

I am writing to make you aware of the Boundary Commission for England's 2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies; details are available at their website here. I would encourage you to circulate this amongst your parish councillors and they may wish to share with the wider community.

I would like to stress that none of this is intended as political comment; this is not any reflection on our MPs past or present, it is about representation in the future. Also, this is parliament and not local government; it has no effect on my Central Bedfordshire ward nor when my current term of office will end.

There is a basic principle that parliamentary constituencies, and the number of people any one MP represents, should contain broadly equal numbers of constituents. Over time, due to housing growth and people's natural migration from one area to another, the balance shifts and some constituencies become significantly "underweight" whilst others run some way "over". Boundary reviews look at whether, by redefining how the lines are drawn, the numbers can be rebalanced.

The boundary commission have published a set of proposals which are open to consultation; I would expect that many alternative proposals will be suggested amongst the consultation responses. Whilst the primary considerations are voter numbers and creating constituencies that (however oddly shaped they may be) are not split into two parts, there is also consideration given to how neighbouring but varied communities are grouped together.

The draft proposals move the civil parishes of Studham, Kensworth and Whipsnade into a redrawn Luton South. It seems inevitable that the two Luton constituencies will be reshaped; an alternative may be that Studham, Kensworth and Whipsnade are left unchanged and Caddington, Slip End & Hyde are moved to join with what is currently South-West Bedfordshire (although that will also be reshaped and renamed).

If you feel your parish has a natural affinity with the nearby town of Luton, then you may wish to submit comments to that effect and that you see benefits in becoming part of Luton South. However, if you feel better suited to being grouped with the other parts of semi-rural south Bedfordshire, then you may wish to make representations to that effect. I make no comment on the merits of either case but I do encourage you to consider it for yourselves and, if you feel moved one way or the other, respond to the consultation before Monday 02 August 2021.

Councillor Kevin Collins
Member for Caddington Ward, Central Bedfordshire Council
Covering the parishes of Caddington, Hyde, Kensworth, Slip End, Studham & Whipsnade