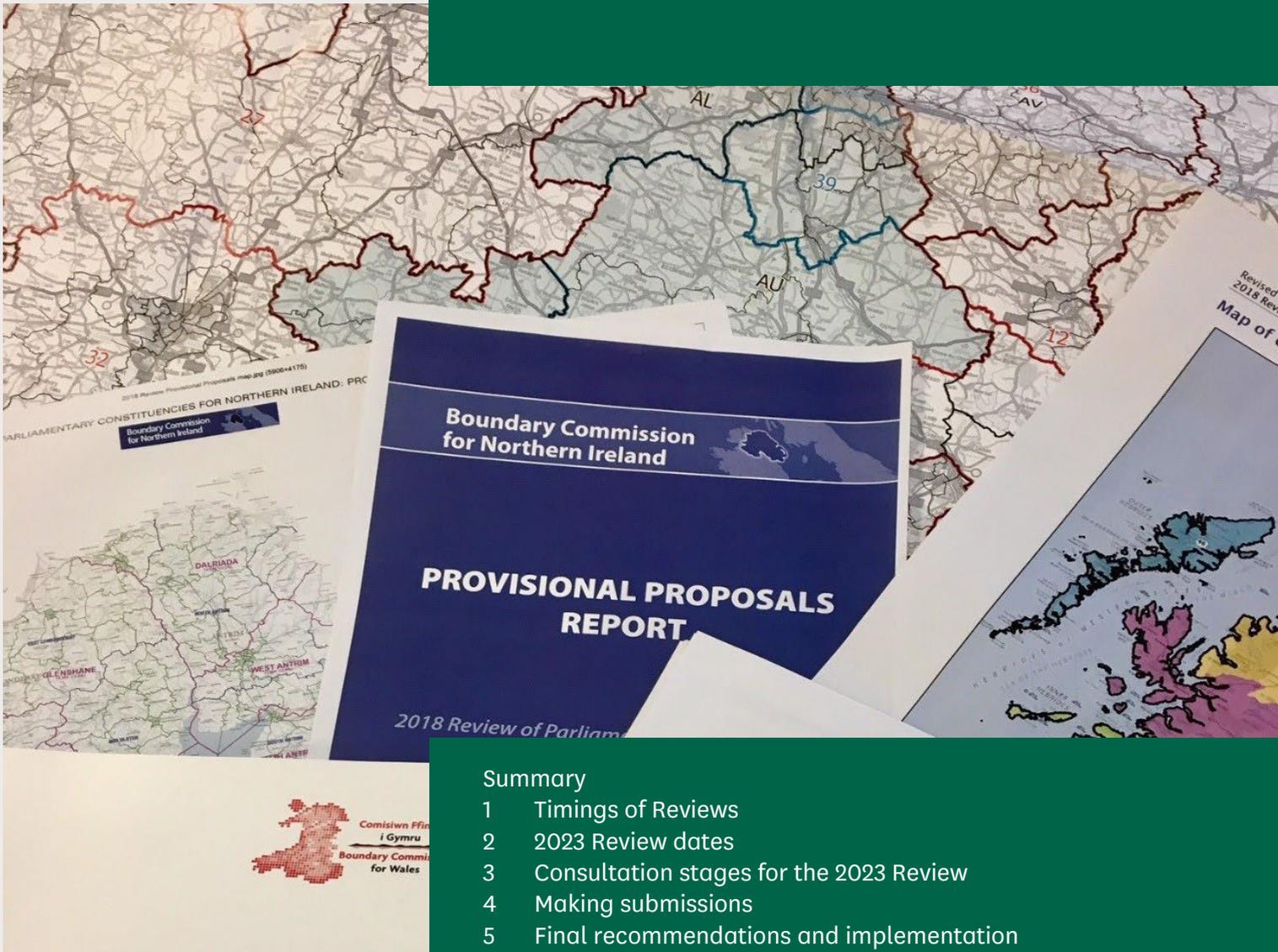


By Neil Johnston

20 November 2023

# Parliamentary boundary reviews: public consultations



## Summary

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## Summary

The number of constituencies in the House of Commons is fixed at 650.

Periodic boundary reviews occur so that constituencies are altered occasionally to take account of changes in population. Changes are also made to reflect local government boundary changes, so that administrative boundaries coincide as much as possible.

Reviews are undertaken by independent Boundary Commissions. There are four Commissions, one for each of the nations of the UK.

Public consultations form an important part of boundary reviews. This briefing summarises the public consultation process followed by the Boundary Commissions.

There is more information on the background to boundary reviews and the number of Members of Parliament in the Library briefing SN05929, [Constituency boundary reviews and the number of MPs](#).

### The 2023 Review

The Commissions jointly announced the start of the new review in January 2021. The Review completed in June 2023. The next review must be completed by 1 October 2031. It is likely to start in early 2029.

The number of seats allocated to each part of the UK is calculated using the total electorate. For the 2023 Review this was based on the Parliamentary electorate as of 2 March 2020. This figure is the highest on record.

2023 Review - allocation of seats				
	Electorate	Current	2023 Review	Change
<b>England</b>	39,860,421	533	543	+10
<b>Scotland</b>	4,079,612	59	57	-2
<b>Wales</b>	2,332,677	40	32	-8
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	1,295,688	18	18	0
<b>Total</b>	47,558,398	650	650	

Source: Boundary Commissions

All seats must have an electorate within 5% of the UK average. The average electorate is known as the ‘electoral quota’. For the 2023 Review the electoral quota was 73,393, with the electorate of each constituency required to be between 69,724 and 77,062 electors.

Five island seats are exempt from this rule - Orkney and Shetland, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Ynys Môn, and the two seats allocated to the Isle of Wight – and their electorates are not included in the calculation for the quota.

## Public consultations

The timings of the start of consultation periods are a matter for the Commissions, subject to meeting the deadline for completing the Review.

The timings of the 2023 Review are summarised in the table below.

2023 Review - consultation stages				
Stage	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Review commences	05 January 2021	05 January 2021	05 January 2021	05 January 2021
Initial proposals published	08 June 2021	14 October 2021	18 August 2021	20 October 2021
Initial consultation closes	02 August 2021	08 December 2021	03 November 2021	15 December 2021
Secondary consultation opens	22 February 2022	10 February 2022	17 February 2022	09 February 2022
Secondary consultation closes	04 April 2022	23 March 2022	30 March 2022	22 March 2022
Revised proposals published	08 November 2022	08 November 2022	19 October 2022	17 November 2022
Third consultation closes	05 December 2022	05 December 2022	15 November 2022	15 December 2022
Final recommendations	28 June 2023	28 June 2023	28 June 2023	28 June 2023

Source: Boundary Commissions

## Implementing the recommendations

The 2023 Review will be the first to be implemented under the new arrangements brought in by the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020](#).

The final reports of the Commissions must be delivered to the Speaker of the House of Commons. At the same time the Commissions must send copies to the Government. The Speaker is responsible for laying the final reports. Once laid the Commissions can publish the reports.

The Government must draw up a draft Order in Council containing the final recommendations of the Commissions without amendment. This must be within four months of the final report being laid.

Parliament has no role in approving the draft Order. It is submitted to His Majesty in Council, where it is approved. Once the draft Order is approved the boundaries are implemented at the next general election. The [Parliamentary Constituencies Order 2023](#) was approved in November 2023.

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# 1 Timings of Reviews

Periodic boundary reviews occur so that constituencies are altered occasionally to take account of changes in population over time. Changes are also made to reflect local government boundary changes, so that administrative boundaries coincide as much as possible.

Reviews are undertaken by independent Boundary Commissions. There are four Commissions, one for each of the nations of the UK.

The timings of reviews are set out in the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986](#), as amended by the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020](#).

Each Boundary Commission must submit a final report of a boundary review:

- before 1 July 2023,
- before 1 October 2031, and
- before 1 October of every eighth year after that.<sup>1</sup>

Before 2011, Commissions were required to announce the start of a review in the London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes. Now the announcement of the start of a review can be announced as the Commissions see fit.

Boundary reviews are based on the number of people on the register of electors for UK Parliamentary elections on a given date.

For the 2023 Review the registers are those in force on 2 March 2020. The March 2020 registers have the highest number of Parliamentary electors ever recorded.<sup>2</sup>

For subsequent reviews the data to be used are the electoral registers in force 2 years and 10 months before the deadline for reports. For example, the 1 October 2031 review must be based on electoral registers in force on 1 December 2028.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 3 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended

<sup>2</sup> ONS, [Electoral statistics, UK: December 2020](#), 24 May 2021

## 2 2023 Review dates

The Boundary Commissions are not bound by specific dates on which stages of the review need to happen. They just need to meet the deadline for the final report.

As noted in section 1, the Commissions must submit their final recommendations to the Speaker of the House by the date set out in the legislation, 1 July 2023. Seats are allocated based on the electoral register data for the registers in force on 2 March 2020.

The table below shows the allocation of seats by region and nation.

2023 Review allocation of seats - House of Commons		
	Allocation	Change from current
<b>England</b>	543	+10
East Midlands	47	+1
Eastern	61	+3
London	75	+2
North East	27	-2
North West	73	-2
South East	91	+7
South West	58	+3
West Midlands	57	-2
Yorkshire and the Humber	54	0
<b>Scotland</b>	57	-2
<b>Wales</b>	32	-8
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	18	0
<b>Total</b>	650	0
Sources:		
Boundary Commissions, various reports		
Boundary Commissions, various announcements of 2023 Review		

Source:

Boundary Commissions, various reports

Boundary Commissions, various announcements of 2023 Review

The Boundary Commissions formally launched the 2023 review on 5 January 2021. The review was completed on 27 June 2023 when all four Commissions sent their reports to the Speaker of the House. These were laid and published the following day.

The consultation phases were triggered by the dates that proposals are published.

Although the dates for launching a consultation are a matter for the Commissions, there are statutory lengths of time for consultation periods within the review process. There are also statutory provisions relating to public hearings. These can only be held during the secondary consultation. See section 3 for more information on the secondary phase of consultation.

The table below summarises the dates of stages of the 2023 Review.

2023 Review - consultation stages				
Stage	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Review commences	05 January 2021	05 January 2021	05 January 2021	05 January 2021
Initial proposals published	08 June 2021	14 October 2021	18 August 2021	20 October 2021
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Revised proposals published	08 November 2022	08 November 2022	19 October 2022	17 November 2022
Third consultation closes	05 December 2022	05 December 2022	15 November 2022	15 December 2022

Source: Boundary Commissions

## Initial proposals consultations

### Wales

Representation received by the Boundary Commission for Wales in the initial consultation were published on 16 December 2021.<sup>3</sup> The Boundary Commission for Wales had announced its secondary consultation period would run from 11 January to 21 February 2022. At the same time, it announced five public hearings would be held in that period.<sup>4</sup>

These were delayed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and were held between 17 February and 30 March 2022. They included public hearings in Aberystwyth, Bangor, Wrexham, Swansea and Cardiff, each lasting one day.

<sup>3</sup> Boundary Commission for Wales, [Boundary Commission publishes consultation responses](#), 16 December 2021

<sup>4</sup> [Boundary Commission for Wales to hold Public Hearings](#), press release, 5 November 2021

Appendix 1 gives details of the public hearings.<sup>5</sup> Consultation [responses and public hearing transcripts](#) were published on 19 July 2022.<sup>6</sup>

## England

The Boundary Commission for England announced details of its secondary consultation on 20 December 2021.<sup>7</sup> This included 32 public hearings across England. London and the North West regions had the maximum five public hearings. The North East had the minimum number of two hearings. All hearings were over two days and details were available on the Commission's [Public hearings page](#) on its website.

Written responses from the received were integrated into the interactive maps on the Commission's [consultation portal](#).<sup>8</sup>

## Scotland

The Boundary Commission for Scotland announced its secondary consultation details on 24 January 2022.<sup>9</sup> The consultation ran from 10 February to 23 March 2022. Responses received from the initial consultation have been published and can be [downloaded from](#) the Commission's website.

Five public hearings were held with each hearing lasting one day. The location of the hearings were Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Inverness and Oban.

## Northern Ireland

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland published the [written representations](#) it received during its initial consultation period on 27 January.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it announced its secondary consultation period would run from 9 February to 23 March 2022. There were three public hearings, one each in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, and Cookstown.<sup>11</sup> Details of [public hearings and written representations](#) were published on 26 May 2022.

## Revised proposals

All four Commissions revised some of their proposals in light of the feedback they have received. Publication of revised recommendations triggered the third and final period of consultation.

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<sup>5</sup> Boundary Commission for Wales, [Guide to the Public Hearings](#), 5 November 2021

<sup>6</sup> Boundary Commission for Wales, [Boundary Commission publishes consultation responses](#), 19 July 2022

<sup>7</sup> Boundary Commission for England, [Secondary consultation: Dates and locations of public hearings now available](#), 20 December 2021

<sup>8</sup> The URL for the site is: <https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> Boundary Commission for Scotland, [press release](#) (PDF), 23 January 2022

<sup>10</sup> Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, [Representations received](#)

<sup>11</sup> Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, [The 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies](#)

## Wales

The Boundary Commission for Wales was the first to publish its revised proposals, on 19 October 2022. The Commission received 1,367 written and 81 oral representations on the initial proposals. As a result, it decided to propose changes to boundaries to 22 of the 32 proposed constituencies, and different names for 9 of the constituencies. The third consultation closed on 15 November 2022.<sup>12</sup>

## England

The Boundary Commission for England published its revised proposals on 8 November 2022 having had over 45,000 comments during the first two rounds of consultation.<sup>13</sup> The Boundary Commission for Scotland released its revised proposals on the same day.<sup>14</sup>

In England's revised proposals, about two-fifths (225) of the 543 proposed seats have been changed from the initial proposals. This leaves 318 seats unchanged from the initial proposals. The revised proposals have retained 54 existing seats wholly unchanged from their current boundaries. A further 72 existing seats have had only minor boundary adjustments to realign constituency boundaries with local government ward boundaries. The Commission has decided to split 35 wards between seats to better reflect local ties in those areas.

In London, 27 constituencies would cross London borough boundaries (four fewer than the initial proposals) and no seat contains wards from more than two boroughs. In the rest of England, 20 proposed seats cross county boundaries.<sup>15</sup>

## Scotland

In Scotland, 20 of the 55 mainland constituency boundaries are unchanged from the initial proposals (the two islands seats are protected) and include three seats where only the name was changed. Nine existing constituencies, in addition to the two protected seats, are retained with boundaries unchanged since 2005. Of the 35 constituencies with altered boundaries from the initial proposals, 20 have also had their name changed.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Boundary Commission for Wales, [Revised Proposals published in Wales Boundary Review](#), 19 October 2022

<sup>13</sup> Boundary Commission for England, [Final consultation on revised proposals open now: Last chance to help reshape constituencies](#), 8 November 2022

<sup>14</sup> Boundary Commission for Scotland, [2023 Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies Boundary Commission for Scotland consults on revised constituencies](#) (PDF), 8 November 2022

<sup>15</sup> Boundary Commission for England, [2023 Review documents](#) for each region

<sup>16</sup> As above

## Northern Ireland

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland published its revised proposals on 17 November 2022. The consultation on them ran until 15 December 2022.<sup>17</sup>

The revised proposals leave half of the 18 proposed constituencies the same as the initial proposals. The other half have had adjustments as a result of the feedback received.

All eighteen seats in Northern Ireland will have different boundaries to the existing seats. They will, however, retain the same 18 names, with the exception of Belfast South. This is being extended further south to include Saintfield, County Down, and the constituency is being renamed Belfast South and Mid Down.

## Final recommendations

Reports containing the final recommendations were submitted to the Speaker of the House on 27 June 2023. They were laid and published the following day.<sup>18</sup>

## England

The Boundary Commission for England received 18,890 individual representations, including petitions and letter-writing campaign, during the consultation on the revised recommendations. The Commission left 457 seats unchanged from its revised recommendations. It made boundary alterations to 41 constituencies from the revised recommendations. In most cases this involved a ward swap or reallocation between a pair of neighbouring seats. In a handful of cases this involved exchanges between a group of three or four neighbouring constituencies. In eight of these constituencies there was also a name change.

In a further 45 constituencies boundaries were the same as in the revised recommendations, but constituency names had been altered. Most of these resulted from the inclusion of an additional place name, for example Bury St Edmunds became Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket. In two cases in London the longer name in the revised recommendations was shortened (Croydon West had included 'and South Norwood' and Lewisham North had included 'and Deptford' in the revised recommendations).

The other main changes were changes in the order of place names (for example Exeter East and Exmouth became Exmouth and Exeter East) or new

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<sup>17</sup> Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, [Boundary Commission Publishes Revised Proposals and Commences Third Consultation Period](#), 17 November 2023

<sup>18</sup> Votes and proceedings, [Wednesday 28 June 2023](#)

names altogether (for example, Berwick and Morpeth became North Northumberland).<sup>19</sup>

The final recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England will mean 55 existing constituencies remain unaltered (including four seats with very small changes that affect few or no voters). Four additional seats will remain with the same boundaries as the existing ones but will have their names altered.

### Scotland

In Scotland, the Commission received 864 representation on the revised proposals. In its final recommendations, 28 constituencies were unaltered from the revised recommendations (including the preserved seats of Orkney and Shetland, and Na h-Eileanan an Iar) and a further six had unaltered boundaries but had their names changed.

Six pairs of neighbouring constituencies had adjustments between them. The remaining seats had more significant changes, which also included some name changes. There were changes affecting the seats in the Highlands, Moray and Aberdeenshire. The most significant changes were around the council areas of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, southern Fife, and eastern Stirling.<sup>20</sup>

The final recommendations will mean ten unchanged seats in Scotland from the existing boundaries. This includes the two preserved seats and one seat (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) where a minor alteration to realign with ward boundaries is in a rural area affecting no voters.

### Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Commission received 28 representations and a petition which had been collated by seven organisations. In the final recommendations thirteen of the eighteen constituencies were unchanged from the revised proposals. The changes related to the allocation of three wards affecting the proposed Belfast North, East Antrim, Lagan Valley, South Down, and Strangford constituencies.<sup>21</sup>

All the seats in Northern Ireland will have altered boundaries compared to the existing boundaries.

### Wales

In Wales, the Commission received 623 representations on the revised proposals. In the final recommendations, 21 of the constituencies recommended in the revised proposals were unchanged in the final recommendations (including the preserved seat of Ynys Môn) and one seat

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<sup>19</sup> Boundary Commission for England, [Final recommendations](#), 28 June 2023

<sup>20</sup> Boundary Commission for Scotland, [Final recommendations](#), 28 June 2023

<sup>21</sup> Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, [Final recommendations](#), 28 June 2023

with the same boundaries was renamed (Merthyr Tydfil and Upper Cynon became Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare).

There were changes between two pairs of seats, Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Montgomeryshire and Glyndwr, and between Caerphilly and Newport West and Islwyn which had no knock-on effects to surrounding seats.

The main changes affected the proposed Rhondda from the revised recommendations and the five seats covering the council areas of Swansea, Bridgend, and most of Neath Port Talbot (the Pontardawe area of Neath Port Talbot was unaffected as it remained allocated to the recommended Brecon, Radnor and Cwm Tawe constituency).<sup>22</sup>

The level of change in Wales needed to reduce the number of constituencies from 40 to 32 means that only the preserved seat of Ynys Môn has the same boundaries as those before the review.

Details of the Review can be found on the Commissions' websites:

- [Boundary Commission for England](#);
- [Boundary Commission for Scotland](#);
- [Boundary Commission for Wales](#);
- [Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland](#).

## Order in Council

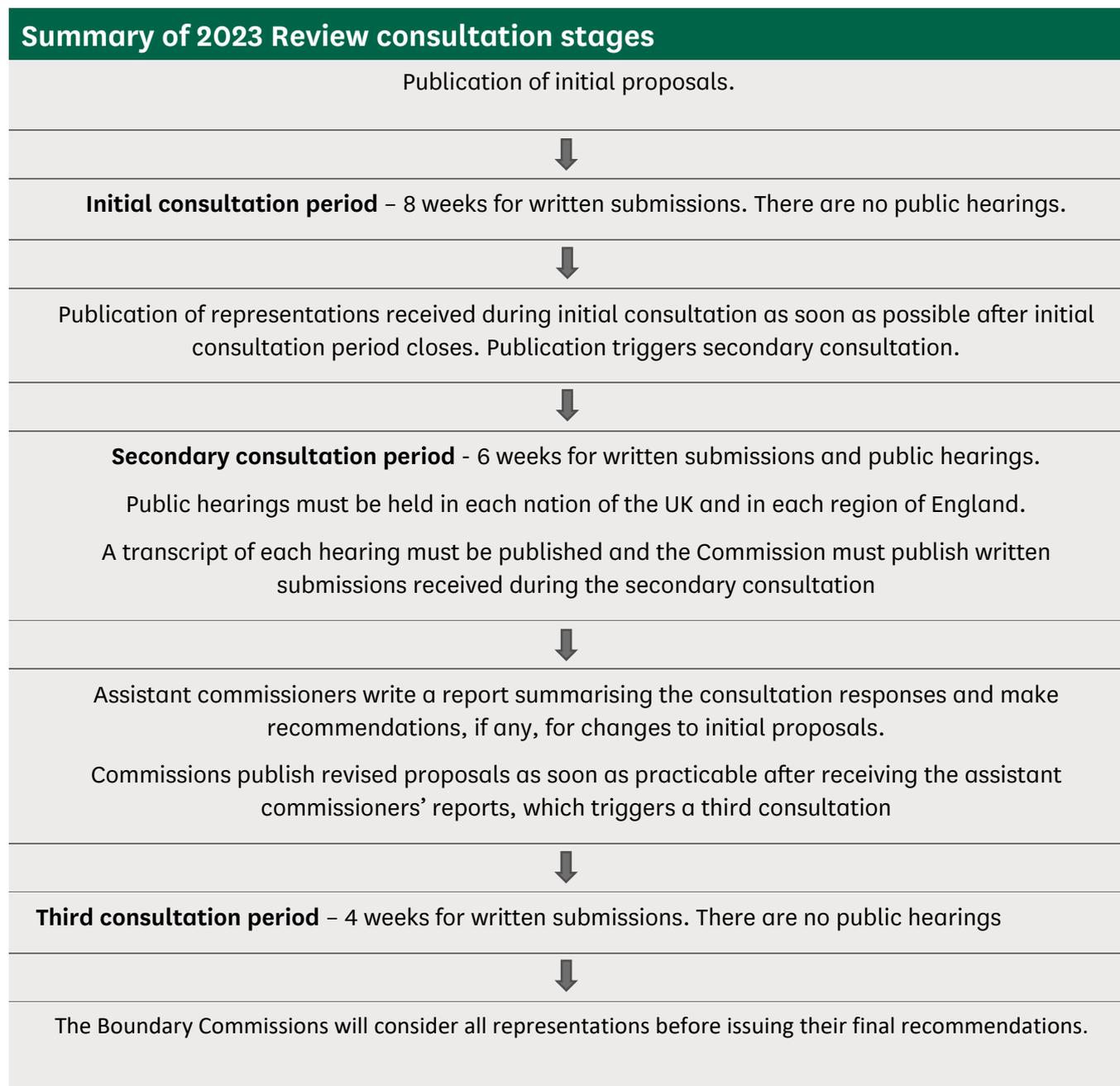
The [Parliamentary Constituencies Order 2023](#), which implements the new boundaries of the 2023 Review at the next general election, was approved on 15 November 2023.

Section 5 explain more about final reports and the implementation of the final recommendations.

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<sup>22</sup> Boundary Commission for Wales, [Final recommendations](#), 28 June 2023

### 3 Consultation stages for the 2023 Review



The time periods for the 2023 Review were shorter overall than subsequent reviews. This reflects the shorter overall timescale for the 2023 Review. In future reviews each consultation stage will last 8 weeks.

The dates of consultation stages of the current review are summarised in section 2.

## 3.1 Initial consultation

The initial consultation period is triggered by the publication of the initial proposals by a Commission.

For the 2023 Review the initial consultation ran for 8 weeks. In subsequent reviews the initial consultation will also run for 8 weeks.

Each Commission must inform people in any way it sees fit:

- What the proposals for each constituency are;
- Where a copy of the proposals can be inspected in each constituency;
- How written submission may be made.

After the close of the 8-week period the Commissions must publish all the written submissions they have received. This can also be done in any way that the Commission sees fit and usually happens a short time after the close of the 8-week period.

For the 2023 Review, the Commissions for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland all commenced their initial consultations at the same time as publishing their initial proposals.

The Boundary Commission for Wales published its initial proposals for revised constituency boundaries on 18 August. However, it also announced that the initial public consultation would start on the 8 September 2021.

Section 5 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended, states that a Commission must take steps to inform voters that written representations may be made “during a specified period of eight weeks”. The legislation does not require initial consultation to start on the same day as publication of initial proposals.

## 3.2 Secondary consultation and public hearings

The Boundary Commissions are required to publicise the fact that the documentation from the initial consultation has been published. This triggers the secondary consultation.

The Commissions must inform people that further submissions commenting on these representations about the initial consultation are being sought. For the 2023 Review this secondary stage was 6 weeks. In subsequent reviews the secondary consultation will last 8 weeks.

This is s an opportunity for people to comment on the content of the representations received by the Boundary Commissions in the initial consultation. The secondary consultation includes public hearings during the six-week period.

## Public hearings

Public hearings are an opportunity for interested parties to make oral representations relating to initial proposals, and to allow for people to make counter-proposals or comment on written submissions made by others in the initial consultation.

[Section 5](#) and [Schedule 2A](#) in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended, make provisions for public hearings to be held during the secondary consultation.

The Commissions are free to choose where hearings are held but there are some statutory requirements. They must ensure they spread hearings to cover the whole of each region or country.

Each of the nine English regions, and the three nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland must each hold at least two and no more than five public hearings.

For the English regions the hearings will relate only to that region. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the hearings can relate to the proposals for the whole of the country.

Hearings must be completed in two days. Commissions are free to decide that they should be completed on a single day.

The Boundary Commissions must appoint chairs to each hearing, and it is the responsibility of each chair how they run their hearing. The chair must allow representations to be made by each qualifying party and by any other person with an interest in the area.

A “qualifying party” means a political party that is registered with the Electoral Commission and:

(a) has at least one Member of the House of Commons representing a constituency in the region or nation in which the hearing is held, or

(b) received at least 10% of the votes cast in that region or country in the most recent parliamentary general election.<sup>23</sup>

The chair can choose the order of contributions, may restrict time allowed, and if time runs short chose who may and may not make a representation.

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<sup>23</sup> Paragraph 9 of [Schedule 2A](#) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended

The chair may put questions or allow questions to be put by others at their discretion.

After the secondary consultation period, each Commission must publish any written submissions received and transcripts of the public hearings held.

## Suggested reform

Following the completion of the 2023 Review, the Boundary Commission for England made a suggestion for further improving public hearings.

At present, the legislation requires public hearings to be held in person. We would welcome the ability to have more flexibility in approach, particularly the ability to deliver hybrid public hearings; for example, an in-person and online hearing convened at the same time.<sup>24</sup>

The Commission considered a hybrid approach would be a more effective use of public money as it may require fewer in-person hearings to be convened. It also suggested it may improve “accessibility of, and encourage participation in, hearings, particularly from those at work, or with caring commitments or mobility issues”.

## 3.3

### Third consultation period

If a Boundary Commission decides to alter its proposals after the end of the secondary consultation, revised recommendations will be published.

The publication of the revised proposals triggers a further 8 weeks public consultation. Public hearings are not held during this consultation and there is no secondary counter-proposal stage of consultation.

For the 2023 Review the third consultation period was shortened to 4 weeks.

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<sup>24</sup> Boundary Commission for England, [The 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries in England – Volume one: Report](#), paragraph 54, 28 June 2023

## 4

# Making submissions

Each Commission publishes guidance at the start of a review. Submissions are encouraged to state whether they support or oppose the recommendations.

A Commission will give equal consideration to each submission regardless of how it is submitted. This could be a presentation at a public hearing or a written submission. Written submissions can be electronic or hard copy, but people are encouraged to respond via the review websites each Commission provides.

MPs may make submissions in the same way as any other member of the public. Commissions will not normally agree to requests for interested parties to meet. Other interested parties should make either written or oral submissions as part of the consultation period.

If a submission objects to a proposal the Commissions advise that providing alternative suggestions are likely to be more helpful than a simple objection. For example, the Boundary Commission for England's [Guide to the 2023 Review](#) (PDF) says:

In particular, objectors are advised to say what they propose in place of the [Commission's] proposals. An objection accompanied by a viable counterproposal is likely to carry more weight than a simple statement of objection.<sup>25</sup>

The Boundary Commission for England guide also encourages people to participate if they agree with a proposal. The Commission notes:

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 [Commission] subsequently published revised proposals.<sup>26</sup>

Submissions may also comment on constituency names. Where a constituency is largely unchanged the Commissions will not normally alter a name. If a suitable alternative name is proposed which generally commands strong support locally then the name may be considered.

<sup>25</sup> Boundary Commission for England, [Guide to the 2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies](#) (PDF), p15

<sup>26</sup> As above, p18

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## 5 Final recommendations and implementation

All four Commissions are next required to report by 1 July 2023. The final reports must be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Commons.<sup>27</sup>

These final reports will have considered written representations received during the third consultation period. The Commissions are not obliged to make any revisions.

At the same time as submitting a report to the Speaker each Commission must send a copy of the final report to the Government.

Once the final reports and recommendations are submitted to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Government the four Commissions' involvement in the review is concluded.

The Minister is then responsible for drafting the required secondary legislation to automatically implement the final recommendations of the Boundary Commissions.

There is no longer any Parliamentary vote on the final recommendations.

### 5.1 Laying and publishing the reports

Once the Speaker of the House receives a final report, they must lay them before Parliament. A Boundary Commission must publish the report once it has been laid. This can be done “as it sees fit” and “as soon as reasonably practicable” after the report is laid.<sup>28</sup>

### 5.2 Automatic implementation

The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 amended the 1986 Act by scrapping the previous provisions that required both Houses of Parliament to

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<sup>27</sup> Section 3 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by [section 1](#) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020

<sup>28</sup> As above

vote on a draft Order in Council before being presented to His Majesty for approval.

Implementation is now automatic, and the 2020 changes also meant that the Government no longer has the power to alter a draft Order. Both measures were controversial and were one of the main points of debate during the passage of the 2020 Act. See the Library briefing on the Bill for more detail, [The Parliamentary Constituencies Bill 2019-21 \(CBP 8921\)](#).

## Draft Order in Council

After all four final reports, one from each Commission, have been laid by the Speaker, the Government is then responsible for drawing up a single draft Order to implement the recommendations.<sup>29</sup>

[Orders in Council](#) are Orders that have been approved at a meeting of the Privy Council personally by the King.

In previous reviews separate draft Orders were required for each part of the UK. The legislation now requires that a single Order is made to give effect to the changes for the whole of the UK.

The Government must submit a draft Order in Council to His Majesty in Council for approval “as soon as reasonably practicable”. The legislation also states this must be no later four months after the final report(s) have been laid in Parliament unless there are exceptional circumstances.<sup>30</sup> If the four month deadline is not met the Government is required to lay before Parliament a statement at regular intervals until the draft Order is submitted to His Majesty.

The draft Order must contain the final recommendations of the Boundary Commissions. The Government or Parliament cannot make changes.

Only a Boundary Commission can make an alteration to a final recommendation once the final reports have been handed to the Speaker of the House. A Boundary Commission may submit to the Speaker “a statement of modifications” specifying the changes required to correct an error. This can only be done if a draft Order in Council has not yet been submitted to His Majesty in Council.

Any modifications will need to be laid by the Speaker before Parliament, who will also write to the relevant minister to inform them. Once laid before Parliament, the relevant Boundary Commission must publish the modification. This can be done “as they see fit”.

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<sup>29</sup> Section 4 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by [section 2](#) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020

<sup>30</sup> Section 4 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by [section 2](#) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020

The validity of an Order in Council, once made, cannot be called into question in any legal proceedings.

## 5.3

### Using the new boundaries

The Order in Council will include a provision stating the date on which the order comes into force having been approved by His Majesty.

The new constituencies do not take effect until the next general election after the Order comes into force. Any coming into force provisions in an Order in Council do not affect the sitting Parliament and take effect at the dissolution of that Parliament.<sup>31</sup>

Any by-elections in the time between the Orders being made and the next general election are held using the current constituency boundaries.

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<sup>31</sup> [Section 4](#) (6) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended

## 6 Background

The current system of public consultation was introduced by the [Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011](#). The 2011 Act amended the provisions on local inquiries in the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986](#).

Before the 2011 changes, the public consultation process was based on an inquiry system. When initial proposals were published, the Boundary Commissions invited written submissions. If enough written submissions were received an assistant commissioner would conduct a quasi-judicial inquiry. There was no statutory procedure for local inquiries and the operation of them was left to the discretion of the assistant commissioner.

The 2011 Act revised the statutory provisions for public consultations and abolished inquiries. They were replaced with public hearings.

The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill, as introduced, made provision for a single 12-week consultation period with no public inquiry stage. If revised proposals were published then a second 12-week consultation was allowed, again with no public inquiries. Following criticism, the then Coalition Government amended the Bill to allow for public hearings. These would give interested parties an opportunity to set out their views, but without the cross-examination and inquisitorial aspects of the old inquiries.

In the 2013 and 2018 Reviews, public hearings were held in the initial consultation phase. Dates of the stages of the 2013 and 2018 reviews are shown in the Appendix 2.

[Section 4](#) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 made further amendments to the 1986 Act. This was to allow for public hearings in the secondary stage of consultation rather than in the initial stage. There had been some criticism that some public hearings had been poorly attended and there had been mixed results in feeding into the consultation process.

The Boundary Commissions had also provided evidence to the Government that holding public hearings in the secondary consultation phase would enable them to better target where to hold hearings within a region.

The background to the 2011 and 2020 changes is outlined in more detail in the Library briefing on the 2020 legislation, [The Parliamentary Constituencies Bill 2019-21 \(CBP 8921\)](#)

## Appendix 1 – public hearings 2023 Review

This appendix shows information on the public hearings held for the 2023 Review.

Wales	
Date	Venue
17 February 2022	Mercure Holland House, Cardiff
23 February 2022	Ramada Plaza, Wrexham
1 March 2022	Grand Hotel, Swansea
9 March 2022	Management Centre, Bangor
30 March 2022	Marine Hotel, Aberystwyth

The hearings in Wales began at 8am and closed at 8pm. A [Guide to Public Hearings \(PDF\)](#) is available on the Commission's website.<sup>32</sup>

Scotland	
Date	Venue
16 February 2022	Apex Hotel, Waterloo Place, Edinburgh
18 February 2022	Joan Knight Studio, Perth Theatre, Mill Street, Perth
23 February 2022	Doubtree by Hilton, 36 Cambridge Street, Glasgow
25 February 2022	Jury's Inn Hotel, Millburn Road, Inverness
01 March 2022	Corran Halls, 54 Corran Esplanade, Oban

Each hearing began at 10am and included three sessions depending on demand: 10am - 12pm, 2pm - 4pm and 6pm - 8pm.<sup>33</sup>

Northern Ireland	
Date	Venue
2 March 2022	Clayton Hotel, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast
8 March 2022	City Hotel, Queen's Quay, Derry/Londonderry
11 March 2022	Glenavon Hotel, Drum Road, Cookstown

Each hearing ran from 11am until 7pm, with morning (11am – 1pm), afternoon (2pm – 4pm), and evening (5pm – 7pm) sessions.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Boundary Commission for Wales, [Guide to the Public Hearings](#), 5 November 2011

<sup>33</sup> Boundary Commission for Scotland, [press release](#) (PDF), 23 January 2022

<sup>34</sup> Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, [The 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies](#)

## England

The town/city with marked with\* was the lead hearing for each region.

London	
Date	Venue
24-25 February 2022	Central Hall, Storey's Gate, Westminster*
28 February - 1 March 2022	Havering Town Hall, Romford
3-4 March 2022	Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway
7-8 March 2022	Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden
10-11 March 2022	Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley

West Midlands	
Date	Venue
28 February - 1 March 2022	Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Broad Street, Birmingham*
3-4 March 2022	Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford
7-8 March 2022	The Guildhall Worcester, High Street, Worcester

North west	
Date	Venue
3-4 March 2022	Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester*
7-8 March 2022	Liverpool Town Hall, High Street, Liverpool
10-11 March 2022	Chester HQ, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester
14-15 March 2022	Preston Town Hall, Lancaster Road, Preston
17-18 March 2022	Kendal Town Hall, 9a Lowther Street, Kendal

East Midlands	
Date	Venue
7-8 March 2022	Nottingham Council House, The Old Market Square, Nottingham*
10-11 March 2022	Leicester City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester
14-15 March 2022	Northampton Guildhall, Saint Giles' Square, Northampton

Yorkshire and the Humber	
Date	Venue
10-11 March 2022	Carriageworks Theatre, Electric Press, Millennium Square, Leeds*
14-15 March 2022	Albemarle Music Centre, 60 Ferensway, Hull
17-18 March 2022	County Hall, Racecourse Lane, Northallerton

South East	
Date	Venue
14-15 March 2022	Crawley Town Football & Social Club, Winfield Way, Crawley*
17-18 March 2022	Portsmouth Marriott Hotel, Southampton Road, Portsmouth
21-22 March 2022	Reading Borough Council Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading
24-25 March 2022	Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford

Eastern	
Date	Venue
17-18 March 2022	Hilton Cambridge City Centre, 20 Downing Street, Cambridge*
21-22 March 2022	Southend Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea
24-25 March 2022	Novotel Ipswich Centre, Grey Friars Road, Ipswich

South West	
Date	Venue
21-22 March 2022	Exeter Guildhall, High Street, Exeter*
24-25 March 2022	Gloucester Guildhall, 23 Eastgate Street, Gloucester
28-29 March 2022	Bath Assembly Rooms, Bennett Street, Bath
31 March - 1 April 2022	Dorchester Town Council, 19 North Square, Dorchester

North East	
Date	Venue
28-29 March 2022	Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle*
31 March - 1 April 2022	Middlesbrough Town Hall, Albert Road, Middlesbrough

## Appendix 2 – consultation stages for previous reviews

The Appendix shows the dates for each stage of the previous reviews under the new Rules of Redistribution introduced by the [Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011](#).

Note that the 2013 and 2018 Reviews were conducted before changes introduced by the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020](#). This means that public hearings were held in the initial consultation phase and not the secondary phase.

2018 Review dates				
Stage	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales
Review commences	24 Feb 2016	24 Feb 2016	24 Feb 2016	24 Feb 2016
Initial proposals published	13 Sep 2016	20 Oct 2016	13 Sep 2016	06 Sep 2016
Initial consultation closed	05 Dec 2016	11 Jan 2017	05 Dec 2016	28 Nov 2016
Secondary Consultation opens	28 Feb 2017	28 Feb 2017	28 Feb 2017	05 Sep 2017
Secondary consultation closes	27 Mar 2017	27 Mar 2017	27 Mar 2017	02 Oct 2017
Revised proposals published	17 Oct 2017	17 Oct 2017	17 Oct 2017	30 Jan 2018
Revised proposal consultation closes	11 Dec 2017	11 Dec 2017	11 Dec 2017	26 Mar 2018
Final reports handed to the Government	05 Sep 2018	06 Sep 2018	07 Sep 2018	08 Sep 2018
Reports laid and published	10 Sep 2018	10 Sep 2018	10 Sep 2018	10 Sep 2018

Source: Boundary Commissions various reports

## 2013 Review dates

Stage	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Review commences	04 Mar 2011	04 Mar 2011	04 Mar 2011	04 Mar 2011
Initial proposals published	13 Sep 2011	13 Oct 2011	11 Jan 2012	13 Sep 2011
Initial consultation closed	05 Dec 2011	04 Jan 2012	04 Apr 2012	02 Dec 2011
Secondary Consultation opens	06 Mar 2012	01 Mar 2012	13 Jun 2012	31 Jan 2012
Secondary consultation closes	03 Apr 2012	28 Mar 2012	10 Jul 2012	27 Feb 2012
Revised proposals published	16 Oct 2012	13 Sep 2012	24 Oct 2012	16 Oct 2012
Revised proposal consultation closes	10 Dec 2012	07 Nov 2012	18 Dec 2012	10 Dec 2012
Review cancelled	31 Jan 2013	31 Jan 2013	31 Jan 2013	31 Jan 2013

Source: Library briefing The Sixth General Review of constituency boundaries: public consultations SN/PC/06223

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