

# Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

Report of head of legal and democratic services

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To: Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

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## Review of parliamentary constituencies – revised proposals

### Recommendations

That the Committee:

- (a) considers whether it wishes to make representations to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) on the revised proposals for the parliamentary constituencies;
- (b) agrees to restate the response to the initial proposals requesting the BCE consider amending the constituency boundaries to reflect the Local Government Boundary Commission for England related alteration order.

### Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an update on above review of parliamentary constituencies and invites the committee to make representations to the BCE.

### Strategic Objectives

2. The report does not specifically relate to any of the council's strategic objectives.

### Background

3. The background, rationale and details of the BCE's review of Parliamentary constituencies in England are set out in the report to this committee at its meeting on 17 October 2016 and are not repeated here.
4. At its meeting on 17 October 2016 this committee considered a report on the BCE's initial proposals for new boundaries and resolved "to request the Boundary Commission for England to amend the constituency boundaries to reflect the Local

Government Boundary Commission for England related alteration order” which will implement changes to district ward boundaries for 2019.

5. Following public consultations in September 2016 and March 2017 the BCE has published revised proposals for consultation. The consultation closes on Monday 11 December. Following the conclusion of all three consultation periods, the BCE will look at all the evidence received and make final recommendations to parliament in September 2018.

## **BCE revised proposals**

6. BCE’s [revised proposals](#) provide for changes to the current constituencies covering Vale of White Horse (Oxford West and Abingdon and Wantage).
7. The Commission’s revised proposals and rationale are reproduced below from the BCE revised proposals document relevant to the constituencies covering Vale of White Horse:

3.124 There was opposition to moving Wallingford ward into the Henley and Thames constituency, in part due to the River Thames at Wallingford forming a natural boundary. An alternative proposed by Aaron Fear (BCE-30739) was to leave Wallingford in the Wantage constituency, instead creating an amended Oxford West and Abingdon constituency stretching to Kirtlington ward in the north, adjacent to Kidlington, and down to Marcham and Drayton wards in the south, adjacent to Abingdon, all of which would be linked by the A34 forming a ‘spine’ through them all.

3.125 The assistant commissioners visited the area and observed the light-controlled single-track bridge that forms the only crossing from Wallingford across the River Thames to Henley. They considered this more of a barrier than a link. They also inspected the proximity and links that the rural wards of Marcham, Drayton, Wheatley, Garsington & Horspath, and Sandford & the Wittenhams had with both Abingdon and Oxford. Marcham and Drayton wards are very close to Abingdon, but the other three are more distant, with poor road links, and appear more similar in nature to wards further east, in the proposed Henley and Thames constituency.

3.126 The assistant commissioners also visited the City of Oxford wards of Jericho and Osney, North, and St. Margaret’s, to compare them to the Summertown and Wolvercote wards. Mr Fear points out that St. Margaret’s is part of the area of Summertown and therefore fits naturally with the Oxford ward of that name. The assistant commissioners, from their visit, concur with this view, as well as the views expressed by the Labour Party and the Green Party (BCE-36874) that including Jericho and Osney ward in the easternmost of the two City of Oxford constituencies would be a better fit. The Labour Party saw it as uniting the centre of the city, better recognising local ties in both Oxford constituencies, and the Green Party observed that ‘... this is consistent with travel patterns, and the cultural differences between north Oxford and the rest’. The assistant commissioners observed that Jericho and Osney is of a very similar nature to the central Oxford wards, but that to travel from the centre of Oxford to St. Margaret’s ward you must first pass through North ward.

3.127 Accordingly the assistant commissioners recommended the adoption of Aaron Fear’s counterproposals for two revised Oxford constituencies. As one will now contain all but three of Oxford City wards and 87% of its electors, we agree with the assistant commissioners’ recommendations that this constituency be renamed ‘Oxford’, and that the second constituency – containing Abingdon, the

remaining three city wards (including St. Margaret's), and wards to the north of Oxford – be renamed 'Abingdon and Oxford North'.

3.129 The assistant commissioners believed that the rural nature of the wards of Wheatley, Garsington & Horspath, and Sandford & the Wittenhams mitigated against transferring them to the much more urban Oxford East (as per the Liberal Democrat Party's counter-proposal), or – particularly with poor road links to Abingdon – to Oxford West and Abingdon (as per our initial proposal).

8. The appendix to this report sets out details of the revised proposals for the proposed constituencies of Abingdon and Oxford North and Wantage and the district/city wards proposed to be included in each.
17. Officers recommend the committee restates the response made at its meeting in October 2016 to request the BCE considers ensuring the proposals reflect the changes to district ward boundaries.

### **Financial Implications**

18. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

19. There are no legal implications arising from the consultation.

### **Risks**

20. There are no discernable risks associated with the decision whether to submit any views during this consultation stage.

### **Conclusion**

21. The BCE has published its revised proposals for parliamentary constituencies. The committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to make representations on the revised proposals.

### **Background Papers**

'Review of parliamentary constituencies' report to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 17 October 2016

BCE Guide to the 2018 Review, available at

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

BCE Initial Proposals for the South East, available at [www.bce2018.org.uk/](http://www.bce2018.org.uk/)

**2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies  
Revised Proposals of the Boundary Commission for England**

| <b>Abingdon and Oxford North</b> |                                  |                     | <b>72,654</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
|                                  | Kidlington North                 | Cherwell            | 3,973         |
|                                  | Kidlington South                 | Cherwell            | 6,112         |
|                                  | Kirtlington (currently Henley)   | Cherwell            | 2,346         |
|                                  | Yarnton, Gosford and Water Eaton | Cherwell            | 4,047         |
|                                  | St Margaret's                    | Oxford              | 2,965         |
|                                  | Summertown                       | Oxford              | 4,197         |
|                                  | Wolvercote                       | Oxford              | 4,281         |
|                                  | Abingdon Abbey Northcourt        | Vale of White Horse | 4,333         |
|                                  | Abingdon Caldecott               | Vale of White Horse | 5,083         |
|                                  | Abingdon Dunmore                 | Vale of White Horse | 4,545         |
|                                  | Abingdon Fitzharris              | Vale of White Horse | 4,616         |
|                                  | Abingdon Peachcroft              | Vale of White Horse | 5,178         |
|                                  | Botley & Sunningwell             | Vale of White Horse | 4,240         |
|                                  | Cumnor                           | Vale of White Horse | 4,645         |
|                                  | Drayton (currently in Wantage)   | Vale of White Horse | 2,274         |
|                                  | Kennington & Radley              | Vale of White Horse | 5,081         |
|                                  | Marcham (currently in Wantage)   | Vale of White Horse | 2,158         |
|                                  | Wootton                          | Vale of White Horse | 2,580         |
| <b>Wantage</b>                   |                                  |                     | <b>76,505</b> |
|                                  | Cholsey                          | South Oxfordshire   | 6,597         |
|                                  | Didcot North East                | South Oxfordshire   | 6,805         |
|                                  | Didcot South                     | South Oxfordshire   | 7,104         |
|                                  | Didcot West                      | South Oxfordshire   | 4,663         |
|                                  | Wallingford                      | South Oxfordshire   | 5,625         |
|                                  | Blewbury & Harwell               | Vale of White Horse | 4,583         |
|                                  | Faringdon                        | Vale of White Horse | 5,362         |
|                                  | Grove North                      | Vale of White Horse | 3,998         |
|                                  | Hendreds                         | Vale of White Horse | 2,151         |
|                                  | Kingston Bagpuize                | Vale of White Horse | 2,555         |
|                                  | Ridgeway                         | Vale of White Horse | 2,355         |
|                                  | Stanford                         | Vale of White Horse | 2,654         |
|                                  | Steventon & the Hanneys          | Vale of White Horse | 2,444         |

|  |                         |                     |       |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|-------|
|  | Sutton Courtenay        | Vale of White Horse | 2,086 |
|  | Thames                  | Vale of White Horse | 2,534 |
|  | Wantage & Grove Brook   | Vale of White Horse | 5,138 |
|  | Wantage Charlton        | Vale of White Horse | 4,764 |
|  | Watchfield & Shrivenham | Vale of White Horse | 5,087 |