

The 2023 Parliamentary Constituency Review

As a result of growth of the population of Kent, including Ashford, the 2023 constituency boundary review will potentially have a major impact on our area.

This review, by the politically independent Boundary Commission for England (BCE), retains the 650 MPs in Parliament and seeks to restore equality in the number of voters in each constituency. It requires constituencies to comply with strict parameters, in particular as far as the number of electors in each constituency is concerned. The number of constituencies in England will increase from 533 to 543 with the number in the South East is increasing from 84 to 91

The statutory rules state that each constituency must have between 69,724 and 77,062 registered voters as at 2nd March 2020.

With most of the Kent constituencies exceeding that target - the Ashford constituency had 94045 on that date - one additional constituency is proposed for this area.

It is provisionally called the Weald of Kent Constituency.

The BCE uses the **Wards** in district and borough council areas such as ours as the basic building blocks for designing constituencies. They are well-defined and well-understood units, which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest.

To encompass this new constituency, the first proposal from BCE, based solely on a computer model, redistributes the Ashford Borough wards from being in a single constituency to being between **three** constituencies, with our Downs West one being included in the Faversham and Mid Kent. *Details appended below.*

If the new proposals are adopted, residents in the local government area of Ashford Borough, including us, will be represented **by THREE MPs, each** representing one of the three parliamentary constituencies.

Ours would be the elected Faversham MP.

But the Rules also provide for a number of other factors that the BCE will take into account in establishing a new map of constituencies for this Review, specifically:

- special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape, and accessibility of a constituency.
- local government boundaries as they existed on 1 December 2020.
- inconveniences resulting from any changes.
- any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies. These may include matters of culture, history, socio-economics and other possible aspects of non-physical geography.
- boundaries of existing constituencies; these include both the external boundaries of local councils and their internal ward boundaries.

While the BCE proposes to identify constituencies by reference to local authority external boundaries as far as practicable, it is nevertheless often necessary to cross these boundaries in order to form constituencies that comply with the statutory electorate range.

The BCE stress that their final recommendations very much take the public consultation into account

The SLRA Committee consider individual participation in this consultation a matter of members' personal choice but consider they have a duty to seek any consensus view of its members and present this as a Residents' Association response.

Whilst variations of the boundaries may be suggested, the aim should be to produce a cohesive area which would not only meet the statutory electorate targets but retains the local ties, geographic factors and local government boundaries criteria as stated by BCE, but also expect its issues to be pursued by its parliamentary representatives.

We are therefore seeking your views on our proposal to:

Object to the initial proposal and suggest moving

1) Charing (2,169) and Downs West (2,331) wards from the Faversham & Mid Kent constituency into the Weald of Kent constituency
and

2) Downs North (2,048) from the Faversham & Mid Kent constituency into Ashford constituency

These meet the statutory size target of 69,724 to 77,062 electorate, as Faversham becomes 69,884, the Weald of Kent 75,232, and Ashford 75,594 registered voters at March 2020. For detailed maps of proposed constituencies showing wards, see: [Ashford](#) [Faversham & Mid Kent](#) [Weald of Kent](#)

We believe that this proposal

- reduces the number of MPs representing Ashford area interests from three to two.
- reinforces the rural as opposed to urban nature of our ward that we fought for, and won, with the BCE resulting in the change in boundary to behind the even numbered properties in Sandyhurst Lane.
- strengthens historical and current community ties of Downs West with Charing and Downs North with Wye. Both towns are designated in the Ashford Local Plan as rural service centres and will be important providers of local shops and services.
- recognises these three wards have no affinity to the communities associated to Faversham or its environs.

Whilst other variations of the boundaries may be suggested the aim should be to produce a cohesive area which would not only retain the local ties, geographic factors and local government boundaries criteria as stated by BCE, but also can expect common issues to be jointly pursued by its parliamentary representatives.

BCE states that those who respond to the consultation are requested to say whether they approve of, or object to, the BCE's proposals. In particular, objectors are advised to say what they propose in place of the BCE's proposals. An objection accompanied by a viable counterproposal is likely to carry more weight than a simple statement of objection. In this respect – and particularly in light of the importance of the statutory electorate range – a counterproposal setting out the composition of each constituency in an area will generally be viewed as more persuasive than a proposal for the composition of only one constituency which does not address any knock-on effects on the electorate figures of neighbouring constituencies.

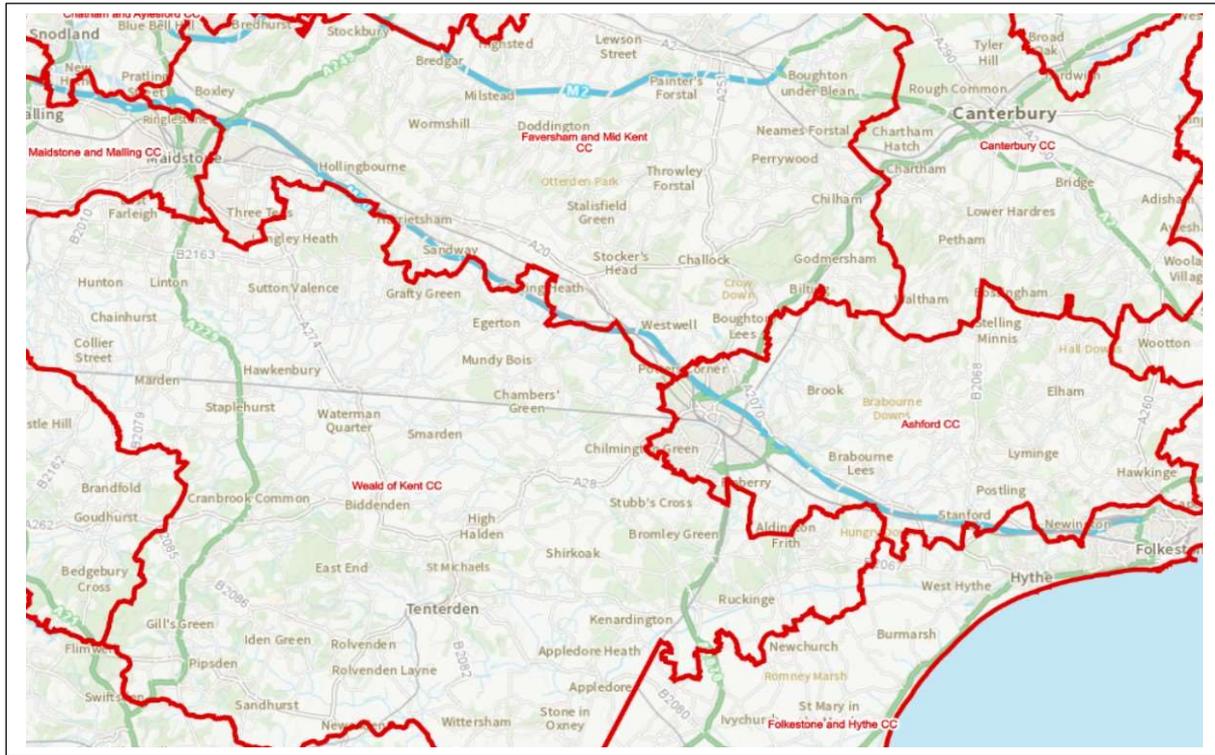
The BCE is required to consider all written representations made to it within a statutory eight-week period commencing with publication of the initial proposals. Details of how to make written representations are on the website bcereviews.org.uk. The closing date for responses to the consultation is Monday 2nd August 2021.

If you have any alternative proposals, please submit at bcereviews.org.uk AND share them with us at info@sandyhurst.co.uk. We are open to other ideas.

If you support our proposition, we ask that you:

- Let us know you support it by email to info@sandyhurst.co.uk.
- Consider using its ideas to submit a personal objection. Please feel free to plagiarise our thoughts. The more submissions the merrier. Visit bcereviews.org.uk.

Proposed Ashford Borough Constituencies



[Ashford](#) (Electorate: 73,546)

[Faversham & Mid Kent](#) (Electorate 76,342)

[Weald of Kent](#) (Electorate 70,362)

Wards:

- 1 Aylesford & East Stour
- 2 Beaver
- 3 Bircholt
- 4 Bockhanger
- 5 Bybrook
- 6 Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm
- 7 Furley
- 8 Goat Lees
- 9 Godinton
- 10 Highfield
- 11 Kennington
- 12 Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry
- 13 Norman
- 14 North Downs East
- 15 North Downs West
- 16 Park Farm North
- 17 Park Farm South
- 18 Repton
- 19 Roman
- 20 Singleton East
- 21 Singleton West
- 22 Stanhope
- 23 Victoria
- 24 Washford
- 25 Willesborough
- 26 Wye with Hinxhill

Wards:

- 1 Abbey
- 2 Bearsted
- 3 Boughton and Courtenay
- 4 Boxley
- 5 Charing
- 6 Detling and Thurnham
- 7 Downs North
- 8 Downs West
- 9 Downswood and Otham
- 10 East Downs
- 11 Harrietsham and Lenham
- 12 North Downs
- 13 Park Wood
- 14 Priory
- 15 Shepway North
- 16 Shepway South
- 17 St. Ann's
- 18 Teynham and Lynsted
- 19 Watling
- 20 West Downs

Wards:

- 1 Benenden and Cranbrook
- 2 Biddenden
- 3 Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton
- 4 Coxheath and Hunton
- 5 Frittenden and Sissinghurst
- 6 Hawkhurst and Sandhurst
- 7 Headcorn
- 8 Isle of Oxney
- 9 Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield
- 10 Leeds
- 11 Loose
- 12 Marden and Yalding
- 13 Rolvenden & Tenterden West
- 14 Saxon Shore
- 15 Staplehurst
- 16 Sutton Valence and Langley
- 17 Tenterden North
- 18 Tenterden South
- 19 Tenterden St. Michael's
- 20 Upper Weald
- 21 Weald Central
- 22 Weald North
- 23 Weald South

Details of all the current and proposed new England constituency boundaries can be viewed interactively at [South East | BCE Consultation Portal \(bcereviews.org.uk\)](https://bcereviews.org.uk).