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**Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
For England  
Report No. 535**

**Reviews of Non-Metropolitan Counties**

COUNTIES OF

CORNWALL AND DEVON

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 535

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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THE RT. HON. NICHOLAS RIDLEY MP  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
THE COUNTIES OF CORNWALL AND DEVON  
INTRODUCTION

1. On 26 July 1986 we wrote separately to Cornwall and Devon County Councils announcing our intention to undertake reviews under section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purpose of considering whether or not to make such proposals in relation to the counties as are authorised by section 47 of the Act, and what proposals, if any, to make. Copies of the letters were sent to the principal local authorities and all the parishes in the Counties of Cornwall and Devon and in the case of the County of Devon to all the local authorities in the Counties of Dorset and Somerset, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests, the headquarters of the main political parties, various Government Departments which might have an interest, South West Regional Health Authority, British Telecom, South Western Electricity and Gas Boards, South West Water Authority, the English Tourist Board, Port Authorities, local TV and radio stations serving the area and the National and County Associations of Local Councils.

2. The County Councils were requested, in co-operation as necessary with the other County Councils and with the District Councils concerned, to assist us in giving publicity to the start of the review by publishing a notice for two successive weeks in appropriate local newspapers so as to give the widest possible publicity to cover the areas concerned. The County Councils were asked in particular to use their best endeavours to ensure that the issue of the consultation letter was drawn to the attention of those concerned with services such as administration of justice and police, in respect of which they have a statutory function.

3. A period of six months from the date of the letter was allowed for all local authorities, including those in the adjoining counties; and anyone else interested in the reviews, to submit to us their views in detail on whether changes in the

counties' boundaries were desirable and, if so, what those changes should be and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government.

#### THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO US

4. In response to our letter we received representations from Cornwall, Devon and Dorset County Councils, Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier, North Cornwall and Penwith District Councils, the Borough of Restormel and Plymouth City Council, together with a number of representations from various parish councils, interested organisations and residents of the Counties of Cornwall and Devon.

5. Cornwall County Council had resolved not to make any representations for alterations to their county boundary and were opposed to any suggestions for change from any other authority.

6. The other principal authorities who responded either stated that they supported Cornwall County Council or that they wished to see the present boundary between Cornwall and Devon maintained. The majority of the other representations received expressed opposition to any changes to the existing boundary between Cornwall and Devon. However, in the context of the review of Cornwall four representations suggested various alterations to rectify alleged anomalies in some areas and to realign Cornwall's boundary to follow the River Tamar throughout its length. The proposals concerned the boundaries of the Parishes of Launcells, Marhamchurch, Morwenstow, North Tamerton and Whitstone in the District of North Cornwall, and the Parishes of Bradworthy, Bridgerule, Clawton, Hartland, Pancrasweek, Pyworthy and Welcombe in the District of Torridge in Devon.

7. There were no suggestions for changes to any other parts of the boundary of the County of Devon.

#### OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBMISSIONS

8. We considered the submissions from the principal authorities concerned and all the other representations we had received. We accepted that the River Tamar represented

the most obvious boundary between the Counties of Cornwall and Devon, as emphasised in many of the comments received. However, we decided to seek the two County Councils' views in respect of the various proposals for changes before formulating our draft proposals.

9. We accordingly wrote to Cornwall County Council on 2 May 1986 seeking their views on the proposed changes which would re-align the county boundary to follow the River Tamar throughout its length. Copies of the letter were also sent to Devon County Council and the other district and parish councils involved for their information, and in case they wished to make any observation. Comments were invited by 16 June 1986.

#### RESPONSE TO OUR LETTER

10. We received 14 representations in response to our letter. These included comments from Cornwall and Devon County Councils, North Cornwall and Torridge District Councils, Mr Gerry Neale and Sir Peter Mills, Members of Parliament, in support of North Tamerton Parish Council and Devon County Council respectively, and from most of the parish councils affected.

11. Cornwall County Council had initially indicated that they were opposed to any changes in the boundary. However, they later decided that while accepting the principle that Cornwall's boundary should be the River Tamar throughout its length, they considered that consultations should take place with the affected residents before any boundary changes were implemented. Clawton, Launcells and Marhamchurch Parish Councils had no objections to the proposals affecting their respective parishes, but the remaining local authorities who responded were strongly opposed to the proposed changes, particularly because the proposals would have divided the Parishes of Bridgerule, North Tamerton and Pancrasweek, leaving one part of each in Cornwall and the other in Devon.

## OUR INTERIM DECISIONS

12. Although we had initially accepted that the River Tamar represented the most obvious boundary between Cornwall and Devon, we noted that none of the representations recommending the changes had explained how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government. In addition, none of the principal authorities concerned had given any indication that the apparent anomalies had a detrimental impact on the effective operation of local government and associated services. In considering the responses to the proposed changes, it became evident that other relevant factors also had to be considered, not least the strength of opposition from the local authorities affected and the pattern of community life. We were of the opinion that if the proposals were to be accepted, they would **by dividing parishes disrupt the pattern of community life, without any clear improvement in the operation of local government and associated services.**

13. Having therefore considered all the arguments put forward and having regard to the guidelines set out in the Department of the Environment Circular 12/84, we concluded that the proposed changes would not be desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government and reached an interim decision to make no proposals for changes to the boundary between Cornwall and Devon. In the absence of any suggestions for changes, we also reached an interim decision to make no proposals for changes to the boundaries between the Counties of Devon and Dorset and the Counties of Devon and Somerset.

14. Our interim decisions were published on 12 September 1986. Copies were sent to all those who had received a copy of our letter of 26 July 1985 and those who had made representations to us. Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset County Councils were asked jointly to arrange publication of notices giving details of our interim decisions and to place copies of them on display at places where public notices are customarily

displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our interim decision letters on deposit for inspection at their main offices for a period of eight weeks. Comments were invited by 7 November 1986.

#### RESPONSE TO OUR INTERIM DECISIONS

15. We received 14 representations in response to our interim decision letters. Devon County Council stated that they would raise no objections to our interim decisions. Cornwall County Council merely stated that our interim decision had been noted. The Borough of Restormel similarly stated that our interim decision had been noted. They confirmed that our interim decision had been on public deposit for a period of eight weeks, and added that there had been very little, if any, public interest and no observations had been received from members of the public. Torridge District Council had no observations to make. Caradon and Carrick District Councils, Constantine, Churchstanton, Illogan, Kenwyn and Otterford Parish Councils, and the Caradon and District Ratepayers Association all supported our interim decisions. However, the Cornish Nationalist Party considered that the River Tamar should form the boundary between Cornwall and Devon throughout its length, which, in their view, would improve the effectiveness of local government in the area. They alleged that the existing boundary which deviated from the River Tamar at West Bridgerule resulted in inefficient management of the B3254 road, since a short length of the road was managed by the Devon Highways Department and the remainder by the Cornwall Highways Department. They also stated that they had conducted a sample survey on the views of the parishioners of West Bridgerule, which had revealed that while the majority of those questioned were initially against any change, several had later changed their views to support whatever was good for the parish, and the area. The Cornish Nationalist Party considered that in commercial, social and economic terms West Bridgerule was a part of Cornwall and that the residents largely looked to Bude and Stratton in Cornwall for shopping, recreation and services.

## OUR FINAL DECISIONS

16. As required by section 60(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, we have considered the representations made to us. We noted that the majority of the representations supported our interim decisions. However, the total response was very small, despite the wide publicity given to our interim decisions, from which we deduced that our decisions had been generally favoured.

17. We noted that under the existing arrangements for highway maintenance on the boundary between Cornwall and Devon a small length of the B3254 road west of Bridgerule was managed by the Devon Highways Department, and the remainder by the Cornwall Highways Department. However, there was no evidence of inefficient management of the road in question and, in addition, none of the principal authorities concerned had indicated that the existing boundary had impaired the effective operation of local government and associated services. We accepted that some residents of West Bridgerule could well look to Bude and Stratton for shopping, recreation and services, but did not consider that that was sufficient justification for altering the boundary in the area. We felt that we should have more regard to the overall pattern of community life in the local areas where changes had been proposed. We were aware that if we were to accept the various proposals for changes, they would divide the parishes of Bridgerule, North Tamerton and Pancrasweek, leaving one part of each in Cornwall and the other in Devon, which would disrupt the pattern of administration and community life of these parishes.

18. There was no opposition to our interim decisions to make no proposals for changes to the boundaries between the Counties of Devon and Dorset and the Counties of Devon and Somerset. We have therefore concluded that in the interests of effective and convenient local government it is right to confirm our interim decisions to make no proposals as our final decisions.

## PUBLICATION

19. A separate letter enclosing copies of this report is being sent to Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset County Councils asking them, as necessary, to deposit copies

of this report at their main offices for inspection over a six-month period. The County Councils are also asked to co-operate in putting notices to this effect on public notice boards and in the local press. Copies of this report are also being sent to those who received our interim decision letters and to those who made comments.

LS

Signed: G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

J G POWELL (Deputy Chairman)

JOAN ACKNER

G E CHERRY

K J L NEWELL

G R PRENTICE

BRIAN SCHOLES

S T GARRISH  
Secretary

26 February 1987

