

Somerset Council
Constitution and Governance Committee
– 16 August 2023



Update on Electoral Commission Parliamentary Constituency Review and Electoral Changes

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Executive Lead Member: Councillor Bill Revans – Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance and Communications

Division / Local Member: All Councillors

1. Summary

- 1.1.** Following on from the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries in England and the submission of the Final Report to the Speaker of the House of Commons on 28 June 2023, the Constitution and Governance Committee requested an update on the Final Recommendations that formed part of the Final Report.

At the Workshop held on 21 June 2023, the Constitution and Governance Committee requested an update on the impact of voter identification at the recent elections and also the upcoming changes arising from the Elections Act 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** The Constitution and Governance Committee are asked to note the update.

3. Background

3.1. Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

At the meeting held on 20 October 2022, the Committee were presented with the proposals for the final consultation stage of the 2023 Boundary Review – Parliamentary Constituencies.

There was a very in-depth debate held on the proposals, which led to the item being brought back to the meeting held on 21 November 2022, where the Committee agreed their final consultation submission.

(Constitution and Governance Committee – 16 August 2023)

- 3.2. In December 2022, the Constitution and Governance Committee submitted a response to the Boundary Review.
- 3.3. Following the submission of the Final Report to the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Committee requested an update on the Final Recommendations to conclude the review process. (The details of the Final Recommendations are included in the presentation to be given at the meeting.)
- 3.4. **Elections Act 2022**
As part of the Elections Act 2022, voters are now required to show photo identification to vote in polling stations. (The details of the impact on voters are included in the presentation to be given at the meeting.)
- 3.5. Further changes to be enacted are those procedures for Absent Voters. The proposed changes would mean that postal voters would need to reapply for their postal vote by 31 January 2026. Other changes include developments to the new digital service for processing Voter Authority Certificates and Absent Votes.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1. Consultations were carried out direct by the Boundary Commission for England: [2023 Review | Boundary Commission for England \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)

5. Implications

- 5.1. The new parliamentary boundaries will come into effect for the next General Election. In the meantime, the Electoral Registration Officer will need to make amendments to ensure that the register of electors is ready for the change. This will be allied to the review of polling districts and polling places which will have to be undertaken by the Council between 1 October this year and 31 January 2025.
- 5.2. There will also need to be co-operation with the Returning Officers for Bath and North East Somerset, Mid Devon and North Somerset Councils on procedures for the cross-boundary constituencies established by the boundary review.

6. Background papers

- 6.1. Boundary Commission for England Website: [2023 Review | Boundary Commission for England \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)
- 6.2. Constitution and Governance Committee Agendas and Minutes: [Browse meetings - SCC Constitution and Governance Committee - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

(Constitution and Governance Committee – 16 August 2023)

- 6.3.** Elections Act 2022, Electoral Commission Website: [Elections Act | Electoral Commission](#)

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author