

City Council - 19 July 2021

Report of the Leader of the Council

Constituency Boundary Review for England 2023

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed Nottingham City Council response to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries.
- 1.2 Council is asked to consider a proposed response on behalf of the City Council to the BCE proposals for Nottingham City, for submission ahead of the 2nd August 2021 deadline for responding, and provide formal endorsement.
- 1.3 More details of the BCE proposals for Nottingham City are set out below under section 5.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council endorse the proposed response for submission to the BCE.
- 2.2 That Council note the BCE's proposals for Nottingham City.

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that the existing accountability between constituents, local authorities and local MPs is maintained following the conclusion of the BCE's review.
- 3.2 To raise concerns with the BCE that Nottingham City's population is not properly counted or reflected in the electorate figures used or the proposals put forward for Nottingham City's three existing constituencies of Nottingham East, Nottingham North and Nottingham South.

4 Other options considered in making recommendations

- 4.1 Not responding to the BCE, this was discounted for the reasons set out under Section 3.

5 Background (including outcomes of consultation)

- 5.1 The BCE published its initial proposals for new constituencies on 8th June 2021, including changes to existing constituency boundaries covering the City of Nottingham. More details are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2 There are various criteria the BCE are working to, but the most significant is that every constituency the BCE proposes (with the exception of two covering the Isle of Wight) should contain no fewer than 69,724 electors and no more than 77,062.
- 5.3 The BCE has noted that the electorates of the three existing City of Nottingham constituencies are "outside" the desired electoral range set out in their criteria (see *Table 1 below*):

Table 1 – BCE Current Electorate

Current Constituencies	Electorate at March 2020
Nottingham North	66,914
Nottingham East	66,279
Nottingham South	79,684

5.3 The BCE argue that they have to propose changes to all three constituencies in Nottingham with a substantial number of electors being added to the city, and the existing electorate reallocated between the three existing constituencies to ensure each falls within the desired electoral range.

5.4 As a result, they have proposed the following changes for Nottingham City:

Nottingham North:

- Adding three wards (Kimberley, Nuthall East & Strelley, and Watnall & Nuthall West) from the existing Broxtowe constituency.
- Gains Leen Valley from the current Nottingham South.
- Loses Bilborough to the proposed new Nottingham South.
- Is renamed “*Nottingham North and Kimberley*”.

Nottingham East:

- Gains Castle Ward from Nottingham South.

Nottingham South:

- Gains Bilborough from the Nottingham North constituency.
- Loses Castle Ward to the proposed Nottingham East
- Loses Leen Valley to the proposed Nottingham North.

5.5 The proposed constituencies have the following electorate as a result (see *Table 2 below*):

Proposed Constituencies	Electorate following changes
Nottingham North and Kimberley	74,515
Nottingham East	75,327
Nottingham South	76,076

6 Nottingham City Council – Response to the Boundary Commission for England

6.1 We believe it is in the best interests of Nottingham constituents to limit the number of constituencies that intersect the city, and maintain the MP representation along existing local authority boundaries as much as possible.

6.2 We would prefer our constituency boundaries to be coterminous with our local government boundaries, as this helps ensure accountability between constituents, local authorities and local MPs is maintained, and reduces confusion for Nottingham residents that would result from constituencies crossing multiple local authority boundaries.

- 6.3 It also facilitates more efficient partnership working between the local authority and MPs.
- 6.4 However, we accept that the BCE's electorate thresholds mean that maintaining the status quo is not an option, and that Nottingham's electorate will always require at least three constituencies, and that one constituency may have to extend beyond the City of Nottingham to meet the statutory criteria for the review as set out in the BCE's proposals.
- 6.5 Therefore, we are not objecting to the BCE's proposed new constituencies for Nottingham, as the proposed changes are much less significant (and detrimental) to the city and local people than the changes put forward by the BCE in the abandoned 2016 review of constituency boundaries.
- 6.6 However, we have serious concerns about the electorate figures used for Nottingham City and the methodology used for measuring the size of the electorate.
- 6.7 Nottingham City is a major urban area – it is one of the largest cities outside of London, and one of the “Core Cities” Group of UK cities – the largest and most strategically important cities for the UK outside of London.
- 6.8 We have two large universities, with an estimated student population (prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic) in the region of 50,000 all living, working and studying in the city.
- 6.9 It also has a large transient population, with significant movement of people into and out of the city over time.
- 6.10 Alongside local residents, the above groups are entitled to and require representation and support from a local MP and the local authority of various kinds. They are not fully reflected in the electorate figures used as the basis for this review.
- 6.11 To illustrate this point, below (*at Table 3*) we provide data on the proportion of people who are over 18 and registered to vote within the BCE's proposed constituencies within Nottinghamshire.

Constituency	BCE proposal		
	Electorate	18+ population	%
Ashfield CC	71,703	77,779	92.2
Broxtowe CC	72,461	78,788	92.0
Gedling CC	75,795	81,348	93.2
Mansfield CC	72,796	81,597	89.2
Newark CC	76,478	85,246	89.7
Nottingham East BC	75,327	106,132	71.0
Nottingham North and Kimberley BC	74,515	81,352	91.6
Nottingham South BC	76,076	89,965	84.6
Rushcliffe CC	76,171	79,124	96.3
Sherwood CC	76,543	80,342	95.3
Worksop and Retford CC	75,773	82,833	91.5

- 6.12 Most constituencies seem to run at 90-95% of over 18s being registered to vote with the other 5-10% being either ineligible or disinterested (roughly 3-7,000 people). This falls to 71% and 85% in Nottingham East and Nottingham South respectively. Under the BCE's proposals, there would be between 14,000 and 31,000 people in these

constituencies who are represented by the local MP but are not a part of the electorate.

6.13 The lowest rates are in Castle ward (51%) with Hyson Green and Arboretum, Radford and St Ann's all in the 60-70% range. These are all areas with large populations of both students (particularly overseas students) and recent migrants.

6.14 Therefore, we wish to put on record our concerns that the electorate figures used for Nottingham City do not fully and accurately reflect the size and diversity of the population in Nottingham, and do not ensure that everyone within the city is receiving the level of democratic engagement and representation at Parliament that they are entitled to.

6.15 Being able to participate in democracy locally and nationally is a key right of citizenship, and we work hard locally to ensure that the full spectrum of Nottingham's diverse communities is heard and represented in the city.

6.16 We are concerned that the BCE's methodology and proposals fail to do this to the same extent, leading to a poorer outcome for the people of Nottingham and the city.

7 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money)

7.1 Not applicable, as there is no financial element involved in the proposed response.

8 Legal and Procurement colleague comments (including risk management issues, and legal, Crime and Disorder Act and procurement implications)

8.1 The Boundary Commission for England is required by law to conduct a review of constituencies every eight years. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 sets out the criteria they must abide by. The proposed response to the draft BCE recommendations identifies concerns about how the size of the Nottingham City electorate has been measured. Evidence is provided in support of this assertion to support the Council's response to the proposals.

Beth Brown, Head of Legal and Governance 9 July 2021

9 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

9.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

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An EIA is not required because there is no proposed change to Nottingham City Council policies or provision of services as a result of the proposed response.

10 List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information

10.1 Nil.

11 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

11.1 The Boundary Commission for England: Initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the East Midlands region.

Councillor David Mellen
Leader of the Council