constituency boundaries. The Boundary Commission invite the public to comment on the proposals via their website, email or letter. Details of which can be found here: [Boundary Commission for England | The Commission is required by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to review the Parliamentary constituencies in England every five years \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)

4.2 A paper copy of the proposals for Wolverhampton can be viewed at the Civic Centre during opening hours. It is held by the front reception team.

4.3 Details of the consultation will be shared with the public via all communication channels.

4.4 All Councillors are strongly encouraged to respond to the final consultation.

5.0 Returning Officer response

5.1 The Returning Officer is planning to respond to this round of consultation with the following:

As Returning Officer for the three Wolverhampton constituencies, I would like to re-iterate my feedback made in the last round of consultation asking the commission to consider the new local government boundaries in the revised proposals. This feedback was not acknowledged in the region report commentary for the revised proposals.

I understand that the review is based on the wards in place as of 1 December 2020, but to have one local government ward (St Peters) that is split across all three parliamentary constituencies does really go against one of the key guiding factors of the review which is against breaking community ties. It also creates significant administrative challenges for designating polling districts and polling stations in these areas.

I propose the following counter proposal and have attached maps to show current polling district electorate to show how this would fit with the appropriate elector range for the parliamentary constituencies:

Wolverhampton North East

- Wolverhampton North East has capacity to take in more electors so it should take the extra part of Bushbury North (BU6 polling district) which is 900 electors so that the whole ward can be placed in the same constituency. This would take the electorate up to 71,349.

Wolverhampton West

- The above would reduce the Wolverhampton West electorate by 900 allowing it to accommodate the below.
- To keep community ties together it should take in all of the remaining St Peters ward from Wolverhampton North East – currently polling districts SP5 and SP6 which is approximately 300 electors
- To keep community ties together it should take in all of the remaining St Peters ward from Wolverhampton South East – currently polling district SP8, which is 1470 electors.
- To keep community ties together it should take in the remaining Oxley ward from Wolverhampton North East – currently polling district OX7, which is 1,500 electors.
- However all of the above would take the electorate up to just over the maximum electorate for the constituency by approximately 900 based on current polling district figures as of 2022. If just all of the St Peters ward could be moved together that would be within tolerance and it would be best to keep this ward together.

OX7 are already used to voting in the Wolverhampton North East constituency as they were previously in the Bushbury North ward so this would have lesser an impact.

Wolverhampton South East

- Based on the above proposals, it would give away 1,500 electorate to Wolverhampton West from St Peters wards.

This count proposal would better fit with the local government wards and balance the electorates to the following:

Wolverhampton North East: 71,349

Wolverhampton West: 74,462

Wolverhampton South East: 74,185

6.0 Next steps

- 6.1 The final public consultation closes on 5 December 2022.
- 6.2 The BCE is required to take its final report to the Speaker of the House of Commons before 1 July 2023.
- 6.3 After the final report from all four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions has been laid by the Speaker, within four months of the last report being laid, the Government is required to submit to the Privy Council an Order that gives effect to all four Commissions' recommendations
- 6.4 After the Privy Council approves the Order, the new constituencies take effect at the next General Election. Any by-elections held in the meantime have to be held on the basis of the old (existing) constituencies.

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report. The report provides an update on the independent review of constituencies undertaken by the Boundary Commission for England and requests endorsement of the Returning Officer's draft response to consultation. [GE/15112022/X].

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 This is an independent review and the relevant provisions covering the review are set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. [DP1611/2022/A].

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 This is an independent review. Rule 5 in Schedule 2 in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act sets out that one of the factors the Boundary Commission may take into account in establishing a new map of constituencies is any local ties that would be broken by

changes in constituencies. The Council is ensuring that the consultation is widely publicised across all available communication channels so that members of the public and local organisations are aware of the review and how to respond to the consultation.

10.0 All other Implications

10.1 There are no other implications arising from the report at the current time.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 Boundary Commission for England, 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies: [BCE Consultation Portal \(bcereviews.org.uk\)](https://www.bcereviews.org.uk)

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1: Map to show new ward boundaries and proposed parliamentary constituencies.

12.1 Appendix 2: Map to show new polling districts and proposed parliamentary constituencies.