

2023 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Governance Committee - 22 June 2021

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

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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 from 2023; and
- (b) Approve that the council submits a consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England based on views collated from Members and following consultation with the Chairman of the Governance Committee.

Recommendation to Council:

- (a) Note the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for England for Parliamentary boundaries for the Sevenoaks District Council area from 2023; and
- (b) Approve that the council submits a consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England based on views collated from Members and following consultation with the Chairman of the Governance Committee.

Reason for recommendations: To ensure that Members are aware of the initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries for the wards they represent and that they are aware how their views may be 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 has the task of periodically reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England. It is currently conducting a review on the basis of rules most recently updated by Parliament in 2020. The BCE are required to report their final recommendations to Parliament by 1 July 2023.

- 3 The BCE are required to develop proposals which retain 650 constituencies for the UK Parliament as a whole and the proposed constituencies must also comply with strict parameters, in particular as far as the number of electors in each constituency is concerned.
- 4 Following the guidance of Parliament the final proposals must result in 543 constituencies in England (from 533), and require that every constituency - apart from two protected constituencies covering the Isle of Wight - has an electorate that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.
- 5 As well as the primary rule that constituencies must have no fewer than 69,724 electors and no more than 77,062, 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 (or were in prospect) on 1 December 2020;
 - boundaries of existing constituencies;
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies; and
 - the inconveniences attendant on such changes.

Initial proposals

- 6 The BCE published their initial proposals for the new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England on 8 June 2021. A summary of the proposals for the wards within the Sevenoaks District are set out at Appendix A to this report for Members information and consideration.
- 7 Whilst the majority of the District wards are unaffected by the proposals for new Parliamentary constituencies, the proposals would see Ash & New Ash Green and Hartley & Hodsoll Street become part of the Tonbridge constituency.
- 8 Darenth and Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley within the Dartford borough would become part of the Sevenoaks constituency.

Consultation

- 9 The BCE are currently consulting on their initial proposals through their website at www.bcereviews.org.uk for an 8-week period, which started on 8 June and will end on 2 August.
- 10 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 “early 2022” and will coincide with a further six week consultation period on the comments that have been received.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

11 None.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

There is a risk that if no consultation response is given the potential for the BCE to review their initial proposals may be reduced.

Equality Assessment

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

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) are required to conduct a review of the Parliamentary constituencies in the UK and make recommendations, to be reported to Parliament by July 2023, that sets the number of constituencies in England to 543 (from 533).

Appendices

Appendix A - Initial Proposals for the Sevenoaks District

Background Papers

Boundary Commission for England initial proposals for the South East

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/>

Dr. Pav Ramewal

Chief Executive