



Dear Local Party Officials,

The Boundary Commission's first proposals for the new Parliamentary boundaries are due to be published next Tuesday (at midnight on Monday night to be precise). They will be published on the Boundary Commission's web-site at <http://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/> Details are being given to MPs on Monday afternoon, so they may leak in the media on Monday afternoon/evening.

Throughout the last year a team has been working at regional and national level to help us make the best response possible to the proposals. The list of regional boundary co-ordinators is set out at the bottom of this email.

Responses to the proposals

The rules for this review are different to all previous boundary reviews. A briefing on the process is available at <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05929> Most significantly, the outcome must be exactly 600 seats, and the Commission has no discretion to have seats larger or smaller than the numbers which have been laid down. This means any change to any one constituency will have a knock on effect on its neighbours and consequently on every seat across the whole region. Therefore, we will be submitting one Party response from each Region. The regional boundary co-coordinators may ask local parties or branches to make submissions in support, but other submissions from individual local parties or branches (or from councillors or parliamentary candidates) could seriously damage the Party's overall case.

Please send your comments on the proposals as they affect your area to your regional boundary co-ordinator.

Please also resist the temptation to make any comment to the press. There will be a national response along the lines that we will be working with the Boundary Commission to get the best outcome for democracy and public engagement in the process. If your local paper asks for a comment, the response should be that this is a major review and we are taking time to look at the recommendations. We will be responding to the Boundary Commission but it is too early to comment on any particular ideas. Remember – if you say to the local press you support/oppose X ward moving into your constituency, that makes it very difficult if we want to argue to the contrary at the public hearings.

What will happen to local parties?

Where local parties are based on constituency boundaries, they will have to be reorganised to reflect the new constituency boundaries. This is a process we have done before – when the boundaries last changed. It is likely the changes will be made at AGMs in the autumn of 2012, with effect from 1 January 2013. Local Parties should go ahead with their AGMs this year for the current local party structure.

What about selecting Parliamentary candidates?

The fact that new local parties won't be in place until 2013 does not prevent candidate selection proceeding. The executives of the old local parties which cover the new constituency can manage the process and appoint a shortlisting committee which reasonably represents the new constituency. Please note, however, that if a selection proceeds before the new Parliamentary boundaries are finalised it will have to be run again if the final boundaries are significantly different from the draft. Constituencies which consider they want to start the selection process now, based on the draft boundaries, should begin by consulting their Regional Candidates Chair and asking for a Returning Officer to be appointed.

Need more information?

If you need more information about the Party's response to the Boundary Commission's proposals, contact your Regional Boundary Co-ordinator listed below or Tom Smithard at Party HQ, tom.smithard@libdems.org.uk

For other queries, contact your Regional Party Chair or Regional Candidates Chair – or you can contact me jonathan.davies@libdems.org.uk or the Chair of the English Candidates Committee, Margaret Joachim, margaret.joachim@london.anglican.org.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Davies
Chair of the English Party

List of Regional Boundary Co-ordinators

Devon & Cornwall	Ian Jolly	ianjolly@oakleigh.eclipse.co.uk
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