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To: Electoral and Boundary Review Committee – 24 November 2016

Subject: 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates Members about the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies being undertaken by the Boundary Commission for England including the timetable of the review and initial proposals for Kent

1. Introduction

- (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 is currently conducting a review on the basis of rules most recently updated by Parliament in 2011. The rules state that there will be 600 Parliamentary constituencies covering the UK – a reduction of 50 from the current number. This means that the number of constituencies in England must be reduced from 533 to 501. The rules also require that every constituency (with the exception of two covering the Isle of Wight) to contain no fewer than 71,031 electors and no more than 78,507.
- (3) After extensive public consultation, the BCE is required to make a formal report to the Government during September 2018, recommending any changes that it believes are appropriate to the distribution, size, shape, name or designation of constituencies in England.

(2) Timetable of the Review

- (1) Stage one – The BCE began its review in February 2016 by publishing electorate data from December 2015. The BCE published its initial proposals on 13 September 2016.
- (2) Stage two – The BCE is currently consulting on its initial proposals for 12 weeks from 13 September to 5 December 2016. The BCE is hosting five public hearings for the South East region; a two day public hearing session was held at County Hall, Maidstone on 3 – 4 November 2016.
- (3) Stage three – The BCE is required to publish all the responses it receives on its initial proposals followed by a four-week 'secondary consultation' period, likely to take place in spring 2017. The purpose of the secondary consultation is for people to see what others have said in response to the initial proposals, and to make comments on those views.
- (4) Stage four – Once the BCE has all the representations and comments from both the initial and secondary consultation periods, it will analyse

those representations and decide whether changes should be made to the initial proposals. If the BCE is persuaded to change its initial proposals, then it must publish its revised proposals and consult on them for a further period of eight weeks. This is likely to be towards the end of 2017.

- (5) Stage five –Following the consultation on revised proposals, the BCE will consider all the evidence received before determining its final recommendations. The recommendations will be set out in a published report to the Government, who will present it, without amendment, to Parliament. If Parliament approves the legislation, the recommended changes will be implemented for the next General Election after the date on which the legislation is passed.

3. Initial proposals for Kent

- (1) The initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in Kent are set out as part of wider proposals for the South East Region and can be viewed here on pages 14 - 16 - https://www.bce2018.org.uk/download_document?type=0&document_id=14172
- (2) Detailed maps of each of the proposed constituencies in Kent can be viewed here as part of the South East region mapping - https://www.bce2018.org.uk/download_document?type=0&document_id=14199
- (3) It is proposed that the KCC Political Groups, rather than the Committee or the County Council, are encouraged to respond directly to the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals prior to the closure of its Stage Two consultation on 5 December 2016.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to note the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies and request the KCC Political Groups to respond directly to the Boundary Commission for England's consultation on the initial proposals by 5 December 2016.

Background Documents

Boundary Commission for England (2016) '*Guide to the 2018 Review of Parliamentary constituencies (12/07/2016)*', <http://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2016-07-11-Guide-to-2018-review-Final-Version.pdf>

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