

## 2018 BOUNDARY REVIEW

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### INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IN LONDON

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#### REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

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1. The City of London Corporation supports the initial proposal to retain the Cities of London and Westminster constituency. The retention of the long-standing constituency link between the City of London and the City of Westminster is strongly supported by the factors of existing boundaries, local ties and geographic considerations.

#### Existing boundaries

2. One of the merits of the initial proposals is that it preserves (with some additions) the current make-up of the constituency. The existing connection between the City of London and the City of Westminster is of long standing and is well-supported locally.
3. The pairing of the two cities dates from 1948 and was proposed personally by the then Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, in response to debate on the Bill for the Representation of the People Act 1949 (which deprived the City of London of its separate parliamentary representation). The City has never been paired with any other area. Although the northern and western areas of the constituency have undergone alterations, the major part of the constituency, from the City of London to the core governmental area around the Palaces, has remained virtually unchanged for over sixty years.
4. During the 2011–13 review, the Commission initially proposed to end the constituency link between the two cities and combine the City of London instead with the southern part of the borough of Islington. The report of the Assistant Commissioners, which was accepted by the Commission in its revised proposals, noted that this proposal received “very little” support and went on:

“It has been strongly opposed by a large number of people and organisations, including all three Parliamentary parties, Mark Field MP, Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP, the Corporation of the City of London, the City of Westminster, businesses, and residents. It would involve a significant departure from the boundaries of the existing constituency, in which the City of London is part of a constituency with wards from Westminster, and many respondents emphasised that this proposal would break long-established ties between the City of London and the City of Westminster.”<sup>1</sup>

The revised proposals of the Commission therefore reinstated the Cities of London and Westminster constituency.

5. We refer to the previous review because, as the Commission notes at paragraph 80 of its guide to the present review, people tend to speak out less in favour of a proposal which they support than they do against a proposal which they oppose. The strength of local feeling in favour of the existing link is thus likely to be better displayed in the context of a

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<sup>1</sup> Report by the Assistant Commissioners on London, AC95 (references omitted).

proposal to remove it (as in the 2011–13 review) than one to retain it (as in the present review).

6. The existing boundaries are also significant because the City Corporation, as a relatively small electoral authority, relies to a large extent in the conduct of elections on long-standing administrative arrangements with the City of Westminster. This extends not only to parliamentary elections, but also to European elections and national referendums.

#### Local ties and geographic considerations

7. The two cities together form the historic nucleus of the capital and maintain a number of significant ties, both tangible and intangible, which are not shared (at least to the same extent) with the surrounding areas.

#### Historical development

8. The institutional relationship between the City of London and Westminster stretches back to early times. During the Norman Conquest, William did not enter London by force, but instead assured its citizens of the rights and freedoms they had enjoyed under the Saxons. Soon after, the principal seat of royal government was established a short distance away from London, near the site of an ancient abbey known as the West Minster. The ‘west’ denoted the abbey’s position in relation to London; Westminster thus takes its very name from its geographical relationship with the City of London. The forms of government which developed in parallel in the Westminster Parliament and in the London Guildhall have a notable symmetry and are thought to have exercised a mutual influence, both incorporating three component ranks (Crown or Mayor, Lords or Aldermen, and Commons).
9. In early centuries London’s civic and commercial heft made it to some extent a counterweight to the Crown interest at Westminster. The relationship between the two cities therefore became politically significant. In struggles for ascendancy at Westminster the City of London could play a key role. It rose to forestall victory for Matilda over Stephen; it was central to the machinations which placed Richard, Duke of York on the throne; and it gave refuge to the Five Members whose flight from Parliament precipitated the Civil War. In the aftermath of the revolution of 1688, the Aldermen and Common Councilmen of London were summoned to Westminster along with former MPs to form the Convention Parliament, and thus played an important part in securing the present constitutional settlement.
10. Westminster’s emergence as a significant centre of population is essentially the product of the westward expansion of the City of London. Ever since the thirteenth century, the City of London tended, in outgrowing the ancient walls, to expand in the direction of Westminster. By the end of the fourteenth century there had grown up a large and thriving suburb around Fleet Street. This was home, most notably, to the legal profession, and it would soon also be renowned for its publishing industry, taverns and literary associations. The physical integration of the two cities was brought to completion by the Great Fire of 1666, when the westward exodus from the City of London prompted urbanisation of the land around Fleet Street and further west into the old Liberty of Westminster, where the aristocratic palaces on the Strand were pulled down and replaced with new swathes of residential and commercial tenements. The resulting commonality of character and

ambience lasts to this day, as will be demonstrated by a simple walk from St. Paul's Cathedral to Charing Cross.

*Financial and professional services*

11. The City of London and the City of Westminster together play a central role in the provision of financial and professional services. These services are vitally important to London, making up 30 per cent of the capital's economy.<sup>2</sup> There are approximately 25,000 financial and professional services firms in the two cities, which include more than half of Greater London's large firms (those with more than 250 employees) in those sectors.<sup>3</sup> These businesses employ more than 462,000 people—some 43 per cent of the capital's total financial and professional services employment—and support a significant number of additional jobs in supporting services.<sup>4</sup> Financial services firms alone in the two cities—which include 67 per cent of the capital's large businesses and 58 per cent of its total employment in that sector—contribute over £40 billion to the UK economy, nearly 60 per cent of London's total output in that sector.<sup>5</sup> The two cities play complementary roles, with the City of London retaining a traditional focus on insurance and banking and Westminster concentrating more on hedge funds and private equity, with a number of associated services (such as accountancy and law) spread between the two.
12. The figures given above are far greater than those for nearly all other London boroughs. Even viewing Westminster in isolation from the City of London, only the London Borough of Tower Hamlets would be of comparable significance, owing to the Docklands development. (This cluster can be discounted in the context of constituency boundaries as it is separated from the City by some miles of the non-commercial area of the East End, which is of a markedly different character.)
13. Given that financial and professional services share many distinct concerns and challenges, it would seem particularly desirable to have unified representation for the primary centre for such services. Many of the financial and professional service firms based in the two Cities have an international reach. This, coupled with the presence of a number of other international organisations, gives the two Cities an appreciably more global outlook than that of other London boroughs.
14. A good illustration of a professional community shared between the two Cities is the legal profession based in Temple in the west of the City of London. Chambers originally situated in Temple have moved into Essex Street just across the border with Westminster, while barristers from the Temple cross the Strand into the City of Westminster to appear in the Royal Courts of Justice.

*Retail, culture and tourism*

15. The retail sector in Westminster, centred on the Oxford Circus, is world-renowned. The City Corporation has in recent years successfully sought to boost the City of London's presence in this field, for instance through the opening of a sixty-store shopping and dining complex at One New Change in 2010. Latest figures show that the City has a higher proportion of its area devoted to so-called "town centres" (areas recognised for planning

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<sup>2</sup> GLA Economics, Regional gross value added estimates for London by different geographies 1997-2014, 2016

<sup>3</sup> ONS, UK business: activity, size and location, 2016

<sup>4</sup> ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2016

<sup>5</sup> ONS, Regional Gross Value Added by Component and Industry, 2016

purposes as significant retail centres) than any of its neighbouring boroughs except from Westminster.<sup>6</sup> The same figures show that the two cities are particularly strong in higher-end “comparison goods.”

16. The City of London is increasingly coming to share Westminster’s long-standing and well-known strength of cultural provision. The City Corporation is the country’s fourth largest funder of the arts and spends more than £75 million per year on cultural and recreational provision. The Barbican estate in the City of London contains one the largest arts centres in Europe, and is designated as one of nine “strategic cultural areas” in the current London Plan.<sup>7</sup> Westminster’s West End has the same designation; no other neighbouring area of the City north of the river does. Other important attractions include the Guildhall Art Gallery and the Museum of London. Plans are being developed significantly to expand and promote the offering of the cultural quarter centred on the Barbican, potentially including the relocation of the Museum of London to the Smithfield General Market and the construction of a major new concert hall.
17. The two Cities share an exceptional architectural heritage. It is no coincidence that when Pevsner first published his *Buildings of England*, he included one volume for ‘London: the Cities of London and Westminster’, and one for ‘London, except the Cities of London and Westminster’. Today, of the 596 Grade-I-listed buildings and monuments in Greater London, 269 are found in the current Cities of London and Westminster constituency. Of these, 85 are in the City of London and 185 in Westminster. By way of comparison, Tower Hamlets has 21 Grade-I-listed buildings, Islington 12, Hackney eight and Southwark four.<sup>8</sup> There are clear parallels to be drawn between the large commercial buildings in the City and the public buildings of Westminster, particularly those of the mid- and late-Victorian and Edwardian periods. Compare, for instance, the Old Bailey or the Bank of England head-quarters on Threadneedle Street with the government offices lining Whitehall. Of the four World Heritage Sites in Greater London, one (around the Tower of London) is in the City of London and one (around the Palace of Westminster) in the City of Westminster, in the area of the present constituency. None is in another neighbouring borough.
18. Because of attractions such as those set out above, both cities accommodate a large number of visitors in comparison with other boroughs, and share the advantages and challenges that this entails. Westminster’s status as the pre-eminent tourist destination in Greater London hardly need be stated, but the situation of the City of London, with its reputation as a business district, is less well-known. Nonetheless, one study ranked the City of London fourth among London boroughs (the City being counted as a borough for this purpose) in terms of spending by tourists, behind only Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Camden.<sup>9</sup> Once geographical area is taken into account, Westminster and the City of London were easily the two most significant boroughs in terms of the number of visits by tourists, the amount of expenditure generated, and the number of persons employed as a result of tourism.

### Transport

19. Fleet Street and the Strand, mention of which has already been made, make up only one of three vital transport links between the two cities. The oldest is the River. Although no

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<sup>6</sup> GLA, London Town Centre Health Check, 2013

<sup>7</sup> London Plan March 2016, Policy 4.5.

<sup>8</sup> Information retrieved from Historic England’s website in October 2016.

<sup>9</sup> All figures are derived from the London Development Agency’s *Local Area Tourism Impact Model* of July, 2009.

longer the commercial life-blood of earlier centuries, this remains the most prominent geographical feature connecting the two cities. The section which provides the southern boundary of the present constituency is today the most popular for tourists and commuters. The other, most recent link is the Victoria Embankment, one of the great engineering achievements of Victorian London. It comprises not only a highway but the original section of the District Line. It is symbolically significant that the riparian route of the Embankment from the Palace of Westminster to Blackfriars in the City of London was continued as part of the same project by a large new street (Queen Victoria Street) running inland to the Mansion House, the official residence of the Lord Mayor of the City of London.

20. Key thoroughfares connect the City of London with all of the boroughs surrounding the City, as a result of its historical position as the centre of the Metropolis. The connections with Westminster are, however, especially heavily used. The last time traffic on individual roads was counted, that on the two main routes between the City of London and Westminster was well over twice that on the two main routes connecting the City of London and Islington.<sup>10</sup>

#### Security

21. The position of the two cities as a political and commercial centre, with a concentration of high-profile buildings, institutions and activities, has led to particularly acute challenges in the maintenance of law and order. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the cities bore the brunt of Irish Republican terrorist activity in Greater London, including, in Westminster, the assassination of Airey Neave, the Hyde Park and Regent's Park bombings, and the Harrods bombing, and in the City of London, attacks on the London Stock Exchange, the Baltic Exchange and Bishopsgate. Today, the two Cities are among the most heavily guarded areas of the country, the City of London's "Ring of Steel" having been matched by highly visible security apparatus around many Westminster landmarks, particularly in the Government Security Zone. Aside from on-going terrorist concerns, both Cities have also been the focus of large-scale protests in the past decade, and have suffered attendant outbreaks of violent disorder. Policing and security therefore remains a clear point in common between the two cities.

#### Civic links

22. The historic relationship between the two Cities is reflected today in a number of unique civic and ceremonial links. The Sovereign's approbation of the Lord Mayor is conveyed annually by the Lord Chancellor at a ceremony in Westminster. The Lord Mayor's Show—one of London's best-known civic occasions, with several thousand participants and an audience of hundreds of thousands—involves a procession from the City of London into the City of Westminster. Other state or ceremonial events often involve a reverse procession, such as, most recently, the funeral of Lady Thatcher in 2013. Visiting Heads of State are customarily entertained first in Westminster by the Sovereign, and then by the City Corporation at Guildhall in the City of London. Royal weddings have, in recent history, taken place in one of the two Cities, such as that of the Prince of Wales at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1981, and that of the Duke of Cambridge at Westminster Abbey in

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<sup>10</sup> Data gathered by the Department of Planning and Transportation of the City Corporation between 2003 and 2005 included the following week-day traffic-flow counts: Aldersgate—18,824; Moorgate—21,577; Fleet Street—34,924; Victoria Embankment—68,178. Individual roads are no longer monitored in this way, but 2014 traffic surveys showed a considerably greater number of vehicles travelling daily in an east/west direction than north/south: 86,000 compared to 68,000.

2011. Close links are maintained between the respective offices of the Lord Mayor of London and the Lord Mayor of Westminster—the only two mayoralties in Greater London to have the appellation of ‘Lord’.

23. The City of London and the City of Westminster form a separate ‘Two Cities’ episcopal area within the Diocese of London. This area is under the personal pastoral care of the Bishop of London and, as of 2015, has its own archdeacon. Meanwhile the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey are patrons of St. Bartholomew the Great and St. Bride’s churches in the City of London.

#### Residential services

24. The City is an unusual electoral unit in that its permanent residential population (of around 7,000) is heavily outnumbered by its daytime population of workers, tourists and other visitors. Residential factors are of course particularly important in the context of parliamentary elections. The anecdotal picture with respect to residential services does not, however, reveal a strength of connection with any neighbouring area which might count against the broadly based links with Westminster described above. For instance, residents report that they may shop for groceries in south Islington, travel to the West End for higher-end retail goods, and to Tower Hamlets for large homeware and gardening stores. City residents are more likely to work in the City itself than in neighbouring Boroughs such as Islington. Health services are found most immediately in the City, with the Bart’s Hospital complex and associated centres. Administratively, the City is joined with Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest in the Bart’s Health NHS Trust, but is paired with Hackney for the purposes of its Clinical Commissioning Group.
25. Given the City’s small residential population, there is not large demand for school places. There is, however, a broad range of school provision available within the City, in the state-funded Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School, and the independent City of London School and City of London School for Girls. City residents may also look to schools in a number of neighbouring Boroughs, including Islington but more notably in Southwark. Residents also use schools in the independent sector farther afield.

#### Conclusion

26. The constituency pairing of the City of London and the historic part of the City of Westminster is long-standing and enjoys strong local support. It reflects a number of connections and shared characteristics between the two cities, which are borne of their position as the historic nucleus of the Greater London conurbation, and are not shared to nearly the same extent by the surrounding areas. In particular, it reflects the position of the two cities as a focal point for the capital’s commerce, politics and heritage, and the attendant challenges this brings in areas such as infrastructure and heritage. There are no evident considerations, in terms of residential amenity or otherwise, which indicate that the City of London should be constituted with any other neighbouring area. Accordingly the City Corporation supports the retention of a Cities of London and Westminster constituency.

**City Remembrancer’s Office**

**Guildhall**

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