

<b>Committee(s):</b> Policy and Resources	<b>Dated:</b> 08/07/2021
<b>Subject:</b> Parliamentary Boundary Review	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk and Remembrancer	<b>For Decision</b>
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### Summary

This paper outlines the effect of proposed changes to parliamentary constituencies published by the Boundary Commission for England on 8 June 2021, and to take effect from 2023.

The current suggestion is to break the link between the City of London and the City of Westminster by placing the Square Mile in a new constituency with the southern part of the London Borough of Islington.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Consider the proposals and indicate whether or not to continue the policy adopted to date of advocating the link between the City of London and the City of Westminster; and
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to finalise the City Corporation's response to the proposals.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Following the passing of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 in December 2020, and the publication of the relevant Parliamentary electorate data in January 2021, the Boundary Commission published its initial proposals for the review of Parliamentary Constituencies in England. Applying the statutory formula to the

electorate figures means the total 650 constituencies is distributed during the review to the four parts of the UK as follows:

- **England = 543** (increase of 10);
- **Scotland = 57** (reduction of 2);
- **Wales = 32** (reduction of 8); and
- **Northern Ireland = 18** (no change)

2. This Commission has applied the same distribution formula to the English allocation, which results in the following redistribution of constituencies among the nine English regions:

- **East Midlands = 47** (increase of one)
- **Eastern = 61** (increase of three)
- **London = 75** (increase of two)
- **North East = 27** (decrease of two)
- **North West = 73** (decrease of two)
- **South East = 91** (increase of seven)
- **South West = 58** (increase of three)
- **West Midlands = 57** (decrease of two)
- **Yorkshire and the Humber = 54** (no change)

### Current Position

3. It has been proposed that the current Cities of London and Westminster seat is broken up and, instead, the City of London will form part of a new constituency named 'The City of London and Islington South'. This would comprise the City of London and 9 local government wards in the London Borough of Islington. These wards currently fall within the Islington South and Finsbury constituency.
4. In drawing up its proposals for London, the Boundary Commission divided the capital into subregions and the number of constituencies allocated to each sub-region is determined by the combined electorate of the component boroughs. The Commission is required to ensure each proposed constituency remains within a statutory electorate range (69,724 – 77,062) and changes in electorate data in London has meant changes are required to all but 2 of the London seats (Walthamstow and Tooting).
5. The Commission notes that change is necessary in both the Cities of London and Westminster constituency and the Westminster North constituency because their electorates fall outside of the statutory range. The City of London's size means that it has to be paired with a neighbouring borough and the Commission has proposed Islington on the basis that the Square Mile "has as good transport links north towards Islington as it does west towards Westminster." However, the Commission also notes that their proposals deviate from the traditional pairing of the City and Westminster and invite representations on whether its proposals

“best reflect community ties” along with any other alternative configurations of the constituencies.

6. A similar proposal to pair the City with Islington was put forward as part of the Boundary Commission’s review in 2011. On that occasion, the City Corporation made representations to the Boundary Commission highlighting the strong community ties and historic links between the two Cities. These included:
  - The City of London has been combined with Westminster ever since it lost its separate representation in 1948.
  - The two Cities have a strong historical relationship as the original part of the Metropolis, and greatly influenced each other’s political and institutional development.
  - There is a growing connection between the two Cities across financial and professional services, strengthened in recent years by the growth of financial services sector in Mayfair and St. James’s.
  - The two Cities share a number of professional communities, not least the legal profession based in the west of the City, with the Royal Courts of Justice in Westminster.
  - Meanwhile, the City of London has welcomed a growing share of the retail and cultural activities typically centred on Westminster, eg One New Change and Culture Mile.
  - The two Cities welcome large numbers of visitors, being the two most-visited London boroughs by geographical area, and both share a valuable architectural heritage.
  - There are strong and important transport corridors between the City and Westminster.
  - The two Cities face unusually grave security challenges given their prominent roles in national life.
  - The two Cities share a strong civic and diplomatic tradition, e.g. the hosting of foreign Heads of State.

## Proposals

7. The Boundary Commission’s timeline is as follows:
  - **8 June 2021:** The Boundary Commission publishes its initial proposals and conduct eight-week written consultation (deadline 2 August 2021)
  - **Early 2022:** Responses to initial proposals are published and a six-week ‘secondary consultation’ is launched, including between two and five public hearings in each region;
  - **Late 2022:** Revised proposals are published followed by a four-week written consultation;
  - **June 2023:** The Commission’s final report and recommendations are published.

8. Subject to Members' views, it is suggested authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and the Deputy Chairman, to finalise the City Corporation's formal response to the Boundary Commission.

## **Appendices**

- None

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