

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes OBE, Chief Executive

Report to:	Councillor M J Hill OBE, Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources, Communications and Commissioning)
Date:	28 November – 02 December 2022
Subject:	The Boundary Commission for England: 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries
Decision Reference:	I028468
Key decision?	No

Summary:

This report provides the Leader of the Council with an update on the latest proposed changes to Lincolnshire's parliamentary constituency boundaries which have been put forward by the Boundary Commission for England and recommends that the Leader writes to the Boundary Commis

Recommendation(s):

The Leader of the Council considers the proposals of the Boundary Commission with particular focus on the plans for Stamford and Rutland and make a decision as to whether Lincolnshire County Council should write to the Boundary Commission calling on it to return to the previous proposals for Stamford and Rutland.

Alternatives Considered:

To let the recommendations of the Boundary Commission proceed in their current form without any comments or recommendations from Lincolnshire County Council.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The proposals of the Boundary Commission for the Stamford and Rutland parliamentary constituency are complex and would present additional challenges for the MP through the additional relationships that would have to be built across a greater number of bodies than for any other Lincolnshire MP. This undermines the continuance of sustainable governance within the parliamentary constituency boundaries.

1. Background

1.1. The Boundary Commission for England is the independent organisation responsible for reviewing Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries in England. Work to develop the latest proposals has been on-going since 2021. Throughout this process, the Boundary Commission have consulted with stakeholders on 8 June – 2 August 2021; and 22 February – 4 April 2022 (the latter including 32 public hearings across England) which have subsequently resulted in the latest proposals being published.

1.2. The current review, referred to as the '2023 Review' will conclude with a formal report and recommendations in June 2023. Recent changes to the law make it very likely that the recommendations from this review will be implemented without further amendment.

1.3. By law, every constituency proposed must contain between 69,724 and 77,062 parliamentary electors (as at 2 March 2020). The proposed changes put forward by the boundary commission will adhere to these requirements and will see 10 new constituencies created in England. The number of constituencies in the East Midlands will subsequently increase from 46 to 47.

1.4. The third and final consultation on the new map of revised constituencies will close on 5 December and final recommendations will be submitted to parliament by 1 July 2023.

1.5. The new plans would see the Stamford and Rutland constituency cross 3 county boundaries and 5 Local Authorities, 3 of which being Upper Tiers (Appendix D). This would also include crossing two Local Enterprise Partnerships which would create a more complex geography than any other Lincolnshire parliamentary constituency. The proposals also raise questions about the synergy between the outskirts of Leicester, Grantham and Bourne.

1.6. Whilst the proposal satisfy the legal requirements for balanced representation for electors, that representation needs to be able to be effective. The complex new geography of the proposed new Stamford and Rutland constituency would present additional challenges for the MP through the additional relationships that would have to be built across a greater number of bodies than for any other Lincolnshire MP.

1.7. The previous arrangements put forward in June 2021 were significantly less complex straddling two counties - Lincolnshire and Rutland – and one district – South Kesteven. Under these initial proposal wards around Market Deeping in South Kesteven would also be moved from the South Holland and the Deepings constituency into the Stamford and Rutland constituency.

1.8. It is suggested that the Leader of the Council consider asking the Boundary Review to return to the previous proposals for Stamford and Rutland. It is advised that the Leader also considers supporting the remainder of the proposed boundary changes.

Initial Boundary Proposals for Lincolnshire (June 2021, Appendix B)

1.9. The initial proposals put forward and consulted on in 2021 would have seen part of South Kesteven (around 11 wards), become part of Rutland and Stamford. Gainsborough would have lost part of Wragby to Louth and Horncastle. Louth and Horncastle's

boundaries would have resulted in Chapel Orby and East Kirkby being moved into Boston and Skegness.

1.10. Boston and Skegness was planned to be moved back from Boston West, Brothertoft, Algarkirk, Holland Fen into a new constituency, named South Lincolnshire.

1.11. South Holland and Deepings was to be replaced with South Lincolnshire, with the boundary moved back from Market Deeping, Deeping St James, and the West Deeping area.

1.12. Under the initial plans it was intended that Grantham and Stamford would be roughly split in approximately half as part of the proposals for Rutland and Stamford.

1.13. A new Grantham Constituency was to be created taking the lower third of the current Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency, with its borders moving north to the west of East Heckington, taking in Silk Willoughby, Wilsford, Sudbook, Fulbeck and Fenton.

1.14. Sleaford and North Hykeham itself will have seen its Western, Northern and Eastern borders remain pretty much the same.

1.15. Lincoln would have remained almost the same, except a small square of land between Somerton Gate Lane and Lowfields Farm to the south leaving the Sleaford constituency.

Latest Boundary Proposals for Lincolnshire (November 2022, Appendix C)

1.16. If the latest proposals were agreed, from the next general election parts of Lincolnshire will be represented by an additional constituency, shared with Rutland and Harborough. The proposed new Stamford and Rutland constituency would include the Harborough villages of Billesdon and Tilton, Nevill and Thurnby & Houghton on top of the planned 11 SKDC wards.

1.17. The proposed new Grantham constituency would be expanded to include a number of SKDC and NKDC wards including the Heckington Rural and Osbournby. The Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency would include the remaining NKDC wards. The previously planned "South Lincolnshire" constituency would revert back to South Holland and the Deepings.

1.18. Boston and Skegness would be expanded to include Chapel St Leonards and will be re-aligned with the south of Boston Borough Council. Louth and Horncastle will include the Wragby and Halton Hologate wards, re-aligning it with the boundaries of East Lindsey. Lincoln and Gainsborough remain largely unchanged apart from minor alterations.

1.19. Suggestions that North Hykeham should be included in the Lincoln boundaries, that Heckington Rural and Osbournby were closer to Sleaford, and that the Grantham constituency would be better called Grantham and Bourne were rejected by the commissioners.

2. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

No adverse impacts of these potential decisions have been identified.

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health & Well Being Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

A decision will not contradict any of the aims and ambitions in the assessment and the strategy.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

No possible negative implications have been identified.

3. Conclusion

3.1. The third and final consultation on the new map of revised constituencies will close on 5 December and final recommendations will be submitted to parliament by 1 July 2023.

3.2. The previous arrangements were significantly less complex, involving two counties - Lincolnshire and Rutland – and one district – South Kesteven. Under these initial proposal wards around Market Deeping in South Kesteven would also be moved from the South Holland and the Deepings constituency into the Stamford and Rutland constituency.

3.3. It is suggested that the Leader of the Council considers asking the Boundary Commission to return to the previous proposals for Stamford and Rutland. It is advised that the Leader of the Council also considers supporting the remainder of the proposed boundary changes.

4. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power to adopt the recommendations and the decision is within the remit of the Leader of the Council

5. Resource Comments:

Accepting the recommendations in this report, should have no material impact on the budgets of the Council.

6. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

This decision will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 24 November 2022 and the comments of the Board will be reported to the Leader of the Council

d) Risks and Impact Analysis

The risks and impacts of potential decisions have been considered within the body of the report.

7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Current Constituency Boundaries
Appendix B	Initial Proposed Constituency Boundaries
Appendix C	Latest Proposed Constituency Boundaries
Appendix D	Comparison Table of the Proposals for Stamford and Rutland

8. Background Papers

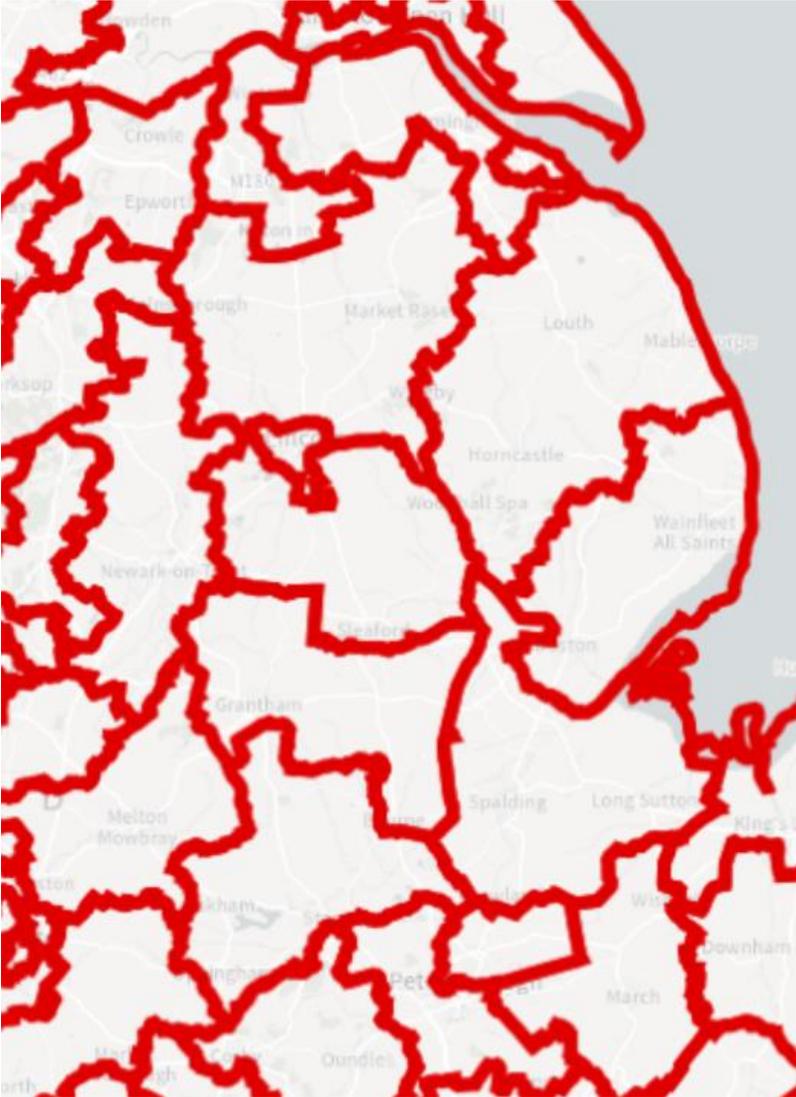
Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Revised proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the East Midlands region	https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/east-midlands/
Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020	https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2738

This report was written by Matthew Garrard, who can be contacted on matthew.garrard@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

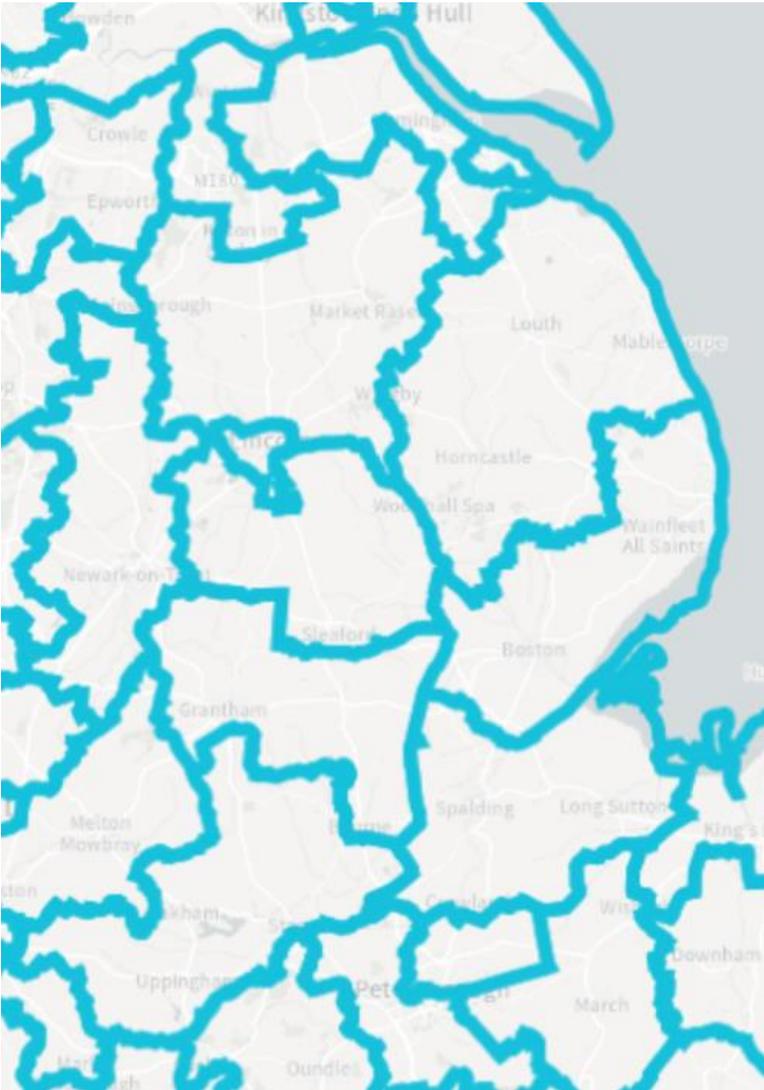
Appendix A: Current Constituency Boundaries



Appendix B: Initial Proposed Constituency Boundaries



Appendix C: Latest Proposed Constituency Boundaries



Appendix D: Comparison Table of the Proposals for Stamford and Rutland

Proposal	MPs Boundaries	Counties	Local Authorities	LEP	Police and Crime Commissioner	Health
Initial (June 2021)	Stamford (Gareth Davies) Rutland (Alicia Kearns) Deepings (Sir John Hayes)	Lincolnshire Rutland	Lincolnshire County Council Rutland County Council (Unitary Authority) South Kesteven District Council	Greater Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland	Lincolnshire ICS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICS
Latest (November 2022)	Stamford (Gareth Davies) Rutland (Alicia Kearns) Harborough (Neil O'Brien)	Lincolnshire Rutland Leicestershire	Lincolnshire County Council Rutland County Council (Unitary Authority) Leicestershire County Council Harborough District Council South Kesteven District Council	Greater Lincolnshire Leicestershire	Lincolnshire Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland	Lincolnshire ICS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICS