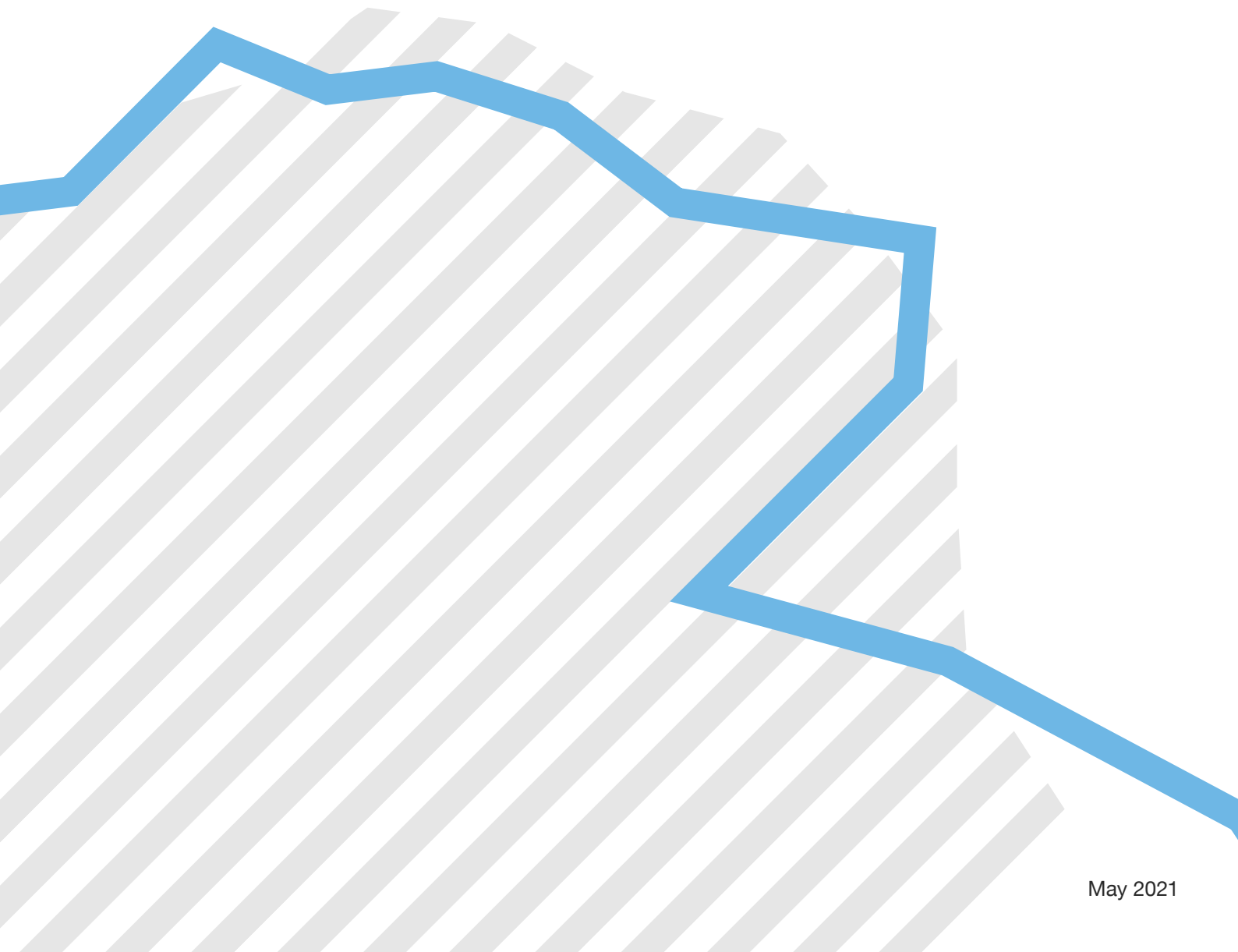


Guide to the 2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies



Contents

Introduction	2
Who we are and what we do	2
Purpose of the Guide	3
Contact details	4
UK electoral boundaries the BCE is <i>not</i> responsible for	4
Preparing for the review	5
The base data for the 2023 Review	5
The distribution of constituencies	5
Establishing policy and procedure	6
Developing proposals – requirements and policy	8
Statutory electorate range	8
Other statutory factors	8
Interplay of the considerations	10
Factors the BCE will not consider	11
Naming and designating constituencies	12
Developing proposals – process	14
Publication of initial proposals	14
Initial consultation period	15
Secondary consultation period	16
Development of revised proposals	18
The importance of participation	18
Final recommendations and report	19
After the final report	20
Conclusion	21
Appendices	22
A: Who we are	22
B: Contact details for other Commissions	24
C: English regions	25
D: Rules for redistribution of seats (Schedule 2 to the Act)	26
E: Glossary and abbreviations	31

Introduction

Who we are and what we do

- 1 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body, which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The members of the BCE and other key positions are described at Appendix A.
- 2 The BCE has the task of periodically reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England. It is currently conducting a review on the basis of rules most recently updated by Parliament in 2020. These latest rules retain 650 constituencies for the UK Parliament as a whole, and require constituencies that we propose or recommend to comply with strict parameters, in particular as far as the number of electors in each constituency is concerned.
- 3 The review process is heavily informed by public consultation. The BCE develops and publishes initial proposals for constituencies across England. Representations from the public about these proposals are then taken in writing and at public hearings in each region of England across two rounds of consultation. In light of all the views expressed about these initial proposals, the BCE may revise them and then conduct a further round of written consultation on the revised proposals.
- 4 The BCE is required to make a formal final report to the Speaker of the House of Commons before 1 July 2023, recommending any changes that it believes are appropriate to the distribution, size, shape, name or designation of constituencies in England. The current constituencies review is therefore referred to throughout this booklet as ‘the 2023 Review’.
- 5 The Government must turn the recommendations of the BCE (and those of the equivalent Commissions for the other three parts of the UK) into an ‘Order in Council’ that implements the recommendations. The constituencies set out in the Order will then be implemented for the next General Election after the date on which the legislation is approved.

Purpose of the Guide

- 6 The BCE has produced this Guide to help to explain how the process for the 2023 Review will work. The Guide covers both what the law says the BCE must do as part of the process, and the particular approach the BCE proposes to take on matters of policy within its own discretion.
- 7 This Guide therefore sets out a detailed and technical statement of: the statutory framework; the review process; and the BCE's policies in developing proposals and final recommendations.
- 8 The BCE hopes that, by clarifying the process and policy in this way, the Guide will both encourage those who may be thinking of making their views known and help to ensure that those who do make their views known can do so in the most well-informed and effective manner. The Guide therefore aims:
 - to **clearly explain how and when the public may contribute their views**, so as to most effectively inform the development of the BCE's final recommendations; and
 - to explain the significant changes that were most recently made to the law governing Parliamentary constituency reviews by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 ('the 2020 Act') and the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). **Both the 2020 Act and 2011 Act have a major impact on the way a review operates. Furthermore, as neither of the constituency reviews conducted since the 2011 Act resulted in new constituencies being implemented, the 2023 Review is likely to result in a significant degree of change to a large number of existing constituencies, if for no other reason than the need to adjust for 20 years of change to the distribution of electors since the data on which the existing constituencies are based was established.**
- 9 However, the Guide is not intended to be a full statement of the law about the review and redistribution of Parliamentary constituencies. For a definitive statement of that law, please refer to the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, the 2011 Act and the 2020 Act) available at www.legislation.gov.uk. The 1986 Act (as amended) is referred to throughout the remainder of this Guide simply as 'the Act'.

Contact details

- 10 Any queries about the content of this Guide, or on any other aspect of the work of the BCE, can be raised using these contact details:

Boundary Commission for England
35 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BQ

Telephone: 020 7276 1102

Email: information@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk

Web: boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk

- 11 All material published by the BCE and other information about the 2023 Review may be found on its website.

UK electoral boundaries the BCE is *not* responsible for

- 12 There are separate Boundary Commissions for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which are responsible for the review of Parliamentary constituencies in their respective parts of the United Kingdom.
- 13 The BCE has no responsibility for the review of local government electoral boundaries or structural reviews of local government. In England, such reviews are the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, while similar bodies conduct local government reviews in the other parts of the UK.
- 14 Contact details for all these bodies are to be found in Appendix B.

Preparing for the review

The base data for the 2023 Review

- 15 The Act provides that the electorate figures that are to be used for this review are the Parliamentary electors as they were in the electoral register on 2 March 2020. The BCE has published all the base electorate data for the 2023 Review on its website.
- 16 The Act says that the BCE may have regard to ‘local government boundaries’ in developing its proposals. The Act defines such boundaries in England as the boundaries of: counties and their electoral divisions; districts and their wards; London boroughs and their wards; and the City of London. The 2020 Act has now introduced the concept of ‘prospective’ boundaries: this means that the local boundaries we may have regard to are – where applicable – not those actually in place on the operative date of 1 December 2020, but future ward/electoral division boundaries that have been made by Order by that date, but not yet implemented on the ground. The maps published alongside the BCE’s proposals (in hard copy and on the BCE website) will show the relevant local government boundaries.

The distribution of constituencies

- 17 The Act requires there to be a fixed number of 650 constituencies for the whole of the UK. Having stated that no single constituency may be split between different parts of the UK, the Act ‘protects’ five specified island constituencies (two on the Isle of Wight for England, two for Scotland, and one for Wales), then provides a mathematical formula to determine how many constituencies each of the four parts of the UK should be allocated from the remaining 645, based on the electorate figures as at 2 March 2020. **The number of constituencies allocated to England for the 2023 Review is 543** (including the two for the Isle of Wight).
- 18 The BCE has subsequently distributed the 541 constituencies (i.e. the total English allocation less the two reserved for the Isle of Wight) between the nine ‘English regions’ defined in the Act. In order to do so, the BCE used the same mathematical formula (commonly known as the Sainte-Laguë method) as that provided in the Act for the initial allocation between the four parts of the UK.

19 This results in the following allocation of constituencies between the regions:

	Existing constituencies	Proposed constituencies
Eastern	58	61
East Midlands	46	47
London	73	75
North East	29	27
North West	75	73
South East	84	91*
South West	55	58
West Midlands	59	57
Yorkshire and the Humber	54	54

* Includes the two constituencies for the Isle of Wight

20 In developing its proposals, the BCE allocates the specified number of constituencies within the relevant region and aims to produce initial proposals in which each constituency is wholly contained within a single region. This approach does not prevent anyone from putting forward counterproposals that include one or more constituencies being split between regions, but it is likely that very compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade the BCE to depart from the region-based approach it adopts in formulating its initial proposals. A description of the extent of each region appears at Appendix C, and maps can be obtained from Ordnance Survey (or viewed on the BCE website once proposals are published).

Establishing policy and procedure

21 In considering the procedures for a review, the BCE consults those Parliamentary political parties with constituencies in England on broad issues of policy ahead of the review, in line with its usual practice. Minutes of the 26 November 2020 meeting conducted with the representatives of these parties are published on the BCE's website.

- 22 In formulating its initial proposals for particular areas, the BCE exercises its own judgement and does not consult the Parliamentary political parties, local authorities or any other interested groups or people. The BCE considers that it should take the initiative in preparing its proposals from all the information available to it. The proposals are therefore formed by the BCE from a position of independence and impartiality and are not influenced by any particular viewpoint or opinion. Once the proposals are published, the statutory procedures allow for a public consultation during which political parties and others can then make their views on proposed boundaries known to the BCE.

Developing proposals – requirements and policy

Statutory electorate range

- 23 The Act sets out a number of Rules in Schedule 2 which are relevant to the detailed development of proposals for individual constituencies. Foremost among these is Rule 2, which provides that – apart from five specified exceptions – every constituency we recommend must have an electorate (as at 2 March 2020) that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the ‘UK electoral quota’. **The UK electoral quota for the 2023 Review is, to the nearest whole number, 73,393.**
- 24 Accordingly, every recommended constituency (except the five ‘protected’ constituencies) must have an electorate as at 2 March 2020 that is **no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.**
- 25 The specified exceptions to this in England are the two constituencies for the Isle of Wight. However, in all other aspects of the 2023 Review, the Isle of Wight is treated in the same way as other parts of England.

Other statutory factors

- 26 Rule 5 in Schedule 2 provides for a number of other factors that the BCE may take into account in establishing a new map of constituencies for the 2023 Review, specifically:
- special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - local government boundaries as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1 December 2020 (see paragraph 16 above);
 - boundaries of existing constituencies;
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies; and
 - the inconveniences attendant on such changes.

Special geographical considerations

- 27 The BCE considers that special geographical considerations that may have an impact on the ability to form a constituency with an electorate within the statutory electorate range will primarily relate to physical geography such as mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, estuaries, islands, and major roads, 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’.

Local government boundaries and local ties

- 28 The BCE may take into account local government boundaries. These include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal – ward or electoral division – boundaries.

- 29 While the BCE proposes to identify constituencies by reference to local authority external boundaries as far as practicable, it is nevertheless often necessary to cross these boundaries in order to form constituencies that comply with the statutory electorate range.
- 30 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 document should be taken to include electoral divisions in unitary authorities.
- 31 Wards are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. Any division of a ward between constituencies would therefore risk breaking local ties, as well as adding complexity to both the task of Returning Officers in administering a Parliamentary election in the area, and the ‘grass roots’ co-ordination of political party activism. The BCE’s view is therefore that **wards should continue to be the default building block for constituencies**. However, the BCE recognises that there may be circumstances where the splitting of a ward may be necessary to achieve a scheme of constituencies locally that better meets the ‘Rule 5’ statutory criteria overall (see paragraph 26 above). In limited circumstances, we would therefore consider the splitting of a ward between constituencies. Those circumstances are:
- Where splitting a ward would significantly enhance the ability of the BCE to adhere to existing or prospective local authority boundaries (i.e. avoid constituencies crossing local authorities), maintain existing constituencies unchanged, and/or preserve local ties, without causing consequential significant problems for surrounding constituencies.
 - Where the division of a ward would avoid the alternative of a significant ‘domino effect’ of change to a wide area if wards were to be kept whole. This is likely to be an issue in metropolitan areas, where wards often have large electorates: an example from a previous Review was the BCE’s recommendation to split three wards in the West Midlands metropolitan area, which minimised the need to cross local council boundaries, and prevented an otherwise radical ‘domino effect’ of change across the whole metropolitan area and beyond.
 - Where the division of a ward would avoid otherwise unacceptable outcomes forced by local geographical factors: an example from a previous Review was the BCE’s acceptance of the need to split a rural ward near Tewkesbury to avoid a proposed Forest of Dean constituency otherwise having to take in an urban area of Gloucester.

32 Additionally, where the splitting of wards is proposed, BCE would wish to adhere to the following policies:

- The number of such ward splits should be the smallest number possible, commensurate with achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 31 above.
- The split of a ward should generally be done on the basis of the boundaries of the component polling districts that form part of that ward, as polling districts are an existing recognised unit of electoral administration (but see paragraph 40 below).
- Wherever possible, the splitting of a ward should be done such that the separated parts of the ward will nonetheless remain in constituencies where the returning officer for each of the constituencies is likely to be the same individual (i.e. ward splits should where possible be contained within a single local authority area): this is consistent with our policy in relation to ‘orphan wards’ below.

Boundaries of existing constituencies

33 The BCE intends to have regard generally to existing constituencies as far as possible, as it does not consider that it would be appropriate to start from a ‘blank sheet of paper’. However, this does not mean that an existing constituency should be automatically considered to be ‘protected from change’, simply on the basis of its electorate figure already falling within the statutory range. The changed number of overall constituencies allocated to most English regions, together with the hard limits of the statutory permitted electorate range, means that many constituencies that have an electorate within the statutory range will, nonetheless, need to be altered to create viable constituencies in the surrounding area, and accommodate the new total of constituencies for the region overall.

Interplay of the considerations

34 The policy of the BCE is to take into account all the factors listed in Rule 5 as far as possible, subject to the primacy of the permitted electorate range under Rule 2.

35 The Act does not require the BCE to seek to achieve constituency electorates that are ‘as close as possible to’ the UK electoral quota. Nor does the BCE consider it appropriate to superimpose on the statutory scheme a policy objective of trying to minimise divergence from the UK electoral quota. The desirability of such an aim was specifically raised during the passage of the most recent legislation, and Parliament chose not to add it to the factors to which we may have regard. Not least, such an objective would actually conflict with – and reduce the ability of the BCE to have regard to – the existing factors listed in Rule 5. By way of illustration, the BCE would prefer to identify a constituency that had, say, a 4% variance from the UK electoral quota, but which respected local ties, in preference to an alternative that produced a constituency with only a 1% variance, but which would split communities.

- 36 As far as possible, the BCE seeks to create constituencies:
- from wards that are adjacent to each other; and
 - 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.
- 37 Where it is necessary to have a constituency that crosses a local authority boundary, the BCE will generally seek to avoid having a single 'orphan' ward from a local authority isolated in a constituency. This is to avoid the perception (if not the reality) that the residents of that ward – and the local authority of which it remains a part – may be considered less important than the remainder of the constituency by its MP.

Factors the BCE will not consider

Impact on future election results

- 38 The BCE is a politically independent and impartial body. It emphasises very strongly that existing voting patterns and the prospective fortunes of political parties should not and do not enter its considerations during a review.

New local government boundaries

- 39 As mentioned above, the local government boundaries that the BCE may have regard to for this review are those that existed or – where relevant – were in prospect (due to being made by an as-yet-unimplemented Order) as at 1 December 2020. Consequently, the BCE will not generally take into account new boundaries after this date.
- 40 However, in the limited circumstances where the BCE may be considering the splitting of a ward (as it existed or was in prospect on 1 December 2020) between constituencies in order to meet the statutory electorate range, in considering how to split that ward, the BCE is prepared to take into account, as appropriate, any new ward boundaries introduced after 1 December 2020.

Changes to electorates after the review date

- 41 The BCE is required to work on the basis of the numbers of Parliamentary electors on the electoral registers as at 2 March 2020. It is unable to take account of any under-registration or over-registration of electors that may be claimed in some areas.

- 42 However, the BCE does not take the view that it is obliged to shut its eyes entirely to growth (or decline) that has occurred since the review date, which it may be aware of from the annual updates of electorate figures it receives, or that it is satisfied is likely to occur. Such a factor may be taken into account in choosing between two or more competing options for the same area that satisfy the statutory rules.

Naming and designating constituencies

- 43 In making its recommendations, the BCE is also required by the Act to specify a name and designation for each proposed constituency. The Act contains no guidance on these points.

Naming

- 44 The BCE's policy on the naming of constituencies is that, when 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 (for example where a constituency named for its main population centre has, over time, seen that main population centre change).
- 45 Generally, the BCE considers that the name should normally reflect the main population centre(s) contained in the constituency, as that will likely be the main focal point for communities in the area. However, if a suitable alternative name is proposed which generally commands strong support locally, the BCE will usually be prepared to recommend that alternative.
- 46 The BCE adopts compass point names when there is not a clear population centre or other focal point in the constituency. The compass point reference used will generally form a prefix in cases where the rest of the constituency name refers to the county area or a more rural council area (e.g. district), but a suffix where the rest of the name refers to a population centre or essentially urban council area (such as metropolitan or London boroughs, and urban unitaries). Examples of existing constituencies that demonstrate these principles are North Shropshire and Reading West.

Designating

- 47 The Act also requires that each constituency is designated as either a ‘county constituency’ or a ‘borough constituency’. The BCE considers 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.
- 48 The designation generally determines who shall act as Returning Officer for Parliamentary elections. The Returning Officer in borough constituencies is a district or borough council chairman or mayor. For county constituencies it is the high sheriff.
- 49 The designation also determines the limit on the amount that a candidate is allowed to spend during a Parliamentary election in the constituency. The limit is slightly lower in borough constituencies, to reflect the lower costs of running a campaign in a more geographically compact urbanised area.

Developing proposals – process

- 50 The BCE obtained the electorate figures from Electoral Registration Officers in local authorities, either directly, or indirectly through the Office for National Statistics. When all the figures had been received, the four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions agreed the UK electoral quota and the number of constituencies allocated to each part of the UK, applying the formulae set out in the Act (see above for the actual figures that have been agreed for the 2023 Review).
- 51 As explained above, the BCE has further allocated constituencies among the nine regions of England using the same distribution formula, and has determined that, in the absence of compelling reasons to the contrary, no constituency should cross a boundary between two regions.
- 52 The mandatory nature of Rule 2 in the legislation – concerning the statutory electorate range for constituencies – means that it will be necessary for a number of constituencies to cross external local authority boundaries: the electorates of many local authorities make it a mathematical impossibility for them to be allocated a whole number of constituencies. However, the BCE has sought to minimise the extent to which this happens. In order to meet the requirements of Rule 2, the BCE has found it necessary to combine some county and unitary authority areas together into sub-region groupings, but will then propose not to cross the boundaries between these sub-regions. The sub-regions used for the 2023 Review will be explained in the initial proposals.
- 53 Within each ‘sub-region’ grouping, the BCE identifies the appropriate number of constituencies to fit within the area that the sub-region covers. This is done by dividing the total electorate within that sub-region (as at 2 March 2020) by the UK electoral quota, with appropriate rounding applied to any fractions.
- 54 Taking into account all the considerations mentioned above and using wards as default building blocks, the BCE then works in detail on how to divide the sub-region into the relevant number of constituencies.
- 55 While the BCE uses a particular pattern of sub-regions for its initial proposals, this does not preclude an individual from submitting a counterproposal during the consultation stage that is, for example, based on a viable alternative pattern of sub-region groupings.

Publication of initial proposals

- 56 When the BCE has decided on its initial proposals, it publishes information on its website (including a series of reports to explain the proposals), together with detailed information about how and when views on those proposals can be submitted. At the same time, it sends hard copies of the proposals to various local ‘places of deposit’, where the public may view the proposals.

- 57 The places of deposit where the public may inspect the proposals are usually the offices of the relevant local authority, although other places such as public libraries may be used instead. There will be one hard copy deposited in each proposed constituency, and a full list of where these are will be published on the BCE website at the same time as the proposals.
- 58 In addition to the initial proposals and its reports on them, in order to help the public better to understand the proposals, the BCE also places on deposit and on its website detailed maps showing, among other information, the name, designation and boundary of each proposed constituency.
- 59 To publicise the initial proposals, the BCE also notifies all interested parties (for example, local authorities, MPs and academics) that it has published and is consulting on them. The House of Commons library also receives copies of the detailed maps. In advance of the information being sent out, the BCE also issues a press release about the initial proposals, the consultation period and the subsequent procedures of a review.
- 60 Copies of the initial proposals, reports and accompanying maps, and all other material published by the BCE, are placed on its website – boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk
- 61 For the 2023 Review, the BCE plans to publish its initial proposals in June 2021.

Initial consultation period

General

- 62 Those who respond to the consultation are requested to say whether they approve of, or object to, the BCE's proposals. In particular, objectors are advised to say what they propose in place of the BCE's proposals. An objection accompanied by a viable counterproposal is likely to carry more weight than a simple statement of objection. In this respect – and particularly in light of the importance of Rule 2 (statutory electorate range) – a counterproposal setting out the composition of each constituency in an area will generally be viewed as more persuasive than a proposal for the composition of only one constituency which does not address any knock-on effects on the electorate figures of neighbouring constituencies.

Written representations

- 63 The BCE is required to consider all written representations made to it within a statutory eight-week period commencing with publication of the initial proposals. Details of how to make written representations, including the last date for receipt of representations, will be published alongside the initial proposals themselves. The BCE will be encouraging all interested parties to contribute views through its consultation website.

Secondary consultation period

- 64 Following the eight-week consultation on the BCE's initial proposals, the BCE prepares and then publishes on its website all of the representations that it has received for each region. Once the representations have been published, there is a further statutory six-week period during which people can submit to the BCE written comments on those representations it received during the initial consultation period, for example, challenging or supporting assertions made in a representation. There is also the opportunity during this six-week consultation to make representations at public hearings (see below).
- 65 The BCE attaches just as much significance to representations made in writing and through its website as to those made orally at public hearings – the content of the representation is more important than the form it takes. There needs to be careful management of the conduct of the hearings, since they are strictly limited by statute to last for no more than two days each. However, if there is not time for someone who wishes to speak to the BCE to say everything they would like to, representations can still be made in writing within the six-week consultation period.

Public hearings

- 66 The BCE is required to conduct a minimum of two and maximum of five public hearings in each region of England. These must take place during the six-week secondary consultation period. The precise number and location of public hearings in each region will be determined by the BCE specifically in relation to the nature of the responses it receives to the consultation on its initial proposals, i.e. targeting the holding of hearings to areas where there is particular contention over the proposals and cases being made for competing alternate proposals. The details of venues and dates for the hearings will be announced on the BCE website in due course, although with a reasonable period of notice prior to the start of the secondary consultation period. While public hearings are currently required by law to be physically held at a venue in each region, the BCE is actively exploring how to make them as accessible as possible, including the possibilities for supplementing a physical hearing with remote live viewing and/or participation: this work was being undertaken in any event, but will be particularly relevant in the context of any legal restrictions on large gatherings, such as those implemented to restrict the spread of COVID-19 (which remain in place at the time of writing this guide).
- 67 A public hearing is intended to provide an opportunity for people to make representations about any of the BCE's initial proposals for that region, present any counterproposals, and comment on counterproposals that may have been put forward by others during the initial consultation period.

- 68 Presentations at each public hearing are likely to focus on proposals for the area closest to the location of the hearing, but this does not preclude giving a presentation that relates to any part of the region in which the hearing is located. However, a representation should not be made that relates to an entirely different region.
- 69 Each hearing is chaired by an independent Assistant Commissioner selected by the BCE, who controls proceedings and may ask – or allow to be asked – questions of an individual giving a presentation. Questions should generally be asked through the Chair and should ordinarily be seeking clarification rather than trying to ‘cross-examine’ the speaker on their views.
- 70 Once details of the dates and locations of the public hearings have been published, individuals wishing to make an oral presentation at one of the hearings are encouraged to book in advance with the BCE. Details of how to book a speaking slot at a public hearing will be published on our website. At each ‘lead’ hearing – the first in the region – the four political parties with English seats in the House of Commons will be allocated a longer speaking slot at the start of the hearing to set out their proposals for the whole region. This longer speaking slot allows the political parties to address the whole region – however, it should be made clear that the BCE otherwise places no more weight on the representations from the political parties than from anyone else.
- 71 The BCE should make it clear that the duration of speaking slots is likely to be very limited, so presentations will need to be clear, concise and focused. Those intending to speak at a public hearing will also need to be reasonably flexible about when exactly they are asked to start and finish their presentation.
- 72 It will be for the Assistant Commissioner chairing the public hearing to decide when to call on speakers and the amount of time to be allocated to them. To aid the Assistant Commissioner in this task, it will be helpful if a synopsis or outline of the points the speaker wishes to make can be provided in advance. Guidance on how and when to do this will be published alongside the details of hearing dates and venues.
- 73 The BCE encourages the use of visual aids during the making of oral representations at public hearings. The BCE will have a laptop and projector available at each hearing to provide for an electronic presentation using MS Office software (for example, PowerPoint) or Google Apps (for example Google Slides). Where given sufficient notice, the BCE will also seek to facilitate the use of other visual aids as far as reasonably practicable.
- 74 Each public hearing will have a written record taken of all the representations made, and any visual aids used at a presentation will be attached to that record on subsequent publication.

Development of revised proposals

- 75 The BCE staff and Assistant Commissioners consider all the written representations received in the initial consultation period, and all the written representations and oral representations made at public hearings in the secondary consultation period. They then write a joint report on each region for the Commissioners, summarising and considering the representations, and recommending whether – and, if so, how – the initial proposals for that region should be revised in the light of those representations. The Commissioners then consider each report and determine whether and to what extent revisions should be made to their initial proposals.
- 76 The BCE then publishes a report for each region stating whether or not revisions have been made to the initial proposals for that region. Alongside these reports, it publishes all the written representations received – and transcripts from public hearings – during the six-week secondary consultation period.
- 77 If the proposals are revised, then the Act provides for a further period of four weeks for written representations to be made to the BCE on the revised proposals for that region. There are no public hearings at this stage; nor is there a repeat of the six-week period for commenting on the representations of others.
- 78 Publication of any representations received during the four-week consultation on revised proposals will take place alongside publication of the final report (see below).

The importance of participation

- 79 The BCE wishes to stress very strongly that any person or organisation interested in the proposals for their area is encouraged to exercise their statutory right and make written or oral representations to the BCE, whether for or against the proposals.
- 80 A particular problem is to elicit such a response at the right time. For example, in previous reviews there were several occasions when people who had not made known their support for the initial proposals were surprised when the BCE subsequently published revised proposals. It was only at that late stage that they then made known their support for the initial proposals, often in very large numbers.
- 81 Full and timely participation ultimately assists the BCE in gauging more accurately local opinion on its proposals, and consequently increases the likelihood that its final recommendations will be generally acceptable to the majority of those who will have to live and work with them.

Final recommendations and report

- 82 The BCE takes into consideration any written representations made in the four-week consultation period about the revised proposals, and then makes its final decisions about whether further modifications need to be made in light of those representations.
- 83 When the BCE has decided on its final recommendations for the whole of England, it then drafts and submits a formal written report to the Speaker of the House of Commons. The report, which is also published once the Speaker has laid it before Parliament, contains a description of the review in each region, a textual description of all the final recommendations, and a set of maps to illustrate the existing boundaries and those proposed by the final recommendations.
- 84 The submission of the formal final report concludes the BCE's involvement in the constituency review process. The procedure to subsequently implement new constituencies is the responsibility of the Government but is set out below for information.

After the final report

- 85 After the final report from all four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions has been laid by the Speaker, within four months of the last report being laid, the Government is required to submit to the Privy Council an Order that gives effect to all four Commissions' recommendations. In drawing up that Order, the Government may not modify any of the recommendations of the Commissions, unless specifically requested to do so by the relevant Commission (and any such request must itself be laid before Parliament and published).
- 86 After the Privy Council approves the Order, the new constituencies take effect at the next General Election. Any by-elections held in the meantime have to be held on the basis of the old (existing) constituencies. The validity of an Order in Council, once made, may not be called into question in any legal proceedings.



Conclusion

- 87 It is hoped that the information and explanations given in this Guide will fulfil the purpose set out in the Introduction, helping to clarify the process and policy for interested parties and encourage their informed participation, and thereby assisting the BCE in carrying out its work.
- 88 If any person has any suggestions as to how the Guide may be improved, whether by correction, clarification, addition or deletion or in any other way, please write to the Secretary to the Boundary Commission for England at the address given in the Introduction. The BCE would be pleased to consider any such suggestions for the production of a similar Guide in future reviews.

Appendix A

Who we are

Chairman

The Speaker of the House of Commons is the Chairman of each of the four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions. This is an ex officio appointment, and – being an MP themselves – the Speaker generally plays no part in the substantive work of the Commission.

Three other members

- The Deputy Chair, who presides over the Commission's meetings, is the **Hon Mr Justice (Peter) Lane**. Sir Peter was educated at state schools in Worcester, before studying law at Oxford and Berkeley, California. After five years in the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, he became a solicitor and parliamentary agent in Westminster, drafting and promoting legislation on a wide range of subjects; in particular, infrastructure projects. His clients included public transport operators, local authorities and universities. In 2001, he was appointed as a salaried immigration adjudicator, in time becoming a judge of the Upper Tribunal. In 2014, he became President of the General Regulatory Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal, which decides appeals from a wide range of statutory regulators. He was appointed a deputy High Court judge in 2016 and, in 2017, a High Court judge in the Queen's Bench Division. Since October 2017, he has also been President of the Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber. He was appointed as Deputy Chair of the BCE for a three-year term from 23 June 2020.
- **Colin Byrne**. Colin worked for over 30 years in the Civil Service in a number of roles. These included Divisional Manager, Health and Safety Executive; Director, Town and Country Planning, Department of Communities and Local Government; and Director, Government Office for the South East. He was the Lead Assistant Commissioner for the South East of England in the BCE's 2018 Review. He was a governor of the Guildford College Group for eight years, and a trustee of Citizens Advice Guildford. He was appointed a Commissioner of the BCE for a five-year term from 1 July 2019.
- **Sarah Hamilton**. Sarah graduated from Exeter University with a BA(Hons) in Law in 1992. She was admitted as a Solicitor in 1995 and enjoyed a 20-year career in a City law firm, specialising in litigation, acting for public sector bodies. Retiring from private practice in 2016, Sarah now has a portfolio career in the fields of healthcare, education and regulation. She chairs Fitness to Practise Committees for two healthcare regulators, and is a lay member for a third. She is an Inspector for University Programmes for Dental Schools and Social Work England. She is an Independent Panel Member for the London Assembly. Sarah worked as the Lead Assistant Commissioner for the East of England in the BCE's 2018 Review. She was appointed a Commissioner of the BCE for a five-year term from 1 July 2019. She is married with two children.

Two assessors (available to provide technical advice and support as requested)

- The Registrar General for England and Wales.
- The Director General of Ordnance Survey.

Secretary to the Commission

- **Tim Bowden.** Tim was appointed in 2020 to lead the Secretariat in administering the 2023 review and generally supporting the Commissioners in their work. Tim was the BCE's Head of Reviews during the 2018 Review, and, prior to that, led multiple local government boundary reviews as a Review Manager at the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Assistant Commissioners

- Appointed by the Secretary of State, at the request of the Commission, to assist it in the discharge of its functions. The Commission requests the appointment of independent Assistant Commissioners to: chair the public hearings; work with the Secretariat in analysing the responses to consultations; and – based on that analysis – make recommendations to Commissioners as to what might be appropriate revisions to the Commission's earlier proposals for an area. They are specifically not involved in the development of initial proposals, so that they have no vested interest in retaining them when considering the strength of alternative proposals.

Appendix B

Contact details for other Commissions

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Telephone: 0330 500 1525
Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk
Web address: www.lgbce.org.uk

The Boundary Commission for Wales

(Parliamentary and Local Government Commissions share a single Secretariat)

Telephone: 02920 464819
Email: enquiries@boundaries.wales
Web address : www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk (for Parliamentary)
<http://ldbc.gov.wales/> (for Local Government)

The Boundary Commission for Scotland

(Parliamentary and Local Government Commissions share a single Secretariat)

Telephone: 0131 244 2001
Email: bcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk (for Parliamentary)
lgbcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk (for Local Government)
Web address: <http://www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk/>
(for Parliamentary)
www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk (for Local Government)

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland

(Parliamentary boundaries only)

Telephone: 02890 527821
Email: contact@boundarycommission.org.uk
Web address: www.boundarycommission.org.uk

**For queries about local government boundaries in Northern Ireland,
refer to the Northern Ireland Department for Communities**

Telephone: 02890 829000
Web address: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/contact>

Appendix C

English regions

The following is the list of unitary authorities and non-metropolitan county councils within each region:

East Midlands	Derby, Derbyshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rutland.
Eastern	Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea, Suffolk, Thurrock.
London	The 32 London borough councils, plus the Corporation of the City of London.
North East	Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.
North West	Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Cumbria, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan, Wirral.
South East	Berkshire, Brighton and Hove, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Southampton, Surrey, West Sussex.
South West	Bath and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.
West Midlands	Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire.
Yorkshire and the Humber	Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York.

Appendix D

Rules for redistribution of seats (Schedule 2 to the Act)

Number of constituencies

- 1 The number of constituencies in the United Kingdom shall be 650.

Electorate per constituency

- 2 (1) The electorate of any constituency shall be –
(a) no less than 95% of the United Kingdom electoral quota, and
(b) no more than 105% of that quota.
(2) This rule is subject to rules 4(2), 6(3) and 7.
(3) In this Schedule the “United Kingdom electoral quota” means –

$$\frac{U}{645}$$

where U is the electorate of the United Kingdom minus the electorate of the constituencies mentioned in rule 6.

Allocation of constituencies to parts of the United Kingdom

- 3 (1) Each constituency shall be wholly in one of the four parts of the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).
(2) The number of constituencies in each part of the United Kingdom shall be determined in accordance with the allocation method set out in rule 8.

Area of constituencies

- 4 (1) A constituency shall not have an area of more than 13,000 square kilometres.
(2) A constituency does not have to comply with rule 2(1)(a) if –
(a) it has an area of more than 12,000 square kilometres, and
(b) the Boundary Commission concerned are satisfied that it is not reasonably possible for the constituency to comply with that rule.

Factors

- 5 (1) A Boundary Commission may take into account, if and to such extent as they think fit –
(a) special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
(b) local government boundaries which exist, or are prospective, on the review date;
(c) boundaries of existing constituencies;
(d) any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies;
(e) the inconveniences attendant on such changes.

- (1A) In the case of a local government boundary which is prospective on the review date, it is that boundary rather than any existing boundary which it replaces, which may be taken into account under sub-paragraph (1)(b).
- (2) The Boundary Commission for England may take into account, if and to such extent as they think fit, boundaries of the English regions specified in sub-paragraph (2A) as they exist on the most recent ordinary council-election day before the review date.
- (2A) [Specifies the English regions as per Appendix C above.]
- (3) This rule has effect subject to rules 2 and 4.

Protected constituencies

- 6 (1) There shall be two constituencies in the Isle of Wight.
- (2) There shall continue to be –
 - (a) a constituency named Orkney and Shetland, comprising the areas of the Orkney Islands Council and the Shetland Islands Council.
 - (b) a constituency named Na h-Eileanan an Iar, comprising the area of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.
 - (c) a constituency named Ynys Mon, comprising the area of the Isle of Anglesey County Council.
- (3) Rule 2 does not apply to these constituencies.

Northern Ireland

- 7 (1) In relation to Northern Ireland, sub-paragraph (2) below applies in place of rule 2 where –
 - (a) the difference between –
 - (i) the electorate of Northern Ireland, and
 - (ii) the United Kingdom electoral quota multiplied by the number of seats in Northern Ireland (determined under rule 8)
 exceeds one third of the United Kingdom electoral quota, and
 - (b) the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland consider that having to apply rule 2 would unreasonably impair –
 - (i) their ability to take into account the factors set out in rule 5(1), or
 - (ii) their ability to comply with section 3(2) of this Act.
- (2) The electorate of any constituency shall be –
 - (a) no less than whichever is the lesser of –
 - N–A
 and 95% of the United Kingdom electoral quota, and –

(b) no more than whichever is the greater of –

$$N+A$$

and 105% of the United Kingdom electoral quota,

where –

N is the electorate of Northern Ireland divided by the number of seats in Northern Ireland (determined under rule 8), and A is 5% of the United Kingdom electoral quota.

The allocation method

- 8 (1) The allocation method referred to in rule 3(2) is as follows:
- (2) The first constituency shall be allocated to the part of the United Kingdom with the greatest electorate.
- (3) The second and subsequent constituencies shall be allocated in the same way, except that the electorate of a part of the United Kingdom to which one or more constituencies have already been allocated is to be divided by –
- $$2C + 1$$
- where C is the number of constituencies already allocated to that part.
- (4) Where the figure given by sub-paragraph (3) above is the same for two or more parts of the United Kingdom, the part to which a constituency is to be allocated shall be the one with the smaller or smallest actual electorate.
- (5) This rule does not apply to the constituencies mentioned in rule 6, and accordingly –
- (a) the electorate of England shall be treated for the purpose of this rule as reduced by the electorate of the constituencies mentioned in rule 6(1);
- (b) the electorate of Scotland shall be treated for the purposes of this rule as reduced by the electorate of the constituencies mentioned in rule 6(2)(a) and (b);
- (c) the electorate of Wales shall be treated for the purposes of this rule as reduced by the electorate of the constituency mentioned in rule 6(2)(c).

Interpretation

- 9 (1) This rule has effect for the purposes of this Schedule.
- (2) Subject to sub-paragraph (2A), the “electorate” of the United Kingdom, or of a part of the United Kingdom or a constituency, is the total number of persons whose names appear on the relevant version of a register of parliamentary electors in respect of addresses in the United Kingdom, or in that part or that constituency.
- For this purpose the relevant version of a register is the version that is required by virtue of subsection (1) of section 13 of the Representation of the

- People Act 1983 to be published no later than the review date, or would be so required but for –
- (a) any power under that section to prescribe a later date, or
 - (b) subsection (1A) of that section.
- (2A) In relation to a report under section 3(1) that a Boundary Commission is required (by sections 3(2)) to submit before 1 July 2023, the “electorate” of the United Kingdom, or of a part of the United Kingdom or a constituency, is the total number of persons whose names appear on a register of parliamentary electors (maintained under section 9 of the Representation of the People Act 1983) in respect of addresses in the United Kingdom, or in that part of that constituency, as that register has effect on 2 March 2020.
- (3) “Local government boundaries” are –
- (a) in England, the boundaries of counties and their electoral divisions, districts and their wards, London boroughs and their wards and the City of London,
 - (b) in Wales, the boundaries of counties, county boroughs, electoral divisions, communities and community wards,
 - (c) in Scotland, the boundaries of local government areas and the electoral wards into which they are divided under section 1 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004, and
 - (d) in Northern Ireland, the boundaries of wards.
- (3A) A local government boundary is “prospective” on a particular date if, on that date –
- (a) it is specified in a provision of primary or secondary legislation, but
 - (b) that provision is not yet in force for all purposes.
- (3B) For that purpose –
- (a) “primary legislation” means –
 - (i) an Act of Parliament
 - (ii) an Act of the Scottish Parliament
 - (iii) an Act of Senedd Cymru; or
 - (iv) Northern Ireland legislation and
 - (b) “secondary legislation” means an instrument made under primary legislation.
- (4) “Ordinary council-election day” is –
- (a) in relation to England and Wales, the ordinary day of election of councillors for local government areas;

- (b) in relation to Scotland, the day on which the poll is held at ordinary elections of councillors for local government areas;
 - (c) in relation to Northern Ireland, the day of an election for any district council (other than an election to fill a casual vacancy).
- (5) The “review date”, in relation to a report under section 3(1) of this Act that a Boundary Commission is required (by section 3(2)) to submit before a particular date:
- (a) 1 December 2020 in the case of a report required to be submitted before 1 July 2023, and
 - (b) in the case of a report required to be submitted before any other particular date, the date which is two years and 10 months before that date.
(For example, 1 December 2028 in the case of a report required to be submitted before 1 October 2031).
- (6) “The United Kingdom electoral quota” has the meaning given by rule 2(3).
- (7) A reference in rule 6(2)(a) or (b) to an area is to the area as it existed on the coming into force of Part 2 the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, and the reference in rule 6(2)(c) to the area of the Isle of Anglesey County Council is to the area as it existed on the coming into force of the Schedule to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020.

Appendix E

Glossary and abbreviations

Assessor	Statutorily appointed technical adviser to the BCE, being either the Registrar General for England and Wales or the Director General of Ordnance Survey	Redistribution of seats	Re-division of a given area into new Parliamentary constituencies.
Assistant Commissioner	Independent person appointed at the request of the BCE to assist it with the discharge of its functions	Representations	The views provided by an individual, group or organisation to the BCE on its initial or revised proposals, either for or against, including counterproposals and petitions.
Borough constituency (abbreviated to BC)	Parliamentary constituency containing a predominantly urban area	Review date	The operative date from which the data the BCE works with must be drawn. For the 2023 Review uniquely, the review date for local government boundaries we may have regard to is 1 December 2020, though the review date for the electorate we must work with is 2 March 2020.
County constituency (abbreviated to CC)	Parliamentary constituency containing more than a small rural element	Revised proposals	The initial proposals as subsequently revised.
Designation	Classification as either a borough constituency or as a county constituency.	Rules for Redistribution of Seats	The statutory criteria for Parliamentary constituencies under Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended).
Electorate	The number of registered Parliamentary electors in a given area.	Special geographical considerations	Dispensation to depart from the strict application of other criteria for Parliamentary constituencies; includes size, shape and accessibility.
(Statutory) Electorate range	The statutory rule that requires the electorate of every constituency (as at the review date) to be within 5% of the UK electoral quota.	UK electoral quota	The mean average number of electors in a constituency, found by dividing the total electorate of the UK (less that of the five specific 'protected' constituencies) by 645.
Final recommendations	The recommendations submitted in a formal final report to the Speaker of the House of Commons at the end of a review. They may – or may not – have been revised since the initial proposals in any given area.	Unitary authority	An area where there is only one tier of local authority (above any parish or town council). Contrasted with those 'shire district' areas that have two tiers (i.e. both a non-metropolitan county council and a district/ borough/city council).
General review	Major review of all Parliamentary constituencies in England at the same time. Since 2011 all Parliamentary constituency reviews are general reviews.		
Initial proposals	First formal proposals published by the BCE during the review for public consultation.		
Periodical report	Report to the Government following a general review of Parliamentary constituencies.		
Public hearing	Formal opportunity in a given area for people to make oral representations, chaired by an Assistant Commissioner. In each region of England there may be no fewer than two and no more than five hearings, and each may last a maximum of two days.		

