



# REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN HAMPSHIRE AND SOUTHAMPTON

Issued: 1 May 2002

## Statement to be introduced formally by the Assistant Commissioner on behalf of the Boundary Commission at the opening of the local inquiry

### Introduction

1. In making their provisional recommendations for parliamentary constituencies, the Boundary Commission are under a statutory duty to apply the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended).
2. Basically the Rules for Redistribution of Seats provide that:-
  - a) constituencies should not normally cross county boundaries - although the county boundaries may be crossed if the Commission consider that this is desirable in order to avoid excessive disparities in the electorates; and
  - b) the electorate of a constituency should be as near the electoral quota as practicable. The electoral quota is found by dividing the total parliamentary electorate of England on the electoral register on 17 February 2000 by the number of constituencies. The electoral quota is 69,934.
3. The Commission may depart from the strict application of both of these requirements, if they consider that special geographical considerations including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency make a departure desirable. The Commission are not, however, under a duty to aim to give full effect to the above requirements, but they are obliged to take account, so far as they reasonably can, of inconveniences attendant on altering constituencies (other than those required to reflect county boundaries) and of any local ties which would be broken.
4. Where possible, the Commission try to take account of district boundaries, but this is often not possible. Where districts are divided between parliamentary constituencies, the Commission consider that the constituency boundaries should follow the lines of ward boundaries in order to avoid confusing local electors, as well as for the convenience of local political party organisations and electoral registration and returning officers.
5. The Commission wish to stress that these provisional recommendations relate solely to parliamentary constituencies and do not affect the structure or arrangements of local government (County, District, Town or Parish councils) or the services they provide.
6. The Commission are an independent and totally impartial body. They wish to emphasise very strongly that the results of previous elections do not, and should not, enter their considerations

when they are deciding their proposals. Nor do they consider the effects of their recommendations on future voting patterns. It follows that such considerations must not be argued at this inquiry.

7. The Commission are not required to enter into consultations with local authorities, political parties or other groups before deciding upon their proposals and indeed consider that those decisions can best be arrived at without regard to conflicting suggestions made to them beforehand. They are therefore in a position to act wholly impartially.

8. The Commission are statutorily required to publish their proposals stating that representations may be made within a period of one month from the date of publication. The proposals for the county of Hampshire and the unitary authority of Southampton were published in local newspapers on 14 February 2002 and copies of the recommendations with an illustrative map were placed on deposit for public inspection at council offices and libraries in the areas.

9. The Commission are required to take into consideration those representations made about their provisional recommendations and to hold a local inquiry if any objection is received from an interested local authority or from a body of 100 or more electors. The Commission may also hold a local inquiry, if they think fit, in respect of any constituency or constituencies.

10. Such objections have been received by the Commission about their proposals, and this local inquiry has been arranged accordingly. Any interested person may attend the inquiry and, if they wish, take part by making an oral submission, whether or not they have previously submitted a written representation to the Commission. Those who intend to speak at the inquiry from a prepared written note are asked to assist the inquiry by providing a minimum of four photocopies of their text.

#### Provisional recommendations

11. Hampshire and Southampton has a combined 2000 electorate of 1,108,878. This number, when divided by the electoral quota (69,934), produces a theoretical entitlement to 15.86 seats. The combined area of Hampshire and Southampton has an existing allocation of fifteen seats. The Commission have, therefore, decided to allocate an extra, sixteenth, seat to the combined area.

12. With sixteen seats the average constituency electorate of the combined area is 69,305. The electorates of the fifteen existing constituencies in the area range from 82,083 in the Winchester seat to 66,881 in the New Forest East seat, producing a disparity of 15,202 which the Commission's provisional recommendations will reduce to 8,725.

13. The only changes to local authority boundaries in Hampshire and Southampton since the last general review have been to district ward boundaries following the Periodical Electoral Reviews by the Local Government Commission. Eleven of the new wards, in six of the eleven districts in Hampshire, and four of the new wards in Southampton, are partly in one of the existing constituencies and partly in another. The Commission do not divide district wards between constituencies.

14. The allocation of an additional seat, the need to reduce the electorates of some of the existing constituencies and the realignment of constituency boundaries where wards are divided between seats meant that major changes were necessary to some of the existing seats. However,

the Commission have tried to keep these changes to a minimum and have endeavoured to follow existing constituency and district boundaries as much as possible when forming new constituencies. The changes proposed would ensure that where high seat electorates currently exist, these will be reduced to a level nearer to the electoral quota.

15. Due to the varying size of the electorates of the eleven districts in Hampshire and the City of Southampton, and the fact that there will be four more seats in the area than there are districts, constituency boundaries will, to some extent, not follow district boundaries.

16. The Commission propose no change to the seats of Fareham and Gosport. Both existing seats have electorates that are close to the electoral quota, being respectively only 1,489 above and 226 below the quota.

#### **Aldershot Borough Constituency**

17. This seat would be comprised of the Borough of Rushmoor, and two wards of the District of Hart, including the whole of the divided ward of Blackwater and Hawley. It would have a 2000 electorate of 66,499.

#### **Basingstoke Borough Constituency**

18. This seat would be comprised of sixteen wards of the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane, including the whole of the divided wards of Hatch Warren and Beggardwood, Popley West, and Rooksdown. It would have a 2000 electorate of 69,987.

#### **East Hampshire County Constituency**

19. This seat would be comprised of thirty-one wards of the District of East Hampshire, including the whole of the divided ward of Holybourne and Froyle. It would have a 2000 electorate of 67,452.

#### **Eastleigh Borough Constituency**

20. This seat would be comprised of sixteen wards of the Borough of Eastleigh, including the whole of the divided ward of Chandler's Ford West. It would have a 2000 electorate of 74,063.

#### **Fareham County Constituency**

21. This seat would be comprised of thirteen wards of the Borough of Fareham. It would have a 2000 electorate of 71,423.

#### **Gosport Borough Constituency**

22. This seat would be comprised of the Borough of Gosport and two wards of the Borough of Fareham. It would have a 2000 electorate of 69,708.

### **Havant Borough Constituency**

23. This seat would be comprised of eleven wards of the Borough of Havant. It would have a 2000 electorate of 70,138.

### **Meon Valley County Constituency**

24. This seat would be comprised of seven wards of the District of East Hampshire, three wards of the Borough of Havant, including the whole of the divided ward of Waterloo, and eleven wards of the City of Winchester. It would have a 2000 electorate of 65,952.

### **New Forest East County Constituency**

25. This seat would be comprised of sixteen wards of the District of New Forest. It would have a 2000 electorate of 65,338.

### **New Forest West County Constituency**

26. This seat would be comprised of eighteen wards of the District of New Forest, including the whole of the divided ward of Boldre and Sway. It would have a 2000 electorate of 69,577.

### **North East Hampshire County Constituency**

27. This seat would be comprised of four wards of the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane, including the whole of the divided ward of Sherborne St John, and sixteen wards of the District of Hart, including the whole of the divided wards of Fleet North and Hartley Wintney. It would have a 2000 electorate of 67,417.

### **North West Hampshire County Constituency**

28. This seat would be comprised of ten wards of the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane and ten wards of the Borough of Test Valley. It would have a 2000 electorate of 73,840.

### **Romsey County Constituency**

29. This seat would be comprised of two wards of the City of Southampton, including the divided wards of Bassett and Swaythling, and fourteen wards of the Borough of Test Valley. It would have a 2000 electorate of 65,461.

### **Southampton, Itchen Borough Constituency**

30. This seat would be comprised of seven wards of the City of Southampton. It would have a 2000 electorate of 71,142.

### **Southampton, Test Borough Constituency**

31. This seat would be comprised of seven wards of the City of Southampton, including the whole of the divided wards of Bevois, and Freemantle. It would have a 2000 electorate of 72,018.

### **Winchester County Constituency**

32. This seat would be comprised of three wards of the Borough of Eastleigh and fifteen wards of the City of Winchester. It would have a 2000 electorate of 68,863.

### Reasons

33. The Commission have proposed this distribution of seats in Hampshire and Southampton for the following reasons:-

- a) to allow for the introduction of an extra seat in the area whilst reducing the disparity in electorates from 15,202 to 8,725; and
- b) to realign constituency boundaries with new local government ward boundaries so that no ward is divided between constituencies.

### Representations

34. The Commission have received 203 written representations, the majority of which object to their provisional recommendations. The main issues which have given rise to objections are:-

- a) the composition of the Aldershot seat – relating to the three Yateley wards of Yateley East (no.16), Yateley North (no.17) and Yateley West (no.18) and the two wards of Blackwater and Hawley (no.1) and Frogmore and Darby Green (no.11), as well as the designation of the Aldershot seat;
- b) the composition of the Basingstoke, North East Hampshire and North West Hampshire seats around Basingstoke – relating to the Basingstoke and Deane Borough wards of Basing (no.1), Oakley and North Waltham (no.18), Pamber (no.20), Sherborne St John (no.24) and Upton Grey and The Candovers (no.28), as well as the designation of the Basingstoke seat;
- c) the composition of the East Hampshire seat – relating to the East Hampshire District ward of East Meon (no.11) and the Basingstoke and Deane Borough ward of Upton Grey and The Candovers (no.28);
- d) the composition of the Meon Valley seat – relating to the East Hampshire District ward of East Meon (no.11) and the City of Winchester ward of Cheriton and Bishops Sutton (no.3);
- e) the composition of the Eastleigh and Winchester seats – relating to the three Eastleigh Borough wards of Bishopstoke East (no.1), Bishopstoke West (no.2), and Fair Oak and Horton Heath (no.10) and the four Eastleigh Borough wards of

Chandler's Ford East (no.5), Chandler's Ford West (no.6), Hiltingbury East (no.15) and Hiltingbury West (no.16);

- f) the inclusion of the Southampton City wards of Bassett (no.2) and Swaythling (no.15) in the Romsey seat;
- g) the name of the Romsey seat; and
- h) whether the New Forest ward of Boldre and Sway (no.5) should be in the New Forest East or the New Forest West seat.

35. The issues listed at a) – h) above will be discussed at the inquiry. However, they are not necessarily the only issues that will be raised and those who are content with the provisional recommendations of the Commission (in full or in part) or with any of the counter-proposals submitted, should take the opportunity to attend the inquiry and make their views known. **It should be noted that the Commission rarely arrange a further inquiry.**

36. For example, were it to be counter-proposed at the inquiry that a change should be introduced to a boundary which has not been proposed by the Commission, nor by any of the counter-proposals published before the inquiry commenced, it is nevertheless possible that the Commission would recommend such changes. If electors do not attend this inquiry, and find that they are in an area covered by such a change, they would have lost the opportunity to state their case on the change.

37. The Commission issued proposals for Hampshire and Southampton at the same time as proposals for Portsmouth were issued. However, they have decided to hold a separate inquiry for seats in Portsmouth (opening on 17 June). It therefore follows, that no representations or submissions concerning seats in Portsmouth will be considered at this inquiry which is being held specifically into the proposals for seats in Hampshire and Southampton.

38. Further copies of this statement will be made available at the inquiry which will commence at 10.30am on Tuesday 18 June in the Walton Room, The Guildhall, Winchester, before the Assistant Commissioner, Mr Roger Ellis QC.

39. Should you have any queries relating to the Commission's proposals for Hampshire and Southampton or the procedures for the local inquiry, please contact the Commission at the address shown at the foot of page 1.