

5 December 2016



Dear Assistant Commissioner

## **2018 Boundary Review Initial Proposals for the South West**

Cornwall Council reiterates its absolute opposition to the initial proposals for the South West region due to the inclusion of the "Bideford, Bude and Launceston" cross-border constituency. We strongly object to the principle of a cross-border constituency for the reasons submitted to the Commission at the public enquiry days in Exeter on 7 November and Truro on 10 November, the transcript of which can be found appended. Maintaining the integrity of Cornwall's historic border is of the utmost importance.

Cornwall Council understands the constrained position of the Boundary Commission as an independent body bound by legislation. However, we reflect that the strength of public feeling around this issue is substantial. The Commission experienced first-hand at the public inquiry days in Truro the distress this has caused numerous residents of Cornwall. It is an issue which must be addressed.

The Council notes the Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill 2016-17 (appended), tabled by Pat Glass Labour MP for North West Durham. Primarily, the Bill seeks to amend Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 by replacing the unnecessarily stringent "5% rule" with a 10% tolerance. This proposed amendment is fully supported by Cornwall Council. Greater freedom to divert from the UK electoral quota is welcomed, as an inflexible 5% tolerance is overly severe. This would allow the Boundary Commission to more adequately take account of the factors outlined in Paragraph 5 Schedule 2 of the 2011 Act when making its recommendations.

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The Commission is asked to provide an indication of whether constituencies wholly contained in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly would be proposed, if this amendment were to acquire Royal Assent. As an independent body bound by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, it would be pertinent for the Commission to consider the implications of any amendments to the Act. The Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill 2016-17 passed its second reading with a vote of 253 to 37. There is a significant chance that this Bill will become law, and, if so, this would have a profound effect on the 2018 Boundary Review. We believe the Commission would be failing in its duty if it did not make comment on the Bill and we would urge the Commission to make reference to its implications in fully addressing the very real concerns of Cornwall and its residents about a cross-border constituency in any correspondence with Central Government.

Cornwall Council will continue to lobby for an amendment to the legislation that specifically includes Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a protected region, for this and future Boundary Reviews.

The Commission must reconsider their proposals for a cross-Tamar constituency following the substantial and heartfelt consultation responses at the recent Inquiry Days and the practical and sensible solution identified through the Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill.

Yours sincerely  
Dhywgh hwi yn hwir

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Pollard'.

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