

**Note of meeting with political party and independent representatives
Friday 27 May @ 2.00pm – Committee Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont**

Attendees:

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland

Madam Justice McBride	Deputy Chair
Dr Bill Smith	Commissioner
Ms Sarah Havlin	Commissioner
Mr Eamonn McConville	Secretary to the Commission
Mr Michael Harris	Secretariat
Mr Tim Johnston	Secretariat
Mr Adam McCalden	Secretariat

Political parties

Independent	Lady Hermon
Democratic Unionist Party	Richard Bullick
Sinn Féin	Mark McLernon
	Gary Fleming
Ulster Unionist Party	Lord Empey
	Colin McCusker
	Stephen Nicholl
Social Democratic & Labour Party	Donal Lyons
	Gerry Cosgrove
Alliance Party	Sam Nelson
Green Party Northern Ireland	John Hardy

1. Madam Justice McBride welcomed attendees and explained the background to the 2018 Review of the Westminster parliamentary constituencies.
2. This was followed by an overview of the methodology and procedures the Commission would follow. She also gave details of the proposed timetable for the review and the statutory rules which would apply.
3. The consultation process was then outlined. Madam Justice McBride advised that there would be three consultation periods during which representations could be made.
 - a. Following the publication of the Provisional Proposals, there would be a 12 week initial consultation period. During weeks 5 to 10 of this initial consultation period, a number of public hearings will be held. Details of the public hearings will be published on the BCNI website.

After the first consultation period of 12 weeks, all representations received, including records of the public hearings, will be published on the Commission's website www.boundarycommission.org.uk

- b. There will then be a 4 week secondary consultation period during which further comment may be made on the representations received during the initial consultation, including at the public hearings. Following this, the Commission will consider all the written representations received and the transcripts of the public hearings.
 - c. If the Commission is minded to revise the provisional proposals, it will publish Revised Proposals. An 8 week consultation period will follow during which representations may be made on the Revised Proposals. The Revised Proposals will be published on www.boundarycommission.org.uk and they will also be available at public display points around Northern Ireland.
4. Following this 8 week period, the Commission will consider any representations received. The Commission can incorporate any further amendments to the constituency proposals into a Final Report without further public consultation. The time allocated for each element of the consultation exercise is set down in the legislation and cannot be extended.
 5. The Commission will present its Final Report to the Secretary of State before 1 October 2018.
 6. Madam Justice McBride expressed the desire of the Commissioners to promote interest from the general public and encouraged engagement through the Commission's website and Twitter account ([@BCNI2018](https://twitter.com/BCNI2018)).

A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOLLOWED.

- **What is the Commission's position on splitting wards?**

The Commission is minded to use local government wards as the building blocks of the new constituencies and as far as practicable to avoid splitting them.

- **What is the Commission's position on the use of Rule 7?**

During the aborted Review the Commission noted that it could use Rule 7 only if it considered that its ability to take the discretionary factors into account would otherwise be unreasonably impaired. That remains our position. We will decide on this during the modelling process.

- **How was the allocation of seats for Northern Ireland arrived at?**

Seats were allocated to the four parts of the United Kingdom in proportion to their electorates, in accordance with a mathematical formula which is set out in the legislation.

- **Will the wards used for this Review be different from the wards in the existing Westminster constituencies?**

Yes. We will use the same wards as for the May 2014 district council elections.

- **Which register of parliamentary electors will be used?**

The register of 1st December 2015.

- **Where can I find details of the numbers of parliamentary electors per ward?**

You can find the number of parliamentary electors per ward and per existing constituency on our website.

- **Is the software used by the Boundary Commission publically available?**

No. However, various open source online tools are available.

7. Madam Justice McBride then brought the meeting to a close.

**BCNI Secretariat
13 June 2016**