

03 November 2016 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 26.10.16



Governance Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Pett; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Ms. Tennessee
Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Clack, Layland, London and McGarvey

Agenda

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 April 2016, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interest not already registered		
3. Actions from the previous meeting (if any)	(Pages 5 - 6)	
4. Outcome of Electoral Review Workshop	(Pages 7 - 14)	Jim Carrington-West Tel: 01732 227286
5. 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review	(Pages 15 - 28)	Jim Carrington-West Tel: 01732 227286
6. Work Plan	(Pages 29 - 30)	

EXEMPT INFORMATION

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

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GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Pett (Chairman)

Cllr. Ms. Tennessee (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Layland, and London

An apologies for absence was received from Cllr. Clack

Cllrs. Firth, Grint, Horwood and Miss. Stack were also present.

17. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 20 October 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

18. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations were made.

19. Actions from the previous meeting

There were none.

20. Electoral Review for Sevenoaks District Council - Members Survey

The Chief Officer Legal & Governance presented a report which set out the results of a Member Survey on whether to invite the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to carry out a review that could result in a reduction in Member numbers. The report explained that 33 Members responded to the survey of whom 18 Members were in favour of a review and 15 thought that the Council should not consider a review.

The Chief Officer Legal & Governance advised that Officers could go forward with further work. The technical guidance produced by the LGBCE stated that before the LGBCE undertook a review they would meet with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to establish the reason for the request, the likely scope of the review and the commitment and capacity of the Council to provide the information requirements. If Members requested Officers to undertake further work then it was anticipated that this work could be completed by early Autumn 2016. This would give sufficient time for Full Council to consider the matter and make a decision on whether to invite the LGBC to undertake a review to take effect at the District Council elections of May 2019.

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Governance Committee - 13 April 2016

The Chairman noted that any review of the boundaries would finally be decided by the LGBCE which may take little account of local geography. A reduction in Councillors could also mean an increase in work for those that remained.

The Committee discussed the electorate data from Kent County Council for each District Council ward, provided at the meeting on 20 October 2015. Members raised concerns at its accuracy, particularly in the projected overall reduction in electorate in the District.

Members considered the cost of the number of Councillors and the savings that could be made either by reducing Councillors or cutting allowances. It was noted that cost reduction would not be a factor which could be taken into account by any LGBCE review but recent reviews in Kent had reduced the numbers of Councillors.

Cllr. Horwood addressed the Committee to express support for a review and reduction in Councillors, noting that a majority of Councillors who responded were in support. He considered that a review could address past anomalies and suggested a Working Group be established to talk to other local authorities who had recently been reviewed. Cllr. Firth addressed the Committee in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Legal & Democratic Services. She agreed that the survey expressed support for a review and felt that a review would be required because of upcoming housing developments, such as Fort Halsted.

In response to a question, the Chief Officer Legal & Governance explained that significant work needed to be carried out, particularly by Officers from Planning Policy or a consultant preparing appropriate projections for the electorate before a review, which had cost implications.

Action: That the cost of the last boundary review be circulated to the Members of the Committee.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) further work be undertaken, particularly with an aim of improving the Council's data on the projections for the future electorate and re-consult with Members before the Governance Committee meeting of 3 November 2016; and
- b) the Governance Committee hold a workshop open to all Members, inviting guests to speak about the experience of a reduction in Members at other Councils, with a report back to the Committee at its meeting on 3 November 2016.

21. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

The Chief Officer Legal & Governance presented a report which explained that on 3 November 2015 Full Council had agreed that the post of Chief Officer Legal & Governance (the current Monitoring Officer) be deleted from the end of May 2016 and the post holder of the Head of Legal & Democratic Services role be appointed as Monitoring Officer, effective from 1 April 2016. However, the new Head of Legal & Democratic Services was yet to be in post. The role of Monitoring Officer continued to reside with the Chief Officer Legal & Governance but this post would no longer exist after May 2016. Under Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 the Council had a duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer.

The report proposed that, in the absence of a Head of Legal & Democratic Services post holder, the Chief Officer Legal & Governance continue as Monitoring Officer until the end of May 2016. The Chief Officer Corporate Support was to be appointed interim Monitoring Officer after May 2016 and until the Head of Legal & Democratic Services was in post.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) in the absence of a Head of Legal & Democratic Services post holder, the Chief Officer Legal & Governance continue as Monitoring Officer until the end of May 2016 (or until such time as the Head of Legal & Democratic Services is in post, whichever is the sooner); and
- b) in the absence of a Head of Legal & Democratic Services post holder after the end of May 2016, the Chief Officer Corporate Support be appointed interim Monitoring Officer, until such time the Head of Legal & Democratic Services is in post.

22. Work Plan

It was noted that a report to the Committee on Option 2 arising from the report on the Electoral Review for Sevenoaks District Council that was considered at minute item 20, would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 3 November 2016.

Resolved: That the meeting of the Committee on 19 July 2016 be cancelled and the electoral review workshop be held on 12 July 2016.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.52 PM

CHAIRMAN

ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 13.04.2016			
Action	Description	Status and last updated	Contact Officer
ACTION 1	That the cost of the last boundary review be circulated to the Members of the Committee.	<p>The last boundary review concluded in May 2001. Council meeting minutes from that time have been reviewed, but no cost information was referred to in any of the minutes.</p> <p>This period was prior to the introduction of the current Aggresso financial system, and information is no longer available at a detailed level.</p> <p>Thus it has not been possible to ascertain the cost of that review.</p>	<p>Jim Carrington-West</p> <p>Chief Officer Corporate Support</p>

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OUTCOME OF ELECTORAL REVIEW WORKSHOP

Governance Committee - 3 November 2016

Report of Chief Officer Corporate Services

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Firth

Contact Officer Jim Carrington-West, Ext. 7286

Recommendations to Governance Committee:

That Council be recommended that:

- (a) (i) an approach be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to initiate an electoral review of this Council with the objective of a significant reduction in the number of councillors by the 2019 elections;
- (ii) the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be authorised to meet representatives of the LGBCE to discuss the process and a potential review timetable, and
- (iii) options to set up a Member Task & Finish Group to oversee the process are considered.
- (iv) a supplementary estimate of £50k to £70k be agreed, funded from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to support the review process.

OR

- (b) no action be taken at this stage, but the matter be reconsidered shortly after the 2019 local elections

Reason for recommendation: If the Council wish to initiate an electoral review that could conclude and be implemented at the 2019 local elections an approach would need to be made before the end of 2016. Thus a decision needs to be made at this meeting of the Governance Committee, for consideration at full Council on 22 November.

Introduction and Background

- 1 At the meeting of the Governance Committee on 20 October 2015 a report was submitted setting out the processes and timescales were the Council

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mind to request the LGBCE to carry out an electoral review of this Council. The report indicated that the current electoral ratios of the Wards of the District Council are within the “acceptable” criteria set by the LGBCE and so no imposed review would take place. The report also noted that the Council had the lowest number of electors per Councillor in the County and that this would fall further according to Kent County Councils population projections.

- 2 Following that meeting a Member Survey was carried out to consider all Members’ views on the possibility of reducing the number of District Councillors. The result of that survey was reported to the last meeting of this Committee on 13 April 2016. 33 Members had responded with 55% (18) in favour of a review and 45% (15) against the proposal.
- 3 At the Governance Committee on 13 April 2016, following a further discussion which other members present also contributed to, the Committee resolved that:
 - a) further work be undertaken, particularly with an aim of improving the Council’s data on the projections for the future electorate and re-consult with Members before the Governance Committee meeting of 3 November 2016;
 - b) the Governance Committee hold a workshop open to all Members, inviting guests to speak about the experience of a reduction in Members at other Councils, with a report back to the Committee at its meeting on 3 November 2016.

Electoral Review Workshop - Results

- 4 At the request of the Governance Committee an Electoral Review Workshop was held on 10 October, with all Members invited. Cllr Pett, as Chairman of Governance Committee, chaired the Workshop and eight other Members were in attendance. A note outlining the areas of discussion, and views expressed, is attached at Appendix A.
- 5 An Officer from Shepway District Council, who have been through such a review process leading to a significant reduction in the number of their Members, was due to attend but unfortunately was not able to on the day.

Electoral Review - issues

- 6 Clearly an electoral review is a lengthy process, requiring considerable time and effort. It should not be undertaken unless it is likely to produce worthwhile results. It should be stressed that at present, and for the foreseeable future, the current position does not have any significant electoral anomalies. It really is a question of whether the overall number of Members is correct.

- 7 Broadly speaking, the LGBCE takes a view on the right council size by considering:
- The governance arrangements of the council, how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities, and whether there are any planned changes to those arrangements. If the council has too few members, it might not be able to take important decisions quickly and the council could lack democratic accountability in some areas of its work. Too many councillors could lead to inefficient decision-making and would not provide the kind of effective local government the Commission tries to encourage.
 - The council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision-making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies, and whether any changes to them are being considered;
 - The representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.
- 8 In so doing it will seek a vision for the local authority in five to ten years' time. Likewise, when considering the division of the area into wards, it will seek six-year forecasts of electorate changes
- 9 If such a review were pursued it is suggested that the Council should seek an outcome that would produce a significant reduction in the number of councillors, probably to somewhere in the mid-thirties, and that would also:
- Provide a basis for ward boundaries that provide acceptable equality of representation and reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - Produce manageable workloads for councillors;
 - Reflect efficient working practices and the general contraction in the size of the organisation.
- 10 Any approach to the LGBCE would need justification from the process that the Council has already gone through. There would need to be recognition of the possible impacts on the Council, as discussed at the Workshop, and including:
- a) Reduction in the amount of business councillors need to transact at the council offices;
 - b) Councillors would have to accommodate larger caseloads of ward work in the community;
 - c) A possible reduction in the number, size and frequency of meetings of committees;
 - d) Possible impact on ability to recruit candidates for election, and possible impact on political proportionality for minor groups;

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- e) Making best use of new ways of working in the digital environment;
 - f) Possible impact on the many joint arrangements providing services;
 - g) Reflecting that a smaller managerial and officer organisation needs to be matched by a reduction in councillors;
- 11 Should a review take place at the present time there would be a resource impact in terms of the work involved in providing the ward-based electorate projections and consideration of options to provide ward electoral equality. In particular the Planning Policy Team is fully stretched at present working on the Local Plan and Housing Market Needs. It would be the case that some of this work would provide some of the data-sets required by the projections process, but there would still be a need to draw all the different aspects together to provide solidly-backed electorate figures (which the LGBCE will expect).
- 12 There could also be complications which arise from any known likely future large developments if they straddle ward or Parish boundaries, which would need consideration of a Community Governance Review in their own right, Fort Halstead being a case in point.
- 13 It is also the case that the final decision relating to the number of Councillors and Ward Boundaries sits with the LGBCE with the Council adopting the outcome.
- 14 If any review is progressed the Council would need to consider the setting up of a vehicle, such as a Task & Finish Group, for Member involvement.
- 15 Given the current stage of the Local Plan process, and if Members are not minded to request a full review at this stage, an option would be to review Community Governance arrangements in the light of the Local Plan and Housing Needs Assessment. Any projected anomalies could then be regulated by making adjustments to Parish Boundaries, and to then reconsider the option of a full review after the 2019 local elections.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

None.

Key Implications

Financial

- 16 If a review took place there would be financial implications in carrying out the necessary electorate projections and the testing of options for achieving electoral equality with possible new Ward boundaries.
- 17 This would require a supplementary estimate of £50k to £70k to fund the required resource to support the review process. This amount is not currently built into the budget. This would need to come from reserves, most likely the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

18 Legal responsibility for any review lies with the LGBCE.

Equality Assessment

19 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

20 Members have had an opportunity to provide their views, through a survey and a Workshop, as to whether they would support an electoral review for Sevenoaks District Council. For any review to be effective by the 2019 local elections, Members' must agree to approach the LGBCE now; the alternative being to re-consider the matter soon after those elections.

Appendices

Appendix A - Note from Electoral Review
Workshop 10 October 2016

Background Papers:

[Governance Committee 20 October 2015](#)

Item 8

[Governance Committee 13 April 2016](#)

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Jim Carrington-West
Chief Officer Corporate Services

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Note from Electoral Review Workshop 10 October 2016

Members attending:

Cllr Pett - chaired the meeting
Cllr Dr Canet
Cllr Clack
Cllr Dickins
Cllr Esler
Cllr Eyre
Cllr Firth
Cllr Hunter
Cllr Purves

Cllr Pett set out the background to the workshop, referring to the previous discussions at meetings of the Governance Committee and the Member Survey carried out during March 2016. He suggested that the review option would be to look for a reduction in the number of Members from the present 54 to somewhere in the mid-30s.

Issues discussed and views expressed

- 1 Growing number of houses and population in the District. This would lead to a bigger workload on Members even at the current numbers.
- 2 Once the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) begins a review, the District Council would lose control of it and there could be a risk that a figure would be imposed. A recent review at Shepway District Council resulted in a reduction to 30 Members, whereas the Council itself had proposed 38.
- 3 Is the main driver for a review based on finance. Can the Council champion its population and protect its services as well, or better, with fewer Members.
- 4 The 700+ councillors across Kent currently cost around £6million a year, so there should be a case for reducing costs. Some Members felt that these costs could be reduced in other ways rather than reducing the numbers of representatives, such as reorganisation of committees.
- 5 It was suggested that the issues Members dealt with were different in Rural and Town areas, and that rural representation could be a more difficult job. This is not reflected in the electorate equality criteria.
- 6 One Member thought that reducing numbers would encourage political parties to be more discerning when selecting candidates. There was a general view that the input by Members varied widely, and that in some areas there was sometimes difficulty finding candidates to stand. There was no guarantee that a councillor who was part of a smaller number would necessarily be of the more active variety.

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- 7 A worry was expressed that reducing numbers, which would broaden each councillor's role and number of population to represent may discourage working people from standing. Some felt that in fact some working Members put in a great deal more than some who did not work at present.
- 8 There was also a view expressed that fewer, larger, wards could result in political balance problems for minority parties. At an extreme these could be wiped out completely.
- 9 A view was expressed that given the contraction of the Council, in terms of the number of employees, and the significant changes made to the way the Council works with increased use of technology and self-service by customers, that the role of the councillor is diminished leading to the possibility of reducing councillor numbers.
- 10 In reality, the Executive Arrangements used by the Council concentrates power to the few Cabinet Members, and if this can be matched to an effective Scrutiny system and a first-class judicial committee system; then there should not be a need for the relatively large number of councillors as at present.
- 11 The last review to take place was some 16 years ago and there was some feeling that the Council should take control by initiating a review before the LGBCE imposed one. It was recognised that the current electoral imbalance of the Council was within LGBCE criteria, and is likely to remain like that for some years.
- 12 One view was that Members fell into 3 main categories -
 - a) Activist - leading/lobbying on particular issues
 - b) Business - getting involved in the day-to-day service activities
 - c) Case Worker - workload driven by local electors' issuesClearly Members carry out all these roles to different extents. It is the Case-Worker role that could increase for Members if there were fewer Members in total.
- 13 It was suggested that the Council's Communications Team need to be involved to ensure the local press portray a true view of any decision taken. Also that all Members of the Council should be advised of the Governance Committee meeting on 3 November and of the importance of the decision on this issue.
- 14 To conclude the meeting Cllr Pett asked for a show of hands of those present as to their view about inviting the LGBCE to carry out a review. Four of those present were in favour of looking for a reduction, three were against. One member had previously left - they had expressed a view that there was some scope to reduce, but not such a large reduction to the mid-30s.

The meeting concluded at 8.13pm

2018 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Governance Committee - 3 November 2016

Report of Chief Officer Corporate Services

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Council - 22 November 2016

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) are required to conduct a review of the Parliamentary constituencies in the UK and make recommendations, to be published in September 2018, that reduces the number of constituencies in England to 501 (from 533).

Their initial proposals have an impact on the wards that make up the Sevenoaks District and it is recommended that the Council responds to BCE's consultation.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Firth

Contact Officers Jim Carrington-West, Ext. 7218
Lee Banks, Ext 7161

Recommendation to Governance Committee:

That Council be recommended to:

- (a) Note the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for England for Parliamentary boundaries for the Sevenoaks District Council area; and
- (b) Approve that the council submits a consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England based on the views collated from Members as set out at Appendix B to this report to be agreed with the Chairman of the Governance Committee.

Recommendations to Council:

- (a) The Boundary Commission for England proposals for Parliamentary boundaries for the Sevenoaks District Council area are noted; and
 - (b) It is approved that the council submits a consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England based on the views collated from Members as set out at Appendix B to this report to be agreed with the Chairman of the Governance Committee.
-

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that Members views on the initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries for the wards they represent are reported back to the Boundary Commission for England.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England
- 2 The BCE are currently conducting a review, on the basis of rules set by Parliament in 2011. These rules require the BCE to make recommendations to reduce the number of Parliamentary constituencies in the UK and make more equal the number of electors in each constituency. These recommendations will be published in September 2018.
- 3 Following the guidance of Parliament the final proposals must result in a reduction in the number of constituencies in England to 501 (from 533), and require that every constituency - apart from two covering the Isle of Wight - must have an electorate that is no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507.
- 4 As well as the primary rule that constituencies must have no fewer than 71,031 electors and no more than 78,507, the legislation also states that, when deciding on boundaries, the Commission may also take into account:
 - special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015;
 - boundaries of existing constituencies; and
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies.

Initial proposals

- 5 The BCE published their initial proposals for the new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England on 13 September 2016. For the South East region just under 18% of the existing constituencies are retained - the remainder are new constituencies
- 6 The proposals for the Parliamentary constituency boundaries for the wards that make up the Sevenoaks District are set out at Appendix A to this report.
- 7 Currently 20 wards fall within the Sevenoaks Parliamentary constituency, 5 wards within the Tonbridge & Malling constituency and 1 ward within the Dartford constituency.
- 8 Under the BCE's initial proposals:

- 19 of the 20 wards within the Sevenoaks Parliamentary constituency remain. These are joined by three wards from the district of Tonbridge & Malling.
- Ash and New Ash Green is proposed to move from the Sevenoaks constituency to become part of the Gravesham constituency. They are proposed to be joined in the Gravesham constituency by Hartley & Hodsoll Street (which is currently in the Dartford constituency).
- The five wards which are currently in the Tonbridge & Malling constituency are all proposed to be part of the Tunbridge Wells constituency.

Consultation

- 9 The BCE are currently consulting on their initial proposals for a 12-week period, which started on 13 September 2016 and will end on 5 December 2016. The BCE are encouraging respondents “to use this opportunity to help us shape the new constituencies - the more views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be when considering whether to revise our proposals”.
- 10 To inform the Council’s response to the initial proposals a survey was sent to all Members welcoming their views on the proposals for the ward they represent. The survey was sent to Members on 7 October and was open for almost two weeks, closing on 20 October.
- 11 There were 19 responses to the survey which are provided for Members information at Appendix B to this report.
- 12 It is recommended that the views of Members are considered and used to inform a response to the BCE’s consultation.
- 13 Members may wish to note that the BCE is required to publish all the responses they receive on their initial proposals. This is likely to occur in Spring 2017 and will coincide with a further four week consultation period on the comments that have been received.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 14 None. However, Members may choose to not respond to the BCE’s consultation.

Key Implications

Financial

- 15 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation to note the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for England’s Parliamentary constituency review or to respond to their consultation.

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Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

- 16 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation to note the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for England's Parliamentary constituency review or to respond to their consultation.
- 17 There is a risk to the Council that if no consultation response is given the potential for the BCE to review their initial proposals may be reduced.

Equality Assessment

- 18 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

- 19 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) are required to conduct a review of the Parliamentary constituencies in the UK and make recommendations, to be published in September 2018, that reduces the number of constituencies in England to 501 (from 533).
- 20 Their initial proposals have an impact on the wards that make up the Sevenoaks District and it is recommended that the Council responds to BCE's consultation, based on the views of Members collected through a survey run during October 2016.
- 21 They Council may choose not to respond however this would create a risk that the potential for the BCE to review their initial proposals may be reduced.

Appendices

Appendix A - Proposals for the Sevenoaks District

Appendix B - Responses to Members consultation

Background Papers:

Boundary Commission for England initial proposals for the South East

<https://www.bce2018.org.uk/node/6488>

Jim Carrington-West
Chief Officer Corporate Services

Ward	Current Parliamentary	Proposed Parliamentary	Voters	Sevenoaks Parliamentary Electorate
Ash and New Ash Green	Sevenoaks	Gravesham	4,513	
Hartley and Hodsoll Street	Dartford	Gravesham	4,731	
Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	4,861	
Crockenhill and Well Hill	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	1,513	
Dunton Green and Riverhead	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,589	
Eynsford	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	1,498	
Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darent	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,724	
Fawkham and West Kingsdown	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	4,801	
Halstead, Knockholt and Badgers Mount	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	2,675	
Hextable	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,287	
Kemsing	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,241	
Otford and Shoreham	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,485	
Seal and Weald	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,045	
Sevenoaks Eastern	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	2,924	
Sevenoaks Kippington	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,561	
Sevenoaks Northern	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,030	
Sevenoaks Town and St. John's	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	4,351	
Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	4,299	
Swanley St. Mary's	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,004	
Swanley White Oak	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	4,603	
Westerham and Crockham Hill	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	3,284	
Borough Green and Long Mill	Tonbridge & Malling	Sevenoaks	5,258	
Downs and Mereworth	Tonbridge & Malling	Sevenoaks	3,305	
Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted	Tonbridge & Malling	Sevenoaks	3,273	76,611
Cowden and Hever	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	1,561	
Edenbridge North and East	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	3,616	
Edenbridge South and West	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	3,015	
Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	1,690	
Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	1,966	

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Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018 – Initial Proposals

Results of Members Survey

Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
Ash and New Ash Green	3	Yes	1	i. Given the geographical proximity to Gravesham and the fact that most leisure activities are undertaken in the Gravesham area, it would make sense.
		No	2	<p>ii. Ash and New Ash Green is a 'frontier' ward which has from time to time been switched from one Parliamentary constituency to another, and also between local authorities. However there has never been any formal link to the Gravesend area. Because of its situation in a rural area, roughly equidistant between Sevenoaks, Swanley, Borough Green and West Malling, Gravesend, Bluewater and Dartford, residents naturally gravitate to all of these places for schools, employment, leisure and shopping and one activity often determines the preferred destination for others. Nevertheless the fact that the ward is part of Sevenoaks for both Parliamentary and local government purposes is important in ensuring that there is a sense of local identity and belonging. There is certainly a concern that if Parliamentary constituency boundaries are changed, local government might follow and in that context Sevenoaks District Council is much more attuned to the needs of its rural parishes than Gravesham is likely to be, purely because of the fundamental differences from the majority of that Council's area.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
				<p>Ash and New Ash Green ward, indeed the whole parish of Ash-cum-Ridley, has essentially a rural North Downs character and is sparsely populated with the exception of New Ash Green which was designed 50 years ago as a model community, demonstrating how a new village could be built in the countryside without having an adverse impact on the rural area whilst allowing its inhabitants to enjoy the benefits of the surrounding countryside. It has been very successful in achieving this objective and as a result the issues that face its elected representatives are much more akin to those of the rest of Sevenoaks rather than the fast-growing urban areas of Dartford and Gravesham to the north. The inclusion of the ward into Gravesham Parliamentary constituency would be likely to mean that the issues which are important to local people would be diluted to the point of invisibility amongst the very different concerns of the majority of residents that will inevitably arise from the major development proposals in Kent Thameside and Ebbsfleet Garden City. The proposal to add the ward to Gravesham also seems short-sighted given the on-going residential development in that constituency which is likely to take the population of the area above the ideal limit for a constituency quite soon and thus lead to a further review of boundaries. That, on past experience, would then mean Ash and New Ash Green might once again have to be moved into another constituency. Residents value stability and the relatively frequent changes of boundaries do not help to build a local identity or provide the reassurance that our elected representatives are concerned about the interests of our locality.</p>

Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge	2	Yes	2	i. Broadly sensible as electorates should be equalised
Cowden and Hever	0	No response	-	None
Crockenhill and Well Hill	0	No response	-	None
Dunton Green and Riverhead	0	No response	-	None
Edenbridge North and East	1	No response	1	All changes cause problems and loss of continuity of service, but provided that the whole of Edenbridge is maintained as an entity, I do not have strong views on whether it should be part of Tonbridge & Malling or Tunbridge Wells.
Edenbridge South and West	0	No response	-	None
Eynsford	1	Undecided	1	Eynsford is unaffected by the proposals; however I feel that Hartley Ward on Sevenoaks District Council should remain as part of the Dartford constituency, not as part of Gravesham. People from Hartley and New Ash Green naturally look towards Dartford as their urban centre and for their retail needs. I would suggest keeping Hartley (and New Ash Green) in Dartford and possibly moving an area like Swanscombe into the Gravesham Parliamentary Seat

Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth	1	Yes	1	Keeping Parliamentary and District Council boundaries co-terminus is always preferential
Fawkham and West Kingsdown	1	No response	1	None
Halstead, Knockholt and Badgers Mount	1	Yes	1	None
Hartley and Hodsoll Street	0	No response	-	None
Hextable	1	Yes	1	None
Kemsing	1	Yes	1	No change so no view
Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway	1	No	1	i. This proposal is based on a numbers game and takes no account of the infrastructure on the ground. All the main Roads run East to West. The B2027 links Edenbridge to Tonbridge, through Leigh, with feeder roads running in from Four Elms, Chiddingstone and Bough Beech. The main railway line runs from Edenbridge to Ton bridge, with links to Redhill in the West and to Victoria in the North and Uckfield in the South. The main rivers including the Eden and the Medway and feeder streams run West to East to Tonbridge.

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Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
				<p>The County Council wards are changing with the member for Sevenoaks South taking in part of Sevenoaks Weald next May. This new area of Sevenoaks Weald is designated to remain in The Parliamentary constituency of Sevenoaks while the rest of the constituency moves to Tunbridge Wells. We have District Councillors representing Edenbridge, Cowden, Penshurst and Leigh, and our services are provided by Sevenoaks District Council. This works well. Are we to be subsumed by the Borough of Tunbridge Wells? We have Tonbridge Post Codes and our addresses all indicate that we are near Tonbridge. The schools in Tonbridge are much nearer and easier to get to than Schools in Tunbridge Wells. We relate to Tonbridge and to our Member of Parliament, Tom Tugendhat MP, and he has come to know our area well as he lives in Mark Beech part of the constituency which is proposed to come under Tunbridge Wells I believe these proposals to be fundamentally flawed and must be reconsidered.</p>
Otford and Shoreham	1	Yes	1	<p>Assuming that the Member has the same Community Support allowance, then it will be spread thinner because the Ward has increased in size. Of course their funding might be removed altogether as a cost saving.</p>
Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone	0	No response	-	None
Seal and Weald	0	No response	-	None

Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
Sevenoaks Eastern	1	Yes	1	Consider transferring Swanley and Hextable to Dartford as they are closer to Dartford than Sevenoaks. Borough Green, Wrotham and Mereworth are in Tonbridge and Malling local authority district, but proposed to be in Sevenoaks Parliamentary district. The increasing divergence between local government and parliamentary boundaries makes it harder for voters to understand what is going on.
Sevenoaks Kippington	1	Yes	1	None
Sevenoaks Northern	0	No response	-	None
Sevenoaks Town and St. John's	1	Yes	1	None
Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village	0	No response	-	None
Swanley St. Mary's	1	Yes	1	None
Swanley White Oak	0	No response	-	None

Ward	No. of responses	Agreement with BCE proposal		Comments
Westerham and Crockham Hill	1	Yes	1	<p>I feel it is important for the ward to have the same boundaries for District, County and constituency so that it has an identity. Very pleased to see that we stay in the same electoral area as before and that we have not been moved out to be with Edenbridge. Therefore no comments.</p> <p>Regarding Sevenoaks District I feel it will be a challenge to have Borough Green within our constituency and will be sad to lose Hartley and Hodsol & New Ash Green. But realise with all re alignment of boundaries there are necessary sacrifices to maintain the correct electorate. All in all I think Sevenoaks should be very relieved at the small impact these proposed changes will make.</p>

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Governance Committee Work Plan 2016/17 (as at 20/10/16)

3 November 2016	2 February 2017	Summer 2017	Autumn 2017
2018 Parliamentary Boundary review Outcome of Electoral Review Workshop			

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