

## **Proposed response to the Boundary Commission for England proposals for Parliamentary Constituencies from 2023**

### **Statutory electorate range**

The Council recognises that the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent body and accepts that the proposed constituencies have an electorate no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.

### **Other statutory factors**

#### **Special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency**

The proposed new constituencies do not take account of the special geographical features of the Lake District. This is particularly noticeable in the proposed Copeland and the Western Lakes constituency which straddles the largest mountains and lakes in England, and is connected by minor roads. The lack of direct road connections and public transport and minimal commuting between Copeland and the Western lakes is a major concern with the proposals. For example the Windermere and Lakes part of the constituency is 50 miles and an 1 hr 30 mins drive to Whitehaven.

#### **Local government boundaries as they existed (or were in prospect) on 1 December 2020**

External local government boundaries have not been taken into account in these proposals. There is no congruence between district council, national park or health authority boundaries although it is recognised that in most cases ward boundaries have remained intact. There is no alignment with NHS and Further Education structures.

The proposals divide the South Lakeland district council area over four different constituency areas and in three of the four proposals their main centres are outside the district council boundary.

From a strategic and administrative perspective it makes sense for constituencies and communities to be aligned where practicable. This is a key factor in local democracy and having South Lakeland district represented by four members of parliament does not provide this alignment.

#### **Boundaries of existing constituencies**

We recognise that the existing constituencies of Westmorland and Lonsdale and Barrow and Furness do not meet the statutory electorate range. However there are other options such as the proposal put forward in 2016 for the 2018 Review, which was supported by the Council. This retained the existing constituencies and enlarged Westmorland and Lonsdale by including additional wards to the north east which are currently in the Eden District and we suggest this is revisited.

#### **Local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies**

The proposals are grouping towns and villages where there is no local connection. This is of particular concern for residents in villages on the outskirts of Kendal with strong local ties to Kendal which are now potentially grouped with Morecambe, Whitehaven or Penrith. Similarly communities in the Central and Southern Lakes areas of Windermere and Ambleside have little in common culturally, historically and economically with Whitehaven and the West coast of Cumbria.

Similarly, there is no connection with the villages in South East Cumbria, such as Endmoor and Kirkby Lonsdale, which are potentially grouped with Penrith, Alston and villages close to Carlisle. These are located within different economic areas and present large and diverse constituencies to be represented by one Member of Parliament.