



Tim Bowden
Secretary to the Commission
Boundary Commission for England

15 July, 2022

Via website

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Dear Mr Bowden

Cotswold District Council: Response to the Boundary Commission's Proposals for Parliamentary Constituencies 2023.

Cotswold District Council made a representation to the Boundary Commission via the Council's Monitoring Officer during the initial consultation period in the summer of 2021.

The Council's initial response supported the Commission's proposals and proposed a name change for two of the proposed constituencies:

- The proposed 'The Cotswolds' constituency be renamed 'North Cotswolds'
- The proposed 'Cirencester & North Wiltshire' constituency to be renamed 'South Cotswolds'

Cotswold District Council wishes to reaffirm its support for the proposed name changes as detailed above.

This submission is being presented as a response to the *secondary consultation* by the Boundary Commission that opened on 22nd February 2022 - the Cotswold District includes two of the proposed constituencies put forward by the Boundary Commission.

As part of the second consultation, Cotswold District Council, at its Council meeting of 16 March 2022, considered a motion (formal proposal) proposed by the Leader of the Council, Cllr Joe Harris and seconded by Cllr Jenny Forde. A link to that debate is below, discussion starts at 2 hours, 29 minutes, 41 seconds into the meeting.

https://cotswold.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/647512

In summary the motion presented proposed:

The Cotswolds' constituency be renamed 'North Cotswolds'
The proposed 'Cirencester & North Wiltshire' constituency be renamed 'South Cotswolds'

The request submitted by Baunton Parish Council (a request to the Boundary Commission in the initial consultation requesting that Chedworth and Churn Valley ward be included in the proposed Cirencester and North Wiltshire seat) become part of the Councils representation

The Chedworth and Churn Valley ward should be included in the proposed Cirencester and North Wiltshire parliamentary constituency. Moving Chedworth and Churn Valley ward into the proposed Cirencester and North Wiltshire Constituency would mean that it would have 72,965 electors and The Cotswolds Constituency would have 73,242, effectively equalising the electorate in the seats.

Authorise the Chief Executive to submit a written response to the Boundary Commission outlining the Council's position as set out in this motion.

This motion was then debated and voted on. Cotswold District Council has a total of 34 elected members and taking into account 6 absences and 1 abstention, the motion was carried.

We note the statutory (Rule 5) considerations that Boundary Commission is taking into account throughout this Review:

- special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- local government boundaries as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1 December 2020;
- boundaries of existing constituencies;
- any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies; and
- The inconveniences attendant on such changes.

In debating the motion before Council, a number of points were debated which are summarised below. **Please take these points as the Council's formal response to the second Boundary Commission that opened on 22nd February 2022.** The Cotswold District includes two of the proposed constituencies put forward by the Boundary Commission.

Electoral Equality

The Council debate included discussion regarding the towns of Cricklade and Malmesbury and their surrounding rural areas relating strongly to the towns of Tetbury and Cirencester and their surrounding rural areas. Many residents live in one area and work in another. Many young people from these parts of Wiltshire attend Cirencester College. Reflecting this, the Council would like to ask the Boundary Commission to move the Chedworth and Churn Valley Ward from the proposed 'The Cotswolds' constituency to the proposed 'Cirencester and North Wiltshire' constituency.

The commission's current proposals place Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituency with 71,222 electors and The Cotswolds constituency with 74,985 electors.

We recognise that the Commission aims to ensure electoral equality as far as possible. The Council's proposal would help to make this happen by giving elector parity in both of these seats with minimal disruption to the proposals as a whole.

This proposal would mean that the Cirencester and North Wiltshire has 72,965 electors and The Cotswolds Constituency 73,242 effectively equalising the electorate in both seats. There is unlikely to be a material effect on elector numbers becoming widely different over the next decade.

Community Cohesion and Representation

Cotswold District Council's response helps ensure that community cohesion and identity are maintained as far as possible. It is highly likely that the villages in Chedworth and Churn Valley Ward, in particular Baunton, Bagendon, North Cerney, Rendcomb, Perrott's Brook, Woodmancote and Chedworth look to Cirencester as their local centre. Cirencester is the main economic centre for residents in these villages. Many use Cirencester's four supermarkets for their groceries or go shopping in the town centre for its diverse retail offer. Many residents also work in Cirencester and use the town's Growth Hub at the Royal Agricultural University which is an important hub for business advice and innovation. The local jobcentre is based in Cirencester and used by residents in these communities.

Both of Cirencester's secondary schools include the villages outlined, within their catchment areas.

In addition, it is highly likely that many young people from North Wiltshire attend Cirencester College and the same is the case for young people in the Chedworth and Churn Valley ward. The above proposal would mean that the college is central to the new constituency.

The bulk of non-urgent local NHS services are based in Cirencester including the Minor Injuries Unit at Cirencester Hospital and the majority of local GP provision. Rendcomb surgery's catchment area also includes Cirencester.

Bagendon, Baunton, North Cerney, Perrott's Brook, Rendcomb and Woodmancote all share a postcode with Cirencester, and Bagendon has a link to Cirencester dating back over 2000 years. The iron age settlement at Bagendon later moved down the river Churn to form Roman Corinium which is now modern day Cirencester.

The residents on one side of Baunton Lane are in a different parliamentary constituency to their neighbours on the opposite side of the road as set out under the commission's current proposals, which seems illogical. The above proposal would retain community cohesion on Baunton Lane by ensuring that they remain in one parliamentary constituency.

Representation

A key consideration for the Boundary Commission when considering this proposal should be effective representation for residents in the villages and communities of Chedworth and Churn Valley Ward. Issues such as health services, schooling, employment and the local economy are all issues that one may have cause to write to their MP about. Under the proposals set out in this letter, transferring Chedworth and Churn Valley Ward into the proposed Cirencester and North Wiltshire seat will ensure that residents have the most effective representation by their future MP on many issues.

Conclusion

Cotswold District Council believes the boundary commission's proposals are well thought out and a good fit for our area given the constraints of achieving electoral equality.

In addition to changing the names of the electoral areas to better reflect the 'north and south Cotswolds, including Chedworth and Churn Valley Ward in the Cirencester and North Wiltshire constituency could significantly help to maintain community cohesion in the villages and communities north of Cirencester. It will also help ensure that representation by their future Member of Parliament is as effective as possible. The two aspirations are met whilst ensuring elector parity in both seats.

We thank the Boundary Commission again for the opportunity to make representations to this important consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Weaver', written in a cursive style.

Robert Weaver
Chief Executive