

2018 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Governance Committee - 6 November 2018

Report of Chief Officer Corporate Services

Status For information

Key Decision No

Executive Summary: This report sets out for Members information the final proposals from the Boundary Commission for England for the Parliamentary Boundaries for Sevenoaks Wards. The proposals, subject to debate and approval by Parliament, would take effect from the next scheduled general election in 2022.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Anna Firth

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Recommendation to Governance Committee:

The final recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England for a revised Parliamentary Boundary for Sevenoaks are noted.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure Members are aware of the revised proposals, which subject to approval by Government, could change the Parliamentary constituency for Wards within the Sevenoaks District.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended in 2011) required the four Boundary Commissions for the UK to carry out a review of constituencies and to submit final reports to Government in September 2018.
- 2 Parliament specified that the 2018 Review must reduce the number of constituencies, and therefore MPs, in the UK, to 600 from 650. In England this means a reduction from the current 533 constituencies to 501.
- 3 The Boundary Commission for England, as an independent and impartial body, considered where the boundaries of the new constituencies in England should be, ensuring that every new constituency (except two for the Isle of Wight) has roughly the same number of electors: no fewer than 71,031 and no more than 78,507.
- 4 The review took approximately two and a half years to be completed, with final recommendations submitted to Government in September 2018.

The review process

- 5 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) published its initial proposals for new boundaries on 13 September 2016, which began twelve weeks of public consultation.
- 6 The Chairman of the Governance Committee submitted a response to this consultation on behalf of the Council in November 2016, after discussions at the Governance Committee on 3 November that year, and subsequently at a full Council meeting on 22 November.
- 7 All feedback from the initial consultation was then published on 28 February 2017. This was followed by a four-week consultation period during which the public were invited to comment on that feedback. That consultation closed on 27 March 2017.
- 8 Having considered all of the representations received the BCE published its revised proposals on 17 October 2017. These were consulted on for eight weeks. The Governance Committee considered a further report on these revised proposals at its meeting on 7 November 2017 and the Chairman of the Committee sent a further representation to the BCE on behalf of the Council.
- 9 After looking at whether any more changes need to be made, in September 2018 the Commission submitted final recommendations in a report presented to the Government, who in turn presented the report to Parliament.

Proposals for the Sevenoaks District

- 10 Set out at Appendix A to this report is a table which summarises the proposals made by the BCE at each stage of their review.
- 11 The majority of the wards in the District are unaffected and are proposed to remain in the same Parliamentary Constituency at the next election, as they were at the last election in 2017.
- 12 The BCE, has however, recommended that Hartley & Hodsoll Street moves from its current Dartford constituency to the Gravesham constituency. In the Councils consultation response to the BCE, and in an additional letter in response to the revised proposals, the Council it was recommended that Hartley & Hodsoll Street was included within the Sevenoaks Parliamentary constituency.
- 13 Members may also wish to note that the BCE initially proposed that the Ash & New Ash Green ward was moved to the Gravesham constituency. The Councils consultation response to the BCE recommended it was retained in the Sevenoaks constituency, and in both the revised and final proposals that has been the case.
- 14 The final proposals from the BCE include one ward in the Sevenoaks parliamentary constituency from outside of the District Council boundary.

That is Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted, which is in the Tonbridge & Malling District.

Implementing the proposed boundaries

- 15 The BCE has completed its work on the 2018 boundary review and the Government has laid the report in Parliament. It now requires Parliament to introduce a Statutory Instrument containing the recommendations and for these to be subject to Parliamentary debate.
- 16 There are no indications of timescales behind this at present except in September 2018, the Minister for the Constitution said that the draft Order will take some months to prepare.
- 17 If Parliament agrees the changes to boundaries, the new constituencies will take effect at the next scheduled General Election in 2022 (or before if one is called after the point at which the boundaries are approved by Parliament). It is understood that any by-election before the next General Election, even if the boundary changes have been approved will be decided on the current boundaries, not the proposed new ones.
- 18 Further explanation is available on the Parliament website at <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/parliament-and-elections/government/the-boundary-review-what-comes-next/>

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

None

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications or risks arising from this report.

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 has set out its final recommendations for Parliamentary constituencies for England, which subject to Parliamentary approval will take effect from the next scheduled election in 2022. The majority of the wards in the District are unaffected and are proposed to remain in the same Parliamentary Constituency. However, Hartley & Hodsoll Street is proposed to

move from the Dartford constituency to form part of the Gravesham Parliamentary constituency from 2022.

Appendices

Appendix A - Summary of BCE proposals for wards in the Sevenoaks District

Background Papers

[Sevenoaks District Council consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England](#)¹

Jim Carrington-West

Chief Officer Corporate Services