

# PARLIAMENTARY VOTING SYSTEM AND CONSTITUENCIES ACT 2011

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### *Schedule 11: Public hearings about Boundary Commissions Proposals*

152. Schedule 11 sets out the rules governing the new public hearings process introduced by section 12 of this Act. *Paragraph 1* sets out the purpose of public hearings - to enable representations to be made about the proposals which are the subject of the hearing. *Paragraph 2* states that there shall be between 2 and 5 hearings held in each region in England and in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which will collectively cover proposals for that region or country. Each hearing will last for up to 2 days (*paragraph 4*). *Paragraph 3* requires the Boundary Commission to appoint a chair, who will determine the procedure governing each hearing (*paragraph 5*) and who will make sure that each hearing begins with an explanation of the proposals which are the subject of the hearing and the process for making written representations on the proposals (*paragraph 6*).
153. *Paragraph 7* requires the Chair to allow representations from each qualifying party (a political party which has at least 1 MP in the region/part of the UK affected, or which received at least 10% of the votes cast in that region or part of the UK in the last general election), and from any other people who they consider to have an interest in the proposals. The Chair may restrict the amount of time allowed for representations, and need not allocate the same amount of time to each party or person. The Chair may determine the order in which representations are made, and if there is not enough time to hear from everyone, the Chair may decide who will not be permitted to make representations. *Paragraph 8* empowers the Chair to ask, or allow others to ask, questions at the hearing. If questions are allowed, the Chair can decide how questions should be asked, or restrict the number of questions a person may ask.
154. Lastly, *Schedule 11* sets out the interpretation of terms used in this schedule.