

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 449

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO **449**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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THE RT HON TOM KING, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

1. As a consequence of suggestions which had arisen in the course of the review of their parish boundaries, South Bedfordshire District Council wrote on 3 September 1980 requesting us to review the boundary between their district and Mid Bedfordshire District with a view to making proposals for changes in two places. One of the changes recommended to us arose from a suggestion by Barton-le-Clay Parish Council, and involved the transfer of an area of land from the parish of Pulloxhill in Mid Bedfordshire District to the parish of Barton-le-Clay in South Bedfordshire District, so that the whole of the Barton industrial estate would lie within Barton-le-Clay instead of straddling the boundary as at present. This change also affected one residential property (Faldo Farm) and an area of farmland. The other recommended change arose from a suggestion by Hockliffe Parish Council, and involved the transfer of an area of land from the parish of Battlesden in Mid Bedfordshire District to the parish of Hockliffe in South Bedfordshire District, in order to move the boundary away from the heart of the village of Hockliffe, and in particular to rectify the situation whereby the new Hockliffe village school was currently on the Battlesden side of the boundary.

2. Mid Bedfordshire District Council and Pulloxhill Parish Council objected to the suggested Barton-le-Clay/Pulloxhill change. The suggested Hockliffe/Battlesden change as originally submitted to us was opposed by both Mid Bedfordshire District Council and the Chairman of Battlesden Parish Meeting; however, South Bedfordshire District Council subsequently had further consultations with Mid Bedfordshire District Council, and reached agreement with them on an amended Hockliffe/Battlesden suggestion, which they duly submitted to us on 17 March 1981; this change involved the transfer of less land but still achieved the original purpose. The Chairman of Battlesden Parish Meeting, however, maintained his objection. Bedfordshire County Council had no comment to make on either of the suggested boundary changes.

3. We considered South Bedfordshire District Council's request, as required by section 48(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, having regard to DOE Circular 33/78 and to our own Report No. 287. We noted that the suggestions appeared to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 14 of DOE Circular 33/78.

4. We decided, therefore, that we should undertake a review, and that the circumstances were such as to enable us to publish draft proposals at the same time as we formally announced our intention to carry out a review. We based our draft proposals on South Bedfordshire District Council's submission of 3 September 1980 (as amended in their letter of 17 March 1981), with two minor technical adjustments which had been suggested by the Ordnance Survey in the case of the Barton-le-Clay/Pulloxhill proposal.

5. On 24 February 1982 we issued a consultation letter announcing the start of the review and giving details of our draft proposals. The letter was addressed jointly to South Bedfordshire District Council and Mid Bedfordshire District Council. Copies were sent to the Bedfordshire County Council, the Barton-le-Clay, Pulloxhill and Hockliffe Parish Councils, the Chairman of Battlesden Parish Meeting, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned, the headquarters of the main political parties, local newspapers circulating in the area, the local government press, and the local radio station serving the area. A copy was also sent to a resident of Faldo Farm who had written to us expressing a desire for a boundary change. We asked the district councils concerned to arrange for the publication of a notice about the draft proposals for two successive weeks in the local press, and to display copies of the notice at places where public notices are customarily displayed; and to place copies of the draft proposals on deposit at their main offices for a period of six weeks. Comments on the draft proposals were invited by 21 April 1982. In a further letter, we pointed out to the two district councils that parts of the proposed new boundary were aligned along the centre of roads, and we asked them to suggest alternative alignments if they considered ours undesirable.

6. Our consultation letter elicited responses from Mid Bedfordshire District Council, Barton-le-Clay Parish Council, Hockliffe Parish Council, Battlesden Parish Meeting, the resident of Faldo Farm to whom we had sent a copy of the letter, and a firm of chartered surveyors. We received no comments on the question of boundary alignments along roads.

7. Mid Bedfordshire District Council reiterated their opposition to the recommended Barton-le-Clay/Pulloxhill change, on the grounds that it would reduce Pulloxhill's rateable value by almost one-third, and that the arguments put forward in support of it by South Bedfordshire District Council would not apply once the proposed Barton by-pass had been constructed. (South Bedfordshire District Council, in requesting the change, had put forward the argument that, as the village of Barton currently provided the only access to the industrial estate, it had an interest in the planning and environmental questions in respect of the whole estate. The Barton by-pass, however, would probably provide alternative access.) Mid Bedfordshire District Council also wished a local meeting to be held concerning the proposed change.

8. The aforementioned resident of Faldo Farm expressed, as she had done before, her desire for the boundary to be changed so as to transfer her from Pulloxhill to Barton-le-Clay in view of her affinity with the latter parish; our draft proposals would, in fact, achieve what she wished.

9. Barton-le-Clay Parish Council expressed support for the proposed change. They considered the question of the proposed Barton by-pass to be irrelevant, since the prospects for its construction were, at the time they wrote, very uncertain; they also argued that the change would rectify certain administrative anomalies. They remained of the opinion that our draft proposals provided what was geographically the most satisfactory Barton-le-Clay/Pulloxhill boundary, but they specified an alternative line which they would be prepared to accept if necessary; this involved a smaller change, which would transfer the industrial area and Faldo Farm but would exclude most of the surrounding farmland. Mid Bedfordshire District Council and Pulloxhill Parish Council, however, on being consulted by us regarding this alternative, both objected to it as strongly as to our draft proposals; Mid Bedfordshire District Council urged that, unless we were prepared to accept that the existing boundary should remain unaltered, we should take no action on the matter until the position regarding the proposed Barton by-pass was known.

10. Our draft proposals for the Hockliffe/Battlesden boundary were accepted by Mid-Bedfordshire District Council, as well as by Hockliffe Parish Council; but Battlesden Parish Meeting objected, stating that Hockliffe already had enough land to use for any purpose needed, and that the present parish boundary was easily defined. Messrs Bidwells (Chartered Surveyors), acting for the Trustees of the Woburn Estate, also objected to our draft proposals, on the grounds that they would transfer a portion of the Woburn Estate to South Bedfordshire District and thus cause that Estate to be split between districts to a greater extent than at present, thereby leading to long-term administrative problems. They urged that the district/parish boundary be moved only up to the boundary of the Woburn Estate; this would still enable the Hockliffe village school to be transferred to Hockliffe Parish. The local authorities concerned, on being consulted by us about Messrs Bidwells' suggestion, were generally opposed to it, since it would fail to achieve the objective of moving the district/parish boundary away from the heart of Hockliffe village; Battlesden Parish Meeting, however, took the view that if a boundary change had to be made, Messrs Bidwells' suggestion should be adopted.

11. We have re-assessed our draft proposals in the light of the representations which we received. Although a request has been made for a local meeting to be held, we consider that we have sufficient information to reach decisions on the evidence before us.

12. With regard to the Barton-le-Clay/Pulloxhill part of our draft proposals, we note Mid Bedfordshire District Council's argument about the loss of rateable value which

the parish of Pulloxhill would suffer as a result of the proposed change, but it does not appear to us that the loss would be such as to impede the operation of effective and convenient local government in the parish; there are many other parishes of similar size which function effectively without the kind of commercial development which Pulloxhill has acquired by virtue of the growth of the Barton industrial estate. We remain of the opinion that there is an overriding need to rationalise the anomalous situation whereby the responsibility for administering the industrial estate is split between two district councils; and that this should be done by bringing the whole estate into the parish of Barton-le-Clay in South Bedfordshire District, having regard to the fact that Barton is the estate's nearest village and generally serves as its local source of non-local-government services - a situation which seems unlikely to be affected by the construction of the Barton by-pass. Moreover, if the whole estate is to be in the parish of Barton-le-Clay, we consider that the best possible boundary line is the one we adopted in our draft proposals, which allows ample room for any future northward extension of the estate. We therefore confirm this part of our draft proposals as final proposals.

13. We can find little merit in the arguments that have been advanced in opposition to the Hockliffe/Battlesden part of our draft proposals. In particular, Battlesden Parish Meeting's statement that the present boundary is easily defined is not borne out by the map. It appears to us to be obviously desirable, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, to move the district/parish boundary clear of the village of Hockliffe. We accordingly confirm this part of our draft proposals as final proposals also.

14. Details of our final proposals are set out in Schedules 1-3 to this report and illustrated on the accompanying map. Schedule 1 specifies the proposed changes in local authority areas, and Schedules 2 and 3 specify the consequential adjustments to the existing electoral arrangements at district and county level respectively. These consequential adjustments merely involve bringing the boundaries of the relevant district wards and county electoral divisions into line with the proposed new district/parish boundaries; we do not propose any other consequential changes, since the two areas to be transferred contain only one residential property each, and the effect on the standard of representation in the wards and electoral divisions in question would therefore be negligible.

15. In due course we shall be submitting to the Home Secretary our proposals for revised electoral arrangements for the county of Bedfordshire. Should the Home Secretary decide to implement those proposals, the pattern of changes envisaged in Schedule 3 hereto should be regarded as applying, *mutatis mutandis*, to the new electoral divisions.

16. Separate letters are being sent with copies of this report to South Bedfordshire District Council and Mid Bedfordshire District Council, asking them to place copies of the report and map on deposit at their main offices, and to put notices to this effect on public notice boards and in the local press. The text of the notices will refer to your power to make an Order implementing the proposals, if you think fit, after the expiry of six weeks from the date they are submitted to you; it will suggest that any comments on the proposals should therefore be addressed to you, in writing, preferably within six weeks of the date of the letter. Copies of this report, which includes small sketch plans illustrating the proposed changes, are also being sent, without the map, to the other bodies and persons who received the consultation letter or who made comments on our draft proposals.

L.S.

SIGNED: G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

WILFRED BURNS (Deputy Chairman)

JOAN ACKNER

TYRRELL BROCKBANK

G E CHERRY

D P HARRISON

LESLIE GRIMSHAW
(Secretary)

28 April 1983

SCHEDULE ONE

Description of proposed district boundary changes between South Bedfordshire and Mid Bedfordshire Districts.

Note : Where a boundary is described as following a road, railway, river, canal or similar feature it should be deemed to follow the centre line of that feature unless otherwise stated.

Area A

Description of an area of land to be transferred from Battlesden CP in Mid Bedfordshire District to Hockliffe CP in South Bedfordshire District.

That area bounded by a line commencing at a point on the existing district boundary between South Bedfordshire District and Mid Bedfordshire District where it joins the A50 road northwest of Turnpike Cottage, thence southwestwards, westwards and generally northwestwards along the existing district boundary to the northwestern boundary of parcel No 0713 as shown on OS 1:2500 Microfilm (A) SP 9727 date of publication 1975, thence northeastwards along said northwestern boundary to and southeastwards along the southwestern boundary of parcel No 1135 to the northwestern boundary of parcel No 2400, thence northeastwards and southeastwards along the said northwestern boundary and the northeastern boundary of parcel No 2400 to the A50 road, thence southwestwards along said road to the point of commencement.

Area B

Description of an area of land to be transferred from Pulloxhill CP in Mid Bedfordshire District to Barton-le-Clay CP in South Bedfordshire District.

That area bounded by a line commencing at a point where the A6 (Bedford Road) crosses the existing boundary between South Bedfordshire District and Mid Bedfordshire District south of the Speed the Plough Public House, thence generally southwestwards and westwards along the existing district boundary to the

westernmost point of parcel No 9180 as shown on OS 1:2500 Microfilm (A) TL 0631 date of publication 1976, thence eastwards along the northern boundary of the said parcel to and northwestwards along the western boundary of parcel No 0005, continuing on OS 1:2500 Microfilm (A) TL 0632 date of publication 1977, to the northern boundary of the said parcel, thence generally northeastwards along said boundary and the northern boundaries of parcels nos 3933, 6333 and 0038 as shown on OS 1:2500 Microfilm (A) TL 0732 date of publication 1977 to Barton Road, thence southeastwards along Barton Road and the A6 (Bedford Road) to the point of commencement.

SCHEDULE TWO

Proposals for revised District electoral arrangements consequent upon the proposed changes as described in Schedule one.

It is proposed that the District Wards as defined in the District of South Bedfordshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1975 and the District of Mid Bedfordshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1976 shall be altered as described below.

1. Area A shall be transferred from the Woburn Ward of Mid Bedfordshire District to the Hockliffe Ward of South Bedfordshire District.
2. Area B shall be transferred from the Flitton and Pulloxhill Ward of Mid Bedfordshire District to the Barton-le-Clay Ward of South Bedfordshire District.

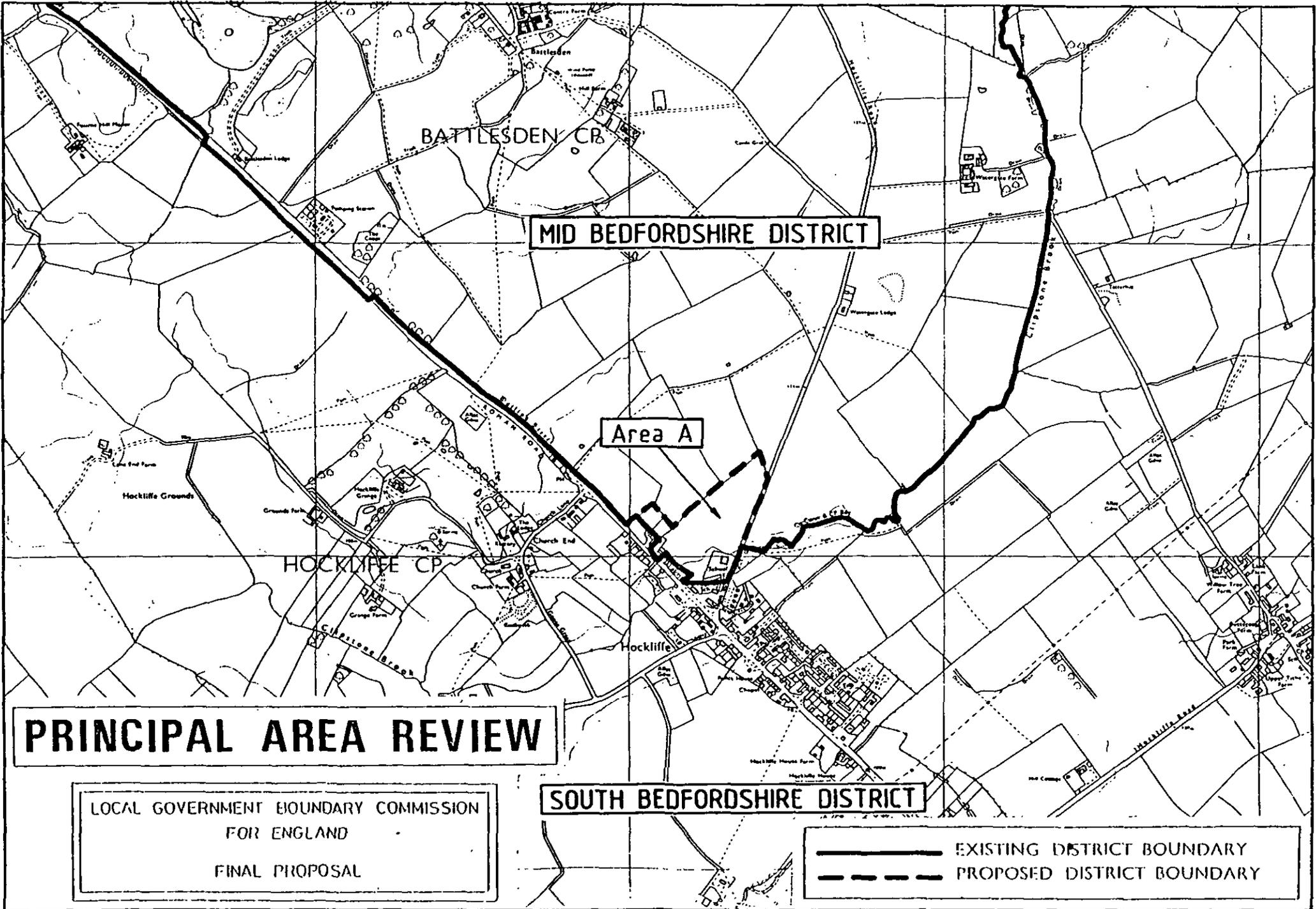
SCHEDULE THREE

Proposals for revised County electoral arrangements consequent upon the proposed changes as described in Schedule one.

It is proposed that the County Electoral Divisions as defined in the County of Bedfordshire (Electoral Divisions) Order 1973 shall be altered as described below.

Area A shall be transferred from the Ampthill Rural No 3 ED to the Luton Rural No 5 ED.

Area B shall be transferred from the Ampthill Rural No 6 ED to the Luton Rural No 1 (Barton) ED.



BATTLESDEN CR

MID BEDFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

Area A

HOCKLIFFE CP

PRINCIPAL AREA REVIEW

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND
FINAL PROPOSAL

SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

— EXISTING DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- - - PROPOSED DISTRICT BOUNDARY

PRINCIPAL AREA REVIEW

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND
FINAL PROPOSAL

MID BEDFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

Area B

HIGHAM GOBIO

SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

Barton-LeClay

— EXISTING DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- - - PROPOSED DISTRICT BOUNDARY

