

## MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/2017 REPORT NO. 125

### MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Council  
9 November 2016

### REPORT OF:

Chief Executive on behalf of the  
Electoral Review Panel

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Agenda – Part: 1

Item: 11

### Subject:

Boundary Commission for England 2018  
review of Parliamentary constituency  
boundaries – Council response

Wards: All 21 Wards

Cabinet Member consulted: N/A

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Boundary Commission for England published its initial proposals for the review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on 13 September 2016.
- 1.2. The Electoral Review Panel considered the effect of the initial proposals on Enfield at its meeting on 12 October 2016 and agreed that Council be recommended to make representations to the Boundary Commission setting out the Borough's general objections to the initial proposals.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. That Council considers whether the representations set out at paragraph 3.8.1 should be submitted to the Boundary Commission for England

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 12 October 2016, the Electoral Review Panel was advised that the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, which was passed in February 2011, required the Boundary Commission for England to conduct a review of parliamentary boundaries in England and to make recommendations to Government by September 2018.
- 3.2 It was further noted that the Commission had published its initial proposals on 13 September 2016 which, if enacted, would have the effect of Enfield being served by 5 Members of Parliament in the Chipping Barnet and Mill Hill, Enfield, Edmonton, Finchley & Southgate and Hornsey and Wood Green constituencies rather than the current 3 in Edmonton, Enfield North and Enfield Southgate.
- 3.3 The Panel debated at length the impact the proposals would have on the Borough and considered what representations Council might be invited to

make to the Commission. The Panel noted that whilst the Commission's primary consideration would be focussed on achieving the statutory electoral range required they would also, as part of representations submitted, be able to take into account:

- Special geographical considerations, including the shape, size and accessibility of the constituency;
- Local government boundaries (as in place on 7 May 2015);
- Boundaries of existing constituencies; and
- Any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies

3.4 The Panel noted that factors which the Commission would not be able to take into account as part of any representations made were:

- Impact on future election results;
- New local government boundaries; and
- Changes to the electorate after the initial review date (1<sup>st</sup> December 2015)

3.5 Having noted the areas on which any response would need to be focussed concerns were raised in relation to the proposals as they affected all three of the exiting Parliamentary constituencies within the borough with a specific focus on those wards within the current Enfield Southgate constituency. These related to the local history of the area and tenuous nature of local community, cultural and transport links between those wards currently falling within the London Borough of Enfield and those within the wards from Barnet and Haringey that would form the proposed new constituencies of, Chipping Barnet and Mill Hill, Finchley and Southgate and Hornsey and Wood Green.

3.6 The Panel unanimously agreed that the initial proposals were not therefore in the best interests of Enfield but reluctantly accepted that the task of coming up with alternative proposals to present to the Commission would be an extremely difficult task taking into account:

- the parameters set by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011; and
- the potential that any alternative schemes might then not be in the interests of all affected parties, and would also have a knock-on effect on neighbouring boroughs and across the North Thames Region as a whole.

3.7 The Panel resolved that a recommendation be presented to Council at its meeting on 9 November 2016 proposing that representations be made to the Boundary Commission for England setting out the Borough's general objections to the initial proposals.

3.8 Council is therefore being asked to consider whether the following representations should be made to the Boundary Commission:

3.8.1 "The London Borough of Enfield notes the initial proposals made by the Boundary Commission for England for the review of parliamentary constituency boundaries, which were published on 13 September 2016.

The Council further notes that the Commission must conduct the review in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, which requires that each constituency must contain between 71,031 and 78,507 parliamentary electors.

However, the Council and representatives of both political parties agree that the initial proposals, as they impact on all three of the existing constituencies within the borough, are not in the best interests of the people of Enfield and its surrounding area, and should therefore be re-considered.

In making this statement, the Council does not consider it is able to offer specific alternative proposals. It does not have the specialist resources available to undertake such complex re-calculations, which the Commission does, and even if it did, the necessary political independence of the review might be compromised.

Notwithstanding these points, the Council urges the Boundary Commission to re-consider its initial proposals as they currently impact on the wards specifically within the existing Enfield Southgate constituency for the following reasons:

- We do not believe that sufficient consideration has been given to the social and cultural differences between the communities based in the three wards currently located within the Enfield Southgate constituency (Southgate, Southgate Green and Winchmore Hill) that it is proposed to combine with the five wards from Barnet to form the new Finchley and Southgate constituency. There is a lack of any natural community connection or social cohesiveness across this new constituency.
- The tenuous nature of public transport links and accessibility across the proposed Finchley and Southgate constituency. Currently wards within the Enfield Southgate constituency are linked via strong transport connections in terms of both the London Underground Piccadilly line and Transport for London (TfL) rail services, which reinforce the strong existing residential, commercial and social ties across the constituency. Existing public transport links across the proposed new constituency lack any natural synergy and reinforce the artificial nature of the constituency created.
- The lack of any shared identity between Southgate and Finchley and confusion likely to be caused for residents and local councillors in terms how they relate to their local M.P. The main community, commercial and residential links between residents living in wards within the current Enfield Southgate constituency remain focussed within the London

Borough of Enfield rather than within Barnet or Haringey (in the case of the proposal affecting Bowes wards). The proposals also have the potential to disenfranchise local residents in the wards affected. This is felt to be especially relevant in terms of both Cockfosters and Bowes wards, as geographically these areas will form the minority interest within the new constituency boundaries for the M.P.s. As a result it is felt neither the proposed Chipping Barnet and Mill Hill or Hornsey and Wood Green constituencies will be seen as constituencies primarily serving the constituents of Enfield.

- The Borough regrets that the historical tie of Southgate to Enfield will be irreparably severed, creating significant administrative issues for the Borough Council. Under the current proposals there will now be five rather than the current three M.P.s with a constituency interest in the London Borough of Enfield. Taken alongside the increasing level of population growth being experienced within Enfield and across Outer London as a whole it is not felt that the proposals sufficiently respect the existing local government boundaries or that the best interests of the borough will be served by representation being split across five rather than the three constituencies as they currently exist which have a majority interest in the London Borough of Enfield.
- In addition, the Council is concerned about the proposed relocation of the Palmers Green ward into the new Edmonton constituency. The argument is made in the report that “We believe that this reconfiguration provides for improved road connections within the constituency, particularly with the Bush Hill Park ward that lies to the west of the A10.” The borough feels that this justification fails to recognise the significant historical, social and community links between Palmers Green and Southgate, which can be demonstrated by the fact that the former Southgate Town Hall site is located within this ward. The proposed change also fails to take account of the lack of a natural connection between Palmers Green and Edmonton, especially when taking account of the A10 as a major geographical division and fact that some of the wider area commonly referred to as Palmers Green extends beyond the ward of that name meaning the area as a whole would be divided between constituencies.

The London Borough of Enfield therefore urges the Boundary Commission for England to re-consider its initial proposals in light of the statements made above in order to better reflect the needs of the local area and which will result in three Enfield-focussed constituencies.”

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Council is not obliged to make representations to the Boundary Commission but the Commission has published its initial proposals for consultation by all interested parties.

## **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To determine whether Council should be recommended to make representations to the BCE.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications other than Officer time in the preparation of supporting information.

### **6.2 Legal Implications**

The Boundary Commission must undertake its review of parliamentary constituency boundaries in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, including taking into account representations made by interested parties. Schedule 2 requires the Boundary Commission to take into account when drawing up proposal for new constituencies “any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies”.

## **7. KEY RISKS**

The re-designation of parliamentary constituency boundaries will have an effect on the relationship of MPs with the Council. At present, 3 MPs have a direct interest in the Borough; the Commission’s initial proposals will increase this representation to 5, 3 of whom will also have an interest in neighbouring local authority areas.

## **8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Fairness for All**

To ensure fairness for all, appropriate democratic representation is required at all levels.

### **8.2 Growth and Sustainability**

To generate growth and sustainability, appropriate democratic representation at all levels is required.

### **8.3 Strong Communities**

The development and maintenance of strong communities is enhanced by effective democratic representation at all levels.

**9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The designation of effective and appropriate parliamentary constituency boundaries assists the local authority in continuing to deliver high quality services across the borough.

**10. EQUALITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken at this stage in relation to the BCE consultation proposals.

**11. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

The development and monitoring of public health is enhanced by effective democratic representation at all levels.

**Background papers:**

Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for the review of parliamentary constituency boundaries published on 13 September 2016