

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2008

2008 No.

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Northern Ireland Office and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Description

- 2.1. This Order gives effect without modification to the recommendations set out in the report of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland dated 14 September 2007. The report sets out the proposals for parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland consequent on a review by the Commission of the representation in the House of Commons of Northern Ireland.

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

- 3.1. None.

4. Legislative Background

- 4.1. The parliamentary constituencies for Northern Ireland are currently set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (S.I.1995/2992). This Order gives effect to the most recent report of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland.
- 4.2. The effect of section 4(6) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 is that the coming into force of any of this Order shall not affect any parliamentary election until a proclamation is issued by Her Majesty summoning a new Parliament, or affect the constitution of the House of Commons until the dissolution of the Parliament now in being.

5. Extent

- 5.1. This instrument applies in Northern Ireland only.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

- 6.1 Paul Goggins has made the following statement regarding Human Rights:
In my view the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 are compatible with the Convention Rights.

7. Policy Background

- 7.1. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland completed their Fifth Periodical Review in 2007 and recommended that there should be 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland with revisions made to the 12 constituencies of Belfast East, Belfast North, Belfast South, Belfast West, East Antrim, East Londonderry, Foyle, Lagan Valley, North Antrim, South

Antrim, South Down and Strangford. In reaching their final recommendations, the Commission had regard to all representations and submissions made to them throughout the review, the report and recommendations of the assistant Commissioners and evidence adduced at the Local Inquiries conducted by them. They have also had regard to changes which had occurred in the distribution of the electorate since the inception of the review.

- 7.2. The detail of the revised recommendations is uncontroversial. The boundaries of 12 of the constituencies have been redrawn to accommodate the extension outwards of the 4 Belfast constituencies and to ensure that the electorate of each constituency is as near as practicable to the electoral quota. The electoral quota is the average number of electors per constituency and is determined by dividing the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland by the number of existing constituencies at the outset of the Review.

8. Impact

- 8.1. A Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on the public sector, businesses, charities or voluntary bodies.

9. Contact

- 9.1. Ruth Sloan at the Northern Ireland Office (tel: 020 7210 6569 or e-mail: ruth.sloan@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.