

Constitutional and Nomination Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2011

Present:

Councillor Curley – In the Chair

Councillors, J Battle, Burns, Leese, Hassan, Ramsbottom, Tavernor, Watson and Wheale

CN/11/13 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2011.

CN/11/14 Boundary Commission for England's review of parliamentary boundaries

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted regarding the Boundary Commission for England's (BCE) review of parliamentary boundaries. The BCE is conducting its sixth general review of parliamentary constituencies in England following the enactment of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act. The Act now provides that the number of constituencies in the United Kingdom shall be 600. This is a reduction of 50 from the current number of 650. The Act also provides that the number of constituencies in each of the four nations of the UK should be allocated to each nation in proportion to their registered electorate in December 2010. That gives:

Nation	Electorate	Current Allocation	New Allocation	Reduction
England	38,332,557*	533	500(+2)	31
North Ireland	1,190,635	18	16	2
Scotland	3,873,387**	59	50(+2)	7
Wales	2,281,596	40	30	10

* excluding the electorate of the two Isle of Wight constituencies (110,924).

** excluding the electorate of Orkney and Shetland (33,755) and the Western Isles (21,837) constituencies.

In all but the two Isle of Wight constituencies, Orkney and Shetland, and the Western Isles, the electorate of any constituency must be no less than 72,810 and no more than 80,473.

The report explained how the constraints had been applied to constituencies across the North West and in Greater Manchester. In applying these constraints, the effect of the BCE proposals on the existing constituencies in Manchester results in nine Manchester wards changing to a different constituency, affecting 27% of the electorate in Manchester. The proposed changes are:

Blackley And Broughton gains Moston and Miles Platting & Newton Heath from Manchester Central and loses Charlestown to Middleton. The Salford wards of Broughton and Kersal remain in the seat.

Manchester Central loses Moston and Miles Platting & Newton Heath to Blackley and Broughton and Ardwick and Moss Side to Manchester Gorton, but gains 4 Salford wards from Salford and Eccles – Irwell Riverside, Langworthy, Ordsall, and Weaste & Seedley

Manchester Gorton gains Ardwick and Moss Side from Manchester Central and loses Fallowfield and Whalley Range to Manchester Withington

Manchester Withington gains Fallowfield and Whalley Range from Manchester Gorton, and loses Didsbury East and Didsbury West to Wythenshawe

Wythenshawe gains Didsbury East and Didsbury West, and loses the Trafford Wards of Brooklands and Priory to Altrincham and Sale (Sale Moor remains in the Wythenshawe seat)

Middleton contains 6 Rochdale wards currently in Heywood and Middleton, and 2 Oldham wards currently in Oldham West and Royton, as well as Charlestown ward.

The report explained that at present the electorate number falls within the necessary range in three of the five existing Manchester constituencies. In the two that are outside the range, Manchester Central is above and Blackley & Broughton is below. However, if the Moston ward is moved from Manchester Central to Blackley & Broughton then these two will also come within the required range. It would also restore Moston's local ties with North Manchester.

The report explained the BCE's consultation arrangements for the proposals and the Council's opportunity to respond to the proposed changes. The Committee agreed that the minimum change option was preferred over the BCE proposals which break many local ties. However, it noted that the BCE has asked that when putting forward alternative proposals respondents should address the consequential effects on other constituencies. In putting forward the minimum change alternative there will be a need to consider the consequential effects on other constituencies in Greater Manchester and possibly the North West so as not to prejudice the achievement of the statutory criteria in those other areas. The Committee felt that the Chief Executive should address these consequential effects for inclusion in the response to the BCE.

Decision

To recommend that the Council:

1. respond to the Boundary Commission for England proposing that the only change to Manchester constituencies be the transfer of Moston Ward from Manchester Central to Blackley & Broughton, so as to bring the electorate of those two constituencies within the necessary range;

2. authorise the Chief Executive to address the consequential effects on other constituencies arising from this counter proposal, so as to demonstrate that the achievement of the statutory criteria would not be prejudiced in other areas; and
3. authorise the Chief Executive to then respond to the BCE by 5 December 2011.