



Revised proposals for new constituency boundaries

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The number of parliamentary constituencies in the UK will fall from 650 to 600 as part of the current boundary review. Revised proposals for 502 new constituencies in England and 16 new constituencies in Northern Ireland were published on 16 October 2012, following on from the publication of initial proposals for new constituency boundaries in September 2011. The Boundary Commission for Scotland published revised proposals for 52 new Westminster parliamentary constituencies on 13 September 2012.

This note looks at how the revised proposals from the Boundary Commissions differ from the initial proposals published last year and the extent to which proposed constituencies can be identified with existing seats. Revised proposals for constituency boundaries in Wales are due to be published on 24 October 2012.

The Boundary Commissions for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland are currently carrying out a public consultation on the revised proposals. The consultation on the Boundary Commission for Scotland's proposals runs until 7 November 2012. The consultations on the revised proposals for England and Northern Ireland close on 10 December 2012.

Information on the initial proposals previously published by the Boundary Commissions can be found in Library notes [SN06068](#) (England); [SN06098](#) (Scotland); [SN06195](#) (Wales); [SN06070](#) (Northern Ireland). Library note [Constituency boundaries: the sixth general review](#) discusses the background to the current boundary review.

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1 Introduction

Revised proposals for new parliamentary constituencies were published by the Boundary Commissions for England and Northern Ireland on 16 October 2012 and by the Boundary Commission for Scotland on 13 September 2012, as part of the Sixth General Review of parliamentary constituencies. The initial proposals from the Boundary Commissions were published in autumn 2011.

Generally the number of electors in any new constituency must be within 5% of the UK Electoral Quota of 76,641, based on the electorate at 1 December 2010, under the terms of the *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act*. Therefore constituencies must contain no fewer than 72,810 electors and no more than 80,473 electors, although two Isle of Wight constituencies and the two Scottish constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar and Orkney and Shetland are exempted. Table 1 shows the number of seats allocated to each region.

Under the terms of the Act, constituencies measuring over 12,000 square kilometres in area may contain fewer than 72,810 electors should the relevant Boundary Commission consider it necessary. The Boundary Commissions have not made use of this rule, although the proposed Scottish constituency of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty has an area of 12,833 square kilometres. The Act also makes provision that Northern Ireland constituency electorates may lie within a wider range (between 70,583 and 80,473 electors) owing to difficulties that might arise from there being only a small number of seats. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland has not used the wider limits; all of the seats it has proposed are within 5% of the UK Electoral Quota.

Table 1: Allocation of seats per region in Boundary Review

	Number of existing	Allocated number of constituencies	Reduction in seats	% decrease
UK	650	600	50	8%
England	533	502	31	6%
Eastern	58	56	2	3%
East Midlands	46	44	2	4%
London	73	68	5	7%
North East	29	26	3	10%
North West	75	68	7	9%
South East	84	83	1	1%
South West	55	53	2	4%
West Midlands	59	54	5	8%
Yorkshire and Humber	54	50	4	7%
Scotland	59	52	7	12%
Wales	40	30	10	25%
Northern Ireland	18	16	2	11%

The Boundary Commissions are currently consulting on the revised proposals and are required to make their final recommendations to the Government by October 2013. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the final recommendations will be implemented at the next General Election. The consultation on Scottish constituency boundaries runs until 7 November 2012 and in England and Northern Ireland the consultation runs until 10 December 2012.

Further information on the revised proposals, including maps of proposed seats, can be found on the Boundary Commissions' websites: [England](#); [Scotland](#); [Northern Ireland](#).

2 England

2.1 Extent of changes

Existing constituencies may be split up between several proposed new constituencies. The revised proposals from the Boundary Commission for England maintain more existing seats in their current form than was the case in the initial proposals published last year. In 200 constituencies, all the electors are transferred to a single proposed constituency. This includes 104 existing constituencies which have the same boundaries as a proposed seat.

Table 2: Division of existing constituencies among proposed constituencies

Fraction of existing constituency electorate contained within proposed constituency	Number of existing seats	
	Revised proposals	Initial proposals
Wholly contained in proposed constituency	200	157
75-100%	164	170
50-75%	137	161
<50%	32	45
Total	533	533

The revised proposals mean that for 32 existing seats (listed in Table 3) there is no proposed constituency to which a majority of the existing seat's electors are transferred. This compares to 45 existing seats in the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission. Thus some existing seats which were extensively altered in the initial proposals are kept closer to their

current form by the revised proposals. For example, Wolverhampton South East was split four ways in the initial proposals but the revised proposals allocate the majority of its electors (70%) to a single proposed new constituency.

Conversely, for some existing constituencies the revised proposals set out much more extensive alterations than were found in the initial proposals. It was originally proposed that the existing Wolverhampton North East seat should be wholly contained within a single proposed constituency, but the revised proposals divide it three ways between the proposed seats of Wolverhampton East (42%), Wolverhampton West (30%) and Walsall West (29%).

Table 3: Existing constituencies where less than half of electors are transferred to any proposed constituency (Revised Proposals)

Existing constituency	Electorate	Proposed constituency	Fraction of electorate going to proposed seat
Bradford South	64,715	Spennings Valley	32.9%
Mid Derbyshire	66,572	Amber Valley	33.0%
Sedgefield	67,386	Stockton North and Aycliffe	33.7%
Ilford South	86,401	Ilford North	35.3%
Meon Valley	71,291	Winchester	37.2%
Weaver Vale	66,008	Tatton	39.6%
Vauxhall	73,274	Brixton	40.0%
Dulwich and West Norwood	71,523	Brixton	40.1%
Wirral South	56,238	Wirral Deeside	40.3%
Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough	69,206	Sheffield Central	40.9%
Greenwich and Woolwich	66,982	Greenwich and Lewisham Central	41.7%
Mid Bedfordshire	76,381	South West Bedfordshire	41.8%
Wolverhampton North East	60,354	Wolverhampton East	41.8%
North Dorset	73,010	Mid Dorset	43.9%
Wyre and Preston North	71,612	Lancaster and Wyre	44.0%
Rushcliffe	73,430	Coalville and Keyworth	45.2%
Leeds Central	80,912	Leeds Metropolitan and Ossett	45.6%
Morley and Outwood	75,163	Batley and Morley	45.7%
Ellesmere Port and Neston	66,995	Mersey Banks and Weaver	45.8%
Kenilworth and Southam	63,772	Kenilworth and Dorridge	46.0%
Liverpool, Walton	61,974	Liverpool Riverside and Walton	46.0%
Wakefield	71,531	Wakefield	46.4%
Faversham and Mid Kent	68,521	Maidstone	46.6%
Wealden	77,536	Lewes and Uckfield	47.3%
Hitchin and Harpenden	74,189	Mid Bedfordshire and Harpenden	47.6%
Westminster North	65,936	Camden Town and Regent's Park	49.2%
Leeds North East	68,269	Leeds East	49.4%
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	75,985	Birmingham Ladywood	49.4%
Stone	66,729	West Staffordshire	49.5%
Dudley South	61,308	Dudley West	49.7%
Birmingham, Selly Oak	75,668	Birmingham Hall Green	49.9%
Feltham and Heston	80,437	Southall and Heston	50.0%

2.2 Constituencies remaining unchanged

104 existing constituencies have been left unchanged in the Boundary Commission's revised proposals. Additionally, there is a slight realignment of the boundaries of Basingstoke constituency but the seat's electorate is unaffected. The relevant seats are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Constituencies left unchanged in the Boundary Commission for England's revised proposals

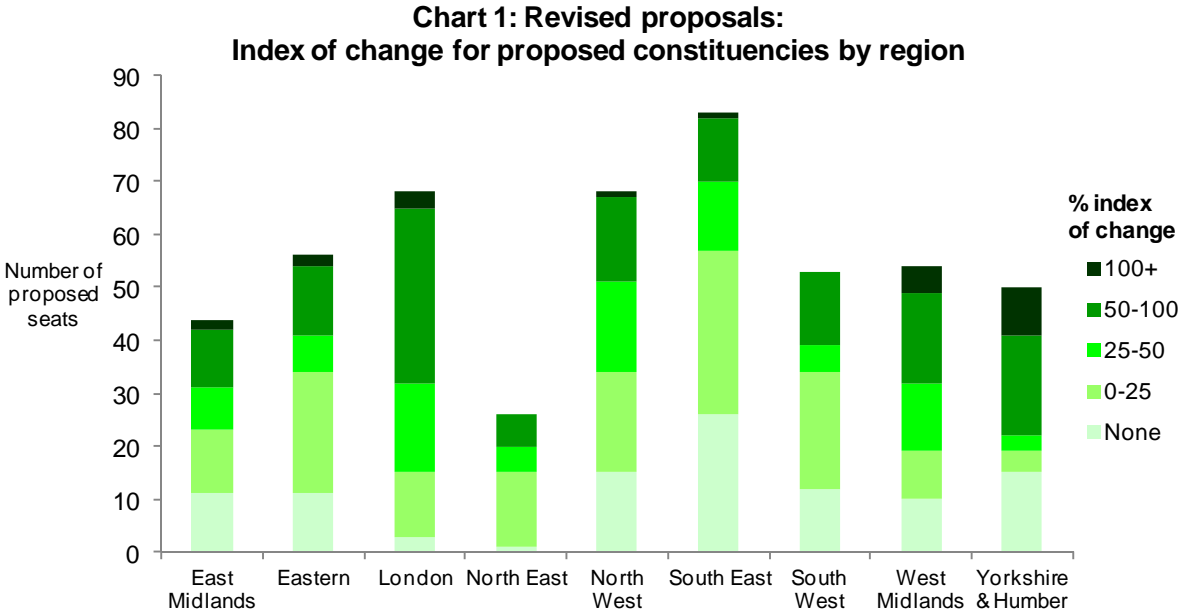
East Midlands			North East		
Ashfield	LAB	Gloria De Piero	Sunderland Central	LAB	Julie Elliott
Corby	CON	Louise Bagshaw e			
Gainsborough	CON	Edw ard Leigh	South East		
Grantham and Stamford	CON	Nick Boles	Eastleigh	LD	Chris Huhne
Harborough	CON	Edw ard Garnier	Basingstoke	CON	Maria Miller
Leicester East	LAB	Keith Vaz	Beaconsfield	CON	Dominic Grieve
Leicester South	LAB	Jon Ashw orth	Bracknell	CON	Philip Lee
Loughborough	CON	Nicky Morgan	East Surrey	CON	Sam Gyimah
Mansfield	LAB	Alan Meale	East Worthing and Shoreham	CON	Tim Loughton
Rutland and Melton	CON	Alan Duncan	Eastbourne	LD	Stephen Lloyd
South Holland and The Deepings	CON	John Hayes	Epsom and Ew ell	CON	Chris Grayling
			Esher and Walton	CON	Dominic Raab
Eastern			Hastings and Rye	CON	Amber Rudd
Cambridge	LD	Julian Huppert	Maidenhead	CON	Theresa May
Chelmsford	CON	Simon Burns	Mid Sussex	CON	Nicholas Soames
Colchester	LD	Bob Russell	New bury	CON	Richard Benyon
Ipsw ich	CON	Benedict Gummer	Reading East	CON	Rob Wilson
North West Norfolk	CON	Henry Bellingham	Reading West	CON	Alok Sharma
Norw ich South	LD	Simon Wright	Rochester and Strood	CON	Mark Reckless
South Suffolk	CON	Tim Yeo	Runnymede and Weybridge	CON	Philip Hammond
South West Hertfordshire	CON	David Gauke	Sittingbourne and Sheppey	CON	Gordon Henderson
Suffolk Coastal	CON	Therese Coffey	South West Surrey	CON	Jeremy Hunt
Thurrock	CON	Jackie Doyle-Price	Southampton, Itchen	LAB	John Denham
Waveney	CON	Peter Aldous	Surrey Heath	CON	Michael Gove
			Wantage	CON	Edw ard Vaizey
London			Witney	CON	David Cameron
Chipping Barnet	CON	Theresa Villiers	Woking	CON	Jonathan Lord
Hendon	CON	Matthew Offord	Wokingham	CON	John Redw ood
Hornchurch and Upminster	CON	Angela Watkinson	Worthing West	CON	Peter Bottomley
North West			West Midlands		
Congleton	CON	Fiona Bruce	Burton	CON	Andrew Griffiths
Crew e and Nantw ich	CON	Edw ard Timpson	Cannock Chase	CON	Aidan Burley
Heyw ood and Middleton	LAB	Jim Dobbin	Coventry North East	LAB	Bob Ainsw orth
Knowsley	LAB	George How arth	Coventry North West	LAB	Geoffrey Robinson
Leigh	LAB	Andy Burnham	Coventry South	LAB	Jim Cunningham
Makerfield	LAB	Yvonne Fovargue	North Shropshire	CON	Ow en Paterson
Manchester, Withington	LD	John Leech	Shrew sbury and Atcham	CON	Daniel Kaw czynski
Rochdale	LAB	Simon Danczuk	Sutton Coldfield	CON	Andrew Mitchell
Salford and Eccles	LAB	Hazel Blears	Worcester	CON	Robin Walker
St Helens North	LAB	Dave Watts	Wyre Forest	CON	Mark Garnier
St Helens South and Whiston	LAB	Shaun Woodw ard			
West Lancashire	LAB	Rosie Cooper	Yorkshire and the Humber		
Wigan	LAB	Lisa Nandy	Beverley and Holderness	CON	Graham Stuart
Worsley and Eccles South	LAB	Barbara Keeley	Calder Valley	CON	Craig Whittaker
Wythenshaw e and Sale East	LAB	Paul Goggins	Don Valley	LAB	Caroline Flint
			Doncaster Central	LAB	Rosie Winterton
South West			Doncaster North	LAB	Edw ard Miliband
Bristol North West	CON	Charlotte Leslie	East Yorkshire	CON	Greg Knight
Bristol South	LAB	Daw n Primarolo	Harrogate and Knaresborough	CON	Andrew Jones
Cheltenham	LD	Martin Horw ood	Richmond (Yorks)	CON	William Hague
Exeter	LAB	Ben Bradshaw	Rother Valley	LAB	Kevin Barron
North Devon	LD	Nick Harvey	Scarborough and Whitby	CON	Robert Goodw ill
North Somerset	CON	Liam Fox	Selby and Ainsty	CON	Nigel Adams
North Sw indon	CON	Justin Tomlinson	Skipton and Ripon	CON	Julian Smith
South Dorset	CON	Richard Drax	Thirsk and Malton	CON	Anne McIntosh
South Sw indon	CON	Robert Buckland	York Central	LAB	Hugh Bayley
Tiverton and Honiton	CON	Neil Parish	York Outer	CON	Julian Sturdy
Torbay	LD	Adrian Sanders			
West Dorset	CON	Oliver Letw in			
Weston-Super-Mare	CON	John Penrose			

2.3 Index of change

The extent to which boundaries are changed can be quantified by calculating an ‘index of change’. The index of change for a new constituency is equal to the number of electors being added to or removed from an existing ‘base’ constituency, as a proportion of the base constituency’s total electorate.

For a third of proposed seats, the index of change exceeds 50% so that the number of electors being added to or removed from the base constituency is greater than half the electorate of the base. There are 23 proposed constituencies, listed in Table 5, where the index of change exceeds 100%, meaning the number of electors leaving or joining the base is greater than the base electorate. In such cases the term ‘base’ is not very meaningful.

Chart 1 uses the index of change to provide a summary of changes in each English region. On average, proposed constituencies in the South East have a lower index of change than in other regions; two thirds of proposed seats in the South East have an index of change of 25% or less. There are more extensive changes proposed in Yorkshire and the Humber and in London, where more than half of proposed constituencies have an index of change of over 50%.



Index of change – Battersea & Vauxhall, example

The proposed constituency of Battersea & Vauxhall has the current Battersea constituency as its base. 51,706 of Battersea’s 73,028 electors are transferred to Battersea & Vauxhall, with the remaining 21,322 electors in Battersea transferred to another new constituency. Battersea & Vauxhall takes a further 27,482 electors from the existing Vauxhall seat.

The index of change for the proposed constituency is 66.8%:

- Electorate of base = 73,028
- Electors added to base = 27,482
- Electors removed from base = 21,322
- Index of change = $(21,322+27,482)/73,028 = 66.8\%$

Table 5: Proposed constituencies with an index of change larger than 100%

Proposed constituency	Region	% Index of change
Wanstead and Woodford	London	135.1
Dudley West	West Midlands	129.2
Brixton	London	125.8
Dudley East and Oldbury	West Midlands	125.4
Mersey Banks and Weaver	North West	124.9
Leeds North	Yorkshire and the Humber	124.8
Kenilworth and Dorridge	West Midlands	124.7
The Weald	South East	123.0
Nottingham West	East Midlands	121.8
Wakefield	Yorkshire and the Humber	118.7
Leeds East	Yorkshire and the Humber	118.0
Bradford Central	Yorkshire and the Humber	117.1
Otley	Yorkshire and the Humber	116.5
Grimsby North and Barton	Yorkshire and the Humber	115.9
Nottingham North and Hucknall	East Midlands	113.2
Billericay and Great Dunmow	Eastern	111.8
Mid Bedfordshire and Harpenden	Eastern	109.9
Batley and Morley	Yorkshire and the Humber	107.9
Leeds Metropolitan and Ossett	Yorkshire and the Humber	106.2
Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice	Yorkshire and the Humber	103.4
West Staffordshire	West Midlands	103.3
Greenwich and Lewisham Central	London	101.5
Walsall South	West Midlands	100.7

The average index of change for new constituencies set out in the revised proposals is 36% compared to 44% for those set out in the initial proposals. Therefore the revised proposals represent less of a change to existing boundaries than the initial proposals. They are still more extensive than the boundary changes introduced at the 2010 General Election, for which the average index of change was 21%.¹ For all regions the average index of change for the revised proposals is lower than for the initial proposals, particularly in the North West and North East.

Table 6: Extent of change in constituency boundaries: % Index of change for revised proposals

	Average % index of change	
	Revised proposals	Initial proposals
England	36.0	44.2
South East	20.5	26.7
South West	28.2	34.5
Eastern	29.1	36.0
North West	31.7	51.4
North East	32.3	59.4
East Midlands	34.1	34.4
West Midlands	45.4	51.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	53.0	55.6
London	53.9	59.2

¹ Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, *Media guide to the new parliamentary constituencies*, 2007. Average index of change is for English constituencies only.

2.4 Sub-regions

The constituencies proposed by the Boundary Commission do not cross regional boundaries. In its initial proposals, where it was not possible to allocate a whole number of constituencies to a single county, the Boundary Commission grouped some local authority areas into sub-regions. In London, the South East and Yorkshire and the Humber, the Boundary Commission has based its revised proposals on new sub-regions.

The revised proposals for London are based on two sub-regions, North Thames and South Thames, compared to three sub-regions in the initial proposals (North East London; North, West and Central London; and South London). The revised proposals still include a Richmond and Twickenham seat which crosses the River Thames.

In the South East, the revised proposals group Berkshire and Surrey into a single sub-region, rather than treat them as separate sub-regions as in the initial proposals. The Commission points out that by proposing a new Spelthorne constituency which contains parts of both counties, it has been able to keep more existing constituencies in Surrey unchanged.²

In Yorkshire and the Humber, the revised proposals group South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire together and treat North Yorkshire as a separate sub-region. The initial proposals grouped North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire together while keeping South Yorkshire separate. Consequently the eight existing constituencies in North Yorkshire and the City of York are unchanged in the revised proposals; only one of these constituencies was retained unchanged in the initial proposals.

2.5 Ward boundaries

There are two split wards in the revised proposals, both in Gloucestershire. Westgate ward in Gloucester city council area is divided between the proposed Gloucester and West Gloucestershire seats. Coombe Hill ward in Tewkesbury borough council area is divided between the proposed Tewkesbury and West Gloucestershire seats. There were no split wards in the initial proposals.

3 Scotland

18 out of 52 new constituencies set out in the Boundary Commission for Scotland's initial proposals have their boundaries amended. In most cases, the revisions to the initial proposals involve the transfer of one or two wards or parts of wards between constituencies but there are more extensive revisions around Dundee City council area.

The revisions around Dundee City council area have most effect on the existing Dundee East seat. In the initial proposals, 98% of its electors were transferred to the proposed Dundee East & the Glens seat and 2% to the proposed Dundee West & Gowrie seat. The revised proposals transfer 72% of the Dundee East electorate to the proposed Angus West & East Perthshire seat and 28% to the proposed Dundee West seat.

3.1 Extent of change

For five existing seats, there is no proposed constituency to which a majority of their electors are transferred. The constituencies are Glasgow Central; Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath; Glasgow North; Gordon; and Ross, Skye and Lochaber. This is the same as in the initial proposals.

² Boundary Commission for England, [South East revised proposals report](#)

There are twelve existing constituencies which are wholly contained within a proposed seat (excluding Orkney and Shetland and Na h-Eileanan an Iar which are preserved). This is two more than in the Boundary Commission's initial proposals: the revised proposals place the entire existing North East Fife constituency within the proposed Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes seat, and the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk seat is coterminous with the existing constituency of the same name.

The average index of change for new constituencies as set out in the revised proposals is 51%, about the same as in the initial proposals.

3.2 Existing constituencies left unchanged

Excluding the preserved constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar and Orkney & Shetland, no change is proposed to two existing seats: East Lothian and Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk.

In the Boundary Commission's initial proposals, East Lothian was preserved but a slight change had been proposed to the existing Berwickshire, Roxburgh & Selkirk seat in order to align it with current ward boundaries.

3.3 Local authority and ward boundaries

35 constituencies in the initial proposals were wholly contained within a single council area while 17 constituencies³ contained parts of two council areas. The reconfiguration of boundaries around Dundee City council area means that 16 constituencies in the revised proposals contain parts of two or more council areas, including one seat that contains parts of three council areas. Instead of two constituencies in the Dundee area which each contain parts of two different council areas as was initially proposed, the revised proposals set out one constituency wholly contained within Dundee City council area (the proposed Dundee West seat) while a new Angus West & East Perthshire seat would contain parts of Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Angus council areas.

There are 31 split wards in the revised proposals, compared to 29 in the initial proposals. Three wards that were split in the initial proposals (one in Dundee City and two in Fife council area) are kept whole in the revised proposals. A split ward in the Scottish Borders council area allows the Boundary Commission to keep the existing Berwickshire, Roxburgh & Selkirk seat intact. The revised proposals also introduce split wards in Highland and Fife council areas, and two split wards in South Lanarkshire council area.

4 Northern Ireland

The revised proposals amend seven of the sixteen constituencies put forward in the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland. The main alterations involve the existing South Antrim and East Antrim seats, and the boundary of the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone seat.

The revised proposals represent less change for the existing East Antrim constituency than the initial proposals, but with the knock-on effect that they are more disruptive for the existing South Antrim seat. 95% of East Antrim's electorate would be transferred to a single proposed seat (of the same name), compared to only 71% in the initial proposals. The revised proposals allocate 69% of South Antrim's electorate to a single proposed seat (of the same name), compared to 94% in the initial proposals. The revised proposals set out a proposed

³ Including Orkney and Shetland constituency, preserved in the boundary review.

Fermanagh and South Tyrone seat containing the current seat of the same name, plus electors from the existing Mid Ulster constituency rather than West Tyrone as was initially proposed. Consequently the revisions proposed to West Tyrone are more minor than in the initial proposals.

4.1 Extent of change

No existing constituencies are left unchanged in the revised proposals. Six existing constituencies are wholly contained within a proposed constituency, the same as in the initial proposals: Belfast North; Fermanagh and South Tyrone; Foyle; Lagan Valley; North Down; and South Down.

The average index of change for new constituencies as set out in the revised proposals is 36%, compared to 38% for the initial proposals.

4.2 Wards

The revised proposals do not divide wards between constituencies, with the exception of Derryagh ward which would be split between the proposed Belfast South West and Lagan Valley seats (as was the case in the initial proposals). Derryagh ward is currently split between the existing Belfast West and Lagan Valley constituencies. The Boundary Commission's proposals are based on ward boundaries as they existed at 5 May 2005.

5 Partisan effects of boundary changes

There are no official figures for what the results of the 2010 General Election would have been if the proposed new constituency areas had been used. However, some unofficial estimates have already been made, for example by Anthony Wells of [UK Polling Report](#).⁴

One method of estimating notional results is to use votes cast at local elections to estimate voting patterns at the General Election. The 2010 General Election result in an old base constituency is adjusted to take account of the votes in the local elections in the wards it is gaining or losing. To votes cast in the 2010 General Election in the old constituency is added or subtracted the estimated number of the votes that each of the three major parties received in those wards at the General election.

The number of votes in the relevant wards is estimated from the distribution of votes cast for each of the three main parties across all the wards making up the former constituency, at the 2010 or most recent local (district) elections. This is an attempt to reflect the relative party strength in gained or lost wards. Votes for other parties are assumed to be in proportion to the overall number of votes cast at the local election for the three main parties.

This is roughly the same method used by Michael Thrasher and Colin Rallings of the Local Government Elections Centre at the University of Plymouth,⁵ who have produced notional general election results for previous boundary reviews.

⁴ <http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/category/boundary-review>

⁵ <http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=16182>