

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Ashford Borough Council

Electoral review

February 2017

Translations and other formats

To get this report in another language or in a large-print or Braille version contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:

Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Licence Number: GD 100049926 2017

Table of Contents

Summary	4
Who we are and what we do	4
Electoral review	4
Why Ashford?	4
Our proposals for Ashford.....	4
Have your say.....	4
What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?	6
1 Introduction	7
What is an electoral review?	7
Consultation.....	7
How will the recommendations affect you?.....	8
2 Analysis and draft recommendations	9
Submissions received.....	9
Electorate figures.....	9
Number of councillors	10
Ward boundaries consultation	10
Draft recommendations	11
Biddenden, Tenterden and Isle of Oxney	12
Central and North Ashford	14
Charing, Downs and Wye	16
Kennington and Bybrook	18
South Ashford.....	20
Weald, Saxon Shore and Stubbs Cross	22
Willesborough, Mersham and Sevington	24
Conclusions.....	26
Summary of electoral arrangements.....	26
Parish electoral arrangements.....	26
3 Have your say	31
Equalities.....	32
Appendix A.....	33
Draft recommendations for Ashford Borough Council.....	33
Appendix B.....	37
Outline map	37
Appendix C.....	39
Submissions received.....	39
Appendix D.....	40
Glossary and abbreviations	40

Summary

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

2 Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions should there be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

Why Ashford?

4 We are conducting a review of Ashford Borough Council as the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Ashford. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

Our proposals for Ashford

- Ashford Borough Council should be represented by 47 councillors, four more than there are now.
- Ashford Borough Council should have 39 wards, four more than there are now.

Have your say

5 We are consulting on our draft recommendations for an eight-week period, from 7 February 2017 to 3 April 2017. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to contribute to the design of the new wards – the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be when analysing all the views we received.

6 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

**You have until 3 April 2017 to have your say on the draft recommendations.
See page 27 for how to send us your response**

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

8 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors (Chair)
 - Alison Lowton
 - Peter Maddison QPM
 - Sir Tony Redmond
 - Peter Knight CBE, DL
-
- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

9 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Ashford are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

What is an electoral review?

10 Our three main considerations are to:

Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents

- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

11 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

12 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Ashford. We then held a period of consultation on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

13 This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
21 June 2016	Number of councillors decided
28 June 2016	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
5 September 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
7 February 2017	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
3 April 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
6 June 2017	Publication of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

14 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

15 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

16 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

17 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2016	2022
Electorate of Ashford	89,881	99,873
Number of councillors	47	47
Average number of electors per councillor	1,912	2,125

18 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Ashford will have electoral equality by 2022.

19 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

20 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

21 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2022, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2017. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 11% by 2022. This will largely be driven by new developments in Kingsnorth, Mersham and Repton.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

22 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

23 Ashford Borough Council currently has 43 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that increasing by four will make sure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

24 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 47 councillors – for example, 47 one-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

Ward boundaries consultation

25 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on warding patterns; however, neither proposed an alternative council size. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 47-member council.

26 We received 23 submissions to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included one detailed borough-wide proposal from Ashford Borough Council. The proposal was based on a pattern of 39 wards to be represented by 47 elected members.

27 The borough-wide scheme provided for a mixed pattern of one and two-councillor wards for Ashford. We carefully considered the proposals received and concluded that the proposed ward boundaries would have good levels of electoral equality. We also considered that they generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

28 Our draft recommendations are based on the borough-wide proposals that we received from the Council. In some areas of the borough we have also taken into account local evidence that we received, which provided evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. We also visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Ashford helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

29 Our draft recommendations are for eight two-councillor wards and 31 one-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

30 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on pages 29–32 and on the large map accompanying this report.

31 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

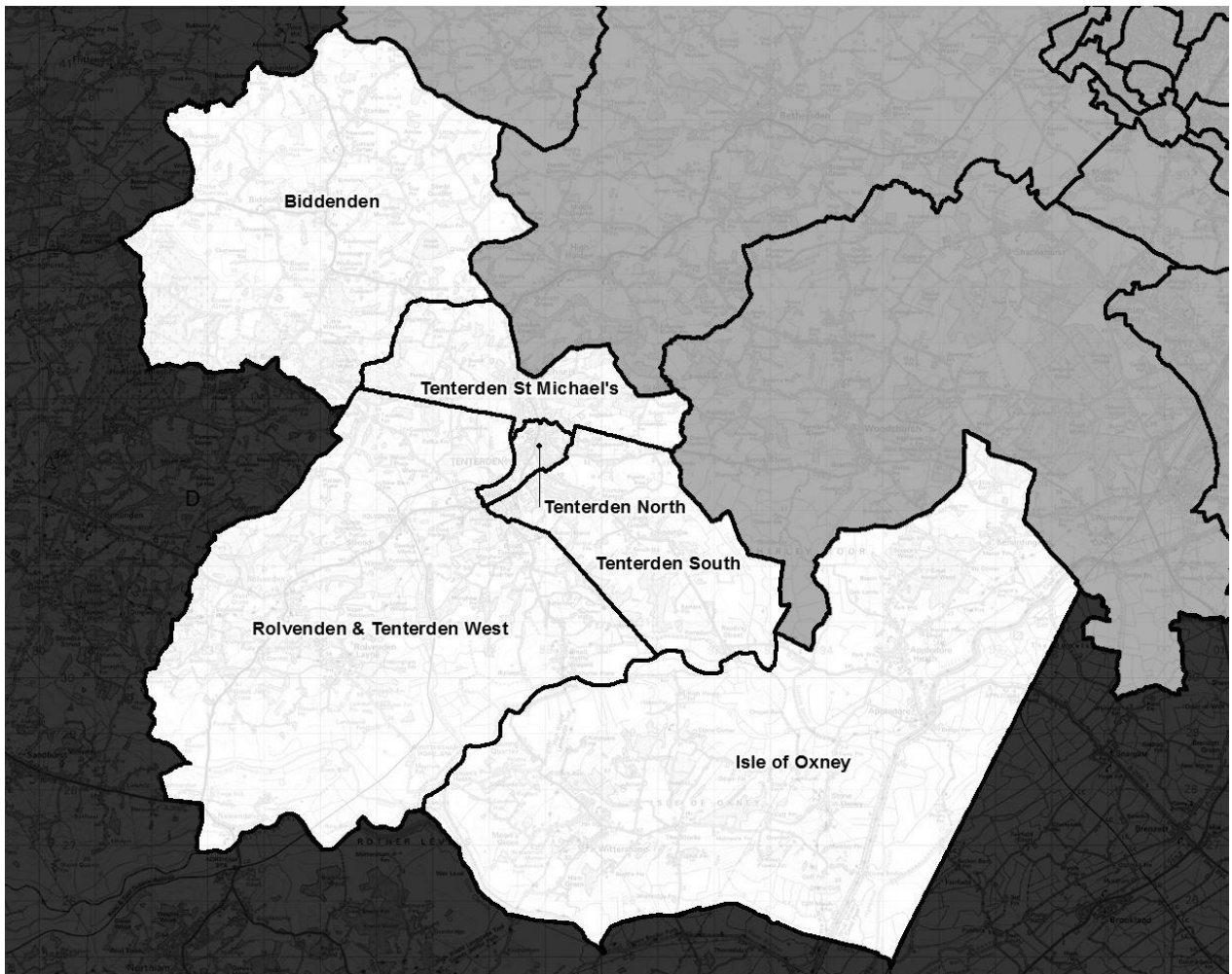
Draft recommendations

32 The tables and maps on pages 8–21 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Ashford Borough Council. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Biddenden, Tenterden and Isle of Oxney



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Biddenden	1	2%
Isle of Oxney	1	4%
Rolvenden & Tenterden West	1	1%
Tenterden North	1	-7%
Tenterden South	1	-9%
Tenterden St Michael's	1	-5%

Biddenden and Tenterden

33 In addition to the whole-borough scheme received from the Council, we received one submission regarding Biddenden, from Biddenden Parish Council. It requested that we slightly alter the boundary of the existing ward to include the entirety of Woodlands Caravan Park, which the current warding arrangements divide between the wards of Biddenden and Weald Central. This amendment was also suggested in the Council's borough-wide proposal. We have therefore based our draft ward on the submissions that suggested this. We consider our Biddenden ward reflects the local community.

34 We have based our Tenterden St Michael's ward on the current ward in this area, with the addition of Colonel Stephens Way, in order to use Home Wood as a more identifiable boundary to better reflect the community. This was as suggested in the Council's scheme.

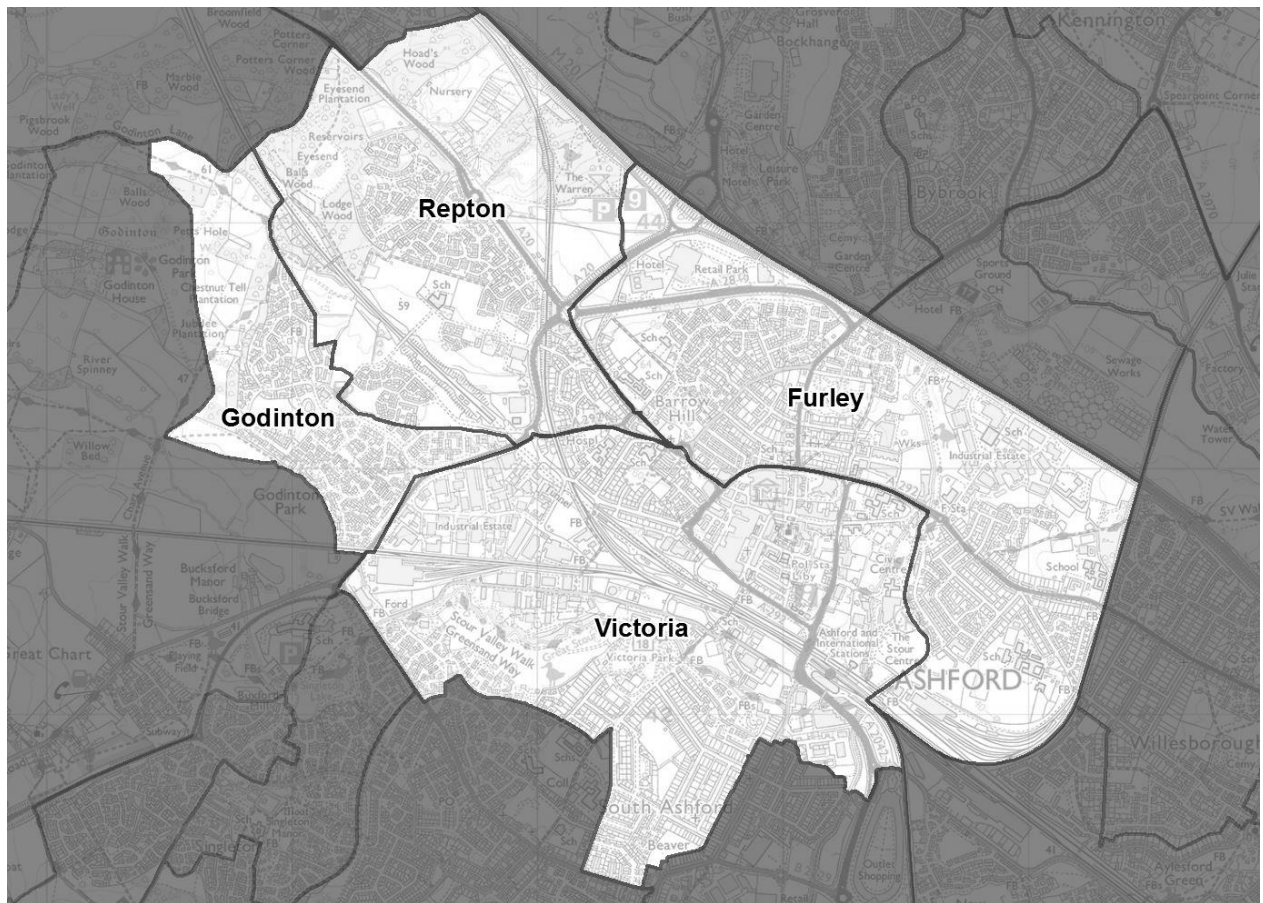
35 As proposed in the Council's submission, we have based our Tenterden North and South wards on the current wards in this area, with the exception of moving part of the Beacon Oak Road and Woodchurch Road area from Tenterden South into Tenterden North to achieve better electoral equality. We expect both wards to have good electoral equality by 2022.

36 We have based our proposal for Rolvenden & Tenterden West on the existing ward, with a small amendment to the boundary along Smallhythe Road. This was as suggested by the Council's proposal.

Isle of Oxney

37 The current Isle of Oxney ward has a good level of electoral equality and reflects the community in the area. Our draft Isle of Oxney ward is therefore identical to the current ward.

Central and North Ashford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Furley	2	9%
Godinton	1	0%
Repton	2	-4%
Victoria	2	-3%

Furley and Victoria

38 We received two submissions concerning the area of Furley and Victoria, from the Council and a local organisation. The two submissions proposed differing boundaries.

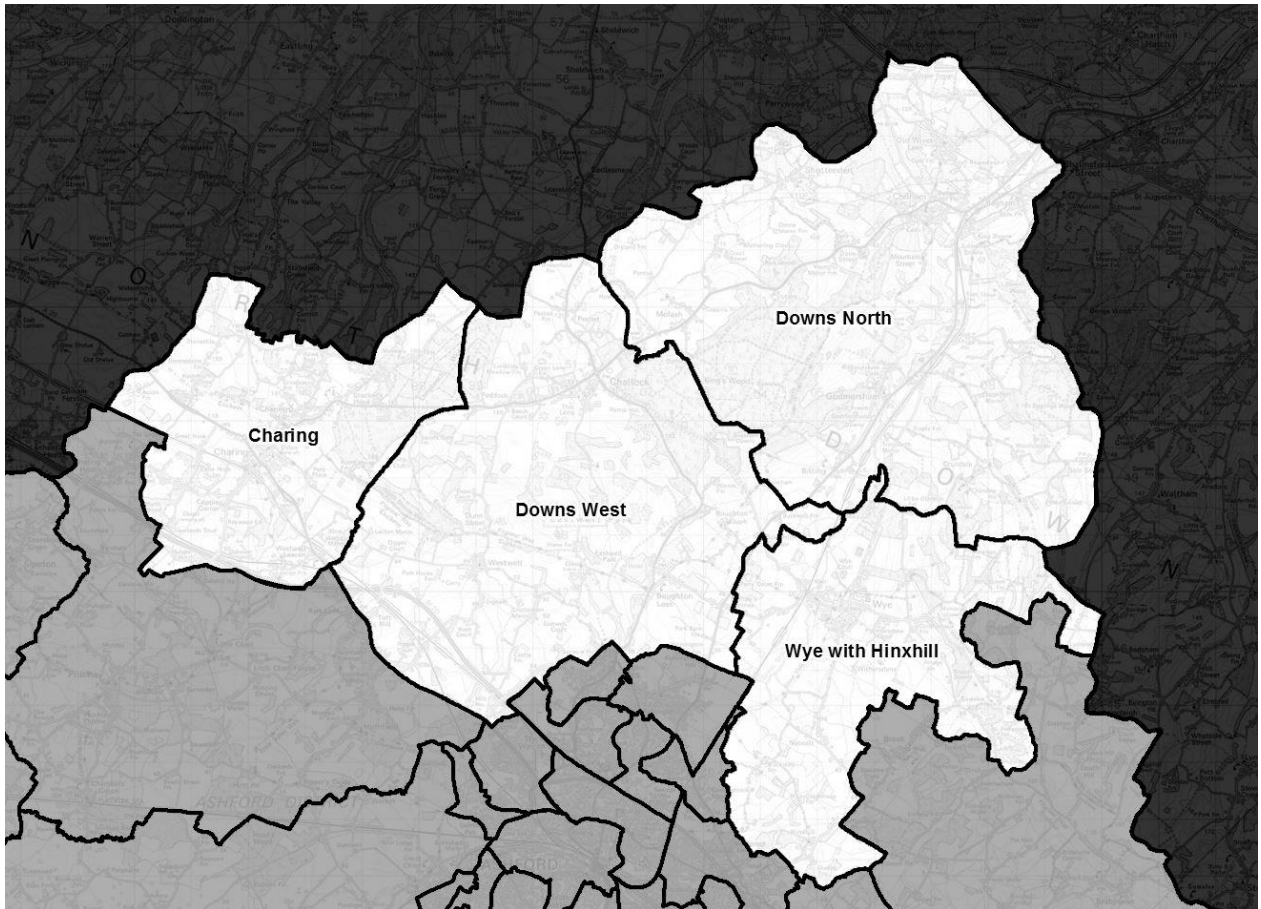
39 We are proposing to accept the Council's scheme in this area as it allows for better electoral equality than the alternative which proposed a significantly higher variance. Both Furley and Victoria are based on the existing wards in this area, with a slight amendment to the boundary between the two. Both wards will have a good level of electoral equality by 2022.

Repton and Godinton

40 We received two submissions concerning Repton and Godinton, from the Council and a local organisation. While alternative boundaries were proposed, both suggested smaller wards would better suit the area. One proposed using the railway line as an identifiable boundary; however, this did not provide for good electoral equality. We have therefore based our draft ward on the Council's submission in this area as it offers a better level of electoral equality.

41 Repton will be a new ward comprising the new developments around Repton Park, Orchard Heights and Champion Close. Godinton is also a new ward based on the Godinton Park Estate. Both will have good electoral equality by 2022.

Charing, Downs and Wye



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Charing	1	5%
Downs North	1	-1%
Downs West	1	1%
Wye with Hinxhill	1	-7%

Charing

42 We received one submission from a local resident in Charing requesting that Charing and Charing Heath be united in one ward. Such a ward would have 21% more electors than the borough average by 2022. We do not consider such a level of electoral inequality to be justifiable and are therefore not adopting this proposal.

43 Our proposal for Charing is based on the Council's submission, which retains the existing ward boundaries, with a slight change to the eastern border to reflect the changes made to the boundary of Charing parish in the Community Governance Review.

Downs

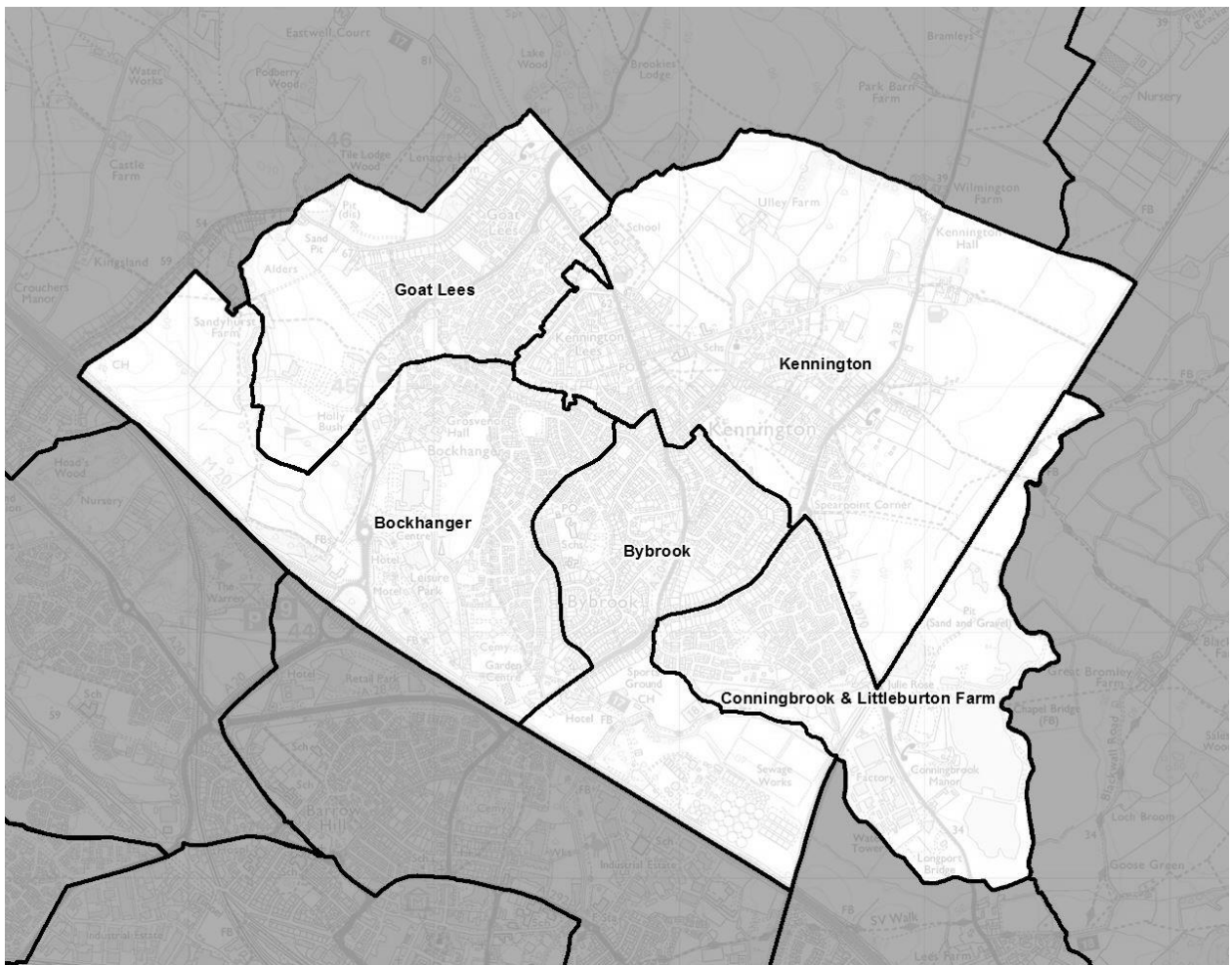
44 We received a number of submissions suggesting that Sandyhurst Lane be included wholly in the Downs West ward. We have therefore amended the ward boundary in this area. We have made a small modification to include one property at Sandyhurst Farm in Downs West ward, in order to reflect the farm's access onto Sandyhurst Lane.

45 Our Downs North ward is the same as the existing ward in this area. We received no submissions that proposed any changes and expect the area to achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Wye with Hinxhill

46 Our Wye with Hinxhill ward is the same as the existing ward in this area. We received no submissions that proposed any changes and expect the area to achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Kennington and Bybrook



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Bockhanger	1	-1%
Bybrook	1	-2%
Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm	1	-7%
Goat Lees	1	-10%
Kennington	1	-1%

Bockhanger and Bybrook

47 We received a number of proposals for this area from local organisations that included various developments that did not yet have planning permission and as such were not included in the agreed electorate figures. When analysing the proposals within the agreed electorate figures the wards would not have good electoral equality.

48 We have based our Bockhanger and Bybrook wards on the Council's proposed wards, using Bybrook Road as a more identifiable boundary. Both wards will have good electoral equality by 2022.

Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm

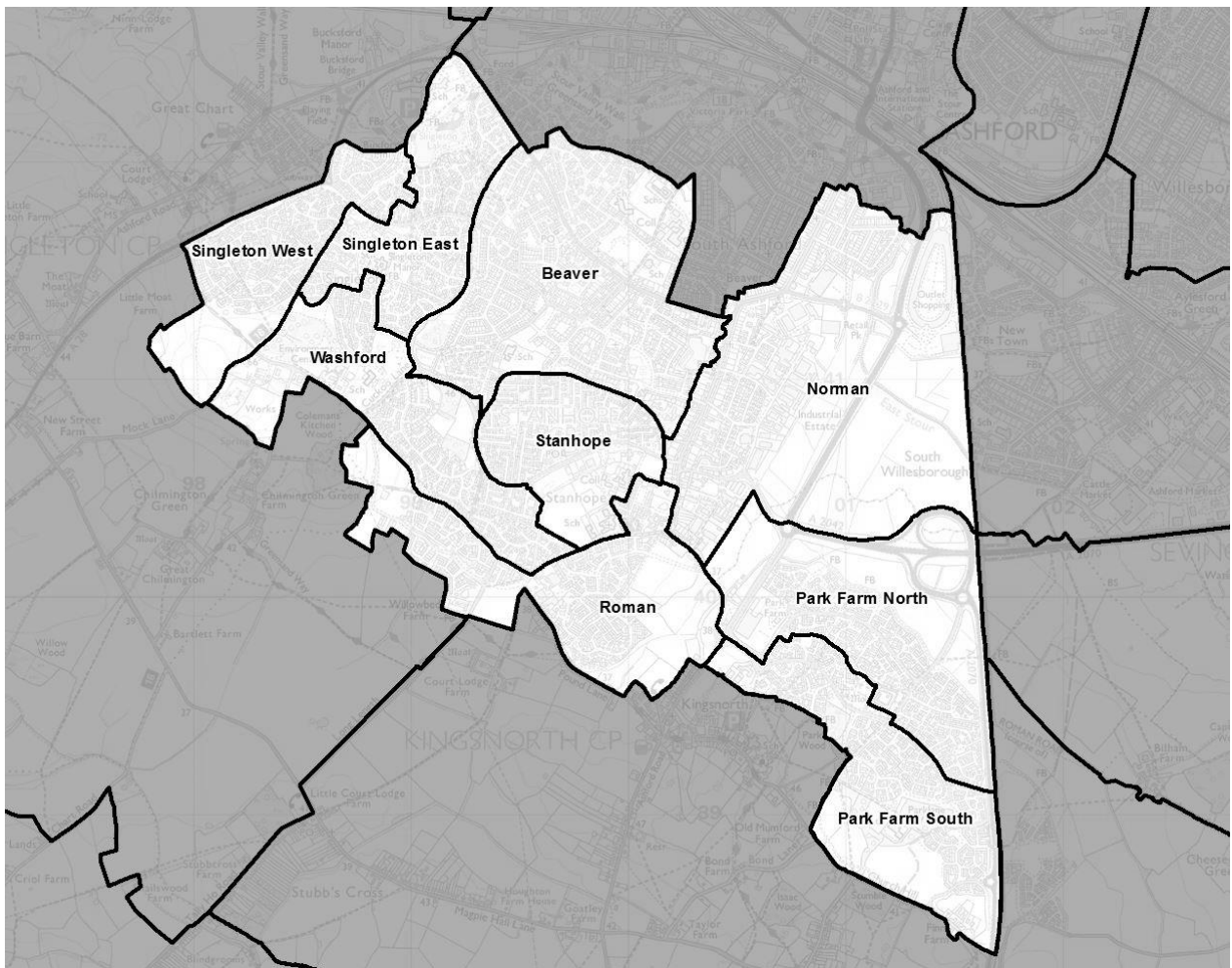
49 We have based our Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm on the Council's submission, which follows the Community Governance Review boundary for North Willersborough. This joins the Conningbrook and Little Burton Farm developments into one single-member ward. We expect Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm to achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Goat Lees and Kennington

50 We have created a new one-member ward named Goat Lees for an area that was previously within Bockhanger ward. This ward is based on the Council's submission and will achieve a good level of electoral equality by 2022.

51 We received a number of submissions that included slightly differing proposals for Kennington. The Council proposed moving Sherwood Close and the properties on the north side of Grosvenor Road into this ward from Goat Lees. Following our tour of the area we concluded that this would better reflect the local community identity. We have therefore based our recommendations on the Council's proposed ward, which had some support from other submissions.

South Ashford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Beaver	2	7%
Norman	1	0%
Park Farm North	1	-9%
Park Farm South	1	-9%
Roman	1	4%
Singleton East	1	-3%
Singleton West	1	-5%
Stanhope	1	9%
Washford	1	4%

Beaver and Norman

52 We received one submission regarding both Norman and Beaver, from the Council's whole-borough submission. Our Beaver and Norman wards are based on this and the new parish boundaries created by the Community Governance Review. Both wards will achieve electoral equality by 2022.

Singleton

53 We have based our Singleton West ward on the current Great Chart with Singleton ward in this area. Singleton East is a new ward based on the existing ward, with an amendment to the southern boundary to allow the properties around Running Foxes Lane to move into Washford. This is as proposed in the Council's submission. Singleton will achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Washford and Roman

54 We are proposing to split the existing Washford ward to create two new wards of Washford and Roman. This is supported by the Council's submission. The new Washford ward will comprise electors in the Running Foxes Lane, Langney Drive and Washford Farm Road area. Roman will comprise electors in the Coulter Road and Britannia Lane areas, along with The Limes.

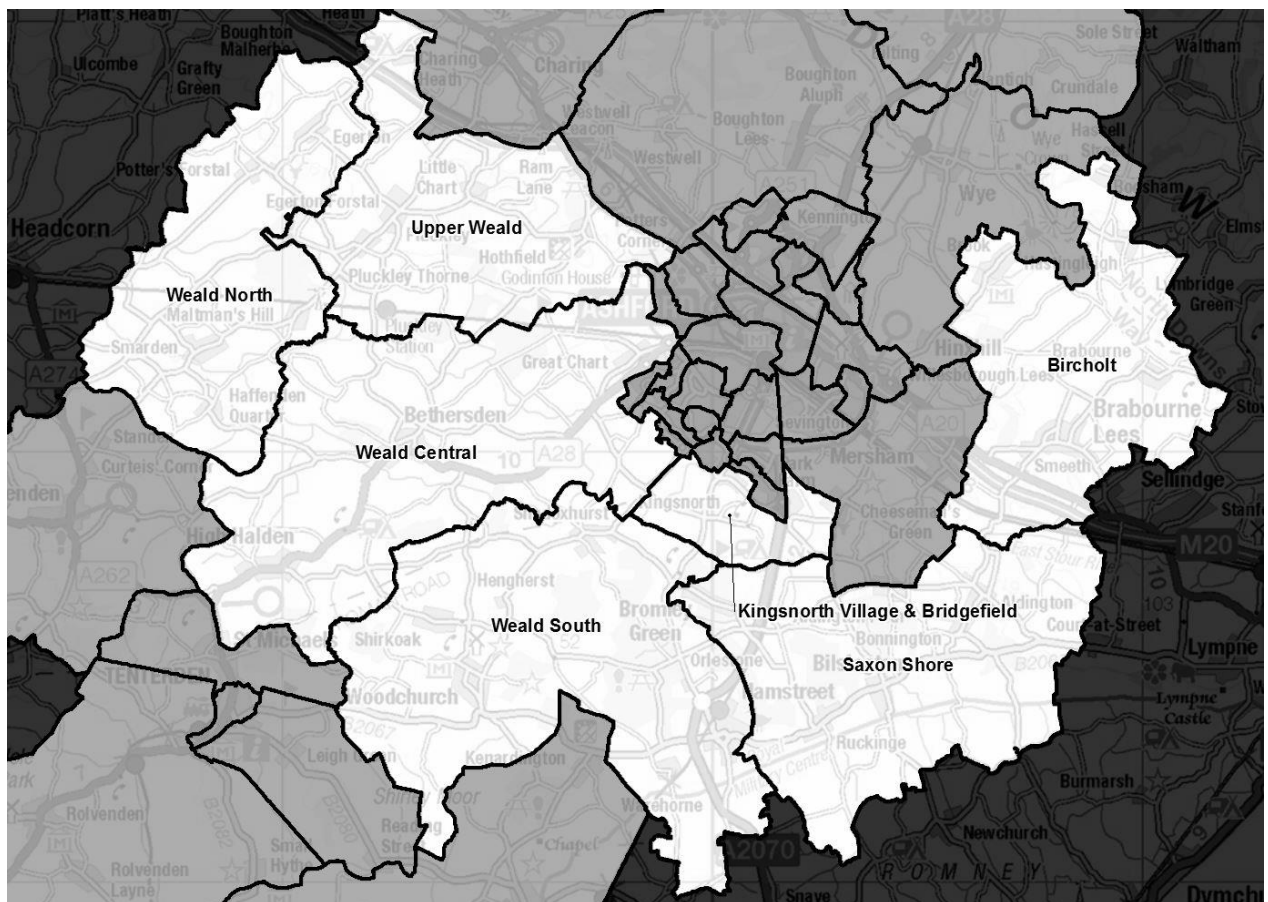
Stanhope

55 We have based our Stanhope ward on the current ward, with the exclusion of The Limes which will be part of Roman. This was proposed in the Council's submission and will improve electoral equality. The area will achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Park Farm North and South

56 We have based our Park Farm North and South wards on the current wards in this area, with the boundary moving slightly to incorporate the Wood Lane area into Park Farm North. This will allow for better electoral equality across the area by 2022.

Weald, Saxon Shore and Stubbs Cross



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Bircholt	1	2%
Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield	1	3%
Saxon Shore	1	1%
Upper Weald	1	-3%
Weald Central	2	2%
Weald North	1	-6%
Weald South	2	1%

Bircholt and Saxon Shore

57 We received one submission from a local resident suggesting that we split Saxon Shore into two wards, using the M20 as a boundary. We have not adopted this boundary as to do so would create a small parish ward. We usually consider parish wards with fewer than 100 electors to be unviable. We have therefore used the parish boundary line between Smeeth and Aldington, creating two single-member wards of Saxon Shore and Bircholt. This was proposed by the Council.

Weald

58 We have based our Weald North ward on the current ward in this area, with the addition of three properties along the boundary with Upper Weald. This is to reflect the changes to Charing parish made by the recently conducted Community Governance Review. Our proposal for Weald South is based on the Council's submission, which retains the existing ward boundaries, with the exception of a number of properties in the Stubbs Cross area. Both wards will have a good electoral variance by 2022.

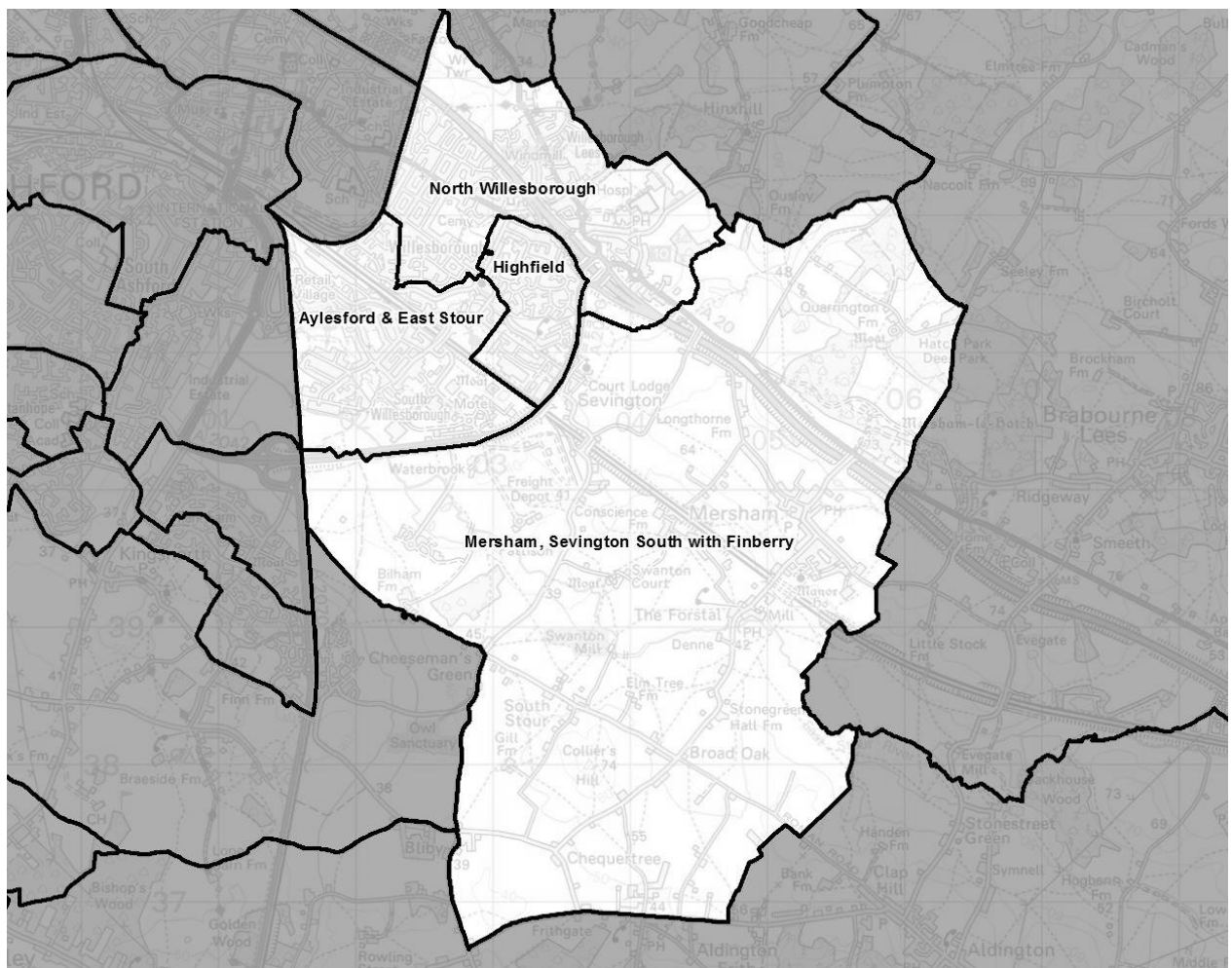
59 We have based our Upper Weald ward on the current ward of the same name, with a modification to incorporate the changes to the boundary between Little Chart and Charing parishes along the M20 made by the recent Community Governance Review.

60 We have based our Weald Central ward on the Council's proposal for this area, combining High Halden, Bethersden and Great Chart parishes. Weald Central should achieve a good level of electoral equality by 2022.

Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield

61 We have based our Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield ward on the Council's proposal for this area, consisting of Kingsnorth Village and Stubbs Cross. We have received no other submissions for this area and expect Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield to have good electoral equality by 2022.

Willesborough, Mersham and Sevington



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Aylesford & East Stour	2	8%
Highfield	1	-7%
North Willesborough	2	5%
Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry	1	6%

Aylesford & East Stour

62 We received two submissions regarding this ward, with differing boundaries suggested. One submission from a local organisation proposed using the railway line as an identifiable boundary, but this did not provide for good electoral equality. Our ward adopts the Council's suggestion of being named Aylesford & East Stour to better reflect the interests of the community. Aylesford & East Stour will have good electoral equality by 2022.

North Willesborough and Highfield

63 The two submissions we received for North Willesborough, from the Council and a local organisation, proposed slightly different boundaries. On visiting the area, we decided that the Council's proposal would be the most appropriate, offering better electoral equality. We have therefore based our proposed ward on the submission that suggested this. We consider the ward reflects the local community.

64 We have based our Highfield ward on the current ward in this area, with the exclusion of electors south of the railway line to make a more identifiable boundary. We have also included residents of Church Road, Millstream Green and Twelve Acres, as suggested by the Council following a member consultation. We consider that this will better reflect community identity.

Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry

65 We have based our ward on the current ward in this area, with the addition of Sevington South and the new Finberry development to improve electoral equality. This was proposed by the Council and incorporates the new parish boundaries following the Community Governance Review. While it currently has a high level of electoral inequality, the growth of the development means the ward will achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Conclusions

66 The table below shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2016 and 2022 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2016	2022
Number of councillors	47	47
Number of electoral wards	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	89,881	99,873
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	12	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	0

Draft recommendation

Ashford Borough Council should be made up of 47 councillors serving 39 wards representing 31 single-councillor wards and eight two-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in the table below and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Ashford.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Ashford on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

67 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different ward it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

68 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Ashford Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

69 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Boughton Aluph & Eastwell, Charing, High Halden, Kingsnorth, Mersham & Sevington, Stanhope and Tenterden.

70 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Boughton Aluph & Eastwell parish.

Draft recommendation	
Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Boughton Lees	1
Eastwell	1
Goat Lees	6

71 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Charing parish.

Draft recommendation	
Charing Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Charing Heath	2
Charing Hill	10

72 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Great Chart with Singleton parish.

Draft recommendation	
Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing 5 wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Chilmington Green	1
Great Chart with Singleton North	1
Singleton East	4
Singleton South	1
Singleton West	4

73 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for High Halden parish.

Draft recommendation High Halden Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
High Halden	7
Woodlands	1

74 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kingsnorth parish.

Draft recommendation Kingsnorth Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bridgefield	1
Kingsnorth Village	1
Park Farm North	2
Park Farm South	2
Roman	2
Washford Farm	2

75 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Mersham & Sevington parish.

Draft recommendation Mersham & Sevington Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Highfield	1
Mersham	4
Sevington	7

76 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Stanhope parish.

Draft recommendation Stanhope Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	7
Speldhurst Close	1
The Limes	1

77 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Tenterden parish.

Draft recommendation	
Tenterden Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Rolvenden & Tenterden West	2
Tenterden North	5
Tenterden South	4
Tenterden St Michael's	5

3 Have your say

78 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

79 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Ashford, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

80 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps and draw your own proposed boundaries. You can find it at consultation.lgbce.org.uk

81 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Ashford)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

82 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for the Ashford which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of voters
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively

83 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government

84 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of voters as elsewhere in the council area?

85 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?

- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

86 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

87 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices in Millbank (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

88 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

89 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

90 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for the Ashford Borough Council in 2019.

Equalities

91 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Ashford Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Aylesford & East Stour	2	4,283	2,142	12%	4,573	2,287	8%
2	Beaver	2	4,284	2,142	12%	4,560	2,280	7%
3	Biddenden	1	2,161	2,161	13%	2,177	2,177	2%
4	Bircholt	1	2,209	2,209	16%	2,169	2,169	2%
5	Bockhanger	1	2,076	2,076	9%	2,111	2,111	-1%
6	Bybrook	1	2,066	2,066	8%	2,088	2,088	-2%
7	Charing	1	2,051	2,051	7%	2,230	2,230	5%
8	Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm	1	1,438	1,438	-25%	1,984	1,984	-7%
9	Downs North	1	1,977	1,977	3%	2,099	2,099	-1%
10	Downs West	1	2,044	2,044	7%	2,153	2,153	1%
11	Furley	2	4,215	2,108	10%	4,628	2,314	9%
12	Goat Lees	1	1,822	1,822	-5%	1,907	1,907	-10%

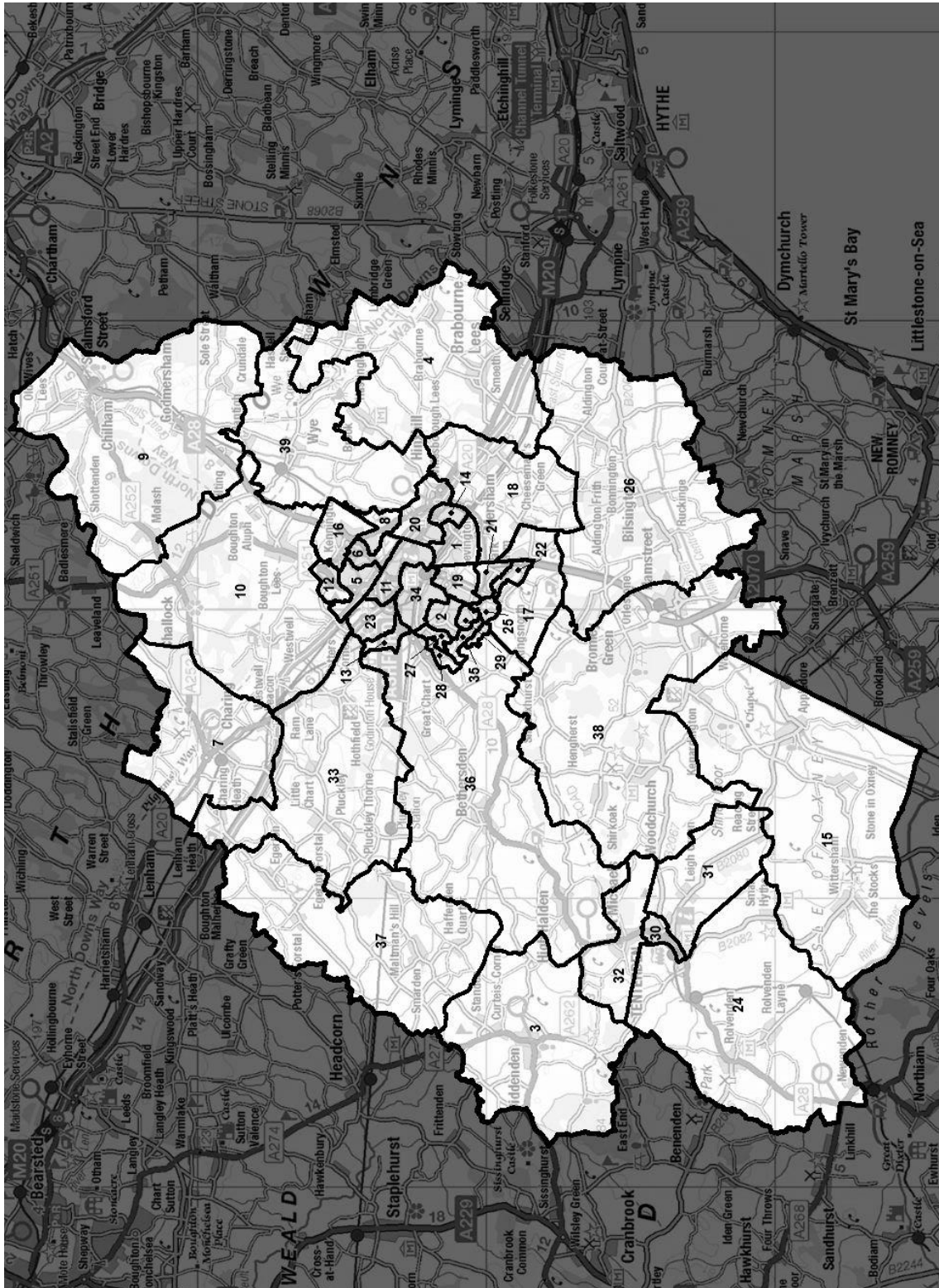
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Godinton	1	1,947	1,947	2%	2,132	2,132	0%
14 Highfield	1	2,055	2,055	7%	1,972	1,972	-7%
15 Isle of Oxney	1	2,156	2,156	13%	2,207	2,207	4%
16 Kennington	1	1,993	1,993	4%	2,094	2,094	-1%
17 Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield	1	1,550	1,550	-19%	2,194	2,194	3%
18 Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry	1	954	954	-50%	2,263	2,263	6%
19 Norman	1	1,989	1,989	4%	2,131	2,131	0%
20 North Willlesborough	2	4,373	2,187	14%	4,455	2,228	5%
21 Park Farm North	1	1,815	1,815	-5%	1,938	1,938	-9%
22 Park Farm South	1	1,850	1,850	-3%	1,937	1,937	-9%
23 Repton	2	2,462	1,231	-36%	4,078	2,039	-4%
24 Rolvenden & Tenterden West	1	1,946	1,946	2%	2,153	2,153	1%
25 Roman	1	2,032	2,032	6%	2,200	2,200	4%
26 Saxon Shore	1	1,894	1,894	-1%	2,139	2,139	1%
27 Singleton East	1	1,830	1,830	-4%	2,056	2,056	-3%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
28 Singleton West	1	1,944	1,944	2%	2,015	2,015	-5%
29 Stanhope	1	1,912	1,912	0%	2,324	2,324	9%
30 Tenterden North	1	1,923	1,923	1%	1,976	1,976	-7%
31 Tenterden South	1	1,671	1,671	-13%	1,941	1,941	-9%
32 Tenterden St Michael's	1	2,046	2,046	7%	2,021	2,021	-5%
33 Upper Weald	1	2,022	2,022	6%	2,071	2,071	-3%
34 Victoria	2	3,829	1,915	0%	4,103	2,051	-3%
35 Washford	1	2,050	2,050	7%	2,211	2,211	4%
36 Weald Central	2	3,222	1,611	-16%	4,321	2,161	2%
37 Weald North	1	1,936	1,936	1%	1,998	1,998	-6%
38 Weald South	2	4,036	2,018	6%	4,288	2,144	1%
39 Wye with Hinxhill	1	1,818	1,818	-5%	1,976	1,976	-7%
Totals	47	89,881	-	-	99,873	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,912	-	-	2,125	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Ashford Borough Council. Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



Key

1. Aylesford & East Stour
2. Beaver
3. Biddenden
4. Bircholt
5. Bockhanger
6. Bybrook
7. Charing
8. Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm
9. Downs North
10. Downs West
11. Furley
12. Goat Lees
13. Godinton
14. Highfield
15. Isle of Oxney
16. Kennington
17. Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield
18. Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry
19. Norman
20. North Willesborough
21. Park Farm North
22. Park Farm South
23. Repton
24. Rolvenden & Tenterden West
25. Roman
26. Saxon Shore
27. Singleton East
28. Singleton West
29. Stanhope
30. Tenterden North
31. Tenterden South
32. Tenterden St Michael's
33. Upper Weald
34. Victoria
35. Washford
36. Weald Central
37. Weald North
38. Weald South
39. Wye with Hinxhill

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the A1 sheet accompanying this report, or on our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east>

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/kent/ashford>

Local Authority

- Ashford Borough Council

Local organisations

- Central Ashford Community Forum
- Kennington Community Forum
- North Willesborough Community Forum
- Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association
- South Ashford Community Forum

Parish and Town Councils

- Biddenden Parish Council
- Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council
- Egerton Parish Council
- Westwell Parish Council

Residents

- 13 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward

A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council