

Dear Colleagues

Boundary Commission for England launches public consultation on proposed parliamentary constituencies

Changes to Ashford parliamentary constituency are proposed

People have 6 weeks to comment by letter, email or in person at an Ashford hearing

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is inviting comments during its secondary public consultation on constituency boundaries, which is open until 4 April 2022. It is undertaking a review of all constituencies in England, to make the number of electors in each constituency roughly the same. The number of constituencies in England will also increase to 543.

The 2023 Boundary Review requires substantial changes to the map of constituencies across England, and the BCE wants the public to help shape the boundaries by taking part in a consultation, running until 4 April. View the initially proposed constituency boundaries and provide your views at www.bcereviews.org.uk

Responses can also be sent in by letter, email or provided in person at one of 32 public hearings being organised across the country, including **Ashford** (see below).

The Commission received over 34,000 responses during its first consultation and these comments are available to view by area, along with the initial proposals for constituencies, on the website.

Proposed changes for Ashford

The Boundary Commission's proposed changes for Ashford would see the existing parliamentary constituency of Ashford replaced with three new constituencies:

- **Ashford** – including 24 of Ashford's 39 wards plus wards from Folkestone & Hythe
- **Weald of Kent** – including 12 of Ashford's wards
- **Faversham & Mid Kent** – including the Ashford wards of Charing, Downs North and Downs West

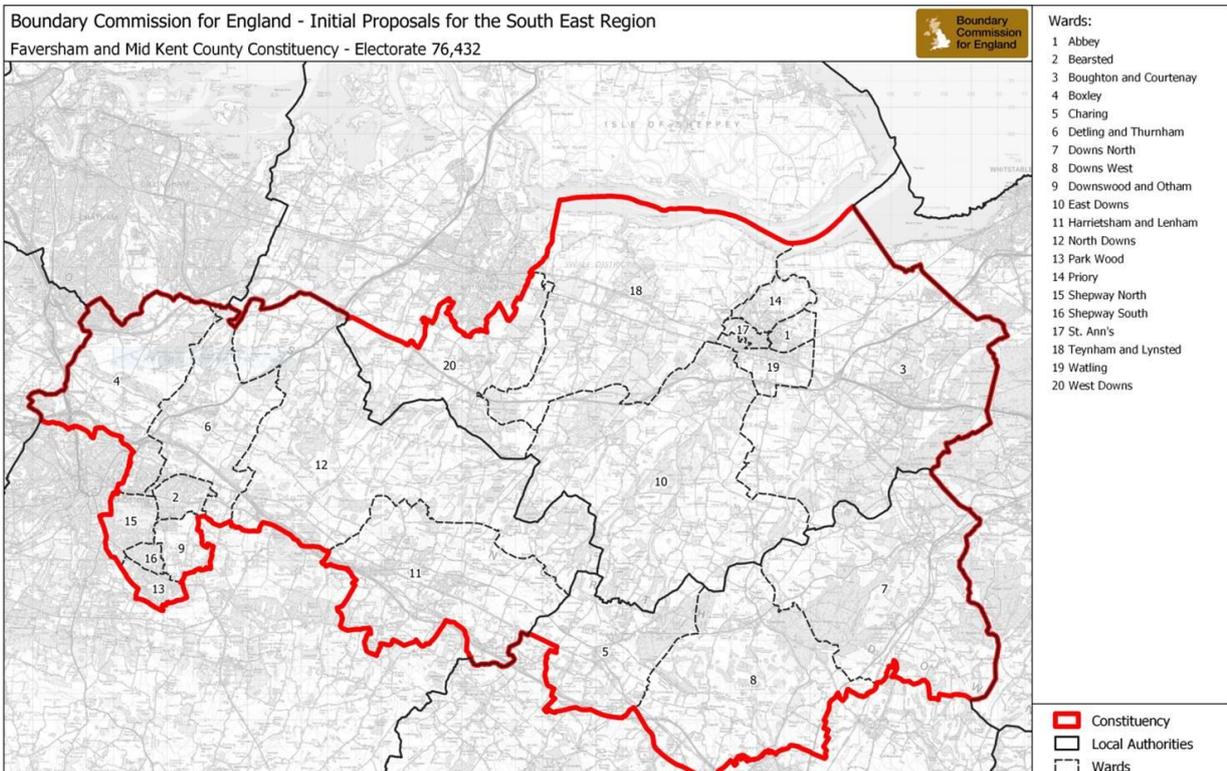
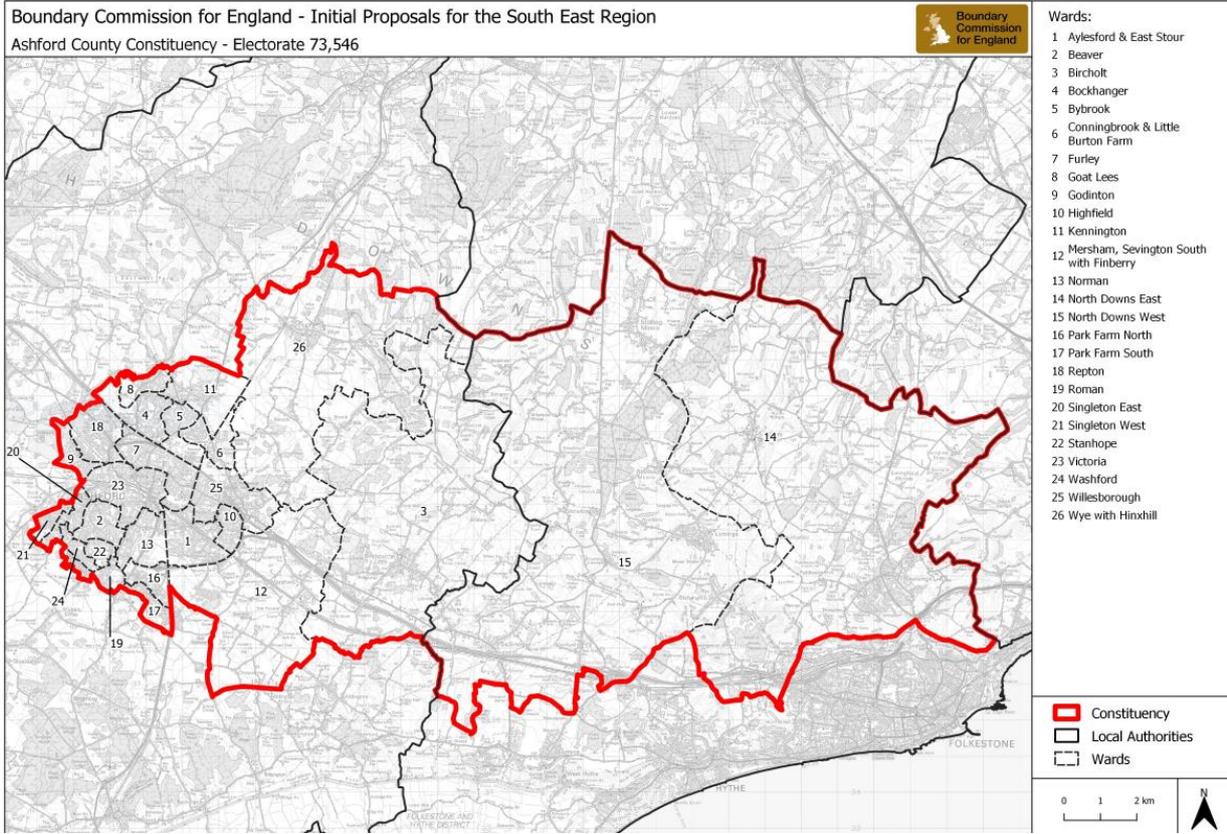
The proposed new Ashford constituency would have an electorate of 73,546; Faversham and Mid Kent 76,432; and Weald of Kent 70,362.

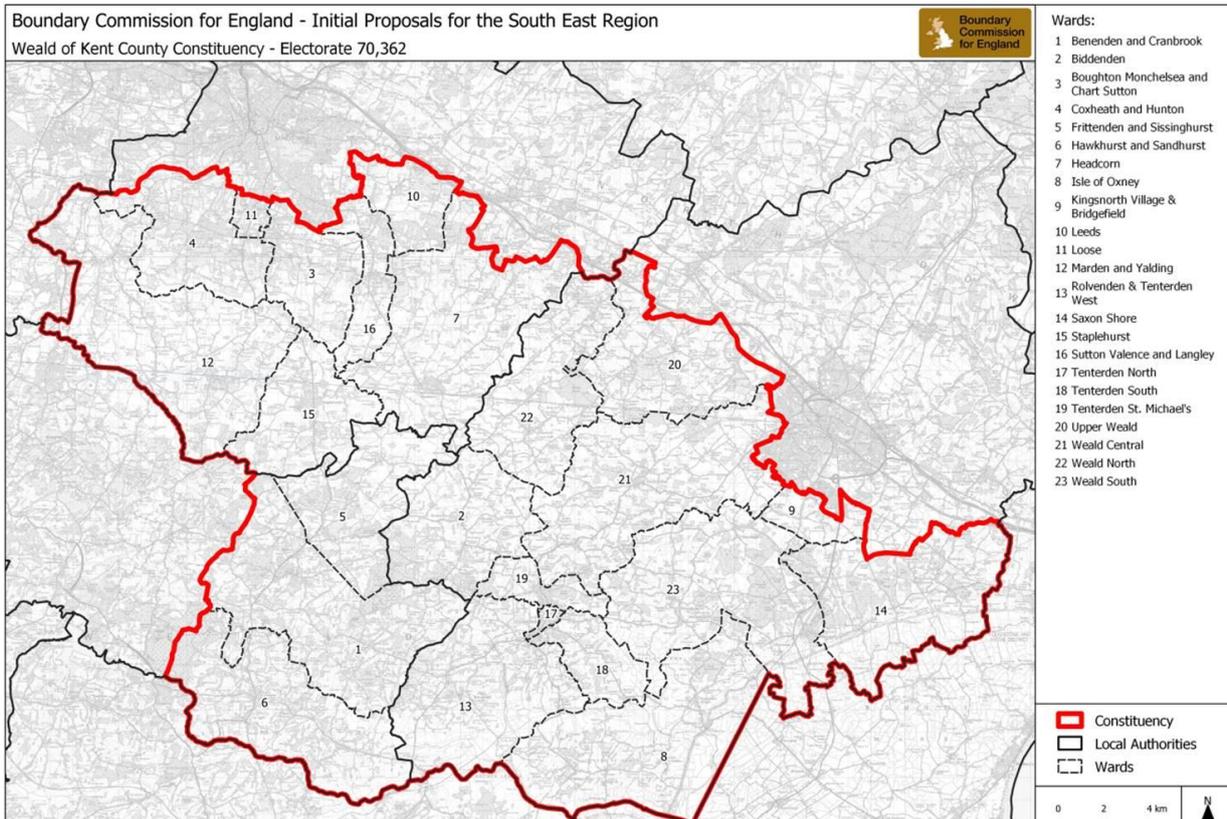
The public hearing in Ashford takes place on 24 and 25 March at the Ashford Borough Council Civic Centre, allowing people to have their say in person about the proposed changes. To book a 10 minute slot to speak at the Ashford hearing visit www.bit.ly/bcepublichearings

Launching the consultation, Secretary to the Boundary Commission for England, Tim Bowden, said: "The 2023 Boundary Review will rebalance the number of electors represented by each MP. It's important that the constituencies we shape reflect your local community as best as possible. We received over 34,000 responses during our first consultation last year which are available online for the public to read and comment on.

"We're inviting more people to have their say in our current secondary consultation, which is open until 4 April. Help us to get our proposals right for your area by telling us your views via www.bcereviews.org.uk or at a public hearing in your region. We're looking forward to hearing your feedback, and we take every response into account during our review of constituency boundaries."

Here are three maps showing the proposed Parliamentary boundary changes relevant to the Ashford borough and surrounding areas. To view them in more detail visit www.bcereviews.org.uk and enter your postcode in the box indicated:





Background notes issued by the Boundary Commission

- The Boundary Commission for England is an independent and impartial advisory body, constituted under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. It is responsible for conducting reviews of UK Parliament constituencies in England and making recommendations to Parliament. The reviews for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of separate Commissions in those parts of the UK.
- The statutory framework for how a review of constituencies must be conducted was most recently changed by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020.
- The key changes made by this Act are summarised in our news release, published 16 December 2020. These include retaining a total of 650 constituencies across the UK; an additional 'protected' constituency of Ynys Môn (Anglesey); and the removal of Parliamentary debates from the process, meaning that future draft Orders will go directly to the Privy Council.
- The Act requires the Commission to base this review on electorate data from 2 March 2020. According to the UK's electorate figures published on 5 January 2021 by the Office for National Statistics, each constituency that we recommend must contain no less than 69,724 Parliamentary electors, and no more than 77,062 (except in England for two 'protected' constituencies for the Isle of Wight). England will be allocated 543 constituencies for the new review, which constitutes an increase of ten constituencies.
- Our Initial Proposals for new constituencies were published on 8 June 2021, and an 8 week consultation period was held inviting comments on the proposals. The Commission received 34,000 representations and subsequently it published all responses received during this stage on the consultation website.

- The public is again invited to respond to our initial proposals during our six-week secondary consultation, which started on 22 February and will conclude on 4 April 2022. We are holding 32 public hearings across the country as part of this consultation. Further information about the public hearings, including the dates, locations, and where to book a slot to speak, is found on our website and in our Guide to public hearings.
- After this secondary consultation, the BC will reflect on all the representations received. If it is minded to change its proposals, it will conduct a 4 week written consultation on its revised proposals.
- The Commission must then submit its final report and recommendations to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023.
- Our Guide to the Review, which explains the statutory framework and policies followed by the Commission in conducting the Review, is available to read on our website.
- For general enquiries call 020 7276 1102 or email information@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk

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Executive Leader - Ashford Borough Council

Distribution: All Members of the Parish or Town Council, and representatives of the Community Forums (Please do not circulate beyond the above recipients).