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# COUNCIL

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**Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Abdul Khan (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Mohammad Ayub, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brerton, Peter Britcliffe, Danny Cassidy, Andrew Clegg, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Peter Edwards, June Harrison, Marlene Haworth, Carole Haythornthwaite, Terry Hurn, Zak Khan, Sajid Mahmood, Colin McKenzie, Caroline Montague, Miles Parkinson OBE, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Paddy Short, Steven Smithson and Kate Walsh

**Apologies:** Councillors Jodi Clements, Melissa Fisher, Susan Hayes, Patrick McGinley and Kimberley Whitehead

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## **203 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jodi Clements, Melissa Fisher, Susan Hayes, Patrick McGinley and Kimberley Whitehead.

## **Announcements**

The Mayor gave a brief summary of his recent visit to Kashmir, which he had thoroughly enjoyed. The visit had centred on the Mirpur region and the Mayor had been accompanied by Councillors Mohammed Ayub, Noordad Aziz, Munsif Dad BEM JP and eight other people.

The group had hoped to start the trip with a short stay in Islamabad, but this had not been possible due to political unrest. However, the group were able to take in a number of their birthplaces and visit family. On one memorable occasion, the Mayor was granted a civic reception, which including flower garlands, music provided by bagpipes and drums and mouth-watering dishes such as kebabs, samosas and fried fish. The group also took in some breath-taking scenery at Mangla Lake. As part of the trip, the Mayor visited some charity organisations, including KORT (Kashmir Orphans Relief Trust), which worked with orphans and under-privileged children, having been founded following a serious earthquake in the region in 2005.

The trip included many more highlights which were too numerous to describe at tonight's meeting.

Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE, Leader of the Council, commented that this must have been a very special trip for the Mayor and perhaps the highlight of his mayoral year to proudly represent Hyndburn within his heritage community. A number of former Mayors had celebrated their achievements in a similar fashion.

On another matter, all political groups had recently received a presentation from the Chief Executive and Chair of Hyndburn Leisure Trust about their Transformation Agenda. A document was being circulated this evening which included a QR code to link providing further information. The project represented investment of around £20m in leisure.

He reported that he had also been away recently and the Deputy Leader of the Council had attended the Accrington Christmas Lights Switch-On in his place.

Councillor Marlene Haworth, Deputy Leader of the Council, acknowledged that it had been a hectic couple of weeks. Last Thursday and seen the Christmas Lights Switch-On followed by a fantastic firework display. There were lots of people in the Town Centre to enjoy to the music and to watch the fireworks. The event had been enhanced by the efforts of the Market Hall Team, who had done an excellent job. The centrepiece of their display was the community Christmas tree, which had included the input of local schools who had made bauble decorations. Hundreds of baubles had been sent in and the feature had really captured the imagination of local children. Councillors were urged to see the tree for themselves. Both the Market Hall Team and Amazing Accrington had done a phenomenal job to make this event such a success.

Councillor Haworth also reported that Hyndburn Leisure had put together a series of 'Christmas on the Square' events taking place every Saturday and Sunday until Christmas on Accrington Town Square. A range of products and 'winter wonderland' themed activities were on offer each weekend.

She undertook to write to all of the Teams involved to thank them on behalf of the Council.

#### **204 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations notified on this occasion.

#### **205 Revised Proposals for the new Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review 2023 for Hyndburn**

Members considered a report of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE, which provided an update on the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2023. The report notified Members of the latest proposals from the Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) concerning the Hyndburn constituency.

The report indicated that the Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) was an independent and impartial non-departmental public body, which was responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.

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 Commission had begun a new review of all Parliamentary constituencies in England. They referred to this as the '2023 Review', as they were required to report with their final recommendations by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

The Commission had been undertaking an independent review of all constituencies in England since January 2021. The number of electors within each constituency currently varied widely due to population changes since the last boundary review. The 2023 Boundary Review would rebalance the number of electors each MP represented, resulting in significant change to the existing constituency map. Each constituency that the Commission recommended would have to contain no fewer than 69,724 Parliamentary electors, and no more than 77,062 (except two 'protected' constituencies for the Isle of Wight). By law, these electorate figures related to the electorates as they were on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

Applying the statutory formula to the electorate figures meant the total 650 constituencies were distributed during the review to the four parts of the UK, with England receiving

543 seats, Scotland with 57, Wales with 32 and Northern Ireland with 18 seats. This Commission had applied the same distribution formula to the English allocation, which resulted in the following redistribution of constituencies among the nine English regions for the 2023 Review.

- 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)

The Commission had revised the composition of 32 of the 73 constituencies they had proposed in June 2021 for the North West, and maintained their initial proposals for the remainder. They had revised the name of 17 of their initially proposed constituencies. The Commission's revised proposals would leave 13 existing constituencies in the North West region wholly unchanged, and five unchanged except to realign constituency boundaries with local government ward boundaries.

As it was not always possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties, these were sometimes grouped into sub-regions, meaning some constituencies crossed county boundaries. The Commission had explained, after consideration of the responses to the sub-regions in the initial proposals, that the revised proposals were based on unchanged sub-regions, as follows: Cumbria and Lancashire (allocated 20 constituencies); Merseyside and Cheshire (allocated 26 constituencies); and Greater Manchester (allocated 27 constituencies). 30 constituencies would cross local authority boundaries (three more than the initial proposals): four would contain parts of more than two local authorities (the same as the initial proposals). The Commission were proposing comprehensive change in both Cumbria and the south of Lancashire, having reflected on the evidence received in opposition to the initial proposals.

#### Proposals for Hyndburn

The latest proposal from the Commission indicated no changes to the Hyndburn Parliamentary Constituency boundary from the current version in operation, which included the two wards of Greenfield and Worsley wards from the Rossendale Borough Council area.

All the way through the process the Commission had kept Hyndburn coterminous with 100% of the district area within the parliamentary seat of Hyndburn whilst keeping its name Hyndburn. The Commissioners might consider including Haslingden in the constituency name, reflecting on the fact that not all of the area was within the Borough of Hyndburn.

The previous 2018 review recommended that Padiham wards were included in the Hyndburn constituency proposals, and the initial 2023 proposals included the three wards

of Billington & Langho; East Whalley, Read & Simonstone; and Whalley & Painter Wood from the Ribble Valley constituency area to be included.

Whilst there might be differing opinions regarding preferences of which additional wards should make up electorate numbers within the parliamentary seat, the Council followed and supported the Commission's impartiality and understood that the seat required a certain number of voters to represent voter equality and tolerance levels and be within the Commission's recommendations.

The main Council's objective was to support the proposal for keeping Hyndburn in one parliamentary constituency area and would like to thank the Commission for retaining the Hyndburn area.

### Final Consultation and Next Stage

The Commission had published the latest proposals for constituencies across the country and opened a third and final month-long consultation on the new map of revised constituency proposals. The Commission had taken into consideration over 45,000 comments (over 400 responses referenced to Hyndburn) sent in by the public during the previous two stages of public consultation, and had changed nearly half of its initial proposals based on this feedback.

The public were invited to view and comment on the new map at [bcereviews.org.uk](https://bcereviews.org.uk) giving the public a last opportunity to send in their views before the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

After this final consultation the Commission would analyse the responses and form its final recommendations. These would be submitted to Parliament by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023. This would be the end of the Commission's involvement in the process.

Within four months of the last of the four Commission's submitting their report, the UK Government would have to prepare the Order that would bring all their recommendations into law. Following recent changes, this Order no longer needed the approval of Parliament: It was sent directly to the Privy Council. If the Privy Council approved the Order, the new constituencies would be used at the next General Election following that.

A copy of the recommendations of the Special Cabinet meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 was circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Parkinson reported that there had been unanimity across the Chamber on all previous occasions when this matter had been debated. In particular, the view had been expressed that the Parliamentary constituency should be co-terminus with the Hyndburn Borough boundary. This principle had been unchanged over the last decade or so.

The proposals now before Council were the final recommendations of the Boundary Commission. The proposals would retain 650 MPs' seats across the UK. The recommendation made no change to the existing Hyndburn parliamentary constituency. Throughout the review process different views had been expressed about the what other wards should be added, or taken away from the constituency.

The Cabinet had discussed the proposals at its meeting yesterday and their recommendations were before the Council this evening. The Commission had recommended the name Hyndburn County Constituency, but this did not include reference to the Haslingden wards. Accordingly, the Cabinet's recommendation to Council was that the Commission be asked to add 'Haslingden' to the constituency name. The Leader

hoped that all would welcome the proposals. This would mean that the Borough would be served by a single MP.

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP agreed with most of what had been said. He acknowledged that many Members had sent representations to the Boundary Commission. He was glad that Hyndburn fell within a single constituency and this was supported by the Opposition group. He also reported that there was agreement to the request to change the constituency name to 'Hyndburn and Haslingden', as this would be inclusive. However, he was concerned that the residents of Haslingden might not have been consulted about this and might associate themselves more with Rossendale. He considered that there were no links with Whalley as had appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft recommendations, or Padiham which had featured in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft. There were, however, some links with Haslingden. Councillor Noordad Aziz commented that former councillor Chris Reid, who had passed away in 2019, had been a strong supporter of the name 'Hyndburn and Haslingden' as long ago as the General Election in 2010.

Councillor Parkinson was pleased that Members appeared to be in agreement about the proposals. The Council would write to the Boundary Commission with its comments. It was known that the Commission did not especially like long names, but the final decision would be a matter for them. The whole review had been difficult task for the Commission to complete and comparisons were made to the difficulties experienced when the Borough's own ward boundaries had to be reviewed. Often people did not like change.

**Resolved**

- (1) That Council notes the contents of the report on the Revised Proposals for the Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review 2023 and adopts the recommendations of Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, as set out at (2) and (3) below.**
- (2) That this Council supports the Commission's proposal to keep the Borough of Hyndburn as one parliamentary constituency (including the two wards of Greenfield and Worsley from the Rossendale Borough Council area).**
- (3) That this Council requests the Commission to consider the name 'Hyndburn and Haslingden' to formally recognise that part of the proposed constituency which is not within the Hyndburn Borough boundary.**
- (4) That Council thanks the Commission for the opportunity to comment on their recommendations and for all their hard work in developing these proposals.**

David Welsby, the Chief Executive, reported that long-serving employee, Gordon Mason, was due to retire at the end of the month. Gordon had served the Council for around 50 years. He had written personally to Mr Mason as Head of the Paid Service, but requested that the Mayor also write, on behalf of the whole Council, to express its best wishes.

The Mayor thanked all for their attendance and advised Members that the next meeting would be held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023. He wished all present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed