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22 March 1984

R. Williams

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REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND ON EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES

- ... I enclose herewith a copy of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for
England's report on its 1983 review of European Parliament constituencies.
... An analysis of the recommendations is attached as an Annex to this letter.

As I explained in my letter of 28 February about the Welsh report I am
required to lay this report as soon as may be, together with the draft
of an Order in Council giving effect to the Commission's recommendations,
with or without modifications. The issues to be decided are also the same
as before:

- a. whether to make any modifications to the Commission's proposals; and
- b. when to lay the draft Order and arrange the ensuing debates.

Modifications

Representations for modifications to the Commission's recommendations are set
out in paragraph 11 of the attached Annex. I have carefully considered all
these representations and have decided not to make any modifications, for the
following reasons:

- a. Parliament should have the opportunity to discuss the Commission's recommendations as submitted to me;

/b. however

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC

- b. however strong the case, any proposed modifications should in fairness be published and representations invited; to do this would delay implementation of all the other recommendations and would effectively rule out any prospect of fighting this year's elections on new boundaries;
- c. the representations about the proposed Derbyshire, London South and Surrey East, London South West, Oxford and Buckinghamshire, Suffolk and Wiltshire constituencies are similar to objections considered and rejected by the Commission during the review.

Timing

I propose to lay the report and draft Order on Wednesday 28 March. I also suggest that the debate be arranged as soon as the Order has been cleared by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

Unless I hear to the contrary by noon on Monday 26 March I shall assume that colleagues are content with the proposals in this letter.

I am copying this letter to the other members of H, to the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

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L.R.

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 1 to the European Assembly Elections Act 1978 provides that there shall be 66 European Parliament constituencies in England. The Commission has no power to vary that number.

Background

2. The Commission had to review the present European constituencies as soon as the new parliamentary constituencies came into force in March 1983. The existing European seats were created by the European Assembly Constituencies (England) Order 1978, which implemented, without modifications, the Commission's recommendations for 66 constituencies based on 1977 electorates. The electorates of those constituencies had ranged from 466,393 (9.7% below the 1977 electoral quota of 516,436) to 570,173 (10.4% above that quota). By February 1983, however, the electorate of the country as a whole had risen by $1\frac{1}{2}$ million, while some urban areas, most notably Greater London, had lost large numbers of electors.

3. The result of these changes was an increase in the range of electorates of the present European Parliament constituencies from 456,956 (15.2% below the 1983 electoral quota of 539,155) in Liverpool to 622,241 (15.4% above the electoral quota) in Hampshire West. The need to reduce this disparity and to align the existing European constituency boundaries with those of the new parliamentary constituencies (119 of which were divided between European constituencies) made substantial changes inevitable in some parts of the country.

Overall view

4. The Commission's proposals leave the Hereford and Worcester, London East and London North East constituencies unchanged and make a minor boundary alteration, involving no electors, to the Cornwall and Plymouth, and Devon constituencies.

5. Twenty-two other constituencies are altered slightly or retain a substantial part of their present area and electorate, namely:-

Bristol	Norfolk
Cumbria (renamed Cumbria and Lancashire North)	Northumbria
Durham	Salop and Stafford (renamed Shropshire and Stafford)
Essex North East	Sheffield
Essex South West	Somerset (renamed Somerset and Dorset West)
Hertfordshire	Suffolk
Kent East	Surrey (renamed Surrey West)
Kent West	Sussex East (renamed East Sussex)
London South East	Sussex West (renamed West Sussex)
London South Inner	The Cotswolds
Midlands Central	Yorkshire West

The remaining 39 constituencies have been modified to a much greater extent, although some new seats, such as Humberside, still contain a nucleus of electors from the present constituency.

6. The table on page 40 of the Report shows that these changes will increase the number of constituencies with electorates within 6% of the electoral quota from 48 (73% of the total number of seats) to 61 (92% of the total). The recommended constituencies which lie outside this range are Bristol, Essex North East, Cheshire East, London South West and Surrey West, which have electorates of 572,939 (6.3% above the electoral quota), 573,681 (6.4% above), 499,418 (7.4% below), 505,396 (6.3% below) and 505,541 (6.2% below) respectively.

County analysis

7. The Commission tried to avoid fragmenting counties where this was possible without causing difficulties elsewhere. However, the electorates of most counties were not of an appropriate size to form one or more whole European constituencies without the addition of electors from adjoining areas (page 2, paragraph 11). The Commission has, therefore, recommended that Norfolk, East Sussex and West Sussex should form separate seats and that Essex and Kent should each contain two whole constituencies.

8. The extent to which the Commission has succeeded in reducing the division of counties and other local government areas between European Parliament

constituencies is illustrated by the following table:

	Present constituencies						Proposed constituencies					
	Not divided	Divided between					Not divided	Divided between				
		two	three	four	five	eight		two	three	four	five	
Metropolitan counties	-	-	1	2	2	1	-	-	4	1	1	
Non-metropolitan counties	10	17	5	5	2	-	16	14	8	1	-	
London boroughs	27	5	-	-	-	-	30	2	-	-	-	
Non-metropolitan districts	251	43	3	-	-	-	258	39	-	-	-	
Metropolitan districts	11	17	6	2	-	-	26	10	-	-	-	
Total	299	82	15	9	4	1	330	65	12	2	1	

The only non-metropolitan counties which are divided between more than two European constituencies are Surrey, which is divided between four seats, and Derbyshire, Hampshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire, which are each divided between three seats. The metropolitan counties are also divided between three seats, with the exception of West Midlands and Greater Manchester, which are divided between four and five seats respectively.

Greater London

9. The decline of 79,529 in the electorate of Greater London between 1977 and 1983, together with the increase in the electoral quota of 22,719 over the same period, meant that the capital was too small to form 10 whole constituencies, as at present. The Commission therefore proposed the creation of nine whole constituencies and one which crossed the GLC boundary with Surrey. As the result of representations from the London Borough of Croydon, it now recommends the creation of eight whole seats and two, London South West and London South and Surrey East, which include parts of Surrey.

Contentious areas

10. The radical re-drawing of so many constituencies made the English Commission's review fairly contentious. However, the small number of representations received by the Commission in respect of its revised recommendations for some areas, such as Avon, Dorset, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Somerset, West Sussex and Wiltshire, suggest that parts of the report will be uncontroversial. Nevertheless, the fact that the Commission rejected all or some of the recommendations of five assistant Commissioners who held local inquiries into its provisional recommendations may lead to strong criticism from the areas concerned (Areas 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9). Contentious issues remaining are likely to be:

- a. the division of the City of Newcastle between the constituencies of Northumbria and Tyne and Wear;
- b. the inclusion of Staffordshire Moorlands CC, Ashfield CC, South Derbyshire CC and North West Leicestershire CC in constituencies not containing any other parts of the counties of Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire respectively;
- c. the replacement of Harwich CC in the present Suffolk constituency with South East Cambridgeshire CC from the present Cambridgeshire constituency; and
- d. the inclusion of Epsom and Ewell BC in the London South West constituency.

MODIFICATIONS

11. The following representations seeking modifications have been received:

- a. (21) Derbyshire: Derby and South Derbyshire Social Democratic Area Party objects to the Commission's rejection of the assistant Commissioner's recommendations. This point is dealt with in Chapter Three, paragraphs 8.21-8.22 of the Report.
- b. (63) London South and Surrey East/(64) London South West: Surrey County Council, who object to the division of the county between four constituencies and submit a counter-proposal for these two constituencies. Epsom and Ewell

Constituency Liberal Association objects to the proposed inclusion of Epsom and Ewell BC and Sutton and Cheam BC in separate constituencies and submits another counter-proposal. Epsom Ratepayers and Residents Society (Town Ward) and four individuals object to the inclusion of Epsom and Ewell in the London South West constituency. Both counter-proposals and similar objections were considered and rejected by the Commission (Chapter Three, paragraphs 14.15-14.17 of the Report).

- c. (38) Oxford and Buckinghamshire/~~(44)~~Wiltshire: Vale of White Horse District Council wish these constituencies to be named Wiltshire and Upper Thames, and Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire South respectively. Similar representations were considered and rejected by the Commission (Chapter Three, paragraphs 9.18-9.21 and 11.15).
- d. (34) Suffolk: Mid Suffolk District Council press for the retention of Harwich CC in the Suffolk constituency. The Commission recommends its inclusion in the (42) Essex North East constituency. This point is dealt with in Chapter Three, paragraphs 9.14, 9.16 and 9.19 of the Report.



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

28 March 1984

Dear Leon

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REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND
ON EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES

Thank you for your letter of 22 March inviting any comments by Monday 26 March on your proposal to go ahead with publication of this report. I appreciate the need to move quickly on this occasion in order to ensure that the new constituencies are in force by the June elections. I understand that there have been no objections from colleagues to your proposal to publish the report as received from the Commission, and you may take it that you have H Committee approval to go ahead as proposed.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of H Committee, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

John
Walker

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP

Pashament : The Boundary Commission Feb. 81