

Submission to the Boundary Commission for England

Of North Herefordshire Conservative Association

1 December 2011

1. This submission is made for and on behalf of the North Herefordshire Conservative Association in response to the Boundary Commission's initial proposals published on 13 September 2011 (the "*Proposals*"), and includes a counter-proposal with respect to certain parts of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire as detailed below.
2. We note that, and in our submission below have paid particular attention to, under the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, Schedule 2 Clause 5(1), in preparing its proposals the Boundary Commission shall take into consideration:
 - i) Special geographical circumstances, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - ii) Local government boundaries;
 - iii) The boundaries of existing constituencies; and
 - iv) Any local ties that be broken by changes to constituencies.
3. In respect of the Proposals with respect to the present Ludlow, North Herefordshire, Hereford and South Herefordshire and West Worcestershire constituencies, namely the creation of new Ludlow and Leominster, Malvern and Ledbury and Hereford constituencies, we have the following comments:
 - i) The proposed Ludlow & Leominster constituency and Malvern & Ledbury constituency require major upheaval for constituents across five current constituencies, leaving an unnecessarily large number of electors subject to disruption and uncertainty as to their Member of Parliament. This disruption could and should be minimized.
 - ii) The proposed Ludlow & Leominster constituency would create by far the largest geographical constituency in the West Midlands region and the third largest in England. Such a large and rural constituency, with few major connecting roads and limited public transport available, would pose a considerable challenge in terms of representation for the Member of Parliament and more importantly for constituents seeking access to their Member of Parliament.
 - iii) Further to paragraph 3 (ii) above, the inclusion of the Golden Valley North and Golden Valley South wards in the proposed Ludlow & Leominster constituency creates an unreasonable and unnecessarily large distance across the constituency and draws communities that are

geographically and socially proximate to the city of Hereford into a constituency centred around the town of Ludlow, some 1 hour, 15 minutes car journey away. In the event that the Commission proceed to recommend the creation of a Ludlow & Leominster constituency, it is strongly urged that the Golden Valley North and Golden Valley South wards be taken out of this constituency and included in the Hereford constituency.

- iv) Further to paragraph 3 (ii) above, the inclusion of the Alverley & Claverley ward in the proposed Ludlow & Leominster is inadvisable given the inaccessibility of the villages of Alverley and Claverley from Ludlow, except via the main road through the town of Bridgnorth, which under the Commission's Proposals would be part of the separate Telford South & Bridgnorth constituency. Furthermore, the villages of Alverley and Claverley and their environs are geographically, culturally and economically linked to Bridgnorth and Telford rather than Ludlow or Leominster. In the event that the Commission proceed to recommend the creation of a Ludlow & Leominster constituency, it is strongly urged that the Alverley & Claverley ward be taken out of this constituency and included in the Telford South & Bridgnorth constituency.
- v) The proposed Ludlow & Leominster constituency and the Malvern & Ledbury constituency have the overall effect of diminishing the extent of dedicated representation provided to residents of the County of Herefordshire. Whilst at present Herefordshire has the benefit of representation from two Members of Parliament serving the present North Herefordshire and Hereford & South Herefordshire constituencies, under the Proposals Herefordshire would have only one dedicated Member of Parliament, that of the proposed Hereford constituency. Whilst the remainder of the County of Herefordshire would be served by two Members of Parliament (those representing the proposed Ludlow & Leominster and Malvern & Ledbury constituencies), in both cases the majority of constituents in each constituency would be residents of another County (Shropshire and Worcestershire respectively). Whilst both Shropshire and Worcestershire would continue to be represented by several Members of Parliament in addition to these 'shared' cross-county Members of Parliament, Herefordshire would see its dedicated representation severely diminished to just one dedicated Member of Parliament and two minority shares of Members inevitably primarily focused on neighbouring Counties.
- vi) Furthermore, the proposed Ludlow & Leominster constituency and the Malvern & Ledbury constituency have the overall effect of over-riding and down-grading the local government boundaries of the County of Herefordshire and seriously damaging the historic ties and sense of local cultural identity that remains strongly felt within Herefordshire by creating two such constituencies that cross county boundaries and link Herefordshire in terms of representation with Shropshire and Worcestershire. As stated in paragraph 3(v) above, whilst such cross-county boundary constituencies would have a more limited effect on larger counties such as Shropshire and Worcestershire as their sense of distinct identity and representation would not be seriously impaired, Herefordshire's distinct cultural identity

and the veracity of County boundary for cultural and local government unit purposes would be significantly and detrimentally impacted. The Commission will be aware that the previous, historic amalgamation of the County of Herefordshire with that of Worcestershire for local government purposes proved damaging to local identity and to effective, local representation and was ultimately abandoned in 1998 following significant popular protest within the county of Herefordshire.

4. In light of the serious concerns detailed in paragraph 3 above, it is hereby submitted that in complete substitution for the proposed Ludlow and Leominster constituency, Hereford constituency and Malvern and Ledbury constituency, we submit the following counter-proposal of a Ludlow and West Worcestershire constituency, North Herefordshire constituency, and a Hereford constituency.

- i) The counter-proposed constituencies detailed below are all within the Commission’s statutory remit for the number of electors.
- ii) The counter-proposals have no wider consequences beyond the present Hereford, Ludlow, North Herefordshire and West Worcestershire constituencies – the constituencies discussed in this submission.
- iii) The counter-proposals have the effect of mitigating the detrimental effects of the Proposals upon the County of Herefordshire as detailed in paragraph 3 above, without causing any material disruption to electors in Shropshire or Worcestershire, beyond that already envisaged in the Proposals.

iv) Counter-proposal constituency 1: Ludlow and West Worcestershire

Wards	District/Borough/County	Electorate
Alfrick and Leigh	Malvern Hills	2927
Baldwin	Malvern Hills	1691
Broadheath	Malvern Hills	2875
Dyson Perrins	Malvern Hills	2906
Hallow	Malvern Hills	1534
Link	Malvern Hills	1823
Martley	Malvern Hills	1419
Teme Valley	Malvern Hills	1559
Tenbury	Malvern Hills	3022
Woodbury	Malvern Hills	1660
Bishops Castle	Shropshire	2837
Brown Clee	Shropshire	3033
Chirbury and Worthen	Shropshire	2397

Church Stretton and Craven Arms	Shropshire	6933
Clee	Shropshire	3566
Cleobury Mortimer	Shropshire	5509
Clun	Shropshire	3093
Corvedale	Shropshire	3050
Highley	Shropshire	2720
Ludlow East	Shropshire	3038
Ludlow North	Shropshire	3030
Ludlow South	Shropshire	3051
Hartlebury	Wychavon	2139
Lovett and Claines	Wychavon	4287
Ombersley	Wychavon	1860
TOTAL		76917

v) **Counter-proposal constituency 2: North Herefordshire**

Wards	District/Borough/County	Electorate
Burghill, Holmer and Lyde	Herefordshire	2618
Credenhill	Herefordshire	2581
Castle	Herefordshire	2528
Wormsley Ridge	Herefordshire	2047
Golden Cross with Weobley	Herefordshire	2342
Pembridge and Lyonshall	Herefordshire	2387
Kington Town	Herefordshire	2451
Leominster North	Herefordshire	4156
Leominster South	Herefordshire	4433
Bircher	Herefordshire	2340
Upton	Herefordshire	2330
Hampton Court	Herefordshire	2157
Sutton Walls	Herefordshire	2440
Hagley	Herefordshire	2909
Bromyard	Herefordshire	2547
Bringsty	Herefordshire	2290
Frome	Herefordshire	2751
Ledbury	Herefordshire	7342
Hope End	Herefordshire	4492
Mortimer	Herefordshire	2578
Pickersleigh	Malvern Hills	4481

West	Malvern Hills	3240
Priory	Malvern Hills	2965
Chase	Malvern Hills	4876
TOTAL		75281

vi) **Counter-proposal constituency 3: Hereford**

Wards	District/Borough/County	Electorate
Aylestone	Herefordshire	4987
Backbury	Herefordshire	2474
Belmont	Herefordshire	6364
Central	Herefordshire	2001
Golden Valley North	Herefordshire	2379
Golden Valley South	Herefordshire	2384
Hollington	Herefordshire	1566
Kerne Bridge	Herefordshire	2548
Llangarron	Herefordshire	2619
Old Gore	Herefordshire	2518
Penyard	Herefordshire	2680
Pontrilas	Herefordshire	2809
Ross-on-Wye East	Herefordshire	3823
Ross-on-Wye West	Herefordshire	4246
St Martins and Hinton	Herefordshire	8313
St Nicholas	Herefordshire	4860
Stoney Street	Herefordshire	2419
Three Elms	Herefordshire	7643
Tupsley	Herefordshire	7089
Valletts	Herefordshire	2622
TOTAL		76344

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