

Council		
Report Title	Response to Boundary Review	
Key Decision	n/a	Item No.
Ward	n/a	
Contributors	Chief Executive, Head of Law	
Class	Part 1	Date: 23 November 2016

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the Boundary Commission for England's consultation on their initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in London.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members agree the content of this report with regard the counter proposal that was considered by the Elections Committee and agree to submit this report to the Boundary Commission for England in support of the counter proposal as set out in appendix C.
- 2.2 Members also agree to authorise the Chief Executive to re-submit his letter relating to the use of the 1/12/15 register to the Boundary Commission for England (as attached at appendix D) now that the consultation window is open.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Parliamentary Voting Systems and Constituencies Act 2011 (the Act) made provision for a reduction in the number of UK parliamentary constituencies from 650 to 600. To implement this change in England, the Boundary Commission for England (the BCE) must complete a review of parliamentary constituencies by September 2018. The BCE began such a review in 2011 but it was discontinued.
- 3.2 The BCE has now started afresh and initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England were published by the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) on 13th September 2016. This report will focus specifically on the proposals for Constituencies that fall, or are proposed to fall, wholly or partly within the boundary of the London Borough of Lewisham. Full information on all the proposals is available on their website:

<http://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

- 3.3 The Act introduced a UK quota for the number of electors in any constituency. By the application of a formula, that quota is 74769. Schedule 2 of the Act states

that every constituency must “at the review date” have an electorate of at least 95% and not more than 105% of that quota. This means that every constituency must have between 71031 and 78507 electors. The statute provides that the review date is 1/12/15.

3.4 The BCE is conducting its review on a regional basis, according to the EU regions. The number of constituencies in England will be 501. The Isle of Wight will have 2 of these leaving 499 for the rest of England. Currently in London (including the City) there are 73 MPs. Under the review proposals there will be 68.

3.5 The Act is clear that the electoral quota will take precedence but it allows the BCE to take into account a number of other factors in developing proposals. These are:-

- (a) Special geographical considerations – size, shape and accessibility of the constituency. This means physical factors such as mountains, hills, rivers, estuaries etc. It does not include human or social factors in this category.
- (b) Local government boundaries – both external and internal ward boundaries. The Guidance is clear that wards are to be the “default building blocks” of new constituencies. However, the BCE acknowledges that ward boundaries may be crossed where there are compelling, exceptional circumstances which must be supported by strong evidence. The BCE will use groupings of two or more local authority areas in drawing up initial proposals. These sub regions will be explained when their initial proposals are published. The BCE intends not to cross the boundary of the sub-region where possible.
- (c) Existing constituencies –The proposals will not be developed from a “blank piece of paper” though the BCE state that it may be necessary to depart from existing constituencies to bring new ones within the statutory range and to reduce the number of constituencies.
- (d) Any local ties that would be broken by a change.

3.6 There are a number of factors which the BCE may not take into account. These are:-

- (a) The effect on future election results
- (b) New local government boundaries put in place after 7th May 2015
- (c) Changes (up or down) in electorate numbers since 1st December 2015

3.7 Though the review date is explicit in the Act, the BCE states at paragraph 40 of its Guidance as follows:-

“However, the BCE does not take the view that it is obliged to shut its eyes entirely to growth (or decline) that has occurred since the review date, which it may be aware of from the annual updates of electorate figures it receives, or that it is satisfied is likely to occur. Such a factor may be taken into account in choosing between two or more competing options for the same area that satisfy the statutory rules”

3.8 The procedure for the review entails a number of stages:-

- (a) On 13/9/16 the BCE published initial proposals on its website and put them on deposit with Councils and in other places where the public can view them.
- (b) There is now an initial consultation period of 12 weeks for representations to be made. The BCE encourages written representations and states that any objections will be considered to have more weight if they are accompanied by a viable alternative proposal. The last date for written representations will be 5th December 2016.
- (c) During the 12 week initial consultation a number of public hearings have been held. These were not public inquiries which have been abolished rather they were short hearings lasting no more than 2 days each at which, the Guidance states, the BCE will explain the initial proposals and people may give their views.
- (d) As soon as possible after the 12 week initial consultation period, the BCE will publish all representations made including the record of the public hearings. There then follows a period of 4 weeks during which people may submit written comments on the representations received in the initial consultation period. There are no hearings at this stage.
- (e) The BCE staff and Assistant Commissioner then produce a joint report for the Commissioners who decide whether any and if so what revisions ought to be made to the initial proposals. The Commissioners then publish a report saying whether revisions have been made or not.
- (f) If revisions have been made, there follows a further period of 8 weeks during which representations may be made on the revised proposals. There are no hearings and no repetition of the 4 week period.
- (g) The final report and any representations made in that 8 week period are published and a formal written report for the whole of England is submitted to the Government. It describes the review, sets out the recommendations and includes maps of the new constituencies.

- (h) The Government must lay the report before Parliament. It has no discretion to change it. It lays a draft Order giving effect to the recommendations. The draft Order must be approved (or rejected) by both Houses of Parliament. Once the Order has effect, it cannot be challenged and the new constituencies apply at the next General Election – scheduled for 2020.

4 Proposals

- 4.1 Maps summarising three scenarios have been provided in the appendices to this report:

Appendix A: existing constituency boundaries in the London borough of Lewisham

Appendix B: BCE proposals

Appendix C: counter proposal considered by the Elections Committee

- 4.2 The tables below outline the existing constituencies within the London Borough of Lewisham:

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham Deptford	Brockley	10,337
	Crofton Park	9,579
	Evelyn	9,129
	Ladywell	8,688
	Lewisham Central	10,532
	New Cross	9,077
	Telegraph Hill	9,824

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham West and Penge	Bellingham	9,019
	Forest Hill	9,201
	Perry Vale	9,807
	Sydenham	9,663
	Clock House (LB Bromley)	10,932
	Crystal Palace (LB Bromley)	7,783
	Penge & Cator (LB Bromley)	11,248

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham East	Blackheath	8,642
	Catford South	9,413
	Downham	9,072
	Grove Park	9,249
	Lee Green	9,182

	Rushey Green	8,053
	Whitefoot	8,755

4.3 The tables below outline the proposed BCE constituencies within the London Borough of Lewisham:

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Greenwich and Deptford BC	Blackheath Westcombe (RB Greenwich)	9,103
	Greenwich West (RB Greenwich)	11,499
	Peninsula (RB Greenwich)	10,036
	Blackheath	8,642
	Brockley	10,337
	Evelyn	9,129
	Lee Green	9,182
	New Cross	9,077

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham and Catford BC	Bellingham	9,019
	Catford South	9,413
	Downham	9,072
	Grove Park	9,249
	Ladywell	8,688
	Lewisham Central	10,532
	Rushey Green	8,053
	Whitefoot	8,755

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Peckham and Lewisham West	Crofton Park	9,579
	Forest Hill	9,201
	Perry Vale	9,807
	Sydenham	9,663
	Telegraph Hill	9,824
	Nunhead (LB Southwark)	9,269
	Peckham Rye (LB Southwark)	9,463
	The Lane (LB Southwark)	10,550

- 4.4 The Council's Election Committee considered a counter proposal at their meeting on 31/10/2016 and the tables below outline the proposal for constituencies within the London Borough of Lewisham:

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham East & Greenwich	Blackheath Westcombe (RB Greenwich)	9,103
	Greenwich West (RB Greenwich)	11,499
	Peninsula (RB Greenwich)	10,036
	Blackheath	8,642
	Downham	9,072
	Grove Park	9,249
	Lee Green	9,182
	Whitefoot	8,755

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham Deptford and Catford	Brockley	10,337
	Catford South	9,413
	Evelyn	9,129
	Ladywell	8,688
	Lewisham Central	10,532
	New Cross	9,077
	Rushey Green	8,053
	Telegraph Hill	9,824

Constituency	Wards (all LB Lewisham unless stated)	Electorate (BCE 1/12/15 figure)
Lewisham West and Dulwich	Bellingham	9,019
	Crofton Park	9,579
	Forest Hill	9,201
	Perry Vale	9,807
	Sydenham	9,663
	East Dulwich (LB Southwark)	9,127
	College (LB Southwark)	8,312
	Village (LB Southwark)	8,592

5 Previous Responses from Lewisham

- 5.1 Members' and officers have previously responded to the BCE to challenge the methodology employed in the review and in particular the use of the 1st December register as the base electorate in the local area.
- 5.2 On 20th July a full meeting of Lewisham's unanimously passed a motion declaring:

"The Government is currently part way through a Parliamentary Boundary Review that bases its methodology on elector numbers from December 2015. The Government ambition has been to reduce the number of MPs to 600. That controversially the government have based the notional size of constituencies on the electoral registers from December 2015, which was after the move from household registrations to individual electoral registrations (IER), has disproportionately affected inner city areas like Lewisham in making the transition. Millions of voters have gone missing from the electoral roll. The independent Electoral Commission did recommend that those on the register following the General Election in May 2015 should remain on the register until December 2016. The Government ignored that advice.

As examples of impact: the electoral register in Liverpool is down 14,000 from December 2014, Birmingham by 19,000 and Lewisham by 6,000 even when there is an actual increase in population in these areas. That registrations to vote increased by 18.6% from December 2015 - placing Lewisham at the top of the league table in elector growth, and London the largest regional growth with 7%.

Council Believes:

This Governments aspiration has been to reduce both the number of MPs, but shamefully the number of electors on the electoral roll in a partisan way, by introducing new electoral procedures, such as individual electoral registrations (IER) that disproportionately disadvantage inner city areas like Lewisham. That Lewisham is potentially going to lose one third of its current say in Parliament if the figures aren't updated in the Boundary Review to reflect these large significant changes."

- 5.3 Furthermore the Council resolved to urgently write to the Boundary Commission to set out their concerns and make clear that this unprecedented growth must not be ignored and ask for urgent action to resolve this issue. This resulted in the letter from the Chief Executive to the Boundary Commission (attached as appendix D) that re-iterated the points raised by full Council:

"Lewisham Council has serious concerns that if the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review is conducted solely on the basis of the electoral roll in Lewisham at 1 December 2015, the people in its 3 parliamentary constituencies, Lewisham Deptford, Lewisham East and Lewisham West, will be significantly under represented for years to come. Because of this, we ask the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) not to rely on the December 2015 electoral register alone, but instead to consider the July 2016 electoral roll as a fairer and more accurate reflection of the electorate in the 3 Lewisham constituencies."

5.4 Moreover the letter covered a number of key points:

- The 8.54% growth of registered electors across the three constituencies between 1st December 2015 and 1st July 2016 – a period that included the EU Referendum.
- The significant population growth and the scale of development being experienced in Lewisham
- The impact of demographics on register completeness in Lewisham

5.5 This letter has already been sent to the BCE prior to the announcement of the proposals however it was returned by the BCE who asked that it is re-submitted during the formal consultation period. This report recommends that members now authorise re-submission.

6 BCE proposal and impact on previous responses

6.1 The BCE proposals were published after the submission and/or publication of both of Lewisham's previous submissions to the process of the review. However now that the proposals have been published are clear that the arguments remain relevant and with regard to Greenwich and Deptford BC the arguments around growth and under registration are in fact strengthened with the inclusion of the Royal Borough of Greenwich's Peninsula Ward which has an estimated population of 24,500 (2015 Greater London Authority Estimate) and a projected population of 49,150 by 2041. Despite this there is a registered electorate of only 10,036 on 1/12/15. RB Greenwich's most recent figures show that the parliamentary register for Peninsula stood at 11,679 by September 2016 which gives a further indication of the scale of growth.

6.2 However these arguments have already been made in the attached response and will be re-submitted for the BCE's consideration. This report recommends that members now authorise re-submission of the letter from the Chief Executive to the BCE in relation to growth and potential under representation in Lewisham.

7 Counter Proposal

7.1 As mentioned previously the Council's Electoral Committee has considered a Counter Proposal that has been backed by Members.

7.2 The impact of this on Lewisham is minimal with the proposed constituencies still crossing boundary lines into Greenwich and Southwark however the committee noted a number of points that should be conveyed to the BCE in line with the provision outlined in the Act:

7.3 Special geographical considerations – size, shape and accessibility of the constituency

Peckham and Lewisham West / Lewisham West and Dulwich

The attached maps at appendix B and C demonstrate that the counter proposal with regard to the Lewisham West and Dulwich constituency constitutes a much more accessible constituency than the BCE's proposed Peckham and Lewisham West BC. The South Circular (A205) gives easy vehicular access through or bordering 5 of the 8 wards and connecting to major routes (Sydenham High Road, Perry Hill and Lordship Lane) give easy access to the other wards. Furthermore there are major bus routes (i.e. 185 to Victoria, 176 to Tottenham Court Road) that connect up these wards in the South of Lewisham and Southwark.

Greenwich and Deptford / Lewisham East and Greenwich

The connections between wards in the South of Lewisham and Greenwich Peninsula would prove difficult under this new proposal but arguably the connections between Evelyn and New Cross and Peninsula (for example) are not much easier given the focus on the Jubilee Line or a busy section of the South Circular going towards the Blackwall Tunnel to access much of Peninsula. Essentially both proposals seem to accept that a constituency must cross the Greenwich and Lewisham boundary at this point to allow the electoral maths work so any proposal will be far from ideal.

Lewisham and Catford / Lewisham Deptford and Catford

Lewisham Deptford and Catford represents an area of the borough that is relatively easy to access given the major transport hub in Lewisham Town Centre. A similar argument could be made for Lewisham and Catford for the South of the borough given the transport hub is within the boundary of both proposals.

However a further point was noted at the Election's Committee around the re-development plans for the three town centres in Deptford, Catford and Lewisham that will mean more housing and businesses in these areas and a comparable set of issues that may be faced by residents across the proposed constituency.

7.4 Local government boundaries – both external and internal ward boundaries.

As noted above the net effect of the counter proposal in terms of external boundaries will remain the same for Lewisham but will reduce the amount of multi-borough constituencies elsewhere in London. Whilst cross borough constituencies are far from ideal Lewisham must accept that in light of the decision to use the 1/12/15 register there will be a requirement to cross boundaries to ensure that electorate quotas are reached for local constituencies.

7.5 Existing constituencies

The table on the next page shows the effect on LB Lewisham electoral wards of the BCE proposal and the Counter Proposal. The final column indicates whether

the proposed constituency for each ward is regarded as the main successor constituency on transition from the current arrangements.

Ward	Current Constituency	BCE Proposed Constituency	Main Successor constituency?
Bellingham	Lewisham West and Penge	Lewisham and Catford BC	No
Blackheath	Lewisham East	Greenwich and Deptford BC	No
Brockley	Lewisham Deptford	Greenwich and Deptford BC	Yes
Catford South	Lewisham East	Lewisham and Catford BC	Yes
Crofton Park	Lewisham Deptford	Peckham and Lewisham West BC	No
Downham	Lewisham East	Lewisham and Catford BC	Yes
Evelyn	Lewisham Deptford	Greenwich and Deptford BC	Yes
Forest Hill	Lewisham West and Penge	Peckham and Lewisham West BC	Yes
Grove Park	Lewisham East	Lewisham and Catford BC	Yes
Ladywell	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham and Catford BC	No
Lee Green	Lewisham East	Greenwich and Deptford BC	No
Lewisham Central	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham and Catford BC	No
New Cross	Lewisham Deptford	Greenwich and Deptford BC	Yes
Perry Vale	Lewisham West and Penge	Peckham and Lewisham West BC	Yes

Rushey Green	Lewisham East	Lewisham and Catford BC	Yes
Sydenham	Lewisham West and Penge	Peckham and Lewisham West BC	Yes
Telegraph Hill	Lewisham Deptford	Peckham and Lewisham West BC	No
Whitefoot	Lewisham East	Lewisham and Catford BC	Yes

7.6 The table below shows the same information based on the counter proposal considered by the Elections Committee:

Ward	Current Constituency	Counter Proposal Constituency	Main Successor constituency?
Bellingham	Lewisham West and Penge	Lewisham West and Dulwich	Yes
Blackheath	Lewisham East	Lewisham East and Greenwich	Yes
Brockley	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	Yes
Catford South	Lewisham East	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	No
Crofton Park	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham West and Dulwich	No
Downham	Lewisham East	Lewisham East and Greenwich	Yes
Evelyn	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	Yes
Forest Hill	Lewisham West and Penge	Lewisham West and Dulwich	Yes
Grove Park	Lewisham East	Lewisham East and Greenwich	Yes

Ladywell	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	Yes
Lee Green	Lewisham East	Lewisham East and Greenwich	Yes
Lewisham Central	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	Yes
New Cross	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	Yes
Perry Vale	Lewisham West and Penge	Lewisham West and Dulwich	Yes
Rushey Green	Lewisham East	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	No
Sydenham	Lewisham West and Penge	Lewisham West and Dulwich	Yes
Telegraph Hill	Lewisham Deptford	Lewisham Deptford & Catford	Yes
Whitefoot	Lewisham East	Lewisham East and Greenwich	Yes

7.7 To summarise there are 7 wards that will not be in their main successor constituency under the BCE proposal and only 3 under the Counter Proposal suggesting that the counter proposal would minimise disruption for Lewisham Electors.

7.8 Any local ties that would be broken by a change.

The arguments above also apply here as the counter proposal minimises the movement between constituencies for electors and provide a constituency in the South of the Borough that is better connected to neighbouring wards in Southwark.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The previous submissions to the BCE consultation around the methodology as laid out in the Act are still relevant and should be resubmitted as part of the formal BCE consultation process.
- 8.2 Furthermore this paper offers arguments as presented and discussed at Elections Committee in favour of the Counter Proposal that was tabled. Broadly these follow two main lines of argument in line with the factors that the BCE are able to take into account under the terms of the Act:
- Better transport between wards in the counter proposal than the BCE proposal
 - Minimised disruption for electors under the counter proposal

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising.

10 Legal implications

- 10.1 The Parliamentary Voting Systems and Constituencies Act 2011 (the Act) made provision for a reduction in the number of UK parliamentary constituencies from 650 to 600. To implement this change in England, the Boundary Commission for England (the BCE) must complete a review of parliamentary constituencies by September 2018. Full legislation is available online:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/1/contents/enacted>

11 Crime and disorder implications

There are no crime and disorder implications arising.

12 Equalities implications

To fulfil its duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Council's engagement strategy is designed to encourage registration by those with protected characteristics and hard to reach groups. The Council will continue to seek to maximise political representation for all residents.

13 Environmental implications

There are no environmental implications arising.

Background documents

- BCE Proposal for the London Region: http://bce-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/consultation-documents/1473420028_London%20Initial%20proposals%20report.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJG2X7BQ35X2H7LAA&Expires=1478772786&Signature=ZZe9f%2FABHmePU3WB2sehWtrgnil%3D
- The Parliamentary Voting Systems and Constituencies Act 2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/1/contents/enacted>

Appendices

- Appendix A: Map of existing parliamentary constituency boundaries
- Appendix B: Map of BCE proposed parliamentary constituency Boundaries
- Appendix C: Map of proposed parliamentary constituency Boundaries considered as a counter proposal by the Council's Elections Committee
- Appendix D: Chief Executive's letter to the BCE
- Appendix E: Motion passed at full Council on 20th July 2016.