



Boundary Commission for England

The 2018 Review of Parliamentary  
Constituency Boundaries

Volume one: Report

Boundary Commission for England

# The 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

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to section 3(5) of the Parliamentary  
Constituencies Act 1986



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# Foreword

I became the Deputy Chair of the Boundary Commission for England in sad circumstances. My predecessor was Dame Frances Patterson DBE. Tragically, she died in 2016.

The Report that follows is the culmination of over two years of hard work that began under Frances' tenure.

As we explain in the first chapter, there are some absolute requirements to which the Commission must work. First, the number of constituencies must be reduced. Throughout the UK there are now 650. Across the UK that number must be reduced to 600. For England, that means a reduction from 533 to 501.

Next, with two exceptions, the English constituencies that we propose must be within 5% of the electoral quota. This means that the number of electors registered on the electoral roll for each constituency in England must be between 71,031 and 78,507.

The exceptions are on the Isle of Wight, which by law must have two constituencies.

Third, our proposals must satisfy these requirements across England. It would be no good for us to say that we think we have done a pretty good job by meeting those requirements in say, 97% of the constituencies. Every constituency must meet them.

But, subject to those overriding considerations, we have to make choices. We are guided by other factors that Parliament told us we may take into account. These are set out in the first chapter of this report. As we say there, the one factor that has attracted a great deal of attention is 'local ties'. The process that Parliament requires us to undertake for each review places considerable emphasis on consultation. We have followed that process and each consultation has led to a great many responses — about 35,000 in total. Very many of those responses addressed the issue of local ties — most commonly expressed in the context of the cultural and social ties in the area — and whether, in the view of the consultee, our proposals respected or disregarded those ties. Unsurprisingly, it is not unusual for those responses to be contradictory, emphasising the different views individuals hold as to what unites their local community. We have taken account of all the responses we received, but, even if they are cogently argued, it has not always been possible to incorporate them into our final recommendations because of the other factors.

The first chapter also emphasises that our role is entirely non-political. That does not mean that all those who commented on our proposals did so from a non-partisan perspective. Far from it. Indeed, it was often (though not exclusively) the political parties who had the resources to put forward counter-proposals that paid attention, as we must, to the bigger picture and who could look at a whole region, sub-region or area rather than suggesting an adjustment to a single constituency, disregarding knock-on consequences for others. However, whatever the motives of the proponents of suggestions, what the Commission is proposing is entirely without regard to any party political advantage or disadvantage that it may cause.

All members of the Commission extend warm thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Commission (superbly led by our Secretary, Sam Hartley, his Deputy, Tony Bellringer, and the Head of Reviews, Tim Bowden) and to our assistant commissioners. Our task would have been impossible without their skill, dedication, hard work and good humour. I personally want to express extra thanks to my fellow commissioners, David Elvin QC and Neil Pringle, who began this review under Frances and who have brought to it a wealth of experience and insight for which I am extremely grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicol', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Hon. Mr Justice Nicol

# The administration of the 2018 Review

## Legislative framework and source data

1. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent and impartial advisory non-departmental public body, established under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to keep under review Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. Similar commissions conduct equivalent work for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The members of the BCE and other key positions are listed at Appendix A.
2. The statutory rules governing the conduct of our work are contained within the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended<sup>1</sup>). These rules require a review of all UK Parliament constituencies to be conducted every five years, with a report and recommendations to be submitted to the Government by each commission at the end of the review, detailing the extent, name and designation of all constituencies in that commission's area (as far as it recommends change). 'Designation' means whether the constituency should be a 'county constituency' or a 'borough constituency'. This last task is perhaps the least controversial of all the tasks that the Commission has to perform.
3. The statutory rules establish a fixed number of 600 constituencies for the UK, from which elections are to be held for the House of Commons (a reduction from the existing 650). From this total, four constituencies (two in the Scottish islands, and two for the Isle of Wight) are 'protected', in the sense that they are reserved for the specified areas and thereby not subject to some of the criteria and statistical calculations applied to all other constituencies (in particular as regards electorate size).

## The electorate for the 2018 Review

4. For a given review, the rules specify a particular UK electorate figure that is to be used throughout that review. For the 2018 Review, this is the figure from the register of Parliamentary electors required to be published by the local electoral registration officers following the autumn 2015 canvass (these were mostly published in December 2015, but some were delayed until February 2016).

## Distribution of constituencies across the UK

5. The legislation then specifies a mathematical formula (set out in Schedule 2 to the 1986 Act and referred to as the Sainte-Laguë formula) to determine how the 596 unprotected constituencies are allocated to each part of the UK for a given review, taking into account the relative sizes of the respective Parliamentary electorates of each part of the UK (not including the electorates of the four protected constituencies). The statutory distribution formula applied to the electorate figures for the 2018 Review resulted in the allocation set out in the table overleaf.

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<sup>1</sup> The statutory rules in the 1986 Act were significantly revised by Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.



Part of the UK	Constituencies allocated
England	499 (+2 Isle of Wight)
Scotland	51 (+2 Scottish islands)
Wales	29
Northern Ireland	17
<b>Total United Kingdom</b>	<b>596 (+4 protected)</b>

### The electoral quota and the permitted electorate range

6. The legislation requires all recommended unprotected constituencies to be broadly similar in electorate size. Specifically, they **must** all be within 5% of an ‘electoral quota’ figure, which is the median average Parliamentary electorate for the 596 unprotected constituencies. We refer to this as the ‘permitted electorate range’. Using the 2018 Review electorate data, the **electoral quota figure is 74,769**, meaning the permitted electorate range for this review is between **71,031 (minimum) and 78,507 (maximum)**.

### Local government boundaries

7. Where the commissions wish to take account of local government boundaries (see statutory factors in the BCE policies section below), the statute requires us to have regard to such boundaries as they were at a specified point in time. **For the 2018 Review, the local government boundaries are those that were in place on 7 May 2015.**

### Geographical size of constituencies

8. The statute also requires all unprotected constituencies to be no larger than 13,000 square kilometres in size (except in prescribed circumstances). In England, this does not become a concern, as even in its most sparsely populated areas, constituency sizes do not come near this figure.

### Requirements for public consultation

9. The legislation requires the commissions to conduct a 12-week public consultation on initial proposals for new constituencies during a review. We must display hard copy materials in each proposed constituency, and we must hold public hearings between weeks five and ten of the consultation period. In England, the legislation requires between two and five public hearings to be held in each of its nine administrative regions.
10. All comments received during the initial consultation must subsequently be published, and people must be given an opportunity to comment on those responses during a four-week public consultation period. Where commissions revise their proposals in light of comments from the first two consultations, those revised proposals must be published and a final eight-week public consultation conducted on them.
11. Detailed information on how we complied with the consultation requirements — and actively sought to inform and engage the public in these consultations — is set out later in this chapter.

## BCE policies

12. Within the mandatory legislative framework described above, there are a number of key issues on which the commissions have discretion to determine their own policies.

### Sub-division of England into nine administrative regions

13. A key preliminary question before detailed work commenced was whether — from the outset — we should seek to contain constituencies within regional boundaries. Freely allowing constituencies to straddle regional boundaries would provide maximum flexibility, but might often be considered undesirable in terms of local community identity and the administration of elections in those constituencies. We conducted a public consultation on this question in 2011, to which the overwhelming response was to support a general policy of working within regional boundaries in developing our proposals.
14. For the 2018 Review, we adopted the same general policy of working within the nine regional boundaries. We stated clearly — before any public consultation in this review — that this approach did not prevent anyone from putting forward counter-proposals that included one or more constituencies being split between regions, but that very compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade us to depart from the general policy.
15. Having established that we would work within the nine regions, we then needed to distribute fairly England's allocation of 499 constituencies (plus the two protected constituencies) between those regions. A further application of the Sainte-Laguë distribution formula — this time using only England figures — seemed to us the fairest approach. Again, such an approach was consulted on in 2011 and had been overwhelmingly supported.

### Having regard to the statutory factors

16. The legislation specifies a number of factors that a commission 'may take into account, if and to such extent as they think fit', in developing proposals. Unlike consideration of geographical or electorate size, these are not mandatory requirements, but their explicit presence in the legislation leads the BCE to seek to have regard to them as far as possible (although in many instances the separate factors will lend themselves to differing options in the same area). The factors relevant to the 2018 Review<sup>2</sup> are:
  - **Special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency:** We consider that the special geographical considerations that may have an impact on the ability to form a constituency with an electorate within the permitted electorate range will primarily relate to physical geography such as mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, estuaries or islands rather than to human or social geography. Matters of culture, history, socio-economics and other possible aspects of non-physical geography are more likely to arise as issues when considering the separate factor of 'local ties' (below).
  - **Local government boundaries:** As noted above, this specifically relates to the boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. Such boundaries include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal — ward or electoral division — boundaries. Our policy has been to

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<sup>2</sup> A further factor — 'the inconveniences attendant on such changes' — is expressly excluded for 'the first review' following the legislative changes of 2011, but may be considered for subsequent reviews. For these purposes, the 2018 Review is 'the first review'.

identify constituencies by reference to local authority external boundaries as far as practicable, but it has nevertheless often proven necessary to cross these boundaries in order to form constituencies that comply with the permitted electorate range. Our particular policy in relation to the use of wards/electoral divisions is discussed further below.

- **Boundaries of existing constituencies:** We have sought to have regard to existing constituencies as far as possible, as we have not considered that it would be appropriate to start from a blank sheet of paper. However, the existing constituencies vary markedly in the size of their electorates. The mandatory requirement to keep within 5% of the electoral quota, and the substantial reduction in the number of constituencies across the country, mean that the scope for following existing constituency boundaries has been limited. Furthermore, it has been important to be clear that an existing constituency could not automatically be considered protected from change, simply on the basis of its electoral figure already falling within the permitted range: many such constituencies have needed to be altered, to allow for the creation of viable constituencies in the surrounding area.
- **Any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies:** We very much recognise that this is the factor that resonates the most with the general public. It is also the factor for which we have drawn most heavily on the evidence from consultation responses as to the exact nature of such local ties and the nature of their impact.

### Using the full permitted electorate range

17. Legislation does not require the commissions to achieve constituency electorates that are as close as possible to the electoral quota figure, and we do not consider it appropriate to adopt such a policy objective. To do so would undermine our ability to take properly into account the other statutory factors mentioned above. Accordingly, by way of illustration, we have preferred to recommend a constituency that has, say, a 4% variance from the electoral quota, but which respected local ties, in preference to an alternative that would produce a constituency with only a 1% variance, but which would split communities.

### Policy on wards

18. The BCE uses wards (in district and borough council areas) or electoral divisions (in areas of unitary authorities that have a county status) as the basic building block for designing constituencies. The use of the term 'ward' throughout the rest of this report should be taken to include electoral divisions in unitary authorities.
19. The BCE's long-standing policy is to avoid dividing wards between constituencies unless there is an exceptional and compelling reason for doing so. Wards are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas that share a broad community of interest. Any division of these units between constituencies would be likely to break local ties, disrupt political party organisations, and cause difficulties for electoral registration and returning officers. Our view is therefore that wards should continue to be the default building block for constituencies. In the unfinished previous review in 2013, the BCE proposed no split wards in its initial proposals, and just two in its revised proposals.
20. However, we recognise that in a few cases there may be exceptional and compelling circumstances — particularly having regard to the specified statutory factors mentioned above —

that may make it appropriate to divide a ward. Strong evidence and justification needs to be provided in any constituency scheme that proposes to split a ward, and examples of circumstances in which we have realistically considered splitting a ward include: a) where all the possible ‘whole ward’ options in an area would significantly cut across local ties; or b) where splitting a single ward may prevent a significant ‘domino effect’ of otherwise unnecessary change to a chain of constituencies in order to meet the permitted electorate range requirement. Where we have agreed the need to split a ward, we have nevertheless sought to do so along the existing administrative boundaries of the polling districts that form part of that ward. Overall, we still believe that the number of such split wards should be kept to an absolute minimum, but are nevertheless recommending 10 split wards across England, where we feel a sufficiently strong justification exists.

21. As far as possible, we have sought to create constituencies: a) from wards that are adjacent to each other; and b) that do not contain ‘detached parts’, i.e. where the only physical connection between one part of the constituency and the remainder would require travel through a different constituency.

#### **Factors we do not consider**

22. There are a number of matters that we specifically do not take into account when looking at constituency boundaries. In particular, these are:
- **Voting patterns and support for political parties:** As an independent and impartial body, we emphasise very strongly that existing voting patterns and the prospective fortunes of political parties should not and do not enter our considerations during a review. Unlike the following issues, there is no nuance to this: we do not collect information on voting patterns, and we conduct our work without any consideration to what implications our proposals may have on the fortunes of particular political parties or individual politicians.
  - **Changes to local government boundaries after the specified statutory date:** The local government boundaries that we may take into account in the 2018 Review are — as stated previously — those that existed on 7 May 2015. Consequently, we have not generally taken into account new boundaries that may have come into effect at local council elections in May 2016, or in subsequent years. However, in the limited circumstances where we have had to consider whether to divide a ward (as it existed on 7 May 2015) between constituencies in order to meet the statutory electorate range, and if so how it should be divided, we have sought to take into account as appropriate any new ward boundaries introduced after 7 May 2015, while also seeking to split along polling district lines.
  - **Changes to electorates after the specified statutory date:** We are required to work on the basis of the numbers of electors on the electoral registers published in December 2015. As such, we cannot take account of claims of under-registration or over-registration of electors in some areas. However, leading up to and during the course of the 2018 Review we have seen particularly significant initiatives that have impacted on the number of registered electors, most prominently the full implementation of individual electoral registration, the holding of referendums on Scottish independence and membership of the EU, and a UK General Election. Particularly in this context, we have not taken the view that we are obliged to shut our eyes entirely to growth (or decline) that has occurred since the start of the review (which can be verified from the annual updates of electorate figures we receive). In any particular situation where we have been choosing between two or more competing options

for the same area (that all satisfy the statutory rules), we have therefore been prepared to take into consideration such proven changes.

### **Naming and designating constituencies**

23. In making our recommendations, we are required by the legislation to specify a name and designation for each proposed constituency, but there is no statutory guidance on these points.
24. Our policy on the naming of constituencies is that where recommended constituencies remain largely unchanged, the existing constituency name should usually be retained. In such cases constituency names are likely to be altered only where there is good reason for change.
25. Where a new name is justified, our general policy has been that the name should normally reflect the main population centre(s) contained in the constituency. Where a new constituency is split between two or more local authorities, the name will generally relate primarily to the majority area, but we have also sought to give some recognition in the name to the minority area (particularly where it consists of more than one ward). However, this is not always practicable.
26. We adopt compass point names when there does not appear to be an obviously more suitable name. The compass point reference used generally forms a prefix in cases where the rest of the constituency name refers to the county area or a local council, but a suffix where the rest of the name refers to a population centre.
27. We have been conscious of the desirability of constituency names being shorter rather than longer (although this has not always been achievable).
28. Notwithstanding the above, where a suitable alternative name is proposed that generally commands greater support locally than what we may have initially proposed, we have usually been prepared to recommend that alternative.
29. In designating constituencies, our policy is that, as a general principle, where constituencies contain more than a small rural element they should normally be designated as county constituencies. In other cases they should be designated as borough constituencies. The designation is suffixed to the constituency name and is usually abbreviated: BC for borough constituency and CC for county constituency.

## **Progression of the 2018 Review**

### **The first review since 2011**

30. Although the commissions commenced working under the new rules immediately after the legislation was enacted in 2011 (in what we refer to as the '2013 Review'), subsequent amendment of the legislation in early 2013 effectively required all the commissions to abandon that work and formally restart in 2016, with a view to making their final recommendations in September 2018. We therefore refer to the current review as the '2018 Review', and consider it the first review since the enactment of the new rules in 2011, as it is the first to be brought to completion.

### **Establishing and publishing the local government boundaries dataset**

31. The legislation provides for local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015 to be those to which we may have regard in our review work. These were established by taking a

snapshot of the relevant boundaries as they are officially mapped by Ordnance Survey (OS) in its Boundary-Line product.

32. Alongside this, we also worked with OS and electoral services officers in local authorities across the whole of England, to develop for the first time a sub-ward mapping layer of reflecting polling districts as they existed on 7 May 2015. This was loaded into our Geographic Information System (GIS), along with the OS Boundary-Line maps, to facilitate the most efficient mapping and consideration of multiple potential options for schemes of constituencies in a given area, including possible ward splits where these might be justified.

**Establishing the Parliamentary electorate dataset, calculation of the distribution of constituencies and formal launch of the 2018 Review**

33. The aggregate Parliamentary electorate figures for the UK for the 2018 Review – and subsequent distribution of constituencies between the four parts of the UK using the statutory Sainte-Laguë formula – were as follows:

	<b>Electorate*</b>	<b>Constituencies allocated</b>
England	37,294,494*	499 (+2)
Scotland	3,842,736*	51 (+2)
Wales	2,181,841	29
Northern Ireland	1,243,369	17
<b>Total United Kingdom</b>	<b>44,562,440*</b>	<b>596 (+4)</b>

\*The electorates of the four protected constituencies are not included in the figures.

34. Applying the Sainte-Laguë distribution formula to the England-only data resulted in the following allocation across England:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Electorate*</b>	<b>Constituencies allocated</b>
Eastern	4,242,266	57
East Midlands	3,275,046	44
London	5,118,884	68
North East	1,874,396	25
North West	5,074,302	68
South East	6,067,475*	81 (+2)
South West	3,930,770	53
West Midlands	3,989,320	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,722,035	50
<b>Total England</b>	<b>37,294,494*</b>	<b>499 (+2)</b>

\*Excludes electorate of Isle of Wight.

### Development of initial proposals, recruitment of assistant commissioners and logistical planning for the initial consultation

35. As soon as the numbers of constituencies for each region were established, we commenced work drawing up and analysing multiple different options for how constituencies might best be changed (where necessary) to ensure an optimal scheme in every area that complied with the statutory factors. We also published, in July 2016, our 'Guide to the 2018 Review', which sought to set out clearly in one place the statutory requirements for the review, what our own policies in relation to it were, and how, when and where the review would progress. This was one of the first significant steps intended to both aid the general public's understanding of the 2018 Review, and support and encourage their informed engagement with the later consultation stages of the process.
36. In parallel with this substantive work in developing the initial proposals, we also ran an open recruitment competition to have suitable individuals appointed to assist us in our task. 'Assistant commissioners' play a key role through the middle stages of the review in chairing public hearings, analysing representations received, and making proposals to us for revisions. We sought to fill 21 positions, and received 369 applications, conducting 52 interviews. Following our recommendation of names to the appropriate Cabinet Office Minister, 21 assistant commissioners were appointed for 12-month terms of office running from 1 September 2016, and were distributed to work on specific regions in proportion to the electorates in those regions, as follows:

Region	Electorate	Assistant commissioners
Eastern	4,242,266	2
East Midlands	3,275,046	2
London	5,118,884	3
North East	1,874,396	2
North West	5,074,302	3
South East	6,067,475	3
South West	3,930,770	2
West Midlands	3,989,320	2
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,722,035	2
<b>Total England</b>	<b>37,294,494</b>	<b>21</b>

37. In each region one of the assistant commissioners was identified as the lead assistant commissioner.
38. Also during this period, the secretariat made the administrative arrangements for the printing of the initial proposals reports and maps, distribution of those to the statutory places of public deposit in each proposed constituency, and the distribution of bespoke initial proposals packs to all MPs representing current English constituencies. Arrangements were also made for the delivery of statutory public hearings across England, and the logistics supporting those events.

### Consultation on initial proposals

39. Our initial proposals were published on 13 September 2016, and we ran a public consultation on them for the statutory 12-week period, with the last date for receipt of responses being 5 December 2016. We undertook a significant range of communications activities to promote public awareness and understanding of the consultation, and to encourage engagement. In addition to the statutory requirement to place initial proposals in a public place of deposit in each proposed constituency, these communications activities included national and local press adverts, a national media briefing session, supported by a national and local media news release, spokesperson interviews on national and local media outlets, adverts on local radio stations, and audience-specific digital advertising on websites and popular social media applications.
40. In line with the legislative requirements, we also ran public hearings across England during the prescribed period of weeks five to ten of the consultation period. Public hearings were chaired by assistant commissioners and were held in the following locations:

Region	Public hearing locations
Eastern	Chelmsford, Norwich, Luton, Cambridge
East Midlands	Derby, Northampton, Lincoln
London	Westminster, Bromley, Harrow, Kingston, Romford
North East	Newcastle, Darlington
North West	Manchester, Chester, Carlisle, Liverpool, Lancaster
South East	Guildford, Oxford, Portsmouth, Brighton, Maidstone
South West	Exeter, Truro, Poole, Bristol
West Midlands	Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Royal Leamington Spa, Stafford
Yorkshire and the Humber	Leeds, Sheffield, Northallerton, Hull

41. By the end of the initial proposals consultation period, we had received 18,775 individual representations (in addition to a number of petitions and letter-writing campaigns) via our consultation website, email, hard copy letter and at public hearings.

### Collation of material for secondary consultation

42. Following the close of the consultation on the initial proposals, all of the responses were prepared for publication, as required by the legislation.

### Secondary consultation on responses to initial proposals

43. We published all the responses to the initial proposals on 28 February 2017, opening the statutory four-week period for consultation on those responses, which subsequently closed on 27 March 2017.



We supported this consultation period with a news release to national and local media, and further audience-specific advertising on websites and social media. During this consultation we received 7,776 individual representations (again with a number of petitions and letter-writing campaigns) via our consultation website, email and hard copy letter.

### **Analysis of responses, development of revised proposals and planning for revised consultation**

44. Following the end of the secondary consultation period, all of the 26,551 responses from the initial and the secondary consultations were brought together for each area and assessed in detail by the assistant commissioners and review staff for the relevant region. This work included mapping out counter-proposals that had been put forward by respondents (including considering how any unspecified consequential effects on surrounding areas might best be accommodated), and visiting any areas around the country that had proven particularly complex or controversial. Our assistant commissioners then considered all the representations received, the counter-proposals put forward, and any further solutions that would reflect the local communities, and made recommendations to the Commission on what revisions to make to the initial proposals.
45. Also during this period, the secretariat made the administrative arrangements for the printing of the revised proposals reports and maps, distribution of those to the statutory places of public deposit in each proposed constituency, and the distribution of bespoke revised proposals packs to all MPs representing current English constituencies.

### **Consultation on revised proposals**

46. Our revised proposals were published on 17 October 2017, and we ran a public consultation on them for the statutory eight-week period, with the last date for receipt of responses being 11 December 2017. We again undertook a full range of communications activities to promote public awareness and understanding of the consultation, and to encourage engagement. In addition to the statutory requirement to place revised proposals in a public place of deposit in each proposed constituency, these communications activities again included national and local press adverts, a national media briefing session, supported by a national and local media news release, spokesperson interviews on national and local media outlets, adverts on local radio stations, and audience-specific digital advertising on websites and popular social media applications.
47. By the end of the revised proposals consultation period, we had received 10,489 individual representations (again with a number of petitions and letter-writing campaigns) via our consultation website, email and hard copy letter.

### **Development of final recommendations and drafting of final report**

48. Following the close of this final consultation, individual commissioners worked with the secretariat to analyse in detail the evidence in the responses, and assess whether any final adjustments would be appropriate. The Commission as a whole then considered this analysis and advice, and decided on any final amendments to be made.
49. The text of this final report and the associated illustrative maps were then prepared, ready for submission to the Government during September 2018, as prescribed by the legislation.

## **Administrative learning from the 2018 Review and wider issues**

50. Through the course of preparing for and delivering the 2018 Review, we have identified a number of administrative aspects where we believe either that the experience has been particularly positive (and the aim should therefore be to replicate that in future), or that improvements to the current process could usefully be made both to secure better value for public money and to improve the rigour of the process overall. Where it is within our own power to implement these improvements, we will of course be doing so, but some require an amendment by Parliament of the legislation that governs our work. We previously provided evidence to relevant Parliamentary select committees on some of these matters in November 2014 and January 2018, but we set them out again below for ease of reference.

### **Use of modern technology to promote the consultation and engage the public**

51. To facilitate the public consultation process, we procured the provision of a web-based consultation tool, specialising in handling consultations involving maps. Following an open procurement, the product we used was supplied by Informed Solutions, being based on their InformedCONSULT platform, an earlier version of which had previously been used successfully by the Boundary Commission for Scotland during the 2013 Review, as well as in various other public sector map-based consultations. The front-facing interactive map provided a user-friendly interface where an individual could explore our proposals (both initial and revised) and seamlessly submit their comments to us on those; then subsequently be able to see the comments that others had provided in earlier stages of the consultation. The system was designed to make the collation and sorting of responses much easier and more efficient, which in turn made for a much improved experience for the public at the secondary consultation stage when searching for particular kinds of responses that had been submitted by others.
52. Our goal at the start of the 2018 Review was to achieve a target of 70% of responses to our consultation coming to us through the new online system. However, the percentage of written responses received through the consultation website across the three consultation periods was in the event much higher, at 92%. This approach therefore provided significant resource savings for the Commission, drastically reducing the amount of time needed to be spent in simply sorting responses, thereby allowing us to dedicate more time to the core role of actually assessing the strength of the arguments put forward. The very high take-up rate also suggests that the public found it more convenient and at least relatively easy to use, compared with either email or physical mail. Technological change is rapid, but our working assumption would be that a similar system could very usefully be deployed in future reviews.
53. Similarly, online and social media advertising seemed to be particularly effective in promoting awareness of the review and consultation, producing a relatively good return for the budget invested when compared with general public sector advertising. The evidence we have received from evaluating the success of our communications strategy thus far leads us to conclude that online and social media advertising should be the focus of our awareness-raising strategy in future reviews.
54. Conversely, in both the 2013 Review and the 2018 Review, significant expense was attributable to the printing and delivery to hundreds of public places of deposit across England of copies of the report and maps containing proposals at both initial and revised stages. However, feedback from

the places of deposit indicates that these hard copies were rarely — and in many cases never — actually viewed. This raises a legitimate question as to whether a continued statutory requirement to provide a hard copy of our proposals in every impacted constituency is the best use of significant sums of public money in the digital age, even if the environmental consequences of their printing and distribution are discounted.

### **Difficulty of creating a consistent and high-quality sub-ward layer of electoral boundary data**

55. As mentioned previously, in preparing for the 2018 Review, we worked with local electoral registration officers and Ordnance Survey to establish a layer of mapping data to illustrate polling district boundary lines across England, which could be easily used to assess the impact of splitting a ward in any instance where that might be a possibility we were considering. Given the different systems used by local authorities to record this information — and the varying levels of their responsiveness to the initiative — this proved to be a lengthy and onerous process. The dataset has proven useful during the 2018 Review, but is merely a snapshot of the polling district boundaries as they were in May 2015, and therefore cannot be re-used in future reviews. Although there is currently a statutory requirement for local authorities to regularly review their polling districts, and publish the results of those reviews, there is no requirement for that information to be provided to us, let alone in any standardised manner. Accordingly, in the absence of such a requirement, it will be necessary to consider the relative value of such an exercise in preparation for the next review.

### **Attendance at public hearings**

56. We do not take a particular position on the merits of having public hearings, and we are aware that the matter was the subject of debate during the Parliamentary passage of the bill that became the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011. However, our experience is that the public's attendance at these hearings has been extremely variable, ranging from attendees in single figures and a handful of speakers across the two-day hearing, to attendance figures well into the hundreds, with full speaker lists. We believe, whatever the merits of holding public hearings, that the current statutory provisions for these hearings are problematic.
57. Currently, legislation requires public hearings to be held in weeks five to ten of the 12-week consultation period on our initial proposals. However, in practice, suitable venues need to be identified and booked well in advance of the start of that consultation period, i.e. before we receive any actual evidence of where the most controversy and/or splits of opinion are arising over our proposals. Accordingly, although we take into account other important factors (such as accessibility) when selecting where to hold public hearings, at the time we have to book those venues we can only ever be speculating about the level of interest likely to be generated in the proposals in a particular area. A more effective use of public money would seem to be to allow public hearings to be held at some point between the general consultation periods on initial and revised proposals. Crucially, this would allow us the opportunity to select locations on the basis of actual levels of interest in the proposals, as demonstrated through responses to the initial consultation. This might be combined with — or replace — the current secondary consultation period, which does not involve consultation on any new proposals of our own.

### **The role of the ‘assessors’**

58. Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) provides that the officers of the BCE shall include, as ‘assessors’, the Statistics Board (the governing body of the UK Statistics Authority: no particular post is specified) and the Director General of Ordnance Survey. Nothing is said about what the role of assessor is intended to entail. The final report of the last completed constituencies review, in 2006, identified that, although our secretariat staff work closely with officials in both the Office for National Statistics and Ordnance Survey at various points of a review, there was ‘very limited input that either assessor was able to make to the review’ and, accordingly, ‘serious consideration should be given to whether the role of the assessors should be retained’. We have to report that the 2018 Review saw no change to that position and there was no situation in which it was necessary to engage the assessors. The Commission’s view continues to be that there is no clarity about the need or purpose for such a statutory provision.

### **The ‘fallow’ years between reviews**

59. Under the current statutory provisions, a constituency review takes place every five years, but active review work must be completed within a much shorter period — a little longer than two and a half years. With little more than recording and monitoring of annual electorates in the other ‘fallow’ two and a half years, we currently experience the loss of the vast majority of our experienced secretariat staff during this period, and then need to go through a recruitment and technical training process for new staff as a new review begins, all of which involves a cost in terms of both recruitment and loss of expertise.
60. We believe that a preferable approach would be to allow a review to be conducted across a full five-year period, i.e. as soon as one review concludes with a report, to immediately commence the next. This would allow us to retain invaluable staff expertise, knowledge and understanding from one review to the next, and remove the extreme peaks and troughs of workload from the current review cycle, without impacting on when and how frequently our final recommendations are produced.
61. An alternative solution would be to adopt a similar approach to that taken in both Scotland and Wales, where a single secretariat supports the separate commissions responsible for Parliamentary and local government boundary reviews. This allows a single small experienced team to deliver both Parliamentary and local government boundary reviews in each country (including for their devolved legislatures) in a planned programme that avoids the costly inefficiency of having to regularly lose experienced staff then later hire and retrain new staff. Clearly the size of both Parliamentary and local government review work in England is significantly larger, but we believe that the commensurately larger resources available for the tasks in England — and the increased flexibility that these allow for — should mean that the principle of delivering reviews using a unified secretariat warrants serious consideration. This has proved difficult to achieve in practice, not least due to the differing sponsorship arrangements for what is similar work: we address this issue in the following paragraphs.

### **Sponsorship of the Parliamentary Boundary Commissions**

62. The Parliamentary Boundary Commissions as independent advisory non-departmental public bodies are nonetheless sponsored by UK Government departments, i.e. the members (except

the Speaker of the Commons as ex officio Chair) are appointed by a Government Minister; our budgets are set and monitored by a Government department; and in England all administrative services (including all the secretariat staff) are provided by that department. Given the importance of our work being — and being seen to be — independent from Government influence, this governance arrangement unfortunately reinforces the common misunderstanding by the public — and frequently by the media — that we and our work are a product of ‘the Government’. It is important that we state very clearly that at no time during the current review (and to the best of our knowledge in past reviews) has there been any political pressure from the Government in relation to our substantive work. However, the sponsor arrangements are not easily understood more generally. These can lead to some tensions, particularly around financial requirements where, regardless of the sponsor department, there is a responsibility on that department to control public spending and to allocate expenditure, having regard to the often conflicting priorities the department is called upon to manage. Again it is important for us to state that at no time during the current review do we feel our work has been anything other than adequately funded: our concern is solely about the perception of our independence from the Government in that context.

63. At the same time, the legislation states that our final recommendations are handed to Government, and states also that those recommendations must be laid before Parliament in the first instance without amendment by the Government. This underlines the independence and integrity of our work. It does, however, mean that the role of the Government is in reality that of an intermediary adding no value — but most likely more time — to the process. By contrast, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) — undertaking work that is in national terms politically less sensitive — is sponsored directly by Parliament, with no Government intermediary: it agrees its budget with, and is accountable to, the Speaker’s Committee in the House of Commons, through which it also lays its statutory instruments to make new local government boundaries. It seems to us contradictory that while the body responsible for local government boundaries reports directly to Parliament, the bodies responsible for Parliament’s own constituency boundaries do not have such a direct line of reporting and accountability. The potential merging of the BCE secretariat and that of the LGBCE would prospectively allow easy adoption of the latter’s established mechanisms for direct accountability to Parliament and establish a single independent funding stream for both areas of activity.

### **Timely refreshing of constituencies**

64. The current constituencies were brought into force at the General Election in 2010, but were for most practical purposes the product of the last completed general review, the electorate data for which was set at the beginning of that review, in 2000. If the recommendations set out later in this report are approved by Parliament within a timely period, then by virtue of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 we would expect the new constituencies to be used in the next scheduled General Election in May 2022. There is, of course, no guarantee that our recommendations will be adopted, and at the time of writing this report a Private Member’s Bill (affecting the work of the Commission) had passed second reading in the House of Commons. It is no part of our role to predict the progress or otherwise of this bill, but we do recognise that if it were to be enacted without amendment it would have the effect of making the 2018 Review redundant, and requiring us to immediately start a new review, to report by October 2020. We have already indicated in our January 2018 evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee that, in

the context of the delivery of a review in England, such a timetable would be almost impossible to meet without significant amendment to the current consultation stages.

65. We need to be clear that the parameters that govern our work (particularly the key issues of the total number of constituencies, the permitted tolerance from the electoral quota and the calculation of that quota) are properly set by Parliament and subsequently set out in statute. We will continue to offer our advice on the practical application of those criteria in the context of our work, when that advice is sought.
66. However, we do feel it appropriate to draw attention to one important effect that the delayed implementation of reviews has on both our current and future work. The boundary commissions were established as independent bodies 'to keep constituencies under review'. The role is, however, not only to ensure that constituencies are reviewed to prevent them becoming excessively imbalanced, but also to make sure that such reviews are conducted with regularity and reasonable frequency. Although Parliament has changed the permitted frequency of reviews over the years (fluctuating between prioritisation of either prevention of electorate drift, or stability of constituencies), the 12 years that will have passed between the 2006 conclusion of the last completed review (for the most part based on 2000 electoral statistics) and the submission of this report already equals the maximum period that Parliament has previously envisaged should pass between constituencies being reviewed since permanent commissions were first established in 1944.
67. Nor can it be said that this is because we have enjoyed a period of electoral stability. Statistically, constituencies have continued to drift further into imbalance since the 2010 General Election. Of the 533 constituencies in England in use since the 2010 election, the number that have an electorate within 5% of the mean average has fallen from 196 in 2010 to 174 in 2018 (a reduction of 11%). Nor should it be assumed that this could be fully addressed by adopting a wider tolerance. The application of a 10% tolerance from the mean average still sees a 2% fall in the number meeting the criteria, from 357 constituencies in 2010 to 351 in 2018. The purpose of including this section in our report is not to involve the Commission in matters that are properly the preserve of Parliament, but simply to illustrate the effect that the failure to agree upon a single set of rules — and to give effect to a review properly carried out under those rules — is likely to have on electoral equality. We hope that the current review we have undertaken and detailed in this report will command support. We believe that, even if there remain reservations about some of the statutory criteria established for its conduct, it will provide a better base from which to consider any future reviews, whether those rules remain as presently enacted or as further amended by Parliament in statute.



## Final recommendations

68. Our final recommendations are set out in a report of three volumes. This volume, containing the previous introductory chapter and the following commentary on how we have reached our final recommendations, should be considered alongside Volume two: Constituency names, designations and composition, and Volume three: Maps. The remainder of this volume sets out, by each administrative region in England, our final recommendations for new constituency boundaries, and how we arrived at them.
69. As we point out in the previous chapter, the new rules under which this review has taken place, combined with the amount of changes within the electorate since the last time a constituency review was implemented, mean that significant change to the existing pattern of boundaries is inevitable. In fact, our final recommendations result in only 80 of the existing 533 constituencies in England remaining completely unchanged. The scale of change in each region is set out in the below table.

Region	Number of recommended constituencies unchanged from existing	%
East Midlands	8	17%
Eastern	6	10%
London	6	8%
North East	3	10%
North West	13	17%
South East	21	25%
South West	10	18%
West Midlands	5	8%
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	15%
<b>Total England</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>15%</b>





# Eastern

70. The Eastern region currently has 58 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 20 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 27 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of 11 constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by one from 58 to 57.
71. The Eastern region comprises the counties of Bedfordshire (comprising the unitary authorities of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton), Cambridgeshire (including the City of Peterborough), Essex (including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock), Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
72. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the Eastern region — Sarah Hamilton and Laura Jane Smallwood — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
  - Chelmsford: 31 October–1 November 2016
  - Norwich: 3–4 November 2016
  - Luton: 7–8 November 2016
  - Cambridge: 10–11 November 2016.

## Sub-division of the region

73. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the Eastern region of 4,242,266 results in it being entitled to 57 constituencies, a reduction of one. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
74. We noted that Cambridgeshire's electorate (which includes the unitary authority of Peterborough) of 554,887 results in an entitlement of 7.42 constituencies. However, it would be impossible to allocate seven constituencies to the sub-region that all fell within the permitted electorate range. The county therefore needed to be grouped with a neighbouring county. The electorate of Norfolk at 645,761 results in an entitlement of 8.64 constituencies. If we allocated nine constituencies, the average constituency electorate in Norfolk would be just 720 electors within the permitted electorate range and it would be very challenging to create constituencies, using whole wards, that all fell within the permitted electorate range while respecting local ties. We therefore decided to group Cambridgeshire with Norfolk for the purpose of creating constituencies.
75. The electorate of Hertfordshire is 801,230, which results in an entitlement of 10.72 constituencies. Hertfordshire could be allocated 11 whole constituencies, but, with a low average electorate, to do so would be challenging without dividing towns between constituencies. We noted that both Bedfordshire and Essex have electorates that come close to allowing for the allocation of a whole number of constituencies to each. We considered that there would be no practical benefit to include either of these counties in a sub-region with Hertfordshire and therefore proposed that Hertfordshire should be included in a sub-region with Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

76. The electorate of the ceremonial county of Bedfordshire (comprising the unitary authorities of Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire) has an electorate of 439,574, which results in an entitlement of 5.88 constituencies. We therefore proposed to treat the county separately and allocate six constituencies. The county of Essex (which includes the boroughs of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) has an electorate of 1,274,597, which results in an entitlement of almost exactly 17 constituencies (17.05). We therefore decided to treat Essex on its own and allocate 17 whole constituencies, a reduction of one. This would therefore mean that there would have to be a significant degree of change in the county. The county of Suffolk has an electorate of 526,217, which results in an entitlement of 7.04 constituencies. We therefore proposed to treat Suffolk on its own and to allocate seven constituencies to the county.
77. There was some support for the use of the sub-regions outlined above during the consultation on the initial proposals. There was also some support for the grouping of Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk. However, we did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions, particularly with regard to the inevitable crossing of the county boundary between Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. Among the counter-proposals aiming to address this issue was one that had wide-ranging implications for the sub-regions we had proposed. The alternative arrangements suggested:
- a sub-region which comprised Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Norfolk
  - a sub-region which comprised Suffolk on its own.
78. Another counter-proposal suggested that Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk should be grouped together as a sub-region, and a further counter-proposal suggested a constituency that crossed the Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire county boundaries.
79. We also received proposals that suggested crossing the regional boundary between the Eastern region and both the East Midlands and South East regions, with cross-regional constituencies that would include parts of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. In formulating our revised proposals we considered that we had not received any compelling or persuasive evidence to lead us to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries, or to propose alternative sub-regions. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on the same sub-regions as those of our initial proposals.
80. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we did not receive any new evidence that would justify either the crossing of the Eastern regional boundary, or the use of alternative sub-regions. Therefore, the sub-regions we are basing our recommendations on are:
- Bedfordshire
  - Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Norfolk
  - Essex
  - Suffolk.

## **Bedfordshire**

### **Initial proposals**

81. Of the six existing constituencies in this sub-region, only one (South West Bedfordshire) has an electorate that is within the permitted electorate range. In order that each constituency in the county was within the permitted electorate range, it was not possible to retain the South West Bedfordshire constituency without change. Therefore, our initial proposals for Bedfordshire were for a new pattern of constituencies.
82. Under our initial proposals we included the Borough of Bedford ward of Eastcotts in the Mid Bedfordshire constituency. This change, and local government boundary changes to the Borough of Bedford wards of Kempston Rural, Clapham, and Great Barford, and the Central Bedfordshire Council wards of Arlesey, and Northill, brought the electorate of the North East Bedfordshire constituency within the permitted electorate range.
83. To bring the Mid Bedfordshire constituency within the permitted electorate range, we included the Central Bedfordshire Council wards of Aspley and Woburn, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay in the South West Bedfordshire constituency. Local government boundary changes to the Central Bedfordshire ward of Caddington, which we proposed be wholly in the Luton South constituency, still did not bring the electorate of the South West Bedfordshire constituency within the permitted electorate range. We therefore included the Central Bedfordshire Council wards of Tithe Farm, Parkside, and Houghton Hall (which comprise the town of Houghton Regis) in a Luton North and Houghton constituency.
84. The boundary changes to the Elstow and Stewartby, Goldington, and also to the Kempston Rural wards (following local government boundary reviews) meant that the Bedford constituency was changed only by the reconfiguration of these wards.
85. We proposed that the Borough of Luton ward of Barnfield should be included in the Luton South constituency, rather than in Luton North, so that both Luton constituencies would have electorates within the permitted range. As a result of our proposals in Luton and the surrounding areas, the Central Bedfordshire Council wards that comprise the town of Dunstable were included in our proposed South West Bedfordshire constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

86. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, there was support for our proposal to consider Bedfordshire as a sub-region in its own right, although this was not unanimous. As previously mentioned, we received a counter-proposal that suggested crossing the Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire county boundary. However, we did not consider that there was sufficiently good reason for this and we rejected this proposal.
87. We received few representations with regard to the North East Bedfordshire constituency, although there was some objection to the consequent inclusion of the towns of Stotfold and Arlesey in different constituencies.
88. Our initial proposals to include the two Borough of Bedford wards of Elstow and Stewartby, and Kempston Rural in (respectively) the Bedford and Mid Bedfordshire constituencies generated a number of representations, which appeared to be evenly divided between support and opposition.

Those opposing our proposals cited the connections between the Kempston Rural ward — and in particular the area around Great Denham — with Bedford and the four other Kempston wards that we had included in the Bedford constituency, as well as the physical separation of the Elstow and Stewartby ward from Bedford. If the Kempston Rural ward were to be included in Bedford, and the Elstow and Stewartby ward in Mid Bedfordshire, it would be necessary to include another ward in Mid Bedfordshire to bring it within the permitted electorate range. Some representations suggested that the Central Bedfordshire ward of Barton-le-Clay was a suitable ward for inclusion in the constituency, noting the ward's links with the Flitwick and Shillington areas. However, there was also support for the inclusion of the Aspley and Woburn ward in the Mid Bedfordshire constituency.

89. Our proposals for the two Luton constituencies also elicited both support and objection. The inclusion of the town of Houghton Regis in the Luton North constituency was welcomed by some who cited links between the two towns. Some thought that our proposals meant that neither the town of Dunstable nor the parish of Houghton Regis were divided, with Dunstable included in the South West Bedfordshire constituency. However, there was also significant opposition to this. Many respondents from Houghton Regis drew attention to the town's links with Dunstable, rather than with Luton, and there was opposition to the inclusion of the Caddington ward in the Luton South constituency. Very little comment was received about the South West Bedfordshire constituency, although there was support for the continued inclusion of the towns of Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard.

### **Revised proposals**

90. Although there was some limited opposition to the inclusion of the town of Stotfold in the North East Bedfordshire constituency, there was also some support. We therefore did not consider that there were sufficient grounds to amend this constituency in our revised proposals.
91. In formulating our revised proposals we noted that our proposed inclusion of the Kempston Rural ward in the Bedford constituency, and the Elstow and Stewartby ward in the Mid Bedfordshire constituency had divided opinion. The evidence regarding the two wards was finely balanced. However, we were persuaded by the evidence that the Kempston Rural ward, and in particular the Great Denham area of the ward, had strong links with the town of Bedford. We noted that including the ward in the Bedford constituency would mean that all five Kempston wards would be in the same constituency. We did consider that there was a case for the inclusion of the Elstow and Stewartby ward in the Bedford constituency, but we considered that the evidence regarding Kempston Rural was more persuasive. We therefore revised our proposals for the Bedford constituency.
92. The transfer of these two wards between the Bedford and Mid Bedfordshire constituencies would mean that Mid Bedfordshire would fall outside the permitted electorate range. We therefore included the Barton-le-Clay ward in our revised Mid Bedfordshire constituency from the existing South West Bedfordshire constituency. We noted evidence drawing our attention to the links of the ward with Flitwick and Shillington. No revisions were made to the South West Bedfordshire constituency, apart from the move of the Barton-le-Clay ward to Mid Bedfordshire.
93. There was both support for and opposition to our proposed Luton North and Houghton, and Luton South constituencies. Although we noted evidence for the town of Houghton Regis to be included in a constituency with Dunstable, this would inevitably lead to the division of Dunstable

between constituencies. We also noted the links of Houghton Regis to Luton. We understood the opposition to the inclusion of the Caddington ward in the Luton South constituency, particularly in light of its large geographical size following local ward boundary changes. However, we considered that our initial proposals for both Luton constituencies were logical and resulted in minimal change across Bedfordshire. We therefore made no revision to the boundaries of the Luton North and Houghton, and Luton South constituencies. However, we did agree with the suggestion that Luton North and Houghton Regis was a more accurate description for the constituency, and we therefore renamed the constituency.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

94. The responses to our revised proposals in Bedfordshire were mostly centred on the three areas that had been contentious in the previous two public consultations.
95. There continued to be objection from Houghton Regis regarding the town's inclusion in the Luton North and Houghton Regis constituency. The objections continued to draw attention to the links of the town with the town of Dunstable, but we did not consider that any significant new evidence had been presented. Similarly, we did not consider that any new evidence had been presented with regard to the inclusion of the Caddington ward in the Luton South constituency (where many of the respondents came from the parish of Studham in the south west of the ward).
96. There continued to be divided opinions as to in which constituency the Kempston Rural, and Elstow and Stewartby wards should be included, although it was drawn to our attention that the area of the Elstow and Stewartby ward to the north of the A421(T) road was in effect part of Bedford.

### **Final recommendations**

97. Although there remained some opposition to our revised proposals in Bedfordshire — particularly with regard to the Kempston Rural, Elstow and Stewartby, and Caddington wards — there was also a degree of support. We did not consider that any significant new evidence had been submitted that would lead us to further amend our revised proposals in Bedfordshire. We also did not consider that any of the alternatives suggested for the names of constituencies were appropriate, particularly where the existing constituency had not been subject to much change.
98. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Bedford, Luton North and Houghton Regis, Luton South, Mid Bedfordshire, North East Bedfordshire, and South West Bedfordshire. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Norfolk**

### **Initial proposals**

99. Of the 27 existing constituencies in this sub-region, seven are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to retain only one existing constituency — Hitchin and Harpenden — unchanged, in order that we could formulate constituencies elsewhere that were within the permitted electorate range.

100. In Cambridgeshire, we included the District of South Cambridgeshire ward of Milton, together with the Queen Edith's ward in our proposed Cambridge constituency. To reduce the high electorate of the existing North West Cambridgeshire constituency, we included the District of Huntingdonshire ward of Earith in our proposed South East Cambridgeshire constituency. We included the City of Peterborough ward of Fletton and Woodston in the Peterborough constituency. We had considered including the City of Peterborough ward of Stanground Central in the Peterborough constituency, rather than the Newborough, and Eye and Thorney wards, but noted that this resulted in unnecessary changes and the splitting of the community of Stanground between constituencies.
101. We proposed that the two District of South Cambridgeshire wards of Fulbourn and Linton be included in our proposed South Cambridgeshire constituency, in order to bring the electorate of the existing North East Cambridgeshire constituency (81,779) within the permitted electorate range. The District of Huntingdonshire ward of Gransden and The Offords was also included in the South Cambridgeshire constituency in order to reduce the high electorate of the Huntingdon constituency (81,303) and bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range.
102. We proposed the inclusion of the three District of South Cambridgeshire wards of Bassingbourn, Melbourn, and The Mordens in the cross-county boundary North East Hertfordshire constituency, noting good transport links across the county boundaries. We had proposed this cross-county boundary constituency because the constituencies in Cambridgeshire had such large electorates that it was not possible to construct seven constituencies that were wholly contained within the county. We also proposed another cross-county boundary constituency between Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, with the inclusion of the two District of East Cambridgeshire wards of Littleport East and Littleport West in our proposed South West Norfolk constituency.
103. In Hertfordshire, we included the District of East Hertfordshire wards of Walkern and Watton-at-Stone in our proposed Stevenage constituency, and two further District of East Hertfordshire wards (Hertford Rural North and Hertford Rural South) in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range.
104. There had been some changes to local government ward boundaries in the south of Hertfordshire around the Oxhey Hall & Hayling, South Oxhey, and Carpenders Park wards. As the electorate of the existing Watford constituency was now almost 82,000, change to the constituency and the surrounding constituencies was inevitable. We included the District of Three Rivers ward of South Oxhey in the Watford constituency to compensate for the inclusion of the Borough of Dacorum ward of Ashridge in our proposed South West Hertfordshire constituency. The divided District of Three Rivers ward of Gade Valley was included in the Hemel Hempstead constituency. The District of Three Rivers wards of Leavesden, and Abbots Langley & Bedmond (which was divided between constituencies) were included in our proposed St Albans constituency from the existing Watford constituency. The Carpenders Park ward was included in our proposed Hertsmere constituency.
105. In order to bring the electorate of the Broxbourne constituency within the permitted electorate range we included the District of East Hertfordshire ward of Great Amwell from the existing Hertford and Stortford constituency, making no further changes to Hertford and Stortford. We decided against the inclusion of the Borough of Hertsmere ward of Potters Bar Oakmere in

the Broxbourne constituency as we considered that this would divide the town of Potters Bar between constituencies.

106. In Norfolk, in order to bring the Great Yarmouth constituency within the permitted electorate range, we included the District of South Norfolk ward of Thurlton from the existing South Norfolk constituency. To compensate, our proposed South Norfolk constituency included the wards that comprise and surround the town of Wymondham (Northfields, Rustens, Abbey, Town, and Cromwells). The inclusion of the Wymondham wards in the South Norfolk constituency meant that further revisions to some of the constituencies in Norfolk were required. Therefore, we suggested that the South Norfolk district wards of Cringleford and Old Costessey be included in our proposed Norwich South constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the City of Norwich ward of Wensum in Norwich North, rather than in Norwich South, where it is currently located.
107. In order to bring the North Norfolk constituency within the permitted electorate range, we included the District of Broadland ward of Aylsham. This led to the Broadland constituency falling outside the permitted electorate range, so we included the District of North Norfolk ward of Briston, in addition to the District of Breckland ward of Hermitage from the existing Mid Norfolk constituency. Following these changes, and due to the inclusion of the Wymondham wards in the South Norfolk constituency, we included in the Mid Norfolk constituency the District of Breckland wards of Harling & Heathlands, and Guiltcross. Further changes were made to the Mid Norfolk constituency to take into account changes made to ward boundaries following local government boundary reviews which affected the Launditch, Ashill, All Saints & Wayland, and The Buckenham & Banham wards.
108. As mentioned above, we decided to include the District of East Cambridgeshire wards of Littleport East and Littleport West in the cross-county boundary South West Norfolk constituency. In order to bring the electorate of the North West Norfolk constituency within the permitted range, we included the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk ward of Walton.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

109. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposals for Peterborough were largely supported. We also heard support at the public hearing in Norwich for the inclusion of the Fletton and Woodston ward in Peterborough. However, we received representations suggesting the inclusion of the Stanground Central and Stanground East wards in the Peterborough constituency with the Newborough ward being included in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency. Although not objecting specifically to the composition of the Huntingdon constituency, a large number of representations suggested that the town of St Neots should be included in the name as this was now the largest town in the constituency.
110. There was support for the inclusion of the Queen Edith's ward in our proposed Cambridge constituency. There was also some support for the inclusion of the Milton ward in the Cambridge constituency, which contained the University of Cambridge Science Park. However, there was also considerable opposition to this, with a campaign and counter-proposals suggesting that the ward should remain in the South East Cambridgeshire constituency. This would result in the South East Cambridgeshire constituency being outside the permitted electorate range. Therefore, there were suggestions that the South Cambridgeshire district wards of Teversham and Fulbourn, which, it was argued, shared close ties, should be transferred from South East Cambridgeshire to the South Cambridgeshire constituency.



111. There was little support for our cross-county boundary constituency of North East Hertfordshire, and considerable opposition to the three District of South Cambridgeshire wards of Bassingbourn, Melbourn and The Mordens being included in this constituency. There was a campaign to retain the Melbourn ward in South Cambridgeshire and a well-supported counter-proposal that retained the three wards in South Cambridgeshire, although this had considerable knock-on effects on a number of other constituencies in the region, with the result that only Suffolk would be considered as a sub-region in its own right. It was noted that there was no support from the constituencies that would be affected if this counter-proposal were to be accepted. In addition to the opposition regarding these three wards, we also received a significant number of representations that suggested that the Meldreth ward had very close links with the Melbourn ward — with both wards sharing many amenities such as schools, the railway station, health provision and churches — and that the Meldreth and Melbourn wards should be contained within the same constituency.
112. We received few representations for the constituencies of Broxbourne, Hertford and Stortford, Hitchin and Harpenden, Stevenage, and Welwyn Hatfield. There were limited calls to split the Borough of Dacorum ward of Bovingdon, Flaunden and Chipperfield in order to retain the Ashridge ward in the Hemel Hempstead constituency, to split the District of North Hertfordshire ward of Chesfield, and to split the District of Welwyn Hatfield ward of Hatfield East, the latter to avoid creating a cross-county boundary constituency. However, there was also a representation that four further South Cambridgeshire wards should be included in the North East Hertfordshire constituency. We received a representation that proposed changing the unaltered Hitchin and Harpenden constituency by including the City of St Albans wards of Sandridge and Redbourn in the St Albans constituency.
113. There was considerable opposition to our initial proposals in the south of Hertfordshire around Watford, with calls for the District of Three Rivers ward of South Oxhey ward to remain in the South West Hertfordshire constituency, rather than in Watford. There was also evidence calling for the District of Three Rivers wards of Abbots Langley & Bedmond, Gade Valley, and Leavesden to be contained within one constituency. However, there was support for the inclusion of the South Oxhey ward in the Watford constituency, which, it was claimed, was part of Watford Rural parish. There was significant opposition to and a well-supported campaign against our proposals to place the District of Three Rivers ward of Carpenders Park in the Hertsmere constituency, with respondents highlighting the ward's close links with Watford.
114. In Norfolk our proposals did not generate large numbers of representations, although there was some opposition and counter-proposals to our suggested constituencies. In North West Norfolk there was some support for the inclusion of the Borough of King's Lynn wards of Walpole and Walton in the constituency. Our proposals to include the Littleport East and Littleport West wards in the cross-county boundary constituency of South West Norfolk were mostly supported, although there were some calls for the retention of the wards in the North East Cambridgeshire constituency. Alternative counter-proposals suggested that other wards should be included in the cross-county boundary constituency in this area, but these resulted in considerable knock-on effects involving the composition of a number of constituencies.
115. There was a mix of support for and opposition to the inclusion of the District of South Norfolk ward of Thurlton in the Great Yarmouth constituency. We also received support for the inclusion of the District of Broadland ward of Aylsham in the North Norfolk constituency, but also objection, with concerns that this would make the Broadland constituency which was considered 'already

unusually long and thin', even more so. There was also opposition to the inclusion of the Briston ward in the Broadland constituency, rather than in North Norfolk.

116. In Norwich we received conflicting evidence concerning the inclusion of the District of South Norfolk wards of Cringleford and Old Costessey in the Norwich South constituency and the consequent inclusion of the Wensum ward in Norwich North, with calls also for the Broadland district wards of Drayton North, Drayton South, and Taverham to be included in the Norwich North constituency. Our initial proposals for the Mid Norfolk and South Norfolk constituencies did not elicit many representations, whether in support of, or objection to, our initial proposals.

### **Revised proposals**

117. In formulating our revised proposals in Cambridgeshire we noted a degree of support for some of our initial proposals. In light of this we decided to make no change to the North East Cambridgeshire, North West Cambridgeshire and Peterborough constituencies that we had initially proposed. We accepted the evidence about the continued growth of St Neots, and, while making no changes to the composition of the proposed Huntingdon constituency, we decided to rename the constituency Huntingdon and St Neots.
118. The inclusion of the Queen Edith's ward in the Cambridge constituency was well-supported, but the inclusion of the District of South Cambridgeshire ward of Milton in the Cambridge constituency was more contentious with both support for, and considerable opposition to the ward's inclusion in the constituency. Our assistant commissioners decided to visit the ward to observe for themselves its links to Cambridge. While they noted the University Science Park and considered that the ward was part of the northern overspill of Cambridge, they also considered that the ward had a somewhat separate village feel and recommended that the Milton ward should not be included in the Cambridge constituency but rather in South East Cambridgeshire, where it is currently located. We agreed with their recommendation and revised our proposals, which would mean that the Cambridge constituency boundaries would be coterminous with the Cambridge local authority boundaries.
119. Our assistant commissioners also visited the Teversham and Fulbourn wards. They considered that the evidence that both wards had a shared identity was not evident to them and noted that both wards had a separate village identity. However, if the Milton ward were to be retained in the South East Cambridgeshire constituency, it would be necessary to reduce the electorate of the constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. Our assistant commissioners therefore recommended to us that the Teversham ward be reunited with Fulbourn in the South Cambridgeshire constituency. We accepted their recommendations and accordingly revised our proposals for the South Cambridgeshire and South East Cambridgeshire constituencies.
120. The inclusion of the Bassingbourn, Melbourn, and The Moderns wards in the cross-county boundary constituency of North East Hertfordshire had been vigorously opposed by many respondents. We had noted the consultation evidence that had emerged during the consultation stages that the Meldreth ward shared many community links with the Melbourn ward and that both should be included in the same constituency.
121. Our assistant commissioners visited each of the wards in order to observe for themselves the links on the ground. It was their view that there were links between the three wards we had proposed be in the North East Hertfordshire constituency and that they all, to some extent, looked

towards the nearby town of Royston. They also visited the Meldreth ward in order to observe that ward's links with Melbourn and firmly agreed with the evidence presented that both wards were very closely linked and that they should be included in the same constituency. However, it would not be possible to retain the Melbourn ward in a Cambridgeshire constituency without very considerable disruption elsewhere in the region. Our assistant commissioners therefore considered that the three South Cambridgeshire wards, and the Meldreth ward, should all be included in the cross-county boundary constituency of North East Hertfordshire. We fully agreed with them. However, in order to recognise that the constituency did not just contain Hertfordshire wards, we proposed that Hertfordshire should not be included in the constituency name and decided to rename it Letchworth and Royston.

122. Very few representations were received for the constituencies of Broxbourne, Hertford and Stortford, Hitchin and Harpenden, Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, and South West Hertfordshire. We considered that evidence that had suggested the split of certain wards in Hertfordshire to be unpersuasive. We therefore decided to make no further change to these seven constituencies.
123. Elsewhere in Hertfordshire, there had been considerable opposition to our proposal to include the District of Three Rivers ward of Carpenders Park in the Hertsmere constituency with a well-supported campaign by local residents opposed to this proposal. There was also objection to (but some support for) the inclusion of the District of Three Rivers ward of South Oxhey in our proposed Watford constituency. Our options were somewhat limited, and our assistant commissioners decided to visit south Hertfordshire to see for themselves the local ties. They were persuaded that both the South Oxhey and Carpenders Park wards looked towards Watford and so should be included in the constituency. However, it was necessary to identify a ward that would have to be excluded from the Watford constituency.
124. The assistant commissioners visited the Borough of Watford ward of Woodside in the north of the constituency. Although they acknowledged that it was part of Watford, they considered it to be the best candidate for inclusion in another constituency, noting that the ward was separated from the rest of Watford by the A405. They recommended that the ward be located in the St Albans constituency, and in turn, that the St Albans ward of London Colney should be included in the Hertsmere constituency instead of Carpenders Park. Although we did not consider these proposals ideal, we accepted the evidence from our assistant commissioners, and from the written and oral representations, and revised the Hertsmere, Watford, and St Albans constituencies.
125. In Norfolk, our proposals had not generated a significant number of representations, although there were a number of counter-proposals. There was general support for the North West Norfolk constituency. There was also support for the cross-county boundary South West Norfolk constituency and the inclusion of the two Littleport wards from the District of East Cambridgeshire. However, we accepted the suggestion from our assistant commissioners to rename the constituency Thetford and Downham Market to reflect the largest settlements in the constituency, and the links of the Cambridgeshire wards to the town of Downham Market.
126. We noted both the opposition and some support for our proposals for the North Norfolk and Broadland constituencies, in particular with regard to the Aylsham and Briston wards, but did not consider that there was any significant new evidence that would lead us to revise our

proposals for these two constituencies. A number of representations were opposed to the inclusion of the Thurlton ward in the Great Yarmouth constituency, but we did not consider that the counter-proposals provided a better solution and we decided not to amend the Great Yarmouth constituency.

127. As mentioned above, in Norwich there was conflicting evidence concerning in which constituency the Old Costessey, Cringleford, and Wensum wards should be located. There was some support for maintaining both the two Costessey wards in Norwich South, although the evidence both supported and opposed the inclusion of the Wensum ward in Norwich North, with those opposing suggesting that the River Wensum had always been considered the boundary between the north and south of the City. This suggested that the Wensum ward should be in Norwich South. As it would have been necessary to include a ward from the District of Broadland in the Norwich North constituency if Wensum were to be included in Norwich South, and in view of the conflicting evidence, we decided that the Wensum ward was a suitable candidate for inclusion in Norwich North. We did not revise our proposals for the Norwich North and Norwich South constituencies.
128. There was both support for and opposition to the inclusion of the town of Wymondham in our proposed South Norfolk constituency — and it was noted that the settlement was the largest in the District of South Norfolk. We considered that the evidence received regarding the Mid Norfolk and South Norfolk constituencies was balanced and we proposed no revisions to these two constituencies.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

129. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we continued to receive support, but also some opposition to our proposed constituencies, in particular to the inclusion of the District of South Cambridgeshire wards in the cross-county boundary constituency of Letchworth and Royston, with the added inclusion of the Meldreth ward. However, the key counter-proposal, which had retained the wards in the South Cambridgeshire constituency, and which had been submitted in the public consultation on our initial proposals, had considerable knock-on effects throughout the region to the extent that, were it to be adopted, only Suffolk would remain as a stand-alone sub-region. Although the counter-proposal was well-supported, it did not provide any significant new evidence and we noted that no support for it was received from the other constituencies that would be affected.
130. Elsewhere in Cambridgeshire, there was support for our revised proposal to continue to include the District of South Cambridgeshire ward of Milton in the South East Cambridgeshire following a local campaign during the previous public consultation, but some objection with some representations calling for it to be once again included in the Cambridge constituency. However, there was no significant new evidence and this would mean that the Cambridge constituency would no longer be coterminous with the Cambridge local authority. Our revised proposals for the inclusion of the Teversham and Fulbourn wards in the South Cambridgeshire constituency elicited few comments.
131. Although the initial proposals for the Peterborough constituency were generally supported, leading us to make no revisions, there were some objections following publication of our revised proposals, with a number of representations calling for the more urban wards to the south of the River Nene (and, in particular, the Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville wards) being included

in the Peterborough constituency. It was inferred that these wards, although in the existing North West Cambridgeshire constituency, were an integral part of the City of Peterborough.

132. Similarly, although there had been some support for the inclusion of the East Cambridgeshire district wards of Littleport East and Littleport West in the cross-county boundary Thetford and Downham Market constituency, there was some objection following publication of our revised proposals. A counter-proposal suggested that, rather than including the Littleport wards in a cross-county boundary constituency, the two wards should continue to be included in the North East Cambridgeshire constituency. This representation further proposed that the District of Fenland ward of Roman Bank be included in the North West Norfolk constituency. This would result in a different crossing of the Cambridgeshire and Norfolk county boundaries and the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk wards of Priory and West Winch being included in the Thetford and Downham Market constituency.
133. In Norfolk, there remained some limited opposition to the inclusion of the Wensum ward in our proposed Norwich North constituency, with calls that it be included in Norwich South, with the Thorpe Hamlet ward being included in Norwich North instead, as it was claimed that the River Wensum had traditionally been seen as the divider between Norwich North and Norwich South. However, we considered that no new evidence was submitted in support of the opposition. Similarly, there remained some limited opposition to the inclusion of the District of Broadland ward of Aylsham in the North Norfolk constituency, and the North Norfolk wards of Astley and Briston in the Broadland constituency, but no significant new evidence.
134. In Hertfordshire, our revised proposals for Watford, Hertsmere and St Albans generated considerable opposition and campaigns. There were also objections at this stage to the inclusion of the District of Three Rivers ward of Leavesden in the St Albans constituency, as well as the Three Rivers district ward of Abbots Langley & Bedmond, although part of this ward is in the existing St Albans constituency. There was also a counter-proposal to split the Gade Valley ward between the St Albans and Hemel Hempstead constituencies. Many of the representations in this area called for a return to the initial proposals with regard to the Watford, Hertsmere and St Albans constituencies. We also received a counter-proposal that included both the Carpenders Park and Woodside wards in the Watford constituency, and the London Colney ward in the St Albans constituency, but this had consequential effects on a further four constituencies.
135. The inclusion of the District of East Hertfordshire ward of Great Amwell in the Broxbourne constituency had not been contentious following publication of our initial proposals, and had generated no discernible opposition. However, although we did not change our proposals for this ward in our revised proposals, there was now opposition to the ward's inclusion in Broxbourne with it being argued that there was no community of interest with the rest of the Broxbourne constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

136. Having considered the evidence received in response to our revised proposals, we were not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in the Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough), Hertfordshire and Norfolk sub-region. We were conscious of the considerable opposition to the inclusion of four South Cambridgeshire district wards in the cross-county boundary Letchworth and Royston constituency. However, the electorates of the existing Cambridgeshire constituencies were such that it would be impossible for us to construct

constituencies in Cambridgeshire within the permitted range without crossing the county boundary. The key counter-proposal in this area that retained the Bassingbourn, Melbourn and The Morderns wards in a wholly Cambridgeshire constituency had far-ranging consequences across many constituencies and we considered that such disruption across the region could not be justified. We also considered that the Meldreth ward does have very close links with the Melbourn ward, as confirmed by strong evidence and the observations of our assistant commissioners, and we are convinced that the ward should also be included in the Letchworth and Royston constituency.

137. Although we accept that the District of South Cambridgeshire ward of Milton does have some links with Cambridge (in particular the university), we were not persuaded by the evidence that the ward should be included in the Cambridge constituency. We noted the initial support for our proposals regarding the inclusion of the Littleport East and Littleport West wards in the cross-county South West Norfolk constituency. While acknowledging the later opposition to this, the alternative proposals had consequential effects on other constituencies, and we did not consider that they provided a better solution.
138. In Norfolk, we were not persuaded by the evidence that we should alter the boundaries of our proposed North Norfolk and Broadland constituencies, although we have renamed the Broadland constituency Broadland and Fakenham. This recognised that the broadlands themselves formed only part of the constituency in the east and that the constituency reflected the town of Fakenham in the west. With regard to the Wensum and Thorpe Hamlets wards, and into which Norwich constituency each should be located, we did not consider that any new and compelling evidence had been presented and we decided to make no change to our revised proposals for the two Norwich constituencies.
139. In Hertfordshire, we noted the strong opposition to the inclusion of the Borough of Watford ward of Woodside in the St Albans constituency, and the City of St Albans ward of London Colney in the Hertsmere constituency. This was a consequence of including the District of Three Rivers ward of Carpenders Park ward in the Watford constituency. We also noted the objections from the Three Rivers district ward of Leavesden about that ward's inclusion in the St Albans constituency. However, we considered that our options were limited and did not consider that sufficient evidence had been provided for us to reverse our revised proposals to include the Carpenders Park ward in the Watford constituency, in view of the very significant opposition that was received to our initial proposals to include the ward in the Hertsmere constituency, and our assistant commissioners' view that Carpenders Park was an extension of Watford. We considered the only other alternative would be to adopt a counter-proposal that had been submitted, but we considered that this had significant implications for the composition of other constituencies in Hertfordshire and did not consider that its adoption could be justified.
140. If we were to exclude the District of East Hertfordshire ward of Great Amwell from the Broxbourne constituency, Broxbourne's electorate would be outside the permitted electorate range. We did not consider that the objections that we received about the inclusion of the Great Amwell ward in Broxbourne were sufficiently compelling for us to alter our revised proposals, given the subsequent knock-on effects.
141. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Broadland and Fakenham, Broxbourne, Cambridge, Great Yarmouth, Hemel Hempstead, Hertford and Stortford, Hertsmere,

Hitchin and Harpenden, Huntingdon and St Neots, Letchworth and Royston, Mid Norfolk, North East Cambridgeshire, North Norfolk, North West Cambridgeshire, North West Norfolk, Norwich North, Norwich South, Peterborough, South Cambridgeshire, South East Cambridgeshire, South Norfolk, South West Hertfordshire, St Albans, Stevenage, Thetford and Downham Market, Watford, and Welwyn Hatfield. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## Essex

### Initial proposals

142. The electorate of the county of Essex (including the boroughs of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) is 1,274,597, which results in an entitlement of almost exactly 17 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate 17 constituencies to the area, a reduction of one. Seven constituencies have electorates within the permitted electorate range, and in order to accommodate change elsewhere, we have retained three of these constituencies unchanged (Chelmsford, Epping Forest, and Thurrock).
143. We proposed just one change to the Colchester constituency, with the inclusion of the Borough of Colchester ward of East Donyland. In order to bring the electorate of the Harlow constituency within the permitted electorate range, we included in Harlow the District of Epping Forest wards of North Weald Bassett, and Moreton and Fyfield from the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency. Although the Brentwood and Ongar constituency was within the permitted electorate range, we proposed considerable change to the constituency in order to address electorates that were outside the electorate range in surrounding constituencies. We included two Borough of Brentwood wards, from Brentwood and Ongar, in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency (Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon, and Warley) and included in Brentwood and Ongar four Borough of Chelmsford wards that are currently located in the Saffron Walden constituency. To compensate, we proposed the inclusion of four District of Braintree wards in the Saffron Walden constituency and a further three District of Braintree wards in the Braintree constituency from the existing Witham constituency.
144. We included the Borough of Basildon wards of Laindon Park, and Lee Chapel North in our proposed South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency and the three Borough of Basildon wards that comprise the town of Wickford in our proposed Basildon and Billericay constituency. The City of Chelmsford ward of South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting was also included in our proposed Basildon and Billericay constituency.
145. We included the two Borough of Basildon wards of Pitsea North West and Pitsea South East in the Castle Point constituency, and, in turn, two Borough of Castle Point wards of St. James and Victoria in the Southend West constituency. The District of Rochford ward of Ashingdon and Canewdon was included in our proposed Rochford and Southend East constituency. The considerable degree of change in south Essex was due to the fact that five existing constituencies in the area had electorates that are outside the permitted electorate range.
146. We proposed that the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency should be renamed Rayleigh and Woodham Ferrers to recognise that we had proposed that the town of Wickford should be contained within the Basildon and Billericay constituency. We also included in the constituency

four City of Chelmsford wards (including the town of Woodham Ferrers) and the Purleigh ward from the District of Maldon in the constituency. To compensate, we proposed the inclusion in the Maldon constituency 10 wards to the north and west: one from the City of Chelmsford, five from the District of Braintree, and four from the District of Maldon. As the constituency would now include nine wards from the existing Witham constituency, we proposed that the constituency be called Witham and Maldon.

147. Towards the coast, we made significant changes and included the towns of Harwich and Clacton-on-Sea in a Harwich and Clacton constituency. We also proposed that 13 wards from the Borough of Colchester and 10 wards from the District of Tendring be included in a North East Essex constituency that would completely surround the Colchester constituency. As a result, the whole of the Harwich and Clacton constituency is contained within the District of Tendring and the villages of Point Clear, St. Osyth, Seawick, and Jaywick would no longer be included in a constituency with Clacton-on-Sea.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

148. There was a considerable degree of support for our initial proposals in Essex, although inevitably some objection. There was significant opposition to our proposal to include the District of Tendring ward of Golf Green, which includes the coastal town of Jaywick, in the North East Essex constituency, with respondents citing the ward's links with Clacton-on-Sea and arguing that it should be located in the Harwich and Clacton constituency, with the Little Clacton and Weeley ward being included in the North East Essex constituency. Our proposals for the Colchester constituency were largely non-contentious, despite some concerns about it being wholly surrounded by the North East Essex constituency. Similarly, there were few representations concerning the Braintree and Saffron Walden constituencies.
149. In the west of the county of Essex, there was some limited objection to the separation of the District of Epping Forest ward of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing, from the Lower Nazeing and Roydon wards which we had included, respectively, in our proposed Epping Forest and Harlow constituencies.
150. In south Essex there was support for the unchanged Thurrock constituency, but considerable opposition elsewhere. There was strong opposition to our proposals to include the Borough of Brentwood wards of Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon, and Warley from the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency. Two campaigns highlighted the links of the two wards with Brentwood and pointed out that it appeared Brentwood station would no longer be in the Brentwood constituency. There were calls for the Borough of Basildon ward of St. Martin's to be included in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency instead of in Basildon and Billericay, as in our initial proposals.
151. There was also some opposition to the proposed Basildon and Billericay constituency, with a counter-proposal suggesting that a number of the wards that we had included in the Rayleigh and Woodham Ferrers constituency — the City of Chelmsford ward of Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon (included in our proposed Witham and Maldon constituency) and the Writtle ward (included in the Brentwood and Ongar constituency) — be included in a newly configured Billericay constituency. This would mean that the three wards comprising the town of Wickford would not be in the Billericay constituency. Instead, they would be in the Rayleigh and Woodham Ferrers constituency, which would otherwise be similar to the existing constituency. There had been some



support for our proposals for the inclusion of Wickford in a constituency with Billericay, although it was also noted that the town is currently in the same constituency as Rayleigh.

152. Our proposed Witham and Maldon constituency elicited little response, although we did receive a counter-proposal that suggested the inclusion of the Purleigh ward (from our proposed Rayleigh and Woodham Ferrers constituency), and the Boreham and The Leighs ward that we had included in our proposed Brentwood and Ongar constituency. As a result of this counter-proposal, the whole of the Maldon Council area would be included in a single constituency.
153. We received support for our initial proposals to make no change to the existing Chelmsford constituency, and very few representations regarding our proposed Rochford and Southend East constituency.
154. There was, however, considerable opposition to our proposed Castle Point and Southend West constituencies, where the existing Castle Point constituency was coterminous with the Borough of Castle Point. We had noted that our options in this area were limited by geography and we had included the two Castle Point wards of St. James and Victoria in the Southend West constituency as the best solution to bring the Southend West constituency within the permitted electorate range. The wards of Pitsea North West and Pitsea South East were included in the Castle Point constituency to compensate for the loss of the St. James and Victoria wards. Many of the respondents cited few links between Castle Point and Southend, and a large number observed that, under our proposals, the castle after which Castle Point had been named would no longer be included in the Castle Point constituency.

### **Revised proposals**

155. In formulating our revised proposals in Essex (including the boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea) we were cognisant of the degree of support for our initial proposals, although there continued to be some opposition and a number of counter-proposals were received, some with wide-ranging consequences. In response to the objections to the inclusion of the District of Tendring ward of Golf Green, which contains the town of Jaywick, in the North East Essex constituency, we amended our proposals to include the ward in the Harwich and Clacton constituency, with the consequential inclusion of the Little Clacton and Weeley ward in the North East Essex constituency.
156. As few representations were received concerning the Braintree, Saffron Walden, Harlow, Epping Forest, and Thurrock constituencies, the latter two being unchanged in our initial proposals, we decided to make no further changes to these constituencies. In our initial proposals, we had additionally included the Borough of Colchester ward of East Donyland in the existing Colchester constituency. Although there was some objection to the constituency being surrounded entirely by the North East Essex constituency, we proposed no further change to the constituency as part of our revised proposals.
157. There had been considerable objection to the Brentwood and Ongar, and South Basildon and East Thurrock constituencies that we had proposed as part of our initial proposals. Although the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency was within the permitted electorate range, we had altered the constituency to effect necessary change elsewhere and had included the Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon, and Warley wards in our proposed South Basildon and East Thurrock

constituency. In light of the evidence received about the links of these two wards with Brentwood, our assistant commissioners visited the area to observe these ties for themselves.

158. They were persuaded that the links of these two wards to Brentwood were strong, particularly in the case of Warley. However, to include the wards in Brentwood and Ongar would mean that additional wards would have to be included in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency in order to bring that constituency within the permitted electorate range. The assistant commissioners also visited the Borough of Basildon wards along the A127 and considered that the St. Martin's and Fryerns wards were very similar in nature, were both close to the centre of Basildon, and should be included in the South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency (from Basildon and Billericay). This would mean that a further ward would have to be included in the Basildon and Billericay constituency. While visiting the area, they considered that the Laindon Park ward, although lying to the south of the A127, was more rural in nature than the St. Martin's and Fryern wards and was further away from the centre of Basildon. They therefore recommended that the Laindon Park ward be included in the Basildon and Billericay constituency. This would also have the effect of allowing most of the town of Basildon to be included in a single constituency, and would allow the renaming of the constituencies as Basildon and East Thurrock, and Billericay.
159. Further consequential changes to the renamed Billericay constituency would be needed and we considered that the four wards we included in our proposed Rayleigh and Woodham Ferrers constituency, one ward from the proposed Witham and Maldon constituency, and the Writtle ward from the proposed Brentwood and Ongar constituency, should be included in the Billericay constituency. We excluded from the Billericay constituency the three wards containing the town of Wickford, which we proposed should be included in the Rayleigh and Woodham Ferrers constituency, and decided to rename it as Rayleigh and Wickford (the existing constituency name). We further included the Purleigh ward in the Witham and Maldon constituency.
160. Although there had been some support for our initial proposal to include Wickford in the Basildon and Billericay constituency, our revised proposals meant that the Rayleigh and Wickford constituency would be almost the same as the existing constituency, apart from the inclusion of the Ashingdon and Canewdon ward in Rochford and Southend East.
161. Our initial proposals for the Witham and Maldon constituency had attracted little response from local residents, although there was both support and objection. The changes we were proposing elsewhere would result in revisions to the Witham and Maldon constituency, but these amendments would have the benefit of containing the whole of the Maldon council area within the Witham and Maldon constituency. We therefore had revised our proposals for the Brentwood and Ongar, Basildon and East Thurrock, Billericay, Rayleigh and Wickham, and Witham and Maldon constituencies. We received support for making no change to the Chelmsford constituency in our initial proposals, and we decided to make no revisions to the constituency.
162. Our proposed Castle Point and Southend West constituencies had been vigorously opposed by Castle Point residents. Our assistant commissioners visited the area to observe the issues and local ties. Although they had sympathy with those who were opposed to the St. James and Victoria wards being included in the Southend West constituency — and the consequent inclusion of the Pitsea North West, and Pitsea South East wards in the Castle Point constituency — it was necessary to increase the electorate of the Southend West constituency to bring it within the

permitted electorate range. The geography of the area was such that the only solution that did not involve a substantial amount of disruption elsewhere in Essex was the inclusion of the St. James and Victoria wards in the Southend West constituency. We agreed with their assessment and made no change to the composition of the two constituencies, although we did decide to rename the constituency Southend West and Hadleigh, to reflect the two Castle Point wards that were included in the constituency.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

163. We received few representations with regard to Essex following the publication of our revised proposals. There was a considerable degree of support for a number of the constituencies we had proposed and for the revisions that we had made, particularly with regard to the Brentwood and Ongar constituency. The main area of objection continued to be the inclusion of the Pitsea North West and Pitsea South East wards in the Castle Point constituency, and the St. James and Victoria wards in the Southend West and Hadleigh constituency. Despite these continued objections, no significant new evidence was received nor viable counter-proposals submitted.
164. There was some very limited opposition to the inclusion of the District of Epping Forest wards of Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village, and Moreton and Fyfield in the Harlow constituency, with it being argued that these rural wards had little in common with Harlow. We received a counter-proposal to split the Silver End & Cressing ward between the Braintree, and Witham and Maldon constituencies. However, we had made no alterations concerning these wards in our revised proposals.

### **Final recommendations**

165. Having considered the evidence received, we were not persuaded to amend the boundaries or names of any of our proposed constituencies in Essex (including the boroughs of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock). There remained significant opposition to the inclusion of the Borough of Castle Point wards of St. James and Victoria in the Southend West and Hadleigh constituency, although we did not consider that any significant new evidence had been submitted. We considered that our options in this part of Essex were very limited and that our revised proposals were the best solution for the Castle Point, and Southend West and Hadleigh constituencies as disruption elsewhere was reduced. We did not consider that the evidence concerning the inclusion of the Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village, and Moreton and Fyfield wards in the Harlow constituency was sufficient for us to amend our proposals.
166. There was support for our revised proposals to return the Ingrave, Herongate and West Horndon, and Warley wards to the Brentwood and Ongar constituency, and our subsequent revisions to the Basildon and East Thurrock, Billericay, Rayleigh and Wickford, and Witham and Maldon constituencies did not prove to be contentious.
167. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Basildon and East Thurrock, Billericay, Braintree, Brentwood and Ongar, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Harwich and Clacton, North East Essex, Rayleigh and Wickford, Rochford and Southend East, Saffron Walden, Southend West and Hadleigh, Thurrock, and Witham and Maldon. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## Suffolk

### Initial proposals

168. Of the seven existing constituencies in Suffolk, we were able to leave four constituencies unchanged, apart from the realignment of ward and constituency boundaries following ward boundary reviews, as they were within the permitted electorate range. These are: Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Suffolk Coastal, Waveney, and West Suffolk.
169. In order to bring the Ipswich constituency within the permitted range we included the District of Babergh ward of Pinewood from the South Suffolk constituency. We considered that the Pinewood ward was part of Ipswich and that the A14 was a clear, identifiable boundary between the Ipswich and South Suffolk constituencies. To compensate for this change, and to bring the Bury St Edmunds constituency to within the permitted electorate range, we included the three District of Mid Suffolk wards of Rattlesden, Onehouse, and Ringshall in the South Suffolk constituency.

### Consultation on the initial proposals

170. We received a degree of support for our initial proposals throughout Suffolk. There was support for our Ipswich constituency, but some objection with a counter-proposal suggesting that the Castle Hill ward rather than the Pinewood ward should be included in the Ipswich constituency. This counter-proposal further suggested that the wards of Rattlesden and Onehouse could be retained in the Bury St Edmunds constituency (in which they are currently located) and that the wards of Ringshall and Needham Market should instead be included in the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency. This counter-proposal attracted some support and there were similar counter-proposals suggesting the inclusion of the Castle Hill ward in the Ipswich constituency rather than the Pinewood ward. Other counter-proposals suggested that all three wards of Castle Hill, Whitehouse, and Whitton should be kept together in the same constituency.
171. A further counter-proposal suggested that, in addition to retaining the three wards in Bury St Edmunds, the Pakenham ward should be included in the West Suffolk constituency.
172. We received relatively few representations regarding the other constituencies of South Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney.

### Revised proposals

173. In formulating our revised proposals we noted the general level of support for our proposals in Suffolk and we considered that any revisions would therefore be modest in nature.
174. We noted the support and the counter-proposals regarding which wards should be included in the Ipswich constituency. In order to observe for themselves, our assistant commissioners visited the wards of Pinewood, Castle Hill, Whitton and Whitehouse. They found that the Pinewood ward was clearly part of the Ipswich overspill, but it did have its own identity and, although separated from the rest of Suffolk by the A14, it was nevertheless a District of Babergh 'orphan ward'<sup>3</sup> in the Ipswich constituency. They considered that the Whitehouse ward is more urban when compared with the Pinewood ward. They noted that the street signs displayed the Ipswich coat of arms, signifying the close affiliation with the rest of Ipswich.

<sup>3</sup> 'Orphan ward' refers to a clear minority of wards (usually just one ward) from one local authority, in a constituency where the overwhelming majority of wards are from another local authority.

175. The assistant commissioners further observed that the Castle Hill ward was also an established urban area. They considered that there was little to differentiate the ward from the neighbouring Whitton ward, but they considered that Castle Hill was an integral part of Ipswich, being close to the town centre, with good road links. They considered Castle Hill to be the most suitable candidate for inclusion in the Ipswich constituency instead of the Pinewood ward. Moving just one ward would mean that the existing South Suffolk constituency could remain intact. We therefore revised our proposals and included the Castle Hill ward in the Ipswich constituency, and the Pinewood ward in the South Suffolk constituency (where it is currently located).
176. Our revised proposals also allowed for the retention of the Onehouse and Rattlesden wards in the Bury St Edmunds constituency, reflecting the strong ties the wards have with the town of Stowmarket. We also maintained the links between the Needham Market and Ringshall wards by including them in the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency. These proposals would result in an unchanged South Suffolk constituency and fewer changes to the existing Bury St Edmunds constituency.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

177. There was significant local support for our revised proposals to include the Castle Hill ward in the Ipswich constituency, rather than the Pinewood ward. However, this was not unanimous. One counter-proposal continued to call for the Pinewood ward to be included in the Ipswich constituency. However, the counter-proposal suggested that, if we retained the Pinewood ward in the South Suffolk constituency, then the Whitehouse ward, rather than the Castle Hill ward, would be the preferable ward to be included in the Ipswich constituency.
178. There were few representations with regard to the rest of the constituencies in Suffolk, although it was suggested that the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency should be renamed either Central Suffolk, or Mid Suffolk, as the constituency contained one fewer Ipswich ward.

### **Final recommendations**

179. In light of the strong support for the inclusion of the Castle Hill ward in the Ipswich constituency, we decided to make no further revision to the Ipswich constituency, and no changes to the composition of the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency.
180. Elsewhere in Suffolk, we considered that our revised proposals were a better solution than our initial proposals, particularly with regard to the retention of the Onehouse and Rattlesden wards in the Bury St Edmunds constituency, and the inclusion of the Needham Market and Ringshall wards in the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency, thereby resulting in an unchanged South Suffolk constituency and fewer changes to Bury St Edmunds. In view of the small number of representations with regard to the other constituencies in Suffolk, we made no further revisions.
181. We have decided to change the name of the Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency to Central Suffolk to recognise that the constituency now contained just two Borough of Ipswich wards, one fewer than the existing constituency.
182. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Bury St Edmunds, Central Suffolk, Ipswich, South Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal, Waveney, and West Suffolk. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## East Midlands

183. The East Midlands currently has 46 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 24 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 19 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of three constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by two, to 44.
184. The East Midlands comprises the counties of Derbyshire (including the City of Derby), Leicestershire (including the City of Leicester and County of Rutland), Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire (including the City of Nottingham), and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
185. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the East Midlands — Scott Handley and Ashraf Khan — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
- Derby: 27–28 October 2016
  - Northampton: 31 October–1 November 2016
  - Lincoln: 3–4 November 2016.

### Sub-division of the region

186. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the East Midlands of 3,275,046 results in it being entitled to 44 constituencies, a reduction of two. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be split across the region.
187. We noted that Lincolnshire's electorate of just over 521,000 results in an entitlement of 6.97 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate the county seven constituencies and treated it as a sub-region. Similarly, we noted that the City of Derby and Derbyshire have a combined electorate of 756,550, which results in an entitlement of 10.12 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate 10 constituencies to Derbyshire and Derby, a reduction of one, and treat it as a sub-region.
188. The combined electorate of Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham is just over 769,000, which results in the area being entitled to 10.29 constituencies, which would be a reduction of one. The combined electorate of Leicestershire, the City of Leicester and Rutland is nearly 735,000, resulting in an entitlement of 9.83 constituencies. In formulating our initial proposals we decided to continue to include Rutland in a constituency with parts of Leicestershire rather than include it in a constituency with parts of Northamptonshire.
189. The electorate of Northamptonshire is nearly 494,000, which results in an entitlement of 6.60 constituencies. We noted that this entitlement of constituencies meant that it was not possible to propose a sub-region consisting solely of Northamptonshire and that it would be necessary to propose a constituency that crossed county boundaries. Given the location of Northamptonshire in the southern part of the East Midlands region, we considered that it could only possibly

be linked with Leicestershire. We considered that the Nottinghamshire (including the City of Nottingham) entitlement of 10.29 constituencies may not allow for the best allocation of constituencies, and therefore proposed a sub-region of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire (including Rutland), and Northamptonshire. This sub-region was allocated 27 constituencies.

190. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during the consultation on the initial proposals. We did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions with alternative arrangements suggested as:
- a sub-region which comprised the areas of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Northamptonshire
  - a sub-region which comprised the areas of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire, and a further sub-region that comprised the areas of Northamptonshire and Rutland.
191. We also received proposals from some respondents that suggested crossing the regional boundary between Yorkshire and the Humber, and the East Midlands. These proposals largely focused on reconfiguring constituencies in the Grimsby area. We also received a proposal to cross the regional boundary between the South East and the East Midlands, in order to reconfigure constituencies in Milton Keynes.
192. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that compelling evidence had not been received to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries. We also considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose alternative sub-regions. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on the same sub-regions as those of our initial proposals.
193. In response to our revised proposals, we did not receive any further evidence that would justify crossing the regional boundary of the East Midlands, nor the use of alternative sub-regions. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:
- Lincolnshire
  - Derbyshire and Derby
  - Leicestershire, Leicester, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham, and Rutland.

## **Lincolnshire**

### **Initial proposals**

194. Of the seven existing constituencies in Lincolnshire, four are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to retain two existing constituencies: Gainsborough, and South Holland and The Deepings. Additionally, we proposed to retain the existing constituencies of Grantham and Stamford, and Louth and Horncastle, with minor modifications to reflect changes to local government ward boundaries.
195. The existing constituencies of Lincoln, and Boston and Skegness both fall below the permitted electorate range and the existing constituency of Sleaford and North Hykeham is above the permitted electorate range. As part of our initial proposals, we proposed that the five wards

comprising the town of North Hykeham and the Waddington West ward be included in the Lincoln constituency. We also proposed that the Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East ward be included in our proposed Sleaford constituency, and that the wards of Heckington Rural, and Kirkby la Thorpe and South Kyme be included in our proposed Boston and Skegness constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

196. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed constituencies of Gainsborough, Louth and Horncastle, Grantham and Stamford, South Holland and The Deepings, and Boston and Skegness were largely supported. The main focus of opposition was to our proposed Lincoln and Sleaford constituencies, with representations focusing on which wards should be included in the Lincoln constituency.
197. We received a number of alternatives to the proposed Lincoln and Sleaford constituencies including:
- that the Waddington West ward should be included in the Sleaford constituency due to links that this ward has with the Bracebridge Heath area
  - that the North Hykeham area be included in the Sleaford constituency, and the two wards of Waddington West, and Heighington and Washingborough be included in the Lincoln constituency.
198. These counter-proposals and our initial proposals were both supported and opposed by different respondents. Having considered the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners visited the Lincoln, and Sleaford and North Hykeham constituencies in order to observe the areas themselves, in relation to the arguments that had been made. Our conclusion, based on the advice provided by our assistant commissioners, was that the North Hykeham area had close links to Lincoln.

### **Revised proposals**

199. Our revised proposals for Lincolnshire were, therefore, identical to those put forward in our initial proposals, including the names of the seven constituencies.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

200. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we continued to receive support for our proposed constituencies in Lincolnshire, including support for our proposed Lincoln constituency.
201. We received some objection to the inclusion of the Kirkby la Thorpe and South Kyme, and Heckington Rural wards in the proposed Boston and Skegness constituency. These wards are currently in the existing Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency and some respondents expressed the view that the wards should remain there, due to their local council and health services being based in Sleaford. We note that making this change would require consequential changes to other constituencies in the sub-region, including those that are otherwise unchanged.
202. One respondent suggested that North Hykeham should not be included in the Lincoln constituency, but that if North Hykeham were to be included in the Lincoln constituency then the name of the constituency should reflect its inclusion.



## **Final recommendations**

203. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Lincolnshire. We do not consider that any further compelling or new evidence has been provided that might justify changing the constitution of our revised constituencies. We do, however, accept that the inclusion of North Hykeham with Lincoln in a constituency should be reflected in the constituency name, given that North Hykeham is part of a neighbouring local authority (North Kesteven), and makes up a significant part of the constituency. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Boston and Skegness, Gainsborough, Grantham and Stamford, Lincoln and North Hykeham, Louth and Horncastle, Sleaford, and South Holland and The Deepings. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Derbyshire and Derby**

### **Initial proposals**

204. Of the existing 11 constituencies in Derbyshire, three are currently within the permitted electorate range: Chesterfield, High Peak, and South Derbyshire. The other eight constituencies all fall below the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed that the High Peak constituency be retained completely unchanged. We proposed minor modifications to the Chesterfield constituency to include the Barrow Hill and New Whittington ward, and minor changes to the Erewash constituency to include the Ockbrook & Borrowash ward.

205. We proposed more significant changes to the other constituencies in Derbyshire. We proposed a Derbyshire Dales constituency, which included five wards from North East Derbyshire district, a Bolsover and Dronfield constituency, which included 11 wards from North East Derbyshire district, the Lowgates and Woodthorpe ward of Chesterfield borough, and 16 wards from Bolsover district. Our Alfreton and Clay Cross constituency included nine wards from North East Derbyshire district, seven from Amber Valley borough, and four from Bolsover district. To the south we proposed an Amber Valley constituency that included 13 wards from Amber Valley borough, two from Erewash borough and the Allestree ward from the City of Derby.

206. In the City of Derby, we proposed constituencies of Derby North and Derby South. The Derby North constituency consisted of eight wards of the City of Derby. The Derby South constituency comprised seven wards of the City of Derby and the Aston ward from South Derbyshire district. The remaining wards of South Derbyshire district formed our South Derbyshire constituency, in which we also included the City of Derby ward of Mickleover.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

207. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received some support for our proposed constituencies in Derbyshire. We received opposition to the initial proposals dividing North East Derbyshire district between three constituencies, and the division of Bolsover district between two constituencies. Respondents particularly opposed the division of the town of Dronfield between the Bolsover and Dronfield, and Derbyshire Dales constituencies. We received a number of counter-proposals that proposed a North East Derbyshire constituency that was coterminous with the district and therefore would not divide Dronfield between constituencies. This counter-proposal would require a series of modifications to neighbouring constituencies.

One respondent proposed a Bolsover constituency that included all wards from Bolsover district, the Lowgates and Woodthorpe ward from Chesterfield borough, and three wards from Amber Valley borough.

208. We also received different counter-proposals for our proposed Derbyshire Dales constituency. Some respondents considered that the Derbyshire Dales district wards of Bradwell, Hathersage and Eyam, and Tideswell should be included in the High Peak constituency. This was objected to by some respondents on the basis that the proposed High Peak constituency was unchanged and was coterminous with its local authority area. Other consequential changes were proposed for the Derbyshire Dales constituency. Some respondents considered that it should include the wards covering the town of Belper, whereas others suggested it should include the City of Derby ward of Allestree.
209. The proposed Derby North and Derby South constituencies were also objected to. Respondents considered that the names did not reflect the east and west configuration of the constituencies. Additionally, some respondents considered that the Derwent ward should be included in a Derby East constituency and the Sinfin ward in the Derby West constituency. Supporters of this counter-proposal considered that it united the Chaddesden community in the Derby East constituency. We also received objection to the inclusion of the South Derbyshire district ward of Aston in the proposed Derby South constituency. Respondents considered that the ward was rural in nature and separated from Derby by the A50. However, we did also receive some support for our proposed South Derbyshire constituency.

### **Revised proposals**

210. In light of the representations received, our assistant commissioners recommended that we modify our initial proposals for Derbyshire. We considered that the evidence demonstrating that Dronfield should not be divided between constituencies was persuasive, and as part of our revised proposals we proposed a North East Derbyshire constituency that was coterminous with the district. We also proposed a Bolsover constituency that contained all the wards from Bolsover district so that it would not be divided between constituencies, and were persuaded by the counter-proposal that it should also include three wards from Amber Valley borough.
211. We were not persuaded by evidence to modify the existing High Peak constituency. Therefore, in light of other changes, we considered alternative patterns of constituencies for Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley. Some respondents suggested that the City of Derby ward of Allestree should be included in the Derbyshire Dales constituency, whereas others proposed that the town of Belper should be included in the constituency. We noted that the latter counter-proposal would result in Amber Valley borough being divided between three constituencies.
212. Having considered the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners visited the constituencies in order to observe the areas themselves, in relation to the arguments that had been made. They observed that the Allestree ward was on the urban fringe of the City of Derby and that it had poor road links going west into the Derbyshire Dales constituency. They observed that Belper had good road links in all directions and noted its similarities to other mill towns located along the A6 and River Derwent. Our conclusion, based on the advice provided by our assistant commissioners was that the four wards comprising Belper be included in our Derbyshire Dales constituency and Allestree be included in our Amber Valley constituency under our revised proposal.

213. We considered the alternative proposals put forward in the City of Derby and decided to modify our initial proposals. We proposed Derby East and Derby West constituencies, with Derby East to include the Derwent ward which reflected the evidence received regarding the Chaddesden area, and our proposed Derby West constituency to include the Sinfin ward.
214. We did not propose any changes to our initial proposals for Chesterfield, Erewash, and South Derbyshire. We noted the concerns regarding Aston ward not being included in a South Derbyshire constituency but considered that the reconfigurations required were too significant.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

215. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals we received support for our constituencies of North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, High Peak, Derby East, Derby West, and South Derbyshire. We did receive some opposition to the other constituencies in the sub-region.
216. Some respondents opposed the Amber Valley constituency. This included opposition from Dale Abbey parish, with respondents proposing that the area be included in the Erewash constituency. A petition signed by 145 individuals supported this modification. We noted that Dale Abbey parish is located in the West Hallam & Dale Abbey ward and that respondents did not suggest that the whole ward be included in the Erewash constituency, as this would result in both the Amber Valley and Erewash constituencies being outside the permitted electorate range. Instead respondents considered that the ward could be divided between constituencies and highlighted the cultural, historical and social links the village of Dale Abbey has with Stanton-by-Dale and Ilkeston.
217. Opposition to the Derbyshire Dales constituency largely focused on whether it should include the town of Belper. Some respondents considered that Belper had close links with the areas of Ripley, Heanor and Loscoe and therefore should be included in the Amber Valley constituency. Advocates of this counter-proposal suggested that the Allestree ward should be included in the Derbyshire Dales constituency. Some opposition was also received to the split of the four wards that make up the Alfreton and Somercotes county electoral division (Alfreton, Ironville and Riddings, Somercotes, and Swanwick) between the proposed Amber Valley and Bolsover constituencies. Respondents indicated that the Ironville and Riddings ward should be included in the Bolsover constituency in order to unite all of the Alfreton and Somercotes county electoral division in one constituency and not divide the Leabrooks area between constituencies. Should it prove necessary to include one of these four wards in Amber Valley, the counter-proposal suggested that the Swanwick ward would be the more appropriate candidate to be placed in Amber Valley, and not Ironville and Riddings.

### **Final recommendations**

218. Having considered the evidence received, we are not recommending any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for Derbyshire. We note the evidence regarding whether Belper or Allestree should be included in the Derbyshire Dales constituency and continue to consider that Allestree should not be included in this constituency given the poor road connections and difference in nature of the areas. We also note the support for our proposed Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales constituencies.
219. We are also not persuaded by the evidence regarding the split of the Alfreton and Somercotes area between constituencies. We consider that it is not clear from the evidence what comprises

the Leabrooks area and note that it is divided by ward boundaries. Additionally, we are not persuaded that the Swanwick ward should be included in the Amber Valley constituency, and are of the view that this change is not supported by evidence relating to local ties. As noted above, some respondents suggested that the West Hallam & Dale Abbey ward should be divided between the Erewash and Amber Valley constituencies so that the Dale Abbey village could be included in the Erewash constituency. We do not consider that this proposal meets our exceptional and compelling threshold to divide a ward (set out in the first chapter) and, therefore, do not propose any modifications to the constituencies.

220. We did receive some representations regarding the names of our constituencies in Derbyshire. Alternative constituency names mainly focused on the inclusion of other town areas in constituency names. Given that most of the names of our proposed constituencies in the sub-region reflect the names of existing constituencies, we have decided not to modify the names of our revised proposal constituencies.
221. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derby East, Derby West, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash, High Peak, North East Derbyshire, and South Derbyshire. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Leicestershire, Leicester, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham, and Rutland**

222. Under the initial proposals we proposed two cross-county boundary constituencies: a Loughborough and Rushcliffe South constituency which crossed the boundaries of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, and a Daventry and Lutterworth constituency which crossed the boundaries of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. As noted above in the report, we do not propose to modify this sub-region, therefore our final recommendations will continue to propose two cross-county boundary constituencies. These are detailed later in this section.

## **Nottinghamshire and Nottingham**

### **Initial proposals**

223. Of the 11 existing constituencies in Nottinghamshire, six are currently within 5% of the electoral quota, while the other five constituencies all fall below the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals we proposed to retain the existing constituencies of Mansfield and Bassetlaw completely unchanged. We also proposed an Ashfield constituency which was only changed to reflect new local government boundaries.
224. Our proposed Newark constituency included the Ollerton and Boughton wards and reflected changes to local government boundaries. We proposed a Sherwood constituency that included the Lowdham and Dover Beck wards and the Gedling borough wards that comprise the town of Arnold and reflected the new local government ward boundaries.
225. In formulating the initial proposals, we noted that the existing Nottingham constituencies were all significantly below the permitted electorate range. We therefore decided to expand these constituencies while trying to respect the River Trent, which we considered represented a physical

boundary in the area. We proposed a Nottingham South and Beeston constituency that included six wards from the City of Nottingham and seven wards from Broxtowe borough, including the town of Beeston. Our Nottingham East and Carlton constituency comprised four wards from the City of Nottingham and eight wards from Gedling borough, including the town of Carlton. Our Nottingham North constituency comprised only wards from Nottingham City but did not include the Bilborough ward, which we proposed be included in a reconfigured Broxtowe and Hucknall constituency, which consisted of wards from three local authorities.

226. To the south of Nottingham, we proposed a West Bridgford constituency that included 16 wards from Rushcliffe borough, including the town of West Bridgford, and the Nottingham city wards of Clifton North and Clifton South. The remaining wards of Rushcliffe borough were included in our proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Loughborough and Rushcliffe South.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

227. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, our decision to retain the Mansfield and Bassetlaw constituencies completely unchanged was supported, although we did receive some alternative proposals for the Bassetlaw constituency. Our proposed Ashfield constituency was also largely supported by respondents.
228. We received some opposition to our proposed constituencies of Newark and Sherwood. Some respondents opposed the inclusion of the Ollerton and Boughton wards in the Newark constituency rather than Sherwood, and the exclusion of the East Bridgford ward from the Newark constituency. Some counter-proposals received sought to address these concerns by also including the Farnsfield ward in the Newark constituency along with the Lowdham and Dover Beck wards.
229. In the City of Nottingham area, we received significant opposition to the inclusion of the Nottingham city ward of Bilborough in the proposed Broxtowe and Hucknall constituency. Respondents considered that the ward should be included in either the Nottingham North or the proposed Nottingham South and Beeston constituency. Some counter-proposals resolved including Bilborough in a Nottingham constituency by reconfiguring nearly all constituencies in the sub-region, whereas some counter-proposals suggested modifications to the proposed Nottingham South and Beeston, and Broxtowe and Hucknall constituencies.
230. We received a mixture of support for and opposition to the inclusion of the Clifton North and Clifton South wards in our proposed West Bridgford constituency. Those supporting this proposal indicated that the River Trent was a boundary in the area and that the Clifton and West Bridgford areas shared ties both economically and socially. Those opposing the proposal considered that Clifton was more directly linked with Nottingham city centre and that public transport routes reflected these ties. Some respondents submitted counter-proposals that included the two Clifton wards in a Nottingham constituency. We noted that these proposals would result in modifications to most constituencies in Nottinghamshire, including the constituency that crossed the county boundary between Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire.

### **Revised proposals**

231. We noted that the Ashfield, Bassetlaw, and Mansfield constituencies had all been supported and therefore decided not to amend these constituencies when formulating our revised proposals. We

considered that persuasive evidence had been received to include Bilborough in a Nottingham constituency and investigated alternatives. We were not persuaded to include the ward in a Nottingham North constituency as this resulted in a number of modifications being required to constituencies in the sub-region. In our revised proposals, we therefore decided to include the Bilborough ward in the proposed Nottingham South and Beeston constituency. Consequently, we proposed that the Toton & Chilwell Meadows and Chilwell West wards be included in the Broxtowe and Hucknall constituency. We noted concerns that this would divide the Chilwell area between constituencies but were mindful that this proposal had significantly less knock-on effect to other constituencies. Therefore, we also decided not to modify our proposed Nottingham North, and Nottingham East and Carlton constituencies.

232. As noted above, we received a series of different configurations for the Sherwood and Newark constituencies. We were persuaded by evidence received to include the Ollerton and Boughton wards in the Sherwood constituency and the Lowdham, Dover Beck, Farnsfield, and East Bridgford wards in the Newark constituency. Having considered the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners visited the constituencies in order to observe the areas themselves, in relation to the arguments that had been made. They observed the apparent geographical bottleneck created in the town of Rainworth by including the Farnsfield ward in the Newark constituency. Our conclusion, based on the advice provided by our assistant commissioners, was that the apparent issue of a bottleneck was not supported by their observations and that the Sherwood constituency retained good road links.
233. In addition to the modification of our West Bridgford constituency (to no longer include the East Bridgford ward), we proposed that this constituency be named North Rushcliffe. We also proposed modifications to the cross-county boundary constituency of Loughborough and Rushcliffe South, which are detailed in the Leicestershire section below.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

234. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received some support for our revised proposals, including the modifications made to the Newark and Sherwood constituencies and to the inclusion of the Bilborough ward in the proposed Nottingham South and Beeston constituency. However, this proposal was also objected to by some respondents who considered that it resulted in the division of the Chilwell area, which they considered would negatively impact the local ties and representation of the area.
235. We again received opposition to the inclusion of the Clifton North and Clifton South wards in the proposed North Rushcliffe constituency. Some respondents considered that the Clifton area has no links with the other areas in the constituency and that it was fundamentally different in character. We received some counter-proposals that sought to include the Clifton wards in a constituency based mainly in the City of Nottingham. These counter-proposals were similar to those suggested during previous consultations and would result in significant modifications to constituencies in Nottinghamshire.
236. We also received a counter-proposal that suggested the Trent Valley ward of Gedling borough be included in the Nottingham East and Carlton constituency. The proponent of this modification indicated that changes to other constituencies as part of the revised proposals resulted in the Trent Valley ward no longer having any road connections with the Sherwood constituency. Some respondents suggested that a more appropriate title for the Nottingham South and Beeston

constituency would be Nottingham West and Beeston, given the orientation of the constituency. We noted that this counter-proposal did not require any other consequential changes to either the Nottingham East and Carlton or Sherwood constituencies. We also received some opposition to the proposed cross-county boundary constituency, which is detailed in the Leicestershire section below.

### **Final recommendations**

237. We have considered the evidence received and are not making changes to the boundaries of our proposed constituencies of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe and Hucknall, Newark, North Rushcliffe, Nottingham North, and Nottingham South and Beeston. We recognise the opposition received regarding the inclusion of the Clifton area in the North Rushcliffe constituency, but consider that the counter-proposals resulted in significant changes to other constituencies that had largely been supported. Similarly, we note the concerns regarding the division of Chilwell between constituencies and we did investigate alternative proposals. We considered whether to revert to our initial proposals, but noted the support we had received for including the Bilborough ward in the Nottingham South and Beeston constituency. However, we do propose to modify the names of the Nottingham South and Beeston, and North Rushcliffe constituencies. We are renaming the Nottingham South and Beeston constituency as Nottingham West and Beeston to better reflect the orientation of the constituency. We recognise that the Clifton wards form a large part of the electorate of the North Rushcliffe constituency and are not part of Rushcliffe borough, and therefore are renaming this constituency North Rushcliffe and Clifton.
238. We are not modifying our proposed Nottingham East and Carlton, and Sherwood constituencies. We are persuaded by evidence received that the inclusion of the Trent Valley ward in the Nottingham East and Carlton constituency would better reflect the transport links in this area and have therefore decided to include this change in our final recommendations.
239. Our final recommendations for Nottinghamshire are for constituencies of: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe and Hucknall, Mansfield, Newark, North Rushcliffe and Clifton, Nottingham East and Carlton, Nottingham North, Nottingham West and Beeston, and Sherwood. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland**

### **Initial proposals**

240. We noted that the electorate of Rutland at 27,355 meant that Rutland had to be included in a constituency with parts of another county. Given that Rutland has previously been included with Leicestershire for the purpose of constructing constituencies, we suggested in our initial proposals that the association of Rutland with Leicestershire should be maintained. At present, Leicestershire (including the City of Leicester and Rutland) has 10 constituencies. Of these, nine are within the permitted electorate range, with Leicester West being below the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to retain the existing Leicester East and Leicester South constituencies completely unchanged. We proposed that the Leicester West constituency include three Blaby district wards to bring it within the permitted electorate range, and proposed modifications to all other constituencies.

241. We proposed a North West Leicestershire constituency that included the two wards covering the town of Shepshed, but did not include the five wards from the existing constituency along the southern edge of North West Leicestershire district. We included these five wards in our proposed Bosworth constituency. We proposed a Charnwood constituency that included three wards from Hinckley and Bosworth borough and 12 wards from Charnwood borough. The remainder of Charnwood borough was divided between three other constituencies – the proposed Loughborough and Rushcliffe South, North West Leicestershire, and Rutland and Melton constituencies. The wards covering the area of Loughborough were included in the cross-county boundary Loughborough and Rushcliffe South constituency, and the East Goscote and Queniborough wards were included in our proposed Rutland and Melton constituency, which also included all wards that comprise the local authorities of Melton borough and Rutland.
242. To the south of the City of Leicester, our initial proposals were for a South Leicestershire constituency which included all but three wards that comprise Blaby district and seven wards from Harborough district. The remaining Harborough wards were divided between two other constituencies. The wards covering the town of Market Harborough were included in a Harborough constituency with all the wards that comprise the Oadby and Wigston borough. The other Harborough district wards, including those covering the town of Lutterworth, were included in the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Daventry and Lutterworth.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

243. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our decision to retain the existing constituencies of Leicester East and Leicester South was largely supported. There was also support for our proposed Leicester West constituency, which was altered by the addition of the three wards that comprise the town of Braunstone, in order to bring its electorate within the permitted range. However, we did receive opposition and counter-proposals for other constituencies in Leicestershire.
244. We received opposition to our proposed North West Leicestershire constituency, with respondents suggesting that the existing North West Leicestershire constituency should be retained as this would be coterminous with the district and enable for a better pattern of constituencies elsewhere in the county. Respondents noted that retaining the existing North West Leicestershire constituency would require consequential changes to the constituencies of Bosworth, Charnwood, and Loughborough and Rushcliffe South.
245. One counter-proposal was received that suggested that the Hinckley and Bosworth borough ward of Ratby, Bagworth and Thornton should be included in the Bosworth constituency, with the wards covering Shepshed being included in a Loughborough and Keyworth constituency along with The Wolds ward. Under this counter-proposal the Barrow and Sileby West, and Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle wards were included in the Charnwood constituency. Advocates of this configuration considered that the Mountsorrel area would not be divided between constituencies and that the counter-proposal resulted in improvements to the cross-county boundary constituency.
246. We also received a counter-proposal that proposed changes to the constituencies of Bosworth, Charnwood, Loughborough and Rushcliffe South, South Leicestershire, Harborough, Rutland and Melton, North West Leicestershire, and the cross-county boundary constituency of Daventry and Lutterworth. This counter-proposal suggested different wards be included in the Daventry



and Lutterworth constituency and that the town of Loughborough not be included in a cross-county boundary constituency with Nottinghamshire. This counter-proposal instead suggested Loughborough should be included with Shepshed and Sileby in a Loughborough constituency, and proposed a cross-county boundary Charnwood and Keyworth constituency that included wards from both Charnwood borough and Rushcliffe borough.

247. We received opposition to our proposed cross-county boundary Daventry and Lutterworth constituency with respondents indicating that the towns of Daventry and Lutterworth did not share any social, economic or transport links. A counter-proposal was received, which proposed that Rutland could be included with parts of Northamptonshire in a cross-county boundary constituency rather than Lutterworth.

### **Revised proposals**

248. Having considered the evidence received, we decided to revise our initial proposals for parts of Leicestershire. We were persuaded by the evidence to retain the existing North West Leicestershire constituency, and to include Shepshed and The Wolds in a constituency with Loughborough named Loughborough and South Rushcliffe, as the evidence received suggested that this would improve road links in the constituency. We therefore considered the extent of consequential changes that should be made to other constituencies.
249. We were not persuaded by the arguments to include the southern part of Charnwood borough in the cross-county boundary constituency with parts of Rushcliffe. Consequently, we proposed a reconfigured Charnwood constituency that would include the Quorn and Mountsorrel Castle, and Barrow and Sileby West wards in the constituency. We considered that this configuration reflected the communities of Sileby and Mountsorrel. As a result of our changes for North West Leicestershire, we proposed that the Ratby, Bagworth and Thornton ward be included in the Bosworth constituency.
250. We considered the alternatives suggested for a cross-county boundary constituency between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and were not persuaded by the arguments to include Rutland in a cross-county boundary constituency. We decided therefore not to revise our initial proposals for the constituencies of South Leicestershire, Harborough, Rutland and Melton, Daventry and Lutterworth, Leicester West, Leicester East, and Leicester South.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

251. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received support for our revised constituencies in Leicestershire, particularly our decision to retain the existing North West Leicestershire constituency and our revised Charnwood constituency. We also received some support for our Loughborough and South Rushcliffe constituency, particularly that transport links were improved by the inclusion of The Wolds ward. However, we did again receive some opposition to this constituency, with respondents considering that the areas included in the constituency shared few common interests.
252. We received some representations that suggested that the Harborough constituency should be named Harborough, Oadby and Wigston due to Oadby and Wigston being the major population centres, being administered by the local authority of the same name.

253. We also received opposition to our proposed Daventry and Lutterworth constituency with respondents considering that the two areas did not have any shared community identity. A counter-proposal was received that sought to reconfigure this cross-county boundary constituency. The counter-proposal suggested alternative constituencies for South Leicestershire, Charnwood, Harborough, Daventry and Lutterworth, and Rutland and Melton. Under this counter-proposal, the existing Rutland and Melton constituency would be retained, and the town of Market Harborough would be included in a new cross-county boundary constituency named Daventry and Market Harborough, instead of Lutterworth. Lutterworth would be included in a reconfigured Wigston and Lutterworth constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

254. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Leicestershire. We are not persuaded by the arguments to include Market Harborough in the cross-county boundary constituency rather than Lutterworth. We note that this counter-proposal would result in consequential changes to a number of constituencies, for which we have received some support. We do not consider that any further compelling or new evidence has been provided that might justify changing the constitution of our revised proposals.

255. We do, however, consider that persuasive evidence has been received to revise the name of the Harborough constituency. We recognise that this constituency includes wards from Harborough district and all the wards that comprise Oadby and Wigston borough. To reflect this, we recommend this constituency be named Harborough, Oadby and Wigston.

256. Our final recommendations for Leicestershire are for constituencies of: Bosworth, Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby and Wigston, Leicester East, Leicester South, Leicester West, Loughborough and South Rushcliffe, Rutland and Melton, South Leicestershire, and North West Leicestershire. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Northamptonshire**

### **Initial proposals**

257. Of the existing seven constituencies in Northamptonshire, only Daventry and Wellingborough are within the permitted electorate range. The other constituencies are all outside of the permitted electorate range. As previously detailed, in configuring our initial proposals we noted that Northamptonshire had to be grouped in a sub-region in order to formulate a pattern of constituencies that are all within the permitted electorate range. Therefore, as part of our initial proposals, we proposed that 14 wards from Daventry district and the two wards of Earls Barton, and Harrowden & Sywell from Borough of Wellingborough be included in the proposed cross-county boundary Daventry and Lutterworth constituency.

258. We noted that the existing Wellingborough constituency was within the permitted electorate range but we considered that retaining it unchanged would require a ward to be divided between constituencies and significant reconfigurations of all other constituencies in Northamptonshire. As part of our initial proposals, we proposed an alternative Wellingborough constituency. To increase

the electorate of the Kettering constituency, we suggested that it include the Finedon ward from the Borough of Wellingborough. To reduce the electorate of the Corby constituency, we proposed that it should no longer include the two wards covering Irthlingborough.

259. To increase the electorate of the Northampton South constituency, we proposed that it should include the Borough of Wellingborough wards of Wollaston and Bozeat, along with the two wards of Brafield and Yardley, and Hackleton from South Northamptonshire district. Within the Borough of Northampton we proposed that the Billing, Park, and Riverside wards be included in the Northampton North constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. Finally, we proposed a South Northamptonshire constituency that included 25 wards from the district and the two wards of Woodford and Weedon from Daventry district.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

260. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received significant opposition to our proposed Wellingborough constituency. Respondents considered that the existing Wellingborough constituency should be retained and objected to the wards of Bozeat, Earls Barton, Finedon, Wollaston, and Harrowden & Sywell being included in different constituencies. Counter-proposals were received that would retain the existing Wellingborough constituency, which involved consequential changes to the Kettering and Corby constituencies. Advocates of these counter-proposals suggested that either the Stanion & Corby Village ward, or part of this ward, be included in the Kettering constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. We received support for our proposed Corby constituency, albeit some respondents suggested that the constituency should be renamed Corby and East Northamptonshire to reflect the inclusion of East Northamptonshire district in the constituency.
261. Our proposed Northampton North constituency was largely supported but some respondents considered that some Northampton borough wards should be included in the Daventry and Lutterworth constituency. We received a mixture of support for and opposition to our proposed Northampton South and South Northamptonshire constituencies. As previously detailed, respondents opposed the inclusion of the Bozeat and Wollaston wards in the Northampton South constituency. Instead, counter-proposals were received suggesting that it was more appropriate to include the South Northamptonshire district wards of Harpole and Grange, and Grange Park in the Northampton South constituency. As part of this counter-proposal it was proposed that the Brafield and Yardley, and Hackleton wards should also be included in the South Northamptonshire constituency. As previously detailed, we received opposition to the inclusion of Daventry district wards in the cross-county boundary Daventry and Lutterworth constituency.

### **Revised proposals**

262. Having considered the evidence received, we investigated alternative configurations to constituencies in Northamptonshire. We were not persuaded by the evidence to retain the existing Wellingborough constituency. We particularly felt that the case for dividing the Harrowden & Sywell ward, as proposed by some respondents, was neither exceptional nor compelling. However, we did consider whether the Bozeat, Finedon, and Wollaston wards could be included in the Wellingborough constituency.
263. We considered that persuasive evidence had not been received to include the Finedon ward in the Wellingborough constituency, particularly given the consequential changes required to the

Kettering constituency. As noted above, the counter-proposals were to include either the whole or part of the Stanion & Corby Village ward in the Kettering constituency. We considered that including all of the ward broke local ties between Corby and Corby Village and that an exceptional and compelling case had not been made to divide the ward. We noted that it was possible to include the Wollaston and Bozeat wards in the Wellingborough constituency and sought to do so by reconfiguring the Northampton South and South Northamptonshire constituencies.

264. We proposed that the wards of Brafield and Yardley, and Hackleton be included in the South Northamptonshire constituency, and the wards of Grange Park, and Harpole and Grange be included in the Northampton South constituency. We considered that the latter wards were close in geography and nature to the Northampton South constituency. We proposed no changes to the Daventry and Lutterworth, and Northampton North constituencies. As part of our revised proposals, we did not suggest any changes to the boundaries of the Corby constituency for the reasons outlined above, but we did propose that the constituency be renamed Corby and East Northamptonshire to reflect that it comprised wards from both local authorities.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

265. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we did not receive any substantial counter-proposals for Northamptonshire, aside from those previously mentioned that proposed an alternative cross-county boundary constituency. Our decision not to retain the existing Wellingborough constituency was again opposed by respondents. Some supported the inclusion of the Bozeat and Wollaston wards in the revised constituency, but were still concerned that the Finedon ward had not been included. Additionally, some respondents from the Harrowden & Sywell ward opposed the revised proposals, suggesting that part of the ward should be included in the Wellingborough constituency. Other respondents commented on the title of the proposed constituency, considering the name Wellingborough and Rushden to be more suitable.
266. We also received some support for our revised proposals, particularly the proposed configuration and name of the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

267. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to retaining the existing Wellingborough constituency. We are not persuaded that an exceptional and compelling case has been made to divide either the Harrowden & Sywell or Stanion & Corby Village wards. Given that our revised proposals in Northamptonshire have generally been supported, we do not propose to modify any of the boundaries of our proposed constituencies.
268. However, we do consider that persuasive evidence has been received to modify the name of the Wellingborough constituency. Some respondents considered that, as the proposed constituency incorporated a large part of East Northamptonshire district, particularly the town of Rushden, the constituency name should reflect the configuration. We therefore recommend the constituency be named Wellingborough and Rushden.
269. Our final recommendations for Northamptonshire are for constituencies of: Corby and East Northamptonshire, Daventry and Lutterworth, Kettering, Northampton North, Northampton South, South Northamptonshire, and Wellingborough and Rushden. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.



# London

270. The London region currently has 73 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 20 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 43 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of 10 constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in London by five, from 73 to 68.
271. The London region comprises 32 London boroughs and the City of London.
272. We appointed three assistant commissioners for the London region — Howard Simmons, Emma Davy and Richard Wald — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
- Westminster: 17–18 October 2016
  - Bromley: 20–21 October 2016
  - Harrow: 24–25 October 2016
  - Kingston: 27–28 October 2016
  - Romford: 31 October–1 November 2016

## Sub-division of the region

273. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the London region of 5,118,884 results in it being entitled to 68 constituencies, a reduction of five. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region and whether the London boroughs could be grouped together to create sub-regions. We were mindful of respecting, where we could, the external boundaries of the London boroughs, and the River Thames and River Lee, which create natural boundaries across the region. For this reason we chose the River Thames as a natural division and created two sub-regions: the North Thames sub-region containing 20 London boroughs, part of Richmond upon Thames, and the City of London, and the South Thames sub-region containing 11 London boroughs and part of Richmond upon Thames.
274. The combined electorate of the City of London and the London boroughs in the North Thames sub-region (Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Brent, Camden, Ealing, Enfield, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames (part),<sup>4</sup> Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, and Westminster) totalled 3,171,133. It therefore has an entitlement of 42.4 constituencies, and 42 constituencies were allocated to this sub-region, a reduction of three from the current 45. We further bore in mind that a constituency crossing the River Lee would need to be achieved in order for the constituencies to fall within the permitted electorate range.

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<sup>4</sup> Richmond upon Thames is divided between the two sub-regions by the River Thames.

275. The combined electorate of the London boroughs in the South Thames sub-region (Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Richmond upon Thames (part), Southwark, Sutton, and Wandsworth) totalled 1,947,751. It therefore has an entitlement of 26.02 constituencies. We allocated 26 constituencies to this sub-region, a reduction of two from the current 28.
276. Within the London region, 53 of the existing constituencies fall outside of the permitted electorate range; this meant that there would have to be a great deal of change to existing constituencies in order to ensure that all 68 constituencies fall within the permitted electorate range. A further issue to affect the distribution of constituencies throughout London was the number of electors in each ward, with the majority of wards containing more than 6,000 electors. This made it difficult to create constituencies within the permitted electorate range.
277. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was widely supported during consultation on the initial proposals and secondary consultations. We did not receive any counter-proposals that suggested alternative sub-regions, with respondents supporting the use of the River Thames as a boundary between the two sub-regions.
278. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on the same sub-regions as those of our the initial proposals. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we did not receive any new evidence that would justify the use of alternative sub-regions within the London region.
279. Therefore, our final recommendations for London are based on the sub-regions of:
- North Thames
  - South Thames.

## **North Thames**

280. Of the 45 existing constituencies in the North Thames sub-region, 14 (Barking, Bethnal Green and Bow, Brent Central, Chipping Barnet, Ealing North, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, Hackney South and Shoreditch, Hampstead and Kilburn, Hornchurch and Upminster, Hornsey and Wood Green, Ilford South, Poplar and Limehouse, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, and Twickenham) are currently within the permitted electorate range. Of the remaining constituencies, six are above and 25 are below the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to retain two existing constituencies unchanged: Hornchurch and Upminster, and Twickenham.

## **North East London**

### **Initial proposals**

281. In formulating our initial proposals, we recognised that the River Lee formed a natural boundary with limited crossing points, particularly towards the northern part of the river in the region. We therefore sought to limit the number of constituencies crossing the River Lee. By using the River Lee as a natural boundary, we were able to allocate 11 constituencies to the east across the five London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest. However, the proposed Bow and Canning Town constituency crossed the River Lee

between the Newham and Tower Hamlet borough boundaries. We considered that the crossing of the River Lee in the south of the sub-region was appropriate given the number of crossing points in this part of the region.

282. In the Borough of Havering, we retained the existing Hornchurch and Upminster constituency and proposed that the Romford constituency include seven wards from the existing constituency and the Eastbrook ward from the neighbouring Dagenham and Rainham constituency. The proposed Dagenham and Rainham constituency included eight wards from the existing constituency and was brought into the permitted electorate range by the inclusion of the Alibon and Valence wards from the existing Barking constituency.
283. The proposed Barking constituency retained nine of its wards, with two wards from the existing Ilford South constituency. We further proposed an Ilford North constituency that included six wards from the existing constituency and three wards from the existing Ilford South constituency. The proposals for a Leytonstone and Wanstead constituency included four wards from the existing Leyton and Wanstead constituency, plus the Wood Street ward from the Walthamstow constituency, two wards from the Ilford North constituency and two wards from the Ilford South constituency to bring it into the permitted electorate range.
284. In the Borough of Waltham Forest, we proposed a Chingford and Woodford Green constituency that retained eight wards from the existing constituency and the Chapel End ward from the Walthamstow constituency. We modified the existing Walthamstow constituency by retaining six of its wards, and also including four wards from the Leyton and Wanstead constituency. We proposed a Forest Gate and Loxford constituency, which contained three wards from the existing East Ham constituency, two wards from the existing Ilford South constituency and four wards from the existing West Ham constituency. This meant that the Newham borough wards of Green Street East and Green Street West were included in the same constituency; currently, they are divided between constituencies. The remaining wards in the existing East Ham constituency were joined with the Custom House and Plaistow wards in a new East Ham constituency. Our proposed Poplar and Limehouse constituency included eight wards from the existing constituency, two wards from the existing Bethnal Green and Bow constituency, and the divided ward of Whitechapel.
285. We also proposed a Bow and Canning Town constituency, which included four wards from the existing West Ham constituency, three wards from the existing Poplar and Limehouse constituency, and two wards from the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency. As noted above, this constituency would cross the River Lee to ensure that all the constituencies fell within the permitted electorate range. We considered that the A13 and A118 provided suitable road crossings of the River Lee in this area and therefore suggested this constituency as part of our initial proposals.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

286. In North East London, we received a mixture of support for and opposition to our initial proposals. Our proposal to retain the existing Hornchurch and Upminster constituency unchanged from the existing was broadly supported. We received a number of other representations that commented on our proposals, with some of these wanting to retain other existing constituencies in the sub-region.



287. We received a number of counter-proposals suggesting alternative patterns of constituencies in North East London. These included:

- that the Eastbrook ward be divided between the Dagenham and Rainham, and Romford constituencies
- that the Bridge ward should be included in the Chingford and Woodford Green constituency
- that the Chapel End ward should remain in the Walthamstow constituency as the initial proposals broke community ties in this area
- that the redistribution of all the wards of the existing Ilford South constituency, which was within the permitted electorate range, should be re-examined as the initial proposals divided Ilford town centre.

### Revised proposals

288. Having considered the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners considered what modifications should be made to the initial proposals. They recommended to us that the Bridge ward be included in the proposed Chingford and Woodford Green constituency as this would better reflect the community ties in the Woodford area, which had been split under the initial proposals, and that the constituency be named Chingford and Woodford. To the south of this constituency, they recommended that Chapel End ward be included in the proposed Walthamstow constituency. They considered that the evidence received indicated that the initial proposals divided Walthamstow between constituencies.

289. As a result of the modifications to the constituencies of Walthamstow, and Chingford and Woodford, consequential changes were required to surrounding constituencies. Our assistant commissioners considered the different counter-proposals and recommended an Ilford North and Wanstead constituency, which included all the wards in the existing Ilford North constituency (apart from Bridge ward) and two wards from the existing Leyton and Wanstead constituency. They also recommended retaining the existing Ilford South constituency completely unchanged.

290. Different counter-proposals were received for the constituencies of Dagenham and Rainham, and Romford. The assistant commissioners considered that the evidence received supported the Chadwell Heath ward being included in the Romford constituency and the Eastbrook ward being included in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency. Having considered whether the Rush Green area of Eastbrook ward should be included in the Romford constituency with the remainder being included in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency, our assistant commissioners noted that this would create an 'orphan polling district<sup>5</sup>' in Havering borough. In addition to this concern, they also did not consider that an exceptional and compelling case had been made to divide a ward between constituencies. Accordingly, our assistant commissioners recommended that Eastbrook ward be retained in its current constituency of Dagenham and Rainham, and Chadwell Heath ward be included in the Romford constituency. They did not recommend any changes to the Hornchurch and Upminster constituency, which retained its existing constituency boundary. We agreed with their recommendations.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Orphan polling district' refers to a clear minority of polling districts (usually just one polling district) from one local authority, in a constituency where the overwhelming majority of polling districts are from another local authority.

291. Our assistant commissioners recommended further changes to our initial proposals in this part of the sub-region that we accepted, based on the evidence presented to us. Our revised proposals amended the Barking and East Ham initial proposals, and proposed new Leyton and Stratford, and Stepney and Bow constituencies having reconfigured the initial proposals for Forest Gate and Loxford, and Bow and Canning Town. We also proposed a cross-borough boundary constituency of Poplar and Canning Town. We noted that this constituency would cross the River Lee and considered it was suitable for this constituency to do so.
292. As a consequence of the boundary changes detailed above, it was necessary to reconfigure the existing Barking constituency gaining the London City Airport area to the south west. We renamed this constituency Barking and Beckton.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

293. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we received support for many of the proposed constituencies in this part of the North Thames sub-region, with some respondents supporting the majority of the proposed constituencies. However, opposition was again received to a number of our proposed constituencies in the sub-region.
294. Similarly to the representations on the initial proposals, we received some representations supporting the dividing of Eastbrook ward in the Dagenham and Rainham constituency, and including polling district MA (Rush Green) in the Romford constituency. We also received a counter-proposal to place the whole of Eastbrook ward in a Romford constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

295. Having further considered the proposal to split the Eastbrook ward, we remain of the view that there are not exceptional and compelling circumstances to do so and therefore do not recommend this proposal. In relation to the counter-proposal arguing that the whole of Eastbrook ward should be included in a Romford constituency: to ensure both Eastbrook, and Dagenham and Rainham constituencies are within the permitted electorate range under this proposal, it would be necessary to transfer a ward to the Dagenham and Rainham constituency — for example, the Chadwell Heath ward as per our initial proposals. We do not consider that evidence has been received to modify either of these constituencies and therefore recommend the revised proposal constituencies of Dagenham and Rainham, and Romford as part of our final recommendations.
296. Having considered the evidence received, and in light of the good levels of support for many of our revised proposals in the area, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in this part of the North Thames sub-region. Under our final recommendations we have retained two existing constituencies unchanged: Ilford South, and Hornchurch and Upminster.
297. However, on the basis of evidence put to us during the final consultation, we have decided to modify some of our proposed constituency names as part of the final recommendations. We propose that the Chingford and Woodford constituency is renamed Chingford and Woodford Green to better reflect the existing constituency.
298. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Barking and Beckton, Chingford and Woodford Green, Dagenham and Rainham, East Ham, Hornchurch and

Upminster, Ilford North and Wanstead, Ilford South, Leyton and Stratford, Poplar and Canning Town, Romford, Stepney and Bow, and Walthamstow.

299. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **North London**

### **Initial proposals**

300. The initial proposals in North London — to the west of the River Lee, extending to the Edgware Road and Maida Vale (A5) — covered the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, and Islington, and parts of Hackney. In the Borough of Enfield, we proposed an Enfield constituency retaining seven wards from the existing Enfield North constituency, with Grange ward from the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency. Our proposed Edmonton constituency included seven wards from the existing constituency with the Palmers Green ward from the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range.
301. In Barnet, the electorate of the borough is too low to create three whole constituencies within the boundaries of the borough. We therefore investigated how the borough would be paired with neighbouring boroughs to create a pattern of constituencies. As part of our initial proposals, we suggested a Finchley and Southgate constituency, which included three wards from the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency, two wards from the Chipping Barnet constituency, and three wards from the Finchley and Golders Green constituency. The proposed Chipping Barnet and Mill Hill constituency retained five wards from the existing Chipping Barnet constituency, with the Cockfosters ward from the Enfield, Southgate constituency, and the Mill Hill ward from the Hendon constituency. Our proposed Hendon constituency included six wards from the existing constituency and two wards from the existing Finchley and Golders Green constituency.
302. In the boroughs of Camden and Islington, our initial proposals were for a Hampstead and Golders Green constituency, which included seven wards from the existing Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, two wards from the Finchley and Golders Green constituency, and the Highgate ward from the existing Holborn and St Pancras constituency. Additionally, we proposed a Holborn and St Pancras constituency that retained eight of its wards and added the two wards of Junction and St. George's from Islington borough. We proposed an Islington constituency, which included eight wards from the existing Islington South and Finsbury constituency and the Mildmay ward from the Islington North constituency to bring it into the permitted electorate range. We also proposed a Finsbury Park and Stoke Newington constituency, which included five wards from the existing Islington North constituency and five wards from the Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency.
303. In the Borough of Hackney, both of the existing constituencies fell within the permitted electorate range. However, in order to ensure adjacent constituencies also fell within the permitted electorate range changes were required. We therefore proposed a Hackney Central constituency, which included five wards from the existing Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency and five wards from the existing Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency. We also proposed a Hackney West and Bethnal Green constituency, which included five wards from the existing

Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency and four wards from the existing Bethnal Green and Bow constituency.

304. In Haringey, we retained the existing Tottenham constituency and added Stroud Green ward from Hornsey and Wood Green to bring the constituency within the permitted electorate range. The remainder of the existing Hornsey and Wood Green constituency had Bowes ward added to it from the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

305. Our proposed Chipping Barnet, Edmonton, and Tottenham constituencies were generally supported (although as noted below there were some concerns about the addition of Stroud Green ward to Tottenham). We received a substantial number of representations that opposed our Finchley and Southgate constituency, along with a number of letter-writing campaigns and petitions. Those opposing our proposed Finchley and Southgate constituency had concerns that the initial proposals divided the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency between five proposed constituencies and also divided the Borough of Enfield between five constituencies.
306. We received a number of comments on the initial proposals in this part of the sub-region. These included:
- that the Stroud Green ward should be included in the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency as it had no connection to the Tottenham constituency, due to the East Coast Main Line railway line running along its eastern boundary
  - that the Bowes and Cockfosters wards should be included in the proposed Finchley and Southgate constituency as these changes would allow for the retention of more of the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency
  - that the Mill Hill ward should be included in the Hendon constituency
  - that the Hackney North and Stoke Newington, and Hackney South and Shoreditch constituencies are both within the permitted electorate range and are coterminous with the borough boundaries, and therefore should remain unchanged.

### **Revised proposals**

307. As detailed above, we received a number of submissions that commented on our proposed Finchley and Southgate constituency, many accompanied by counter-proposals for the Enfield Southgate area. Some sought to retain the existing constituency, while others proposed minimal change. Our assistant commissioners noted that, while these counter-proposals addressed the concerns raised about Enfield Southgate, they would require changes to surrounding constituencies such as Edmonton, Tottenham, and Hornsey and Wood Green, all of which had broadly been supported during both consultations. Having considered various alternative proposals, our assistant commissioners agreed with the evidence that suggested that the Cockfosters ward should be included in the Finchley and Southgate constituency. In order to avoid revising those constituencies that had been supported with good evidence, they recommended that this constituency be modified to include part of the Brunswick Park ward, and exclude the West Finchley ward. They considered that the test of exceptional and compelling circumstances had been met in this instance to divide the Brunswick Park ward between two

constituencies. They noted particularly that the splitting of this ward allowed the inclusion of Cockfosters ward in a constituency with Southgate and also avoided modifications to other constituencies that had broadly been supported. They visited the Brunswick Park ward to observe the proposed split and considered that it was sensible.

308. Therefore, they recommended to us a revised constituency named Finchley and Enfield Southgate, which included four wards from the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency, three whole wards from the Borough of Barnet and the polling districts of CCA, CCB and CCC from the Brunswick Park ward. Consequently, they recommended a revised Chipping Barnet constituency that included five wards from the existing constituency, two wards from the existing Finchley and Golders Green constituency, and polling district CCD from the Brunswick Park ward. As a result of these changes, our assistant commissioners recommended that the Mill Hill ward be included in the Hendon constituency. We agreed with their recommendations.
309. Our assistant commissioners were also persuaded by the evidence that the Stroud Green ward should be included in the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency rather than the Tottenham constituency. They considered that the Stroud Green ward was divided from Tottenham by the East Coast Main Line railway. As a result, it would be necessary to include a different ward in the Tottenham constituency. Having considered the representations received, they recommended that the Woodside ward be included in the Tottenham constituency. We agreed with this recommendation.
310. We did not propose any boundary changes to the other initially proposed constituencies in the sub-region. However, we did propose the renaming of some of the constituencies in this part of the sub-region. We proposed that: Hampstead and Golders Green be called Hampstead; Hackney West and Bethnal Green be renamed Shoreditch and Bethnal Green; and Holborn and St Pancras be named Camden and St Pancras.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

311. In response to our revised proposals, there remained opposition to the proposed Finchley and Enfield Southgate constituency, which again mainly focused on the division of the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency across constituencies. We also received representations that commented on dividing Brunswick Park ward between the Chipping Barnet, and Finchley and Enfield Southgate constituencies. Some respondents were concerned that this proposal had not been suggested in any representations. There was also opposition to the wards of East Finchley and Woodhouse being included in the proposed Finchley and Enfield Southgate constituency, with respondents concerned that our revised proposals divided Finchley area between constituencies.
312. A counter-proposal was received that sought to address the concerns about dividing the Finchley area across constituencies. It was proposed that the division of the Oakleigh ward, in the Barnet borough, instead of the Brunswick Park ward would provide for a better pattern of constituencies. The counter-proposal suggested a Southgate and East Barnet constituency, which would include four wards from the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency, the East Barnet, Brunswick Park, and Coppetts wards from the Chipping Barnet constituency and polling district CED from the Oakleigh ward to bring it into the permitted electorate range. This reconfiguration would result in what was described as the four 'Finchley wards' — East Finchley, Finchley Church End, West Finchley, and Woodhouse — being included in the proposed Chipping Barnet constituency,

with polling districts CEA, CEB, CEC from the Oakleigh ward. There was general support for the proposals we had not revised.

### **Final recommendations**

313. As during previous consultations, some counter-proposals were suggested that sought to retain the existing Enfield, Southgate constituency all within Enfield borough, which would require substantial changes to surrounding constituencies. We do not consider that further evidence has been received to recommend this counter-proposal and note that we have received support for the surrounding constituencies that it would modify. We have investigated the counter-proposal that sought to unite all four wards described to us as 'Finchley wards' in one constituency, and proposed dividing the Oakleigh Park ward. We noted the benefits of this counter-proposal, particularly that it reflects some of the evidence received regarding community ties between the wards of Finchley Church End, East Finchley, West Finchley, and Woodhouse.
314. However, we also had a number of concerns with the counter-proposal, particularly as it appeared to divide Barnet between constituencies and did not reflect the community ties between the Coppetts and West Finchley wards, which include the area of Friern Barnet. Given that it was an untested proposal, which has not been aired at any previous stage of the review, and therefore has not been open to public consultation, on balance we are not persuaded by the counter-proposal and therefore do not recommend any changes to our revised proposal constituencies of Chipping Barnet, and Finchley and Enfield Southgate.
315. Having considered the evidence received during the consultation on the revised proposals, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in this part of the North Thames sub-region.
316. However, on the basis of evidence put to us during the final consultation, we have decided to modify some of our proposed constituency names as part of the final recommendations. We are renaming the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency Hornsey, as not all of the Wood Green area is included in the proposed constituency. On the basis of evidence put to us, we also have renamed Islington as Islington and South Finsbury, and Hackney Central as Hackney.
317. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Camden and St Pancras, Chipping Barnet, Edmonton, Enfield, Finchley and Enfield Southgate, Finsbury Park and Stoke Newington, Hackney, Hampstead, Hendon, Hornsey, Islington South and Finsbury, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, and Tottenham.
318. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Central and West London**

### **Initial proposals**

319. The proposals to the west of the Edgware Road and Maida Vale (A5) included constituencies in the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, and part of Richmond upon Thames, as well as the City of London. In Westminster and the City of London, the combined electorate of the two authorities

does not allow us to construct constituencies that fall within the permitted electorate range, so, as part of our initial proposals, we proposed a Cities of London and Westminster constituency that included the City of London and 10 Westminster borough wards from the existing constituency, the Lancaster Gate ward from the Westminster North constituency, and two wards from the Camden borough constituency of Holborn and St Pancras. To bring the existing Westminster North constituency within the permitted electorate range, we included the Brent borough wards of Queens Park and Kilburn from the existing Hampstead and Kilburn constituency. We decide to name this constituency Queen's Park and Regent's Park in our initial proposals.

320. We proposed a Kensington and Chelsea constituency that was coterminous with the borough boundary. In the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, we proposed a Hammersmith and Fulham constituency that included six wards from the existing Hammersmith constituency and added six wards from the existing Chelsea and Fulham constituency. This constituency was wholly within the Hammersmith and Fulham borough boundary. However, in order to create other constituencies within the permitted electorate range it was necessary to include the remaining Hammersmith and Fulham borough wards in constituencies with wards from other boroughs. We proposed an Ealing Central and Shepherd's Bush constituency, which included three wards in the north of the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham — namely Askew, Wormholt and White City, and Shepherd's Bush Green — and six wards from the Borough of Ealing.
321. In the Borough of Brent, we proposed a Willesden constituency, which included eight wards from the existing Brent Central constituency, one Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham ward (College Park and Old Oak), and the Brondesbury Park ward from the existing Hampstead and Kilburn constituency. We proposed two further constituencies that included wards from the Borough of Brent: a Kenton constituency, which included four wards from the existing Brent North constituency and five from the existing Harrow East constituency; and a Wembley and Harrow on the Hill constituency, which included three wards from the existing Harrow West constituency, five wards from the existing Brent North constituency, and the Tokyngton ward from Brent Central. In the Borough of Harrow, we proposed a Harrow and Stanmore constituency, which included four wards from the existing Harrow East constituency, five wards from the existing Harrow West constituency, and the Hatch End ward from the existing Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency.
322. The Borough of Hillingdon is too large for two constituencies wholly within its boundary. We therefore proposed a Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency that retained six of its wards, with two wards from the existing Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency and the Rayners Lane ward from Harrow West. Our proposed Hillingdon and Uxbridge constituency included five wards from the existing Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency, two wards from the existing Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency, and two Borough of Ealing wards from the existing Ealing North constituency. Our proposed Ealing North constituency included six wards from the existing constituency, with the Lady Margaret and Dormers Wells wards from the existing Ealing, Southall constituency. The remaining four wards of the Ealing, Southall constituency were added to four wards from the Feltham and Heston constituency, and the Walpole ward from the Ealing Central and Acton constituency, in our proposed Southall and Heston constituency.
323. In the southern part of the Borough of Hillingdon, we proposed a Hayes and Harlington constituency that retained eight of its wards and included the Yiewsley ward from the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency. To the south of this constituency, we proposed a Feltham

and Hounslow constituency, which included six wards from the existing Feltham and Heston constituency, and three wards from the existing Brentford and Isleworth constituency.

324. The proposed Brentford and Chiswick constituency combined the remaining seven wards from the Brentford and Isleworth constituency with the Northfield ward from the Ealing, Southall constituency, and the Southfield ward from the Ealing Central and Acton constituency. In the Borough of Richmond upon Thames, we noted that the existing Twickenham constituency was within the permitted electorate range and left it unchanged. The remaining seven wards within the borough were included within constituencies in the South Thames sub-region.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

325. In the centre and west of the sub-region, we received some support for our initial proposals, including for the constituencies of Cities of London and Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Brentford and Chiswick, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, and Twickenham. However, we also received some opposition to our initial proposals across the centre and west of the sub-region.
326. We received a number of representations in this part of the sub-region, which stated:
- that the Kilburn ward in the Borough of Brent and the Kilburn ward in the Borough of Camden should be in the same constituency as the community is united by the Kilburn High Road
  - that the Harrow on the Hill ward should be included in the proposed Harrow constituency with the Greenhill ward, and not the proposed Wembley constituency, as these are seen as the heart of Harrow
  - that the Belmont ward should be in the same constituency as the Canons and Stanmore Park wards
  - that Rayners Lane ward should remain in a Harrow constituency and not the proposed Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency
  - that there was no community ties between the three wards from the Borough of Hammersmith – namely Askew, Shepherd’s Bush Green, and Wormholt and White City – with the other wards included in the proposed Ealing Central and Shepherd’s Bush constituency
  - that the proposed Hammersmith constituency should include the Askew, Shepherd’s Bush Green, and Wormholt and White City wards.
327. In the area of Ealing, we received opposition to our initial proposals, with representations suggesting we had divided Ealing between our proposed Southall and Heston, and Ealing Central and Shepherd’s Bush constituencies. We also received significant opposition to the inclusion of Shepherd’s Bush in this constituency with respondents concerned that it was not included in a constituency with Hammersmith. We received a number of counter-proposals for the proposed Hammersmith and Fulham constituency, which addressed the concerns and combined Hammersmith and Shepherd’s Bush in the same constituency. However, many of these counter-proposals did require consequential changes to other constituencies in the sub-region, particularly



the neighbouring constituency of Kensington and Chelsea, our proposals for which had received significant support.

### **Revised proposals**

328. As detailed above, we received mixed evidence regarding whether the Kilburn wards (one being in the Borough of Camden, the other in the Borough of Brent) should be included in the same constituency. Some respondents considered that the proposal to use the Kilburn High Road as a boundary divided the community, while others considered it to be a sensible boundary and argued that the initial proposals did not break community ties. On the basis of the evidence received, our assistant commissioners visited the area and recommended that the best pattern of constituencies was achieved by the two Kilburn wards being in different constituencies.
329. To the south of Kilburn, our assistant commissioners noted the representations that suggested the proposed boundary of the Cities of London and Westminster constituency divided communities in the Hyde Park and Lancaster Gate wards. A counter-proposal was received which indicated that these wards looked north towards Bayswater and Little Venice. It was suggested that these wards could be accommodated in this constituency if the Regent's Park and Abbey Road wards were included in the Cities of London and Westminster constituency. Having considered the evidence, our assistant commissioners recommended this modification as part of the revised proposals as they considered it better reflected community ties. In addition, they also recommended that the initially proposed constituency of Queen's Park and Regent's Park be renamed Kilburn.
330. To the west of the A5, on the advice of our assistant commissioners, we also decided to modify substantial parts of our initial proposals. As noted above, we received a number of representations that commented on our initial proposals dividing the areas of Harrow, Belmont and Wembley between constituencies. Our assistant commissioners were persuaded by the evidence that the Belmont ward should be included in the same constituency as the Canons and Stanmore Park wards. They recommended that all three wards be included in a revised Harrow North constituency. They also recommended revised constituencies of Harrow South and Kenton, Wembley, Greenford and Sudbury, and Hillingdon and Uxbridge. As a result of the proposed changes to these constituencies, they recommended the retention of the existing Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency.
331. Our assistant commissioners considered the counter-proposals received for the Ealing Central and Shepherd's Bush constituency. They considered that Ealing had been divided under the initial proposals and recommended that the wards of Elthorne and Walpole be included in a revised constituency of Ealing and Acton, which no longer divided Ealing between constituencies. Consequently, they recommended a revised Southall and Heston constituency, which no longer divided Southall between constituencies. As Shepherd's Bush would no longer be included in a constituency with Ealing, they considered what other modifications were required to the initial proposals. They noted the evidence regarding the inclusion of Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush in the same constituency but were concerned that this required significant modifications to the Kensington and Chelsea constituency, which had been substantially supported. Therefore, they recommended a Willesden and Shepherd's Bush constituency, which we accepted as part of our revised proposals.

332. We did not propose any boundary changes to the other initially proposed constituencies in Central and West London. However, we did propose, based on local evidence, that the proposed Brentford and Chiswick constituency be called Isleworth, Brentford and Chiswick.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

333. In the west of the sub-region, we received several counter-proposals for the transfer of single wards between the Harrow North, and Harrow South and Kenton constituencies, and between the Greenford and Sudbury, and Wembley constituencies. These counter-proposals largely sought to address local concerns with the revised proposals. We also received a counter-proposal that changed five constituencies in the boroughs of Ealing, Harrow, and Hillingdon. This counter-proposal would result in the existing Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency no longer being retained; instead, it would retain the Ealing North constituency.
334. We did not include the three Shepherd's Bush wards in the Hammersmith constituency as part of our revised proposals and this continued to generate opposition. Our Willesden and Shepherd's Bush constituency was also opposed as respondents considered the areas did not share community ties with each other. As with our initial proposals, we received some opposition to our Hammersmith and Fulham constituency with counter-proposals again suggesting changes to neighbouring constituencies, including Kensington and Chelsea. We received a general level of support for many of our other revisions in this part of the sub-region.

### **Final recommendations**

335. In the west of the sub-region, we investigated the different counter-proposals received. We considered that compelling evidence had not been received to accept the counter-proposal that modified five of the revised proposed constituencies. We also investigated the counter-proposals that suggested the transfer of individual wards between the proposed constituencies of Harrow North, Harrow South and Kenton, Wembley, and Greenford and Sudbury. We considered that these counter-proposals did not better reflect community ties and in some cases would result in dividing communities between constituencies. Therefore, we propose no changes to the boundaries of these constituencies as part of our final recommendations. However, we are renaming the Greenford and Sudbury constituency. We propose this constituency is renamed Ealing North and Sudbury as we accept the argument put to us that this better reflects the communities included in this constituency.
336. We noted that, during the consultation on the revised proposals, we again received a number of representations that opposed the Hammersmith and Fulham constituency. Similarly to previous consultations, the counter-proposals were for a Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush constituency, which resulted in consequential changes to neighbouring constituencies. We consider that no further compelling evidence has been received to modify the Hammersmith and Fulham constituency and so we confirm it as part of our final proposals.
337. Having considered the evidence received, following the consultation on the revised proposals, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in this part of the North Thames sub-region. Under our final recommendations we have retained two existing constituencies unchanged in this part of the sub-region: Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, and Twickenham.

338. However, on the basis of evidence put to us during the final consultation, we have decided to modify some of our proposed constituency names as part of the final recommendations. We recommend that: the Ealing and Acton constituency is renamed Ealing Central and Acton to reflect the name of the existing constituency; the Greenford and Sudbury constituency is renamed Ealing North and Sudbury as we accept the argument put to us that this better reflects the communities included in this constituency; the Hillingdon and Uxbridge constituency is renamed Uxbridge and Northolt to better reflect the towns in the constituency; and the Kilburn constituency is renamed Paddington and Queen's Park as this better reflects the constituency.
339. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Cities of London and Westminster, Ealing Central and Acton, Ealing North and Sudbury, Feltham and Hounslow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow North, Harrow South and Kenton, Hayes and Harlington, Isleworth, Brentford and Chiswick, Kensington and Chelsea, Paddington and Queen's Park, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, Southall and Heston, Twickenham, Uxbridge and Northolt, Wembley, and Willesden and Shepherd's Bush.
340. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **South Thames**

### **Initial proposals**

341. Of the existing 28 constituencies in this sub-region, six have electorates within the permitted electorate range: Croydon Central, Dulwich and West Norwood, Kingston and Surbiton, Richmond Park, Tooting, and Vauxhall. Of the remaining constituencies, 18 have electorates that are below the permitted electorate range, and four are above. In developing the proposals for the South Thames sub-region, we proposed to retain as wholly unchanged the constituencies of Kingston and Surbiton, and Richmond Park.
342. In the boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth, we proposed a Wimbledon Common and Putney constituency, which included all six wards from the existing Putney constituency, and the two Merton borough wards of Wimbledon Park and Village from the Wimbledon constituency. We also proposed a Merton and Wimbledon Central constituency, which included eight wards from the existing Wimbledon constituency and four wards from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency. Our Tooting constituency retained all seven of its existing wards and added Graveney ward from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency. Our Battersea constituency included all seven of its existing wards and was brought into the permitted electorate range by adding the Lambeth borough ward of Thornton from the existing Streatham constituency.
343. In the Borough of Sutton, we proposed a Sutton and Cheam constituency that included eight wards from the existing constituency and the two Merton borough wards of Lower Morden and St. Helier from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency. Our proposed Carshalton and Wallington constituency remained as is, with the addition of the Belmont ward from the existing Sutton and Cheam constituency.
344. In the Borough of Croydon, we were able to retain three constituencies with minor reconfiguration. The proposed Croydon South constituency retained five of its wards and added three wards from

the existing Croydon Central constituency; our proposed Croydon Central constituency included three wards from the existing constituency, three from Croydon South, and one ward from Croydon North; while the proposed Croydon North constituency retained six of its wards, adding the Borough of Bromley ward of Crystal Palace from the existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency, and the Woodside ward from the Croydon Central constituency.

345. In the centre of the South Thames sub-region, we proposed a number of cross-borough boundary constituencies to ensure that all constituencies were within the permitted electorate range. The proposed Streatham and Mitcham constituency included four wards from the existing Streatham constituency, the Norbury ward from the Croydon North constituency, the Lambeth borough ward of Knight's Hill from the existing Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, and three Merton borough wards from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency.
346. In the Lambeth and Southwark boroughs, the electorate of the existing Dulwich and West Norwood constituency was within the permitted electorate range. However, minor changes were required to ensure that the electorates of adjacent constituencies were also within the permitted electorate range.
347. The proposed Dulwich and West Norwood constituency included six of its existing wards, the Lambeth borough ward of Tulse Hill from the existing Streatham constituency, and the Southwark borough ward of South Camberwell from the Camberwell and Peckham constituency. We further proposed a Clapham North and Stockwell constituency, which included five wards from the existing Vauxhall constituency, the Coldharbour ward from the existing Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, and the Brixton Hill and Clapham Common wards from the existing Streatham constituency. We proposed a Camberwell and Vauxhall Bridge constituency, which included five wards from the existing Camberwell and Peckham constituency, the Lambeth borough wards of Prince's and Vassall from the existing Vauxhall constituency, and the Newington ward from the existing Bermondsey and Old Southwark constituency.
348. Our proposed Bermondsey and Old Southwark constituency retained eight of its wards and added the Lambeth borough ward of Bishop's, which provided a link to the adjacent Cathedrals ward of the Borough of Southwark. We also proposed a Peckham and Lewisham West constituency, which included three wards from the existing Camberwell and Peckham constituency, three wards from the Lewisham West and Penge constituency, and two wards from the Lewisham, Deptford constituency.
349. In the east of the South Thames sub-region, we formulated constituencies that were within the permitted electorate range in the boroughs of Bromley, Bexley, Greenwich, and Lewisham, but doing so required significant changes to the existing constituencies. We were able to retain three constituencies in the Borough of Bromley. The Orpington constituency included all seven of its existing wards with the Cray Valley West ward from the existing Bromley and Chislehurst constituency. Our proposed Bromley and Chislehurst constituency included the remaining five wards from the existing constituency, and the Bromley Common and Keston, and Hayes and Coney Hall wards from the existing Beckenham constituency. Our proposed Beckenham constituency included four wards from the existing constituency, the Clock House, and Penge and Cator wards from the existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency, and the Croydon borough ward of Shirley from the existing Croydon Central constituency.

350. In the Lewisham and Greenwich boroughs, we proposed a Lewisham and Catford constituency, which included five wards from the existing Lewisham East constituency, the Bellingham ward from the existing Lewisham West and Penge constituency, and the Ladywell and Lewisham Central wards from the existing Lewisham and Deptford constituency. We proposed a Greenwich and Deptford constituency, which included three wards from the existing Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, three wards from the existing Lewisham, Deptford constituency and two wards from the existing Lewisham East constituency. Our proposed Eltham constituency retained all seven of its wards and added the Woolwich Common ward from the existing Greenwich and Woolwich constituency.
351. We further proposed a Woolwich constituency, which included three wards from the existing Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, four wards from the existing Erith and Thamesmead constituency, and the Bexley borough ward of St. Michael's from the existing Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency. Our proposed Old Bexley and Sidcup constituency included all eight of its existing wards and the Danson Park ward from the existing Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency. We also proposed an Erith and Crayford constituency, which included four wards from the existing Erith and Thamesmead constituency, and six wards from the existing Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

352. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals in the South Thames sub-region, we received some support for our proposed constituencies of Battersea, Beckenham, Kingston and Surbiton, Orpington, Richmond Park, Streatham and Mitcham, Tooting, and Wimbledon Common and Putney (although there were also some strong objections to the last constituency).
353. However, our proposed Merton and Wimbledon Central, and Streatham and Mitcham constituencies were strongly opposed. There were concerns that, under the initial proposals, the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency had been divided between four constituencies and that the Borough of Merton had been divided between five constituencies. Those commenting on the proposed Streatham and Mitcham constituency were also concerned that it divided the town of Mitcham between the Streatham and Mitcham, and Merton and Wimbledon constituencies. We received a larger number of representations commenting on this issue than any other in the region, including several letter-writing campaigns and petitions. The main objection to our proposed Merton and Wimbledon Central constituency was that it did not include the Borough of Merton wards of Wimbledon Park and Village which, under our initial proposals, had been included in the Wimbledon Common and Putney constituency. Residents of these wards considered that the initial proposals divided Wimbledon between constituencies and that they relied on the centre of Wimbledon for many of their services including transport.
354. We received a number of counter-proposals that sought to address the objections to our proposed Wimbledon constituencies. Some counter-proposals suggested the inclusion of both the Wimbledon Park and Village wards in a constituency with other Wimbledon wards but proposed also that the Borough of Wandsworth ward of Roehampton and Putney Heath be included in the constituency. We also received some counter-proposals that only included the Village ward in a proposed Wimbledon constituency. A number of counter-proposals were also submitted to address the concerns with the proposed Streatham and Mitcham constituency. Many of these did not divide Mitcham between constituencies and sought to

propose a constituency that included as many wards as possible from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency.

355. The proposed Carshalton and Wallington, and Sutton and Cheam constituencies received some opposition during the initial and secondary consultation periods. The objections to these constituencies mainly focused on the exclusion of the Belmont ward from the Sutton and Cheam constituency. Some counter-proposals attempted to include the ward in the Sutton and Cheam constituency. This either required the division of the Borough of Merton between another constituency or the inclusion of Borough of Croydon wards, specifically in the Coulsdon area of the Carshalton and Wallington constituency.
356. In the Borough of Croydon, the proposed Croydon South constituency and our decision to include the Shirley ward in the Beckenham constituency were both opposed. Many representations objected to the wards of Coulsdon East, Coulsdon West, and Kenley being included in the Croydon South constituency, with opponents citing that the links of all three wards were to the north with Purley. The representations commenting on the inclusion of the Shirley ward in a Beckenham constituency considered that the initial proposals divided the Shirley area between constituencies, therefore breaking local ties. We received a number of counter-proposals that sought to address these issues.
357. Towards the north of this sub-region, we received support for our proposed Battersea constituency; however, some respondents considered that the constituency should also include the Borough of Lambeth wards of Clapham Common, Clapham Town, and Thornton.
358. In the centre of this sub-region, we received opposition to our proposed Dulwich and West Norwood constituency. Our proposals to divide the existing Vauxhall constituency between constituencies was also largely opposed, with many respondents objecting to the Borough of Lambeth ward of Bishop's being included in the Bermondsey and Old Southwark constituency.
359. In the east of the sub-region, our proposed Woolwich, and Erith and Crayford constituencies were both opposed, with concerns focusing on the inclusion of the Borough of Bexley wards of St. Michael's and Lesnes Abbey in the Woolwich constituency. Many representations considered that these wards had links to Erith and Crayford and a number of counter-proposals were received that reflected these views. Some of these counter-proposals suggested that the Lesnes Abbey ward could be divided between constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

360. In view of the considerable objections to our initial proposals and the variations in a number of the counter-proposals, our assistant commissioners visited many of the areas of contention, to observe for themselves some of the links between areas that had been suggested. In particular, they visited the Roehampton and Putney Heath, and Village wards and travelled to the centre of Wimbledon. In their view, they considered that both the Village and Wimbledon Park wards were an integral part of the Wimbledon constituency. They also noted that the open space of Wimbledon Common was used by residents in the boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth, on both sides of the common, and that the Roehampton and Putney Heath ward in particular had links to the common and Village ward. They therefore considered it appropriate to include the Roehampton and Putney Heath ward in a revised Wimbledon constituency, in order to allow for a better pattern of constituencies across Wandsworth and Merton boroughs. We accepted

their recommendation, agreeing that it would help address the substantial objections with the initial proposals in the Mitcham area (discussed below). We therefore proposed a Wimbledon constituency that included all wards from the existing constituency, Colliers Wood ward from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency, and Roehampton and Putney Heath ward from the existing Putney constituency to bring it into the permitted electorate range.

361. In view of the significant opposition to our proposals for Merton and the division of Mitcham in particular, and the consequent changes proposed in the Merton borough, our assistant commissioners visited the area to observe the community links and the different counter-proposals received. As a result, they recommended a pattern of constituencies that divided the Borough of Merton between three constituencies – rather than the five under our initial proposals – and a Mitcham and Norbury constituency that included seven of the 10 wards from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency and the three Croydon borough wards of Broad Green, Norbury, and West Thornton. As part of their site visit, it was observed that these wards had links to the west.
362. The reconfiguration of the Wimbledon, and Mitcham and Norbury constituencies required us to make changes to adjacent constituencies. During their site visit, the assistant commissioners observed the links between the Earlsfield ward, the Southfields ward, the Fairfield ward and the area of Putney. They considered that including all three wards in a revised Wandsworth and Putney constituency more closely reflected the statutory criteria. We agreed with their recommendation and included this constituency as part of our revised proposals.
363. We were not persuaded by the arguments to include the Belmont ward in a revised Sutton and Cheam constituency. We noted the objections to the initial proposals but were concerned that the counter-proposals either divided the Borough of Merton between a further constituency or required the inclusion of the Coulsdon area in the Carshalton and Wallington constituency, which did not reflect the evidence received. We therefore decided to propose no changes to either of our initially proposed Carshalton and Wallington, and Sutton and Cheam constituencies.
364. The evidence received in the Borough of Croydon was that the initial proposals broke community ties, particularly in the areas of Coulsdon, Kenley, and Shirley. Our assistant commissioners investigated the counter-proposals and recommended that the Coulsdon East, Coulsdon West, and Kenley wards should be included in a revised Croydon South West constituency, as the evidence received indicated community links between these wards and Purley. They addressed the concerns about the division of Shirley between constituencies by recommending a Croydon South East constituency that included the Ashburton, Shirley, and Heathfield wards, which were identified as comprising the Shirley area. They proposed that the remaining wards in the Borough of Croydon be included in a revised Norwood and Thornton Heath constituency.
365. As a result of the changes proposed in the Borough of Croydon, as part of our revised proposals we were able to propose three constituencies (Beckenham, Bromley and Chislehurst, and Orpington) that were all wholly contained within the Borough of Bromley.
366. In the east of the sub-region, we noted the objections to the exclusion of the St. Michael's and Lesnes Abbey wards from the Erith and Crayford constituency. Our assistant commissioners visited the area to observe the evidence received and the counter-proposals. They noted that one counter-proposal suggested that the Lesnes Abbey ward could be divided between

constituencies; however, they considered that the argument for splitting a ward in this part of London was not compelling, nor necessary in formulating a pattern of constituencies that reflected the evidence received. After investigating the different counter-proposals, our assistant commissioners recommended revised constituencies of Bexley and Sidcup, Eltham and Welling, Erith and Crayford, and Woolwich. As part of this pattern of constituencies, the proposed Erith and Crayford constituency included both the St. Michael's and Lesnes Abbey wards. In order to include both these wards in this constituency, it was proposed to include the Christchurch and Barnehurst wards in a revised Bexley and Sidcup constituency. We agreed with their recommendation, noting that this pattern of constituencies better reflected community ties in the area.

367. In the north and centre of the sub-region, our assistant commissioners recommended a number of modifications be made to the initial proposals. They considered that the evidence of community ties between the wards of Bishop's, Prince's, and Oval was persuasive, and they therefore recommended that all three wards be included in a revised Brixton and Vauxhall constituency.
368. We received multiple representations supporting a counter-proposal to include the Borough of Lambeth ward of Clapham Common in a Battersea constituency, and our assistant commissioners recommended that this alteration should be made. However, other changes would be required to this constituency to ensure that it was within the permitted electorate range. There were counter-proposals that recommended that the Clapham Town ward should also be included in this constituency as this would avoid splitting the Thornton and Clapham Common wards. Some of the representations received indicated that there was some ongoing major development at the Clapham Park Estate which straddles the two wards east and west of Clarence Avenue. It was felt that this solution would bring the Lambeth and Clapham wards together for the first time in many years. We therefore proposed a constituency that included five wards from the existing Battersea constituency, Clapham Common, and Thornton wards from the existing Streatham constituency, and Clapham Town ward from the existing Vauxhall constituency. To reflect this change, we proposed to name the constituency Battersea and Clapham. As a result of these changes, our assistant commissioners recommended that the Borough of Wandsworth ward of Balham be included in a revised Tooting constituency. We agreed with this proposal and included it as part of our revised proposals.
369. As noted in the section above, we received some opposition to our initially proposed Dulwich and West Norwood constituency. The objections mainly focused on the constituency excluding wards from the Boroughs of Lambeth and the division of the Herne Hill area. We received counter-proposals suggesting that the constituency should include parts of the Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark. Having investigated the different counter-proposals received, our assistant commissioners recommended revised constituencies of Bermondsey and Old Southwark, Camberwell and Peckham, Dulwich and Sydenham, and Streatham and Brixton South. As part of this pattern of constituencies, the revised Dulwich and Sydenham constituency included wards only from the boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham. We agreed with their recommendation and considered that it provided for an improved pattern of constituencies. We did not propose any changes to our initially proposed Lewisham and Catford constituency as part of our revised proposals.



### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

370. The revised proposals attracted fewer comments than the initial proposals, with our modifications to constituencies across most of the sub-region being largely supported. However, the constituencies of Wimbledon, Sutton and Cheam, Carshalton and Wallington, Croydon South West, Dulwich and Sydenham, Lewisham and Catford, and Erith and Crayford did attract some opposition.
371. While the proposed Wimbledon constituency was broadly supported for uniting the Village and Wimbledon Park wards, there were some objections to the inclusion of the Roehampton and Putney Heath ward in the constituency, with representations arguing that this ward has community links with Putney. A counter-proposal was received that included the Roehampton and Putney Heath ward in the Wandsworth and Putney constituency, but required the splitting of the Earlsfield ward between the Wandsworth and Putney, and Wimbledon constituencies to ensure both were within the permitted electorate range.
372. Our revised Mitcham and Norbury constituency was largely supported, with representations considering it an improvement on the initial proposals. Some comments were received on this constituency that wanted us to include further wards from the existing Mitcham and Morden constituency in it.
373. We again received opposition to the inclusion of the Belmont ward in the Carshalton and Wallington constituency, with representations indicating that this ward had shared links with Sutton and Cheam. Similar counter-proposals received during the earlier consultation were put forward, which proposed that the Belmont ward could be included in the Sutton and Cheam constituency and the Borough of Merton ward of St. Helier could be included in the Carshalton and Wallington constituency.
374. Our revised proposals in the Borough of Croydon were generally supported, particularly the inclusion of the Coulsdon and Kenley wards in the Croydon South West constituency and the inclusion of the Shirley area in the Croydon South East constituency. However, some counter-proposals were received that proposed an alternative pattern of constituencies in the borough. One counter-proposal suggested constituencies of Croydon Central and Croydon South. The counter-proposal sought to reflect the existing constituencies and required splitting the Heathfield ward between both constituencies. The other counter-proposal received in the Borough of Croydon attempted to include the Broad Green ward in the Croydon South West constituency. The respondent considered that the revised proposals had divided the centre of Croydon between constituencies. This counter-proposal required modifications to be made to a number of other constituencies including the division of Coulsdon between constituencies.
375. Towards the centre of the sub-region, we received little opposition to our revised proposals; however, a counter-proposal was received for the Camberwell and Peckham, Dulwich and Sydenham, and Lewisham and Catford constituencies. It proposed that the South Camberwell ward be transferred to the Dulwich and Sydenham constituency and the Peckham Rye ward be included in the Camberwell and Peckham constituency. The respondent considered this better reflected community ties. The second part of the counter-proposal was to transfer the Crofton Park ward to the Lewisham and Catford constituency and the Bellingham ward to the Dulwich and Sydenham constituency. It was considered that this proposal better reflected community ties in the Catford area in particular. In investigating the counter-proposal, we noted that not all four ward

transfers were required to produce constituencies that were within the permitted electorate range, and that the ward transfers proposed could be considered independently from each other.

376. In the east of the sub-region, our revised constituencies of Bexley and Sidcup, and Erith and Crayford were largely supported. A counter-proposal was received that proposed the Barnehurst, Crayford and North End wards be included in a revised Bexley, Crayford and Sidcup constituency, and the Christchurch and Danson Parks wards be included in a revised Bexleyheath and Erith constituency.
377. The revised proposals in the remainder of the sub-region were all broadly supported. In a number of cases we did receive suggestions for alternative constituency names.

### **Final recommendations**

378. We carefully considered the case for the inclusion of the Roehampton and Putney Heath ward in the Wandsworth and Putney constituency, and we are not satisfied that we received persuasive evidence to justify changing this proposal. We note that the counter-proposal that aims to include this ward in a constituency with Putney results in the division of the Earlsfield ward between constituencies. We consider that the division of this ward between constituencies is likely to break community ties and does not appear to command any further local support, or offer a generally better solution in terms of the statutory criteria, and therefore consider that there is not an exceptional and compelling case to adopt this proposal.
379. We acknowledge the objections to the exclusion of the Belmont ward from the Sutton and Cheam constituency and have reconsidered the counter-proposal for this constituency that was submitted during previous consultation. We remain unpersuaded by this counter-proposal, particularly as it would result in the Borough of Merton being divided between four constituencies and would create an orphan ward. Therefore, we propose no changes to the revised constituencies of Sutton and Cheam, and Carshalton and Wallington, as part of our final recommendations.
380. We have investigated the different counter-proposals received in the Borough of Croydon and have decided not to alter the pattern of constituencies in this part of the sub-region. We are not persuaded by the counter-proposal to create constituencies of Croydon Central and Croydon South, particularly as this required the splitting of the Heathfield ward between constituencies. We consider that an exceptional and compelling case has not been made to divide this ward. We are also not persuaded by the counter-proposal that attempted to include the Broad Green ward in the Croydon South West constituency. The consequential modifications as part of this counter-proposal are not supported in representations and are likely to break community ties, particularly in the Coulsdon area. Therefore, we propose no changes to the revised proposals in the Borough of Croydon under our final recommendations.
381. In the east of the sub-region, the revised proposals for the constituencies of Bexley and Sidcup, and Erith and Crayford were both broadly supported. We noted the counter-proposal that transferred wards between both constituencies but consider that compelling evidence has not been received to recommend it. We were concerned that the counter-proposal was likely to divide parts of Bexleyheath between constituencies. Therefore, we propose no changes to the revised constituencies of Bexley and Sidcup, and Erith and Crayford under our final recommendations.

382. We noted the counter-proposal that suggested modifications to the proposed constituencies of Camberwell and Peckham, Dulwich and Sydenham, and Lewisham and Catford. We investigated the proposed modification between the Camberwell and Peckham, and Dulwich and Sydenham constituencies, and while we considered it might better reflect community ties in the Nunhead area we had concerns that it might break community ties in the Denmark Hill area. We therefore do not support this modification. However, we have decided to modify the constituencies of Dulwich and Sydenham, and Lewisham and Catford. We are persuaded by the transfer of the Crofton Park ward to the Lewisham and Catford constituency and the Bellingham ward to the Dulwich and Sydenham constituency. We consider this pattern of constituencies better reflects community ties, particularly in Catford, and better reflects the existing pattern of constituencies.
383. Having considered the evidence received during the consultation on the revised proposals, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any other proposed constituencies in the South Thames sub-region. We note that our revised proposals have been broadly supported in the sub-region and on the whole any modification would require substantial changes to a number of constituencies. Under our final recommendations, we have retained the two existing constituencies of Kingston and Surbiton, and Richmond Park unchanged.
384. We have decided to modify some of our proposed constituency names as part of the final recommendations, based on evidence put to us during the final consultation. We recommend that the Eltham and Welling constituency is renamed Eltham and East Wickham, and the Tooting constituency is renamed Tooting and Balham. This would better reflect the geography and settlements of the constituencies. On the basis of evidence put to us about the areas within each constituency, the Streatham and Brixton South constituency is renamed Streatham and Brixton Hill, and the Wandsworth and Putney constituency is renamed Putney and Wandsworth Town.
385. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Battersea and Clapham, Beckenham, Bermondsey and Old Southwark, Bexley and Sidcup, Brixton and Vauxhall, Bromley and Chislehurst, Camberwell and Peckham, Carshalton and Wallington, Croydon South East, Croydon South West, Dulwich and Sydenham, Eltham and East Wickham, Erith and Crayford, Greenwich and Deptford, Kingston and Surbiton, Lewisham and Catford, Mitcham and Norbury, Norwood and Thornton Heath, Orpington, Putney and Wandsworth Town, Richmond Park, Streatham and Brixton Hill, Sutton and Cheam, Tooting and Balham, Wimbledon, and Woolwich.
386. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## North East

387. The North East region currently has 29 constituencies. Of these constituencies, four have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of the remaining 25 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range. Our recommendations reduce the number of constituencies in the region by four, from 29 to 25.
388. The North East comprises the unitary authorities of Northumberland, County Durham, Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees, and the boroughs that formed the former metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear: Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, and Sunderland. The region is therefore covered by a mix of metropolitan districts and unitary authorities.
389. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the North East — Eileen Brady and Adele Baumgardt — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
- Newcastle upon Tyne: 14–15 November 2016
  - Darlington: 17–18 November 2016.

### Sub-division of the region

390. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the North East of 1,874,396 results in the region being entitled to 25 constituencies, a reduction of four. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
391. We noted that Northumberland, with an electorate of 232,448, could be allocated three constituencies contained wholly within its boundaries. However, as part of our initial proposals, we decided to allocate three constituencies that are wholly within the county boundary of Northumberland, and one that crossed the county boundary with Newcastle upon Tyne.
392. Similarly, we noted that Tyne and Wear, with an electorate of 792,738, could be allocated 11 constituencies within the permitted electorate range that would be wholly contained within its boundary. County Durham, with an electorate of 377,715, could be allocated five constituencies that would be wholly contained within its boundary. Finally, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees (otherwise known collectively as ‘Cleveland’ throughout this report for ease of reference) could be allocated five constituencies within the permitted electorate range, and one constituency could be wholly contained within the unitary authority of Darlington. Given the challenges of creating constituencies within the permitted electorate range, we decided to consider the North East as a single region without any division into sub-regions. In formulating the initial proposals, we considered that creating a set of constituencies across the entire region provided us with more flexibility in ensuring a pattern of constituencies that were within 5% of the electoral quota. We were also mindful of the need to respect natural boundaries and the external boundaries of local authorities as far as possible.

393. As a result, we proposed a pattern of constituencies whereby only one crossed the River Tyne within the Tyne and Wear metropolitan area, and only one constituency crossed the River Tees. Of the 25 constituencies allocated to the region, 21 constituencies were wholly contained within the Tyne and Wear metropolitan area, County Durham, Darlington, and the former county of Cleveland. One constituency — Newcastle upon Tyne North West — crossed the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear county boundary. Four constituencies crossed the county boundary between County Durham and Tyne and Wear: City of Durham, Easington and Houghton, North Durham and Chester-le-Street, and West Durham and Teesdale. One constituency — East Durham — crossed the boundary between County Durham and Cleveland.
394. The use of the sub-regions outlined above generated mixed responses during consultation on the initial proposals. We received some objections to the split of sub-regions, with alternative arrangements suggesting that Northumberland could be treated as a separate sub-region. Some respondents considered that Northumberland was different in nature to the metropolitan areas in the region and therefore should be considered separately. In addition, objection was received to the particular crossing between Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, with respondents suggesting that it resulted in the breaking of community ties.
395. We also received proposals from some respondents that proposed crossing the regional boundary with Yorkshire and the Humber. These proposals largely focused on reconfiguring constituencies in Cleveland.
396. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that compelling evidence had not been received to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries. However, we did believe persuasive evidence had been received to propose alternative sub-regions. As a result, in our revised proposals we proposed a separate Northumberland sub-region, and a sub-region comprising Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Darlington, and Cleveland.
397. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we did not receive sufficient evidence that would justify the crossing of the regional boundary, nor to support the use of alternative sub-regions. Therefore, the sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:
- Northumberland
  - Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Darlington, and Cleveland.

## **Northumberland**

### **Initial proposals**

398. Of the four existing constituencies in Northumberland, all have electorates below the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed three constituencies that were wholly contained within the county boundaries: Berwick and Ashington, Hexham and Morpeth, and Blyth Valley, and one cross-county boundary constituency with Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle upon Tyne North West.
399. In the existing constituency of Berwick-upon-Tweed — which has an electorate of only 55,548 — we included the wards that comprise the towns of Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea from the existing Wansbeck constituency, and renamed the constituency Berwick and Ashington. Our

Hexham and Morpeth constituency included the wards of Pegswood, Rothbury and Longhorsley, along with the three wards of Morpeth Kirkhill, Morpeth North, and Morpeth Stobhill. In order to bring the existing Blyth Valley constituency within the permitted electorate range, wards from the towns of Bedlington, Sleekburn, and Stakeford were added. We proposed that the ward of Ponteland East and Stannington be included in the cross-county boundary constituency of Newcastle upon Tyne North West.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

400. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed constituencies in Northumberland received limited support. The main focus of opposition was our decision to link the towns of Hexham and Morpeth in a constituency, and the linking of Berwick with Ashington. We also received significant opposition to the division of the town of Ponteland between constituencies, and in particular to the inclusion of the Ponteland East and Stannington ward, which was an orphan ward, in the proposed Newcastle upon Tyne West constituency. Respondents suggested the whole of the town of Ponteland should be included in a Northumberland-based constituency.
401. We received a number of alternatives to our proposed constituencies in Northumberland:
- that Berwick should be included in a constituency with Morpeth and Alnwick
  - that Blyth and Ashington should be in the same constituency
  - that Hexham and Cramlington should be linked to allow for a better pattern of constituencies in the rest of the Northumberland sub-region.
402. These counter-proposals received significant support from respondents. Having considered the written and oral evidence received during both consultation periods, our assistant commissioners considered that community links between Berwick and Morpeth were stronger than the ties between Berwick and Ashington. They were also mindful of the close ties linking the towns of Blyth and Ashington.

### **Revised proposals**

403. In light of the evidence received, our assistant commissioners concluded that constructing constituencies that linked the towns of Berwick with Morpeth, Blyth with Ashington, and Hexham with Cramlington in three revised constituencies better reflected local community ties in Northumberland on the whole.
404. The axis of our proposed Hexham and Cramlington constituency was an east–west configuration as it extended across the region. However, we concluded that this constituency allowed for a better pattern of constituencies across the sub-region, would result in Ponteland not being divided between constituencies, and would not divide Cramlington between constituencies.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

405. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we received substantial support for our configuration of the constituencies in Northumberland. In comparison to our initial proposals, respondents believed that our newly configured constituencies in a separate Northumberland sub-region better reflected local community ties.

406. However, we did receive some objection to our decision to treat Northumberland as a separate sub-region, with respondents arguing that a consequence of this was a revised Blaydon constituency, which included parts of three local authorities and created an orphan ward (in the case of the County Durham ward of Burnopfield and Dipton). Reservations were also expressed regarding the east–west nature of our revised Hexham and Cramlington constituency. However, given the geography of the North East region and the criteria within which we are required to work, we consider that constituencies of this nature are inevitable.

### **Final recommendations**

407. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Northumberland. We do not consider that any further compelling or new evidence has been provided that might justify changing the composition of our revised proposal constituencies.
408. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Berwick and Morpeth, Blyth and Ashington, and Hexham and Cramlington. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Darlington, and Cleveland**

### **Tyne and Wear**

#### **Initial proposals**

409. Of the existing constituencies in the metropolitan area of Tyne and Wear, three are currently within the permitted electorate range: North Tyneside, Sunderland Central, and Tynemouth. These remained unchanged in our initial proposals. The electorates of the remaining constituencies in Tyne and Wear were all below the permitted electorate range and required significant change to their configuration. In our initial proposals we were able to propose constituencies that did not cross the River Tyne in the centre of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. However, to ensure that all constituencies were within the permitted electorate range, it was necessary to propose a constituency that crossed the River Tyne in the Blaydon area. As mentioned above, we proposed a Newcastle upon Tyne North West constituency that crossed the county boundary with Northumberland and included the Ponteland East and Stannington ward.
410. We proposed a Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency that retained nine wards from the existing constituency of that name and added the wards of Westgate and Wingrove from the existing Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency. The ward of East Gosforth was also included in the constituency from the existing Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency.
411. Our proposed Blaydon constituency retained six wards from the existing Blaydon constituency but added three wards from the existing Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency, plus two wards from the existing Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency. The remaining wards of the existing Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency were included in the constituency of Newcastle upon Tyne North West.
412. Our proposed Gateshead constituency retained 10 wards from the existing Gateshead constituency and added the City of Sunderland ward of Washington West from the existing

Washington and Sunderland West constituency, and the Pelaw and Heworth ward from the existing Jarrow constituency.

413. We proposed a Jarrow constituency that retained seven wards from the existing Jarrow constituency and added three wards from the existing Washington and Sunderland West constituency, and the Simonside and Rekendyke ward from the existing South Shields constituency. We considered that these proposals helped to maintain the close ties of the Hebburn communities.
414. Our proposed South Shields constituency retained nine wards from the existing South Shields constituency and added the two wards of Cleadon and East Boldon, and Boldon Colliery from the existing Jarrow constituency, thereby maintaining the community links around Boldon Colliery. We did not alter the Sunderland Central constituency, but we proposed a Sunderland West constituency which contained four wards from the existing Washington and Sunderland West constituency, and four wards from the existing Houghton and Sunderland South constituency. The constituency of Sunderland West also crossed the local government boundary of Gateshead with the inclusion of the Birtley ward from the existing Blaydon constituency.

#### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

415. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received some support for the three constituencies in Tyne and Wear that we proposed should not be altered, namely North Tyneside, Tynemouth, and Sunderland Central. We received significant opposition to our proposed constituency of Newcastle upon Tyne North West. Respondents objected to the inclusion of the rural ward of Ponteland East and Stannington in a mainly urban constituency. Numerous counter-proposals were received that included the Ponteland East and Stannington ward with the three other Ponteland wards in a revised Hexham and Cramlington constituency.
416. There was also significant opposition to the initial proposals for our South Shields and Jarrow constituencies. Multiple respondents objected to our proposal to include the Simonside and Rekendyke, and Boldon Colliery wards in the Jarrow and South Shields constituencies, respectively. It was suggested that the Simonside and Rekendyke ward had few ties to Jarrow and looked more towards South Shields. Similarly, respondents stated that the Boldon Colliery ward had closer ties with Jarrow and few with South Shields. A counter-proposal was put to us, which suggested a solution to this problem that would allow the Simonside and Rekendyke ward to remain in South Shields without significant knock-on effects across the sub-region. This counter-proposal also suggested the splitting of Bede ward between constituencies, with polling district LC, known as Brockley Whins, being included in the South Shields constituency. As well as providing a solution to the breaking of local ties, it was also claimed that this polling district identified with South Shields rather than with the rest of the Bede ward. Prior to a local government boundary review in 2004, Brockley Whins had been part of the South Shields constituency. Five campaigns initiated by local residents were also received in support of this specific counter-proposal. It was believed by all that the counter-proposed configuration of constituencies better reflected local community ties in the area.
417. Respondents also had concerns about our proposed Blaydon constituency. It was suggested that there were significantly fewer transport links and crossings at this point of the River Tyne. Some considered that it resembled the former Tyne Bridge constituency that had been controversial and unpopular with some local residents. There were strong objections to the division of the town



of Washington across the three constituencies of Jarrow, Gateshead, and Sunderland West. It was suggested that Washington was a notable urban centre in the region that needed proper representation. Various counter-proposals were submitted, all of which sought to unite the five Washington wards in a single constituency.

### **Revised proposals**

418. As the three unchanged constituencies of North Tyneside, Tynemouth, and Sunderland Central had been supported, we decided not to amend these constituencies when formulating our revised proposals. Given the opposition to the inclusion of the orphan ward of Ponteland East and Stannington in the Newcastle upon Tyne North West constituency, we decided to include this ward with all the other Ponteland wards in a revised Hexham and Cramlington constituency (as mentioned above), and proposed a revised Newcastle upon Tyne North West constituency that was wholly contained within the City of Newcastle upon Tyne local authority and bounded by the River Tyne to its south. Our revised Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency was very similar to the existing constituency, apart from the inclusion of the East Gosforth and West Gosforth wards.
419. Following a site visit to the area, and being cognisant of the strength of feeling regarding this area during the abandoned 2013 Boundary Review, our assistant commissioners decided that there should not be a Tyne Bridge constituency that crossed the River Tyne in the centre of Newcastle, and they supported our initial proposal to cross the River Tyne further west in Blaydon. We noted the objections to our initial proposals for the Blaydon constituency, but, given the numerical constraints, coupled with our decision to create a separate Northumberland sub-region, crossing the River Tyne somewhere was inevitable.
420. We proposed a revised Gateshead West constituency that consisted of five wards from the existing Blaydon constituency and seven wards of the existing Gateshead constituency. Although this configuration had not been widely suggested by respondents, our assistant commissioners considered that this configuration would result from resolving issues elsewhere and so was an appropriate solution.
421. Our assistant commissioners considered the evidence that had been received regarding the Simonside and Rekendyke, and Boldon Colliery wards, and polling district LC of Bede ward. They acknowledged the strength of feeling from local residents and the local authority. However, they were also aware that the only counter-proposal that did not result in crossing the River Tyne split the Bede ward. Given that the evidence to split a ward needed to be exceptional and compelling, our assistant commissioners did not consider that the criteria to split a ward had been met on this particular occasion. They did, however, encourage us to specifically invite further evidence on the matter as part of our revised proposals consultation.
422. As noted above, we received multiple counter-proposals that aimed to unite all five wards of the town of Washington in a single constituency. These proposals received widespread support. Having considered both the oral and written evidence, our assistant commissioners decided to create a Washington and Sunderland West constituency that was the same as the existing constituency, with the addition of the Sandhill ward.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

423. There was a degree of support for most of our revised proposals for the constituencies in Tyne and Wear, but there remained some objection. Our initial proposals for the Blaydon constituency — which traversed the River Tyne and was divided across three local authorities — continued to attract opposition, but no significant new evidence was received. There also continued to be opposition to the inclusion of the Simonside and Rekendyke ward in the revised Jarrow constituency.
424. In formulating our revised proposals, the assistant commissioners had considered that the evidence received to split the Bede ward was not sufficiently exceptional and compelling, but we agreed with their recommendation to invite further evidence on this issue. Further evidence in support of the counter-proposal to split the Bede ward was forthcoming, as was additional evidence regarding the links and community identity between the Simonside and Rekendyke ward and South Shields. It was suggested that the part of the Bede ward known as Brockley Whins (polling district LC) strongly associated with South Shields and had no association with Jarrow. Residents of South Shields referred to themselves as ‘Sand Dancers’, as they did in Brockley Whins, whereas those from Jarrow were considered ‘Jarrovians’. There was also evidence of transport links between this area and South Shields (rather than with Jarrow) and where children went to school.

### **Final recommendations**

425. We noted the support for most of our revised constituencies in Tyne and Wear. Although we also noted the objections with regard to the Blaydon constituency, we decided not to make any modifications to this constituency given the knock-on effects that would result.
426. We noted the opposition to the Jarrow and South Shields constituencies and again investigated alternative proposals. We considered that persuasive evidence had been received that supported the inclusion of the Simonside and Rekendyke ward in the South Shields constituency and the Boldon Colliery ward in the Jarrow constituency. Our investigations indicated that resolving this issue by transferring whole wards between constituencies would require changes to existing constituencies — constituencies that had been supported — or the division of Gateshead town centre. We therefore considered again the evidence regarding the breaking of local ties between Simonside and Rekendyke ward and the rest of South Shields constituency, as well as the division of the Bede ward between the South Shields and Jarrow constituencies. We considered that the additional evidence that we had invited and received was compelling and we decided, as suggested in representations, that the Bede ward should be split, with the Brockley Whins area of the ward (polling district LC) included in the South Shields constituency. We consider that this proposal would better reflect community ties in the area and avoid disruption to existing constituencies.
427. We noted that the Gateshead West constituency was very similar to the existing Gateshead constituency. As such, we considered that a name change was necessary and we decided to revert to the existing constituency name of Gateshead.
428. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Blaydon, Gateshead, Jarrow, Newcastle upon Tyne East, Newcastle upon Tyne North West, North Tyneside, South Shields, Sunderland Central, Tynemouth, and Washington and Sunderland West.

## County Durham and Darlington

### Initial proposals

429. Of the seven existing constituencies in County Durham and the Borough of Darlington, all have electorates below the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed one constituency that is wholly within the boundaries of County Durham: Bishop Auckland. The other constituencies in County Durham either linked part of the county with parts of Tyne and Wear or parts of Hartlepool. As we were able to include all of the Borough of Darlington wards in the Darlington constituency, our proposed Darlington constituency was coterminous with the borough boundaries.
430. We proposed a West Durham and Teesdale constituency that included nine wards from the existing North West Durham constituency, the ward of Barnard Castle West from the existing Bishop Auckland constituency, and the two Borough of Gateshead wards of Chopwell and Rowlands Gill, and Winlaton and High Spenn from the existing Blaydon constituency. We proposed a North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency that included 12 wards from the existing North Durham constituency and was brought within the permitted electorate range by the inclusion of the Gateshead borough ward of Lamesley.
431. Our City of Durham constituency included nine wards from the existing City of Durham constituency, including the whole of the wards of Deerness, and Esh and Wilton Gilbert, and also the Tow Law ward from the existing North West Durham constituency. The proposed constituency also included the City of Sunderland ward of Hetton from the existing Houghton and Sunderland South constituency. Our proposed East Durham constituency included 11 wards from County Durham (including eight wards from the existing Sedgfield constituency) and the Hartlepool borough wards of Hart and De Bruce from the existing Hartlepool constituency.
432. The Easington and Houghton constituency that we proposed consisted of nine County Durham wards from the existing Easington constituency, including those covering the towns of Easington, Seaham and Peterlee, and three City of Sunderland wards, including those covering the town of Houghton-le-Spring, which we reflected in the constituency name.

### Consultation on the initial proposals

433. There was widespread support for our initial proposals to include all the Borough of Darlington wards — and not others — in the Darlington constituency. However, there were suggestions that the Heighington & Coniscliffe ward from the Sedgfield constituency had closer community ties outside the borough with the town of Newton Aycliffe.
434. We received some limited support for our proposals for the City of Durham constituency, but elsewhere there was opposition to our initial proposals in this part of the sub-region. There was particular opposition to the inclusion of the Barnard Castle East, and Barnard Castle West wards in different constituencies. It was claimed that our proposals were damaging to the local community, broke community ties and did not reflect the geography of the area. It was suggested that both wards should be in the same constituency, thereby uniting the town of Barnard Castle in one constituency.

435. We also received a proposal suggesting that the Framwellgate and Newton Hall ward — which we had included in the City of Durham constituency in our initial proposals — should instead be included in our proposed North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency. It was also suggested that the constituency be renamed City of Durham and Chester-le-Street.
436. A number of the counter-proposals we received suggested changes to the initial proposals for constituencies in County Durham in order to address concerns regarding other constituencies in the Tyne and Wear area and, in particular, the division of the town of Washington between constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

437. In light of the evidence received across the region in the representations, and from their visits to certain areas to observe for themselves links between communities, our assistant commissioners recommended, and we accepted, considerable change to the constituencies we had initially proposed in County Durham, in order to achieve the best balance between the statutory criteria.
438. As mentioned previously, we had included the City of Sunderland ward of Sandhill in our revised Washington and Sunderland West constituency. This led our assistant commissioners to propose a revised Houghton and Seaham constituency that included the wards of Dawdon, Deneside, and Seaham. Our assistant commissioners were aware that these wards had closer ties with the Easington and Murton wards, but it was not possible to include all five wards together in the same constituency, given the numerical constraints.
439. In our revised proposals, there would no longer be an East Durham constituency, the Borough of Hartlepool wards of De Bruce and Hart would be included in a Hartlepool constituency, and the City of Durham would be combined in a constituency with the coastal areas of Easington and Peterlee. The assistant commissioners acknowledged that the links between these areas were not strong and considered that the town of Easington might look more towards the wards of Dawdon and Deneside, while the City of Durham had established ties with the wards of Brandon, Coxhoe, and Framwellgate and Newton Hall. However, they considered that the configuration of the revised City of Durham and Easington constituency allowed for a better pattern of constituencies across the North East region as a whole. We accepted the revisions for this constituency.
440. Despite its links with the City of Durham, our assistant commissioners could see no compelling reason why the Framwellgate and Newton Hall ward (which they had visited) should not be included in the proposed North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency. They were of the view that the ward did not need to be included in a City of Durham constituency and recommended its inclusion in the North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency, noting that their recommended North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency was similar to the existing North Durham constituency, apart from the addition of the Framwellgate and Newton Hall ward. They considered that this ward had good road connections between the ward and to the town of Chester-le-Street via the A167. However, they acknowledged that this proposal was untested and invited further evidence on it in the consultation on the revised proposals.
441. Under our revised proposals, we recommended a North West Durham constituency, similar to the existing North West Durham constituency with only minimal changes. The constituency would include the wards of Brandon, Deerness, and Esh and Witton Gilbert that we had initially included in our proposed City of Durham constituency.

442. As detailed above, a number of respondents objected to the division of the town of Barnard Castle between constituencies. Therefore, we revised our initial Bishop Auckland constituency, which would now be the same as the existing Bishop Auckland constituency, but with the addition of the Willington and Hunwick ward. This constituency united all of Barnard Castle in the same constituency and reflected the evidence that Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland have good road connections along the A688.
443. As we were no longer proposing an East Durham constituency, we redistributed the wards of the proposed constituency among three other constituencies in our revised proposals. Seven wards, including the wards that formed the town of Newton Aycliffe, were included in a Billingham and Sedgefield constituency, which also contained six Borough of Stockton-on-Tees wards, including the town of Billingham. The Shotton and South Hetton, and Trimdon and Thornley wards were included in the City of Durham and Easington constituency, and in addition to the De Bruce and Hart wards, the County Durham wards of Blackhalls and Wingate were included in the Hartlepool constituency.
444. We did not consider that the counter-proposals or any of the evidence contained within the representations warranted any change to the Darlington constituency that we had proposed initially.

#### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

445. Some support was received for our revised pattern of constituencies in County Durham and Hartlepool, but our proposals for the County of Durham were nonetheless the most contentious in the whole North East region. There was particular opposition to the revised North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency and to the inclusion of the Framwellgate and Newton Hall ward in the constituency. There was also significant opposition to our proposed City of Durham and Easington constituency, which linked the City of Durham with coastal areas.
446. There was also opposition to the inclusion of the Burnopfield and Dipton ward in the Blaydon constituency. The ward had been included in the Blaydon constituency as a consequence of our decision to treat Northumberland as a separate sub-region without crossing county boundaries.
447. There was support for retaining the Darlington constituency as in the initial proposals without any further change, and for the revised proposals which reunited the town of Bishop Auckland in one constituency.

#### **Final recommendations**

448. We received a number of counter-proposals that offered alternative proposals for County Durham. With regard to the opposed inclusion of the Burnopfield and Dipton ward in the Blaydon constituency, we consider that the counter-proposals that had been submitted would inevitably create an alternative sub-region and result in a significant amount of change to other constituencies. We consider that the counter-proposals do not contain any significant new evidence, and that the evidence that was presented did not demonstrate how the counter-proposals would better reflect the statutory rules. We therefore do not consider that there was an ideal solution among the counter-proposals, or one that we could consider was an improvement on our revised proposals and that would lead us to modify our revised proposals. We therefore made no changes to the configuration of our revised proposals for constituencies in this area.

449. However, we consider that the configuration of the North Durham and Chester-le-Street constituency is not sufficiently dissimilar to the existing North Durham constituency to warrant the inclusion of the town of Chester-le-Street in the constituency name. We therefore rename the constituency North Durham.
450. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Billingham and Sedgfield, Bishop Auckland, City of Durham and Easington, Darlington, Houghton and Seaham, North Durham, and North West Durham.

## **Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees (Cleveland)**

### **Initial proposals**

451. Of the six existing constituencies in the unitary authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees, five have electorates below the permitted electorate range, while the electorate of the existing Stockton South constituency is within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed constituencies wholly within this area, although the two Borough of Hartlepool wards of De Bruce and Hart were included in an East Durham constituency. The remaining wards of the Borough of Hartlepool were included with four Borough of Stockton-on-Tees wards covering part of the town of Billingham to form a Hartlepool and Billingham constituency.
452. We proposed a wholly Borough of Stockton-on-Tees constituency that included seven wards from the existing Stockton South constituency, and eight wards from the existing Stockton North constituency. This included most of the town of Stockton-on-Tees. We named this constituency Stockton West. Our Middlesbrough West and Stockton East contained seven wards from the existing Middlesbrough constituency and five from the Stockton South constituency. This constituency also included Norton South and Stockton Town Centre wards which currently reside in the Stockton North constituency.
453. We proposed two further constituencies covering the Borough of Middlesbrough. Our Middlesbrough North East and Redcar constituency included 11 wards from the existing Redcar constituency and six wards from the existing Middlesbrough constituency. This configuration ensured that this constituency was located wholly to the south of the River Tees. Our Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency retained 13 wards from the existing constituency, and three wards from the existing Redcar constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

454. We received some support for our initial proposals in the south and east of the area. Respondents supported the inclusion of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees wards of Yarm and Eaglescliffe in the same constituency. Evidence we received indicated the close ties between the two areas, although some respondents suggested that, while Yarm and Eaglescliffe should be kept together, the two areas should be in a constituency with parts of North Yorkshire.
455. However, we received significant opposition to our proposals in Stockton and Middlesbrough as respondents considered that our initial proposals divided the respective town centres between constituencies. In addition, respondents were concerned about the division of the local authorities of Middlesbrough and Stockton between three constituencies. A number of counter-proposals

were received that sought to amend the initial proposals. Some of these counter-proposals suggested that parts of Middlesbrough should be included in a constituency with Redcar, whereas others suggested that Redcar should be included in a constituency with Guisborough and the coastal area of Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Those who opposed Middlesbrough being included in a constituency with Redcar indicated that the largely industrial ward of Dormanstown separated the two areas.

456. Counter-proposals were made in the Hartlepool area which objected to the division of the borough between two constituencies and objected to the division of the town of Billingham between constituencies, as the Billingham West ward had been included in the Stockton West constituency in our initial proposals.

### **Revised proposals**

457. Having considered the evidence received, we were of the view that improvements could be made to our initial proposals in this part of the region. As part of our revised proposals, we sought to reduce the division of the Borough of Middlesbrough between three constituencies to two. We were also persuaded by the evidence that our initial proposals divided the town centres of Middlesbrough and Stockton between constituencies.
458. There was significant objection to the division of the town of Billingham and counter-proposals suggested alternative configurations that would require extensive revisions. We decided to include the whole of the Borough of Hartlepool in a Hartlepool constituency with, reluctantly, the two County Durham wards of Blackhalls and Wingate. However, this meant that we were able to retain all the wards that formed the town of Billingham in a single constituency with eight County of Durham wards, including the town of Newton Aycliffe, in a constituency that we called Billingham and Sedgfield. Although we had reservations about including these different areas in the same constituency, we considered that the construction of this constituency allowed for a better pattern overall in the area.
459. We proposed a Middlesbrough South and Thornaby constituency that had the identifiable boundary of the River Tees to its west and did not divide the town centre of Stockton between constituencies. This constituency was comprised of wards from both the local authorities of Middlesbrough and Stockton. We were not persuaded by evidence to combine parts of Middlesbrough and Redcar in a constituency as we considered that the areas were largely separated by the Dormanstown ward. Therefore, we proposed a Middlesbrough and Eston constituency which included wards from the Borough of Middlesbrough and the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland, resulting in the centre of Middlesbrough not being divided between constituencies. To the east, we proposed a Redcar and East Cleveland constituency that included the coastal areas of the borough and the town of Guisborough.
460. In Stockton-on-Tees, we proposed a Stockton and Yarm constituency. This constituency included all the wards that form Stockton town centre and ensured that both the Yarm and Eaglescliffe wards were included in the same constituency. This further enabled all the wards covering Billingham town to be included in a Billingham and Sedgfield constituency, rather than be divided as under our initial proposals, as discussed previously.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

461. Relatively few representations were received in response to our revised proposals in this area, but, overall, our revised proposals have generally been supported. A further counter-proposal was received which suggested that the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland ward of Ormesby should be included in the Redcar and Cleveland constituency, rather than in the Middlesbrough and Eston constituency, as it was suggested that the ward was more rural in nature and that its ties were with Redcar and Cleveland.

### **Final recommendations**

462. We considered the counter-proposal to include the Ormesby ward in the Redcar and Cleveland constituency but were of the view that doing so would divide the Ormesby community between constituencies. We therefore decided not to modify either of the Middlesbrough and Eston, and Redcar and Cleveland constituencies.

463. Having reviewed all the evidence, we are making no further amendments to our revised proposals in this area. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Eston, Middlesbrough South and Thornaby, Redcar and East Cleveland, and Stockton and Yarm. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.





## North West

464. The North West currently has 75 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 20 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 53 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of two constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by seven, to 68.
465. The North West comprises the counties of Cumbria, Cheshire (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington) and Lancashire (including Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool), which are covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities. It also includes the former metropolitan counties of Greater Manchester and Merseyside (covered by metropolitan boroughs).
466. We appointed three assistant commissioners for the North West — Neil Ward, Nicholas Elliott, and Graeme Clarke — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
- Manchester: 11–12 October 2016
  - Chester: 13–14 October 2016
  - Carlisle: 17–18 October 2016
  - Liverpool: 20–21 October 2016
  - Lancaster: 24–25 October 2016.

### Sub-division of the region

467. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the North West of 5,074,302 results in it being entitled to 68 constituencies, a reduction of seven. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
468. Cumbria's electorate of almost 374,000 results in an entitlement of 5.02 constituencies. We have therefore considered Cumbria as a sub-region in its own right and have allocated five whole constituencies, a reduction of one.
469. The electorate of Lancashire and its unitary authorities of just over 1.05 million results in an entitlement of 14.06 constituencies. We have therefore considered Lancashire as a sub-region in its own right and have allocated 14 constituencies, a reduction of two. However, we have proposed one constituency that crosses the county boundary with Merseyside.
470. The electorate of the Metropolitan County of Merseyside, at almost 980,000, indicates that it should be allocated 13 constituencies. However, the electorate in the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral of almost 235,000 results in an entitlement of 3.14 constituencies, and suggests that it would be necessary either for a constituency to cross the boundary with Cheshire, or for a constituency to cross the River Mersey in Liverpool. With an entitlement of 9.94 constituencies, we decided to consider the remainder of Merseyside, without the Wirral, as a separate entity.

We also decided to include the Wirral in a sub-region with Greater Manchester and Cheshire; we acknowledge that this will necessitate a constituency that crosses the boundary with Cheshire. We therefore propose to allocate 13 whole constituencies to Merseyside (three to the Wirral and 10 to the rest of Merseyside), a reduction overall of two constituencies. As mentioned previously, despite the allocation of 10 constituencies in the remainder of Merseyside to the north and east of the River Mersey, we have crossed the county boundary between Merseyside and Lancashire in one constituency.

471. Greater Manchester's electorate, at almost 1.9 million, results in an entitlement of 25.37 constituencies. We considered that making proposals for 25 constituencies (a reduction of two constituencies) in this area that respected local government boundaries, while also seeking to minimise change to existing constituencies, would be very challenging.
472. Cheshire's electorate, at just over 773,000, results in an entitlement of 10.34 constituencies and therefore a reduction of one constituency to 10. The entitlements in both Greater Manchester and Cheshire suggest that it would be necessary for both counties to contain at least one constituency that crosses a county boundary. We considered that Lancashire's entitlement to 14.06 constituencies demonstrated that there could be no justification to propose a crossing of the boundary with Greater Manchester and the unnecessary disruption that would be caused. We had already concluded that the Wirral should be considered with Cheshire and decided that Greater Manchester, Cheshire and the Wirral should be considered as a sub-region, as there was likely to be a constituency that crossed the boundary between the Wirral and Cheshire, and two constituencies that crossed the boundary between Cheshire and Greater Manchester. One constituency would combine the Poynton area in Cheshire East with areas in the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport, and the other would combine the town of Knutsford and the area broadly to its north, also in Cheshire East, with areas in the Metropolitan Borough of Trafford.
473. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during consultation on the initial proposals.
474. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that compelling evidence had not been received to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries. We also considered that no persuasive evidence had been received to propose alternative sub-regions. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on the same sub-regions as those of our initial proposals.
475. In response to the revised proposals consultation, we did receive a representation that suggested the crossing of the regional boundary between the North West and the East Midlands in order to reconfigure constituencies in east Cheshire. However, we did not receive sufficient evidence that would justify the crossing of the regional boundary, nor to support the use of alternative sub-regions. The sub-regions we propose as part of the final recommendations are:
  - Cumbria
  - Lancashire
  - Merseyside (less the Wirral)
  - Greater Manchester, the Wirral, and Cheshire (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington).

## Cumbria

### Initial proposals

476. Of the six existing constituencies in Cumbria, none are within the permitted electorate range. Given its entitlement of 5.02 constituencies, under our initial proposals, the number of constituencies within Cumbria was reduced by one to give the sub-region a total of five constituencies. Significant changes were required to bring these five constituencies within the permitted electorate range.
477. In the north of the county, we proposed a Carlisle constituency, coterminous with the boundaries of Carlisle City Council, and encompassing the city and its rural hinterland.
478. We proposed that the existing Barrow and Furness constituency, which needed to gain electors in order to be within the permitted range, should extend northwards rather than eastwards, due to poor transport links across Cartmel Sands. Noting that the electorate of the existing Copeland constituency was well outside the permitted electorate range, we also suggested the creation of a coastal Workington and Whitehaven constituency in the west, extending from the town of Maryport down to the River Mite.
479. We then divided the Lakeland areas of Cumbria along an east–west axis, creating the constituencies of Penrith and Solway, and Westmorland and Lonsdale. We proposed that the town of Appleby-in-Westmorland be included in our Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency, which also contained the southern lakes, while the northern lakes and fells would be included in the Penrith and Solway constituency that extended to the Solway Firth in the west.

### Consultation on the initial proposals

480. We received broad support for all of our initial proposals in Cumbria, particularly for the proposed constituencies of Carlisle, and Penrith and Solway.
481. It was suggested that the Bootle ward on the west coast, which we recommended be included in the Barrow and Furness constituency, would be more appropriately included in the Workington and Whitehaven constituency.
482. Some respondents considered that the Dalston ward, which was proposed to be part of the Carlisle constituency, would be better placed in Penrith and Solway.
483. We received counter-proposals that suggested a cross-county boundary constituency between Cumbria and Lancashire. The primary aim of these proposals was to produce an alternative configuration for the proposed North Lancashire, and Lancaster and Morecambe constituencies.

### Revised proposals

484. Given the support our initial proposals received, our revised proposals for Cumbria were very similar and change was kept to a minimum.
485. We considered that the Bootle ward did indeed look north for its services and community links and the initial proposals were amended, resulting in the transfer of the Bootle ward from the Barrow and Furness constituency into the Workington and Whitehaven constituency. As was

also proposed by some representations, the proposed name of the Workington and Whitehaven constituency was changed to the more appropriate West Cumbria.

486. We did not consider the case to transfer the Dalston ward from the Carlisle constituency into the Penrith and Solway constituency to be sufficiently strong enough to warrant change, particularly in light of considerable support for the proposed Carlisle constituency and representations that confirmed the integral nature of Dalston to the rest of the City of Carlisle. We therefore retained both constituencies as proposed in the initial proposals.
487. We considered that compelling evidence had not been received to propose constituencies that crossed the county boundary into Lancashire.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

488. There were relatively few representations received in reference to constituencies within Cumbria, with many of the proposed constituencies continuing to be broadly supported. Opposition in Cumbria largely focused on the principle of the review itself and we did not receive substantive counter-proposals for the sub-region.
489. Our change — moving the Bootle ward from the Barrow and Furness constituency to the Workington and Whitehaven constituency — did not prove to be contentious, nor did the proposal to rename Workington and Whitehaven as West Cumbria.

### **Final recommendations**

490. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Cumbria. We do not consider that any further compelling or new evidence has been provided that would justify changing the constitution of our revised proposal constituencies. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Barrow and Furness, Carlisle, Penrith and Solway, West Cumbria and Westmorland and Lonsdale. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Lancashire**

### **Initial proposals**

491. Of the existing 16 constituencies within Lancashire, only three (Chorley, South Ribble, and Ribble Valley) have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range, and many of the remaining constituencies have electorates that are significantly lower than the permitted electorate range. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that Lancashire's entitlement to 14.06 constituencies meant that the county could have been treated on its own, but we proposed the inclusion of three West Lancashire borough wards in a cross-county Southport constituency — primarily so that the town of Formby would not be divided. The reduction of two constituencies in one county is a significant one, resulting in some difficulty for us in proposing constituencies that match the existing pattern.
492. The low electorates of both the Morecambe and Lunesdale, and Lancaster and Fleetwood constituencies meant that we proposed the combination of both Lancaster and Morecambe into one constituency, although this did not include Lancaster University, which is located in the mostly rural University & Scotforth Rural ward. The geographically large ward sizes, but conversely small

ward electorates, led us to include this ward in a constituency that stretched from the Cumbrian border to the estuary of the River Wyre and to the outskirts of the City of Preston, which we proposed to be named North Lancashire.

493. On the Fylde, the electorates of Blackpool South, and Blackpool North and Cleveleys were particularly low, and we proposed modifications to both. We proposed that the Kilnhouse, and St. Leonards wards be included in the Blackpool South constituency, the town of Fleetwood be included in the Blackpool North constituency, which we named Blackpool North and Fleetwood, and that the Fylde constituency should include the four wards comprising the town of Poulton-le-Fylde.
494. The existing Preston constituency had the fourth-lowest total electorate in the North West. We suggested that the whole of the city area, including Fulwood, could be included in a compact, urban constituency.
495. We recommended a minor change to the existing Blackburn constituency — the inclusion of the Fernhurst ward from the existing Rossendale and Darwen constituency. In turn, we proposed that Rossendale and Darwen should gain two wards from the existing Hyndburn constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range, and to create a geographically better shaped constituency.
496. As a result of these changes, the Hyndburn constituency needed to increase in terms of electors so that it was within the permitted electorate range. We proposed the inclusion of three wards on the eastern side of the constituency from the existing Burnley constituency and, in view of these changes, suggested that the constituency be called Accrington. Burnley meanwhile, in addition to the change mentioned above, would extend northwards to include eight wards from the existing Pendle constituency.
497. Although the electorate of the existing Ribble Valley constituency was within the permitted electorate range, as a result of the reduction of two constituencies in the county and of changes made elsewhere, we suggested that the remainder of the existing Pendle constituency be combined with a number of wards from the existing Ribble Valley constituency and included them in a Clitheroe and Colne constituency.
498. With respect to the existing West Lancashire constituency, we proposed that this be changed only by the inclusion of the wards of Rufford, and Eccleston and Mawdesley from the existing South Ribble constituency. We further proposed that the wards of North Meols, Hesketh-with-Beaconsall, and Tarleton be transferred from the existing South Ribble constituency to our proposed Southport constituency. The South Ribble constituency would then include several wards in the east from the existing Ribble Valley constituency.
499. Finally, we suggested that the constituency of Chorley should remain unchanged.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

500. In our initial proposals, the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency was the subject of much opposition — perhaps the most contentious constituency in the North West. It attracted hundreds of individual representations from residents of both Lancaster and Morecambe. The Member of Parliament for Morecambe and Lunesdale submitted several sets of letters as part of a campaign to keep Morecambe and Lancaster separate. We also received petitions from hundreds of Lancaster residents who called on us to reject any proposal that would divide the town of

Lancaster. The main objection to the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency stemmed from the idea that the two towns had distinct and strongly separate identities. The exclusion of Lancaster University, which is located in the mostly rural University & Scotforth Rural ward, was also a major point of opposition to the proposals. Several respondents, some of whom otherwise supported the initial proposals, considered the separation of Lancaster University from the Lancaster constituency to be unacceptable.

501. The North Lancashire constituency did not receive much support from respondents; many commented on the geographical size of the constituency, the lack of community links, and the number of local authorities that were contained within the constituency. The Clitheroe and Colne constituency was widely criticised for its long, narrow shape. The configuration of these constituencies caused some concern among residents of the existing Ribble Valley constituency; they were concerned that the communities within the constituency would be divided between North Lancashire and Clitheroe and Colne, and deprive them of their association with the Ribble Valley and Pendle. This concern was demonstrated by a letter-writing campaign containing 570 signatories, which encouraged us to use the configuration suggested at the revised proposals stage of the abandoned 2013 Review. This configuration included all of the Pendle local authority area in a single constituency.
502. Generally, there was less opposition to our initial proposals in the south of Lancashire. The configuration of our Accrington constituency was largely supported, although some suggested that the name Hyndburn would better reflect the areas contained within the constituency. It was also suggested that we should transfer wards between the proposed Accrington constituency and the proposed Burnley constituency. It was argued that Coal Clough with Deerplay ward, which we had placed in Accrington, would be better suited in the Burnley constituency and should be moved there; to compensate for this, Accrington would in turn receive the Rosegrove with Lowerhouse ward from the Burnley constituency. The majority of respondents in Burnley supported our proposals. There were, however, a number of respondents in the town of Nelson who were opposed to being included in a Burnley constituency.
503. The proposed South Ribble constituency was largely supported, although there were calls for the Bamber Bridge East ward, which had been included in the Clitheroe and Colne constituency, to be included in the South Ribble constituency alongside its partner ward Bamber Bridge West. There were also a number of suggestions that the Eccleston and Mawdesley ward should be included in the South Ribble constituency (where it is currently located) rather than West Lancashire.
504. On the Fylde, the principal issue of contention was the division of the town of St. Annes. Under the initial proposals, it was suggested that the St. Leonards and Kilnhouse wards should be transferred out of the Fylde constituency and be moved into a Blackpool South constituency. This proposal was met with widespread opposition. As well as the division of the community, many respondents in St. Annes remarked that they felt no affinity with Blackpool, and did not share many common interests with its people. Furthermore, it was noted that Blackpool Airport represented a very clear division between the town and Blackpool. A number of counter-proposals were submitted which sought to bring St. Annes back into the Fylde constituency. They varied in approach and scale: some restricted changes to relatively few constituencies, while others suggested changes that had a large impact on the rest of Lancashire.

505. We noted that, at all stages of consultation, there were relatively few representations received in reference to the proposed constituencies of Blackburn, Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Chorley, Preston, Rossendale and Darwen, with most representations broadly in support of our proposals.

### **Revised proposals**

506. We empathised with the strong sense of identity that was illustrated in many representations from those located in Morecambe, and the genuinely held concerns they had regarding our proposal to place them in a constituency with Lancaster. However, we considered that many representations, from respondents in both Morecambe and Lancaster, provided evidence demonstrating the ease and frequency with which they travelled, worked, and used leisure facilities and other services across both areas. We also noted that counter-proposals which proposed to split the two areas moved areas of Lancaster, including the Bulk ward, into a Morecambe constituency. This suggestion was strongly opposed by residents of Lancaster, who considered that it would result in an unacceptable division of their community. We agreed with this assessment and, having considered all of the additional evidence, we did not consider the case to place Lancaster and Morecambe in separate constituencies to be sufficiently persuasive.

507. We did, however, consider configurations that would have included the University & Scotforth Rural ward in the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency. Our assistant commissioners were persuaded of the university's importance to Lancaster and by representations suggesting that the Bolton & Slyne ward was a logical fit for the North Lancashire constituency. They recommended that the university should be included in the proposed Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, if additionally the Halton-with-Aughton ward was transferred to it, and the Bolton & Slyne ward was transferred to the proposed North Lancashire constituency. We noted that this configuration resulted in the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency having a geographically irregular shape, and made it appear somewhat artificial. While we understood the concerns that many had regarding the exclusion of the university from the constituency, we agreed with the point made that student populations are often transient, and noted that many students would reside off campus, where they were likely to be electors in the proposed constituency. The arguments were finely balanced, but we did not find the evidence in support of the university being included in a Lancaster constituency, at the expense of the Bolton & Slyne ward, to be sufficiently persuasive. While recognising some of the merits of the arguments put to us by the assistant commissioners, we rejected their recommendations and made no revision to the initial proposals for Lancaster and Morecambe.

508. We noted the concerns about the large geographical area covered by the proposed North Lancashire constituency but were able to compare it with other similarly sized constituencies in Cumbria, noting that large constituencies were a natural consequence of sparsely populated areas. The legislation sets a maximum cap on the geographical size that a constituency can be: the North Lancashire constituency was comfortably within that maximum. We did not consider the evidence and counter-proposals submitted to be persuasive enough to warrant a change to our initial proposals for this constituency.

509. Our recommendation not to modify the proposed North Lancashire constituency meant that any changes to proposals in the boroughs of Ribble Valley and Pendle would have to be minimal. We did not suggest significant modifications to the configuration of the Clitheroe and Colne constituency, as was suggested by a number of counter-proposals. Our assistant commissioners



noted that there were a number of representations that considered it was not possible to travel easily across the proposed constituency, and decided to visit the area to investigate further. Beginning in Preston town centre, and primarily using the A59 to travel through the constituency, the assistant commissioners observed that, while it was not possible to travel across the whole constituency on major trunk roads without exiting into the proposed North Lancashire constituency, it was possible to remain in the constituency using alternative routes available around Pendle Hill. Due to the proposed constituency containing numerous wards from both the Pendle and Ribble Valley local authority areas, we recommended that the constituency should be renamed Pendle and Ribble Valley.

510. As part of their investigation in the Ribble Valley, the assistant commissioners also travelled to Bamber Bridge. They noted that the transfer of the Bamber Bridge East ward into the South Ribble constituency was desirable, as it unified the town in one constituency and had no knock-on effects. We agreed with this assessment and recommended that this ward transfer should be included in our revised proposals.
511. Uniting Bamber Bridge in the South Ribble constituency meant that we would not be able to include the Eccleston and Mawdesley ward in the South Ribble constituency, as a number of representations had suggested, because it would have led to the electorate of the constituency being outside the permitted electorate range. We did consider, however, that the ward could also be appropriately included in the Chorley constituency, noting that the ward is located within the Chorley local authority. There were multiple benefits to making this move: first, the West Lancashire constituency would now be wholly contained within West Lancashire borough; second, Chorley borough would now only be divided between two constituencies (rather than three, as in the initial proposals); and, third, that there were existing ties with the rest of the Chorley constituency. For these reasons, we recommended that the Eccleston and Mawdesley ward should be transferred out of South Ribble and into the Chorley constituency as part of the revised proposals.
512. We were persuaded by the argument that the Rosegrove with Lowerhouse ward had superior community links with Accrington, and agreed with the view that residents within the Coal Clough with Deerplay ward would look more to Burnley for their services. We therefore recommended that these two wards be exchanged between the Accrington and Burnley constituencies as part of the revised proposals. We also noted that many representations supported the view that the name Accrington would effectively represent the constituency, and suggested that this remain unchanged.
513. We investigated the counter-proposals that addressed the division of Lytham St. Annes between constituencies. One of them proposed an alternative arrangement of constituencies that would result in the Fylde local authority area being wholly contained in a single constituency. This proposal would also transfer the two wards of Breck and Carleton into the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency, and would additionally include the Warbreck ward in the Blackpool South constituency. We noted that this would divide the town of Poulton-le-Fylde between constituencies but were persuaded by the evidence illustrating the division of St. Annes, as well as noting the physical division between the Kilnhouse and St. Leonards wards and Blackpool, due to the presence of the airport. We therefore recommended that the constituencies of Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde should be revised in accordance with this counter-proposal.

514. We noted that relatively few representations were received in reference to the proposed constituencies of Blackburn, Chorley, Preston, Rossendale and Darwen, with most representations broadly in support of the initial proposals. Aside from the division of the area of Bamber Bridge between constituencies, as described earlier in this section, the proposed South Ribble constituency, also proved uncontroversial.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

515. The revised proposals attracted much less comment than the initial proposals, with our small changes in the south and west of the county being largely supported. However, the constituencies of Lancaster and Morecambe, North Lancashire, and Pendle and Ribble Valley continued to attract significant opposition.

516. The proposed Lancaster and Morecambe constituency was again the subject of a campaign which sought to keep Morecambe in a separate constituency to Lancaster. With more than 890 individual comments submitted, this campaign was smaller than those seen in previous consultations, but it still accounted for the vast majority of the representations received in Lancashire. The campaign largely reiterated views that had been expressed in previous stages of the consultation, such as the view that Lancaster and Morecambe have completely separate identities. Included in this campaign were a number of comments from residents in areas such as Carnforth and Silverdale, who strongly opposed their inclusion in the North Lancashire constituency, citing their lack of community links to other areas in the constituency, and their preference to remain in a Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency.

517. As in the previous consultations, there was also some support for our Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, primarily from those residing in Lancaster, although a number of these respondents continued to have reservations over the exclusion of the university from the constituency. We received a counter-proposal which sought to include the university in the constituency by moving either the Bolton & Slyne or Overton wards into North Lancashire.

518. The Pendle and Ribble Valley constituency, which we had formerly called Clitheroe and Colne, also drew significant objections. Respondents argued that the constituency was an irregular shape and had a lack of community focus.

519. Opponents of these constituencies instead favoured a counter-proposal which had originally been submitted during the consultation on our initial proposals. This counter-proposal advocated the creation of a Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency, which was similar to the existing constituency, but also included parts of Lancaster city centre. It included Ribble Valley and Hyndburn West, and Pendle constituencies, which largely matched the boundaries of the Ribble Valley and Pendle local authorities. It also proposed a Lancaster and Wyre constituency which stretched from the centre of Lancaster in the north to the centre of Preston in the south.

520. We had received some support for the name of the Accrington constituency in the previous stages of consultation; in the latest consultation, however, we noted that there were a significant number of representations still calling for the retention of the name Hyndburn. The rationale given noted that the existing constituency in the area is called Hyndburn, the local authority is Hyndburn district and the name Accrington does not reflect all of the main population centres in the area.

521. The transfer of the St. Leonards and Kilnhouse wards from Blackpool South into Fylde, thus reuniting St. Annes in one constituency, was almost unanimously supported. Some representations did, however, express opposition to the consequential division of Poulton-le-Fylde between constituencies to enable these changes to be made.
522. We received no significant support or objection in relation to the remainder of constituencies within Lancashire.

### **Final recommendations**

523. Having carefully considered the evidence received in relation to Lancashire, we are not persuaded to modify the configuration of the revised proposals in this sub-region. We consider that the reduction of two constituencies in Lancashire, and the fact that only three of the existing constituencies have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range, with many existing constituencies being significantly lower than the permitted range, means that a large degree of change across the county is inevitable.
524. We note that the main counter-proposal for constituencies in the north of Lancashire had already been submitted in earlier stages of the consultation, and we still do not consider this counter-proposal to be superior to our current recommendations, nor do we feel that sufficiently persuasive new evidence has been received to modify our proposals. While the counter-proposal does have its merits, we consider that the current proposals provide a better balance of the statutory factors for constituencies across Lancashire.
525. The proposed Lancaster and Morecambe constituency has proven contentious since the initial proposals, attracting much opposition across all of the consultation periods. Despite this significant opposition, we are not recommending a change to the configuration of this constituency as part of our final recommendations. When formulating our revised proposals, we carefully considered the question of whether there were any connections between Lancaster and Morecambe, acknowledging that, in the discontinued 2013 Review, the assistant commissioners concluded that the two had separate and distinct identities. On reflection, and based on some of the evidence submitted during this review, we concluded that residents of the two areas had intrinsic links to each other through their work, shared services and institutions. Furthermore, we noted that the main counter-proposal supported by some residents of Morecambe recommended a Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency which contained parts of Lancaster city centre within its boundaries. This proposal seemed to contradict the sought aim of Morecambe maintaining separate Parliamentary representation to Lancaster; and it also had the effect of dividing communities within Lancaster. We recognise that the arguments here are finely balanced, but we do not consider that any of the counter-proposals we received provide a superior balance of the statutory factors. While popular in Morecambe, a separate Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency would lead to a disproportionate amount of change across the rest of Lancashire and produce unsatisfactory constituencies elsewhere, particularly in the south of the county.
526. We carefully considered the case for the inclusion of the university in the Lancaster and Morecambe constituency, and we are not satisfied that persuasive new evidence has been received to change this proposal. We further note that the counter-proposal, which suggested we move either the Bolton & Slyne or Overton wards into North Lancashire in order to accommodate the university, resulted in a constituency that does not meet the statutory requirements for the number of electors, and therefore can not be recommended.

527. Objections to the North Lancashire, and Pendle and Ribble Valley constituencies were considered during our formulation of the revised proposals, and we have not received persuasive evidence to suggest we should depart from these proposals. We consider that the arguments put forward by the residents of Carnforth and Silverdale are similar to those heard in previous stages of the consultation. While we recognise the strength of feeling against the current proposals from these areas, we do not consider that the counter-proposal which included these areas in a Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency provided a better overall solution for Lancashire. We recognise that the arguments put forward about the lack of community links with other areas in the constituency could be put forward by many of the other settlements that are proposed to be included in the North Lancashire constituency; given the large geographical size of many of these wards and the low electorates of each, it is inevitable that any constituency configuration in this part of the region would cover a large area. We note that there are existing constituencies elsewhere in the region and in other regions across the country that exceed the acreage of this constituency. We do not consider the presence of four local authorities in the proposed North Lancashire constituency to be ideal, but note that there are existing constituencies with a similar arrangement.
528. We acknowledge that the proposed Pendle and Ribble Valley constituency has an irregular shape, and that counter-proposals that instead created constituencies of Ribble Valley and Hyndburn West, and Pendle would be supported by several respondents. However, given our decisions elsewhere in Lancashire, and the broad support for the boundaries of our Preston constituency, we do not consider that persuasive evidence has been received to recommend these proposals. We note that our assistant commissioners visited this area to assess the viability of this proposed constituency, and concluded that travel across the constituency was not a significant issue.
529. The transfer of the Eccleston and Mawdsley ward into Chorley, and the unification of the Bamber Bridge wards in South Ribble, did not attract much comment. The few representations we did receive in relation to these changes were largely supportive, and in light of this, we do not recommend any changes to these proposals.
530. Following careful consideration of the representations received in relation to our Accrington constituency, we note the evidence that suggests Hyndburn is a more appropriate name for the constituency. Accrington, as a name, had been supported in previous stages of the consultation, and while there had been suggestions to rename the constituency Hyndburn, the naming of the constituency had not proven to be especially contentious. We are now minded to change the name in light of continuing calls for us to recognise the areas outside Accrington in the proposed constituency, as well as the desire to be consistent with our naming policy of constituencies across England.
531. The division of Poulton-le-Fylde is regrettable and has raised a small amount of concern, but we did anticipate this reaction and reached the conclusion that the division of St. Annes was more problematic. We considered that Blackpool Airport was a significant physical division between the Kilnhouse and St. Leonards wards and Blackpool. We also noted that moving the Carleton and Breck wards out of the Flyde and into Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency would allow them to be placed in a constituency located within the Wyre local authority, in which they are currently placed. Therefore, we do not recommend any further changes to the Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, and Fylde constituencies.

532. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Blackburn, Blackpool North and Fleetwood, Blackpool South, Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster and Morecambe, North Lancashire, Pendle and Ribble Valley, Preston, Rossendale and Darwen, South Ribble, and West Lancashire. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Merseyside (less the Wirral)**

### **Initial proposals**

533. Of the 11 constituencies within this sub-region, four have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to reduce the number of constituencies within this sub-region by one, to 10, due to its entitlement to 9.94 constituencies, and retained unchanged the four constituencies of Knowsley, Garston and Halewood, St Helens South and Whiston, and St Helens North, which are currently within the permitted electorate range.
534. We proposed that the wards comprising the existing Liverpool, Walton constituency should be redistributed among the Liverpool Riverside, Liverpool West Derby, and Bootle constituencies. This redistribution brought the Liverpool West Derby, and Liverpool Riverside constituencies within the permitted electorate range. We also proposed the transfer of the Greenbank ward from Liverpool Riverside to Liverpool Wavertree.
535. Elsewhere we suggested crossing the Merseyside and Lancashire county boundary by incorporating into the proposed Southport constituency the three West Lancashire borough wards of North Meols, Hesketh-with-Becconsall, and Tarleton, thereby allowing the town of Formby to remain undivided and allowing for more of the town of Crosby to be contained within the reconfigured Sefton Central constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

536. The initial proposals for Merseyside generated a relatively small number of representations and few counter-proposals. In addition, a significant number of representations expressed objections to the principle of the review, rather than to specific proposals.
537. There was a large degree of support for the retention of the Knowsley, Garston and Halewood, St Helens South and Whiston, and St Helens North constituencies. However, a few respondents did express concerns at the continued division of the town of Prescott between the Knowsley, and St Helens South and Whiston constituencies.
538. Few representations were received in reference to the Liverpool Riverside, Liverpool West Derby, and Liverpool Wavertree constituencies. The transfer of the Greenbank ward from Liverpool Riverside to Liverpool Wavertree proved to be somewhat contentious with some residents arguing that the St. Michael's and Greenbank wards were inextricably linked and should remain in the same constituency; others argued that the placement of Greenbank ward would make no tangible difference to the residents and that they could be placed in either constituency.
539. There was some concern over the proposal to redistribute the wards of the historic Liverpool, Walton constituency. Most of the objection was centred on the redistribution of Liverpool,

Walton's wards into neighbouring constituencies outside the city boundaries, in particular the Bootle constituency. It was felt that Liverpool, Walton would lose its identity under the proposed boundary changes. Liverpool, Walton is almost entirely residential while Bootle encompasses the dock area, thus having different needs.

540. The cross-county boundary Southport constituency received a mixture of support and opposition. It was noted that the three Lancashire wards looked more towards Southport than towns in Lancashire and that many residents of these wards regard Southport as their local town. The proposal was also widely supported because it kept the town of Formby united. Opposition to the proposal centred around the belief that the rural communities of the Lancashire wards had different needs to the town of Southport, and residents were also uneasy about belonging to a constituency divided between two local authorities.

### **Revised proposals**

541. We considered the debate surrounding the placement of the Greenbank ward, the preservation of Liverpool, Walton and the continued division of the town of Prescot. Ultimately, we did not consider the objections to our initial proposals compelling enough to necessitate a revision.
542. We noted that there was a counter-proposal for Merseyside which did not require a cross-county constituency in Southport. However, we considered that the knock-on effects of this proposal were too severe, namely the division of Formby and subsequent mass reconfiguration of constituencies in Lancashire.
543. In light of the support for the initial proposals, we recommended that these proposals for all 10 proposed constituencies should remain unchanged. We considered that the counter-proposals received for this sub-region would result in further division of communities and lead to changes in existing constituencies which could otherwise be left unchanged. Furthermore, the initial proposals were largely supported. We therefore decided not to modify the initial proposals in the Merseyside sub-region.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

544. Given that the proposals for Merseyside were not revised, much of the feedback we received at this stage was similar to that seen in the previous stages of consultation. The number of representations received in Merseyside was relatively low and much of the debate was centred on the principle of the review itself, with a significant number of representations objecting to change in any form.
545. The inclusion of the three West Lancashire borough wards of Hesketh-with-Beaconsall, North Meols, and Tarleton in a Southport constituency were opposed to a greater degree than in previous stages of the consultation. Respondents from within the existing Southport constituency considered that the rural nature of these three wards contrasted with the urban nature of the Southport constituency, and that therefore their inclusion would be inappropriate.
546. The proposed redistribution of the wards that comprise the existing Liverpool, Walton constituency to other constituencies continued to draw objections, as did the proposed transfer of the Liverpool City wards of County and Warbreck to the Bootle constituency. We did not receive any substantive counter-proposals for these constituencies, nor for any other constituencies in the Merseyside sub-region.

## **Final recommendations**

547. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Merseyside. We do not consider that any further compelling or new evidence has been provided that might justify changing the composition of our revised proposal constituencies. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Bootle, Garston and Halewood, Knowsley, Liverpool Riverside, Liverpool Wavertree, Liverpool West Derby, Sefton Central, Southport, St Helens North, and St Helens South and Whiston. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Greater Manchester, the Wirral, and Cheshire (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Halton and Warrington)**

548. Under the initial proposals, we recommended three cross-county boundary constituencies in this sub-region. We proposed two constituencies that contain electors from both Cheshire and Greater Manchester: one that combined the towns of Altrincham and Knutsford in a constituency, and another that combined Bramhall and Poynton in a constituency. We further recommended that one constituency, Ellesmere Port and Neston, cross the county boundary between Cheshire and the Wirral. We do not propose to modify this sub-region; therefore our final recommendations will continue to propose three cross-county, constituencies. These are detailed later in this section.

## **Greater Manchester**

### **Initial proposals**

549. Of the 27 existing constituencies within Greater Manchester, 11 have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range. Since the electorates of many constituencies in the western and central Greater Manchester areas were within the permitted electorate range, in our initial proposals we sought to retain as many of these constituencies unchanged as possible. This resulted in the Wigan, Makerfield, Leigh, Worsley and Eccles South, Salford and Eccles, Blackley and Broughton, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, and Wythenshawe and Sale East constituencies remaining wholly unchanged. The Manchester Central constituency was amended only by the necessary removal of the Moston ward.
550. We proposed that the Bucklow-St. Martins ward be included in our cross-county boundary Altrincham and Tatton Park constituency, and as a result of changes elsewhere, recommended that the two western Sale town wards of Ashton upon Mersey and St. Mary's should be included in the Stretford and Urmston constituency.
551. We proposed more significant changes in the boroughs of Bolton and Bury. These included a Farnworth constituency comprising five Borough of Bolton wards and three Borough of Bury wards, a Bolton West constituency that included the Halliwell ward, and a Bolton North East constituency that included the Rumworth and Great Lever wards. Finally, we proposed a Bury constituency that was largely the same as the existing Bury North constituency with the addition of the Radcliffe East ward.
552. We further proposed a Prestwich and Middleton constituency, comprising five wards from the Borough of Bury, and five wards from the Borough of Rochdale. The Rochdale constituency was

significantly reconfigured to include most of the town of Rochdale, including the town centre, and most of the town of Heywood. We proposed a new, moor-based Littleborough and Saddleworth constituency, which contained five wards each from the boroughs of Rochdale and Oldham, and included the Moston ward from Manchester Central in our compact Oldham constituency. Further south from Oldham, we proposed a Failsworth and Droylsden constituency, which contained wards from four existing constituencies in the boroughs of Oldham and Tameside.

553. Elsewhere in Tameside, our proposed Ashton-under-Lyne constituency included both the towns of Mossley and Stalybridge, as well as both the Dukinfield and Dukinfield Stalybridge wards, which were previously in different constituencies.
554. We proposed two cross-county boundary constituencies that included wards from the boroughs of both Stockport and Tameside: Marple and Hyde, which included four wards from each borough; and Stockport North and Denton, which included three Borough of Tameside wards and five Borough of Stockport wards. Our proposed Stockport South and Cheadle constituency included only Borough of Stockport wards, in a configuration that allowed Cheadle Hulme and Cheadle to remain together.
555. We recommended two constituencies that crossed the county boundary between Greater Manchester and Cheshire. We proposed a Bramhall and Poynton constituency that comprised five wards from the Borough of Stockport (including the towns of Bramhall and Hazel Grove) and five wards from Cheshire East (including the towns of Poynton, Disley, and Handforth). The other constituency that crossed the county boundary between Greater Manchester and Cheshire, Altrincham and Tatton Park, is addressed later in this report.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

556. During the consultation on our initial proposals, our decision to retain the constituencies of Blackley and Broughton, Salford and Eccles, Wigan, Makerfield, Leigh, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, Wythenshawe and Sale East, and Worsley and Eccles South was generally supported, and did not elicit many representations. In respect of the Manchester Central constituency, some respondents considered the transfer of the Moston ward to the Oldham constituency to be inappropriate, given that the ward is administered by Manchester City Council, and the area has little connection to Oldham.
557. We received a mixture of support for and opposition to our proposals in the Borough of Bolton. While some respondents supported our proposed constituencies of Bolton West, Bolton North East, and Farnworth, others considered that the Astley Bridge ward should be included in a Bolton West constituency, and the Rumworth and Great Lever wards should be included in a Bolton South East constituency, due to those areas having close ties to Hulton, Harper Green, and Farnworth. In Bury, several respondents considered that the communities of Whitefield and Radcliffe had been divided between constituencies by the initial proposals and supported a counter-proposal that modified the constituencies of Farnworth, Prestwich and Middleton, and Bury, thereby allowing these towns to remain united.
558. In the Borough of Oldham, many respondents expressed objections to the proposed Failsworth and Droylsden constituency, considering the inclusion of wards from the Borough of Tameside to be undesirable, and noting that the M60 motorway bisected the constituency. Counter-proposals received for this area included one that contained two constituencies wholly



within the Borough of Oldham, and another that altered three constituencies in order to restore ties that had been broken. Other respondents opposed the division of Royton between the Oldham, and Littleborough and Saddleworth constituencies. In the Borough of Rochdale, some respondents objected to any modifications to the existing Rochdale, and Heywood and Middleton constituencies, due to both having electorates within the permitted range, and suggested that these constituencies remain unaltered. The cross-borough boundary constituency of Littleborough and Saddleworth was supported by some, but others considered a constituency with two different local authority areas to be undesirable, and also felt that the exclusion of the Saddleworth West and Lees ward from the constituency divided Saddleworth between constituencies.

559. We received almost unanimous support, including a letter-writing campaign, for the proposed Stockport North and Denton constituency. Objections to the Stockport South and Cheadle constituency mainly focused on the division of the Heatons North and Heatons South wards between constituencies.
560. Many respondents also objected to the Marple and Hyde constituency, considering there to be little commonality between electors in each borough area.
561. Some counter-proposals were received that modified the chain of either wholly or minimally changed constituencies (Blackley and Broughton, Leigh, Makerfield, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, Salford and Eccles, Wigan, Worsley and Eccles South, and Wythenshawe and Sale East) in order to address concerns in other areas.
562. We received significant objections to the cross-county boundary Bramhall and Poynton constituency, and noted that many respondents from Poynton did not wish to be included in a constituency with wards outside the county of Cheshire. We received counter-proposals that continued to link the two areas in one constituency, with slight alterations. Further objections to the initial proposals in this area included the division of the towns of Handforth and Wilmslow, with several respondents additionally expressing their wish that these towns be situated in constituencies based wholly in Cheshire.

### **Revised proposals**

563. In light of the evidence received, we decided not to make wholesale changes to our initial proposals for Greater Manchester, but opted to recommend alterations that could be self-contained, and did not adversely affect those constituencies that we suggested should either be minimally or wholly unchanged. Therefore, we recommended that the proposed constituencies of Ashton-under-Lyne, Blackley and Broughton, Bolton North East, Bolton West, Leigh, Makerfield, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, Marple and Hyde, Rochdale, Salford and Eccles, Stockport North and Denton, Stockport South and Cheadle, Stretford and Urmston, Worsley and Eccles South, and Wythenshawe and Sale East remain unaltered.
564. As noted previously, we received a number of objections regarding the proposed Farnworth constituency, namely to the division of the communities of Radcliffe and Whitefield. We were persuaded by evidence received in support of counter-proposals that transferred the Radcliffe East ward from our proposed Bury constituency to our Farnworth constituency (which we subsequently renamed Farnworth and Radcliffe); that transferred the Pilkington Park ward to

a Prestwich and Middleton constituency; and that also transferred the Unsworth ward to a Bury constituency.

565. In the boroughs of Oldham and Rochdale, we considered the evidence received that Royton and Saddleworth had both been divided between constituencies to be persuasive, and recommended that the Failsworth and Droylsden, Littleborough and Saddleworth, and Oldham constituencies be modified so that both areas would remain undivided. We did not consider other counter-proposals, which suggested that two constituencies should be wholly contained within the Borough of Oldham local authority, to be persuasive, in light of the consequential effects on neighbouring constituencies.
566. We considered that persuasive evidence had been received regarding the breaking of local ties in Handforth and Wilmslow, but observed that the counter-proposals submitted had undesirable consequences elsewhere in Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Taking into account the evidence that had been submitted, we recommended a pattern of constituencies in Greater Manchester and Cheshire that allowed the Wilmslow and Handforth areas to be united in a single constituency, that we suggested be called Hazel Grove and Wilmslow. Therefore, in our revised proposals, there would no longer be a Bramall and Poynton constituency.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

567. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received relatively few representations in reference to our proposed constituencies of Blackley and Broughton, Bolton North East, Bolton West, Leigh, Makerfield, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, Rochdale, Salford and Eccles, Worsley and Eccles South, and Wythenshawe and Sale East. In regard to the proposed Manchester Gorton constituency (which is unchanged from its existing configuration), some respondents made reference to local government ward changes, requesting that the proposals be amended to align with these accordingly.
568. Despite uniting both Whitefield and Radcliffe in single constituencies in our revised proposals, we received some objections to our proposed Farnworth, Bury, and Prestwich and Middleton constituencies. Many of the objections to these constituencies were to the review in principle, or were generally opposed to the suggestion of cross-borough boundary constituencies.
569. In Rochdale, some respondents objected to the division of the Heywood area between the Rochdale, and Prestwich and Middleton constituencies, and to the exclusion of the Balderstone and Kirkholt ward from the Rochdale constituency. Many respondents supported the revisions to the Littleborough and Saddleworth constituency, noting the inclusion of the Saddleworth and Lees ward as a marked improvement. Others, however, continued to oppose the combining of the two areas in a single constituency, noting that the proposed constituency contained electors from both the Rochdale and Oldham local authority areas, and the poor road links across the constituency.
570. In response to the revised proposals for constituencies within the Borough of Oldham, some respondents considered the inclusion of both the Royton North and Royton South wards in the Oldham constituency to be an improvement, but other respondents felt that the name of the constituency was not a true reflection of its composition. Some suggested that as the constituency contained the three wards that comprise Chadderton (Chadderton Central, Chadderton North and Chadderton South), the name of the town should feature in the constituency. Others suggested that for similar reasons, the town of Royton should feature in

the name of the constituency. Other respondents, however, still considered both the Oldham, and Failsworth and Droylsden constituencies to be incoherent, and proposed alternative configurations for these constituencies.

571. In respect of our proposed Ashton-under-Lyne constituency, we received several representations from residents of Stalybridge expressing concerns about the inclusion of the town in the constituency, considering that they did not want their town's needs to be considered as an afterthought in comparison to Ashton-under-Lyne. Many of these respondents also expressed the view that the existing Stalybridge and Hyde constituency was long-standing, and that, while Stalybridge had formerly been part of Cheshire, Ashton had formerly been part of Lancashire; many people still recognised this difference. Other comments received in reference to this constituency considered the absence of Stalybridge in the constituency's name to be unacceptable, and suggested its inclusion in the name to reflect the fact that Stalybridge is a sizeable town which covers a large geographical area.
572. We received significant objections to the inclusion of the Ashton upon Mersey ward in the Stretford and Urmston constituency, with many respondents considering that the ward was in close proximity to Sale town centre, and others arguing that the area had no connection to either Stretford or Urmston, but rather to the rest of Sale and to Altrincham.
573. In response to our request for comment on the new cross-county boundary constituency named Hazel Grove and Wilmslow, we received a mixture of support and opposition. Several respondents, particularly those from areas such as Poynton and Disley in Cheshire, supported the new configuration as it allowed them to remain in their current constituency of Macclesfield. Other respondents were pleased with the unification of all the Wilmslow wards in one constituency, and were content that Alderley Edge, Handforth and Wilmslow were all contained within the same constituency. In contrast, we received further objections to the idea of a cross-county boundary constituency, with many respondents considering there to be no commonality between electors in the Stockport and Cheshire East local authority areas. Others continued to oppose the division of the Heatons North ward and the Heatons South ward, noting that residents within the 'four Heatons' (Heaton Chapel, Heaton Mersey, Heaton Moor, and Heaton Norris) had a shared identity.
574. We received three counter-proposals that addressed the issue of the division of Heatons North and Heatons South. One proposal advocated minor adjustments to the revised proposals for the constituencies of Hazel Grove and Wilmslow, Stockport North and Denton, and Stockport South and Cheadle by including both Heatons North and Heatons South wards in a renamed Cheadle constituency, and by transferring the Davenport and Cale Green, and Offerton wards to a Hazel Grove and Wilmslow constituency, and a renamed Stockport and Denton constituency, respectively. Other counter-proposals received suggested the transfer of the Heatons North ward to a Cheadle and the Heatons constituency, and made small alterations to our proposed Stockport North and Denton, and Hazel Grove and Wilmslow constituencies. The author of this counter-proposal subsequently put forward another suggestion, which disagreed with linking the communities of Hazel Grove and Wilmslow, and considered a link between Cheadle and Wilmslow to be more appropriate. In order to do so and avoid major subsequent knock-on effects, the counter-proposal suggested that the Brinnington and Central ward be divided.

## Final recommendations

575. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received few representations in reference to our proposed constituencies of Blackley and Broughton, Bolton North East, Bolton West, Leigh, Makerfield, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, Marple and Hyde, Rochdale, Salford and Eccles, Worsley and Eccles South, and Wythenshawe and Sale East. We have therefore decided not to amend our revised proposals for these constituencies in our final recommendations.
576. We note the opposition, as described earlier, to our Farnworth and Radcliffe, Bury, and Prestwich and Middleton constituencies, but also note that no new counter-proposals were put forward for these constituencies. We do not consider that persuasive evidence has been received to amend our revised proposals in this area, and therefore recommend that no amendments are made to these three constituencies.
577. In respect of the Rochdale constituency, we are sympathetic to the views that oppose changes to the existing constituency, but we do not consider that persuasive evidence has been received to amend our revised proposals for this constituency. We note that some respondents continue to oppose the Littleborough and Saddleworth constituency, as described earlier. We note that despite this, no alternative counter-proposals have been submitted, and also note support for the inclusion of the Saddleworth West and Lees ward in this constituency. We were also not persuaded by evidence to reconfigure the Oldham, and Failsworth and Droylsden constituencies due to counter-proposals in this area being a significant departure from the revised proposals, and we consider that changes of this scale would require further consultation to fairly assess their suitability. We therefore recommend no amendments to the revised proposals for Rochdale, Littleborough and Saddleworth, and Oldham constituencies in our final recommendations.
578. We did, however, consider that persuasive evidence had been received regarding the naming of the Oldham, and Failsworth and Droylsden constituencies. We consider the names of Oldham North, and Oldham South and Droylsden to better reflect the composition of these constituencies, and therefore recommend that these constituencies are named as such in our final recommendations.
579. We noted the objections to the Ashton-under-Lyne constituency, which primarily concerned its naming, and the inclusion of Stalybridge in the constituency. We do not consider that persuasive evidence has been received to modify the composition of this constituency, but we agree that Stalybridge is a significant settlement within the constituency, and that this should be reflected in the name. Therefore, we propose that this constituency is named Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge.
580. In respect of the Stretford and Urmston constituency, we acknowledge that there are strong objections to the inclusion of the Ashton upon Mersey ward. We do not consider that other configurations of this constituency, and their subsequent knock-on effects, better reflect the statutory factors, and therefore do not recommend any changes to this constituency as put forward in the initial and revised proposals.
581. Having carefully examined the counter-proposals for the Hazel Grove and Wilmslow, Stockport North and Denton, and Stockport South and Cheadle constituencies, and having considered the evidence received in relation to the division of the Heatons North and Heatons South wards

between constituencies, we consider that persuasive evidence has been received to modify these three constituencies. We recommend the proposal that unites the Heaton North and Heaton South wards in a renamed Cheadle constituency, and the subsequent transfers of the Davenport and Cale Green ward to a Hazel Grove and Wilmslow constituency, and the Offerton ward to a renamed Stockport East and Denton constituency. We reject the counter-proposal that divides the Brinnington and Central ward, as we do not consider that this meets our exceptional and compelling criteria. We note that the author of this counter-proposal suggested constituency names of Cheadle, and Stockport and Denton; but, given their configuration, we recommend that these constituencies be named Stockport West and Cheadle, and Stockport East and Denton. We also recommend that the proposed Hazel Grove and Wilmslow constituency is named Bramhall and Wilmslow, in order to reflect its main population centres from each local authority area.

582. Our final recommendations for Greater Manchester are for constituencies of: Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge, Blackley and Broughton, Bolton North East, Bolton West, Bury, Farnworth and Radcliffe, Leigh, Littleborough and Saddleworth, Makerfield, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington, Marple and Hyde, Oldham North, Oldham South and Droylsden, Prestwich and Middleton, Rochdale, Salford and Eccles, Stockport East and Denton, Stockport West and Cheadle, Stretford and Urmston, Wigan, Worsley and Eccles South, Wythenshawe and Sale East, and the two cross-county boundary constituencies of Altrincham and Knutsford, and Bramhall and Wilmslow, both of which include parts of both Greater Manchester and Cheshire. The configuration of the proposed Altrincham and Knutsford constituency is covered later in the section addressing Cheshire. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **The Wirral**

### **Initial proposals**

583. Of the four existing constituencies in the Wirral, none are within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, the number of constituencies in the Wirral was reduced by one to give the sub-region a total of three constituencies.
584. Two of the existing constituencies, Wallasey and Birkenhead, underwent minor changes, largely maintaining their current boundaries and gaining a ward each. The other two — the existing constituencies of Wirral South and Wirral West — saw much more significant change. In our initial proposals we included parts of both of these constituencies in our Bebington and Heswall constituency. Our initial proposals also proposed the inclusion of the Borough of Wirral ward of Eastham in our Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency, a cross-county boundary constituency with Cheshire West and Chester.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

585. Our initial proposals for the Wirral were largely supported, with the majority of representations supporting the configuration set out in the initial proposals. The counter-proposals we did receive were relatively limited in scope and suggested only minor changes to the overall configuration.
586. The opposition we did receive was mostly centred around our proposed Bebington and Heswall constituency. As the constituency did not contain the Bebington ward, it was considered that

the proposed name did not accurately reflect the composition of the constituency. For many this anomaly was the greatest point of contention in the Wirral. A number of representations also noted that our proposed name largely excluded the Deeside towns of Meols, Hoylake and West Kirby. Various suggestions were put forward for a more appropriate name, with many of them including the word 'Wirral' in some form. Popular suggestions put forward included Wirral South, Wirral West and South, Wirral Deeside, and Wirral Deeside and Bromborough.

587. The debate surrounding the Bebington anomaly led to suggestions that the configuration of constituencies in the Wirral should also change. We received a counter-proposal which transferred the Bebington ward to the Bebington and Heswall constituency, the Upton ward to Birkenhead, and included the Hoylake and Meols ward in the Wallasey constituency. It was recognised that a small part of West Kirby, included in the Hoylake and Meols ward, would be split from the rest of West Kirby, but this was deemed to be a better outcome than having the Bebington ward outside of Bebington and Heswall.
588. Another large point of contention in the Wirral was the proposal to cross the county boundary between the Wirral and Cheshire. Such a move was necessary in order to ensure that the Wirral constituencies were within the permitted electorate range and, of the options available, we considered that including the Eastham ward in the Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency was the best way to do this. A number of representations made it clear that, as a part of the Wirral, Eastham ward should be represented by a Wirral MP.

### **Revised proposals**

589. In light of the representations received, we decided to make two amendments to the initial proposals for the Wirral. We agreed with the concerns over the composition of the proposed Bebington and Heswall constituency. Rather than simply renaming the constituency, we decided that the configuration of the constituency should change. We considered that the counter-proposal submitted had been too radical in its approach. It did have support from a number of residents within the Upton ward, but this support was not universal and we noted that there was an opposing argument which supported the inclusion of the Upton ward in the Wallasey constituency. A number of representations also recognised that including the Hoylake and Meols ward in Wallasey had far greater implications than the counter-proposal suggested. In the interest of preserving local ties, and changing as little as possible, we decided that the Bebington ward should be included in the Bebington and Heswall constituency, and that the Bromborough ward should be transferred from the proposed Bebington and Heswall constituency to the Birkenhead constituency. We considered this to be a much simpler solution to the problem, although we recognised that it was still not possible to maintain the close affinity between the Bebington and Bromborough communities within a single constituency.
590. We also recognised that there were strong objections to our proposals from residents of the Eastham ward, but we did not consider that any persuasive counter-proposals had been received which allowed the Eastham ward to be included in a Wirral constituency. We were minded therefore to recommend that the Eastham ward should remain in the Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency, as set out in our initial proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

591. Despite the inclusion of the Bebington ward, the naming of the proposed Bebington and Heswall constituency continued to be the main issue in the Wirral. Many respondents still maintained that this name was not inclusive for other areas contained within the constituency. A number of representations again suggested that 'Wirral' should feature in its name in some form.
592. Aside from the naming of the Bebington and Heswall constituency, and the unavoidable placement of the Eastham ward in the Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency, our revised proposals for the Wirral were largely supported. Any other opposition in the Wirral focused on the principle of the review itself.

### **Final recommendations**

593. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in the Wirral. We do, however, consider that persuasive evidence has been received to revise the name of the Bebington and Heswall constituency. We appreciate that our proposed name is still considered inaccurate and exclusive. In order to better reflect the composition of the constituency, we propose that this constituency be named Wirral West and Bebington.
594. Our final recommendations for Wirral are for constituencies of: Birkenhead, Wallasey, and Wirral West and Bebington. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Cheshire (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington)**

### **Initial proposals**

595. Of the 11 existing constituencies within Cheshire, two have electorates that are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to reduce the number of constituencies within this sub-region from 11 to 10, due to its entitlement to 10.34 constituencies.
596. In our initial proposals, we proposed that three constituencies could remain largely unchanged, with realignments to ensure they reflected recent changes to local government ward boundaries. The Crewe and Nantwich, and Congleton constituencies had electorates already within the permitted electorate range and the City of Chester came into range once the entirety of the Chester Villages ward, which is currently divided between constituencies, was included in the proposed constituency.
597. A number of constituencies within Cheshire only required the addition of a single ward to bring them into the permitted electorate range. Ellesmere Port and Neston was also adjusted to reflect local government changes but, unlike the three effectively unchanged constituencies, this was not sufficient to bring the electorate within the permitted electorate range. We therefore proposed that the Eastham ward from the Borough of Wirral be included in this constituency. We did not consider that the Eastham ward would be adversely affected by this move as it has strong links with Ellesmere Port, and forms part of the urban continuum between the town and Bebington.
598. We noted that the current electorate figure for the Halton constituency was very close to the minimum required; the addition of a single ward, Halton Lea, brought the number of electors within range. We also proposed a single ward change in the Borough of Warrington: the Latchford

East ward would be transferred from Warrington South to the Warrington North constituency. This would bring both the Warrington constituencies into the permitted electorate range and allow them to be wholly contained in the local authority area.

599. The reduction in constituencies, and the need for us to cross the Greater Manchester and Cheshire county boundary, led to significant changes for the remaining constituencies. In Weaver Vale we proposed a configuration that led to the constituency extending considerably further south, to the border with Wales; the Halton Lea ward and the wards containing the town of Northwich would no longer be included in the constituency. To compensate for this loss, the constituency would then gain the Marbury ward from the existing Tatton constituency, and wards from the existing Eddisbury constituency, including Farndon and Goway. In return, Eddisbury received the wards comprising the town of Northwich, and was renamed Eddisbury and Northwich to reflect this. In addition to the town of Northwich, Eddisbury also included the Shakerley, and Witton and Rudheath wards from the existing Tatton constituency to form a constituency that extended further north.
600. On the border of Greater Manchester we proposed two constituencies that crossed the Greater Manchester and Cheshire county boundary: Bramhall and Poynton, and Altrincham and Tatton Park. The existing Macclesfield constituency would no longer include the areas in the north, around Poynton and Disley, but instead extend to the north west to include the area around Wilmslow and Alderley Edge, as well as the Chelford ward from the existing Tatton constituency. The remaining Tatton wards of High Legh, Knutsford, and Mobberley would then be included in a new cross-county boundary constituency with eight Borough of Trafford wards, including the town of Altrincham.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

601. In Cheshire, the reaction to our initial proposals was mixed. In areas that underwent little change there was significant support for the initial proposals. This was true for the constituencies of Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton, Halton, Warrington North, and Warrington South.
602. The initial proposals for the Halton constituency — which, with the exception of the addition of the Halton Lea ward, were otherwise unchanged — did not attract many representations. One of the few representations we did receive suggested that either the Beechwood ward or Windmill Hill ward would be more appropriate for inclusion in the constituency than Halton Lea. It was also suggested that Widnes and Runcorn would be a better name for the constituency as it was more recognisable, and there were wards from Halton borough that were not included in the constituency.
603. As in Halton, it was suggested we had moved the wrong ward between the two Warrington constituencies. Latchford East ward, it was argued, was the wrong ward to have been transferred between Warrington North and Warrington South. One representation claimed that the Bewsey and Whitecross ward had much stronger community links to other wards in Warrington North than it did to those in Warrington South and would therefore be the more appropriate ward to move. Furthermore, it was noted that moving Latchford East into Warrington North would cut across the natural boundary of the River Mersey.
604. The proposed City of Chester constituency elicited almost unanimous support. The proposal to include the villages of Mickle Trafford, Bridge Trafford, Picton, Rowton and Waverton



within the constituency was particularly popular. Support for the initial proposals was also evident in representations that called on us to reject a counter-proposal which would transfer the Dodleston and Huntington ward from the proposed City of Chester constituency to an Eddisbury constituency.

605. Opposition to the initial proposals was much stronger in the areas affected by significant changes and by the redistribution of wards from the existing Tatton constituency; namely Weaver Vale, Eddisbury and Northwich, Macclesfield, and Altrincham and Tatton Park. We received numerous counter-proposals recommending changes to these areas.
606. Counter-proposals for the constituencies of Weaver Vale and Eddisbury sought to minimise change and tackle what was perceived to be a division, within our initial proposals, between the urban north and rural south. It was suggested that the initial proposal for Weaver Vale was flawed because the centres of population were all located in the northern part of the proposed constituency and that, consequently, the southern half would be isolated. The counter-proposals also disapproved of the degree of change present in the initial proposals. One representation noted that only 61.0% of the electors of Eddisbury and 58.3% of the electors of Weaver Vale would remain in the same constituency. Most of the counter-proposals for Eddisbury and Weaver Vale suggested configurations that were more akin to the current configuration. Although the details of each proposal differed slightly, they universally disagreed with our proposal, on the grounds that it was too radical a change.
607. The cross-county boundary constituency of Altrincham and Tatton Park did not receive much support. Residents within both Cheshire and Greater Manchester were concerned about how the different needs of the two areas would affect their representation if they were placed together. One counter-proposal considered Altrincham and Tatton Park to be a poor place to base a cross-county boundary constituency, noting that the boroughs of Trafford and Cheshire East had few connections and were separated by the River Bollin. A Macclesfield constituency was proposed which orientated westward towards Knutsford and which included the three Cheshire wards included in our proposed Altrincham and Tatton Park constituency. As a consequence, there would be no crossing point in this area between Greater Manchester and Cheshire East. The crossing point between Greater Manchester and Cheshire would instead occur further east with the creation of a Cheadle and Wilmslow constituency. Some representations also commented on the name of the proposed constituency. It was noted that Tatton Park was a National Trust property. It did not therefore seem to be a sensible name, given that there were more populous areas within the constituency. With this in mind, some respondents suggested the alternative name of Altrincham and Knutsford.

### **Revised proposals**

608. We did not consider that alternative arrangements for the Halton constituency, such as the suggestion that the Windmill Hill ward should be added to the existing constituency, better reflected the statutory factors. As such, we recommended that the composition of the constituency should not change from the initial proposals. We were however, persuaded by the suggestion that the constituency would be more appropriately named Widnes and Runcorn.
609. We then reflected on whether the Bewsey and Whitecross, or Latchford East ward would be more appropriately situated in the Warrington North constituency. We considered that transferring the Bewsey and Whitecross ward into Warrington North would cause the Penketh and Cuerdley,

Great Sankey North, Great Sankey South, and Whittle Hall wards to become detached from the remainder of the constituency. Consequently, we did not consider Bewsey and Whitecross to be a viable alternative to Latchford East. We therefore recommended that the initial proposals for constituencies within the Borough of Warrington should remain unchanged.

610. We considered the counter-proposals for Weaver Vale and Eddisbury. By looking at these proposals, we were able to find a solution which was less radical than the initial proposals and produced constituencies that much better reflected the existing configuration in Cheshire. We therefore recommended changes to the composition of both constituencies. As part of these changes, we suggested a minor alteration to the Crewe and Nantwich, and Ellesmere Port and Neston constituencies: the Audlem ward was transferred from Eddisbury into Crewe and Nantwich, and the Elton ward was moved from Ellesmere Port and Neston into Weaver Vale.
611. We accepted that the River Bollin formed an identifiable division between Greater Manchester and Cheshire; however, we considered that it was not an insurmountable obstacle and that an Altrincham and Tatton Park constituency, as set out in the initial proposals, was viable. We were not persuaded by counter-proposals which sought to cross the county boundary elsewhere, as these resulted in wholesale alterations to constituencies in Greater Manchester, which remained unchanged under the initial proposals. We did, however, agree that Altrincham and Knutsford was a more appropriate name for the constituency.
612. In light of the support received for the constituencies of City of Chester, Congleton, Warrington North, and Warrington South, we recommended that our initial proposals for these constituencies should remain unchanged.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

613. In Cheshire, the effort to preserve more of the existing configuration in the revised proposals was generally seen as an improvement on the radical solution we initially proposed. The reconfiguration of the Eddisbury and Weaver Vale constituencies, and the new cross-county boundary constituency of Hazel Grove and Wilmslow were particularly well received. Nonetheless, there were still areas of disagreement within Cheshire; the need to have two constituencies crossing the county boundary into Greater Manchester limited our options and meant that many of the concerns shared in previous consultations were raised once again.
614. The cross-county boundary constituency of Altrincham and Knutsford continued to be contentious, with many respondents arguing that the urban character of Altrincham did not fit with the small market town of Knutsford. Residents of the High Legh, Mobberley and Knutsford wards made it clear that they would have preferred to be placed in a Macclesfield constituency. We did receive a counter-proposal that was able to link Macclesfield and Knutsford, but this was only achieved by making a number of radical changes elsewhere. For example, the proposal suggested that we should make changes to the Wythenshawe and Sale East constituency which, under our revised proposals, is currently unchanged from the existing constituency. It also suggested that the Poynton East ward be included in the High Peak constituency, thus crossing the regional boundary into the East Midlands. We did not receive any further new suggestions as to how Macclesfield and Knutsford could be linked.
615. In Eddisbury and Weaver Vale, our general move to be closer to the existing configuration was not felt by all to be the most desirable outcome. Indeed, it was argued that our revised proposals

only served to perpetuate problems with the existing configuration, such as the division of Northwich between constituencies. Our proposed transfer of the Audlem ward from the Eddisbury constituency to Crewe and Nantwich, a departure from the existing configuration, was also opposed. The opinion was that there was no commonality between the Audlem ward and the rest of the constituency. There were very few representations from the Audlem ward at this stage of the consultation, but in previous consultations, opinion was more evenly divided. We received only one counter-proposal for this part of Cheshire; the prime focus of this counter-proposal was to unite the town of Northwich. In doing so, it advocated a Northwich constituency which was centred on the town and stretched east to the communities of Middlewich and west to Kingsley. The Eddisbury constituency would then border Ellesmere Port by including the wards of Elton, Frodsham, Helsby and Gowy; it would also retain the Audlem ward, and the Crewe and Nantwich constituency would remain unchanged.

616. There were relatively few representations received in reference to the Halton, Warrington North, and Warrington South constituencies. Renaming Halton as Widnes and Runcorn did not attract many representations; the few representations that did reference the change were generally supportive of what they considered to be a more recognisable name. Meanwhile the representations from Warrington largely focused on the principle of the review itself and we did not see much in the way of new evidence. We received a counter-proposal (a reaffirmation of a proposal received in previous stages of the consultation) that wished to divide a ward in the Borough of Warrington in order to reflect local government ward changes.
617. The proposed Macclesfield constituency — which, except for the inclusion of the Chelford ward, is the same as the existing arrangement — attracted broad levels of support. Respondents, particularly from the town of Poynton and the village of Disley, supported the new constituency, considering these proposals to be far preferable to including the areas in a cross-county boundary constituency, as was suggested in the initial proposals.
618. The two constituencies of City of Chester and Congleton saw continued support and did not elicit significant opposition.

### **Final recommendations**

619. Having considered the evidence received, and with the exception of the cross-county boundary constituency of Hazel Grove and Wilmslow, which has been discussed earlier in this report, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Cheshire.
620. We do not recommend the counter-proposal that crosses the regional boundary into the East Midlands in order to link the High Legh and Knutsford areas with Macclesfield. We note that similar counter-proposals that linked Knutsford and Macclesfield were rejected when we formulated our revised proposals, and also note that the Poynton area would be split in this proposal. Additionally, we note the strong support for our proposed Macclesfield constituency, and do not consider that adopting this counter-proposal allows for a better pattern of constituencies.
621. The counter-proposal to unite Northwich is a significant departure from the revised proposals and, indeed, the existing arrangements. We do not consider that persuasive evidence had been received to justify this change and therefore have rejected this counter-proposal.

622. With regards to the counter-proposal that seeks to divide a ward in the Borough of Warrington in order to reflect local government ward changes, we consider that this situation will arise in many areas across the country and that dividing wards in this area does not have any wider beneficial effects. We do not consider that this meets our exceptional and compelling criteria for dividing a ward, and reject this proposal.
623. We do not consider that persuasive evidence has been received to depart from revised proposals in respect of the Audlem ward, which we suggested should be included in the Crewe and Nantwich constituency. We note that few representations have been received from the ward itself, and while its inclusion in Crewe and Nantwich has been opposed by residents of Crewe, the evidence received does not persuade us to depart from our previous recommendations in this area.
624. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Altrincham and Knutsford, Bramhall and Wilmslow, City of Chester, Congleton, Crewe and Nantwich, Eddisbury, Ellesmere Port and Neston, Macclesfield, Warrington North, Warrington South, Weaver Vale and, Widnes and Runcorn. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.



## South East

625. The South East currently has 84 constituencies. Of these, 40 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 32 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of 12 constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by one, from 84 to 83.
626. The South East comprises the counties of Berkshire (including the boroughs and districts of Bracknell, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham), Buckinghamshire (including the Borough of Milton Keynes), Hampshire (including the boroughs of Portsmouth and Southampton), the Isle of Wight, Kent (including the Borough of Medway), Oxfordshire, Surrey, East Sussex (including the City of Brighton and Hove), and West Sussex, and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
627. We appointed three assistant commissioners for the South East — Colin Byrne, Stephen Lawes and Alan Nisbett — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations for these hearings were:
- Guildford: 20–21 October 2016
  - Oxford: 24–25 October 2016
  - Portsmouth: 27–28 October 2016
  - Brighton: 31 October–1 November 2016
  - Maidstone: 3–4 November 2016.

### Sub-division of the region

628. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the South East of 6,172,923 results in it being entitled to 83 constituencies, a reduction of one. The rules that govern how we must allocate constituencies state that two must be allocated to the Isle of Wight and that neither of these is required to have an electorate that is within the permitted electorate range. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
629. We noted that Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes has a combined electorate of just over 536,500, which results in an entitlement of 7.18 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate seven constituencies, the same number as at present, and treat it as a sub-region.
630. The electorate of Hampshire and the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton is just over 1,273,500, which results in the area being entitled to 17.03 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate 17 constituencies to this sub-region, a reduction of one. As mentioned previously, the rules to which we work specify that we must allocate two constituencies to the Isle of Wight, one more than currently, neither of which needs to be constrained by the permitted electorate range.

631. The electorate of Kent and Medway is just over 1,227,000, which results in an entitlement of 16.41 constituencies. We noted that this entitlement of constituencies meant that it was possible to propose a sub-region of Kent with 16 constituencies, a reduction of one, but that it would be necessary to make significant change to some of the constituencies in the county to accommodate this. As the City of Brighton and Hove, with 183,038 electors, cannot be allocated a whole number of constituencies either on its own, or when combined with East Sussex's 383,226 electors, we decided to group Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent, and Medway into one sub-region, with an allocation of 24 constituencies.
632. We noted that Berkshire's electorate of just under 587,700 results in an entitlement of 7.86 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate the county eight constituencies. Oxfordshire's electorate of a little over 461,300 entitles it to 6.17 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate six constituencies to the county. In Surrey, the electorate of just over 816,500 entitles it to 10.92 constituencies, so we allocated it 11 constituencies. West Sussex has just under 598,550 electors, which results in an entitlement of 8.01 constituencies, so we allocated it eight constituencies. The number of constituencies allocated to these counties is the same as at present, and we treated each as a separate sub-region.
633. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during consultation on the initial proposals. We did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions with alternative arrangements suggested as:
- a sub-region which comprised the areas of Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex, Kent, and Medway
  - a sub-region which comprised the areas of Berkshire and Surrey.
634. We also received proposals from some respondents that proposed crossing the regional boundary between the South East and the South West. These proposals largely focused on reconfiguring constituencies in the New Forest and Test Valley areas. We received proposals to cross the boundary between the East Midlands or Eastern regions and the South East, in order to reconfigure constituencies in Milton Keynes. We also received proposals to cross the boundary between the East Midlands and the South East, in order to reconfigure constituencies around Bicester.
635. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that compelling evidence had not been received to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries. We assessed whether West Sussex should be included in a sub-region with East Sussex, Kent, and Medway. We noted that the main proponents of this sub-region considered that it assisted in creating a better pattern of constituencies in Brighton and Hove. However, under our initial proposals the majority of constituencies in West Sussex were subject to minimal change. We were therefore not persuaded to include West Sussex in a larger sub-region. We also investigated the proposals that suggested the grouping of Berkshire and Surrey to form a sub-region. We considered that the formulation of this sub-region enabled us to create a better pattern of constituencies. Therefore, as part of our revised proposals we included one alternative sub-region, combining Berkshire and Surrey. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on one change from the sub-regions as those of our initial proposals.

636. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we did not receive any new evidence that would justify either the crossing of the South East regional boundary, or the use of alternative sub-regions. The sub-regions we are therefore basing our recommendations on are:

- Berkshire and Surrey
- Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent, and Medway
- West Sussex
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes
- Hampshire, Portsmouth, and Southampton
- Isle of Wight
- Oxfordshire.

## **Berkshire and Surrey**

### **Initial proposals**

637. Of the eight existing constituencies in Berkshire, four are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we treated Berkshire as a separate sub-region and proposed to retain two existing constituencies: Bracknell and Maidenhead.
638. The electorates of the existing constituencies of Reading East, Reading West, and Windsor all fall below the permitted electorate range and the existing constituency of Newbury is above the permitted electorate range. As part of our initial proposals we proposed minimal changes to these constituencies. We proposed that the Maiden Erlegh ward be included in the Reading East constituency, the Mapledurham ward in the Reading West constituency and the Chalvey ward in the Windsor constituency. The transfer of the Chalvey ward was the only change we proposed to the existing Slough constituency. In order to reduce the electorate of the Newbury constituency, we proposed the inclusion of the Aldermaston ward in the Wokingham constituency.
639. Of the 11 constituencies in Surrey, the electorates of eight are currently within the permitted electorate range. The existing constituencies of Runnymede and Weybridge, and Spelthorne have electorates below the permitted electorate range. The existing Esher and Walton constituency has an electorate that is above the permitted electorate range. As part of our initial proposals, we treated Surrey as a separate sub-region and retained five existing constituencies: East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, Reigate, and South West Surrey. The remaining three existing constituencies that have electorates within the permitted electorate range, but to which we made changes, were Mole Valley, Surrey Heath, and Woking.
640. We proposed that the Oxshott and Stoke D’Abernon ward be included in the Mole Valley constituency to reduce the electorate of the existing Esher and Walton constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. We proposed the inclusion of the Chertsey St. Ann’s ward from the existing Runnymede and Weybridge constituency in the Spelthorne constituency in order to bring its electorate within the permitted electorate range. This meant that the Runnymede and Weybridge constituency, which already has an electorate below the permitted electorate range,



would need an addition in order to bring it within the range. We therefore proposed the inclusion of the Byfleet ward in the constituency from the existing Woking constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the Bisley ward from the existing Surrey Heath constituency, and the Send ward from the existing Mole Valley constituency, in the Woking constituency, to keep the Woking constituency within the permitted electorate range.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

641. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed Berkshire constituencies of Bracknell and Maidenhead, and our proposed Surrey constituencies of East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, Reigate, and South West Surrey were largely supported. The main opposition was to our proposed Slough and Windsor constituencies, with representations focusing on which ward should be added to the Windsor constituency. Many representations argued strongly that the Borough of Slough ward of Chalvey should not be included in the Windsor constituency as it contains the centre of Slough and therefore should remain in a Slough constituency.
642. We also received objections to our proposed Wokingham constituency, where the focus was on keeping the existing Wokingham constituency unchanged by leaving the Aldermaston ward in the Newbury constituency and keeping Maiden Erlegh in the Wokingham constituency. In addition, there was further opposition to our Reading East and Reading West constituencies, concerning the boundary between them, and concern that the Mapledurham ward would be detached from the Reading West constituency by the River Thames. In respect to all of our Surrey changes, the main objections were that we had divided Chertsey between constituencies, and were breaking community ties for the Bisley, Byfleet, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon, and Send wards.
643. We received a number of alternatives to the proposed Newbury, Reading East, Reading West, and Wokingham constituencies, including:
- that the Aldermaston ward should be included in the Newbury constituency due to its links being with Newbury rather than Wokingham
  - that the Basildon and Bucklebury wards should be added to the Reading West constituency, in order to permit Aldermaston to remain part of the Newbury constituency
  - that the Maiden Erlegh area should remain attached to the wider Earley area of the Wokingham constituency
  - that the Mapledurham ward should be included in the Reading East constituency, as all of its links are with the Caversham area and there is no River Thames crossing at Mapledurham into the Reading West constituency.
644. We received representations that one of several Borough of Bracknell Forest wards should be included in the Windsor constituency in place of the Chalvey ward, whose ties lie most closely with Slough, or that we should combine Berkshire and Surrey into a sub-region.
645. These counter-proposals and our initial proposals were both supported and opposed by respondents. Having considered the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners visited the Bracknell and Surrey Heath constituencies in order to observe the areas for themselves, in relation to the arguments that had been made. Our conclusion, based on the advice provided by our assistant commissioners, was that the Windlesham ward in Surrey Heath

constituency was a better fit for the Windsor constituency than either the Chalvey ward or any ward from the Borough of Bracknell Forest, as both of these options would be likely to break local ties by dividing communities.

646. We also received representations that the Thorpe ward should be included in the Spelthorne constituency, allowing the Guildford, Mole Valley, and Woking constituencies to be retained in their existing configurations.

### **Revised proposals**

647. In light of the representations received, we decided to modify our proposals for Berkshire and Surrey, and combine them in a sub-region in order to help resolve concerns surrounding the inclusion of the Chalvey ward in the Windsor constituency, instead proposing including the Windlesham ward in the constituency. We also felt that ensuring the Mapledurham ward was not detached from the rest of its constituency was important, and that it should be included in the Reading East constituency. We investigated the different counter-proposals received for the Reading constituencies and were persuaded to include the Basildon and Bucklebury wards in the Reading West constituency. We had considered alternatives that included changes to the boundary between the Reading East and Reading West constituencies, by including the Maiden Erlegh ward in the Reading East constituency. However, we were not persuaded by the evidence for these counter-proposals, particularly as, following reconfigurations to constituencies, we were able to retain the existing Wokingham constituency. We also found the evidence regarding some of our proposed constituencies in Surrey persuasive, particularly that the Guildford, Mole Valley, and Woking constituencies be retained in their existing configuration, which we included as part of our revised proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

648. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we continued to receive both opposition to and support for our proposed constituencies in Berkshire and Surrey.
649. We received some objection to the inclusion of the Basildon and Bucklebury wards in the proposed Reading West constituency. These wards are currently in the Newbury constituency and some respondents expressed the view that the wards should remain there, due to the similar rural nature of both wards, as opposed to the mainly urban nature of the Reading West constituency. We note that not making this change would require consequential changes to other constituencies in the sub-region, including Wokingham, which is otherwise unchanged. We received limited counter-proposals that suggested an alternative configuration of constituencies in Berkshire.
650. Many respondents objected to the inclusion of the Windlesham ward from the existing Surrey Heath constituency in the Windsor constituency, suggesting that a Borough of Bracknell Forest ward should be included instead, in order to avoid crossing the Berkshire/Surrey boundary and dividing Windlesham civil parish. The Windlesham ward was originally proposed by our assistant commissioners as an alternative to including the urban ward of Chalvey in the very different Windsor constituency. We investigated some of the wards suggested by objectors — Bullbrook, Crown Wood, and Priestwood and Garth — and noted that they are urban or suburban wards, close to the centre of Bracknell, and in our view were unsuitable for inclusion in the Windsor constituency for similar reasons to Chalvey.

651. A further suggestion, Crowthorne ward, was proposed but we noted that it has very poor transport links to Windsor. We considered that taking it out of the Bracknell constituency would split the Crowthorne community, which includes parts of the Little Sandhurst and Wellington, and Wokingham Without wards. It would also almost completely detach the southern part of the constituency from the main area of Bracknell, with the Wokingham Without ward being the sole link between Bracknell and the wards of Central Sandhurst, College Town, Finchampstead North, Finchampstead South, Little Sandhurst and Wellington, and Owlsmoor. Given the opposition received, we visited the Bracknell and Windlesham areas to observe the different counter-proposals. We observed that the Borough of Bracknell Forest wards suggested are all very close to the centre of Bracknell and that, despite crossing the Berkshire/Surrey county boundary, Windlesham was more similar in nature to the Windsor constituency than any of the Bracknell wards that had been proposed by respondents.
652. We also received objections to the inclusion of the Thorpe ward in the proposed Spelthorne constituency. The concerns raised were that it is detached from the rest of the constituency by the River Thames, but only limited alternatives within the permitted electorate range were suggested, all of which we considered caused more disruption to existing Surrey constituencies than the revised proposals.

### **Final recommendations**

653. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to further amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Berkshire and Surrey. We do not consider that any further compelling or new evidence has been provided that might justify changing the constitution of our revised proposal constituencies.
654. We note the objections to our proposal to include the Basildon and Bucklebury wards in the Reading West constituency. Having investigated the alternatives, we considered that the counter-proposals did not better reflect the statutory criteria, particularly as they required changes to the existing Wokingham constituency, which would otherwise be retained unchanged, and did not reflect the evidence we had received regarding the Maiden Erlegh ward.
655. We acknowledge the opposition to our proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Windsor, particularly the inclusion of the Windlesham ward in the constituency. As outlined above, we investigated the counter-proposals and were not persuaded by them. We recognise the concerns about the inclusion of Windlesham in the constituency, but we considered that the inclusion of either a Borough of Bracknell Forest ward or the Borough of Slough ward of Chalvey would divide communities. We did observe from our visit to the area that the Windlesham ward was similar in nature to adjacent wards in Berkshire, such as the Sunningdale ward.
656. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Bracknell, East Surrey, Epsom and Ewell, Esher and Walton, Guildford, Maidenhead, Mole Valley, Newbury, Reading East, Reading West, Reigate, Runnymede and Weybridge, Slough, South West Surrey, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Windsor, Woking, and Wokingham. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent, and Medway**

### **Initial proposals**

657. Of the 25 existing constituencies in the sub-region, only eight are currently within the permitted electorate range: Bexhill and Battle, Dartford, Dover, Eastbourne, Hastings and Rye, Rochester and Strood, Sittingbourne and Sheppey, and Tonbridge and Malling. Three of the existing constituencies (Ashford, Folkestone and Hythe, and Wealden) have electorates that are above the permitted electorate range and 14 of the existing constituencies are below the permitted electorate range. Our initial proposals changed all but three of the existing constituencies: Eastbourne, Hastings and Rye, and Sittingbourne and Sheppey. We proposed only minor changes to the Dartford, Folkestone and Hythe, Gillingham and Rainham, and Rochester and Strood constituencies.
658. In the City of Brighton and Hove, we proposed three constituencies: Brighton Central and Hove, Brighton North, and Brighton East and Newhaven. This last proposed constituency crossed the boundary into the District of Lewes. In East Sussex, although it was within the permitted electorate range, we proposed a substantially altered Bexhill and Battle constituency that included wards from Rother and Wealden districts, and a new Lewes and Uckfield constituency that included Lewes and Wealden district wards. We proposed a High Weald constituency, which crossed the county boundary between East Sussex and Kent and included wards from the East Sussex districts of Rother and Wealden, and the Kent districts of Ashford and Tunbridge Wells.
659. In Kent, we proposed a Chatham and The Mallings constituency, including the towns of East and West Malling to the existing Chatham and Aylesford constituency. Our proposals for the Gravesham constituency made minor changes to bring the Dartford, and Rochester and Strood constituencies within the permitted electorate range. We proposed a Maidstone constituency that only included Maidstone borough wards. We proposed a Sevenoaks constituency made up of wards from Sevenoaks district, and Tonbridge and Malling borough. Our proposed Tonbridge and The Weald constituency included wards from the boroughs of Maidstone, and Tonbridge and Malling. Our proposed Tunbridge Wells constituency included wards from the boroughs of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling, and the district of Sevenoaks.
660. Our proposals for Ashford made changes to the existing configuration but still retained the town of Ashford at its centre. Our proposed Canterbury and Faversham constituency combined City of Canterbury, District of Dover and Borough of Swale wards. The Dover district wards of Little Stour and Ashstone, and Sandwich, were included in our proposal for the Dover constituency. In the Isle of Thanet, we proposed a Thanet East constituency, bringing together the towns of Broadstairs, Margate and Ramsgate. We included the remainder of Thanet district in a constituency with the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable, proposing to name this the North Kent Coastal constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

661. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, we received substantial opposition to our Brighton and Hove proposals. The splitting of the Hove area between two constituencies, Brighton North's lack of seafront, the topography making east-west community ties and travel difficult, splitting the 'Deans' areas, and extending the Brighton constituencies as far as Seaford were all cited as reasons for us to reconfigure the pattern of constituencies in this area. We received a range of counter-proposals. Some respondents proposed alternative patterns of

constituencies by formulating a larger sub-region with West Sussex, some proposed adding Lewes to Brighton constituencies rather than the Newhaven and Seaford areas, and some proposed to split the Queen's Park and Regency wards between constituencies.

662. Our Eastbourne, and Hastings and Rye constituency proposals were largely supported. The degree of change in the rest of East Sussex generated a mix of support for and opposition to our proposals for the High Weald, and Lewes and Uckfield constituencies. Much of the opposition stemmed from these two constituencies being considered too large geographically for effective representation, with little to identify a community of interest in either, other than their largely rural nature. We received counter-proposals to address this. Our proposal for Bexhill and Battle received little support or opposition other than as part of objections to our High Weald proposal.
663. Our initial proposals for Kent and Medway were both supported and opposed. A counter-proposal to retain the Higham ward in the Gravesham constituency was supported, as were our proposals for Chatham and The Mallings, Dartford, Gillingham and Rainham, Sevenoaks, and Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Our proposal to include the Lordswood and Capstone ward in the Gillingham and Rainham constituency was also opposed, with concerns that our proposals would break community ties between the Princes Park and Walderslade wards. Similarly, our proposal to include the Wateringbury ward in a Chatham and The Mallings constituency was opposed due to this ward having links with Tonbridge to the west.
664. There was opposition to our initial proposals for Tonbridge and The Weald constituency. Respondents felt that it was poorly aligned to both the existing Tonbridge and Malling constituency and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. It was also considered in representations that the town of Edenbridge, allocated to the Sevenoaks constituency in our initial proposals, looked towards Tonbridge for schools due to its road and rail links in that direction. A small amendment to our Maidstone proposal was suggested, to add the Park Wood ward, in order to increase the number of urban Maidstone wards in the constituency.
665. In east Kent, our proposal to include the Little Stour and Ashstone, and Sandwich wards in the Dover constituency was both supported and opposed. Respondents variously reported that Sandwich has links either south to Dover, or north towards Thanet, and that Little Stour and Ashstone looks towards Canterbury, or Sandwich and Thanet. Our initial proposals for North Kent Coastal, and Thanet East constituencies were both supported and opposed. The opposition to these proposals was focused on where the boundary between these two constituencies should lie, with a view to keeping the existing South Thanet constituency intact.
666. We also received opposition to our proposed Ashford constituency. We received a small number of representations stating that the parishes of Egerton and Smarden in the Weald North ward should remain with the Ashford constituency, with which they have local ties.
667. We received little significant comment on our initial proposals for the Canterbury and Faversham, and Folkestone and Hythe constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

668. In light of the representations received, we decided to modify our initial proposals for Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent, and Medway. Having considered the oral and written evidence, our assistant commissioners visited the City of Brighton and Hove and observed Woodingdean's

links with Rottingdean and Saltdean to be closer than those with Bevendean and Roedean, which appeared to them to be more closely linked with Brighton. The assistant commissioners also observed the difficulties in moving east–west across the city away from the seafront, due to the steep north–south valleys running through the Westdene area, which supported respondents’ views that the Hove Park ward should remain part of a Hove constituency.

669. To the eastern side of the three Brighton and Hove constituencies, we considered whether a split ward, either in the centre of Brighton as suggested by respondents, or in Newhaven, as suggested by our assistant commissioners, would allow for an improved pattern of constituencies. We recognised that this was a balanced decision and decided on the evidence received up to that point that it did not meet the exceptional and compelling test we set ourselves for such decisions, and instead included the Newhaven Valley ward in our revised proposal for the Lewes and Uckfield constituency. For the City of Brighton and Hove, our revised proposals were for Brighton Pavilion, Brighton Kemptown and Seahaven, and Hove and Regency constituencies.
670. We were persuaded by the evidence presented to modify our proposals for Lewes and Uckfield, reducing its area to make it more accessible, and to allow for changes elsewhere in the sub-region, notably to make substantial changes to our proposals for the East Sussex and Kent boundary constituencies. We proposed a Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough constituency that crossed the county boundary, to a lesser extent than our initial High Weald constituency. Our revised proposal for Bexhill and Battle was more closely aligned to the existing constituency, adding the Horam ward in the west, and losing the Ticehurst and Etchingham ward in the east. This last ward we included in the Mid Kent and Ticehurst constituency, across the East Sussex and Kent boundary. This proposed constituency was also smaller in area than our initial proposal for High Weald, in order to improve its accessibility.
671. We modified our Sevenoaks proposal to include the ward of Ash and New Ash Green, in exchange for the wards of Borough Green and Long Mill, and Downs and Mereworth, which we allocated to our revised Tonbridge constituency. We also further modified our Tonbridge proposal, allocating the more distant wards of Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton, Coxheath and Hunton, Harrietsham and Lenham, Headcorn, Leeds, Loose, Marden and Yalding, North Downs, Staplehurst, and Sutton Valence and Langley to our Mid Kent and Ticehurst proposal. We agreed with the evidence regarding the Park Wood ward, and included it in the Maidstone constituency under our revised proposals.
672. We were persuaded by the evidence regarding the Higham ward remaining in the Gravesham constituency. We noted that this modification allowed us to retain Rochester and Strood as a constituency unchanged from its existing configuration. We considered the evidence regarding the Wateringbury ward to be sufficient to transfer it from our initial Chatham and The Mallings proposal to our Tonbridge constituency.
673. We considered the evidence in respect of our east Kent proposals and modified them to include the Sandwich ward in the East Thanet and Sandwich constituency, and to move the boundary between that and North Kent Coastal to a break in the urban area of Margate, it not being possible to keep all of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate in a single constituency due to the size of the electorates in these three towns. In order to achieve this, we included the ward of Seasalter in the Canterbury and Faversham constituency, and the Little Stour and Ashstone ward in the Dover and Deal constituency.

674. We were not persuaded by the evidence to include the Weald North ward in our proposed Ashford constituency. Although we recognise the local ties between these areas, we considered that we could not include these wards in the constituency except by disrupting other constituencies across the sub-region.
675. As our initial proposals for Dartford, Eastbourne, Folkestone and Hythe, Gillingham and Rainham, Hastings and Rye, and Sittingbourne and Sheppey were largely supported, we made no changes to these for our revised proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

676. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received opposition and support across the sub-region.
677. Our revised proposals for the Brighton and Hove area were largely objected to, for similar reasons to our initial proposals in respect of the Brighton Pavilion constituency losing access to the seafront, and the allocation of the Regency ward, perceived to be a Brighton facing ward, to the Hove and Regency constituency. The splitting of the Queen's Park ward was raised once again and we visited the ward in order to establish where the appropriate place might be for such a split, and to consider if it would produce any regional or sub-regional improvement to the pattern of constituencies. Additional objections arose due to the splitting of Newhaven between the Brighton Kemptown and Seahaven, and Lewes and Uckfield constituencies.
678. Our revised proposals for the constituencies of Eastbourne, and Lewes and Uckfield, were both supported and opposed in the East Dean and Friston areas. We also received objections to our proposals for the boundary between our Bexhill and Battle, and Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough constituencies. The inclusion of the Ticehurst and Etchingham ward in a cross-county boundary constituency was also heavily opposed with respondents supporting it being retained in the existing Bexhill and Battle constituency.
679. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received both opposition and support across Kent. We received objections to our proposals for the boundary between the Tonbridge, and Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough constituencies. There was both support for and objection to our revised proposals in north and east Kent. The splitting of Seasalter from Whitstable was strongly opposed, as respondents consider that these form a continuous residential area. Residents of Little Stour and Ashstone felt that their links are with Canterbury and Sandwich, but that there were poor transport links with Dover. Responses about Margate and Ramsgate repeated concerns from earlier consultations. The evidence received regarding the Sandwich ward indicated that it looks both north to Ramsgate, and south to Dover. The overall pattern of constituencies here did also receive some support.

### **Final recommendations**

680. Having considered the evidence received, we are persuaded to modify the pattern of constituencies for Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Kent, and Medway.
681. Having visited the area, we are now persuaded that, by splitting the Queen's Park ward in Brighton and Hove, not only can we avoid breaking local ties in Newhaven in dividing it between two constituencies, we can give all of Brighton and Hove's three constituencies direct access to the seafront, and also improve our proposals across the sub-region. For these reasons, we

consider the argument for doing so is compelling. Splitting the Queen's Park ward also allows us to keep the existing Bexhill and Battle constituency unchanged and avoids crossing the East Sussex and Kent boundary in two places, thereby retaining the Ticehurst and Etchingham ward in the Bexhill and Battle constituency.

682. We note that representations received during this consultation in Kent have strongly opposed the division of the Seasalter ward from Whitstable. We are persuaded by the evidence that suggested our revised proposals broke community ties, and so we recommend that the Seasalter ward be allocated to the North Kent Coastal constituency. As a consequence of this, we also recommend that the wards of Garlinge and Westbrook be allocated to the East Thanet constituency. We also note concerns regarding the Little Stour and Ashstone ward, and recommend that it be allocated to the Canterbury and Faversham constituency, and that the Sandwich ward be allocated to the Dover and Deal constituency.
683. Therefore, our final recommendations for these constituencies largely revert to the initial proposals, subject to the inclusion of the Little Stour and Ashstone ward in the Canterbury and Faversham constituency, and the Eythorne and Shepherdswell ward in the Dover and Deal constituency. We recognise that the inclusion of the Little Stour and Ashstone ward in the Canterbury and Faversham constituency is untested during public consultation. However, we consider that it reflects the community evidence that the ward has links to Canterbury. We did consider whether to revert to the initial proposals in this part of the sub-region in their entirety but considered that they did not reflect the evidence received that the ward of Eythorne and Shepherdswell has close community ties with Dover.
684. We note the objections to our revised proposals for the constituencies of Tonbridge, and Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough. However, our investigations of the alternative constituency patterns found that they would require significant modifications to adjacent constituencies, some of which had been supported during consultation. Therefore, we have decided not to modify either constituency. Having considered the evidence, received we are not minded to modify the boundaries of the other proposed constituencies in the sub-region, apart from the modifications outlined above.
685. However, we are persuaded that some modifications should be made to the names of our proposed constituencies based on the evidence put to us during the final consultation. We propose that, as East and West Malling are always referred to in the singular rather than as The Mallings, the constituency including this area should be called Chatham and Malling. As our East Sussex constituency including Lewes also includes several Wealden district wards, this constituency should be named Lewes and West Wealden. We received representations arguing that Mid Kent is not a term recognised within Kent, and we recommend that our Mid Kent constituency, which now does not include the ward of Ticehurst and Etchingham, should be named Weald of Kent.
686. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Ashford, Bexhill and Battle, Brighton Kempdown and Seahaven, Brighton Pavillion, Canterbury and Faversham, Chatham and Malling, Dartford, Dover and Deal, East Thanet, Eastbourne, Folkestone and Hythe, Gillingham and Rainham, Gravesham, Hastings and Rye, Hove and Regency, Lewes and West Wealden, Maidstone, North Kent Coastal, Rochester and Strood, Sevenoaks, Sittingbourne and Sheppey,



Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough, and Weald of Kent. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **West Sussex**

### **Initial proposals**

687. Of the eight existing constituencies in West Sussex, five are currently within the permitted electorate range, the electorate of Crawley is below the permitted electorate range, while those of Chichester, and Mid Sussex are above. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to retain the existing constituency of East Worthing and Shoreham completely unchanged, and changes to the Worthing West constituency were limited to those needed to accommodate local government ward boundary changes in the District of Arun. The other changes we proposed across the county as part of our initial proposals were relatively minor.
688. In order to bring our proposed Chichester constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the inclusion of the Plaistow ward in the Arundel and South Downs constituency. We also proposed transferring the Bolney ward from the Mid Sussex constituency to Arundel and South Downs. As this left Arundel and South Downs outside the permitted electorate range, we proposed to include the Barnham ward in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency. To increase the number of electors in the Crawley constituency, we proposed to include the Cophorne and Worth ward from the Horsham constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

689. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, most respondents were supportive of the pattern of constituencies, with a relatively small number of objections. As previously outlined, some representations suggested constituencies that combined West Sussex with Brighton and Hove, or East Sussex. Our investigations of these proposals were that they required significant changes to constituencies in West Sussex that had otherwise been largely unchanged.
690. We received some representations that commented on whether the Rusper and Colgate ward should, either in total or just in part, be added to the Crawley constituency, rather than the Cophorne and Worth ward, due in part to the perceived barrier presented by the M23, and development work ongoing in the Rusper and Colgate ward, where it borders Crawley. We noted that the Rusper and Colgate ward also borders Horsham town, which the Cophorne and Worth ward does not.

### **Revised proposals**

691. Having considered the small number of objections to our initial proposals, and their potential impact on what was a sub-region with only limited changes to existing constituencies, we made no changes for our revised proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

692. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received some support for the pattern of constituencies. There were no large-scale objections, but we did receive some locally focused objections from a small number of representations, such as asking that the Crawley Down and Turners Hill ward or the Hassocks ward be included in the Mid Sussex constituency.

Our investigations of these counter-proposals indicated that resolving these would have created undesirable knock-on effects beyond the immediate issue raised by the respondent.

### **Final recommendations**

693. We have considered the evidence received and, as those objections we did receive would have caused substantially more disruption to existing constituencies than our proposals, we are making no changes to the boundaries of our proposed constituencies in this sub-region.
694. Our final recommendations for West Sussex are for constituencies of: Arundel and South Downs, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, Chichester, Crawley, East Worthing and Shoreham, Horsham, Mid Sussex, and Worthing West. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes**

### **Initial proposals**

695. Of the seven constituencies in this sub-region, four (Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Buckingham, and Wycombe) are within the permitted electorate range, the electorates of Milton Keynes North, and Milton Keynes South are above the permitted electorate range, while that of Chesham and Amersham is below. Of the four that are within the permitted electorate range, we were able to retain the Beaconsfield constituency unchanged under our initial proposals.
696. As the Borough of Milton Keynes has too many electors for two constituencies, but not enough for three, two of its wards had to be allocated to a neighbouring constituency. We selected the Stony Stratford and Wolverton wards to be included in the Buckingham constituency. In Milton Keynes we proposed constituencies of Milton Keynes Bletchley and Milton Keynes Newport Pagnell. In the proposed Aylesbury constituency, we included the District of Aylesbury Vale wards of Edlesborough, Pitstone & Cheddington, and Wingrave from the existing Buckingham constituency, as well as the whole of the wards of Oakfield & Bierton, and Watermead, which are currently divided between the Buckingham and Aylesbury constituencies.
697. To bring the Chesham and Amersham constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the inclusion of the District of Wycombe wards of Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens, and Greater Hughenden, while to the Wycombe constituency we proposed the inclusion of the District of Wycombe wards of Bledlow and Bradenham, and Stokenchurch and Radnage.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

698. During the consultation on our initial proposals, we received both support and objection in this sub-region. Much of the opposition focused on including Milton Keynes wards in a Buckingham constituency. The only alternative to this would be to cross the regional boundary, and include Milton Keynes wards in either an East Midlands or Eastern region constituency. We did receive counter-proposals suggesting this but, following our investigations, we considered that none of these provided improved solutions in those regions, and so we found they did not provide exceptional or compelling evidence to do so. We also received some counter-proposals that suggested alternative wards from the Borough of Milton Keynes be included in the Buckingham

constituency. The suggestion was that the Tattenhoe ward should be included in the Buckingham constituency rather than Wolverton. It was argued that the Tattenhoe ward should be included in the Buckingham constituency as it was closer to Buckingham, whereas the Wolverton ward was divided from the constituency by the A5.

699. We received a small number of representations that suggested that the Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens ward has links with The Risboroughs ward and to Wycombe, and that The Risboroughs ward has links to Aylesbury, rather than to Chesham and Amersham, or Buckingham, as in our initial proposals. However, a suggested attempt to address this in a counter-proposal relied upon separating the Hazlemere wards between the Chesham and Amersham, and Wycombe constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

700. Having considered the evidence received, we decided to revise our initial proposals for Milton Keynes. We were persuaded by the evidence to include the Tattenhoe ward in a constituency with Buckingham in place of Wolverton ward. We investigated the other counter-proposals for the remaining constituencies in this sub-region but we were not persuaded to make any further changes to our initial proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

701. The responses during the consultation on the revised proposals were similar to those received during the earlier consultation periods. With respect to the Tattenhoe ward, respondents indicated that, although Tattenhoe is on a direct road to Buckingham, it had always been part of Milton Keynes and was a relatively recent development. Respondents suggested that the Wolverton ward, as one of the pre-Milton Keynes villages, had a separate identity as the Wolverton Urban District until 1974. This also included the neighbouring Stony Stratford area. Although these wards are separated by the A5, they are joined by Millers Way and Stratford Road. Both areas had been part of the Buckingham constituency from at least 1918 until 1992. The counter-proposals received suggested that we should revert to the initial proposals for Buckinghamshire in the Milton Keynes area.

### **Final recommendations**

702. Having considered the evidence received, we have decided to modify our revised proposals. We have decided to revert to our initial proposals, in that the two Milton Keynes wards of Stony Stratford and Wolverton be included in the Buckingham constituency, and that the Tattenhoe ward should be allocated to the Milton Keynes South constituency. We consider that the evidence regarding shared community ties between the Wolverton and Stony Stratford wards was persuasive and that both wards should be included in the Buckingham constituency.
703. We have also reflected on the names of the constituencies in the sub-region in light of the reconfiguration outlined above. As part of our final recommendations, we propose that the Buckingham constituency be renamed Buckingham and Milton Keynes West to reflect that the constituency includes parts of Milton Keynes borough, and Milton Keynes South West be renamed Milton Keynes South to reflect the orientation of the constituency.
704. Our final recommendations for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are for constituencies of: Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Buckingham and Milton Keynes West, Chesham and Amersham, Milton

Keynes North East, Milton Keynes South, and Wycombe. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Hampshire, Portsmouth, and Southampton**

### **Initial proposals**

705. Of the 18 existing constituencies in this sub-region, eight (Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Meon Valley, New Forest East, North East Hampshire, and North West Hampshire) have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The remaining 10 constituencies all have electorates that are below the permitted electorate range. Our initial proposals reduced the number of constituencies for this sub-region to 17 and we proposed retaining three existing constituencies unchanged: Basingstoke, Eastleigh, and Gosport.
706. We proposed the inclusion of the New Forest district ward of Boldre and Sway in the New Forest West constituency, and the Borough of Test Valley wards of Blackwater, and Dun Valley in the New Forest East constituency.
707. We proposed including the District of Hart wards of Crookham East, and Crookham West and Ewshot, in the Aldershot constituency. We also proposed including the Alton, Holybourne and Yateley areas in the North East Hampshire constituency.
708. We proposed the inclusion of the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane wards of Bramley and Sherfield, Pamber and Silchester, and Sherborne St. John in the North West Hampshire constituency from the existing North East Hampshire constituency. We proposed the inclusion of the District of Test Valley wards of Anna, Ampert, and Penton Bellinger in the Test Valley constituency, from the North West Hampshire constituency. This did not add sufficient electors to the Test Valley constituency, so we also proposed the inclusion of the City of Winchester wards of Colden Common and Twyford, and Compton and Otterbourne, and the Borough of Eastleigh wards of Chandler's Ford East, Chandler's Ford West, Hiltingbury East, and Hiltingbury West.
709. In the City of Southampton, we were able to propose two constituencies wholly within the city boundary. We proposed including the ward of Bevois in the Southampton Itchen constituency, and the wards of Bassett and Swaythling in the Southampton Test constituency.
710. The City of Portsmouth has too few electors for two whole constituencies, requiring us to propose the inclusion of two wards from outside the city. We proposed the inclusion of the Borough of Havant wards of Purbrook and Stakes in the Portsmouth North constituency. We noted that either of the Baffins or Nelson wards could be included in Portsmouth South to bring that constituency within the permitted electorate range, and chose the Nelson ward for our initial proposals, but we actively sought representations on whether either the Nelson ward or the Baffins ward was the most suitable ward for inclusion in the constituency.
711. Our proposed Portsmouth North constituency led to a reduction in the number of electors in the Havant constituency. To return the constituency to the permitted electorate range, we proposed including the Borough of Havant wards of Cowplain, Hart Plain, and Waterloo from the existing Meon Valley constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the City of Winchester ward of Whiteley in the Fareham constituency from the existing Meon Valley constituency.

712. We proposed that the remaining area of Hampshire be divided between the East Hampshire and Winchester constituencies. We allocated a further 10 City of Winchester wards from the current Meon Valley constituency to the Winchester constituency, including the Bishop's Waltham area, and seven East Hampshire district wards from the current Meon Valley constituency to the East Hampshire constituency, including the Clanfield and Horndean areas.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

713. Our initial proposals in this sub-region were both supported and opposed. We received some representations that supported the initial proposals for the sub-region in their entirety. Others opposed the proposals more locally and suggested counter-proposals.
714. We received opposition to the proposal to include the Dun Valley and Blackwater wards in the New Forest East constituency, with evidence put forward that residents look instead to Romsey, Andover, Salisbury or Winchester, rather than south to the New Forest communities, with the east-west nature of roads in the area being highlighted. To address this issue, the counter-proposals put forward were to either cross the regional boundary into Wiltshire (for which we saw no justification), or to substitute for these two wards the ward of Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams. There were also objections to the inclusion of the Compton and Otterbourne ward, and the Colden Common and Twyford ward in the proposed Test Valley constituency, with counter-proposals suggesting either splitting the Compton and Otterbourne ward (to keep the polling district containing Compton and Shawford parish with Winchester), or substituting for both wards the two wards of Sparsholt, and Wonston and Micheldever.
715. In north-east Hampshire, there was strong local opposition to the inclusion of the two Church Crookham wards in Aldershot, with representations focusing on how the initial proposals separated Church Crookham from Fleet, with which they are said to have closer ties. We received counter-proposals that suggested instead adding the Yateley East ward to the existing Aldershot constituency as this allowed Church Crookham to be included in a constituency with Fleet; however, it would result in splitting the town of Yateley between constituencies. There was also opposition to excluding villages such as Abbots Ann and Amport, close to Andover, from the North West Hampshire constituency, to where they naturally gravitate, and allocating Alton wards to North East Hampshire, separated from the rest of East Hampshire District Council.
716. There was both support for and opposition to our initial proposals for the Portsmouth North and Portsmouth South constituencies, with debate focused on which ward to add to Portsmouth South, and where to expand Portsmouth North beyond the city boundary, to ensure both constituencies fell within the permitted electorate range. As we outlined in our initial proposals, moving either the Baffins ward or Nelson ward would bring Portsmouth South within the permitted electorate range, and we received representations in favour of both options. Further representations opposed the expansion of Portsmouth North to the north east but made no suggestions as to how we might resolve this.
717. We also received support for and opposition to our initial proposals for Southampton. Some representations raised concerns about the boundary between the Southampton Test and Southampton Itchen constituencies, with counter-proposals suggesting that the Bevois ward should be included in the Southampton Test constituency and the Swaythling ward should be included in the Southampton Itchen constituency.

## Revised proposals

718. Having investigated the different counter-proposals put forward in relation to the New Forest East constituency, we were persuaded by the evidence put forward in favour of retaining the Dun Valley and Blackwater wards in a Test Valley constituency, moving instead the ward of Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams into New Forest East, given the evidence received regarding closer links between the areas. As it was a finely balanced decision, we invited respondents to comment on this specifically during the consultation on the revised proposals. While recognising the community links between Winchester and areas to its south and west, we noted that the counter-proposals suggested in this area would result in cutting other community ties, and therefore kept the initial proposals for the boundaries unchanged in this area.
719. We acknowledged the opposition to our initial proposals for the Aldershot and North East Hampshire constituencies. Having considered the counter-proposals received we decided not to modify our initial proposals, as we were concerned that the counter-proposals resulted in the splitting of the town of Yateley between constituencies.
720. We also did not propose any further changes to the North West Hampshire constituency under our revised proposals. We noted the comments regarding the exclusion of the villages to the south of Andover from the constituency but our investigations identified that modifying this constituency resulted in significant disruption to the Test Valley and Winchester constituencies, and beyond.
721. Having considered the evidence received, we were persuaded to modify our proposed Portsmouth North and Portsmouth South constituencies. We considered that the evidence received indicated that including Baffins ward in the Portsmouth South constituency and Nelson ward in the Portsmouth North constituency better reflected community identities. However, we were not persuaded to modify the northern boundary of our proposed Portsmouth North constituency.
722. Additionally, we considered the counter-proposals for the constituencies in the City of Southampton, taking evidence from our assistant commissioners, who visited the city. We were not persuaded by the alternative proposals, particularly as we considered that the River Itchen provided a clear boundary in the north of the city. Our assistant commissioners observed that the only bridge in the area was a single track road, and the alternative would have divided the Flowers Estate area of the city and the University of Southampton, which straddle the boundaries of the Bassett, Portswood, and Swaythling wards.

## Consultation on the revised proposals

723. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we received representations that were similar to those received during earlier stages. We received representations that commented on a number of our proposed constituencies but did not provide any alternative counter-proposals. We noted the concerns regarding the separation of the areas to the south of Andover from the North West Hampshire constituency but counter-proposals were not received that would resolve these concerns without significant consequential modifications to neighbouring constituencies. Similar objections were received to the exclusion of areas to the west and south of the Winchester constituency and the exclusion of Church Crookham from the Aldershot constituency. However,

again in both cases we considered that the consequential modifications required to address these concerns were too substantial or resulted in the breaking of community ties elsewhere.

724. As outlined in the section above, we specifically sought representations on whether it was appropriate for the Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams ward to be included in the New Forest East constituency. We received representations that considered the Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams ward to be detached from the New Forest East constituency, with all the connecting roads passing through neighbouring constituencies. It was also highlighted that this ward is more built-up, whereas the alternative wards of Blackwater and Dun Valley are more rural, and so more like the neighbouring Chandler's Ford and North Baddesley areas.

### **Final recommendations**

725. Having considered the evidence, we have concluded that the only change appropriate for Hampshire is to revert to our initial proposals for New Forest East and Test Valley constituencies due to the strength of evidence received at this stage. We consider that the evidence regarding the inclusion of the Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams ward in the Test Valley constituency is persuasive, particularly given that the road links are stronger towards the town of Romsey than they are to the settlements in the New Forest East constituency. We consider that no further compelling evidence has been received to modify our revised proposals in the remainder of the sub-region.
726. Our final recommendations for Hampshire, Portsmouth, and Southampton are for constituencies of: Aldershot, Basingstoke, East Hampshire, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest East, New Forest West, North East Hampshire, North West Hampshire, Portsmouth North, Portsmouth South, Southampton Itchen, Southampton Test, Test Valley, and Winchester. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Isle of Wight**

### **Initial proposals**

727. The Isle of Wight sub-region is unique in England in that we are required to allocate two constituencies, and that neither are required to be within the permitted electorate range. Our initial proposals were for Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West constituencies, each with a similar number of electors, 53,268 and 52,180 respectively.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

728. During consultation on our initial proposals, most of the opposition to our proposals for the Isle of Wight was about the principle of splitting the island. This is a statutory requirement under the legislation, so these views had to be set aside. The east–west split of the island received both support and opposition, with a small number of responses suggesting a north–south split.
729. We received some representations that commented on the boundary between our Isle of Wight East and Isle of Wight West constituencies. A representation suggested that the Wootton Bridge electoral division looked more towards Ryde than towards Newport and Cowes, and another suggested the Wootton Bridge electoral division has close ties with the Fishbourne electoral division, and therefore should be included in the Isle of Wight East constituency.

### **Revised proposals**

730. In formulating our revised proposals, we were persuaded by the evidence to modify the constituencies by including the Wootton Bridge electoral division in the Isle of Wight East constituency rather than Isle of Wight West.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

731. We again received a mixture of support for and opposition to our revised proposals during the final consultation. Some representations indicated a desire locally that the East Cowes electoral division be included in Isle of Wight East, as its ties are with Ryde to the east. Respondents indicated that the River Medina was a divider in this area, which separates East Cowes from West Cowes. Our investigations of this proposal indicated that this modification would also require the Whippingham and Osborne electoral division to be included in the Isle of Wight East constituency due to the road links in the area. We noted that this pattern of constituencies would bring the electorate of the two island constituencies further away from the parity we sought at the initial proposal stage, 43,459 for Isle of Wight West and 61,989 for Isle of Wight East.

### **Final recommendations**

732. Having considered the evidence, we have decided that the East Cowes, and Whippingham and Osborne electoral divisions should be included in the Isle of Wight East constituency. We consider that this change better reflects the evidence we received about community ties.
733. Our final recommendations for the Isle of Wight are for constituencies of: Isle of Wight East, and Isle of Wight West. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Oxfordshire**

### **Initial proposals**

734. Of the six existing constituencies in Oxfordshire, two are above the permitted electorate range (Banbury and Wantage) and one (Oxford East) is below. The remaining three constituencies (Henley, Oxford West and Abingdon, and Witney) are within the range. The initial proposals retained the existing Witney constituency unchanged.
735. We proposed the inclusion of the District of Cherwell wards of Ambrosden and Chesterton, Fringford, and Launton in the Henley and Thames constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the South Oxfordshire district ward of Wallingford in this constituency. Bicester town remained in a Banbury and Bicester constituency. We proposed the inclusion of the wards of Garsington & Horspath, Wheatley, and the whole of the divided ward of Sandford & the Wittenhams in the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency. We also proposed the inclusion of the City of Oxford wards of North, and St. Margaret's in the Oxford East constituency. As the existing Wantage constituency boundary divided the Vale of White Horse district ward of Thames, we included all of this ward in the Wantage constituency.



### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

736. The initial proposals for Oxfordshire received a mixture of support and opposition during the first two consultations. The main objection was to separating the villages and suburbs closest to Bicester away from the town. Representations considered that this could be resolved by either crossing the region boundary into South Northamptonshire, or by a more disruptive rearrangement of north Oxfordshire, neither of which we considered to be justified by the evidence presented. In particular, the cross-region counter-proposal suggested provided no assistance in developing a good arrangement of constituencies in South Northamptonshire. We also received objections to moving the Wallingford ward out of the Wantage constituency, across the natural boundary that is the Thames, and some objections to the boundaries of the two Oxford constituencies.
737. In developing the revised proposals, the assistant commissioners visited Oxford, the towns and villages to the south and east, and Wallingford, to observe the nature of the wards in these areas. In Oxford they compared the nature of the Wolvercote, Summertown, St. Margaret's, North, and Jericho and Osney wards. They observed that the Jericho and Osney ward is of a very similar nature to the central Oxford wards.
738. The assistant commissioners also observed the rural nature of the wards of Wheatley, Garsington & Horspath, and Sandford & the Wittenhams. They felt that this demonstrated why we should not transfer them to the much more urban Oxford East constituency, as had been suggested by a counter-proposal, or to the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency, as in our initial proposals. They also observed that these wards have poor road links to Abingdon, having better road links with the Henley and Thame constituency which, due to its geographical extent, should more appropriately be called East Oxfordshire. During their visit, the assistant commissioners also observed the restricted crossing of the River Thames at Wallingford.

### **Revised proposals**

739. Having visited the areas, our assistant commissioners recommended we revise the pattern of constituencies in this sub-region. We considered that the wards of Wheatley, Garsington & Horspath, and Sandford & the Wittenhams should be included in our proposed East Oxfordshire constituency. We considered that these wards share community ties with the East Oxfordshire constituency. We also proposed that the Wallingford ward be included in the Wantage constituency, noting the links between this ward and Didcot and its poor road links across the River Thames. We proposed that the Jericho and Osney, and North wards be included in a renamed Oxford constituency, noting that these wards are more closely linked with the centre of the city. Finally, we proposed that the City of Oxford ward of St. Margaret's and the District of Cherwell ward of Kirtlington be included in a revised Abingdon and Oxford North constituency. We considered that this better reflected community ties, as the St. Margaret's ward is part of the Summertown area in the north of the city, and the Kirtlington ward has close ties with the Kidlington area.
740. We acknowledged the objections to the division of Bicester between constituencies and did investigate alternative patterns of constituencies. However, our investigations indicated that addressing this issue resulted in the breaking of community ties elsewhere in the sub-region, as well as preventing the retention of the existing constituency of Witney. For these reasons, we proposed no further changes to our initial proposals in Oxfordshire.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

741. During the consultation on the revised proposals, we received similar opposition to that received during earlier consultations regarding the separation of Bicester villages and suburbs from the town. The representations received highlighted that Bicester had and would continue to grow beyond its southern boundary and that more of the new development should be included in the Banbury constituency. We also received some opposition to our revised Abingdon and Oxford North constituency. We noted that some representations were concerned with what they considered to be the artificial pairing of Abingdon with areas to the north of Oxford, with their only link being the A34 road.

### **Final recommendations**

742. Having considered the evidence, we have decided not to make any further changes to the boundaries of the revised proposals in this sub-region. We did not consider that new or compelling evidence had been received regarding the issues raised across the county. We acknowledge the concerns regarding the growth of Bicester and with our Abingdon and Oxford North constituencies, but consider that modifications to address either of these issues would result in significant consequential changes to constituencies in the sub-region that were already broadly supported.

743. Our final recommendations for Oxfordshire are for constituencies of: Abingdon and Oxford North, Banbury, East Oxfordshire, Oxford, Wantage, and Witney. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.



## South West

744. The South West currently has 55 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 23 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 28 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range while the electorates of four constituencies are above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by two, from 55 to 53.
745. The South West comprises the counties of Cornwall (including the Isles of Scilly), Devon (including the City of Plymouth and the unitary authority of Torbay), Dorset (including the unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole), Gloucestershire (including the unitary authority of South Gloucestershire), Somerset (including the unitary authorities of North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset), Wiltshire, Bristol, and Swindon, and is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities. As the South West region includes the county unitary authorities of Cornwall and Wiltshire, we have used the term ‘ward’ throughout in reference to the electoral divisions in these authorities.
746. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the South West — Anita Bickerdike and Catherine Elliott — to assist us with the analysis of representations received during the first two public consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were as follows:
- Exeter: 7–8 November 2016
  - Truro: 10–11 November 2016
  - Poole: 14–15 November 2016
  - Bristol: 17–18 November 2016.

### Sub-division of the region

747. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the South West of 3,930,770 results in it being entitled to 53 constituencies, a reduction of two. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
748. The County of Cornwall (including the electorate of the Isles of Scilly), has an electorate of 393,874 which results in an entitlement of 5.27 constituencies to that county. This meant that it was not possible to develop a proposal for five constituencies within the county boundary that were all within the permitted electorate range. Given that Cornwall shares a boundary with Devon, we decided to group both counties (and the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay) together to form a sub-region, and allocated to it 17 constituencies. Consequently, our initial proposals included one constituency that crossed the boundary between Cornwall and Devon. Under the statutory rules within which we are required to work, this is unavoidable. We created the initial proposals for this sub-region in which the boundary for these two counties is crossed only once.
749. We identified that the electorate of neither the County of Dorset (including the unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole) nor the County of Wiltshire were such that we could develop

proposals in which a whole number of constituencies with electorates within the permitted electorate range were contained within the respective county boundaries. Therefore, we combined these areas into one sub-region and allocated it 12 constituencies.

750. We proposed that the County of Somerset be considered as a sub-region on its own and allocated to it five constituencies, noting that four of the five existing constituencies have an electorate within the permitted electorate range.
751. We noted that the unitary authority of Bath and North East Somerset has an electorate of just over 129,000, which is insufficient for the allocation of two constituencies. Therefore, as part of our initial proposals, we combined the County of Somerset with Bath and North East Somerset and allocated seven constituencies to this sub-region. In formulating our initial proposals we proposed one constituency that crossed the boundary between these authorities, namely the North East Somerset constituency.
752. The electorate of the County of Gloucestershire is such that it could be considered on its own and was allocated six constituencies. However, the unitary authority of South Gloucestershire has an electorate of just over 202,000, which is insufficient for the allocation of three constituencies. Therefore, as part of our initial proposals we combined the County of Gloucestershire with South Gloucestershire to form a sub-region and allocated it nine constituencies in which the boundary between the two authorities was crossed once.
753. The electorates of the unitary authorities of Bristol, North Somerset, and Swindon are such that they can be allocated four, two and two constituencies, respectively. We decided not to combine these authorities with any neighbouring authority, therefore each were classed as individual sub-regions under the initial proposals.
754. The use of the sub-regions outlined above was largely supported during consultation on the initial proposals with a number of representations considering our grouping of local authorities to be sensible. However, we did receive some objection to the sub-regions we proposed.
755. Most notably, we received significant opposition to our proposal to combine Cornwall in a sub-region with Devon, including one constituency that crossed the River Tamar. Many respondents wanted Cornwall to be treated as a stand-alone sub-region and that it be allocated five constituencies, which, as stated above, would not enable us to comply with the statutory rules within which we are bound to work. We also received some objections to our proposal to combine Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, and Wiltshire to form a sub-region, with concerns raised about the cross-county boundary constituency of Warminster and Shaftesbury.
756. We also received a counter-proposal which proposed a sub-region comprising North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, and Somerset. We also received some suggestions to cross the regional boundary of the South West with suggestions for constituencies that contained parts of Wiltshire with parts of Hampshire in the South East region.
757. In formulating our revised proposals, we considered that compelling evidence had not been received to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries. We acknowledged the passionate views expressed by those opposing our proposals to combine Cornwall and Devon to form a sub-region. However, there is no valid lawful alternative to a cross-county boundary

constituency that would comply with the statutory rules. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on the same sub-regions as those of our initial proposals.

758. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals we did not receive any new evidence that would justify either the crossing of the South West regional boundary, or the use of alternative sub-regions.
759. We again noted the objections to combine Cornwall and Devon to form a sub-region. As outlined above this is unavoidable in formulating a pattern of constituencies that complies with the statutory rules. Therefore, we have decided not to modify our proposed sub-regions as part of the final recommendations.
760. The sub-regions we are therefore basing our recommendations on are:
- Bath and North East Somerset, and Somerset
  - Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, and Wiltshire
  - Bristol
  - Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly, Plymouth, and Torbay
  - Gloucestershire, and South Gloucestershire
  - North Somerset
  - Swindon.

## **Bath and North East Somerset, and Somerset**

### **Initial proposals**

761. Of the seven existing constituencies in this sub-region, four currently have electorates within the permitted electorate range. Of the remaining three constituencies, two (Bath, and North East Somerset) have electorates that fall below the permitted electorate range, and one (Bridgwater and West Somerset) is above.
762. As part of our initial proposals we retained the two existing constituencies of Taunton Deane and Yeovil completely unchanged. We brought the Bath constituency within the permitted electorate range by including the wards of Bathavon North, Bathavon South, and Peasedown, and proposed limited changes to the other constituencies in Somerset. We proposed that the constituency of Somerton and Frome transfer the Ammerdown, and Coleford and Holcombe wards to the North East Somerset constituency to bring Somerton and Frome within the permitted electorate range. An additional four wards, including the town of Shepton Mallet, from the existing Wells constituency were also transferred into the North East Somerset constituency. As a consequence of this move, we transferred the wards of Huntspill and Pawlett, and Puriton and Woolavington from the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency to the Wells constituency bringing both constituencies within the permitted electorate range.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

763. We received general support for the initial proposals for Bath, North East Somerset and Somerset with some respondents supporting all seven of the proposed constituencies. In relation to the proposed Bath constituency, residents of the Peasedown ward welcomed being included within the Bath constituency noting that they look to Bath for employment and cultural activities. We received a counter-proposal that suggested dividing the Bathavon West ward to include the N-BW5A and N-BW5B polling districts in the Bath constituency. The respondent noted that these polling districts contained students from Bath Spa University, and splitting the ward would result in all of the student accommodation for the university being included in one constituency.
764. We received a mix of support for and opposition to the inclusion of the town of Shepton Mallet in the North East Somerset constituency. Those in opposition argued that this proposal broke historical and community ties between Shepton Mallet and its existing constituency of Wells.
765. We received some counter-proposals that sought to address the concerns of Shepton Mallet not being included in a constituency with Wells. We noted a counter-proposal that included Shepton Mallet in a Wells constituency and proposed a number of changes to the North East Somerset, and Bridgwater and West Somerset constituencies. As part of this counter-proposal it was suggested that the Sedgemoor district ward of Huntspill and Pawlett be included in the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency, even though there is no direct road connection across the River Parrett between the Huntspill and Pawlett ward and the town of Bridgwater, without going through the neighbouring ward of Puriton and Woolavington, which would not be in the same constituency.
766. A small number of representations objected to the inclusion of the Sedgemoor district wards of Huntspill and Pawlett, and Puriton and Woolavington in the Wells constituency. Respondents were concerned that a new Member of Parliament might not understand the specific interests of these communities, and therefore Parliamentary representation could suffer.
767. The boundaries of our proposed Yeovil constituency were supported; however, we received comments about the name of the constituency. A petition was submitted proposing that the constituency should be renamed Yeovil and South Somerset. It was argued that the constituency contained other towns and villages as well as Yeovil, and the name change would reassure residents that the focus was not merely on the town of Yeovil.

### **Revised proposals**

768. In light of representations received, we did not propose any changes to the constituency boundaries from the initial proposals for our revised proposals. We noted the concerns regarding the inclusion of Shepton Mallet in the North East Somerset constituency; however, we considered that the counter-proposals did not better reflect the statutory criteria and required a number of changes to surrounding constituencies that had otherwise been supported.
769. We considered that the evidence to rename the constituency of Yeovil to Yeovil and South Somerset had merit even though this constituency boundary was unchanged from its existing arrangement. We considered that this alternative name would better reflect the main town of Yeovil in the constituency name and also the local authority (South Somerset) covered by the constituency. Accordingly, we included the constituency name of Yeovil and South Somerset as part of our revised proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

770. There was general support for the revised proposals, with a respondent commenting that our proposals were logical with minimal disruption to the sub-region. However, we did receive some objections. We received opposition to the town of Frome remaining in its current constituency of Somerton and Frome. Residents of Frome asserted that they look to Bath, east Somerset and/or Wiltshire, not south towards Somerton. Representations noted that their geographical and cultural associations are with the neighbouring areas of Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Bath and also into west Wiltshire, Trowbridge and Warminster. Alternatively, it was suggested that Frome may be conjoined with its neighbouring Mendip district towns of Shepton Mallet, Wells and Glastonbury.
771. We also received a submission in opposition to the change of constituency name from Yeovil to Yeovil and South Somerset, contending that the name is tautological, as Yeovil is part of South Somerset and the largest town in that district. This representation requested that the current constituency name of Yeovil be retained.

### **Final recommendations**

772. We considered that no new and compelling evidence was received to modify our revised proposals for this sub-region. We noted the objection from the residents of the town of Frome; however, to include Frome in one of the surrounding constituencies would result in consequential knock-on effects within this sub-region. We also considered that these changes could not be justified given the level of support we received for our proposed constituencies.
773. In relation to the proposed name change of the Yeovil and South Somerset constituency; on balance, taking into consideration the strength of evidence received during previous public consultations, we are not persuaded to modify the name for this constituency. We therefore retain the constituency name Yeovil and South Somerset as per our revised proposals.
774. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Bath, Bridgwater and West Somerset, North East Somerset, Somerton and Frome, Taunton Deane, Wells, Yeovil and South Somerset. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, and Wiltshire**

### **Initial proposals**

775. There are currently 13 constituencies in the sub-region comprising the County of Dorset and the unitary authorities of Bournemouth, Poole, and Wiltshire. Four of these constituencies have electorates within the permitted electorate range; the electorates of the remaining nine constituencies fall below the permitted electorate range. Our initial proposals allocated 12 constituencies to the sub-region, a reduction of one from the current arrangement.
776. In formulating our initial proposals we considered whether we could leave unchanged any of the four constituencies which have electorates within the permitted electorate range. However, in order to develop proposals in which all the constituency electorates are within the permitted electorate range, and to facilitate the reduction in allocated constituencies by one, we altered the boundaries of all four constituencies.



777. We noted that the existing West Dorset constituency required realignment to reflect the new local government ward and constituency boundaries. We included all of the divided West Dorset district ward of Puddletown wholly within the West Dorset constituency, and the whole of the divided West Dorset district ward of Broadmayne & Crossways in our proposed South Dorset constituency. This provided a connection between the Weymouth and Portland borough area of the South Dorset constituency and the Purbeck district area. We also included the three Purbeck district wards of Bere Regis, St. Martin, and Wareham in the South Dorset constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range.
778. We considered the option of not making any changes to the existing Bournemouth East constituency, and only minor changes to the existing Bournemouth West, Christchurch, and Poole constituencies to bring the electorates within the permitted electorate range. However, we noted that doing so would mean that the changes required to be made to the existing Mid Dorset and North Poole constituency would have resulted in that constituency containing parts of three districts (East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck) and the unitary authority of Poole. We considered that this was unnecessary would mean greater change to the existing pattern of constituencies.
779. We proposed that the Christchurch borough be included in a constituency with five wards from north of the Bournemouth borough and that this constituency be named Bournemouth North and Christchurch. We proposed a Bournemouth South constituency containing 10 wards from south of the Bournemouth borough. We also proposed a Poole constituency that included 11 Poole borough wards including the whole of the wards of Alderney, Branksome East, and Branksome West, which are divided between the existing Bournemouth West, and Poole constituencies.
780. As part of our initial proposals we created a Broadstone, Ferndown and Kinson constituency containing three wards from Bournemouth borough, four wards from East Dorset district, and five wards from Poole borough. As a result of this change, we also created a new constituency called Blandford and Wimborne. This constituency contained 12 wards from East Dorset district, including the town of Wimborne Minster, seven wards from North Dorset district, including the town of Blandford Forum, and three wards from Purbeck district.
781. The remaining 12 North Dorset district wards, including the town of Shaftesbury, were included in a cross-county boundary constituency with 12 wards from the Wiltshire unitary authority, including the towns of Warminster and Westbury. Our proposed name for this constituency was Warminster and Shaftesbury.
782. We increased the electorate of the existing Salisbury constituency by including all of the divided Wiltshire wards of Bulford, Allington and Figheldean, and Fovant and Chalke Valley. We also transferred the Durrington and Larkhill ward from the existing Devizes constituency into the Salisbury constituency.
783. To bring our Devizes constituency within the permitted electorate range we also included the five wards that make up the town of Calne, noting that Calne had previously been included in a Devizes constituency.
784. In order to compensate for the transfer of Calne from the existing North Wiltshire constituency to Devizes, we included the eight wards comprising the town of Chippenham, together with

the two wards of Corsham Pickwick, and Corsham Town to form a constituency which we named Chippenham.

785. We proposed that the remaining 21 Wiltshire wards, including the towns of Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham, and Trowbridge, form a constituency that we named Trowbridge.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

786. There was little support for our initial proposals in Dorset. In particular, we received significant opposition to our proposals for Bournemouth and Christchurch. It was argued that the initial proposals were far too disruptive to the current pattern of Parliamentary constituencies in this area and there was fervent opposition to the loss of the existing Bournemouth East constituency. A number of counter-proposals suggested that we should retain the existing Bournemouth East constituency unchanged and only make minor amendments to the existing constituencies of Bournemouth West, Christchurch, and Mid Dorset and North Poole, to ensure that their electorates were within the permitted range.

787. As noted above, respondents strongly opposed our initial proposals covering Bournemouth and Poole and submitted a number of counter-proposals for the area, including retaining the existing Bournemouth East constituency. In considering these counter-proposals, it would be necessary to propose a Mid Dorset constituency that would contain parts of four local authorities (something we had sought to avoid in formulating the initial proposals). However, this proposal was generally supported in representations.

788. We also received objections to our proposed South Dorset constituency, particularly that it included the three Purbeck district wards of Bere Regis, St. Martin, and Wareham. One counter-proposal suggested that the West Dorset district ward of Chickerell & Chesil Bank should be included in the South Dorset constituency, instead of the three Purbeck wards which had ties with the Mid Dorset constituency. Respondents highlighted the close proximity and links that Chickerell & Chesil Bank has with Weymouth. Under the initial proposals, the Chickerell & Chesil Bank ward had been included in a West Dorset constituency which had otherwise only been modified to reflect changes to local government boundaries.

789. An alternative counter-proposal also included the Chickerell & Chesil Bank ward in the South Dorset constituency citing this ward's close links with Weymouth. To bring the West Dorset constituency within the permitted electorate range, four North Dorset district wards were included in this proposed constituency. Consequently, the transfer of all four wards would mean that other changes were required to the proposed Warminster and Shaftesbury constituency. A further counter-proposal suggested that only two North Dorset wards be transferred to the West Dorset constituency. Under this counter-proposal no further changes to the proposed Warminster and Shaftesbury constituency were required. The assistant commissioners noted that under both counter-proposals the District of North Dorset would be divided between three constituencies.

790. In Wiltshire, we received a counter-proposal which included the towns of Chippenham and Trowbridge in the same constituency. However, this resulted in an awkward arrangement which linked these two areas and excluded Melksham (with Melksham being included in another constituency). We noted that travel by road from Chippenham to Trowbridge requires passing through Melksham and that the towns in this area would be on the periphery of their constituencies.

791. We also received opposition to the division of the town of Corsham between our proposed constituencies of Chippenham and Trowbridge. A counter-proposal suggested the inclusion of the Box and Colerne ward in the Chippenham constituency and the Corsham Pickwick and Corsham Town wards in the Trowbridge constituency, thereby including the majority of Corsham town in the same constituency. Our initial proposals for other constituencies in Wiltshire were generally supported.

### **Revised proposals**

792. The opposition to the initial proposals in the Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, and East Dorset constituencies, and near unanimous support for counter-proposals proposing alternative configurations, persuaded our assistant commissioners to look again at the configuration of this area. They recommended that we revert back to the current boundaries for the Bournemouth East constituency, thereby retaining this constituency unchanged. They also recommended a Bournemouth West constituency that retained its current composition, with a minor modification uniting the Branksome West and Branksome East wards. Our assistant commissioners recommended a Poole constituency that was similar to the existing constituency, with the inclusion of the wards of Canford Heath East and Canford Heath West and the loss of the Branksome West ward to Bournemouth West. We agreed with their recommendations.
793. Due to the reconfiguration of the constituencies in this area, a Broadstone, Ferndown and Kinson constituency and Blandford and Wimborne constituency (as proposed under the initial proposals) were no longer proposed. We expunged the Broadstone, Ferndown and Kinson constituency and created a constituency named Mid Dorset to replace the Blandford and Wimborne constituency.
794. To the east of the new Mid Dorset constituency, the whole of the West Moors & Holt ward, and the Verwood East, and Verwood West wards were included in the proposed Christchurch constituency.
795. We considered whether to include the Purbeck district ward of Wareham in this constituency or alternatively into a South Dorset constituency. We noted that Wareham's ties were with Lytchett Matravers and Lytchett Minster, and not with South Dorset. Therefore we retained the wards of Wareham, Bere Regis, and St. Martin in a Mid Dorset constituency. This revision left the South Dorset constituency under the permitted electorate range, so we transferred the Chickerell & Chesil Bank ward from the proposed West Dorset constituency to the South Dorset constituency, and moved the Blackmore and Lydden Vale wards from the proposed Warminster and Shaftesbury constituency to the West Dorset constituency. This was the only proposed amendment to the Warminster and Shaftesbury constituency.
796. In Wiltshire, we were persuaded by the evidence received to revise the constituency boundary between the proposed constituencies of Trowbridge and Chippenham. We included the ward of Box and Colerne in a Chippenham constituency and the Corsham Pickwick and Corsham Town wards in the Trowbridge constituency. We also recommended that these constituencies be re-named North Wiltshire and West Wiltshire respectively.
797. We considered that no changes were necessary for the proposed Devizes and Salisbury constituencies. These were the only constituencies in this sub-region not to be altered in our revised proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

798. The revised proposals for Dorset were warmly welcomed, in particular for both Bournemouth constituencies. Respondents approved of the minimum change approach taken to this area, in particular to the Bournemouth East constituency retaining its current boundary, and bringing together the Branksome East and Branksome West wards into a single constituency (Bournemouth West). Residents were pleased that the local community would remain connected to similar, nearby communities such as Littledown, Boscombe and Southbourne, and that the economic developmental needs of Bournemouth would be represented by only two Members of Parliament. Furthermore, respondents supported Bournemouth University remaining within one constituency (Bournemouth West). A counter-proposal was put forward to change the name of this constituency to Bournemouth West and Bourne Valley to reflect the inclusion of three wards from Poole borough in the proposed Bournemouth West constituency.
799. Limited opposition was received in relation to the town of Verwood being divided between the proposed Mid Dorset, and Christchurch constituencies. A respondent suggested that the whole of Verwood be included in the Christchurch constituency. This proposal would have resulted in both constituencies falling outside the permitted electorate range.
800. Our revised proposals for the South Dorset and West Dorset constituencies drew little comment. One respondent was disappointed that our revised proposals crossed the Dorset and Wiltshire county boundary, but understood this was required in order to configure a pattern of constituencies that was within the permitted electorate range. This respondent suggested that the proposed Warminster and Shaftesbury constituency be renamed Blackmore Vale and Deverill Valley to reflect this constituency's rural nature.
801. We received support for the revised West Wiltshire and North Wiltshire constituencies, particularly in the Chippenham area. Our proposals for Corsham also received support as they would unify the town of Corsham (which was divided under the initial proposals). Many residents were pleased that the towns of Corsham, Melksham and Trowbridge were included within a single constituency. We received some objections from the parishioners of Box Parish as they considered that the revised proposals divided the Box Hill and Rudlow area (in the West Wiltshire constituency) from the rest of the parish located in the North Wiltshire constituency. We noted that the parish spans across two wards, Box and Colerne, and Corsham Without and Box Hill, as a consequence of relatively recent changes to local government ward boundaries. While we were sympathetic to the arguments, we noted that bringing the two wards together into one constituency would require a number of consequential changes to other constituencies in Wiltshire.
802. We received some support for the constituency names of West Wiltshire and North Wiltshire although we also received some suggestions for alternative names. Some representations suggested the constituency name North Wiltshire be renamed Chippenham and North Wiltshire, and also suggested the constituency of West Wiltshire be renamed Trowbridge and West Wiltshire. In both cases respondents considered these names better reflected the main towns and geographical nature of the constituencies. In relation to the constituency of Devizes, we received a suggestion to rename this constituency East Wiltshire.

## **Final recommendations**

803. Given that our revised proposals were generally well received, we were not persuaded to modify the pattern of constituencies in this sub-region. Our revised boundaries better aligned with communities in Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, and Wiltshire. We noted the evidence presented regarding the breaking of some community ties in this sub-region; for example, from the residents of Box Parish and town of Verwood; however, we consider this was not compelling enough to warrant further changes to constituencies due to consequential knock-on effects across this sub-region.
804. Having considered the evidence received for this sub-region, we recommend that modifications are made to three constituency names. We recommend that the North Wiltshire, West Wiltshire and Devizes constituencies be renamed Chippenham and North Wiltshire, Trowbridge and West Wiltshire, and Devizes and East Wiltshire, respectively. We consider that these names reflect the conurbations in each constituency and the geographical area of the local authorities.
805. Our final recommendations for Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, and Wiltshire are for constituencies of: Bournemouth East, Bournemouth West, Chippenham and North Wiltshire, Christchurch, Devizes and East Wiltshire, Mid Dorset, Poole, Salisbury, South Dorset, Trowbridge and West Wiltshire, Warminster and Shaftesbury, West Dorset. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Bristol**

### **Initial proposals**

806. There are currently four constituencies within this sub-region, which covers the unitary authority of Bristol. The Bristol South and Bristol North West constituencies have electorates within the permitted electorate range, therefore we were able to leave the boundaries of these two constituencies unchanged as part of our initial proposals.
807. We proposed minimal changes to the existing Bristol East and Bristol West constituencies, to ensure that the electorates of both fall within the permitted electorate range. At present, the electorate of the Bristol East constituency falls below the permitted electorate range, while the Bristol West constituency is above the permitted electorate range. Accordingly, we enlarged the Bristol East constituency to include the Easton ward that is currently located in the Bristol West constituency. We did not propose any further changes to either constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

808. We received general support for our initial proposals in this sub-region. However, there were some objections to the inclusion of the Easton ward in the Bristol East constituency. It was argued that the Easton and Lawrence Hill wards should be included within one constituency to recognise their close ties.
809. A respondent suggested that the Easton and Lawrence Hill wards should be included in the Bristol East constituency, with the Henleaze ward being transferred from the Bristol North West constituency to the Bristol West constituency, and the Frome Vale ward transferred from the Bristol East constituency to the Bristol North West constituency. The assistant commissioners

noted that the M32 forms the constituency boundary between the Bristol East and Bristol North West constituencies, with no direct road access between the Frome Vale ward and the rest of the Bristol North West constituency, which is also separated by the open space of Stoke Park.

810. Alternatively, it was proposed that both the Easton and Lawrence Hill wards should remain in the Bristol West constituency, with the Bishopston ward transferred from the Bristol West constituency to the Bristol North West constituency, and the Lockleaze ward transferred from the Bristol North West constituency to the Bristol East constituency. As with the aforementioned counter-proposal, the assistant commissioners noted the lack of a road link between the Lockleaze ward and the rest of the Bristol East constituency.
811. A respondent also proposed that both the Easton and Lawrence Hill wards should be included in the Bristol East constituency. It was suggested that the Stockwood ward be transferred from the Bristol East constituency to the Bristol South constituency, and the Southville ward be transferred from the Bristol South constituency to the Bristol West constituency. The assistant commissioners noted that the River Avon formed a clear natural boundary between the Bristol South and Bristol West constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

812. Our assistant commissioners considered the representations received and were not minded to recommend any changes to the initial proposals in this sub-region. They noted that the counter-proposals would not better reflect the statutory criteria, particularly in cases where changes to the existing constituencies of Bristol South and Bristol North West were proposed. Therefore, our revised proposals were identical to our initial proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

813. Our revised proposals for Bristol were again broadly supported during consultation, particularly in that we had proposed limited changes to the existing pattern of constituencies. However, some representations raised similar concerns as during the consultation on the initial proposals. For example, we received a counter-proposal which sought to avoid the Easton and Lawrence Hill wards being included in different constituencies. The respondent noted the areas' distinctive shared community, identity and character with the other local communities in these wards such as Russell Town, Barton Hill and St. Jude's. We also received a suggestion to amend the constituency name of Bristol North West to Bristol North and Avonmouth to better reflect the configuration of the constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

814. We noted that our proposed pattern of constituencies in the Bristol sub-region was generally supported during all consultations. We consider that the counter-proposals received resulted in more change than is necessary to create four constituencies within the permitted electorate range. Therefore, as no new or compelling evidence has been received to modify our proposals, we confirm our revised proposals for this sub-region as final.
815. Our final recommendations for Bristol are for constituencies of: Bristol East, Bristol North West, Bristol South, Bristol West. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly, Plymouth, and Torbay**

### **Initial proposals**

816. This sub-region comprises the County of Devon and the unitary authorities of Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, Plymouth, and Torbay. There are currently 18 constituencies in the sub-region. Of these, only seven (East Devon, Exeter, North Devon, St Austell and Newquay, Tiverton and Honiton, Torbay, and Torridge and West Devon) have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The remaining 11 constituencies fall below the permitted electorate range.
817. Our initial proposals allocated 17 constituencies to this sub-region, a reduction of one from the current arrangement.
818. In order to develop initial proposals in which all the constituency electorates were within the permitted electorate range, and to facilitate the reduction in constituencies outlined above, it was necessary to alter the boundaries of three existing constituencies: East Devon, St Austell and Newquay, and Torridge and West Devon. The Tiverton and Honiton constituency was altered to realign local government ward and constituency boundaries. Our initial proposals left the existing constituencies of Exeter, North Devon, and Torbay unchanged.
819. As noted earlier in this report, it is not possible to propose a whole number of constituencies with electorates within the permitted electorate range within the County of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Consequently, a key consideration when developing proposals in this sub-region was identifying the most appropriate point at which to propose the necessary cross-county boundary constituency between Cornwall and Devon. We decided that the most suitable point at which to cross the boundary is in the north of both counties, rather than traversing the River Tamar between Plymouth and Saltash, at which point the river, notwithstanding the bridge, presents a far more significant boundary between the two counties. We named this constituency Bideford, Bude and Launceston, reflecting the names of the three largest towns in the constituency. This constituency stretches along the South West Coastal Path from Port Isaac Bay to Bideford Bar and comprises nine wards that are currently included in the North Cornwall constituency and 18 wards that are currently in the existing Torridge and West Devon constituency. The A39 provides a strong communication link along the north coast of the constituency, linking Bideford in Devon with Bude and Camelford in Cornwall.
820. Due to the small electorate in the existing St Ives constituency, we expanded the boundary along the coast to incorporate the entirety of St Ives Bay and the town of Hayle, with which there are close geographical and communication links. Similarly, due to the small electorate of the existing Camborne and Redruth constituency, exacerbated by the transfer of Hayle to St Ives, we also extended this boundary along the south coast to incorporate the towns of Falmouth and Penryn. Our proposed name for this constituency was Falmouth and Camborne.
821. To replace the loss of the town of Falmouth from the existing Truro and Falmouth constituency, we included the town of Newquay in a constituency that continues to cross the county from the northern coast to the southern coast. Our proposed name for this constituency was Truro and Newquay.

822. To replace the loss of the town of Newquay from the existing St Austell and Newquay constituency, we included nine wards from the existing North Cornwall constituency, including the towns of Bodmin and Wadebridge into one constituency and named it Bodmin and St Austell.
823. We extended the South East Cornwall constituency to include the wards of Altarnun, and Stokeclimsland, from the existing North Cornwall constituency and proposed no change to the name of this constituency.
824. In Devon, our initial proposals did not alter the existing constituencies of Exeter, North Devon, and Torbay. Additionally, a number of our proposed constituencies in the south and east of the county were largely similar to the existing constituencies, apart from the transfer of a small number of wards to ensure that electorates fell within the permitted electorate range. As a result, the major changes we proposed were confined to the Central Devon, South West Devon, and Torridge and West Devon constituencies.
825. In Plymouth, we transferred the Peverell ward from the existing constituency of Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport to the Plymouth, Moor View constituency. To replace the Peverell ward, we transferred the Plymstock Dunstone, and Plymstock Radford wards to the existing Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport constituency. We named the two constituencies, which were wholly within the City of Plymouth, Plymouth North, and Plymouth South respectively.
826. We included 10 West Devon borough wards, including the town of Tavistock, which are currently in the Torridge and West Devon constituency, in a constituency together with the remaining wards in the existing South West Devon constituency. We named this constituency Tavistock and Ivybridge.
827. We transferred the two Teignbridge district wards of Ambrook and Ipplepen from the Newton Abbot constituency to the existing Totnes constituency to bring its electorate within the permitted electorate range. To compensate for the loss of these two wards, we transferred the two Teignbridge district wards of Chudleigh, and Kenn Valley from the existing Central Devon constituency to Newton Abbot.
828. The Tiverton and Honiton constituency is within the permitted electorate range. However, we amended this constituency by including all of the East Devon district ward of Feniton and Buckerell to reflect the changes made to this ward boundary. Apart from this change to the existing East Devon constituency, there did not need to be any other changes made. However, we noted that we had to include the five remaining Torridge district wards not included in the proposed Bideford, Bude and Launceston constituency in a revised Central Devon constituency, to compensate for the transfer of the Teignbridge district wards of Chudleigh, and Kenn Valley to the Newton Abbot constituency. This would have resulted in the Central Devon constituency containing parts of five different districts. We considered that this was unnecessary and decided to include the East Devon district ward of Exe Valley in the proposed East Devon constituency. This meant that the proposed Central Devon constituency would continue to contain parts of four Devon districts (Mid Devon, Teignbridge, Torridge, and West Devon).

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

829. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals for Devon, there was strong support for the proposed East Devon and Exeter constituencies, with respondents noting that our initial



proposals were minimum change options for both constituencies, with Exeter's constituency boundary unaltered. Conversely, we also received a counter-proposal to include the Exeter city ward of St. Loyes in the Exeter constituency. The respondent argued that the St. Loyes ward had strong links with the rest of the Exeter constituency. This counter-proposal was supported by other respondents stating that the rate of housing development in East Devon may necessitate a change at the next review.

830. There were objections to the inclusion of the Teignbridge district ward of Chudleigh in the Newton Abbot constituency. A respondent was concerned that Hennock Parish (part of the Chudleigh ward), would lose its rural identity as a result of these proposals. Alternative configurations included transferring the Chudleigh ward into a Central Devon constituency to recognise its ties to that constituency.
831. We received suggestions for alternative constituency names in relation to the three constituencies covering the City of Plymouth. The addition of 'Plympton' to the name of our proposed Tavistock and Ivybridge constituency was suggested as a more accurate representation of the electorate of this constituency. Respondents also requested that we revert to the existing names of the remaining Plymouth constituencies: Plymouth Moor View, and Plymouth Sutton and Devonport.
832. As part of our initial proposals we suggested constituencies in Cornwall that generally crossed the county from the north coast to the south coast, rather than constituencies that followed the coastline. There was some support for our proposed constituencies; however, we received passionate arguments against the creation of a so-called 'Devonwall' cross-county boundary constituency, namely to our proposed Bideford, Bude and Launceston constituency. Many of those who opposed this proposal did not submit a counter-proposal to create five constituencies wholly within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, each with an electorate within the permitted electorate range. It was argued that Cornwall is a separate entity from England and should be treated in the same way as Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in terms of the review.
833. Turning south to the proposed Bodmin and St Austell, and Truro and Newquay constituencies, respondents opposed the division of the 'China Clay District' between two constituencies. The consensus was that as much of this area as possible should be in the same constituency as the town of St Austell. It was suggested that the St. Stephen-In-Brannel ward be included in the Bodmin and St Austell constituency and the St. Columb Major ward included in the Truro and Newquay constituency to recognise the close ties between St. Columb Major and the town of Newquay. Although this counter-proposal would not unite the whole of the 'China Clay District' within a single constituency, it was a viable solution that could be achieved within the statutory rules. We noted further evidence asserting that the St. Columb Major ward has economic and community links with the Truro and Newquay constituency, in particular with the town of Newquay.
834. Submissions also commented that the village of Portreath is closely linked to the Redruth area; however, it was noted that including the whole of the ward of Mount Hawke and Portreath in the Falmouth and Camborne constituency was not possible without making a number of changes to neighbouring constituencies. Splitting the Mount Hawke and Portreath ward was also proposed. However, our assistant commissioners considered that this would not satisfy our exceptional and compelling circumstances test.

835. A number of respondents suggested that the proposed Falmouth and Camborne constituency should be renamed Falmouth, Camborne and Redruth to recognise the three largest towns in the constituency.

### **Revised proposals**

836. Given the mix of support for and opposition to the initial proposals for the Exeter and East Devon constituencies, in particular with respect to the St. Loyes ward, the assistant commissioners visited the area to test evidence received during the public consultations. They noted that the St. Loyes ward was indeed very similar to other wards within Exeter and was separated from the rest of the East Devon constituency by the M5 motorway; however, the assistant commissioners also highlighted the fact that the Exeter city ward of Topsham would become an orphan ward if St. Loyes ward were to be transferred to the Exeter constituency. Due to the strength of evidence presented we agreed with the recommendation of the assistant commissioners to include the St. Loyes ward in the Exeter constituency as part of the revised proposals. We noted that the arguments between change and respecting the existing boundaries were finely balanced.
837. In relation to the Truro and Newquay, and Bodmin and St Austell constituencies, we were persuaded by the evidence put forward to unite the 'China Clay District' within a single constituency. Therefore we transferred the St. Columb Major, and St. Stephen-In-Brannel wards between constituencies (Truro and Newquay, and Bodmin and St Austell respectively), thereby respecting the community ties these two wards have with their neighbouring areas.
838. As part of our revised proposals, we proposed that the constituency names for the Plymouth area be changed to Plymouth Moor View, and Plymouth Sutton and Devonport, thereby reverting to the original constituency names. We also changed the constituency name for Tavistock and Ivybridge to Plympton, Tavistock and Ivybridge to better represent the identity of the electorate, and the constituency name of Falmouth and Camborne to Falmouth, Camborne and Redruth to recognise the three largest towns in the constituency.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

839. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals we received further opposition to the cross-county boundary constituency of Bideford, Bude and Launceston. Many of the representations requested that we treat Cornwall as a separate sub-region, contending that the unique needs of the Cornish electorate would not be adequately served by a cross-county boundary Member of Parliament. However, as outlined in earlier sections of the report, classifying Cornwall as a separate entity would result in at least one constituency outside of the permitted electorate range, thereby not adhering to the statutory rules. We did not receive any counter-proposals that suggested an alternative crossing of the river Tamar.
840. In relation to the Exeter, and East Devon constituencies, we received a mix of opposition, to and support for the revised proposals. Opponents considered the transfer of the St. Loyes ward as unnecessary and unjustified. As noted above, during our consultation on our initial proposals, some respondents drew to our attention to the future housing growth in the area. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, respondents made the point that future housing growth could also be used to argue for the St. Loyes ward to remain in its current constituency of East Devon. As a consequence of expected housing growth in both Exeter and East Devon, the feeling was that St. Loyes ward will be used like game of political 'ping pong', having to move between

the two constituencies at each review. Concern was also raised with respect to the Topsham ward becoming an orphan ward. We received a counter-proposal which included the St. Loyes ward back into the East Devon constituency, as per our initial proposals. This proposal would be that it would minimise disruption to the electors within these constituencies, Exeter would be an unchanged constituency and the Topsham ward would not be an orphan ward.

841. We received some opposition to our proposed Totnes constituency. A small number of representations requested that the town of Brixham be transferred from its existing constituency of Totnes to Torbay. Respondents regarded Torbay as spanning the three towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham and that they should all be included in the same constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

842. We considered that the evidence received regarding the inclusion of the St. Loyes ward in either the Exeter or East Devon constituencies is finely balanced. Having considered the evidence, we recommend that the St. Loyes ward is retained in the East Devon constituency, as per the existing arrangement. We consider that this proposal addresses concerns regarding unnecessary change to existing communities and avoids the Topsham ward becoming an orphan ward. This modification would also result in the existing Exeter constituency being retained completely unchanged.
843. We are sympathetic to the arguments against a cross-county boundary constituency between Cornwall and Devon (the Bideford, Bude and Launceston constituency). However, our options for Cornwall are limited due to statutory rules, which make it impossible to create a sub-region for Cornwall alone (see above). We consider that no new or compelling evidence has been received to modify this proposed constituency that would address the local concerns and at the same time reflect the statutory criteria. Having considered the suggestions for alternative constituency names we have decided not to modify any of the revised proposal constituency names in this sub-region.
844. Our final recommendations for Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly, Plymouth and Torbay are for constituencies of: Bideford, Bude and Launceston, Bodmin and St Austell, Central Devon, East Devon, Exeter, Falmouth, Camborne and Redruth, Newton Abbot, North Devon, Plymouth Moor View, Plymouth Sutton and Devonport, Plympton, Tavistock and Ivybridge, South East Cornwall, St Ives, Tiverton and Honiton, Torbay, Totnes, and Truro and Newquay. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Gloucestershire, and South Gloucestershire**

### **Initial proposals**

845. There are currently nine constituencies within this sub-region, which covers the County of Gloucestershire and the unitary authority of South Gloucestershire. Three of those constituencies (Tewkesbury, The Cotswolds, and Cheltenham) have electorates within the permitted electorate range; the electorates of two constituencies are above the range, and the electorates of the remaining four fall below the range. Our initial proposals allocated nine constituencies to this sub-region and proposed changes to all nine of the existing constituencies.

846. We considered whether we could leave unchanged any of the three constituencies which have electorates within the permitted electorate range. However, in order to develop proposals in which all the constituency electorates are within the permitted electorate range, it was necessary to alter the boundaries of all nine of the existing constituencies.
847. The electorate of the existing Forest of Dean constituency is below the permitted electorate range. Extending this constituency to increase its electorate is particularly problematic given the geographical constraints created by the border with Wales and the regional border to the north and west, the River Severn to the east and the desirability of retaining Gloucester city centre within a single constituency. As part of our initial proposals we included the Tewkesbury borough ward of Coombe Hill in the constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. We also changed the name of this constituency from the Forest of Dean to West Gloucestershire.
848. We noted that moving the Coombe Hill ward from the Tewkesbury constituency to the West Gloucestershire constituency resulted in the Tewkesbury constituency having two detached parts. Consequently, we included the Cheltenham borough ward of Springbank in the Tewkesbury constituency, to provide a link to both parts of the constituency. As this resulted in a Tewkesbury constituency with an electorate above the permitted electorate range, we included the Gloucester city ward of Longlevens in the Gloucester constituency. The transfer of the Springbank ward to the Tewkesbury constituency was the only change we proposed to the existing Cheltenham constituency.
849. The electorate of the City of Gloucester was too large to form a single constituency. As mentioned above, we included the Longlevens ward in the Gloucester constituency. In addition, we also transferred the two Gloucester city wards of Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale to the Stroud constituency to bring the Gloucester constituency within the permitted electorate range.
850. Due to the small electorate of the existing Kingswood constituency, we included in this constituency the South Gloucestershire district ward of Boyd Valley. Similarly, due to the small electorate of the existing Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency, we also added to it the South Gloucestershire district ward of Frampton Cotterell.
851. Having included the wards of Boyd Valley, and Frampton Cotterell in other constituencies, the existing Thornbury and Yate constituency needed to gain electors from the Stroud district. To bring this constituency within the permitted electorate range we included five Stroud district wards, including the towns of Cam and Dursley, from the existing Stroud constituency, and two wards (Kingswood and Wotton-under-Edge) from the existing The Cotswolds constituency. As a result of these changes, our proposed name for this constituency was Dursley, Thornbury and Yate.
852. As part of our initial proposals we also included the Stroud district ward of Nailsworth in The Cotswolds constituency to ensure it fell within the permitted electorate range. We also proposed that the remaining 21 Stroud district wards were included in our proposed Stroud constituency together with the Gloucester city wards of Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

853. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals we received some support for our proposed pattern of constituencies. However, there was significant opposition to the proposed Cheltenham and Stroud constituencies.
854. The proposed change of constituency name from the Forest of Dean to West Gloucestershire was not popular. We received a well-supported petition and submissions in opposition of our proposal. Residents believed that the current name for this constituency is intrinsic to the identity of this constituency, in particular to its heritage and geographical nature.
855. In Cheltenham, respondents opposed the inclusion of the Springbank ward in the Tewkesbury constituency. The consensus was that the Springbank community looked to Cheltenham for amenities and local services. A counter-proposal was submitted to retain the Springbank ward in the Cheltenham constituency. In order to provide for a Tewkesbury constituency that was not detached, the counter-proposal divided the Coombe Hill ward between the Tewkesbury and West Gloucestershire constituencies. In order to compensate for this amendment, this counter-proposal also proposed consequential changes to other constituencies in the sub-region.
856. We also received an alternative counter-proposal which suggested changes to the constituencies of Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Stroud, and The Cotswolds and proposed a modified Thornbury and Yate constituency. However, this proposal did not include the Bisley and Painswick wards in a Stroud constituency and also would have resulted in the Cotswold district being divided between constituencies. In Stroud, respondents objected to the towns of Cam and Dursley not being included in a Stroud constituency.
857. In Gloucester, we received some support for our initial proposals, particularly the inclusion of the Elmbridge and Longlevens wards in the constituency. However, opposition was received to removing the Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale wards from the Gloucester constituency, with respondents stating that the topography of the Quedgeley area was more aligned to Gloucester.

### **Revised proposals**

858. We received ardent submissions against many of our proposals in this sub-region during previous public consultations; therefore, our assistant commissioners investigated alternative configurations to constituencies in Gloucestershire, and South Gloucestershire for our revised proposals.
859. In the north of this sub-region, the proposed constituency name of West Gloucestershire was unpopular. Accordingly, our revised proposals changed this constituency name back to Forest of Dean.
860. We noted the strong opposition to including the Springbank ward in a Tewkesbury constituency (including a petition of 192 signatures). Our assistant commissioners visited Gloucestershire in order to observe the area for themselves. Having considered the evidence received, we agreed with the assistant commissioners' recommendation to modify our proposal in the Cheltenham constituency by placing the Springbank ward back into Cheltenham, thereby satisfying the objections from the Springbank ward and returning Cheltenham to an unchanged constituency.

861. As a consequence of reverting to the existing constituency for Cheltenham, modifications were required to the Tewkesbury constituency as part of the revised proposals. Accordingly, we divided Coombe Hill ward (currently in the Tewkesbury constituency) between the constituencies in order for the Tewkesbury constituency to be contiguous with the local authority area. The ELH and UCK polling districts were included in the Tewkesbury constituency providing for access from one end of the constituency to the other via the M5 motorway. The remaining polling districts in the Coombe Hill ward were included in the Forest of Dean constituency. We considered that in this instance, the test of exceptional and compelling circumstances had been met in order to propose dividing the Coombe Hill ward between constituencies.
862. We also proposed further changes to the Tewkesbury constituency. We transferred the Tewkesbury borough wards of Isbourne and Winchcombe to The Cotswolds constituency. We considered these wards to be a more natural fit to The Cotswolds. Our assistant commissioners observed as part of a tour of this area that these wards had a lot in common with other wards in The Cotswolds constituency, in particular the similarities in housing stock and tourism, and that they were both largely within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
863. We included the Gloucester city wards of Elmbridge and Longlevens in the Tewkesbury constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. We noted that under the revised proposals the District of Tewkesbury would be divided between three constituencies. We considered this necessary to achieve the best overall solution for the sub-region, while also reflecting the evidence received during the consultation.
864. As the Elmbridge ward had been transferred from the Gloucester constituency to the Tewkesbury constituency, we were able to return the Gloucester city wards of Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale to the Gloucester constituency. These changes allowed for the inclusion of the three Stroud district wards of Berkeley, Minchinhampton, and Nailsworth into the Stroud constituency, resulting in the District of Stroud being divided between two constituencies.
865. We considered the evidence with respect to including the wards of Cam East, Cam West, and Dursley in a Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency and concluded that this configuration, balanced with the aforementioned revisions we proposed under our revised proposals, was the most appropriate for this constituency.
866. We did not propose any changes to the initial proposals for the South Gloucestershire constituencies of Kingswood, and Filton and Bradley Stoke.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

867. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, our proposal to split the Coombe Hill ward between the constituencies of Tewkesbury and the Forest of Dean did not attract any significant support or objection. We received some counter-proposals suggesting an alternative solution to splitting this ward; however, they did not meet the statutory criteria. The first counter-proposal resulted in knock-on effects leaving The Cotswolds, Forest of Dean, and Gloucester constituencies outside of the permitted electorate range. The second counter-proposal resulted in the Tewkesbury, and Gloucester constituencies falling outside of the permitted electorate range, as well as leaving the Elmbridge ward detached from its proposed constituency.

868. Many respondents objected to the City of Gloucester wards of Elmbridge and Longlevens being included in the Tewkesbury constituency. Residents of these wards asserted that they identified with Gloucester not with Tewkesbury, stating that the distance from these wards to Gloucester city would be much less than that to the centre of Tewkesbury. The alternative to this proposal would result in the Quedgeley wards not being included in the Gloucester constituency and would require consequential changes to most of the revised proposals in the sub-region.
869. As with our previous consultations, during the consultation on the revised proposals, respondents objected to the towns of Cam and Dursley being included in the Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency, contending that these proposals broke close ties with the town of Stroud and with the neighbouring Coaley and Uley ward currently in the Stroud constituency. These representations supported the towns of Cam and Dursley being included in a constituency with the town of Stroud, emphasising the historical connection between Stroud and other market towns in the vicinity, especially Nailsworth, Stonehouse, Dursley and Cam and the rural communities that link them. We noted that the alternatives to the revised proposals would require significant changes to nearly all constituencies across the sub-region.
870. Turning to South Gloucestershire, the proposed Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency continued to attract opposition and we received many counter-proposals for this area. We received objections to the Kingswood Parish (located within the Kingswood ward) being included in a Dursley, Thornbury and Yate constituency and suggested alternatively being transferred to either the Stroud or The Cotswolds constituencies. Our investigations indicated that placing the Kingswood ward in the Stroud constituency would result in this ward being detached from this constituency. Furthermore, including this ward in The Cotswolds constituency may result in dividing the community of Kingswood and/or any community ties between the Kingswood ward and the Wotton-Under-Edge ward.
871. We received support for the inclusion of the Berkeley and Nailsworth wards in the Stroud constituency. The inclusion of the ward of Minchinhampton into the Stroud constituency was also supported with residents welcoming this arrangement due to its geographical proximity to Stroud and its shared identity — historically, culturally and socially.

### **Final recommendations**

872. After due consideration of the evidence received, we were not persuaded to modify the constituency names or boundaries for any of our revised proposals for the Gloucester, and South Gloucester sub-region.
873. Under our revised proposals, dividing the Coombe Hill ward between the Forest of Dean, and Tewkesbury constituencies provided a practical solution to a more cohesive Tewkesbury constituency. This reconfiguration enabled the Springbank ward to be returned to the Cheltenham constituency, thereby resulting in the Cheltenham constituency retaining its existing constituency boundary.
874. In relation to the Gloucester constituency, we noted the concerns of the residents of the Elmbridge ward in opposition to its inclusion in the Tewkesbury constituency. However, we also considered the strength of evidence to retain the Quedgeley wards in the Gloucester constituency together with evidence obtained from our assistant commissioners during a visit to this area. On balance we considered that our revised proposal provided for fewer electors being disrupted,

would result in Longlevens ward no longer being an orphan ward, and maintains the community ties between the Quedgeley wards and Gloucester.

875. We noted that objections were again received to the towns of Cam and Dursley not being included in the Stroud constituency. We investigated the counter-proposals received and identified that they would require significant changes to nearly all of the constituencies in the sub-region, many of which we have received support. Therefore, we are not minded to modify our proposed Stroud constituency. We have also considered the evidence regarding the inclusion of Kingswood ward in either the Stroud or The Cotswolds constituencies. As noted above, including the ward in the Stroud constituency would result in it being detached and therefore we do not recommend this change. We are also not persuaded to include the ward in The Cotswolds constituency, as we consider compelling evidence has not been received to suggest the modification would better reflect community ties, and may break community ties between Kingswood and Wotton-under-Edge. Furthermore, including the Kingswood ward in The Cotswolds constituency would result in Stroud borough being divided between three constituencies and it would be an orphan ward. Having considered all of the evidence received, we decided not to modify our revised proposals for the sub-region.
876. Our final recommendations for Gloucestershire, and South Gloucestershire are for constituencies of: Cheltenham, Dursley, Thornbury and Yate, Filton and Bradley Stoke, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Kingswood, Stroud, Tewkesbury, The Cotswolds. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **North Somerset**

### **Initial proposals**

877. There are currently two constituencies within this sub-region, which covers the unitary authority of North Somerset. These are North Somerset, and Weston-super-Mare, both of which have electorates within the permitted electorate range. We did not consider it necessary to propose any changes to these constituencies as part of our initial proposals.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

878. We received general support for our initial proposals; however, we did receive a small number of submissions in opposition. A respondent considered the North Somerset constituency was a collection of disparate small towns and villages and suggested an alternative cross-river constituency with Bristol. Another counter-proposal suggested including the Winford ward from the North Somerset constituency, and the Blagdon and Churchill ward from the Weston-super-Mare constituency in a North East Somerset constituency, therefore requiring the creation of different sub-regions.

### **Revised proposals**

879. In light of the representations received, we were not persuaded to modify our proposals given there was no need to modify the existing constituencies.



### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

880. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals we received support for the pattern of constituencies in this sub-region. We received little opposition and no new counter-proposals.

### **Final recommendations**

881. Having considered the evidence received, we were not persuaded that the current boundaries for these constituencies should be amended, particularly given that these constituencies have received support over the public consultation periods. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: North Somerset, and Weston-super-Mare. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Swindon**

### **Initial proposals**

882. There are currently two constituencies in this sub-region comprising the unitary authority of Swindon. Only the North Swindon constituency has an electorate within the permitted electorate range. We were unable to leave this constituency unchanged because changes were required to the South Swindon constituency.

883. In formulating our initial proposals we noted that two wards in Swindon borough are divided between the existing North Swindon, and South Swindon constituencies following a review of local government ward boundaries. We also noted that the majority of both wards are in the North Swindon constituency. We considered that to include the divided Mannington and Western ward wholly in North Swindon would isolate the two wards of Lydiard and Freshbrook, and Shaw from the remainder of the South Swindon constituency. Therefore, we included the whole of the Mannington and Western ward in the proposed South Swindon constituency and the whole of the Covingham and Dorcan ward in the proposed North Swindon constituency. This resulted in both the South Swindon and North Swindon constituencies having electorates within the permitted electorate range.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

884. Our initial proposals for the Swindon constituencies were largely supported with respondents citing that they were pleased with the minimal disruption to community ties under this proposal.

885. Limited objection was received to the initial proposals; for example, to the inclusion of the whole ward of Covingham and Dorcan in the North Swindon constituency. Counter-proposals suggested either dividing a ward or resulted in constituencies not within the permitted electorate range. Some counter-proposals suggested an entirely new pattern of constituencies in Swindon.

### **Revised proposals**

886. We considered that we had not received persuasive evidence to warrant an amendment to the initial proposals; therefore, we proposed the same constituency boundaries for North Swindon and South Swindon in our revised proposals.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

887. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received one counter-proposal suggesting that the current boundary for South Swindon, and North Swindon should be followed in the west, and the communities of Nythe and Covingham along the Parish Council boundaries should be included in the South Swindon constituency. The other representations received commenting on this sub-region largely supported our revised proposals.

### **Final recommendations**

888. We have again considered the evidence received in relation to North Swindon and the South Swindon constituencies. We consider that persuasive evidence has not been received to modify the revised proposals and that both constituencies have received broad levels of support.

889. Our final recommendations for the Swindon sub-region are for constituencies of: North Swindon and South Swindon. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.



## West Midlands

890. The West Midlands region currently has 59 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 15 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 43 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorate of just one constituency is above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by six from 59 to 53.
891. The West Midlands comprises Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire (including Telford and The Wrekin), Warwickshire, Staffordshire (including the City of Stoke-on-Trent) and the cities and boroughs that comprise the former metropolitan county of West Midlands: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The region is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
892. We appointed two assistant commissioners for the West Midlands — Margaret Gilmore and David Latham — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
- Birmingham: 3–4 November 2016
  - Shrewsbury: 7–8 November 2016
  - Royal Leamington Spa: 10–11 November 2016
  - Stafford: 14–15 November 2016.

### Sub-division of the region

893. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of the West Midlands of 3,989,920 results in the region being entitled to 53 constituencies, a reduction of six. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
894. We noted that Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent has an electorate of just over 815,000 and results in an entitlement of 10.90 constituencies. We decided to allocate 11 constituencies to the county and treat it as a sub-region. Of the other counties, only the former metropolitan county of West Midlands had an electorate that would allow for it to be treated as a sub-region, without it being paired with a neighbouring county. However, we noted that the very large ward electorates in the seven metropolitan boroughs that comprised the former metropolitan county of the West Midlands, and particularly in the City of Birmingham and the Borough of Dudley, meant that the creation of constituencies with an electorate within the permitted electorate range, using whole wards, would be challenging.
895. We considered that the other counties would need to be paired with a neighbouring county and that these pairings would be decided so as to achieve the construction of constituencies containing whole wards across the rest of the region. We looked at alternative divisions of the region that attempted to create constituencies that each had an electorate within the permitted electorate range and that did not divide wards. We also looked at alternative divisions that divided

wards in the former metropolitan county of West Midlands. We considered that all of these alternatives had a number of drawbacks.

896. We therefore decided that the rest of the region — the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire (including Telford and The Wrekin), Warwickshire, the former metropolitan county of West Midlands, and Worcestershire — would be combined to form a second sub-region. This sub-region was allocated 42 constituencies.
897. While there was support for the decision to treat Staffordshire (including Stoke-on-Trent) as a sub-region, the use of the remainder of the region as a sub-region was largely objected to during consultation on the initial proposals. There were objections to the creation of a constituency that contained part of the county of Warwickshire and part of the county of Worcestershire; to the inclusion of wards from Herefordshire and Shropshire in the same constituency; to the inclusion of wards from the Borough of Solihull in a constituency with a neighbouring area; and to the inclusion of wards from the City of Birmingham and the Borough of Dudley in the same constituency. We did receive some suggestions for alternative sub-regions, with alternative arrangements suggested such as:
- a sub-region which comprised the areas of the City of Coventry and Warwickshire
  - a sub-region which comprised the area of the Borough of Solihull.
898. We did not receive any substantial proposals that suggested crossing the regional boundary between the West Midlands and the neighbouring regions of the East Midlands, North West, South East or South West in the initial proposals consultation. In formulating our revised proposals, we also considered that compelling evidence had not been received to justify crossing the regional boundaries. However, we considered that persuasive evidence had been received to propose alternative sub-regions. Our revised proposals were, therefore, based on alternative sub-regions to those of our initial proposals.
899. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals we did not receive any new evidence that would justify either the crossing of the West Midlands regional boundary, or the use of alternative sub-regions. The sub-regions we are therefore basing our recommendations on are:
- Coventry and Warwickshire
  - Solihull
  - Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, the former metropolitan county of West Midlands (less Coventry and Solihull), and Worcestershire
  - Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

## **Coventry and Warwickshire**

### **Initial proposals**

900. Of the three existing constituencies in the City of Coventry, only the Coventry North East constituency has an electorate within the permitted electorate range. In our initial proposals, we proposed to make no changes to the Coventry North East constituency and to make changes

to the other two constituencies. The Coventry South constituency was formed of seven City of Coventry wards, and the proposed Coventry West and Meriden constituency included the two Borough of Solihull wards of Knowle, and Meriden.

901. In Warwickshire, none of the six existing constituencies had an electorate within the permitted electorate range. The shape of the county limited the scope for change in the north and east of the county. In our initial proposals we included the two Borough of North Warwickshire wards of Arley and Whitacre, and Hartshill in the North Warwickshire constituency, thereby uniting the whole of the District of North Warwickshire in one constituency. The electorate of the Nuneaton constituency was brought within the permitted electorate range with the inclusion of the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth ward of Bulkington, and the three Borough of Rugby wards of Revel and Binley Woods, Wolston and the Lawfords, and Wolvey and Shilton. The Rugby constituency included seven wards of the District of Stratford-on-Avon and was renamed Rugby and Southam.
902. We proposed the division of the existing constituency of Warwick and Leamington, by including the towns of Royal Leamington Spa and Kenilworth in a Kenilworth and Leamington constituency. The five remaining District of Warwickshire wards, including the town of Warwick, were included in a constituency with 21 wards from the District of Stratford-on-Avon, including the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, that we named Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon. We also proposed that seven wards from the south of Warwickshire should be included in a cross-county boundary constituency with wards from Worcestershire, called Evesham and South Warwickshire, and the District of Stratford-on-Avon ward of Tanworth-in-Arden in a proposed Shirley and Solihull South constituency, across the county boundary with the former metropolitan county of the West Midlands.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

903. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed constituencies of North Warwickshire, and Nuneaton, received some support. However, there was widespread opposition to all of the other proposed constituencies. The main focus of opposition was to our proposed Kenilworth and Leamington, and Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon constituencies, with representations focusing on the close ties between the neighbouring towns of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa, which many respondents said should be included in the same constituency.
904. We received a number of alternatives to the proposed constituencies in Warwickshire including:
- that the town of Kenilworth should be included in a Coventry South and Kenilworth constituency due to the links this town has with the south of the City of Coventry, as typified by the University of Warwick campus, which straddles the boundary
  - that the town of Bedworth should be included in a Coventry constituency due to the links this town has with the north of the City of Coventry, as typified by the Coventry to Nuneaton rail upgrade between the two areas, known as the NUCKLE transportation route
  - that the Stratford-on-Avon constituency should only contain wards from Stratford-on-Avon district.
905. These counter-proposals were generally supported by respondents in the public consultation periods.

### **Revised proposals**

906. Having reviewed the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners considered that the connections between the towns of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa were strong and that they should be in the same constituency, although this would require consequential changes to the pattern of constituencies in the sub-region. They also concluded that the town of Kenilworth had strong links with south Coventry and that it should be included in a Coventry South and Kenilworth constituency. This also had the benefit that the District of Stratford-on-Avon would be divided by two constituencies, rather than four as in our initial proposals. We agreed with our assistant commissioners and endorsed the revised proposals for the Warwick and Leamington, and Coventry South and Kenilworth constituencies.
907. We noted the counter-proposals for this area and agreed that the District of Warwick ward of Radford Semele should be included in a Rugby and Southam constituency to compensate for the inclusion of the District of Stratford-on-Avon ward of Kineton in the Stratford-on-Avon constituency.
908. Although we had made no changes to the Coventry North East constituency in our initial proposals, we decided that the constituency should be altered to allow for the adoption of the counter-proposals that suggested a more practical division of the City of Coventry into three constituencies, two of which would be wholly contained within Coventry (Coventry East and Coventry North West). We rejected suggestions that the town of Bedworth should be included in a Coventry constituency. We therefore made no revisions to the proposed Nuneaton and North Warwickshire constituencies, rejecting a suggestion that Bedworth should be included in the name of the latter constituency.
909. We considered that there was no need to include part of Warwickshire in any neighbouring county, although we noted that this would have ramifications for constituencies elsewhere in the West Midlands region.
910. Our revised proposals for Coventry and Warwickshire were, therefore, markedly different to those put forward in our initial proposals, including the names of many of the constituencies.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

911. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals, we received support for our proposed constituencies of Warwick and Leamington, Stratford-on-Avon and North Warwickshire. However, there was a degree of opposition to the revised proposals for Coventry South and Kenilworth, Nuneaton, and Rugby and Southam.
912. We received some objections to the inclusion of the Radford Semele ward in the Rugby and Southam constituency, and to the inclusion of the Borough of Rugby wards of Revel and Binley Woods, and Wolston and the Lawfords wards in the proposed Nuneaton constituency. Respondents stated that the Radford Semele ward had close ties with the town of Royal Leamington Spa. The Revel and Binley Woods, and Wolston and the Lawfords wards are currently in the Rugby constituency and respondents wanted both wards to remain in the constituency, as both wards are much closer to the town of Rugby, than to the town of Nuneaton. We noted that to make these changes would require consequential changes to other constituencies in the sub-region, including those which are otherwise unchanged.

913. There was objection to the inclusion of the town of Kenilworth in our proposed Coventry South and Kenilworth constituency. Representations suggested that Kenilworth has a rural outlook, which is the opposite to the urban nature of Coventry. Alternative proposals were submitted for the three Coventry constituencies, but we considered that these did not provide for a satisfactory configuration of constituencies in the city.

### **Final recommendations**

914. Having considered the evidence received, we were mindful of the ties between the Radford Semele ward and the town of Royal Leamington Spa, but it would not be possible to include the ward in the Warwick and Leamington constituency without removing another ward, which would result in further changes elsewhere. The combined electorate of the Revel and Binley Woods, and Wolston and the Lawfords wards is 10,609; to remove the wards from the Nuneaton constituency and include them in the Rugby and Southam constituency would not be possible as the electorate of both constituencies would fall outside of the permitted electorate range. We also considered that our proposals for the City of Coventry were superior to the alternatives that had been submitted. We do not consider that any additional compelling or new evidence has been provided that might justify further amending the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Coventry and Warwickshire.
915. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Coventry East, Coventry North West, Coventry South and Kenilworth, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton, Rugby and Southam, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick and Leamington. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Solihull**

### **Initial proposals**

916. Of the existing two constituencies in the Borough of Solihull, the Solihull constituency is currently within the permitted electorate range and the Meriden constituency has an electorate that is above the permitted range. We proposed a different pattern of constituencies in Solihull, by including the two wards of Knowle and Meriden in a proposed Coventry West and Meriden constituency. We also included the City of Birmingham ward of Sheldon in a proposed Chelmsley Wood and Solihull North constituency, and the Stratford-on-Avon district ward of Tanworth-in-Arden in a proposed Shirley and Solihull South constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

917. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals we received very little support for our proposed constituencies in Solihull and opposition to the proposals that included the wards of Knowle and Meriden in the Coventry West and Meriden constituency. It was claimed that these two wards had no ties with Coventry and that our proposals broke strong ties between the neighbouring villages of Dorridge and Knowle. We received a number of counter-proposals for Solihull, including those that created two constituencies wholly within the borough boundary and which included the Blythe ward in the Solihull constituency and the Elmdon ward in the Meriden constituency. There was also opposition to the inclusion of the District of Stratford-on-Avon ward of Tanworth-in-Arden in the proposed cross-county boundary constituency of Shirley and Solihull



South. Among the counter-proposals was a suggestion to divide a Solihull borough ward between constituencies, so as to minimise change to the existing constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

918. In light of the representations received, we decided to modify our initial proposals for Solihull. We considered that the evidence demonstrating that Solihull should have two constituencies wholly contained within the borough boundary was persuasive, and could be accommodated within our revised proposals for the neighbouring sub-region of Coventry and Warwickshire (see above).
919. We were persuaded by the evidence to include the Blythe ward in the Solihull constituency and the Elmdon, Knowle and Meriden wards in the Meriden constituency, thereby ensuring that both constituencies would have an electorate within the permitted electorate range. We rejected the counter-proposals that suggested splitting wards in Solihull; we were able to create acceptable constituencies without splitting wards and did not consider that the suggestions for the splitting of a ward in the Borough of Solihull met our exceptional and compelling threshold.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

920. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals, we received support for both constituencies in Solihull. There remained claims that the City of Birmingham ward of Sheldon had close ties with Solihull, which we had recognised in our initial proposals, but no valid counter-proposals were put forward that suggested alternative divisions of Solihull between two constituencies.

### **Final recommendations**

921. Having considered the evidence received, we noted the significant level of support for our revised proposals and decided to make no further changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for Solihull.
922. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for constituencies of: Meriden, and Solihull. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, the former metropolitan county of West Midlands (less Coventry and Solihull), and Worcestershire**

923. Under the initial proposals we proposed four cross-county boundary constituencies: a Bridgnorth, Wellington and The Wrekin constituency which crossed the county boundaries of Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin; a Ludlow and Leominster constituency which crossed the county boundaries of Herefordshire and Shropshire; a Malvern and Ledbury constituency which crossed the county boundaries of Herefordshire and Worcestershire; and an Evesham and South Warwickshire constituency which crossed the county boundaries of Warwickshire and Worcestershire. As noted previously in this report, while we do propose to modify this sub-region, our final recommendations will continue to propose four cross-county boundary constituencies. These are detailed later in this section.

## **Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Worcestershire**

### **Initial proposals**

924. Of the existing five constituencies in Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin, only two (North Shropshire, and Shrewsbury and Atcham) are currently within the permitted electorate range; the other three constituencies all have electorates below the permitted electorate range. Both the existing constituencies in Herefordshire (Hereford and South Herefordshire, and North Herefordshire) have an electorate that is below the permitted electorate range. In Worcestershire, four of the existing constituencies have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range, and the other two constituencies (Redditch and Worcester) both have electorates that are below the permitted electorate range.
925. Under our initial proposals we proposed to retain the existing constituency of North Shropshire completely unchanged. We also proposed that the existing Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency, which could be left unchanged, would include the Chirbury and Worthen ward, and we decided to change the name to Shrewsbury as the previous Borough of Shrewsbury and Atcham no longer exists.
926. Our proposed Telford constituency included the Telford and Wrekin wards of Donnington, and Hadley & Leegomery, which are close to the centre of Telford town and are currently located within The Wrekin constituency. We proposed a Bridgnorth, Wellington and The Wrekin constituency, which included nine Shropshire wards, including the towns of Bridgnorth, Broseley and Much Wenlock. The remaining 11 Shropshire wards were included in a geographically large, cross-county boundary Ludlow and Leominster constituency with 15 wards from Herefordshire.
927. We proposed to bring the electorate of the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency within the permitted electorate range by including the Backbury, Credenhill, and Hagley wards from the current North Herefordshire constituency, as we considered that these wards were close to the City of Hereford. We included the seven remaining Herefordshire wards, including the town of Ledbury, in a cross-county boundary constituency of Malvern and Ledbury, which also included the whole of the District of Malvern Hills and the District of Wychavon ward of Ombersley. We included the District of Wychavon wards of Drakes Broughton, and Norton and Whittington in our proposed Worcester constituency.
928. The electorate of the existing Redditch constituency was below the permitted electorate range. We therefore proposed that the constituency contain the whole of the Borough of Redditch and eight wards of the District of Bromsgrove, including the town of Alvechurch. We also proposed that the existing Wyre Forest constituency, which could be left unchanged, should include the District of Wychavon ward of Hartlebury. We proposed a Bromsgrove and Droitwich constituency, which included the remaining wards from the District of Bromsgrove and seven District of Wychavon wards. The remaining Wychavon district wards, including the towns of Evesham and Pershore, were included in a cross-county boundary constituency with seven wards from Stratford-on-Avon district in an Evesham and South Warwickshire constituency.

### Consultation on the initial proposals

929. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, our decision to retain the North Shropshire constituency completely unchanged was largely supported. There was also some support for the Hereford and South Herefordshire, Shrewsbury, and Telford constituencies. However, there were objections to nearly every other constituency that we had proposed in this sub-region.
930. We received some opposition to the inclusion of the Chirbury and Worthen ward in our proposed Shrewsbury constituency, and an alternative division of the District of Telford and Wrekin was suggested. Although there was some support for the proposed Bridgnorth, Wellington and The Wrekin constituency, there were objections to the inclusion of the Shropshire ward of Much Wenlock in the constituency. Some objection to the name of the constituency was also received with it being suggested that the inclusion of Wellington in the constituency name was unnecessary as it already had strong historical links to the name The Wrekin. There were objections to the geographical size of the proposed Ludlow and Leominster constituency, but also suggestions that the constituency should include the Much Wenlock ward.
931. The inclusion of the Herefordshire ward of Old Gore in our proposed Malvern and Ledbury constituency was objected to on the grounds of the ward's links with the town of Ross-on-Wye, which we included in the proposed Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency. We received counter-proposals suggesting the inclusion of the Bromyard Bringsty, Bromyard West, and Hampton wards in the Malvern and Ledbury constituency, instead of in Ludlow and Leominster as we had initially proposed, thereby including the Old Gore ward in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency. We received some support for the inclusion of the Backbury and Hagley wards in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency.
932. While there was some support for our initial proposals in the north of Worcestershire, there were objections to the division of the District of Wychavon between five of our proposed constituencies, and to the proposal for an Evesham and South Warwickshire constituency that crossed the county boundary. There were many objections to the inclusion of the Drakes Broughton ward in the Worcester constituency and a number of different suggestions as to which were the most suitable wards for inclusion in the constituency, with the District of Wychavon wards of Ombersley, and Lovett and North Claines being suggested as appropriate additions. There was, however, support for the inclusion of the Norton and Whittington ward in the Worcester constituency. There were objections to the inclusion of the District of Wychavon ward of Hartlebury as an orphan ward in our proposed Wyre Forest constituency, but there was also some support.
933. There was opposition to the inclusion of District of Bromsgrove wards in the Redditch constituency. It was suggested that the District of Bromsgrove ward of Tardebigge should not be included in the constituency, with Copton ward being included in Redditch instead. There were a number of objections from the town of Alvechurch to its inclusion in the Redditch constituency, with the suggestion that the town should remain in a Bromsgrove constituency, where it is currently located. There was also a counter-proposal to retain the District of Wychavon ward of Inkberrow in the Redditch constituency as well as a suggestion that Redditch should be renamed North Worcestershire.

## Revised proposals

934. We noted that the North Shropshire and Telford constituencies had been mostly supported and therefore decided not to amend these constituencies further when formulating our revised proposals. The evidence with regard to the inclusion of the Chirbury and Worthen ward in the proposed Shrewsbury constituency was noted, but we made no revisions as we considered that the ward had sufficient ties with Shrewsbury along the A488, and its inclusion in the Ludlow and Leominster constituency would make this geographically large constituency even larger. We considered that persuasive evidence had been received to include the Much Wenlock ward in the Ludlow and Leominster constituency, to reflect the ties of the ward to neighbouring wards in that constituency. We noted that this would leave the Broseley ward without a direct road connection across the River Severn, but considered that this was not a reason to reject the change.
935. The inclusion of the Much Wenlock ward in the Ludlow and Leominster constituency allowed us to include three more Herefordshire wards, including the three wards comprising the town of Bromyard, in a revised Malvern and Ledbury constituency, thereby reducing the geographical size of the proposed Ludlow and Leominster constituency. We agreed with the evidence that it was unnecessary to divide Wychavon district between five constituencies. We proposed that it should only be divided between three, with the Hartlebury and Ombersley wards being included in a revised Bromsgrove and Droitwich constituency. This would recognise the close ties between these two wards and also with the town of Droitwich Spa. We noted that this also would allow for the existing Wyre Forest constituency to be wholly unchanged and that its boundaries would continue to be coterminous with those of the District of Wyre Forest.
936. Our revisions to the Bromsgrove constituency meant that it would not now be within the permitted electorate range. Our assistant commissioners visited the District of Bromsgrove wards of Rubery North and Rubery South to observe for themselves the links that had been suggested between the town of Rubery and the neighbouring City of Birmingham ward of Longbridge. They considered the links were such that it would be reasonable to accept a counter-proposal to include the two wards in a cross-county boundary Birmingham Northfield constituency.
937. We agreed with the evidence that we should only include the District of Wychavon ward of Norton and Whittington in our proposed Worcester constituency. We considered that this would better reflect the rules and help to minimise change in the county. This revision also allowed for the inclusion of the Drakes Broughton ward in a revised and renamed Evesham constituency, thereby recognising the ward's ties with the towns of Evesham and Pershore, which would not include any wards from the county of Warwickshire (see above). We also accepted the evidence presented and considered that the Bromsgrove district ward of Tardebigge should be included in our proposed Bromsgrove and Droitwich constituency, to recognise its close ties with the town of Bromsgrove. As a result of this change, we decided to include the Bromsgrove district ward of Cofton in our Redditch constituency. We noted the objections to the inclusion of the town of Alvechurch in the Redditch constituency but considered that it was necessary to include a number of District of Bromsgrove wards in the constituency as its electorate was particularly low. We decided not to include the District of Wychavon ward of Inkberrow in the Redditch constituency, as had been suggested, and neither did we consider that a change of name for the constituency was necessary. We therefore made no revisions to the proposed Redditch constituency.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

938. The revised recommendations attracted a degree of support in Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin, and there was also support for the revised constituencies of Telford, Wyre Forest, and Worcester, although there was still some objection to the inclusion of the Wychavon district ward of Norton and Whittington in the Worcester constituency (at least one neighbouring ward has to be included in Worcester to bring it within the permitted electorate range).
939. A counter-proposal suggested that the two wards of Rubery North and Rubery South should continue to be included in a Worcestershire constituency, rather than in a cross-county boundary constituency with City of Birmingham wards. This counter-proposal also included the Much Wenlock ward in a Bridgnorth and The Wrekin constituency. It was submitted that the proposed Ludlow and Leominster constituency is too large geographically, but we noted that the counter-proposal actually increased its geographical area. The counter-proposal included the District of Wychavon ward of Hartlebury in the Evesham constituency and the town of Alvechurch in the Redditch constituency. There continued to be considerable objection to the inclusion of eight District of Bromsgrove wards in the proposed Redditch constituency, but no counter-proposal was received that would ensure a Redditch constituency within the permitted electorate range.
940. There also continued to be objections to the inclusion of the District of Herefordshire ward of Old Gore in the Malvern and Ledbury constituency, which cited the ward's links with the town of Ross-on-Wye. There had, however, been some support for this proposal in the initial proposals, and it was noted that to include the Old Gore ward in the Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency would place it outside of the permitted electorate range.
941. The inclusion of five District of Malvern Hill wards in the proposed Evesham constituency continued to be opposed, with it being argued that the wards' ties were closer with the town of Malvern than with Evesham. Similarly, the inclusion of the wards of Much Wenlock, Brown Clee, Cleobury Mortimer, and Highley in the Ludlow and Leominster continued to be opposed, but we considered that no significant new evidence had been submitted.

### **Final recommendations**

942. Having fully considered the evidence we recommend no changes to the revised proposals in this sub-region. We consider that the counter-proposal that included the District of Wychavon ward of Hartlebury in the Evesham constituency and retained the town of Alvechurch in the Redditch constituency was too disruptive, was counter to the evidence that had been received, and we rejected it. We also considered that no significant new evidence had been submitted that would lead us to recommend further revisions to the proposals for the two constituencies of Evesham, and Ludlow and Leominster.
943. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Bridgnorth and The Wrekin, Bromsgrove and Droitwich, Evesham, Hereford and South Herefordshire, Ludlow and Leominster, Malvern and Ledbury, North Shropshire, Redditch, Shrewsbury, Telford, Worcester, Wyre Forest. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **The former metropolitan county of West Midlands (less Coventry and Solihull)**

### **Initial proposals**

944. In the former metropolitan county of West Midlands (which comprises the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton, and the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, and Walsall), and in the City of Birmingham in particular, we found it challenging to construct constituencies in view of the large ward electorates. The ward sizes in the City of Birmingham ranged from just over 14,000 to over 19,000 electors, with the majority of the wards having electorates in excess of 17,000. Although the ward electorates in the other metropolitan boroughs of the West Midlands are not quite so large, they are nonetheless still large when compared with more rural areas, especially in the Borough of Dudley.
945. In our initial proposals, although the electorate of the existing Birmingham Hall Green constituency was within the permitted electorate range, we amended the constituency as a result of changes required to other constituencies. The Birmingham Hodge Hill and Sutton Coldfield constituencies had electorates within the permitted electorate range and we proposed no change to these two constituencies, which contained only City of Birmingham wards. In total, in our initial proposals, four constituencies would contain three City of Birmingham wards and one ward from another borough: the proposed Birmingham Edgbaston, Birmingham Ladywood, and Birmingham Perry Barr constituencies each contained one ward from the Borough of Sandwell, and the Birmingham Erdington constituency contained one ward from the Borough of Walsall. The proposed Birmingham Selly Oak and Halesowen constituency contained three City of Birmingham wards and three Borough of Dudley wards. Five constituencies (including the proposed constituencies of Birmingham Brandwood, Birmingham Northfield, and Birmingham Yardley) would contain only City of Birmingham wards and five would contain three of the four wards from an existing Birmingham constituency. We included the City of Birmingham ward of Sheldon in the proposed Chelmsley Wood and North Solihull constituency.
946. In the Borough of Walsall, we included the two wards of Bloxwich East, and Bloxwich West, in the existing Aldridge-Brownhills constituency, which we renamed Aldridge, Brownhills and Bloxwich. The proposed Walsall Central constituency included two wards from the existing Walsall North constituency (Birchills Leamore, and Blakenall) and six wards from the existing Walsall South constituency, including the wards of Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck and St. Matthew's. We proposed a Wolverhampton West constituency that contained six of the seven wards from the existing Wolverhampton South West constituency and the two wards of Bushbury North, and Oxley, from the existing Wolverhampton North East constituency. The proposed Wednesfield and Willenhall constituency contained five, three and one ward, from the existing Wolverhampton North East, Walsall North, and Wolverhampton South West constituencies, respectively. The proposed Wolverhampton South and Coseley constituency contained five City of Wolverhampton and three Borough of Dudley wards.
947. In the Borough of Dudley, the proposed Dudley West, and Stourbridge constituencies contained only Borough of Dudley wards (both from three existing constituencies). The proposed Dudley East and Tipton constituency contained three Borough of Dudley wards, and five wards from the Borough of Sandwell (four from the existing West Bromwich West constituency, and one from the existing West Bromwich East constituency). In the Borough of Sandwell, the proposed Warley constituency included only Borough of Sandwell wards (from three different existing

constituencies) and the proposed West Bromwich constituency also contained only Borough of Sandwell wards (also from three different existing constituencies).

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

948. There was some support for the initial proposals with representations approving the shape of many of the Birmingham constituencies, which included parts of both inner city and suburban areas. However, there was considerable opposition to the proposals for constituencies across the city. The proposed Birmingham Selly Oak and Halesowen constituency was opposed, with there being particular objection to the inclusion of City of Birmingham and Borough of Dudley wards in the same constituency. It was also claimed that the constituency was divided by the M5 motorway running through it, and that the Halesowen area was also divided. It was suggested that Dudley is part of the Black Country, that Birmingham is not, and that there were rivalries between the two areas.
949. There were objections to the inclusion of the City of Birmingham ward of Tyburn in the proposed Birmingham Ladywood constituency and to the elongated shape of the constituency, which traversed the M6 motorway and extended westwards across the width of Birmingham into the Borough of Sandwell with the inclusion of the Soho and Victoria ward, although there was some support for the inclusion of this ward in the constituency. The inclusion of the Borough of Walsall ward of Pheasey Park Farm in the Birmingham Erdington constituency received some support, but also opposition (including a campaign), because of its rural feel. There was support for the Sutton Coldfield constituency, which had been unchanged in the initial proposals, but there were requests for the constituency to be called Royal Sutton Coldfield.
950. We received a number of counter-proposals that proposed the splitting of wards, with numerous wards being suggested as suitable candidates for splitting to better reflect local ties, with various alternative configurations to a number of constituencies. One counter-proposal suggested the splitting of the City of Birmingham ward of Brandwood and Springfield, and the Borough of Dudley ward of Brierley Hill, and proposed further alterations to the Birmingham Erdington, Birmingham Ladywood, and Birmingham Perry Barr constituencies. One representation suggested that the initially proposed Birmingham Perry Barr constituency should be retained, although a consequence of this would be the inclusion of the Ladywood ward, which contains much of Birmingham city centre, in a predominantly Sandwell-based constituency. Another counter-proposal that suggested that Birmingham should contain nine whole constituencies split five wards (and one in the Borough of Walsall) in achieving this. Further counter-proposals suggested the splitting of up to five wards between constituencies.
951. Although we are open to suggestions for the splitting of wards to achieve a better pattern of constituencies in any given area, and to better meet the statutory criteria, our aim is to attempt to construct constituencies by splitting as few wards as we reasonably can, and we drew attention in our Guide to the review that any evidence regarding the splitting of a ward must be both exceptional and compelling.
952. We did receive some counter-proposals that did not split wards. However, one of these included the City of Birmingham ward of Hall Green in a Solihull constituency, and another counter-proposal that did not split wards created constituencies that crossed the county boundaries between Staffordshire and the former metropolitan county of West Midlands, and Worcestershire

and the West Midlands. We had previously decided that Staffordshire could be considered on its own without being grouped with another county.

953. In the City of Wolverhampton, there was support for the three proposed constituencies of Wednesfield and Willenhall, Wolverhampton South and Coseley, and Wolverhampton West, although there was some opposition to the name of the Wednesfield and Willenhall constituency. The representations suggested that as the Wolverhampton ward of St. Peter's, which included Wolverhampton city centre, was included in the Wednesfield and Willenhall constituency, the constituency name should reflect this and be changed to Wolverhampton East and Willenhall.
954. In Walsall, there was support for the Aldridge, Brownhills and Bloxwich, and Walsall Central constituencies. However, as mentioned previously, there was significant opposition to the inclusion of the Borough of Walsall ward of Pheasey Park Farm in the proposed Birmingham Erdington constituency.
955. In the Borough of Dudley, there was significant opposition to the Birmingham Selly Oak and Halesowen constituency, as mentioned previously, and objection to the inclusion of the ward of Hayley Green and Cradley South in the Stourbridge constituency, with it being argued that Hayley Green is a distinct part of Halesowen and that the initial proposals divided the town. A counter-proposal was received which split the Dudley ward of Brierley Hill between the proposed Dudley, and Stourbridge constituencies. It was noted that this would allow for the four wards that comprised the town of Halesowen to be contained within a single constituency.
956. In the Borough of Sandwell, as mentioned previously, there was some support for the inclusion of the Soho and Victoria ward in the proposed Birmingham Ladywood constituency, despite the constituency being largely opposed in the representations. A number of counter-proposals were received for a different configuration of the Sandwell constituencies, including one which suggested that four Borough of Sandwell wards be split between constituencies.

### **Revised proposals**

957. The assistant commissioners had recommended in the revised proposals, with regard to constituencies in Solihull and Worcestershire, the inclusion of the Rubery North and Rubery South wards in the cross-county boundary constituency of Birmingham Northfield, and the City of Birmingham ward of Sheldon in the Birmingham Yardley constituency. They acknowledged that the consequences of these revisions would require further substantial revision to the remainder of the constituencies in Birmingham. They also considered that this would continue to be a challenging task in view of the large ward electorates throughout Birmingham.
958. Having reviewed all the representations and counter-proposals for this part of the sub-region, the assistant commissioners considered that no one counter-proposal provided a suitable solution and they decided to adopt elements of different counter-proposals. They therefore decided to recommend changes to most of the constituencies that had been proposed in the initial proposals and to propose a pattern of constituencies that, they considered, provided a much better fit to the existing constituencies and a better reflection overall of the statutory factors. All but two of the City of Birmingham wards would be contained within the Birmingham constituencies.
959. Although there was support for the proposed inclusion of the Oscott ward in a Birmingham Erdington constituency, the assistant commissioners considered that there was sufficient



evidence to alter the initial proposals to include the Oscott ward in a Walsall and Oscott constituency. The other City of Birmingham ward not contained within a Birmingham constituency is Handsworth Wood, which they recommended be included in the West Bromwich constituency.

960. The Selly Oak ward was added to the existing Birmingham Edgbaston constituency, thereby uniting student areas within the Selly Oak and Edgbaston wards in one constituency, which was renamed Birmingham Edgbaston and Selly Oak to reflect both historical constituency names. The Moseley and Kings Heath ward was included in the renamed Birmingham Brandwood constituency, and the Acocks Green and Hall Green wards were transferred from the Birmingham Yardley constituency that we had initially proposed, and included in a reconfigured Birmingham Hall Green constituency; we noted the evidence submitted of the ties between the Acocks Green and Hall Green wards. There was further significant revision of the Birmingham Yardley constituency that we had proposed in our initial proposals, with the transfer of the Stechford and Yardley North ward to the Birmingham Hodge Hill constituency and the inclusion instead of the Sheldon, Bordesley Green and Nechells wards. We acknowledged that this would divide the Yardley area between constituencies, but considered that it was acceptable in order to achieve a better result across Birmingham as a whole.
961. There was significant support for our initial proposals to retain the Stockland Green ward in the Birmingham Erdington constituency, in which we also included the Tyburn ward due to the opposition received regarding it being included in Birmingham Ladywood under our initial proposals. We renamed this constituency Birmingham Erdington and Perry Barr. In addition to the Borough of Sandwell ward of Soho and Victoria, we included in the revised Birmingham Ladywood constituency the wards of Aston, and Lozells and East Handsworth.
962. We noted the support for the Sutton Coldfield constituency, but did not agree with the proposals for the constituency to be called Royal Sutton Coldfield, as no other constituency in the UK has a Royal prefix in the constituency name. We also note that neither the official town council, nor the city wards covering the town, are prefixed by the term 'Royal'.
963. In the City of Wolverhampton, there had been support for the proposed Wednesfield and Willenhall, Wolverhampton South and Coseley, and Wolverhampton West constituencies and we did not further revise these, except to rename Wednesfield and Willenhall as Wolverhampton East and Willenhall as it contained Wolverhampton city centre.
964. Although they did not consider it necessary to split wards in the City of Birmingham, the assistant commissioners were persuaded by the evidence in the representations to split wards in the Black Country. We agreed that the evidence was exceptional and compelling in that splitting wards would more closely match the existing pattern of constituencies and have a closer regard to the local authority boundaries and the statutory criteria overall.
965. In the Borough of Sandwell, we revised the Warley and West Bromwich constituencies, with the latter including the City of Birmingham ward of Handsworth Wood and part of the split Borough of Sandwell ward of Greets Green and Lyng (which the assistant commissioners had visited to observe for themselves the local ties). The West Bromwich constituency would also include part of the split Borough of Sandwell ward of St. Pauls, in order to ensure that all constituencies were within the permitted electorate range, with the remainder of this ward being included in the Warley constituency, which would also include the Borough of Dudley ward of St. Thomas's.

The remainder of the split Greet Green and Lyng ward would be included in a Darlaston and Tipton constituency.

966. In the Borough of Walsall, we proposed no change to the Aldridge, Brownhills and Bloxwich constituency that we had initially proposed. Although there was support for the Walsall Central constituency, as mentioned previously, there was significant opposition to the inclusion of the Borough of Walsall ward of Pheasey Park Farm in the proposed Birmingham Erdington constituency. This ward, and the Oscott ward, were subsequently included in a renamed Walsall and Oscott constituency. A consequence of this revision was the transfer of the three wards of Bentley and Darlaston North, Darlaston South, and Pleck from the Walsall Central constituency that we had proposed initially, to the Darlaston and Tipton constituency, which would also include the Wednesbury North and Wednesbury South wards.
967. In the Borough of Dudley, the assistant commissioners visited the ward of Brierley Hill, and considered that to split the ward along the railway line, as suggested in a counter-proposal, was a satisfactory solution as it would allow the four wards that comprised Halesowen town to be included in a Halesowen and Rowley Regis constituency. We agreed and considered that the evidence for doing so, and for being able to avoid the division of Halesowen, was exceptional and compelling. This constituency would also include the Hayley Green and Cradley South ward. Having recommended that three Dudley wards be included in the Wolverhampton South and Coseley constituency, which they did not consider should be revised, the assistant commissioners included seven Borough of Dudley wards in the Dudley constituency, including part of the split Brierley Hill ward, and seven Borough of Dudley wards in a revised Stourbridge constituency, which would include the remainder of the split Brierley Hill ward.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

968. In response to our revised proposals, in the City of Birmingham, we received a counter-proposal that included the Moseley and Kings Heath ward in our revised Birmingham Hall Green constituency, to be called Birmingham Moseley and Sparkbrook, and the Hall Green ward in our revised Birmingham Brandwood constituency, to be called Birmingham Hall Green. It was claimed that the Moseley and Kings Heath ward was more of an inner city ward than was the Hall Green ward. We noted that in Birmingham, although there had been some opposition to the transfer of the Acocks Green ward from the Birmingham Yardley constituency and to the composition of the constituency in general, there had been a degree of support for most of our proposals in the city.
969. However, we received further proposals that questioned whether the name of the Birmingham Brandwood constituency was suitable. It was suggested that few people knew where Brandwood was, that Brandwood lacked an urban centre and that locally the name refers to a cemetery. It was suggested that the inclusion of Bournville (home to the Cadbury's confectionery complex) in a constituency name would be appropriate, as would Kings Heath, which was an historic constituency name in Birmingham.
970. The largest number of objections in the whole West Midlands region related to the revised proposals as they affected the existing Birmingham Yardley constituency. Many representations objected to the inclusion of the City of Birmingham wards of Acocks Green in the Birmingham Hall Green constituency, Stechford and North Yardley in the Birmingham Hodge Hill constituency, and the consequential inclusion of the Nechells ward in the Birmingham Yardley constituency. It was argued that the existing Birmingham, Yardley constituency was a coherent whole and that

there were no ties between the Nechells and Sheldon wards at opposite ends of the constituency. We also received a counter-proposal that redistributed wards between the Birmingham Hodge Hill and Birmingham Yardley constituencies and split the Hodge Hill ward between the two constituencies in order to better reflect the existing constituencies. It was noted that relatively few representations were received from residents in the Hodge Hill and Bordesley Green wards, either in support for or objection to our revised proposals, both of which would be affected by this counter-proposal if it were to be adopted.

971. The second largest group of objections in the region concerned the proposed constituencies in the Borough of Dudley. The inclusion of the St. Thomas's ward in the revised Warley constituency was opposed as it was considered that it would result in the division of the centre of the town of Dudley between constituencies, and that the ward would be an orphan ward in an otherwise Sandwell-based constituency. Another counter-proposal was able to retain the centre of Dudley in one constituency and resulted in fewer boundary crossings, but a consequence was that the town of Stourbridge would have to be divided. A further counter-proposal suggested that the Borough of Dudley wards of Upper Gornal and Woodsetton, and Sedgley should be included in the Dudley constituency, instead of in the Wolverhampton South and Coseley constituency, as in our revised proposals, and exchanged with the Borough of Dudley wards of Castle and Priory, and St. James's, thereby dividing the Borough of Dudley along an east/west axis, rather than north/south.
972. In the Borough of Walsall, it was proposed that the two Borough of Walsall wards of Blakenall and Streetly should be exchanged between the revised Aldridge, Brownhills and Bloxwich, and Walsall and Oscott constituencies, to recognise the Blakenhall ward's ties with Bloxwich, and the Streetly ward's ties with Oscott and Birmingham.
973. There was also opposition to the inclusion of the Borough of Walsall ward of Pleck in the Darlaston and Tipton constituency in the revised proposals. It was suggested that placing the Pleck ward in Darlaston and Tipton would separate it from the similar wards of Paddock, Palfrey and St. Matthew's, which would continue to be located in the renamed Walsall and Oscott constituency. It was suggested that the ward continue to be included in the Walsall and Oscott constituency, with the Oscott ward being included in a Birmingham constituency. However, it was suggested in representations that Pleck had links with Darlaston.
974. We received little comment regarding the constituencies in the Borough of Sandwell, although we did receive a representation inferring that, rather than splitting the Greets Green and Lyng ward between the Darlaston and Tipton, and West Bromwich constituencies, a more suitable candidate for splitting across the two constituencies might be the Wednesbury South ward. We received little by way of representations from the City of Wolverhampton and noted that, in the earlier public consultation periods, there had been a degree of support for our proposals.

### **Final recommendations**

975. We recommend no changes to the boundaries of the revised proposals. We note the opposition to the revised Birmingham Yardley constituency, and the counter-proposal that suggests the splitting of the Hodge Hill ward between the Birmingham Hodge Hill and Birmingham Yardley constituencies. However, we do not consider that this counter-proposal provides compelling evidence for us to split a further ward in the West Midlands region. We consider that our proposals offer the only acceptable solution that does not split a ward, and we do not consider that there is a better or more suitable alternative that we could recommend for the Birmingham

Yardley constituency that would fit with our other recommendations. We also considered that little evidence was received from the Bordesley Green area of the constituency that might have assisted us in formulating a different pattern of constituencies.

976. We also did not consider that the evidence in the counter-proposal for the revised Birmingham Hall Green and Birmingham Brandwood constituencies was sufficiently persuasive for us to revise our recommendations for the composition of these two constituencies. However, we do accept the evidence that Birmingham Brandwood is not a wholly suitable name for the constituency. We therefore suggest renaming the constituency Birmingham Kings Heath. We consider that this name, which had featured as a Birmingham constituency previously, is more suitable and more likely to be accepted locally.
977. We did not consider that the evidence submitted with regard to the constituencies in the Borough of Dudley was sufficiently persuasive for us to further revise our proposals. Although we would have preferred to avoid the unfortunate division of the centre of the town of Dudley between constituencies, we considered that the alternatives did not provide a more acceptable solution.
978. In the Borough of Walsall, we considered further the evidence with regard to the Aldridge, Brownhills and Bloxwich, and Walsall and Oscott constituencies, but we did not consider that any revision to the constituencies was warranted. We considered the evidence regarding the inclusion of the Pleck ward in the Darlaston and Tipton constituency and its ties with other wards that were included in the Walsall and Oscott constituency. However, we noted that there was evidence that Pleck also had ties with the wards covering Darlaston. We did not, therefore consider that we should further alter the proposed constituencies in this area.
979. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Aldridge, Brownhills and Bloxwich, Birmingham Edgbaston and Selly Oak, Birmingham Erdington and Perry Barr, Birmingham Hall Green, Birmingham Hodge Hill, Birmingham Kings Heath, Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham Northfield, Birmingham Yardley, Darlaston and Tipton, Dudley, Halesowen and Rowley Regis, Stourbridge, Sutton Coldfield, Walsall and Oscott, Warley, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton East and Willenhall, Wolverhampton South and Coseley, Wolverhampton West. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent**

### **Initial proposals**

980. Of the 12 existing constituencies in the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent, four have electorates within the permitted electorate range. We proposed to reduce the number of constituencies in the sub-region by one to 11 and we proposed to make no changes to the constituencies of Burton, Cannock Chase, and South Staffordshire.
981. The District of Lichfield wards of Whittington & Streethay, and Hammerwich with Wall are divided between the Lichfield and Tamworth constituencies, with the Lichfield constituency containing the majority of the electors of both wards. As part of the initial proposals, we included the Whittington & Streethay ward in the Tamworth constituency to bring its electorate within the permitted electorate range and considered that this created a strong boundary between the Tamworth and

Lichfield constituencies. To bring the electorate of the Lichfield constituency within the permitted range, we included in it the ward of Hammerwich with Wall, and the divided Borough of Stafford ward of Haywood & Hixon. The electorate of the existing Stafford constituency was increased by the inclusion of the Stafford borough wards of Milwich, Seighford & Church Eaton, and Gnosall & Woodseaves, the latter from the existing Stone constituency.

982. We proposed that the boundaries of the Staffordshire Moorlands constituency would be coterminous with the boundaries of the District of Staffordshire Moorlands local authority, with the inclusion of five wards from the existing Stone constituency. We proposed a Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency comprising 20 Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme wards, including the five wards that form the town of Kidsgrove.
983. The electorate of the City of Stoke-on-Trent is too small for three whole constituencies and too large for two. We therefore proposed a Stoke-on-Trent North constituency that contained 14 wards from the north of the city, and a Stoke-on-Trent South constituency containing 18 wards from the south and east of the city. We proposed a West Staffordshire constituency that included the four remaining Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme wards, the remaining six Borough of Stafford wards, and the remaining five City of Stoke-on-Trent wards.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

984. In response to consultation on the initial proposals we received support for the constituencies that we had proposed should remain unchanged.
985. There was, however, particular opposition to the inclusion of the Whittington & Streethay ward in the Tamworth constituency, with it being submitted that the ward's ties were mostly with the City of Lichfield. A well-supported counter-proposal was received that proposed the Hammerwich with Wall ward should instead be included in the Tamworth constituency. There was also objection to the inclusion of the Haywood & Hixon ward in the proposed Lichfield constituency, with it being suggested that the ward should remain in the Stafford constituency.
986. There was a degree of support for the proposed Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Stafford constituencies, but objections to the inclusion of urban Stoke-on-Trent wards in the largely rural West Staffordshire constituency. We received a number of counter-proposals with alternative suggestions for the division of the City of Stoke-on-Trent between constituencies, although there was some support for our proposed constituencies. There was both support for, and objection to, the inclusion of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme wards that formed the town of Kidsgrove in the proposed Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency, with it being submitted that the town's ties were with the north of Stoke-on-Trent.
987. Among the counter-proposals, there was support for one which more closely matched the existing pattern of constituencies in the area. It proposed a Stoke-on-Trent North and Kidsgrove constituency that contained 11 City of Stoke-on-Trent wards with the five Kidsgrove town wards, a Stoke-on-Trent Central constituency containing 15 City of Stoke-on-Trent wards, and a Stoke-on-Trent South and Stone constituency, which would contain the remaining 11 City of Stoke-on-Trent wards with five Borough of Stafford wards that included the town of Stone.
988. The counter-proposal further suggested the inclusion of the Borough of Stafford ward of Eccleshall in the Stafford constituency, and the whole of the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme in a

Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency, with the four Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme wards of Audley and Bignall End, Halmerend, Loggerheads and Whitmore, and Madeley. This would result in the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme being divided between only two constituencies and the proposed Stoke-on-Trent South and Stone constituency would contain only parts of two districts, and not three as in our proposed West Staffordshire constituency.

989. There was also a counter-proposal that suggested that the name of the Burton constituency should be renamed Burton and Uttoxeter, to recognise the two main population centres in the constituency, and that the Tamworth constituency should be renamed South East Staffordshire, as the existing constituency had been altered in the initial proposals.

### **Revised proposals**

990. Our assistant commissioners considered that the extensive counter-proposal for the Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent, and Stafford constituencies was very persuasive, was a significant improvement on the initial proposals and would satisfy most of the objections that had been received for the constituencies in this area. They therefore recommended its adoption and we agreed to propose these changes as part of the revised proposals.
991. Our assistant commissioners visited the Hammerwich with Wall, and Whittington & Streethay wards to observe for themselves the local ties of the wards. They noted that the village of Streethay is geographically close to the City of Lichfield, but also that the Hammerwich with Wall ward contained part of the town of Burntwood, and they considered that it would not be appropriate to divide Burntwood between constituencies. They considered that, as the electorate of the town of Tamworth was outside the permitted electorate range, a ward had to be added to the existing constituency. They did not consider it appropriate to include a ward from neighbouring county of Warwickshire and, while they considered that it would be possible to split the Whittington & Streethay ward and include only the polling district that contained the village of Streethay in the Lichfield constituency, this would mean that the village of Whittington would be separated from Streethay by its inclusion in the Tamworth constituency. We did not consider that the case for splitting the Whittington & Streethay ward was compelling or exceptional.
992. The opposition to the inclusion of the Haywood & Hixon ward in the Lichfield constituency was also noted, but the assistant commissioners considered that this was the best option for ensuring that the electorate of the Lichfield constituency was within the permitted electorate range.
993. We did not consider there there was any need to alter the name of the Burton constituency as the constituency itself was unchanged; nor was there a need to change the name of the Tamworth constituency, because the changes made to it had been modest.
994. We agreed with our assistant commissioners and made no revisions to the constituencies in this part of Staffordshire.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

995. There was a general level of support in the representations for the revised proposals for constituencies in Stoke-on-Trent, although there was some opposition. The inclusion of the town of Kidsgrove in the Stoke-on-Trent North and Kidsgrove constituency was opposed by some, with it being claimed that Kidsgrove's ties were stronger with the rest of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme than they were with Stoke-on-Trent. There was also some opposition to the inclusion

of the town of Stone in the Stoke-on-Trent South and Stone constituency, with claims that the town has no links with Stoke-on-Trent.

996. There was considerable opposition to our decision not to amend the Lichfield and Tamworth constituencies. It was reiterated in the representations that the village of Streethay lies close to the centre of Lichfield and has very strong ties to the Lichfield constituency. Many suggested that the whole of the Whittington & Streethay ward be included in the Lichfield constituency, although this would mean that the electorate of the Tamworth constituency would be below the permitted electorate range. It was also suggested again that the Whittington & Streethay ward be split, with just the Streethay polling district being included in the Lichfield constituency.
997. The inclusion of the Borough of Stafford ward of Haywood & Hixon in the proposed Lichfield constituency also continued to be opposed, with it being suggested that the ward be included in the Stafford constituency. However, the inclusion of the Haywood & Hixon ward in the Stafford constituency rather than in the Lichfield constituency would result in both constituencies being outside the permitted electorate range, and we considered that no workable solution to this had been provided in the counter-proposals.

### **Final recommendations**

998. We noted the opposition to some of our revised proposals, particularly with regard to the constituencies in the Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme constituencies, and also the Lichfield, Tamworth and Stafford constituencies, but we did not consider that any significant new evidence had been submitted that would lead us to consider further amendments. We noted the restated proposal to split the Streethay & Whittington ward, and that some further representations had been made on this issue. However, the arguments had already been considered by our assistant commissioners when considering the revisions to our proposals, and we do not consider that any further compelling arguments have been received at this stage, and we reject the proposal.
999. We therefore did not consider that the evidence submitted with regard to the constituencies in Staffordshire was sufficiently persuasive for us to further revise our proposals. Our final recommendations in this part of the sub-region are for constituencies of: Burton, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent Central, Stoke-on-Trent North and Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent South and Stone, and Tamworth. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

# Yorkshire and the Humber

1000. Yorkshire and the Humber currently has 54 constituencies. Of these constituencies, 18 have electorates within the permitted electorate range. The electorates of 35 constituencies currently fall below the permitted electorate range, while the electorates of only one constituency is above. Our proposals reduce the number of constituencies in the region by four from 54 to 50.
1001. Yorkshire and the Humber comprises the counties of North Yorkshire (including the City of York), South Yorkshire (the City of Sheffield and the boroughs of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham), and West Yorkshire (the cities of Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield, and the boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees) and the four unitary authorities created from the former county of Humberside (East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, North Lincolnshire, and North East Lincolnshire). It is covered by a mix of district and county councils, and unitary authorities.
1002. We appointed two assistant commissioners for Yorkshire and the Humber — John Feavoyour and Collette Rawnsley — to assist us with the analysis of the representations received during the first two consultation periods. This included chairing public hearings, which were held in the region in order to hear oral evidence direct from the public. The dates and locations of these hearings were:
- Leeds: 13–14 October 2016
  - Sheffield: 17–18 October 2016
  - Northallerton: 20–21 October 2016
  - Kingston upon Hull: 24–25 October 2016.

## Sub-division of the region

1003. In formulating our initial proposals, we noted that the electorate of Yorkshire and the Humber of 3,722,035 results in it being entitled to 50 constituencies, a reduction of four. We then considered how this number of constituencies could be allocated across the region.
1004. We noted that the electorate of Humberside (including the unitary authority of Kingston upon Hull) of 661,955 results in an entitlement of 8.85 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate the county nine constituencies, a reduction of one, and treat it as a sub-region.
1005. The electorate of North Yorkshire (including the City of York) is 589,885, which results in the area being entitled to 7.89 constituencies. North Yorkshire could be considered on its own and allocated eight constituencies, with a minimal amount of change to the existing constituencies. The electorate of West Yorkshire is 1,517,665, which results in the area being entitled to 20.30 constituencies. This entitlement of constituencies means that the average constituency size in West Yorkshire would be 75,883, which is 2,624 electors within the permitted electorate range. However, the electoral size of the wards in West Yorkshire, particularly in the cities of Leeds and Wakefield and the Borough of Kirklees, made it difficult to construct constituencies in West Yorkshire within the permitted electorate range without dividing towns between constituencies. We therefore decided that we should combine North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire in a sub-region in order to give us more flexibility in the construction of constituencies.



1006. The electorate of South Yorkshire is 952,530, which results in an entitlement of 12.74 constituencies. We noted that this entitlement of constituencies meant that the average constituency size would be 73,272 — only 2,241 within the permitted electorate range. We noted that the large electorates of wards in the City of Sheffield were such that it would be challenging to create constituencies within the permitted electorate range. We had already decided to treat both North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire as a sub-region. In order to allow us a greater degree of flexibility in constructing constituencies in South Yorkshire, we further decided to include South Yorkshire with the grouping of North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire in a sub-region. This sub-region was allocated 41 constituencies, a reduction of three across the three counties within the sub-region. Sixteen of the constituencies in this sub-region have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range. Of the remaining 28 constituencies, 27 have electorates that are below the permitted electorate range, and just one constituency has an electorate that is above the permitted electorate range.

1007. There was some support for the use of the sub-regions outlined above during consultation on the initial proposals. There was also support for the pairing of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. However, we did receive some objections to the split of sub-regions with representations suggesting that North Yorkshire should be considered as a sub-region on its own. The alternative arrangements suggested:

- a sub-region which comprised the area of Humberside
- a sub-region which comprised the area of North Yorkshire
- a sub-region which comprised the areas of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

1008. We also received proposals from some respondents that proposed crossing the regional boundary between Yorkshire and the Humber, and the East Midlands. These proposals largely focused on reconfiguring constituencies in Grimsby and Cleethorpes by grouping these areas with parts of Lincolnshire in the East Midlands. We also received a proposal to include part of Derbyshire in a Sheffield constituency. We received another proposal to cross the regional boundary between Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East in order to include three wards from the North East region in three separate North Yorkshire constituencies.

1009. In formulating our revised proposals we considered that compelling evidence had not been received to lead us to propose constituencies that crossed the regional boundaries. However, we considered that persuasive evidence had been received to propose alternative sub-regions. Our revised proposals were, therefore, not based on the same sub-regions as those of our initial proposals.

1010. The sub-regions we are therefore basing our recommendations on are:

- Humberside
- North Yorkshire
- South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

## **Humberside**

### **Initial proposals**

1011. Of the 10 existing constituencies in Humberside, two constituencies — Beverley and Holderness, and East Yorkshire — are currently within the permitted electorate range. Under our initial proposals, we proposed to retain both of these existing constituencies unchanged.
1012. The electorates in Kingston upon Hull, Grimsby, and Scunthorpe are particularly low. As part of our initial proposals we proposed two constituencies wholly containing wards from the local authority of the City of Kingston upon Hull (Kingston upon Hull East, and Kingston upon Hull Central), and a Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice constituency containing four City of Kingston upon Hull wards and five District of East Riding of Yorkshire wards. Four District of East Riding of Yorkshire wards, three further East Riding wards comprising the town of Goole, and three Borough of North Lincolnshire wards that include the Isle of Axholme were included in our proposed Goole constituency.
1013. We proposed that the two Borough of North Lincolnshire wards of Burton upon Stather and Winterton, and Burringham and Gunness be included in the Scunthorpe constituency. The two Borough of North Lincolnshire wards of Broughton and Appleby, and Brigg and Wolds were included in the Grimsby North and Barton constituency, which would also contain a further two Borough of North Lincolnshire wards and six Borough of North East Lincolnshire wards — two wards from the existing Cleethorpes constituency and four wards from the existing Great Grimsby constituency. The remaining wards from the existing Great Grimsby constituency and a further five North East Lincolnshire wards were included in our proposed Grimsby South and Cleethorpes constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

1014. In response to the consultation on the initial proposals, our proposed constituencies of Beverley and Holderness, East Yorkshire, Scunthorpe, and Goole did not generate a large number of representations, although there were suggestions for a change of name to the Goole constituency. The main focus of opposition was to our proposed constituencies covering Kingston upon Hull, and in particular the Grimsby North and Barton, and Grimsby South and Cleethorpes constituencies.
1015. Although we received some support for our initial proposals for the proposed Kingston upon Hull constituencies, we received proposals for a number of alternative configurations of wards. Some of these drew attention to the River Hull as being a natural divide within the city, and the desire to keep in one constituency a number of wards that were linked to the university. Our proposals for the Grimsby North and Barton, and Grimsby South and Cleethorpes constituencies drew considerable opposition, particularly from Grimsby. There were passionate calls to retain the whole of Grimsby in one constituency, counter-proposals that included in the constituency the Sidney Sussex ward, and further suggestions that we split the Croft Baker ward. In the second public consultation, these counter-proposals were opposed by respondents from Cleethorpes.
1016. The counter-proposals and our initial proposals in Humberside were both supported and opposed by respondents. Having considered the written and oral evidence, our assistant commissioners recommended that we revise some of the proposed constituencies.

## **Revised proposals**

1017. Our assistant commissioners were persuaded by a counter-proposal for the three constituencies in Kingston upon Hull that closely resembled the existing pattern of constituencies and we therefore decided to revise our proposals for the city. The revised Kingston upon Hull East constituency would be similar to the existing constituency apart from the inclusion of the Myton ward, and the revised Kingston upon Hull North constituency (which included the wards identified as being linked with the university) was similar to the existing constituency apart from the inclusion of the Derringham ward. The remainder of the existing Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle constituency would be combined with five District of East Riding of Yorkshire wards to form the Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice constituency.

1018. In the Grimsby and Cleethorpes areas we considered that there was no perfect solution that would address the issues. The majority of the representations from Grimsby opposed our proposals, but the counter-proposals affected Cleethorpes, resulting in the division of the community of Humberston. These counter-proposals were opposed by residents from Cleethorpes, who generally supported our proposals. Despite the strongly-felt and expressed opposition from Grimsby, our options were very limited and we were not persuaded that there were exceptional and compelling reasons to split the Croft Baker ward and we decided that there should be no revisions to the boundaries of the proposed Grimsby North and Barton, and Grimsby South and Cleethorpes constituencies. However, we did propose that the constituency names be modified, to reflect the historical and cultural heritage of Grimsby that had been alluded to in many of the representations. We therefore proposed that the constituencies be called Great Grimsby North and Barton, and Great Grimsby South and Cleethorpes.

1019. We did not revise our proposals for any other constituency in Humberside (namely Beverley and Holderness, East Yorkshire, and Scunthorpe), although we were persuaded by the evidence to rename the Goole constituency Goole and Axholme to reflect the different areas included in the constituency.

## **Consultation on the revised proposals**

1020. In response to the consultation on the revised proposals we continued to receive some support for, but also opposition to, our proposed constituencies in Humberside. In particular, there was considerable continuing opposition to the retention of the Great Grimsby North and Barton, and Great Grimsby South and Cleethorpes constituencies that we had proposed initially and had not revised.

1021. The opposition regarding Grimsby reiterated the points raised in the previous consultations about the historical and cultural significance of Grimsby and that the town should be retained in a single constituency. However, as detailed above, this would involve the splitting of the Croft Baker ward and would have knock-on effects in Cleethorpes, and there was opposition here to the counter-proposals calling for such changes. A number of respondents called for the name of Great Grimsby South and Cleethorpes to be amended to Cleethorpes and Grimsby South, to reflect that Cleethorpes formed the larger part of the constituency.

1022. There were relatively few further representations on our revised proposals for the constituencies in Kingston upon Hull, but there was a call for a return to our initial proposals for the city. There was also opposition from residents in the Derringham ward to its inclusion in the Kingston upon

Hull North constituency, instead of Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice, and suggestions that this constituency be called Haltemprice and Kingston upon Hull West, as the larger part of the constituency would be formed of Haltemprice wards.

1023. We received some objection to the inclusion of the town of Brigg and the rural wards to the east of Scunthorpe in a constituency with Grimsby, in view of the proximity of the wards to Scunthorpe and their distance from Grimsby. Although there was support for the change of name of the Goole constituency to Goole and Axholme, some respondents suggested that we go further and include in the constituency name reference to Haltemprice or Howdenshire, as much of the constituency would contain wards from the existing Haltemprice and Howden constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

1024. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded to amend the boundaries of any of our proposed constituencies in Humberside. We considered that our options in the Grimsby and Cleethorpes areas were particularly limited, and we did not consider that any further compelling or new evidence had been provided that might justify changing the composition of our revised constituencies or for the splitting of a ward. We do, however, accept that the pre-eminence of the town of Cleethorpes in the Great Grimsby South and Cleethorpes constituency was such that the constituency should be called Cleethorpes and Great Grimsby South. Further, we accept that the inclusion of such a large area of the existing Haltemprice and Howden constituency in our proposed Goole and Axholme constituency was such that Howden should be reflected in the constituency name, which we changed to Goole, Howden and Axholme.

1025. In Kingston upon Hull, we received representations concerning the Derringham ward and other representations that suggested a return to the initial proposals in the city, which we had already decided to revise. In view of the lack of further persuasive evidence we decided not to amend further our constituencies in the city or to change the name of the Kingston upon Hull and Haltemprice constituency.

1026. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for the constituencies of: Beverley and Holderness, Cleethorpes and Great Grimsby South, East Yorkshire, Goole, Howden and Axholme, Great Grimsby North and Barton, Kingston upon Hull East, Kingston upon Hull North, Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice, and Scunthorpe. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **North Yorkshire (including the City of York)**

### **Initial proposals**

1027. Of the existing eight constituencies in North Yorkshire, seven are currently within the permitted electorate range, with only the Scarborough and Whitby constituency outside this range with an electorate of 70,708. North Yorkshire could continue to be allocated eight constituencies, with a minimal amount of change to the existing constituencies. However, the electorate of West Yorkshire and the electoral size of the wards in the county made it difficult to construct constituencies within the permitted electorate range without dividing towns between constituencies. We therefore decided, when formulating our initial proposals, to combine

North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire in order to give us more flexibility in the construction of constituencies.

1028. Under our initial proposals we proposed that the York Central and York Outer constituencies would be similar to the existing constituencies apart from some small modifications to realign ward and constituency boundaries following a local government ward boundary review.
1029. In order to increase the electorate of the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, we included the Borough of Scarborough ward of Filey from the existing Thirsk and Malton constituency. To compensate for this change we included the Hambleton district ward of Great Ayton from the Richmond (Yorks) constituency in our proposed Thirsk and Malton constituency. Although the existing Selby and Ainsty constituency did not need to be altered as its electorate fell within the permitted electorate range, we included the District of Selby wards of Byram & Brotherton, and Whitley in our proposed cross-county boundary constituencies of, Normanton, Castleford and Outwood, and Pontefract (respectively). To compensate for these changes, we included the Borough of Harrogate wards of Boroughbridge and Claro in the Selby and Ainsty constituency and, consequently, the Borough of Harrogate ward of Washburn in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency, from the existing Skipton and Ripon constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

1030. There was significant opposition to our proposals to cross the county boundary between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, with it being argued that North Yorkshire was distinct from the metropolitan counties of West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, being largely agricultural and rural in nature. It was noted that a consequence of including the Byram & Brotherton, and Whitley wards in cross-county boundary constituencies was that the Selby and Ainsty constituency, which did not need to change as its electorate was already within the permitted electorate range, was now outside this range. It was further noted that to compensate for this we had included the Boroughbridge and Claro wards in the constituency, which led to a further knock-on effect with the inclusion of the Washburn ward from the Skipton and Ripon constituency in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range.
1031. We received considerable opposition to, and little support for, the inclusion of the Boroughbridge and Claro wards in the Selby and Ainsty constituency, with respondents citing the proximity of these two wards to Harrogate and that they had little in common with the areas of Selby and Ainsty to the south.
1032. Our proposed inclusion of the Borough of Scarborough ward of Filey in the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, rather than in Thirsk and Malton where it is currently located, did not generate many representations, although there was some support due to the ward's proximity to Scarborough and that, like the rest of the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, it was a coastal ward. However, a consequence of this proposal was a need to now bring the Thirsk and Malton constituency within the permitted electorate range, and we proposed that the Great Ayton ward should be included in the constituency. This proposal was particularly unpopular and we received a large number of representations affirming that Great Ayton looked towards Richmond and that the ward was separated from the rest of the Thirsk and Malton constituency by the North York Moors.

1033. Few representations either in support of, or in opposition to, the two City of York constituencies were received, although it was suggested that, rather than there being a ‘doughnut’ shape of the two constituencies, the boundary between the two constituencies should be north or south, or along the River Ouse.

### **Revised proposals**

1034. In light of the representations received opposing our initial proposals, many of which were in response to the consequential knock-on effects of crossing the county boundary with West Yorkshire, and as a result of the modifications we made to our initial proposals in West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, we were able to consider North Yorkshire as a sub-region on its own. This meant that the constituencies of Selby and Ainsty, Harrogate and Knaresborough, and Skipton and Ripon could be unchanged from the existing constituencies and we revised our proposals accordingly. Also, in light of the limited objections to our proposed York Central and York Outer constituencies, we proposed that they should not be further modified. This would mean that both York constituencies would be changed from the existing constituencies only by making some small modifications to realign ward and constituency boundaries following a local government ward boundary review.
1035. We considered that the large body of evidence demonstrating that the Great Ayton ward looked towards Richmond (Yorks), and that it had few links with Thirsk and Malton, was particularly persuasive, especially with regard to the North York Moors physically separating Great Ayton from the rest of the Thirsk and Malton constituency. We therefore revised our initial proposals to retain the ward in the Richmond (Yorks) constituency, which would now also be similar to the existing constituency, as it also only reflected changes to ward boundaries following a local government ward boundary review.
1036. The inclusion of the Great Ayton ward in the Richmond (Yorks) constituency meant it would be necessary to include another ward in the Thirsk and Malton constituency to bring it within the permitted electorate range. In light of the few representations received, either in support of, or in opposition to, the inclusion of the Filey ward in the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, and despite our initial view that the ward’s best fit was with Scarborough and Whitby, we proposed a revision and included the ward in the Thirsk and Malton constituency, where it is currently located. However, the Scarborough and Whitby constituency would need an additional ward to bring it within the permitted electorate range. We therefore accepted a counter-proposal that the District of Ryedale ward of Thornton Dale should be included in the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, noting evidence that the ward had good communication links to Scarborough along the A170.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

1037. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals we received support for our decision to now treat North Yorkshire as a sub-region on its own, and received a general level of support for the revised changes that we had made to the constituencies of Harrogate and Knaresborough, Richmond (Yorks), Selby and Ainsty, and Skipton and Ripon, which, along with York Central, and York Outer, were either all unchanged from the existing constituencies or altered only to reflect changes to ward boundaries following local government ward boundary reviews.

1038. We received some opposition to our revised proposals for the Scarborough and Whitby, and Thirsk and Malton constituencies. Respondents suggested that Filey — an urban, sea-facing ward — would be a better fit in the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, as in our initial proposals, and that the rural Thornton Dale ward should instead be in the Thirsk and Malton constituency. However, this would mean that the electorate of the Thirsk and Malton constituency would be outside the permitted electorate range. There was, however, a counter-proposal that it would be possible to include the Great Ayton ward in Richmond (Yorks), the Filey ward in Scarborough and Whitby, and the Thornton Dale ward in Thirsk and Malton if, additionally, the Borough of Scarborough ward of Derwent Valley were to be included in the Thirsk and Malton constituency. However, we had not proposed that the Derwent Valley ward should be in the Thirsk and Malton constituency in either our initial or revised proposals. Additionally, we noted that the Derwent Valley ward is currently included in the existing Scarborough and Whitby constituency.

### **Final recommendations**

1039. Having considered the evidence received, we are not proposing to make any changes to the boundaries of our revised proposals for North Yorkshire. We note the evidence regarding whether the Filey ward should be included in the Scarborough and Whitby constituency, and whether the Thornton Dale and Derwent Valley wards should be included in the Thirsk and Malton constituency. Although we proposed that Filey should be in Scarborough and Whitby in our initial proposals due to the different pattern of constituencies we proposed at that stage, and we noted the evidence that suggests the ward does look towards Scarborough, the ward is currently in the existing Thirsk and Malton constituency. Also, as we had received very few representations concerning the Derwent Valley ward, and as the ward is in the existing Scarborough and Whitby constituency and we had not proposed at any stage in our proposals that the ward be included in Thirsk and Malton, we did not consider that we should make this further revision at this late stage.

1040. We did receive some representations regarding the names of our constituencies in North Yorkshire, including the two City of York constituencies. However, given that most of the names of our proposed constituencies in the sub-region reflect the names of existing constituencies, we have decided not to modify the names of our revised proposal constituencies.

1041. Our final recommendations in this sub-region are for the constituencies of: Harrogate and Knaresborough, Richmond (Yorks), Scarborough and Whitby, Selby and Ainsty, Skipton and Ripon, Thirsk and Malton, York Central, and York Outer. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire**

1042. Under the initial proposals we proposed a sub-region containing the counties of North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, and West Yorkshire, and four cross-county boundary constituencies: two crossing the county boundary between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, and two crossing the county boundary between South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. We had proposed this combined sub-region because the electoral size of the wards in West Yorkshire, particularly in the cities of Leeds and Wakefield and the Borough of Kirklees, made it difficult to construct constituencies within the permitted electorate range in West Yorkshire without dividing towns between constituencies. Also, the large electorates of wards in the City of Sheffield were such that it would be challenging to create constituencies within the permitted electorate range. In order to allow

us more flexibility in constructing constituencies in South Yorkshire, we had therefore decided to group North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and South Yorkshire as a sub-region. In our initial proposals we were able to construct constituencies that did not involve the splitting of any wards.

1043. Of the 33 existing constituencies in South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, 11 have electorates that are within the permitted electorate range. Of the remaining 22 constituencies, Colne Valley has an electorate that is above the permitted electorate range: all the others have electorates that are below the permitted electorate range.

1044. Under our initial proposals we proposed just one constituency that would be unchanged (Elmet and Rothwell in West Yorkshire) and only one constituency that was similar to the existing constituency apart from the realignment of local authority wards with constituency boundaries (Dewsbury, also in West Yorkshire).

## **West Yorkshire**

### **Initial proposals**

1045. In Leeds, we included the City of Leeds ward of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward in our proposed Leeds East constituency from Leeds Central and to compensate we included the City of Leeds ward of Farnley and Wortley in the Leeds Central constituency. In order that both the Leeds North West and Leeds North East constituencies would have electorates that were within the permitted electorate range, we included the City of Leeds ward of Headingley in Leeds North East, rather than Leeds North West where it is currently located. To compensate for the inclusion of the Headingley ward in the Leeds North East constituency, we proposed that the City of Leeds wards of Kirkstall and Horsforth be included in the Leeds North West constituency. To further compensate for the inclusion of the Horsforth ward in Leeds North West, we proposed that the two City of Leeds wards of Bramley and Stanningley, and Armley be included in the Pudsey constituency, along with the City of Bradford ward of Tong. We proposed that the wards in the existing Leeds West constituency be redistributed among neighbouring constituencies in order to contribute to reducing the number of constituencies in West Yorkshire by two. The Elmet and Rothwell constituency was unchanged.

1046. In the City of Bradford, we proposed that the Shipley constituency should cross the local authority boundary with the addition of the City of Leeds ward of Guiseley and Rawdon to the five City of Bradford wards in the constituency. In order to bring the electorate of the Keighley constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed that the constituency should include the City of Bradford ward of Wharfedale. No other changes were proposed to the Keighley constituency. In order to bring the Bradford East constituency within the permitted electorate range, we included the City of Bradford ward of Manningham.

1047. In order to reduce the number of constituencies in West Yorkshire we proposed that the City of Bradford wards that comprised the existing Bradford South constituency be redistributed among the neighbouring constituencies. We proposed the inclusion of the two wards of Great Horton and Queensbury in Bradford West; the two wards of Wyke and Wibsey in our proposed Spen constituency; as mentioned previously, the Tong ward in our proposed Pudsey constituency; and the Royds ward in our proposed Halifax constituency. Our proposed Halifax constituency would include eight Borough of Calderdale wards, four of them from the existing Calder Valley



constituency. In order to bring both the Halifax and Calder Valley constituencies within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the inclusion of four wards from the existing Halifax constituency in the Calder Valley constituency.

1048. We proposed that the Dewsbury constituency should be similar to the existing constituency, save for the re-alignment of local ward and constituency boundaries following a local government ward boundary review. In order to bring the electorate of the Huddersfield constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the inclusion of the Borough of Kirklees ward of Lindley from the existing Colne Valley constituency. To compensate for this change, we proposed to include in Colne Valley the Borough of Barnsley ward of Penistone West, thereby constructing a third constituency that crossed the West Yorkshire county boundary (in this case, with South Yorkshire). We proposed that the Batley and Morley constituency should include the two Kirklees borough wards of Batley East and Batley West, with the three City of Leeds wards of Morley North, Morley South, and Ardsley and Robin Hood.

1049. In the City of Wakefield, we had proposed the Normanton, Castleford and Outwood, and Pontefract constituencies that crossed the county boundary with North Yorkshire with the inclusion, respectively, of the two District of Selby wards of Byram & Brotherton, and Whitley in the constituencies. The inclusion of the Byram & Brotherton ward allowed us to construct a constituency that did not divide the town of Castleford. The Pontefract constituency would include three wards from the existing Hemsworth constituency. We proposed that the Wakefield constituency would include the Wakefield South ward from the existing Hemsworth constituency.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

1050. In response to the consultation on our initial proposals, there was support for some of our proposals, but also significant opposition. Also, we received a number of representations that suggested the splitting of numerous wards, especially in Bradford, and a number of counter-proposals suggested extensive revisions across much of the county. There were objections to our proposals to construct two constituencies that crossed the county boundary with North Yorkshire as this caused more disruption than was necessary, although in the City of Wakefield local authority, while we noted both support for and objection to our proposals, they did not generate a large number of representations. However, there was a counter-proposal that supported the inclusion of the City of Wakefield ward of Hemsworth in a cross-county boundary constituency with Borough of Barnsley wards and that a new constituency to be called Featherstone be constructed in the City of Wakefield, which, it was claimed, would closely resemble the existing Hemsworth constituency.

1051. Our proposals in the Borough of Calderdale were generally not supported and there was a campaign against our proposals in the borough with a call to adopt a pattern of constituencies that more closely matched the existing pattern of constituencies. The inclusion of the City of Bradford ward of Royds in a Calder Valley constituency was opposed.

1052. Our proposals for the Huddersfield and Dewsbury constituencies did not generate a significant number of representations. There was some objection to the inclusion of the Borough of Barnsley ward of Penistone West in the cross-county boundary constituency of Colne Valley, although there was also some support for this proposal. It was also suggested in a counter-proposal that the whole of the town of Penistone was located in the Penistone West ward, and that the town was therefore not necessarily divided between the Penistone West and Penistone East wards. An

alternative that avoided the Colne Valley constituency crossing the boundary with South Yorkshire required alterations to the Dewsbury constituency which, apart from ward re-alignment, was otherwise similar to the existing constituency in our initial proposals.

1053. Our proposals in the City of Bradford local authority generated a considerable amount of opposition, although we had made only minor changes to the Keighley constituency; and there was some support for the continued inclusion of Ilkley in the constituency, and also some support for our proposals for Shipley. However, there was objection and a supported counter-proposal called for the creation of a Keighley and Shipley constituency, and an Airedale and Wharfedale constituency, suggesting that the links between Keighley and Shipley were stronger than those between Keighley and Ilkley. Our proposals to include the City of Leeds ward of Guiseley and Rawdon in the Shipley constituency attracted considerable opposition: apart from those who objected to the fact that an orphan City of Leeds ward would be included in a largely City of Bradford constituency, many respondents claimed that our proposals divided the communities of Rawdon and Yeadon between constituencies.
1054. Most of the objections to our proposals in Bradford were as a result of the perceived loss of the Bradford South constituency and the consequent redistribution of wards in neighbouring constituencies, in particular, the Tong, Wyke, Wibsey, Royds, and Queensbury wards, with suggestions that these wards were also linked to the Great Horton and Little Horton wards. We received campaigns and a number of counter-proposals which highlighted a strong depth of feeling against our initial proposals and a distinct 'Bradfordian' identity. Most of these called for the re-establishment of a Bradford South constituency, and there were many calls for the splitting of a number of wards. Furthermore, many representations suggested that the redistribution of wards meant that some were located in constituencies with areas with which they had little in common, for example the inclusion of the Wibsey and Wyke wards in the Spen constituency. We noted that a number of the representations suggested changes that would have knock-on effects on other constituencies, but few suggestions were proffered as to how these could be addressed.
1055. There was some opposition to our proposals for the Spen, and Batley and Morley constituencies with suggestions that the existing Batley and Spen constituency should remain unchanged. However, our initial proposals for these constituencies did not generate a large number of representations and it was noted that there was also some support for our proposals for the Batley and Morley constituency.
1056. Our proposals for the City of Leeds did not generate large numbers of representations, apart from those opposed to the inclusion of the Guiseley and Rawdon ward in the Shipley constituency. Although there were a few limited counter-proposals and some opposition to the inclusion of the Adel and Wharfedale ward in the Leeds North West constituency with some suggesting that the ward be split, the most contentious issues in the Leeds constituencies were the inclusion of the City of Bradford ward of Tong in the Pudsey constituency and the inclusion of the Headingley ward in our proposed Leeds North East constituency, which, it was argued, was a predominantly student area and an inappropriate ward to be included in Leeds North East. However, this view was not unanimous and there was a degree of support, not just for our proposals for Leeds North East and, in particular, the proposed Leeds North West constituency, but across the Leeds constituencies as a whole. Our proposals for the inclusion of the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward in the Leeds East constituency was supported.

## Revised proposals

1057. In light of the representations received, many of which opposed our initial proposals, we made a number of revisions to our initial proposals. The revisions that enabled us to consider North Yorkshire as a sub-region on its own had significant implications for the constituencies in the City of Wakefield. As the Normanton, Castleford and Outwood, and Pontefract constituencies no longer each contained a District of Selby ward, we were able to reconstruct the existing constituency of Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford. We accepted the counter-proposal that suggested the construction of a Featherstone constituency and the inclusion of the towns of Ossett and Outwood in the Wakefield constituency. The three City of Wakefield constituencies would be entirely contained within the City of Wakefield local authority area (although the Hemsworth ward would be included in a cross-county boundary constituency).
1058. In Calderdale, we accepted the strong support for the creation of the two constituencies of Lower Calder and Upper Calder. There had been opposition to the inclusion of the City of Bradford ward of Royds in a Calderdale constituency. Although it was not possible to create two constituencies in Calderdale that contained wholly District of Calderdale wards, rather than including the Royds ward in such a constituency we included the City of Bradford ward of Queensbury in a revised Lower Calder constituency as we accepted the evidence that the ward had links to the Shelf area, which was also included in the revised constituency. In the Borough of Kirklees we were not persuaded by the arguments presented with regard to possible changes to the Colne Valley, Huddersfield, and Dewsbury constituencies and therefore made no alteration to these three constituencies.
1059. In light of the considerable opposition to our initial proposals for the City of Bradford, notably in the oral evidence presented at the Leeds public hearing, we felt that we had to go some way to address the issues raised, but this would not be easy as the reduction of two constituencies in West Yorkshire was unavoidable. Also, many of the alternative suggestions proposed ward splits and had consequential, but unexplored, consequences on other constituencies in the sub-region.
1060. Our assistant commissioners visited wards in the east and south of Bradford in order to observe the areas for themselves. Following their visit they recommended a new configuration of constituencies for the area: Bradford North would contain the City of Bradford wards of Bingley Rural, Bolton and Undercliffe, Eccleshill, Heaton, Manningham, Thornton and Allerton, and Toller; Bradford South would contain the City of Bradford wards of Bowling and Barkerend, City, Clayton and Fairweather Green, Great Horton, Little Horton, Royds, and Wibsey. We included the Tong (instead of Wibsey) ward in our proposed Spen constituency, which we renamed Bradford South East and Spen. There were no other changes to this proposed constituency.
1061. It was necessary to include a City of Bradford ward in the Pudsey constituency. We considered that the Bradford Moor ward had closer links with Leeds than either the Eccleshill ward, or the Idle and Thackley ward and included the Bradford Moor ward in Pudsey in place of the Tong ward. To compensate for the inclusion of the Bingley Rural ward in the revised Bradford North constituency, we included the Idle and Thackley ward in the Shipley constituency.
1062. We acknowledged the strength of feeling about the inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Guiseley and Rawdon in the Shipley constituency and the arguments that this resulted in divided communities, but it was necessary to include a City of Leeds ward in the constituency and we did not consider that a persuasive case had been made to warrant the splitting of the Guiseley and

Rawdon ward. Having rejected the counter-proposals for the Keighley and Shipley constituencies in order to address the other issues in Bradford, we made no revision to the Keighley constituency and no further revision to the Shipley constituency, other than with regard to the Bingley Rural, and Idle and Thackley wards.

1063. In view of a degree of local support that was received with regard to our initial proposals, we made no further revisions to the proposed Batley and Morley constituency.
1064. The inclusion of the Guiseley and Rawdon ward in the Shipley constituency was unpopular locally, but we also noted that there was support for the Leeds North West constituency that we had initially proposed. In light of this firm support, and that we had already concluded that the Guiseley and Rawdon ward should remain in our proposed Shipley constituency, we were not persuaded that there was any reason to revise the Leeds North West constituency.
1065. Although we acknowledged some opposition to our proposed Leeds North East constituency and, in particular, the inclusion of the Headingley ward, elsewhere throughout the City of Leeds there was a degree of support for our initial proposals and our decision not to split wards in Leeds, although there had been relatively few representations. In light of this support and the lack of any credible counter-proposal that did not split wards or have consequential effects elsewhere throughout the area, we were not persuaded that there was any reason to amend further the Leeds North East, Leeds East, Leeds Central or Elmet and Rothwell constituencies.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

1066. In response to the consultation on our revised proposals we received some support, particularly for the modifications made to the Borough of Calderdale constituencies (although we did receive further counter-proposals for the area that split wards). However, a number of representations suggested that the constituency names of Upper Calder and Lower Calder were not necessarily accurate descriptions, and also that the large town of Halifax, which had been a constituency since 1832, was no longer included in a constituency name.
1067. There was both some support for and opposition to most of our revised constituencies in West Yorkshire; for example, there was some limited objection to the continued inclusion of the town of Ilkley in the Keighley constituency, as in the existing constituency. However, we received little new evidence and most of the objections focused on a few specific areas.
1068. The reduction of a constituency in Bradford had led to very significant opposition. We were unable to restore the existing pattern of constituencies and, in attempting to meet many of the objections, we proposed an alternative solution for Bradford that did not split any wards with the construction of the Bradford North, Bradford South, and Bradford South East and Spen constituencies. Although many respondents thought that we should continue to explore other options that might involve the splitting of wards, we did receive a cautious welcome from some respondents to our revised proposals for the Bradford constituencies. However, there was very strong opposition to our proposal to include the Bingley Rural ward in the Bradford North constituency. It was argued that this divided the community of Bingley and that both Bingley wards should be included in the Shipley constituency. Many of these representations suggested that, rather than Bingley Rural, the Idle and Thackley ward should be included in the Bradford North constituency rather than in the Shipley constituency, where we had placed it in our revised proposals. We noted that the Idle and Thackley ward was located in the existing Bradford East constituency. We received some

objection to the inclusion of the Bradford Moor ward in the Pudsey constituency, the Queensbury ward in the Lower Calder constituency, and the Tong and Wyke wards in the Bradford South East and Spen constituency.

1069. The inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Guiseley and Rawdon in the Shipley constituency continued to attract opposition. Although we accepted that it could be considered that the communities of Rawdon and Yeadon would be divided by our initial and revised proposals, we did not consider that any new evidence or arguments had been presented.

1070. Throughout Leeds generally, there were comparatively few representations either in support of or in objection to our revised proposals. There continued to be limited opposition to the inclusion of the Adel and Wharfedale ward in the Leeds North West constituency. However, we did receive some objection to the composition of the Elmet and Rothwell constituency. This was unchanged in our initial proposals from the existing constituency, and we had made no revision to the constituency in our revised proposals.

1071. Although there was some support for our revised constituencies in the City of Wakefield, there was some notable objection. Some respondents objected to the construction of a Featherstone constituency, the inclusion of the Wakefield South ward in this constituency rather than in Wakefield, and the inclusion of the Hemsworth ward in the cross-county boundary constituency of Barnsley East and Hemsworth, particularly from the Fitzwilliam and Kinsley areas in the north of the ward.

### **Final recommendations**

1072. We have considered all the evidence, but did not consider that, in the majority of cases, any significant new evidence had been presented that would lead us to further amend our revised proposals.

1073. We had acknowledged that the inclusion of the City of Leeds ward of Guiseley and Rawdon in the Shipley constituency would lead to the division of some communities, caused largely by the configuration of the Guiseley and Rawdon, Horsforth, and Otley and Yeadon wards. We noted that, with an electorate of 17,779, the ward had the largest electorate among all the wards of the Yorkshire and the Humber region, and we had considered it necessary to include the ward in the Shipley constituency to bring its electorate within the permitted electorate range. We did not consider that compelling evidence had been presented to consider the splitting of the ward, or that there was significant new evidence that would lead us to consider including the ward in the Leeds North West constituency.

1074. Elsewhere in Leeds, we did not consider that there were sufficient grounds to make any further revisions, and we rejected calls for amendments to the Elmet and Rothwell constituency as its composition had not been changed at any stage during the consultation process and was the same as the existing constituency.

1075. We had noted the support for our revised Upper Calder and Lower Calder constituencies, but were persuaded by the evidence that the names of the constituencies were not appropriate. It had been submitted that it was important for a town the size of Halifax to be included in a constituency name and that Lower Calder was not a suitable name for the constituency, as the River Calder continued to run for many miles eastwards through the districts of Kirklees and

Wakefield, and that the constituency also included areas of high ground. We have therefore amended the name of the Lower Calder constituency to South Calderdale and Queensbury, to acknowledge the local authority and the fact that the constituency includes a single ward from the City of Bradford. We also amended the name of the Upper Calder constituency to Halifax and North Calderdale, in order to include the town of Halifax in the constituency name. We do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence to support any amendments to the Keighley, Huddersfield, and Dewsbury constituencies.

1076. However, we considered that a more suitable name should be adopted for the Colne Valley constituency as it included the orphan Borough of Barnsley ward of Penistone West. Although the ward of Penistone East would be included in the Barnsley West and Stocksbridge constituency, we accepted the evidence that the town of Penistone was located entirely within the Penistone West ward and that the town's inclusion in the Colne Valley constituency would be appropriate. We therefore revised the name of the Colne Valley constituency to Colne Valley and Penistone.

1077. We noted that there had been a degree of support for, and little further opposition to, our proposals for the constituencies containing wards from the City of Bradford. The inclusion of the Bradford Moor ward in the Pudsey constituency had generated some opposition, but we did not consider it sufficient to alter our proposals, and the inclusion of the Tong and Wyke wards in the Bradford South East and Spen constituency had not generated a large number of representations. We did consider a request for a change of name for the latter constituency to Spen and Bradford South East, to recognise the fact that the constituency was primarily comprised of Borough of Kirklees wards, but we did not consider that there was a compelling reason to change the name of the constituency that we had proposed.

1078. However, as mentioned previously, there was considerable opposition to the inclusion of the Bingley Rural ward in our revised Bradford North constituency: a substantial number of all the representations we had received to our revised proposals in the whole of the Yorkshire and the Humber region had concerned the Bingley Rural ward. Those objecting said the ward should continue to be included in the Shipley constituency and that not to do so would divide the community of Bingley. It was suggested that the Idle and Thackley ward, rather than being included in the Shipley constituency, should instead be included in Bradford North. We could see the merits of keeping the two Bingley wards in the same constituency, and acknowledged that the Idle and Thackley ward was currently in the existing Bradford East constituency and had links with other wards in our revised Bradford North constituency, such as Eccleshill. We considered that the evidence presented to us was both strong and persuasive and therefore decided to amend our revised proposals to include the Bingley Rural ward in the Shipley constituency and the Idle and Thackley ward in the Bradford North constituency. This amendment did not have any impact on any other constituency.

1079. We considered the objections received to the revised proposals for the constituencies in the City of Wakefield. However, we considered that there had to be a crossing of the county boundary and that the inclusion of the Hemsworth ward in the Barnsley East and Hemsworth constituency was the most appropriate solution. We considered that the new Featherstone constituency was not profoundly different from the existing Hemsworth constituency, albeit without the Hemsworth ward, and we considered that it was an appropriate successor to the existing Hemsworth constituency. We considered that our revised Wakefield constituency was a reasonably compact constituency and that there had been some support for our revised proposals. Although we

considered that the Wakefield South ward had links to Wakefield itself, we also considered that it had links with the rest of the Featherstone constituency, and that the electorate of our revised Wakefield constituency at 76,795 could not accommodate the Wakefield South ward with its electorate of 9,760 without further considerable disruption elsewhere.

1080. However, we considered that the Featherstone constituency name was not entirely appropriate and decided to revise the name to Wakefield Rural, which was alluded to in a representation. The constituency is contained wholly within the local authority of the City of Wakefield, and we considered that this was a more accurate description of the constituency and that none of the alternatives were suitable. We therefore recommend only this change to our revised constituencies in the City of Wakefield.

1081. Our final recommendations in West Yorkshire are for the constituencies of: Batley and Morley, Bradford North, Bradford South, Bradford South East and Spenningsdale, Colne Valley and Penistone, Dewsbury, Elmet and Rothwell, Halifax and North Calderdale, Huddersfield, Keighley, Leeds Central, Leeds East, Leeds North East, Leeds North West, Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford, Pudsey, Shipley, South Calderdale and Queensbury, Wakefield, and Wakefield Rural. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

## **South Yorkshire**

### **Initial proposals**

1082. In order to bring the Barnsley Central constituency within the permitted electorate range, we proposed the inclusion of the two Borough of Barnsley wards of Dodworth and Worsbrough. We also proposed a fourth constituency that crossed the county boundary with West Yorkshire with the inclusion of the two City of Wakefield wards of Hemsworth, and Crofton, Ryhill and Walton in a Barnsley East and Hemsworth constituency. The remainder of this constituency would comprise five wards from the existing Barnsley East constituency as well as the Borough of Barnsley ward of Dearne South, from the existing Wentworth and Dearne constituency. Our proposed Wentworth and Dearne constituency would contain two Borough of Barnsley wards and six Borough of Rotherham wards.

1083. We proposed three constituencies that fell primarily within the Borough of Doncaster. The existing Doncaster Central constituency would be changed only by the inclusion of the whole of the divided Stainforth & Barnby Dun ward. We proposed to reconfigure the orientation of the existing Doncaster North and Don Valley constituencies with a Doncaster East constituency comprising four wards from the existing Don Valley constituency and two from the existing Doncaster North constituency, and a Doncaster West constituency containing four wards from the existing Doncaster North constituency, three wards from the existing Don Valley constituency, and the Barnsley borough ward of Dearne North from the existing Wentworth and Dearne constituency.

1084. We proposed significant changes to the Borough of Rotherham constituencies although the existing constituencies of Wentworth and Dearne, and Rother Valley were within the permitted electorate range. In addition to the changes already mentioned regarding Wentworth and Dearne, our proposed Rotherham constituency included three wards from the existing Rother Valley constituency and one ward from Wentworth and Dearne (the Wickersley ward). To compensate

for the transfer of wards from Rother Valley, we proposed the inclusion of the two City of Sheffield wards of Beighton and Mosborough in the Rother Valley constituency.

1085. In Sheffield itself, in order to construct constituencies that did not divide wards we proposed significant change. Our proposed Sheffield East constituency included two wards from the existing Sheffield South East constituency, two wards from Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough constituency, one Borough of Rotherham ward from the Rotherham constituency (Brinsworth and Catcliffe), and one ward from the Sheffield Heeley constituency (Richmond). Our proposed Sheffield South constituency included three wards from the existing Sheffield Heeley constituency, two wards from Sheffield Central, and one ward from Sheffield South East (the Birley ward). Our proposed Sheffield Central and West constituency included three wards from the existing Sheffield Central constituency, and two wards from the existing Sheffield Hallam constituency. Our proposed Sheffield Hallam and Stocksbridge constituency comprised one ward from the existing Sheffield Heeley constituency (Beauchief and Greenhill), three wards from Sheffield Hallam, and two wards from Penistone and Stocksbridge, one of them a Borough of Barnsley ward (Penistone East). Our proposed Sheffield North and Ecclesfield constituency comprised three wards from the existing Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough constituency, two wards from Penistone and Stocksbridge, and the Borough of Rotherham ward of Keppel. In order to reduce by one the number of constituencies in South Yorkshire, we proposed that the wards of the existing Penistone and Stocksbridge constituency be redistributed between our proposed constituencies of Barnsley Central, Colne Valley, Sheffield Hallam and Stocksbridge, and Sheffield North and Ecclesfield.

### **Consultation on the initial proposals**

1086. In developing our initial proposals in South Yorkshire we did not propose that any wards be split, but we were mindful that our proposals for Sheffield, an area which had proved particularly challenging in constructing constituencies, resulted in five constituencies, three of which had crossed the city boundary. Our initial proposals for the Sheffield constituencies were not supported and we received both numerous and a wide variety of counter-proposals that had identified some half of all the wards in Sheffield as being candidates for splitting. This in itself suggested that there could be exceptional and compelling circumstances for the splitting of wards in Sheffield. There was also a campaign and very considerable opposition against our initial proposals to include the City of Sheffield wards of Mosborough and Beighton in the Rother Valley constituency, with calls for any solution to ensure that these two wards be contained together wholly within a Sheffield constituency.

1087. Within the Borough of Rotherham, despite the considerable changes that we had proposed, our initial proposals did not generate a large number of representations, either in support of or in objection to our proposals, although most of the representations received were in opposition. Among the representations we did receive, it was argued that unnecessary change had been forced on the Borough of Rotherham as a consequence of us having to turn to the borough to allow for the construction of constituencies in Sheffield that were within the permitted electorate range. There was opposition to the proposed Rother Valley constituency, which did not need to be changed as the existing constituency was within the permitted electorate range. There was also opposition to the inclusion of the Borough of Rotherham ward of Brinsworth and Catcliffe in our proposed Sheffield East constituency, with it being argued that the parish of Brinsworth was located only two miles from Rotherham town centre. There was further opposition to the inclusion



of the Keppel ward in our proposed Sheffield North and Ecclesfield constituency, with the eastern areas of the ward, namely Kimberworth and Kimberworth Park in particular, being very much part of Rotherham town.

1088. Our proposals for the Wentworth and Dearne constituency were also opposed with a counter-proposal suggesting the inclusion of the Barnsley borough ward of Wombwell as it had close ties with the Hoyland Milton ward, and the Borough of Rotherham ward of Hooper, which were both included in the constituency.

1089. Our initial proposals in the Borough of Doncaster had significantly reconfigured the existing Doncaster North and Don Valley constituencies, and less so in Doncaster Central. There was a degree of support for these constituencies, which included the Borough of Barnsley ward of Dearne North as an orphan ward in our proposed Doncaster West constituency. However, a number of counter-proposals objected to our proposals, suggesting that they significantly and unnecessarily amended the Doncaster North and Don Valley constituencies. A counter-proposal that proposed minimum change was received and was well-supported, the only difference from the existing pattern of constituencies being the inclusion of the whole of the divided Thorne & Moorends ward in the Don Valley constituency, and the whole of the divided Stainforth & Barnby Dun ward in the Doncaster Central constituency. In recognising that there would have to be at least one constituency that crossed the county boundary between South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, this counter-proposal included the City of Wakefield ward of South Elmsall and South Kirkby in the Doncaster North constituency. However, we received another counter-proposal that retained this ward in a constituency wholly containing City of Wakefield wards. This counter-proposal included the Barnsley borough ward of Royston in a cross-county boundary constituency, rather than the Penistone West ward.

1090. There was a significant degree of opposition to our initial proposals as they affected the Borough of Barnsley. As discussed previously, although there was some support, the inclusion of the Penistone West ward in the cross-county boundary constituency of Colne Valley was mostly opposed. However, a counter-proposal suggested that it was inevitable that the Penistone East and Penistone West wards would have to be divided between constituencies and that Penistone East and Dodworth looked towards Barnsley. This counter-proposal also supported the continued link of the City of Sheffield ward of Stocksbridge and Upper Don with Barnsley and proposed a Barnsley West and Stocksbridge constituency that would include the centre of the town of Barnsley. This counter-proposal also supported our proposed second cross-county boundary constituency with the inclusion of the City of Wakefield ward of Hemsworth in a Barnsley East and Hemsworth constituency.

1091. In opposition to our initial proposals the view was expressed that we had disproportionately disadvantaged the Borough of Barnsley. The existing pattern of constituencies meant that the Borough of Barnsley was already divided across four constituencies; the initial proposals would result in the Borough of Barnsley being divided across six constituencies and across two counties in two different locations.

### **Revised proposals**

1092. There was little support for our initial proposals for constituencies in South Yorkshire. In Sheffield, as mentioned previously, we received numerous counter-proposals that suggested a wide range of alternatives and suggestions for the splitting of wards. In light of the considerable support

for the splitting of wards in Sheffield, the unnecessary and extensive domino effect of our initial proposals throughout the region, and a recognition that our initial proposals would cause significant disruption to the existing pattern of constituencies, our assistant commissioners decided to visit Sheffield. They went to see for themselves a number of wards that had been suggested as suitable candidates for splitting to determine, from their observations, the merits or otherwise of splitting these wards. They concluded that there was sufficiently persuasive evidence to make an exceptional and compelling case to split wards in the area. They noted a counter-proposal that had suggested splitting the Burngreave, Central, and Crookes wards between constituencies, and which allowed for a significant reconfiguration of the constituencies in the city that would better match the existing pattern of constituencies. Our assistant commissioners recommended that we adopt this counter-proposal, and we agreed.

1093. In adopting the counter-proposal, we addressed the issue of the Mosborough and Beighton wards and included both in the Sheffield South East constituency. Sheffield Central would contain parts of the split Central and Crookes wards, Sheffield Hallam would also contain part of the split Crookes ward, and Sheffield South would contain the remainder of the split Central ward. The Burngreave ward would be split between the Sheffield South East and the Sheffield North and Ecclesfield constituencies. It was not possible to include the City of Sheffield ward of Stocksbridge and Upper Don in a Sheffield constituency.
1094. We noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England had reviewed the City of Sheffield and that alterations had been made to some of the wards in Sheffield, as specified in the 'Sheffield (Electoral Changes) Order 2015'. In line with our policy (stated in the Guide to the 2018 Review), as we were splitting wards, we would take into account as appropriate any new ward boundaries made after 7 May 2015. The changes to the Burngreave ward and the Crookes ward (which was now called Crookes & Crosspool) had no impact on the polling districts that we proposed should be included in the Sheffield South East and the Sheffield Central constituencies, respectively. Changes made to the Central ward (now called City ward) did have an impact. Although not affecting our revised proposals, the GF polling district of the former Central ward was itself now split, with a portion included in the new City ward and the rest of the polling district being included in the Nether Edge and Sharrow ward. We decided to take this into account and proposed slightly revised Sheffield Central and Sheffield South constituencies.
1095. Our decision to split wards in Sheffield and reconfigure the constituencies had positive knock-on effects in the Borough of Rotherham, where we were able to reconstruct the existing Rother Valley constituency and revise the Rotherham constituency to include the Brinsworth and Catcliffe, Keppel, and Wingfield wards. Apart from the addition of the Wickersley ward, our revised Rotherham constituency would be similar to the existing constituency.
1096. As the electorate of our proposed Wentworth and Dearne constituency would be too low, we included in the constituency the additional Barnsley borough ward of Wombwell, accepting the evidence that highlighted the links of this ward with the Hoyland Milton, Rockingham, and Hooper wards, which we had included in the constituency in our initial proposals.
1097. In Doncaster, we were persuaded by the evidence, and the degree of support received, to reconfigure the constituencies to more closely resemble the existing pattern and return to a north-south orientation rather than east-west as in our initial proposals. We did not amend the Doncaster Central constituency that we had initially proposed. Our assistant commissioners

were not convinced that a cross-county boundary constituency should be constructed between Doncaster and Wakefield, as proposed by some respondents, and decided to visit a number of wards to observe for themselves the links between wards and the geography of the area. They considered that the City of Wakefield ward of South Elmsall and South Kirkby looked towards Wakefield and should not be included in a Doncaster constituency. Therefore, another ward from outside Doncaster would need to be identified in order to bring the Doncaster North constituency within the permitted electorate range. They visited the Dearne wards and recommended to us that we include the Borough of Barnsley ward of Dearne South in the Doncaster North constituency. We further proposed a Don Valley constituency.

1098. We had been persuaded by the evidence, and the visit to the area by our assistant commissioners, to include the City of Wakefield ward of Hemsworth in a cross-county boundary constituency as a best fit with Borough of Barnsley wards and to confirm a Barnsley East and Hemsworth constituency. This was similar to our initial proposals, although due to the changes we had made elsewhere, the initial proposals for the constituency would have to be amended. This meant that we would not have to look elsewhere to cross the county boundary — such as the Royston and/or Darton East wards, which we considered was a less suitable solution. We accepted the reasoning presented in the representations that suggested that the electorate of the City of Sheffield ward of Stocksbridge and Upper Don was concentrated in the north and north-eastern parts of the ward and looked towards Barnsley. We therefore amended the Barnsley Central constituency as in our initial proposals and proposed a Barnsley West and Stocksbridge constituency that would also include the central parts of Barnsley. As mentioned previously, we were not persuaded that we needed to make any changes to the Colne Valley constituency, which would continue to include the Borough of Barnsley ward of Penistone West.

1099. We had sympathy with those who, following publication of our initial proposals, expressed concern that the Borough of Barnsley would be divided across six constituencies. However, our revised proposals did reduce the number of constituencies that included Barnsley wards to five, and we did not consider that there were any other options that were more suitable and that also afforded the improvements that we had made elsewhere.

### **Consultation on the revised proposals**

1100. Relatively few representations, either in support of, or in objection to, our revised proposals in South Yorkshire as a whole, were received. It was considered that our revised proposals for Sheffield were an improvement on our initial proposals and there was no significant opposition to the splitting of the three wards in Sheffield, although there was a counter-proposal that suggested different splits of the Central and Crookes wards, or the splitting of the Manor Castle ward rather than the Central ward. There was also some limited objection from respondents from the Burngreave ward who suggested that the part of the ward that we had proposed be included in the Sheffield South East constituency did not look towards the constituency. Our assistant commissioners had visited the Burngreave ward and had considered that the ward did have links and similarities with the Darnall ward, which we had included in the Sheffield East constituency in the initial proposals, and in Sheffield South East in our revised proposals. A number of representations suggested alternative names for the Sheffield constituencies that were the same as, or alluded to, the traditional names of the Sheffield constituencies.

1101. Very few representations to our revised proposals were received in relation to the boroughs of Rotherham and Doncaster, although there continued to be opposition to our revised proposals as they affected the Borough of Barnsley, and, in particular, the treatment of the Dearne North and Dearne South wards which, in our revised proposals, we had included in the Barnsley East and Hemsworth, and Doncaster North constituencies, respectively.
1102. There were general objections to the way the Borough of Barnsley had been divided between five constituencies. However, a counter-proposal that sought to address the issue split a ward in West Yorkshire and resulted in two wards being completely detached from what was proposed to be the Barnsley East constituency. The objections from the two Dearne wards repeated concerns expressed in the previous consultations about the community ties between the wards being broken. This was an area our assistant commissioners had visited to observe the links for themselves. Although they acknowledged the community ties, they recommended to us that it would not be essential for the two wards to be included in the same constituency if that meant they would be better able to recommend more appropriate constituencies overall. We agreed with them. We did receive a representation that asked us to consider renaming the Wentworth and Dearne constituency as it no longer contained either of the two Dearne wards and suggested that the River Dearne barely touched the constituency.
1103. There was also some objection (as noted previously) to the inclusion of the City of Wakefield ward of Hemsworth in our revised Barnsley East and Hemsworth constituency, and some further opposition, but no significant new evidence, to the inclusion of the Penistone West ward in the cross-county boundary constituency of Colne Valley.

### **Final recommendations**

1104. We considered all the evidence in South Yorkshire, but we do not consider that there was significant new evidence that would lead us to further revise the boundaries of constituencies in the county.
1105. In constructing our initial proposals, we had found it very challenging to construct appropriate constituencies in Sheffield that did not split wards. When formulating our revised proposals, we considered that the splitting of wards would allow for the construction of more robust constituencies in Sheffield and would avoid unnecessary and disruptive knock-on effects on existing constituencies and throughout the county. We received little by way of representations on our revised proposals, apart from the view that they were an improvement on the initial proposals. However, there was some objection to including part of the Burngreave ward in the Sheffield South East constituency, a counter-proposal that suggested some minor changes to two of the wards we had proposed be split, and an alternative suggestion for the splitting of another ward. Our assistant commissioners had visited Sheffield and we were satisfied that their suggestion that part of the Burngreave ward should be included in Sheffield South East was an appropriate solution. We considered that we should not accept the suggestions for revisions to two of the split wards we had suggested, and an alternative solution for one ward, as we would not be in a position to test these proposals in a public consultation.
1106. We received a number of suggestions for alternative names of constituencies in Sheffield. There were calls for a return to the traditional place names, rather than compass point identifiers as in our revised proposals. Apart from these representations, the names of the constituencies in Sheffield had generally not elicited comment. We considered that since there had been such

substantial change to the existing constituencies in Sheffield, it would be difficult to determine place names for constituencies that accurately reflected the constituency composition, and that any alternative names we suggested could prove to be contentious. In view of the limited comment on place names, we decide to make no changes to either the composition or the names of the constituencies in Sheffield. This meant that there would continue to be a Sheffield Hallam constituency.

1107. We received very few representations with regard to our revised proposals in the Borough of Rotherham, apart from a suggestion that the name of the Wentworth and Dearne constituency was no longer appropriate as it did not reflect the composition of the revised constituency. When publishing our revised proposals we had requested suggestions for an alternative name for the Wentworth and Dearne constituency. We therefore accepted the proposal to include one or more of the larger towns in the constituency name. As the constituency still contained much of the existing Wentworth and Dearne constituency, we decided to rename the constituency Wentworth and Hoyland.
1108. Our revised proposals for Doncaster did not attract any significant comment (apart from with regard to the Dearne South ward) or new evidence. We therefore decided to make no further change to the three Doncaster constituencies.
1109. There continued to be opposition to our proposals for the Borough of Barnsley and, in particular, the treatment of the Dearne North and Dearne South wards. However, our assistant commissioners had thoroughly considered the two wards in question and had visited them. We did not consider that any new significant evidence had been submitted that would lead us to consider further revisions regarding these wards. Within the Borough of Barnsley as a whole, we did not consider that any of the suggestions or counter-proposals offered a superior solution to our revised proposals. We therefore made no further change to constituencies in the Borough of Barnsley.
1110. Our final recommendations in South Yorkshire are for the constituencies of: Barnsley East and Hemsworth, Barnsley West and Stocksbridge, Don Valley, Doncaster Central, Doncaster North, Rother Valley, Rotherham, Sheffield Central, Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield North and Ecclesfield, Sheffield South, Sheffield South East, and Wentworth and Hoyland. These constituencies are listed in Volume two and shown on the maps in Volume three of this report.

# Appendix A

## Membership of the Boundary Commission for England

### Chair (ex officio)

The Speaker of the House of Commons (Rt Hon. John Bercow, MP)

### Deputy Chair

The Hon. Mrs Justice Patterson (to December 2016)

The Hon. Mr Justice Nicol (from March 2017)

### Commissioners

David Elvin QC

Neil Pringle

### Assistant Commissioners

Region	Assistant Commissioners
Eastern	Sarah Hamilton (Lead), Laura Jane Smallwood
East Midlands	Scott Handley JP (Lead), Ashraf Khan
London	Howard Simmons (Lead), Emma Davy, Richard Wald
North East	Eileen Brady (Lead), Adele Baumgardt
North West	Neil Ward (Lead), Graeme Clarke, Nicholas Elliott QC
South East	Colin Byrne (Lead), Stephen Lawes, Alan Nisbett
South West	Anita Bickerdike (Lead), Catherine Elliott
West Midlands	Margaret Gilmore (Lead), David Latham
Yorkshire and the Humber	John Feavyour QPM (Lead), Collette Rawnsley

Biographical information for the Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners is available on the Commission's website.

### Secretary to the Commission

Sam Hartley