



16th July 2021

The Occupier(s)
Address
Address
Address
Address
Address

Your views on Boundary Commission proposals - do you want to vote for an MP for Gloucester or an MP for Tewkesbury?

Dear Resident,

The Boundary Commission proposes changes for many constituencies in our country, in order to make the size of constituencies fairer. Their proposals for Gloucester would mean residents living in both Bamwood and Elmbridge wards would vote for an MP for Tewkesbury not for an MP for Gloucester in future General Elections.

My own view is that most of you in both wards have far more work, study and play links to Gloucester than with Tewkesbury, and that this should be taken into account by the Commission. But it's no good me just saying this. So I'm asking for YOUR help in telling me what you think, through the survey enclosed. I can then use the evidence from that in my reply to them. You can also reply direct yourself through: www.bcereviews.org.uk/node/6489.

The bottom line is that if enough of you care about this, we can get changes - as we did in 2011 when the Commission proposed Westgate residents vote for an MP for the Forest of Dean. More voters from Gloucester replied to the consultation than from anywhere else in the SW: and we kicked that proposal into touch. So - please fill in and return the FREEPOST survey on the other side of this note.

Quick Q&A background:

Q: What's the proposal all about?

A: The Commission is tasked to ensure each constituency is mathematically more equal ie has between 69,724 - 77,062 voters. Gloucester currently has 81,509 voters. So we have too many: their solution is to shrink the Gloucester constituency boundary to exclude Barnwood and Elmbridge. (See also my earlier article, which gives a map & a fuller explanation with more detail: <https://www.richardgraham.org/news/2023-boundary-commission-review-what-does-it-mean-gloucester>.)

Q: Does their proposal mean I would no longer live in Gloucester?

A: No. Come what may you still live (at your current address) within Gloucester City boundaries, vote for Gloucester City Councillors and pay Gloucester council tax. But the changed constituency boundaries would mean (under this proposal) that in a General Election you would vote for an MP for Tewkesbury rather than for Gloucester. That individual would then be your point of contact eg for all casework/issues.

Q: Is this a good idea?

A: My first reaction is deep personal frustration - you all live close to Gloucester City Centre and I've had some 14 years of great relationships with individuals, community groups, charities and businesses in your ward. Together we've discussed tackle issues like floods, relief ponds and roundabouts. I've visited all your schools and churches, and planted trees with some of you: protected your Post Offices, worked on your GP surgeries and volunteered at your Hospital (and vaccination centre). Many of you have supported the Gloucester History Festival that I created and chair. So I don't like things that split links between the community of Gloucester. My second broader worry is that if you don't relate much to the Tewkesbury constituency, it might put you off voting (whomever you support) - and that could be bad for democracy. But I may be wrong, which is why I invite your views.

Q: What can I do about this?

A: Send your views direct to the consultation (www.bcereviews.org.uk/node/6489) by midday on the 2nd August 2021 and copy me (richard.graham.mp@parliament.uk). But PLEASE also send me your completed survey (enclosed) via FREE Post in the envelope attached. I will then collate the data on the answers and use it for my response to the consultation (which I'll make public and share by mail with everyone who contributes to it). If enough of you reply and share similar views, it will have a definite impact on Commission thinking.

Q: And then?

A: The Commission will look at all the responses and come up with a second proposal. We all consider the new version again. Hopefully that will have positive changes for us. Eventually the whole thing is voted on by Parliament, probably by early autumn 2023. So there's a long way to go - but your input now is crucial. Mail me if you have any further queries!

Best regards



P.S. I've enclosed two copies of the survey in case anyone else in the household would like to give their thoughts, which I would appreciate.