

Agenda Item No: 4
Report To: Selection & Constitutional Review Committee
Date: 3rd December 2015
Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Neil Bell, Deputy Leader
Report Author: Sarah Hartles, Solicitor



Summary: This report summarises the Community Governance Review process, the consultation that has been carried out, and the responses that have been received in respect of the draft recommendations of the Community Governance Review.

The report asks the Committee to consider the draft recommendations put forward by the Local Government & Polling Places Task Group and to make their own recommendations to Council.

Key Decision: N/A

Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: **The Committee be asked to:**

- 1. Note the consultation responses received and the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (attached at Appendix 2);**
- 2. Note Part One of the draft Final Recommendations of the Community Governance Review, in relation to the “Existing Parishes”, proposed by the Task Group as set out at Appendix 11 and recommend the same to Council; and**
- 3. Note Part Two of the draft Final Recommendations of the Community Governance Review, in relation to the “Currently Unparished Area”, proposed by the Task Group as set out at Appendix 11 and recommend the same to Council.**

Policy Overview: It is expected that the Borough will carry out a review of this nature every 10 to 15 years, with the last being done in 2006 and a review of the Borough ward boundaries due to commence in April 2016, it was agreed that this review should consider all of the Parishes in the Borough.

Financial Implications:	A budget for the review itself was agreed at Management Team of £35,000 to cover the costs of the ballot of the urban area and other sundries.
Risk Assessment	See paragraph 55 of the Report.
Equalities Impact Assessment	See Appendix 12.
Other Material Implications:	None
Exemption Clauses:	None.
Background Papers:	Selection & Constitutional Review Committee Report 11 th February 2015 and subsequent recommendation to Council on 19 th February 2015.
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Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out details of the Community Governance Review (“the Review”) that was started when Council approved the Terms of Reference (copy attached at Appendix 1) on 19th February 2015.
2. The report summarises the consultation process that has been carried out on the draft recommendations and the responses that have been received in response.
3. The report asks the Committee to consider the consultation responses, the guidance from the Secretary of State and the recommendations of the Local Government & Polling District Task Group (“the Task Group”).

Issue to be decided

4. Whether to recommend the draft Final Recommendations as put forward by the Task Group, as are set out at Appendix 11 to Council.

Legislative Background

5. Community Governance Reviews are carried out under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the Act”). This gives the Council the power to conduct Reviews and also sets out the statutory duties of the Council when conducting a review.
6. The statutory duties of the Council are set out in section 93 of the Act and are summarised as follows:
 - a. To consult the electors for the area under review;
 - b. To consult any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review;
 - c. The Council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
 - i. Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
 - ii. Is effective and convenient;
 - d. In deciding what recommendations to make, the Council must take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions):
 - i. That have already been made; or
 - ii. That could be made;
 - e. The Council must take into account any representations received in connection with the review.
7. Section 100 of the Act also states that the Secretary of State may issue guidance about undertaking Reviews and the Council must have regard to

that guidance. Guidance has been issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government together with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and a copy of this is attached at Appendix 2. This is referred to in this report as “the Guidance”.

8. If the Council does not comply with these statutory duties set out in sections 93 and 100 of the Act, then it will be in breach of the legislation and its decision could be subject to challenge.
9. Once the final recommendations of the Review have been made, the Act requires the Council to publish the decision as to the recommendations that it is going to make as an outcome of the Review, and publish the Council’s reasons for making that decision.

Background

10. The Council commenced a community governance review of all the parishes in the Borough on 23rd February 2015. The Review was triggered by the receipt of a petition under section 80 of the Act in respect of the currently unparished area of North Willesborough.
11. Following publication of the Terms of Reference, we carried out an initial consultation phase and wrote to Parish Councils, Urban Forums, County Councillors, Borough Councillors, Returning Officers, MPs, MEPs, other residents groups asking them to make submissions as to what changes they would like to see made to their areas or the way in which they are governed. A press release was issued and the review was reported in the Kentish Express. Social media releases were also issued and Parish Councils were also provided with posters for their notice boards inviting residents to make submissions.
12. Twenty three submissions were received as part of this process, along with a number of emails and letters from residents in respect of the unparished urban areas.
13. These submissions were then considered by the Officer Review Team and presented to the Task Group together with the draft recommendations for them to consider and direct Officers as to the changes they wished to see. The Task Group met twice to consider the draft recommendations and the draft recommendations were then published on 31st July 2015.

Draft Recommendations - Consultation Process

14. Following the publication of the draft recommendations on 31st July, a copy of the draft recommendations were sent to all of the people and organisations listed in paragraph 5 above, as well as anyone else who had responded to the initial consultation. The wording of the letter that was sent is attached at Appendix 3.
15. Those Parish Councils where specific changes were proposed in the draft recommendations, were written to again on 9th September inviting them to comment on the specific recommendation for their area, enclosing a further poster to be placed on their parish notice boards, and informing them of the

opportunity to attend the open evening to ask questions and view the plans in more detail. The wording of this letter and the poster are attached at Appendix 4.

16. All households who were affected by the changes proposed in the draft recommendations were also written to on 9th September advising them of the proposals and asking them for their comments. The wording of one of these letters is attached at Appendix 5. Approximately 850 letters of this type were sent out.
17. It was agreed by the Task Group that a ballot of the electors who live in the Currently Unparished Areas, should be carried out by the Electoral Reform Service. This was commissioned and the Council prepared a covering letter to go with the ballot paper. An information leaflet was also sent out with the ballot paper and this was agreed by the members of the Task Group before it was issued. Copies of the letter, leaflet and ballot paper are attached at Appendix 6.
18. The ballot was split into the five proposed areas and residents received the appropriate leaflet for their area with their ballot paper. In total, 38,201 electors were sent ballot papers. The ballot was open from 14th September until 12th October.
19. The Urban Forums produced their own promotional literature encouraging residents to vote “yes” in the ballot. Copies of the Forums’ literature is attached at Appendix 7. The Council was not involved in the production of this literature or the funding of it.
20. The Council issued a press release at the beginning of September to draw attention to the consultation and the ballot and a series of social media releases were made through the consultation period. These were relatively successful and there was coverage in the Kentish Express and several letters from residents printed as well.
21. We held an open evening on 28th September at the Civic Centre between 4pm and 8pm. This was well attended by a mixture of residents from existing parishes and the unparished areas. The review team answered a number of mixed and varied enquiries and collected feedback from those residents who attended through written feedback forms.
22. The review team also attended a public meeting at the request of Westwell Parish Council, to discuss the proposed boundary changes for the Westwell Parish area. This meeting was well attended and feedback forms were again handed out.
23. The parish clerks of those parishes where specific changes were proposed, were then reminded again on 21st October of the need to respond to the consultation by 30th October.
24. A summary of the consultation responses received is attached at Appendix 8. Full copies of the responses received are set out in the separate Appendix 9.

Part One of the Final Recommendations – Existing Parishes

25. For the majority of the existing parishes no changes were proposed in the draft recommendations.
26. Minor boundary changes were proposed in four parish areas at the boundaries of:
 - a. Egerton with Charing;
 - b. Little Chart with Charing;
 - c. Pluckley with Bethersden.Very little response to the consultation was received in respect of those areas and what was received was in favour of the proposed changes.
27. A reduction in councillor numbers was requested by Pluckley Parish Council and no response was received in respect of this proposal.
28. More significant boundary changes were proposed in other areas and details of the consultation responses are set out below.

Great Chart with Singleton Parish

29. In respect of the minor boundary change of the Parish with the unparished area, no response was received from the residents and the Parish Council were in favour of the proposal.
30. No response was received from residents in respect of the amendment to the Parish Ward boundary between Singleton South ward and Great Chart with Singleton North ward, and the Parish Council were in favour of the proposal.
31. There have been a couple of consultation responses in respect of the proposed creation of a ward for the Chilmington Green development area. However, these responses have been in support of the Council's long term aim of creating a new parish council for Chilmington Green once it is able to do so.
32. The Parish Council requested an additional parish councillor for the newly defined Singleton South parish ward and this has been incorporated into the draft Final Recommendations set out at Appendix 11.

Kingsnorth

33. The creation of a new parish ward for the area known as Bridgefield with an amendment to the number of councillors to reflect this was proposed and the response received from a resident and a Ward Member was in favour. The Parish Council questioned the proposed boundary for the new ward and the proposed number of councillors, but the Task Group was satisfied that the boundary proposed is a sensible one and the number of councillors proposed is within the Guidance.
34. A minor boundary was proposed for the boundary of Kingsnorth Parish with the unparished urban area and the Parish Council responded in favour of this proposal.

35. A change to the boundary of the Kingsnorth Village parish ward with the Stubbs Cross parish ward. The Parish Council questioned the proposed boundary, but again the Task Group was satisfied that the boundary proposed is a sensible one.

Mersham & Sevington

36. A change to the boundary with Kingsnorth Parish is proposed in order to incorporate the whole of the development known as Finberry within Mersham and Sevington Parish. The responses received from the Ward Member and Kingsnorth Parish Council were in favour of this change.

Orlestone & Warehorne Parishes

37. The original recommendation was to amend the boundary of Orlestone and Warehorne parish, so as to remove 54 properties (99 electors) from Warehorne to Orlestone.
38. Whilst Orlestone Parish Council were in favour of the proposal, Warehorne Parish Council were not due to the impact that the change would have on their financial position.
39. This boundary issue has been ongoing for a number of years. The Council reviewed it back in 1999 and again in 2006, when no action was taken because agreement could not be reached between the two Parish Councils.
40. It is clear when you visit these properties that they naturally fall within the village of Hamstreet, which is predominantly in the Orlestone Parish area. When considering where the boundaries of a civil parish should be, Councillors should have a mind to the community of which the properties form part and which community the residents feel part of.
41. When considering where civil parish boundaries should be located, it is not appropriate to take into account postal addresses, the parish precept, historical concerns – this review is of the civil parish boundaries and should consider how the community feels and operates today.
42. The initial consultation letter elicited a response from six of the affected residents, of which only one was in favour of the proposed change.
43. In order to try and determine this long running matter finally for these residents, we wrote to all of the residents affected a second time and asked them to let us have a specific answer to the questions:
- a. Which community do you consider yourself to be part of? Orlestone or Warehorne
 - b. Which parish area do you think your property should be part of? Orlestone or Warehorne

We provided a prepaid envelope for residents to return a tear off slip back to us, and details of the email and postal address where residents could provide us with their answers.

44. At the request of one of the Ward Members, we held a meeting with the Chairs of both Parishes, the Chair of the Kent Association of Local Councils and both Ward Members.
45. As a result of this meeting where the responses from the second letters were considered in detail, the Chairs of the two Parish Councils were able to agree a boundary revision that resolved the issue of a cul-de-sac being split in two.
46. The agreed boundary proposal has now been incorporated into the draft Final Recommendations attached at Appendix 11.

Westwell Parish

47. The recommendation consulted on was to amend the boundary of the Parish with the unparished urban area to include the eastern side of Sandyhurst Lane within Westwell Parish. This would see an additional 145 properties (319 electors) situated within Westwell.
48. Of the 12 responses received to the consultation, 7 were in favour of the change and 5 were not in favour of the change. Westwell Parish Council were not in favour of the change due to concerns about the planning impacts and an increase in the population of the Parish. The Sandyhurst Lane Residents Association were in favour of the proposal.
49. Taking the consultation responses into consideration, the Task Group decided that the draft recommendation should remain as originally drafted.

Part Two of the Final Recommendations – Currently Unparished Areas

50. The ballot results for the five proposed areas are summarised in the table below, and a full copy of the Electoral Reform Service’s result report is attached at Appendix 10. The ballot question was “Do you want a community council for your area?”.

Area	Turnout	Votes Yes	Votes No
Central Ashford	28.6%	1,098 (39% of the valid vote)	1,719 (61% of the valid vote)
Kennington	34.9%	1,522 (53.3% of the valid vote)	1,336 (46.7% of the valid vote)
North Willesborough	33.1%	1,143 (44.2% of the valid vote)	1,444 (55.8% of the valid vote)
South Willesborough & Newtown	26.3%	437 (54.6% of the valid vote)	363 (45.4% of the valid vote)
South Ashford	26.1%	906 (37.8% of the valid vote)	1,492 (62.2% of the valid vote)

51. The results of the ballot are non-binding, but the ballot forms part of the consultation process and the responses received must be taken into account with the other consultation responses. The table below summarises the consultation responses by those in favour and those not.

Area	General responses in favour	General responses against	Online responses in favour	Online responses against
Central Ashford	10	9	7	5
Kennington	11	2	9	1
North Willesborough	3	2	3	2
South Willesborough & Newtown	3	0	3	0
South Ashford	2	1	2	1
All areas	2	1	-	-

52. As a result of the ballot result, consultation responses and the Guidance (in particular Section 3 of the Guidance), Officers recommended to the Task Group that community councils be created for both the Kennington and South Willesborough and Newtown areas.
53. The Task Group, on consideration of:
- the turnout of the ballot;
 - the number of votes in favour of the proposals as a percentage of the total possible vote;
 - the effective permanence of community councils, and the precept that they will be able to raise as part of the council tax, were they to be created;
 - the context of the ballot and the promotional activity of the Community Forums,
- decided not to recommend the creation of any community councils.
54. The draft Final Recommendations are those recommended by the Task Group.

Risk Assessment

55. As with all Council decisions, there is a risk of challenge. However, we have followed the statutory procedure and the Guidance in respect of carrying out a Community Governance Review and set out at paragraphs 6 and 7 the statutory duties that Members must have in mind when making the final recommendations.

Equalities Impact Assessment

56. The Equalities Impact Assessment is set out at Appendix 12 and Members must have regard to this.

Other Options Considered

57. The Committee is asked to consider the other options available to the Council to ensure effective and convenient community governance, in light of the statutory duties set out at paragraphs 6 and 7 of this report.

Consultation

58. Full details of the consultation process are set out in this report.

Implications Assessment

59. Will be carried out following this meeting so that it is appropriate and relevant to the final recommendations.

Handling

60. The recommendations of the Committee will be considered by Council on 10th December.

61. A copy of this report is being sent to all Members of Council at the time of being circulated to the Committee Members to ensure that they have an appropriate period of time to consider all of the papers.

Conclusion

62. There has been a good response to the various elements of the consultation that has been carried out. Members are asked to consider all of these responses and suggest appropriate amendments to the draft recommendations.

Portfolio Holder's Views

63. *To be given at the meeting.*

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Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

Review of Community Governance Arrangements Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Ashford Borough Council (“the Council”) has resolved to conduct a Community Governance Review of the whole of the Ashford Borough Council Local Authority area in accordance with Part 4 Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This guidance was considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference (“TOR”).

Aim of the Community Governance Review

The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and ensure electors across the whole Borough will be treated equitably and fairly.

The review will consider:

- The electoral arrangements for the existing parishes, including the number of councillors elected to the parish, parish warding;
- The boundaries of the existing parishes in light of ongoing development;
- Whether the residents of any unparished area of the Borough would have effective and convenient representation by having a parish or community council(s);
- Any other issues that are submitted in response to the review consultation process.

Why undertake this Community Governance Review?

The Council is undertaking this review in accordance with section 83(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 in response to a valid petition received under section 80 of that Act. It is also being carried out in advance of a review of the electoral arrangements of the borough by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which is due to take place in 2016. In addition, Government guidance recommends that a review is carried out every 10-15 years. The last review was carried out in 2006 and was a partial review only and so it is timely to carry out a review of the whole Borough.

A review provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when there have been changes in population or in reaction to specific or local new issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective and convenient and it reflects the identities and interests of the community.

The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and wants to ensure that parish governance within the Borough continues to be robust, representative and enabled

to meet new challenges. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review offers the opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features and to remove any anomalous parish boundaries. It can take place for the whole or part of the Borough to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding); and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient.

In doing so the community governance review is required to take into account:

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

Area to be reviewed

The Community Governance Review includes the whole of the Ashford Borough Council area.

Who will undertake the Review?

The Council is responsible for conducting the review. The body responsible for overseeing this process is the Full Council. It will oversee the review and produce draft and final recommendations; the Council will approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order is made. In coming to its recommendation in the Review, the Council will need to take account of the views of local people. A full consultation process will form part of the Review to take full account of the views of local people.

The Council is required to approve the final recommendations prior to the Community Governance Order being made.

CONSULTATION

How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the review

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council will take full account of the views of local people. The Council will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:

- Consulting local government electors for the area under review;

- Consulting any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review;
- Notifying and consulting Kent County Council;
- Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.

The Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Civic Centre, placing articles on the Council's website and in the Council's magazine, Ashford Voice. The Council will also write to all parish councils, neighbourhood forums or any other community or resident groups of which the Council is aware, the Kent Association of Local Councils, Borough Councillors and the relevant County Councillors, the MP and Kent County Council.

The Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them. The Council will notify each consultee and any other persons or bodies who have made written representations of the outcome of the review.

Timetable for the review

A timetable for the review is attached at Appendix 1. The programme and timeline may be adjusted after representations have been received by local people and bodies in response to the initial public consultation. This will allow the Council a degree of flexibility in the interests of ensuring that it manages the review process efficiently. Any adjustments to the programme and timetable will be approved by the Council and published on its website.

Electorate forecasts for the District

The Review will be conducted using electoral data taken from the February 2015 electoral register.

When the Council comes to consider the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. Electorate forecasts have been prepared by the Council using extant planning permissions and the Local Plan to project the five-year electorate forecast.

It is the government's guidance that these forecasts should be made available to all interested parties as early as possible in the review process, so that they are available to all who may wish to make representations.

THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF PARISHES AND THEIR ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

A summary of the present structure of the parishes and their electoral arrangements is attached at Appendix 2.

REORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ORDERS AND COMMENCEMENT

The review will be completed when the Council adopts the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this Order, the map(s) that show the

effects of the order in detail, and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the Council takes (including where it has decided to make no change following the review) will be deposited at the Civic Centre, and on the website.

In accordance with the Guidance issued by the Government, the Council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale that will not normally be smaller than 1:10,000.

These maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government and at the Civic Centre. Prints will also be supplied, in accordance with the regulations, to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency, the Boundary Commission for England and the Electoral Commission.

CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS

General principles

The Council notes that a Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of property;
- The setting of precepts for new parishes;
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;
- Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters, the Council will be guided by Regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

Borough ward boundaries

The Council is mindful that it may be necessary for it to recommend the Local Government Boundary Commission to make alterations to the boundaries of the borough wards or county electoral divisions to reflect the changes made at parish level. The Council notes that it will be for the Local Government Boundary Commission to decide if related alterations should be made and when they should be implemented, and that the Commission may find it appropriate to conduct an electoral review of the affected areas.

The Council notes that the Local Government Boundary Commission will require evidence that the Council has consulted on any such recommendations for alterations to the boundaries of the borough wards or county electoral divisions as part of the review. Of course, such recommendations for alterations may only become apparent during the course of the review. Even so, the Council will endeavour to include any such draft recommendations for alterations at the earliest possible opportunity for consultation that will arise after they become apparent.

Representations

Ashford Borough Council welcomes all representations from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters under review.

Representations should be addressed to: Community Governance Review, Legal Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

Representations may be sent by email to review@ashford.gov.uk or via the Council's website at www.ashford.gov.uk.

All initial representations must be made by 29th May 2015. There will be a further opportunity to respond to the second stage of the review as set out on the timetable attached at Appendix 1.

The Council will consult with the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review and take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

All representation received will be published, as will the reasons for accepting or rejecting any such representations. In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the Review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the Review.

How will the results be disseminated?

The Council will publish full details on the Council's website; press releases will be issued at key points and key documents will be on deposit at the council offices.

This Review is deemed to have commenced on the date of this Notice.

Dated: 23rd February 2015

Community Governance Review Timetable

Dates	Review Stage	Activity
23 rd February 2015	Commencement	Terms of Reference published.
23 rd February to 29 th May 2015	Stage One – Submissions	Submissions are invited. , Council notifies stakeholders, the Council invites proposals from stakeholders on future arrangements and carries out research, information gathering, holds open day.
30 th May to 31 st July 2015	Stage Two – Consideration of Submissions	Consideration of the submissions that are received and preparation of the draft recommendations.
1 st August to 30 October 2015	Stage Three – Draft Recommendations	Draft recommendations are published and consulted on.
31 st October to 16 th	Stage Four –	Consideration of the

December 2015	Consideration of final submissions	submissions that are received and preparation of the final recommendations.
December 2015* Council meeting	Conclusion	Final recommendations are approved by Council and published.
February 2016* Council meeting	Resolution	Council resolves to make a reorganisation order and requests the Electoral Commission to approve and consequential changes.

*Date of meeting to be confirmed

**Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 2 – Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued
on behalf of the Secretary of State**



The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Guidance on community governance reviews



The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Guidance on community governance reviews

March 2010
Department for Communities and Local Government
Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Department for Communities and Local Government
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Foreword

This document comprises guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England under section 100 of the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) on undertaking, and giving effect to recommendations made in, community governance reviews and on making recommendations about electoral arrangements respectively.

The Implementation Plan for the Local Government white paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*¹ (the 2006 white paper), sets out Communities and Local Government's future approach to guidance. It proposes that guidance must be short, clear and practical, and that an open and inclusive approach to its preparation should be followed, involving the range of stakeholders who will be affected by or have an interest in it.

This guidance follows that approach. It is an updated version of guidance originally published in 2008 prepared by a partnership of Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission with stakeholders including DEFRA, the Local Government Association, County Councils Network, London Councils, the National Association of Local Councils, and the Society of Local Council Clerks. It aims to be clear and practical but also to encourage innovative and flexible local action. The main change to the guidance has been to reflect the establishment of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which is responsible for the boundary-related functions previously exercised by the Electoral Commission and the Boundary Committee for England.

A model community governance reorganisation order is available on the Department's website.²

¹ *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Local Government white paper, The Stationery Office, October 2006(Cm 6969).

² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/modelreorganisationorder>

Section 1: Introduction

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and community governance reviews

1. Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England.
2. The Secretary of State therefore has no involvement in the taking of decisions about recommendations made in community governance reviews and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) involvement is limited to giving effect to consequential recommendations for related alterations to the electoral areas of principal councils.
3. From 13 February 2008, district councils, unitary county councils and London borough councils ('principal councils') have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, they will need to take account of the views of local people.
4. Principal councils are required, by section 100(4) of the 2007 Act, to have regard to this guidance which is issued by the Secretary of State, under section 100(1) and (3), and the LGBCE under section 100(2).
5. This guidance is not an authoritative interpretation of the law (as that is ultimately a matter for the courts) and it remains the responsibility of principal councils to ensure that any actions taken by them comply with the relevant legislation. They should seek their own legal advice where appropriate.

Aim of this guidance

6. This guidance is intended to provide assistance to principal councils on:
 - a) undertaking community governance reviews
 - b) the making of recommendations for electoral arrangements for parish councils and the making of consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for related alterations to the boundaries of electoral areas of principal councils; and

- c) giving effect to recommendations made in community governance reviews

Issues covered in this guidance

7. The guidance supports and helps to implement key aspects of the 2006 white paper. The 2007 Act requires that local people are consulted during a community governance review, that representations received in connection with the review are taken into account and that steps are taken to notify them of the outcomes of such reviews including any decisions.
8. The matters covered by the guidance include:
 - a) duties and procedures in undertaking community governance reviews (Chapter 2), including on community governance petitions; the document gives guidance on a valid petition, and for the requirement for petitions to meet specific numerical or percentage thresholds signed by local electors
 - b) making and implementing decisions on community governance (Chapter 3): the 2007 Act places a duty on principal authorities to have regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area, and that it is effective and convenient; relevant considerations which influence judgements against these two principal criteria include the impact on community cohesion, and the size, population and boundaries of the proposed area
 - c) other forms of community governance not involving parishes (Chapter 4) for example, residents' associations, community forums, tenant management organisations, area committees
 - d) considerations on whether parish meetings and parish councils would be most appropriate, and electoral arrangements (Chapter 5)
 - e) consequential recommendations for related alterations to ward and division boundaries (Chapter 6)

Statutory provisions

9. In addition to the 2007 Act, legislation relating to parishes can also be found in the Local Government Act 1972 (in particular, provision about parish meetings and councils, the constitution of a parish meeting, the constitution and powers of parish councils and about parish councillors) and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (reviews of, and recommendations about,

electoral areas by the LGBCE), as well as in other enactments.

Structure of guidance

10. This document is published jointly and is divided into two parts. Chapters 2 to 4 deal with those matters which the Secretary of State may issue guidance on and the issues raised in Chapters 5 and 6 are those on which the LGBCE may issue guidance. Having conducted a community governance review, unless in certain circumstances there are no implications for electoral arrangements, principal councils will need to consider both parts of this guidance together.

Further information

11. Further information about electoral arrangements for parishes and any related alterations to district or London borough wards, or county divisions should be sought from the LGBCE's website www.lgbce.org.uk

Section 2: Undertaking community governance reviews

Why undertake a community governance review?

12. Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. It can be helpful to undertake community governance reviews in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population, or in reaction to specific or local new issues. The Government has made clear in the 2006 white paper and in the 2007 Act its commitment to parish councils. It recognises the role such councils can play in terms of community empowerment at the local level. The 2007 Act provisions are intended to improve the development and coordination of support for citizens and community groups so that they can make the best use of empowerment opportunities.
13. The 2007 Act is intended to streamline the process of taking decisions about giving effect to recommendations made in a community governance review, such as recommendations for the creation of new parishes and the establishment of parish councils, and about other matters such as making changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements. By devolving the powers to take these decisions from central government to local government, the 2007 Act is intended to simplify the decision-making process and make it more local.
14. Parish and town councils are the most local tier of government in England. There are currently about 10,000 parishes in England – around 8,900 of which have councils served by approximately 70,000 councillors. There is a large variation in size of parishes in England from those with a handful of electors to those with over 40,000 electors.
15. In many cases making changes to the boundaries of existing parishes, rather than creating an entirely new parish, will be sufficient to ensure that community governance arrangements to continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over time communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. In such circumstances, the council should consider undertaking a community governance review, the terms of reference

of which should include consideration of the boundaries of existing parishes.

16. A community governance review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove the many anomalous parish boundaries that exist in England. Reviews also offer the chance to principal councils to consider the future of what may have become redundant or moribund parishes, often the result of an insufficient number of local electors within the area who are willing to serve on a parish council. Some of these issues are considered elsewhere in this guidance (see Chapter 3 about parish councils and parish meetings and Chapter 4 regarding grouping parishes and dissolving parish councils and abolishing parishes).
17. Since new boundaries may be used to provide the building blocks for district and London borough ward and/or county division boundaries in future electoral reviews of district, London borough, unitary and county councils, it is important that principal councils seek to address parish boundary anomalies when they arise. Principal councils should therefore consider carefully changes to parish boundaries as these can have consequential effects on the boundaries for other tiers of local government.
18. Community governance reviews may also be triggered by local people presenting public petitions to the principal council. This is explained in more detail in paragraphs 39 to 43 on public petitions to trigger community governance reviews.

Terms of reference for community governance reviews

19. The 2007 Act allows principal councils to determine the terms of reference under which a community governance review is to be undertaken. It requires the terms of reference to specify the area under review and the principal council to publish the terms of reference. If any modifications are made to the terms of reference, these must also be published.
20. Terms of reference will need to be drawn up or modified where a valid community governance petition has been received by the principal council. Local people will be able to influence the terms of reference when petitioning (see paragraphs 24 and 39 to 43 for more information).
21. As the 2007 Act devolves power from central to local government and to local communities, it is inappropriate to prescribe a “one size fits

all” approach to terms of reference for community governance reviews applied by principal councils. However, the Government expects terms of reference to set out clearly the matters on which a community governance review is to focus. The local knowledge and experience of communities in their area which principal councils possess will help to frame suitable terms of reference. The terms should be appropriate to local people and their circumstances and reflect the specific needs of their communities.

22. In areas for which there is both a district council and a county council, district councils are required under section 79 of the 2007 Act to notify the county council of their intention to undertake a review and of their terms of reference. County councils play a strategic role in the provision of local services, and they can offer an additional dimension to any proposal to conduct a review, particularly as the terms of reference are being formulated. The bodies which the principal council must consult under section 93 of the 2007 Act include other local authorities which have an interest in the review. Such local authorities would include any county council for the area concerned. In such circumstances the district council should seek the views of the county council at an early stage.
23. Local people may have already expressed views about what form of community governance they would like for their area, and principal councils should tailor their terms of reference to reflect those views on a range of local issues. Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Timing of community governance reviews

24. A principal council is under a duty to carry out a community governance review if it receives a valid community governance petition for the whole or part of the council’s area. However, the duty to conduct a review does not apply if:
 - a) the principal council has concluded a community governance review within the last two years which in its opinion covered the whole or a significant part of the area of the petition or
 - b) the council is currently conducting a review of the whole, or a significant part of the area to which the petition relates
25. Where a review has been conducted within the last two years the principal council still has the power to undertake another review if it so wishes. Where a review is ongoing, the council can choose to

modify the terms of reference of the ongoing review to include the matters within the petition, or to conduct a second review.

26. Otherwise, the 2007 Act provides for a principal council to conduct a community governance review at any time. Principal councils will want to keep their community governance arrangements under review, and they should ensure that they consider on a regular basis whether a review is needed. A review may need to be carried out, for example, following a major change in the population of a community or as noted earlier in this chapter (see paragraph 15) to re-draw boundaries which have become anomalous, for example following new housing developments being built across existing boundaries. Principal councils should exercise their discretion, but it would be good practice for a principal council to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years – except in the case of areas with very low populations when less frequent reviews may be adequate.
27. In the interests of effective governance, the principal council should consider the benefits of undertaking a review of the whole of its area in one go, rather than carrying out small scale reviews in a piecemeal fashion of two or three areas. However, it is recognised that a full-scale review will not always be warranted, particularly where a review of the whole area or a significant part of the principal council's area has been carried out within the last few years. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to carry out a smaller review, for example, to adjust minor parish boundary anomalies.
28. Principal councils should use their knowledge and awareness of local issues when deciding whether to undertake a review. However, principal councils should avoid starting a community governance review if a review of district, London borough or county council electoral arrangements is being, or is about to be, undertaken. Ideally, community governance reviews should be undertaken well in advance of such electoral reviews, so that the LGBCE in its review of local authority electoral arrangements can take into account any parish boundary changes that are made. The LGBCE can provide advice on its programme of electoral reviews.
29. Where the LGBCE bases its new district or London borough ward boundaries on parish boundaries the Parliamentary Boundary Commission will then use these boundaries to determine parliamentary constituency boundaries (parliamentary constituencies use district and London borough wards as their building blocks). This illustrates the importance of keeping parish boundaries under review and ensuring they accurately reflect local communities.
30. Reorganisation of community governance orders (explained further in

this chapter under implementation) creating new parishes, abolishing parishes or altering their area can be made at any time following a review. However for administrative and financial purposes (such as setting up the parish council and arranging its first precept), the order should take effect on the 1 April following the date on which it is made. Electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force at the first elections to the parish council following the reorganisation order. However, orders should be made sufficiently far in advance to allow preparations for the conduct of those elections to be made. In relation to a new parish council, the principal council may wish to consider whether, during the period between 1 April and the first elections to the parish council, it should make interim arrangements for the parish to be represented by councillors who sit on the principal council.

31. Parish council elections should normally take place every four years at the same time as the elections for the district or London borough ward or, in areas outside of London which have no district council, the county division in which a parish, or part of a parish, is situated. However, where a new parish is to be created, it may be necessary to alter the date of the next parish election, particularly if the next elections to the ward or division are not scheduled to take place for some time. To achieve this, section 98 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to modify or exclude the application of sections 16(3) and 90 of the Local Government Act 1972, so that the first election to the new parish council is held in an earlier year. This results in councillors serving either a shortened or lengthened first term to allow the parish council's electoral cycle to return to that of the unitary, district or London borough ward at the next election.

Undertaking community governance reviews

32. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake a community governance review, provided that they comply with the duties in that Act which apply to councils undertaking reviews.
33. Principal councils will need to consult local people and take account of any representations received in connection with the review. When undertaking the review they must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area under review, and the need to secure that community governance in that area is effective and convenient. Further information on making recommendations is in Chapter 3.
34. Under the 2007 Act principal councils are required to consult both

those local government electors in the area under review, and others (including a local authority such as a county council) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review. In the case of a community governance review where a parish council already exists, as a local authority, it too should be consulted. Other bodies might include local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations - such as schools or health bodies. The principal council must take into account any representations it receives as part of a community governance review.

35. Principal councils must consider the wider picture of community governance in carrying out their reviews. In some areas there may be well established forms of community governance such as local residents' associations, or community forums which local people have set up and which help make a distinct contribution to the community. Some principal councils may also have set up area committees which perform a specific role in the local community.
36. In undertaking a review, section 93(5) requires principal councils to take these bodies into account. Potentially, as representatives of their community, these bodies may be considered as foundations for or stages towards the creation of democratically elected parishes (further information about other non-parish forms of community governance can be found in Chapter 4).
37. Principal councils are required to complete the review, including consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for related alterations to the boundaries of principal area wards and/or divisions, within 12 months of the start of the community governance review. The review begins when the council publishes terms of reference of the review and concludes when the council publishes the recommendations made in the review³. The Government stated in the 2006 white paper that they wanted the process for undertaking community governance (formerly parish reviews) to be simplified and speeded up. Given that there is no longer the need to make recommendations to Central Government prior to implementing any review recommendations, the 2007 Act makes it easier for principal councils to reach decisions on community governance reviews. Whilst a community governance review will depend on a number of factors, such as the number of boundary changes, the Government believes it should be feasible to accomplish reviews within 12 months from the start.
38. Principal councils will need to build into their planning process for

³ See section 102(3) of the 2007 Act for the interpretation of 'begin' and 'conclude' in relation to a review.

reviews reasonable periods for consultation with local electors and other stakeholders, for the consideration of evidence presented to them in representations, as well as for decision-making (see Chapter 3 on making and implementing recommendations made in community governance reviews). Implementation of reviews by Order and the requirement for the principal council to publicise the outcome of a community governance review are covered in paragraphs 98 to 103.

Public petitions to trigger community governance reviews

39. In recent years, the Government has been keen to encourage more community engagement. The 2006 white paper confirmed this development further stressing the intention to build on the existing parish structure improving capacity to deliver better services, and to represent the community's interests.
40. Under the 2007 Act, local electors throughout England can petition their principal council for a community governance review to be undertaken. The petition must set out at least one recommendation that the petitioners want the review to consider making. These recommendations can be about a variety of matters including:
- the creation of a parish
 - the name of a parish
 - the establishment of a separate parish council for an existing parish
 - the alteration of boundaries of existing parishes
 - the abolition of a parish
 - the dissolution of a parish council
 - changes to the electoral arrangements of a parish council
 - whether a parish should be grouped under a common parish council or de-grouped
 - a strong, inclusive community and voluntary sector
 - a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride; and
 - a sense of place – a place with a 'positive' feeling for people and local distinctiveness
 - reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and
 - effective and convenient
 - the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and

- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish
 - people from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
 - people knowing their rights and responsibilities
41. For a petition to be valid it must meet certain conditions. The first of these conditions is that a petition must be signed by the requisite number of local electors. It is recommended that petitioners aim to collect the requisite number of signatures based on the most recently published electoral register. It should be against this register that the petition thresholds (set out below) will be assessed. The three thresholds are:
- a) for an area with less than 500 local electors, the petition must be signed by at least 50% of them
 - b) for an area with between 500 and 2,500 local electors, the petition must be signed by at least 250 of them
 - c) for an area with more than 2,500 local electors, the petition must be signed by at least 10% of them
42. These thresholds have been chosen to ensure that the minimum number of signatures to be obtained is neither so high that it will be impossible in most cases to collect that number nor so low as to allow a very small minority of electors to trigger a review. So, in areas with higher populations the threshold is not so high as to prevent a genuine desire for a review not being realised. Equally, in areas with smaller numbers of electors, this means that a handful of electors cannot initiate a review against the wishes of the majority of their fellow electors. The thresholds therefore help to ensure that the local democratic process is properly maintained.
43. The petition should define the area to which the review relates, whether on a map or otherwise, and refer to identifiable fixed boundaries. Where a proposed boundary is near an individual property, the petition must make clear on which side of the boundary the property lies. The petition must specify one or more proposed recommendations for review.
44. Where a petition recommends the establishment of a town or parish council or parish meeting (see paragraph 88) in an area which does not currently exist as a parish, the petition is to be treated as including a recommendation for a parish to be created even if it does not expressly make such a recommendation⁴

⁴ See Section 80 (8) of the 2007 Act

Section 3: Making and implementing recommendations made in community governance reviews

45. As stated in the 2006 white paper parish councils are an established and valued form of neighbourhood democracy and management. They are not only important in rural areas but increasingly have a role to play in urban areas. We propose to build on the existing parish structure, so as to improve its capacity to deliver better services and represent the community's interests.

Context of parishes in the wider community

46. Communities and Local Government is working to help people and local agencies create cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant local communities, building on the Government's Sustainable Communities' strategy.
47. An important aspect to approaching sustainable communities is allowing local people a say in the way their neighbourhoods are managed. One of the characteristics of a sustainable community is the desire for a community to be well run with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership. This means:
 - a) representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations; and
 - b) effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence
48. Central to the concept of sustainable communities is community cohesion. The impact of community governance on cohesion is an issue to be taken into account when taking decisions about community governance arrangements, and this is discussed further below.

Defining a parish

49. Parish and town councils vary enormously in size, activities and circumstances, representing populations ranging from less than 100 (small rural hamlets) to up to 70,000 (large shire towns – Weston-Super-Mare Town Council being the largest). The majority of them are small; around 80% represent populations of less than 2,500. Small parishes with no parish council can be grouped with

neighbouring parishes under a common parish council (see paragraphs 112 to 115).

50. Parish councils continue to have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity. The views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance.
51. The identification of a community is not a precise or rigid matter. The pattern of daily life in each of the existing communities, the local centres for education and child care, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication generally will have an influence. However, the focus of people's day-to-day activities may not be reflected in their feeling of community identity. For instance, historic loyalty may be to a town but the local community of interest and social focus may lie within a part of the town with its own separate identity.

Criteria for undertaking a community governance review

52. Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:
 - reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and
 - effective and convenient
53. When considering the criteria identified in the 2007 Act, principal councils should take into account a number of influential factors, including:
 - the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and
 - the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish
54. In considering this guidance, the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities. Size, population and boundaries are linked to both but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.

The identities and interests of local communities

55. Parish councils have an important role to play in the development of their local communities. Local communities range in size, as well as in a variety of other ways. Communities and Local Government is

working to help people and local agencies create cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant local communities. The aim for communities across the country is for them to be capable of fulfilling their own potential and overcoming their own difficulties, including community conflict, extremism, deprivation and disadvantage. Communities need to be empowered to respond to challenging economic, social, and cultural trends, and to demographic change.

56. Parish councils can contribute to the creation of successful communities by influencing the quality of planning and design of public spaces and the built environment, as well as improving the management and maintenance of such amenities. Neighbourhood renewal is an important factor to improve the quality of life for those living in the most disadvantaged areas. Parish councils can be well placed to judge what is needed to build cohesion. Other factors such as social exclusion and deprivation may be specific issues in certain areas, and respect is fundamental to the functioning of all places and communities. The Government remains committed to civil renewal, and empowering citizens to work with public bodies, including parish councils, to influence public decisions.
57. 'Place' matters in considering community governance and is a factor in deciding whether or not to set up a parish. Communities and Local Government's vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities which offer a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. One aspect of that is strong and accountable local government and leadership. Parish councils can perform a central role in community leadership. Depending on the issue, sometimes they will want to take the lead locally, while at other times they may act as an important stakeholder or in partnership with others. In either case, parish councils will want to work effectively with partners to undertake the role of 'place-shaping', and be responsive to the challenges and opportunities of their area in a co-ordinated way.
58. It is clear that how people perceive where they live - their neighbourhoods - is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents. Some of the factors which help define neighbourhoods are: the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban area.
59. Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, the feeling of local community and the wishes

of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

60. Today, there may well be a variety of different communities of interest within a parish; for example, representing age, gender, ethnicity, faith or life-style groups. There are other communities with say specific interests in schools, hospitals or in leisure pursuits. Any number of communities of interest may flourish in a parish but they do not necessarily centre on a specific area or help to define it.
61. Building a sense of local identity may make an important contribution to cohesion where a local area is facing challenges arising from rapid demographic change. In considering the criteria, community governance reviews need to home in on communities as offering a sense of place and of local identity for all residents.

Effective and convenient local government

62. The Government believes that the effectiveness and convenience of local government is best understood in the context of a local authority's ability to deliver quality services economically and efficiently, and give users of services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them.
63. Local communities should have access to good quality local services, ideally in one place. A parish council may be well placed to do this. With local parish and town councils in mind, effective and convenient local government essentially means that such councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services, and if they are to be convenient they need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people.
64. In responding to the requirement for effective and convenient local government, some parish councils are keen, and have the capacity to take on more in the provision of services. However, it is recognised that not all are in position to do so. The 2007 Act provides a power of well-being to those parish councils who want to take on more, giving them additional powers to enable them to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their areas. Nevertheless, certain conditions must be met by individual parish councils before this power is extended to them.
65. Wider initiatives such as the Quality Parish Scheme and charters agreed between parish councils and principal councils also help to give a greater understanding of securing effective and convenient local government. In such cases, parish and town councils which are well managed and good at representing local views will be in a better

position to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area's development and running its services.

Factors for consideration

66. When reviewing community governance arrangements, principal councils may wish to take into account a number of factors, to help inform their judgement against the statutory criteria.

The impact on community cohesion of community governance arrangements

67. Setting up parishes and parish councils clearly offers the opportunity to strengthen community engagement and participation, and generate a positive impact on community cohesion. In conducting community governance reviews (whether initiated by itself or triggered by a valid petition), the principal council should consider the impact on community cohesion when deciding whether or not to set up a parish council.
68. Britain is a more diverse society – ethnically, religiously and culturally – than ever before. Today's challenge is how best to draw on the benefits that migration and diversity bring while addressing the potential problems and risks to cohesion. Community cohesion is about recognising the impact of change and responding to it. This is a fundamental part of the place-shaping agenda and puts local authorities at the heart of community building.
69. In its response to the recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion the Government has defined community cohesion as what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.
70. The Government's vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:
- people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly
71. And three key ways of living together:
- a shared future vision and sense of belonging
 - a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
 - strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

72. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion's report, *Our Shared Future*, is clear that communities have expert knowledge about their own circumstances and that actions at the local level contribute to achieving integration and cohesion, with local authorities well placed to identify any pressures. The Commission reports that policy makers and practitioners see civic participation as a key way of building integration and cohesion – from ensuring people have a stake in the community, to facilitating mixing and engendering a common sense of purpose through shared activities. The 2006 white paper's proposals for stronger local leadership, greater resident participation in decisions and an enhanced role for community groups contribute to promoting cohesion.
73. Community cohesion is about local communities where people should feel they have a stake in the society, and in the local area where they live by having the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives. This may include what type of community governance arrangements they want in their local area.
74. The 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identity and interests of local communities; the impact on community cohesion is linked strongly to it. Cohesion issues are connected to the way people perceive how their local community is composed and what it represents, and the creation of parishes and parish councils may contribute to improving community cohesion. Community governance arrangements should reflect, and be sufficiently representative of, people living across the whole community and not just a discrete cross-section or small part of it. It would be difficult to think of a situation in which a principal council could make a decision to create a parish and a parish council which reflects community identities and interests in the area and at the same time threatens community cohesion. Principal councils should be able to decline to set up such community governance arrangements where they judged that to do so would not be in the interests of either the local community or surrounding communities, and where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion.
75. As part of a community governance review a principal council should consider whether a recommendation made by petitioners will undermine community cohesion in any part of its area.
76. Challenges to community cohesion are often very local in nature and because of their knowledge of local communities, local authorities are in a good position to assess these challenges. As for the other considerations set out in this guidance, principal councils will wish to

reach a balanced judgement in taking community cohesion into account in community governance arrangements.

Size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

77. Size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish are linked to aspects of both principal criteria as identified in the 2007 Act, but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient. Often it is factors such as the size, population and boundaries which influence whether or not it is going to be viable to create a parish council. Parishes must fall within the boundaries of a single principal council's area.
78. The Local Government Commission for England in its 1993 Report *Renewing Local Government in the English Shires* makes the point that there is a long history of attempts to identify ideal minimum and maximum sizes for local authorities. Instead its preference was for authorities to be based on natural communities and reflecting people's expressed choices. This is even truer today, particularly at the most local level of government. Nevertheless, the size of communities and parishes remains difficult to define.
79. Parish councils in England currently vary greatly in size from those with a handful of electors with some representing hamlets of around 50 people to those in towns with well over 40,000 electors. Geography and natural boundaries; population size; and to an extent 'council size' (the term used by the LGBCE to describe the number of councillors who are elected to a local authority) may influence how small or large a parish council can be.
80. The general rule should be that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest and which is of a size which is viable as an administrative unit of local government. This is generally because of the representative nature of parish councils and the need for them to reflect closely the identity of their communities. It is desirable that any recommendations should be for parishes or groups of parishes with a population of a sufficient size to adequately represent their communities and to justify the establishment of a parish council in each. Nevertheless as previously noted, it is recognised that there are enormous variations in the size of parishes, although most parishes are below 12,000 in population.
81. A parish council should be in a position to provide some basic services and many larger parishes will be able to offer much more to their local communities. However, it would not be practical or desirable to set a rigid limit for the size of a parish whether it is in a

rural or urban area, although higher population figures are generally more likely to occur in urban areas. Equally, a parish could be based on a small but discrete housing estate rather than on the town within which the estate lies.

82. There may be cases where larger parishes would best suit the needs of the area. These might include places where the division of a cohesive area, such as a Charter Trustee town (see paragraphs 133 to 134), would not reflect the sense of community that needs to lie behind all parishes; or places where there were no recognisable smaller communities.
83. As far as boundaries between parishes are concerned, these should reflect the “no-man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways. They need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable. For instance, factors to consider include parks and recreation grounds which sometimes provide natural breaks between communities but they can equally act as focal points. A single community would be unlikely to straddle a river where there are no crossing points, or a large area of moor land or marshland. Another example might be where a community appeared to be divided by a motorway (unless connected by walkways at each end). Whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable.
84. In many cases a boundary change between existing parishes, or parishes and unparished areas, rather than the creation of an entirely new parish, will be sufficient to ensure that parish arrangements reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over time, communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across them resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.
85. A review of parish boundaries is an opportunity to put in place strong boundaries, tied to firm ground detail, and remove anomalous parish boundaries. Since the new boundaries are likely to be used to provide the building blocks for district ward, London borough ward, county division and parliamentary constituency boundaries in future reviews for such councils, it is important that principal councils seek to address parish boundary issues at regular intervals.

Parish meetings and parish councils

- 86.** Under the Local Government Act 1972 all parishes, whether or not they have a parish council, must have a parish meeting. In many parishes the requirement to have a parish meeting takes the form of at least one annual meeting, or more often several meetings during each year, organised (where one exists) by the parish council or if not by the parish meeting itself. The parish meeting of a parish consists of the local government electors for the parish, and as such local electors are invited to attend these meetings. Parish meetings have a number of functions, powers and rights of notification and consultation. The trustees of a parish meeting hold property and act on its behalf. Depending on the number of local government electors in the parish, there are different rules about whether or not a parish council must be created for the parish, or whether it is discretionary.
- 87.** Where principal councils are creating new parishes, the 2007 Act requires them to make recommendations about whether or not a new parish should be constituted in their area. New parishes can be constituted in a number of different ways, including by creating a parish in an area that is not currently parished, amalgamating two or more parishes and separating part of a parish, with or without aggregating it with parts of other parishes.
- 88.** Section 94 of the 2007 Act applies in relation to these recommendations. It places principal councils under a duty to recommend that a parish should have a council in parishes which have 1000 electors or more. In parishes with 151 to 999 electors the principal council may recommend the creation of either a parish council or a parish meeting. In parishes with 150 or fewer electors principal councils are unable to recommend that a parish council should be created and therefore only a parish meeting can be created. The aim of these thresholds is to extend the more direct participatory form of governance provided by parish meetings to a larger numbers of electors. Equally, the thresholds help to ensure that both the population of a new parish for which a council is to be established is of sufficient size to justify its establishment and also that local people are adequately represented.
- 89.** One of the reasons for these differing thresholds is that the Government recognises the difficulty which sometimes exists in small parishes, in particular, in managing to get sufficient numbers to stand for election to the parish council. However, the thresholds identified above do not apply to existing parish councils. If the community governance review concludes that the existence of the parish council reflects community identities and provides effective and convenient

local government, despite the small number of electors, then it can recommend that the parish council should continue in existence. So, where an existing parish of 150 or less electors already has a parish council with the minimum number of five parish councillors it can continue to have a parish council.

90. If a principal council chooses to establish a parish council, or if an existing parish whose boundaries are being changed has a parish council, the principal authority must consult on, and put in place the necessary electoral arrangements for that parish. (See Chapter 5 Electoral Arrangements.)

Recommendations and decisions on the outcome of community governance reviews

91. Community governance reviews will make recommendations on those matters they have considered, as defined by the terms of reference set at the start of the review.
92. A principal council must make recommendations as to:
 - a) whether a new parish or any new parishes should be constituted
 - b) whether existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area of existing parishes should be altered or
 - c) what the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be
93. It may also make recommendations about:
 - a) the grouping or degrouping of parishes
 - b) adding parishes to an existing group of parishes or
 - c) making related alterations to the boundaries of a principal councils' electoral areas
94. In deciding what recommendations to make the principal council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The 2007 Act provides that it must also take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions) that have already been made, or that could be made, for the purposes of community representation or community engagement.
95. The recommendations must take account of any representations received and should be supported by evidence which demonstrates

that the recommended community governance arrangements would meet the criteria set out in the 2007 Act. Where a principal council has conducted a review following the receipt of a petition, it will remain open to the council to make a recommendation which is different to the recommendation the petitioners wished the review to make. This will particularly be the case where the recommendation is not in the interests of the wider local community, such as where giving effect to it would be likely to damage community relations by dividing communities along ethnic, religious or cultural lines.

96. In making its recommendations, the review should consider the information it has received in the form of expressions of local opinion on the matters considered by the review, representations made by local people and other interested persons, and also use its own knowledge of the local area. It may be that much of this information can be gained through the consultation which the council will have held with local people and also the council's wider engagement with local people on other matters. In taking this evidence into account and judging the criteria in the 2007 Act against it, a principal council may reasonably conclude that a recommendation set out in a petition should not be made. For example, a recommendation to abolish or establish a parish council, may negatively impact on community cohesion, either within the proposed parish area, or in the wider community within which it would be located, and therefore should not be made.
97. The aim of the 2007 Act is to open up a wider choice of governance to communities at the most local level. However, the Government considers that there is sufficient flexibility for principal councils not to feel 'forced' to recommend that the matters included in every petition must be implemented.
98. Under the 2007 Act the principal council must both publish its recommendations and ensure that those who may have an interest are informed of them. In taking a decision as to whether or not to give effect to a recommendation, the principal council must have regard to the statutory criteria (see paragraph 51). After taking a decision on the extent to which the council will give effect to the recommendations made in a community governance review, the council must publish its decision and its reasons for taking that decision. It must also take sufficient steps to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the decision and the reasons for it. Who should be informed will depend on local circumstances. Publicising the outcome of reviews is dealt with in the next section on implementation.

Implementation of community governance reviews by order

99. There are a number of steps that a principal council must take to publicise the outcome of any review it has conducted, and to provide information about that outcome to the bodies it must notify following any reorganisation order it makes to implement the review. Community governance reviews should be conducted transparently so that local people and other local stakeholders who may have an interest are made aware of the outcome of the decisions taken on them and the reasons behind these decisions.
100. If the council implements the recommendations made in its review, there are other steps it is required to undertake. These include depositing copies of the reorganisation order⁵ which the principal council will need to draw up to give effect to its decisions. Besides depositing at its main office a copy of the reorganisation order, it should also deposit a map showing the effects of the order in detail which should be available for inspection by the public at all reasonable times (i.e. during normal working hours). The 2007 Act also requires the council to make available a document setting out the reasons for the decisions it has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a community governance review) and to publicise these reasons.
101. The principal council must publicise how the council has given effect to the review, and that the order and map are available for public inspection as set above. Other means of publicity it may wish to consider are through publication on the council's website, in local newspapers, on notice boards in public places, and in local libraries, town halls or other local offices. In addition, after a principal council has made a reorganisation order, as soon as practicable, it must inform the following organisations that the order has been made:
- a) the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
 - b) the LGBCE
 - c) the Office of National Statistics
 - d) the Director General of the Ordnance Survey
 - e) any other principal council (e.g. a county council) whose area the order relates to

⁵ A copy of a model reorganisation order with different examples of recommendations can be viewed on the Communities and Local Government website. It may help principal councils to draw up reorganisation orders which could be adapted to their own needs and circumstances. Principal councils are not obliged to follow this example. It is offered on an advisory basis and principal councils will want to seek their own legal advice that any orders they produce meet the necessary legal requirements.

102. The Audit Commission has statutory responsibility for appointing external auditors to all local councils in England. For the purposes of its audit appointment functions the Commission needs to be aware of changes emerging from community governance reviews. Therefore, principal councils should inform the Audit Commission of any reorganisation orders made to implement the recommendations of community governance reviews.
103. Section 97 of the 2007 Act provides for regulations to make incidental, consequential, transitional or supplementary provision for the purposes of, or in consequence of, reorganisation orders. Two sets of regulations have been made under the 2007 Act, which apply to reorganisation orders - both came into force on 8 April 2008. The first of these, the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 No.625 make provisions in relation to matters such as the distribution of property and the rights and liabilities of parish councils affected by a reorganisation order. The second set, the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 No.626 deal with the setting of precepts for new parishes.
104. Section 99 of the 2007 Act provides for public bodies affected by reorganisation following a community governance review to make agreements about incidental matters and what those agreements may provide for. So as to ensure that a reorganisation order has effect subject to the terms of any such agreement, principal councils should make provision for this in the reorganisation order. An example provision has been included in the model reorganisation order which can be found on the Communities and Local Government website (see footnote 2).

Maps of parish changes and mapping conventions

105. To assist those who will have an interest in any recommendations made by the principal council when conducting a community governance review and to accompany the reorganisation order, clear high quality maps should be produced to a standard equivalent to using Ordnance Survey large scale data as a base. Maps can be graphically presented at a reduced scale for convenience but preferably no smaller than 1:10,000 scale. Each recommendation and order should be depicted on a map or maps. The mapping should clearly show the existing parish ward, parish, district or London borough boundaries and all proposed parish ward and parish boundaries in the area(s) affected, or given effect to in a reorganisation order.

106. It can be useful to include some positional information to identify the location of the area(s) in relation to the complete area of the principal council. A colour key can be included to clearly identify each boundary type. Where there are only proposed changes to an existing parish boundary alignment it can be helpful to show in translucent colour any areas to be transferred from one parish to another. This indicates clearly the extent of the proposed change. It can also be beneficial to add unique references to all areas of transfer to create a cross reference to the re-organisation order document. Applying a reference to each order map should also be considered so that a link is created with the re-organisation order.

Section 4: Other aspects of community governance reviews

Parish names and alternative styles for parishes

- 107.** Prior to the 2007 Act, a parish could be given the status of a town under section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972. “Town” status continues to be available to a parish. In addition, the 2007 Act inserted sections 12A and 12B into the 1972 Act to offer a further choice of alternative styles for a parish: community, neighbourhood and village. However, for as long as the parish has an alternative style, it will not also be able to have the status of a town and vice versa.
- 108.** The ‘name’ of a parish refers to the geographical name of the area concerned and can be changed independent of a review by a principal council at the request of a parish council or parish meeting (where there is no parish council)⁶. A change in the status or ‘style’ of a parish allows for that area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village, rather than as a parish. The status or style of the parish will be reflected in the name of any council of the parish, the parish meeting, any parish trustees, and the chairman or vice-chairman of the parish meeting or of any parish council. So, for example, the council of a parish which uses the style ‘village’ will be known as the ‘village council’ and its councillors as the ‘village councillors’, etc.
- 109.** References in legislation to a ‘parish’ should be taken to include a parish which has an alternative style, as is the case in relation to a parish which has the status of a town. The same applies in relation to references in legislation to a ‘parish meeting’, ‘parish council’, ‘parish councillor’, ‘parish trustees’, etc in connection with a parish which has an alternative style.
- 110.** The Government recognises that in long established parishes, particularly in rural areas, local people may wish to retain the name of their parish and the existing style of their parish councils, - although others may prefer “village” or another style. Following a community governance review, in areas previously unparished where a new parish is being created, people living there may wish for the style of their parish council to reflect the local community in a different way and may prefer one of the alternative styles. This may well be the case for those living in urban areas. Local authorities will wish to take

⁶ Section 75 Local Government Act 1972

account of these preferences in deciding the name of the parish and the chosen style.

- 111.** Where the review relates to a new parish, it is for the principal council, in the first instance, to make recommendations as to the geographical name of the new parish, and as to whether or not it should have one of the alternative styles. So far as existing parishes under review by principal councils are concerned, the review must make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should be changed, but it may not make any recommendations for the parish about alternative style. It will be for the parish council or parish meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles.
- 112.** In relation to a group of parishes, provision about alternative styles for the group may be made by the principal council in a reorganisation order that forms that group, adds a parish to an existing group or de-groups a parish or group. A grouping containing a mixture of styles is not permitted under section 11A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972. Where an individual parish is removed from a group through a de-grouping order the parish must retain the style it had when it was part of the group until such time as the parish council or meeting resolves to adopt an alternative style. Provision about alternative styles in relation to groups will normally be made independently of a community governance review.

Grouping or degrouping parishes

- 113.** Section 91 of the 2007 Act provides for a community governance review to recommend the grouping or degrouping of parishes by principal councils. As mentioned in chapter 3, (paragraph 87) unless they already exist as functioning parish councils smaller new parishes of less than 150 electors will be unable to establish their own parish council under the 2007 Act.
- 114.** In some cases, it may be preferable to group together parishes so as to allow a common parish council to be formed. Degrouping may offer the reverse possibilities perhaps where local communities have expanded. Such proposals are worth considering and may avoid the need for substantive changes to parish boundaries, the creation of new parishes or the abolition of very small parishes where, despite their size, they still reflect community identity. Grouping or degrouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests. It would be inappropriate for it to be used to build artificially large units under single parish councils.
- 115.** Section 91 also requires a review to consider the electoral arrangements

of a grouped parish council or of a parish council established after a parish is de-grouped. Each parish in a group must return at least one councillor.

- 116.** When making a recommendation to group or de-group parishes, the principal council may make a request to the LGBCE to make a related alteration to the boundaries of district or London borough wards or county divisions. For example, if a principal council decided to add an additional parish to a group, because of their shared community identities, it may wish to recommend that all of the parishes in the group be included in the same district ward (see Chapter 6 for more details).

Abolishing parishes, and dissolving parish councils

- 117.** While the Government expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes, there are circumstances where the principal council may conclude that the provision of effective and convenient local government and/or the reflection of community identity and interests may be best met, for example, by the abolition of a number of small parishes and the creation of a larger parish covering the same area. If, following a review, a principal council believes that this would provide the most appropriate community governance arrangements, then it will wish to make this recommendation; the same procedures apply to any recommendation to abolish a parish and/or parish council as to other recommendations (see paragraphs 90 -97). Regulations⁷ provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of a parish council to the new successor parish council, or where none is proposed to the principal council itself.
- 118.** Section 88 of the 2007 Act provides for a community governance review to recommend the alteration of the area of, or the abolition of, an existing parish as a result of a review. The area of abolished parishes does not have to be redistributed to other parishes, an area can become unparished. However, it is the Government's view that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming unparished with no community governance arrangements in place.
- 119.** The abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified. Any decision a principal council may make on whether to abolish a parish should not be taken lightly. Under the previous parish review legislation, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 , the

⁷ The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 No.625.

Secretary of State considered very carefully recommendations made by principal councils for the abolition of any parish (without replacement) given that to abolish parish areas removes a tier of local government. Between 1997 and 2008, the Government rarely received proposals to abolish parish councils, it received only four cases seeking abolition and of these only one was approved for abolition by the Secretary of State.

120. Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where abolition may be the most appropriate way forward. Under the 2007 Act provisions, the principal council would need to consider local opinion, including that of parish councillors and local electors. It would need to find evidence that the abolition of a parish council was justified, and that there was clear and sustained local support for such action. A factor taken into account by the Government in deciding abolition cases, was that local support for abolition needed to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. eight years), and that such support was sufficiently informed. This means a properly constituted parish council should have had an opportunity to exercise its functions so that local people can judge its ability to contribute to local quality of life.
121. Where a community governance review is considering abolishing a parish council we would expect the review to consider what arrangements will be in place to engage with the communities in those areas once the parish is abolished. These arrangements might be an alternative forum run by or for the local community, or perhaps a residents' association. It is doubtful however, that abolition of a parish and its council could ever be justified as the most appropriate action in response to a particular contentious issue in the area or decision of the parish council.
122. In future, principal councils will wish to consider the sort of principles identified above in arriving at their decisions on whether or not to abolish a parish council. In doing so, they will be aware that decisions about community governance arrangements, including decisions for the abolition of a parish council, may attract a challenge by way of judicial review.
123. The 2006 white paper underlined the Government's commitment to parish councils as an established and valued form of neighbourhood democracy with an important role to play in both rural, and increasingly urban, areas.
124. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 makes provision for the dissolution of parish councils in parishes with very low populations,

but not for the de-parishing of the area. Recommendations for the dissolution of a parish council which is not in this position are undesirable, unless associated either with boundary changes which amalgamate parishes or divide a parish or with plans for a parish to be grouped with others under a common parish council (see paragraphs 112 to 115). Recommendations for changing a parish area (or part of a parish area) into an unparished area are also undesirable unless that area is amalgamated with an existing unparished urban area.

Rural areas

- 125.** About 90% of the geographical area of England is covered by a parish, and this is mostly in rural or semi-rural areas. So, most populated rural areas already have a structure of local government that includes parishes and many of these have been in existence for hundreds of years. It is desirable that any changes do not upset historic traditions but do reflect changes that have happened over time, such as population shift or additional development, which may have led to a different community identity.
- 126.** The focus of community feeling will differ from place to place and between different types of settlement. A scatter of hamlets may have a feeling of community within each hamlet, meriting a separate parish for each one, or amongst a number of hamlets, for which one parish covering all may be appropriate. Where a number of hamlets surround a village a parish could be based on the village and its environs, provided that the sense of individual identity is not lost.
- 127.** In rural areas, the Government wants to encourage the involvement of local people in developing their community and having a part to play in shaping the decisions that affect them. A parish can be a useful and democratic means of achieving this.

London

- 128.** The London Government Act 1963 abolished parishes existing at the time within London. When the boundaries for Greater London were established, they were adjusted to allow the surrounding shire counties to keep parishes that were in the fringe areas. Since then, London has been the only part of England not to have parishes or parish councils.
- 129.** The Government's view is that Londoners should have the same rights as the rest of the country. The 2007 Act corrects this anomaly to allow London boroughs the possibility to exercise the same community governance powers as other principal councils including

being able to set up parishes and parish councils. Similarly, local electors in London boroughs are, as elsewhere in England, able to petition for a community governance review.

- 130.** In London, there is the same possibility to choose a style for a parish perhaps to reflect better the local urban area like “community” or “neighbourhood”. Whilst some parts of London are populated by people who may be more transient or mobile than elsewhere, there are equally areas of the capital where there are stable populations who may wish to see the creation of a parish council for their local area.

Other urban areas

- 131.** There are parts of rural or semi-rural England which are unparished, but the opportunities for establishing new parishes are increasingly to be found in urban and suburban areas. It is possible that identifying the community upon which a parish might be based may be more difficult to discern in some urban areas. A “community” perhaps already represented by a voluntary organisation or a community endeavour, such as a Neighbourhood Watch area or a residents’ association, may indicate a suitable area on which to base proposals for a new or altered parish, (see paragraphs 135 -145).
- 132.** Much of the information described in Chapter 3 on the identities and interests of local communities is applicable to urban areas. There are parishes in parts of some large cities or unitary authorities, as well as a number of parishes in the metropolitan boroughs of the larger conurbations. Some of these parishes have been created under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 Act, but in most metropolitan boroughs these are on the more sparsely populated peripheries (the originals having been transferred, as part of former rural districts, to the metropolitan counties in 1974).
- 133.** The lower population limits and grouping mentioned above are more relevant to rural areas than to urban areas, although both are applicable in law. The general rule is that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest and which is viable as an administrative unit. In urban areas this may mean, for example, that a parish should be based on a housing estate rather than on the town within which the estate lies. The larger the town, the greater will be the scope for identification of distinct communities within it.

Charter trustee areas

- 134.** Charter trustees were established following the local government reorganisations in the early 1970s and 1990s to preserve the historic identity of former boroughs or cities, most with relatively large populations. To this end, charter trustees have the power to carry out ceremonial functions. They were not intended to act as administrative units. Proposals to create a parish or parish council covering all or part of a charter trustee area need to be judged in particular against the following considerations:
- a) the effect on the historic cohesiveness of the area
 - b) what are the other community interests in the area? Is there a demonstrable sense of community identity encompassing the charter trustee area? Are there smaller areas within it which have a demonstrable community identity and which would be viable as administrative units?
- 135.** These issues need to be taken into account in those areas with certain cities or boroughs which will be affected by any consequent reorganisation from the structural and boundary changes in the 2007 Act.

Other (non-parish) forms of community governance

- 136.** In conducting a community governance review, principal councils must consider other forms of community governance as alternatives or stages towards establishing parish councils. Section 93(5) of the 2007 Act states that *“In deciding what recommendations to make [in the community governance review] the principal council must take into account any other arrangements... that have already been made or that could be made for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in respect of the area under review”*. The following paragraphs consider other types of viable community representation which may be more appropriate to some areas than parish councils, or may provide stages building towards the creation of a parish council. There is sometimes evidence locally of an existing community governance infrastructure and of good practice which are successfully creating opportunities for engagement, empowerment and co-ordination in local communities.
- 137.** However, what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance is the fact they are a democratically elected tier of local government, independent of other council tiers and budgets, and possess specific powers. This is an important distinction to make. Parish councils are the foundation stones for other levels of local government in England. Their directly elected parish councillors

represent local communities in a way that other bodies, however worthy, cannot since such organisations do not have representatives directly elected to those bodies.

- 138.** The 2006 white paper recommended that local communities should be able to take more responsibilities for local issues affecting their area. Key to this approach is community empowerment, and the ability of various existing organisations themselves to see through specific projects to tackle local issues. Structures such as local residents' associations, community or neighbourhood forums and area committees have an important role to play in local community governance.
- 139.** At the neighbourhood level, there are various initiatives in existence, which through being representative and accountable can effectively empower local people. They have varying degrees of power and influence, and commensurate levels of transparency and accountability.

Area committees

- 140.** Area committees are part of the structure of some principal councils (e.g. district, unitary and London borough), where they choose to have them. Area committees are a key initiative for enabling local government to fulfil community governance roles and also to deliver government policy on issues affecting social inclusion in local communities. Principal councils also provide resources for area committees, and their councillors are commonly integral to their constitution. Area committees can cover large areas and exist to advise or make decisions on specific responsibilities that can include parks, off-street parking, public toilets, street cleaning, abandoned vehicles and planning applications amongst others. Also, more widely, they contribute to shaping council services and improving local service provision.

Neighbourhood management

- 141.** Neighbourhood management programmes are similarly set up by principal councils and may be led by one of a number of bodies. The expansion of neighbourhood management was promoted in the 2006 White Paper as a tool to enable local authorities to deliver more responsive services through their empowerment of citizens and communities. Their purpose is to create the opportunity for residents to work with local agencies, usually facilitated by a neighbourhood manager, to improve services at the neighbourhood level.

- 142.** Neighbourhood management arrangements aim to improve ‘quality of life’ through implementation of (rather than advising or making decisions on) better management of local environment, increasing community safety, improving housing stock, working with young people, and encouraging employment opportunities, supported strategically by relevant stakeholders and Local Strategic Partnerships. They tend to cover smaller populations than area committees. The 2006 white paper recommends that take up of neighbourhood management should be encouraged and that Government should work with local authorities pioneering the approach, to raise the profile of achievements and promote adoption elsewhere.

Tenant management organisations

- 143.** The 2006 white paper makes a series of proposals that facilitate the empowerment of residents through tenant management organisations (TMOs). Tenant management organisations are established by the local housing authority; they usually function on urban housing estates and can take responsibility for housing services (such as collecting rents and service charges and organising repairs and maintenance) from the local housing authority under the Housing (Right to Manage) (England) Regulations 2008. The 2006 white paper promoted the role of TMOs and recommended simplifying and extending their scope; enabling them to take on additional services and undertake further representation of residents within neighbourhoods. A TMO is an independent legal body and usually elects a tenant-led management committee to the organisation; they can also enter into a legal management agreement with landlords.

Area/community forums

- 144.** Area or community forums (including civic forums) can be set up by the principal council, or created by local residents to act as a mechanism to give communities a say on principal council matters or local issues. Sometimes forums are set up to comment on a specific project or initiative that will impact upon the local area, and so may be time-limited. They increase participation and consultation, aiming to influence decision making, rather than having powers to implement services. They vary in size, purpose and impact, but membership usually consists of people working or living in a specific area. Some forums also include ward councillors, and representatives from the council and relevant stakeholders can attend meetings.

Residents' and tenants' associations

- 145.** Residents' and tenants' associations enable local people to participate in local issues affecting their neighbourhood or housing estate, including the upkeep of the local environment, crime, sometimes dealing with anti-social behaviour matters, or on some estates, housing management. They can be set up by any group of people living in the same area and can choose who members will be; how they will be represented and what they want to achieve. In the case of tenants' and residents' associations on estates, they may be established with direct support from the principal council, as a mechanism for communicating with the tenants and residents on its estates. To engage effectively with other organisations, residents' and tenants' associations must be able to show that they are accountable and represent the views of the whole community, rather than narrow self interests of just a few local people.

Community associations

- 146.** Community associations offer a particular and widespread democratic model for local residents and local community-based organisations in a defined neighbourhood to work together for the benefit of that neighbourhood. They can use a model constitution registered with the Charity Commission. The principal council may also be represented on the association's committee. They usually manage a community centre as a base for their activities. Membership is open to everyone resident in the area.

Section 5: Electoral arrangements

Introduction

147. The purpose of a review undertaken by a principal council, or a petition from the electorate, is likely primarily to concern the administrative boundaries of a new or existing parish. As discussed earlier (Chapter 2), this might be in the light of growth from within an existing parish or a locally identified need for a new form of community governance. However, in addition to these primary concerns, principal authorities will also need to consider the governance of new or altered parishes. The principal council must have regard to the need for community governance within the area under review to reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area, and to ensure that the governance is effective and convenient. Further information on electoral arrangements is available from the LGBCE's website www.LGBCE.org.uk

What are electoral arrangements?

- 148.** Electoral arrangements in relation to an existing or proposed parish council are defined in the 2007 Act and are explained in detail below:
- a) ordinary year of election – the year in which ordinary elections of parish councillors are to be held
 - b) council size – the number of councillors to be elected to the council, or (in the case of a common council) the number of councillors to be elected to the council by local electors in each parish
 - c) parish warding – whether the parish should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. This includes considering the number and boundaries of any such wards, the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward and the name of any such ward

Ordinary year of election

149. Ordinary parish elections are held once every four years with all councillors being elected at the same time. The standard parish electoral cycle is for elections in 2011, 2015 and every four years after 2015, but parish elections may be held in other years so that they can coincide with elections in associated district or London borough wards or county divisions and share costs. For example, all London borough ward elections take place in 2010, 2014 and so on. We would therefore expect parish elections in London to take place in these years.

- 150.** New or revised parish electoral arrangements come into force at ordinary parish elections, rather than parish by-elections, so they usually have to wait until the next scheduled parish elections. They can come into force sooner only if the terms of office of sitting parish councillors are cut so that earlier parish elections may be held for terms of office which depend on whether the parish is to return to its normal year of election.
- 151.** For example, a parish that had elections in 2007 could wait until its next scheduled elections in 2011 for new parish wards to come into force. Alternatively, the new parish wards could have come into force at elections in 2009 if the terms of office of the councillors elected in 2007 were cut to two years. If the elections in 2009 were for two-year terms of office then the parish council could return to its normal electoral cycle in 2011.
- 152.** Alternatively, if new or revised parish electoral arrangements are to be implemented in the third year of sitting councillors' term of office, provision can be made to cut short the term of office of existing councillors to three years. Elections could then take place with all councillors serving a five-year term of office, enabling the parish to return to its normal year of election.

Council size

- 153.** Council size is the term used to describe the number of councillors to be elected to the whole council. The 1972 Act, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocation of those councillors between parish wards but each parish ward, and each parish grouped under a common parish council, must have at least one parish councillor.
- 154.** In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had nine to 16 councillors. Most parish councils with a population of between 10,001 and 20,000 had between 13 and 27 councillors, while almost all councils representing a population of over 20,000 had between 13 and 31 councillors.
- 155.** The LGBCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was

conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven and the maximum 25.

- 156.** In considering the issue of council size, the LGBCE is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.
- 157.** Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies. However, a parish council's budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size.

Parish warding

- 158.** Parish warding should be considered as part of a community governance review. Parish warding is the division of a parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. This includes the number and boundaries of any wards, the number of councillors to be elected for any ward and the names of wards.
- 159.** In considering whether or not a parish should be divided into wards, the 2007 Act requires that consideration be given to whether:
- a) the number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
 - b) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented
- 160.** Accordingly, principal councils should consider not only the size of the electorate in the area but also the distribution of communities within it. The warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominantly on a single centrally-located village may not be justified. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where the parish

encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some urban overspill into the parish. However, each case should be considered on its merits, and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.

- 161.** There is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes, unless they have particularly low electorates or are based on a particular locality. In urban areas community identity tends to focus on a locality, whether this be a housing estate, a shopping centre or community facilities. Each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity. Again, principal councils should consider each case on its merits having regard to information and evidence generated during the review. (See also under Chapter 3, paragraphs 54 to 60).

The number and boundaries of parish wards

- 162.** In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards the principal council should take account of community identity and interests in the area, and consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Principal councils should seek views on such matters during the course of a review. They will, however, be mindful that proposals which are intended to reflect community identity and local linkages should be justified in terms of sound and demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages.
- 163.** The principal council should also consider the desirability of parish warding in circumstances where the parish is divided by district or London borough ward and/or county division boundaries. It should be mindful of the provisions of Schedule 2 (electoral change in England: considerations on review) to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 in relation to reviews of district or London borough and county council electoral arrangements. These provide that when the LGBCE is making changes to principal council electoral arrangements, no unwarded parish should be divided by a district or London borough ward or county division boundary, and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary. While these provisions do not apply to reviews of parish electoral arrangements, the LGBCE believes that, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, they are relevant considerations for principal councils to take into account when undertaking community governance reviews. For example, if a principal council chooses to establish a new parish in an area which is covered by two or more district or London borough wards or county division boundaries it may also wish to consider the merit of putting

parish warding in place to reflect that ward and/or division.

- 164.** When considering parish ward boundaries principal councils should ensure they consider the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

The number of councillors to be elected for parish wards

- 165.** If a principal council decides that a parish should be warded, it should give consideration to the levels of representation between each ward. That is to say, the number of councillors to be elected from each ward and the number of electors they represent.
- 166.** It is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors. There is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors. However, the LGBCE believes it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards. Such variations could make it difficult, in workload terms, for councillors to adequately represent the interests of residents. There is also a risk that where one or more wards of a parish are over-represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council.
- 167.** The LGBCE offers no specific guidelines for what might constitute significant differences in levels of representation; each case will need to be considered on its merits. Principal councils should be mindful that, for the most part, parish wards are likely to be significantly smaller than district or London borough wards. As a consequence, imbalances expressed in percentage terms may be misleading, disguising the fact that high variations between the number of electors per councillor could be caused by only a few dozen electors.
- 168.** Where a community governance review recommends that two or more parishes should be grouped under a common parish council, then the principal council must take into account the same considerations when considering the number of councillors to be elected by each parish within the group.

Names of parish wards

- 169.** In considering the names of parish wards, the principal council should give some thought to existing local or historic places so that, where appropriate, these are reflected and there should be a presumption in favour of ward names proposed by local interested parties.

Electorate forecasts

- 170.** When considering the electoral arrangements for a parish, whether it is warded or not, the principal council must also consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. The most recent electoral register should be used to gain an accurate figure for the existing electorate. Planning assumptions and likely growth within the area, based on planning permissions granted, local plans or, where they are in place, local development frameworks should be used to project an accurate five year electorate forecast. This ensures that the review does not simply reflect a single moment but takes account of expected population movements in the short- to medium-term.
- 171.** Electorate forecasts should be made available to all interested parties as early as possible in the review process, ideally before the formal commencement of the review so that they are available to all who may wish to make representations.

Consent/protected electoral arrangements

- 172.** If, as part of a community governance review, a principal council wishes to alter the electoral arrangements for a parish whose existing electoral arrangements were put in place within the previous five years by an order made either by the Secretary of State, the Electoral Commission, or the LGBCE, the consent of the LGBCE is required. This includes proposals to change the names of parish wards.
- 173.** The principal council must write to the LGBCE detailing its proposal and requesting consent. The LGBCE will consider the request and will seek to ensure that the proposals do not conflict with the original recommendations of the electoral review, and that they are fair and reasonable.
- 174.** Where a request for consent is made to the LGBCE, it will expect to receive evidence that the principal council has consulted with electors in the relevant parish(es) as part of the community governance review and will wish to receive details of the outcome of that review.
- 175.** For changes to the number or boundaries of parish wards, the

principal council will also need to provide the LGBCE with an existing and five-year forecast of electors in the parish(es) affected. Five-year forecasts should be accurate from the day that the review began. Both existing and forecast figures should be provided for the existing parish (and parish wards where relevant) and the proposed parish (and parish wards where relevant).

176. If the LGBCE consents to the changes it will inform the principal council which can then implement the proposed changes by local order. No LGBCE order is required. Conversely, if the LGBCE declines to give consent, no local order may be made by the local authority until the five-year period has expired.

Section 6: Consequential recommendations for related alterations to the boundaries of principal council's wards and/or divisions

177. As part of a community governance review, principal councils may wish to consider whether to request the LGBCE to make changes to the boundaries of district or London borough wards or county divisions to reflect the changes made at parish level.
178. There are three instances when a principal council may wish to consider related alterations to the boundaries of wards or divisions following:
- the creation, alteration or abolition of a parish
 - the establishment of new or altered parish ward boundaries
 - a grouping or de-grouping of parishes
179. In the interests of maintaining coterminosity between the boundaries of principal authority electoral areas and the boundaries of parishes and parish wards, principal councils may wish to consider as part of a community governance review whether to make consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for related alterations to the boundaries of any affected district or London borough wards and/or county divisions. The Commission may agree to make related alterations to ensure coterminosity between the new parish boundary and the related ward and/or division boundary. If so, the Commission will make an order to implement the related alterations. The Commission will not normally look to move ward or division boundaries onto new parish ward boundaries. However, it will consider each proposal on its merits.
180. In addition, when making a recommendation to group or de-group parishes, (see paragraph 108 to 111 for more details) the principal council may make a request to the LGBCE to make a related alteration of district or London borough ward or county division boundaries. For example, if a principal council decided to add an additional parish to a group it may wish to recommend that all of the parishes be included in the same district or London borough ward and/or county division. Recommendations for related alterations should be directly consequential upon changes made as part of a community governance review.
181. It will be for the LGBCE to decide, following the receipt of proposals, if

a related alteration should be made and when it should be implemented. Only the LGBCE can make an order implementing any alterations to the district or London borough ward or county division boundary. No order will be made to implement related alterations until the order changing the boundary of the relevant parish(es) or parish ward(s), or the order grouping or de-grouping parishes, has been made. Rather than make related alterations that would create detached wards or divisions or that would have a disproportionate impact on ward or division electoral equality, the LGBCE may decide to programme an electoral review of the principal council area.

- 182.** If, in liaison with the district or London borough council and/or the county council, the LGBCE decides to make related alterations to ward and/or division boundaries at a different time, it will consider whether there would be any adverse effects for local people in the holding of elections while the boundaries are not coterminous. However, changes to wards and divisions come into force at district or London borough and county ordinary elections in the electoral areas on either side of the electoral boundary change, so a period of non-coterminosity until the scheduled parish, district or London borough and county elections have taken place may be preferable to unscheduled elections. Unscheduled elections will be necessary to bring into force changes between adjacent parishes or wards whose scheduled elections never normally coincide.
- 183.** In two-tier areas, district councils are advised to seek the views of the county council in relation to related alterations to division boundaries.
- 184.** A principal council may decide that it does not wish to propose related alterations to ward or division boundaries. Where this results in boundaries no longer being coterminous, principal councils will need to be satisfied that the identities and interests of local communities are still reflected and that effective and convenient local government will be secured. Principal councils will also wish to consider the practical consequences, for example for polling district reviews, of having electors voting in parish council elections with one community but with a different community for district or London borough and/or county elections.
- 185.** Where proposals for related alterations are submitted to the LGBCE, it will expect to receive evidence that the principal council has consulted on them as part of a community governance review and the details of the outcome of that review. Principal councils may wish to undertake this consultation at the same time as they consult on proposals to alter the boundaries of parishes or establish new parishes. They must complete the community governance review,

including making any consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for related alterations, within a period of one year. Sufficient time should be given to the LGBCE to consider the proposals in advance of the election year in which the principal council proposes they be implemented.

186. The principal council will need to take into account the number of registered electors in any district or London borough ward or county division affected when the review starts, and a forecast of the number of electors expected to be in the areas within five years, and provide this information to the LGBCE. This information should be used to establish a total electorate figure for each district or London borough ward and/or county division affected by the recommendations, both for the current electorate and for expected electorate five years after the start of the review. These totals should also be provided to the LGBCE.
187. When submitting proposals to the LGBCE the principal council should illustrate the proposed changes on maps of a suitable scale, using different coloured lines and suitable keys to illustrate the required changes.
188. If the LGBCE decides not to implement the proposed related alterations, then the existing ward and/or division boundaries will remain in force. The LGBCE has no power to modify any recommendations submitted to it; it may only implement or reject the recommendations.
189. In most cases, related alterations to district or London borough ward and/or county division boundaries tend to be fairly minor in nature and simply tie the ward and/or division boundary to the affected parish boundary. However, if an authority has altered several parish and/or parish ward boundaries and proposes several related alterations to district or London borough ward and/or county division boundaries, the cumulative effect of these could affect electoral equality at district or London borough and/or county level. This could be particularly acute if a number of parishes were transferred between district or London borough wards or county divisions to reflect grouped parishes. In such circumstances, the LGBCE will wish to consider conducting an electoral review of the principal council area or an electoral review of a specified area within it. The timing of such reviews would be dependent on the LGBCE's review programme commitments.

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**Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 3 – First consultation letter**

**Community Governance Review of Ashford Borough
Draft Recommendations**

The Council received a number of submissions in response to the first stage of the Community Governance Review. These submissions have now been considered and we have now published the Draft Recommendations.

A copy of the Draft Recommendations is enclosed for your consideration. Copies of the plans referred to in the Draft Recommendations are available on the Council's website at www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review. If you have any difficulties accessing these plans, please do not hesitate to contact me and I shall arrange for a hard copy to be sent to you.

The website also has details of the Review timetable and the answers to a number of frequently asked questions and links to useful guidance regarding community governance reviews.

We will be carrying out detailed consultation with those directly affected by the proposals contained in the draft recommendations in due course. The final recommendations will be made in December after taking into account the responses received during this consultation process.

The Council wishes to hear as much evidence as possible in order to develop the final recommendations that are right for the people of the Borough. We are keen to hear what people think of the proposals and whether they agree with them or if not how they can be improved.

We welcome and will consider all comments and responses on the draft recommendations, whether they affect your area or not. You can send us your responses by email to review@ashford.gov.uk, or by post to Community Governance Review, Legal Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

We look forward to hearing from you – please note that the closing date for consultation responses is 30th October 2015.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Hartles
Solicitor & Lead Officer for the Community Governance Review
On behalf of the Review team

Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations Appendix 4 – Second Consultation Letter & Poster

Proposed changes to the arrangements for Mersham & Sevington Parish Council

As you are aware, the Community Governance Review has made the following draft recommendations for Mersham & Sevington Parish:

The Borough Council is therefore recommending:

- (a) The amendment to the boundary of the Parish as shown on Plan 13;*
- (b) A reduction to the number of councillors for the Mersham ward of 1, to 6;*
- (c) An increase in the number of councillors for the Sevington South ward of 1 to 2.*

The boundary of Mersham & Sevington would also be affected by the proposed creation of community councils for the North Willesborough and South Willesborough and Newtown areas, which are set out in recommendations 42 and 43. The proposed areas for those community councils are shown on Plans 19 and 20.

Copies of Plans 13, 19 and 20 are enclosed for your ease of reference.

Whilst we are consulting directly with the residents that will be affected by the proposed changes, we do of course want to hear the views of the Parish Council.

To take part in the consultation visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations and follow the instructions. Alternatively, any comments the Parish Council has can be sent by email to review@ashford.gov.uk, or by post to Community Governance Review, Legal Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

Full details about the review and to view all of the draft recommendations and accompanying plans, please visit www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review. The website also has details of the review timetable and the answers to a number of frequently asked questions.

Parish Councillors and residents are also invited to call into the Council offices on Monday 28th September between 4pm and 8pm to find out more information or ask any questions that they may have.

The consultation closes on Friday 30th October, after which all responses will be taken into consideration by councillors when they make the final decisions in December. This review can only change boundaries at parish or parish ward level, however if these changes come into effect it is likely that any corresponding Borough or County boundary would also be changed. If any changes are made, these will take place in 2019 at the next parish elections.

Due to the timetables involved, I would be grateful if you could pass this letter to the Parish Council chair as soon as possible in order to ensure that the Parish Councillors have the opportunity to attend the session on Monday 28th September.

I have also enclosed a poster to be displayed on the parish notice board. If you would like an electronic copy for use in your parish magazine or newsletter, please don't hesitate to let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Hartles', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Hartles
Solicitor & Lead Officer for the Community Governance Review
On behalf of the Review Team

Poster

SEEKING YOUR GUIDANCE ON PARISHING ARRANGEMENTS IN MERSHAM & SEVINGTON

NOW IS THE TIME TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON HOW OUR COMMUNITIES ARE REPRESENTED AT THE FIRST TIER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Should local opinion reflect such a need, Ashford Borough Council has the power to deal with the electoral arrangements for parishes – for example:

- Creating, merging or abolishing parish councils
- Changing the boundary of the area that each one covers
- Altering the number of parish councillors on each parish council

WE NOW WANT TO HEAR FROM *YOU* ABOUT PARISHING ARRANGEMENTS IN MERSHAM & SEVINGTON.

We now want to hear from you about parishing arrangements in Mersham & Sevington. Boundary changes are proposed for Mersham & Sevington Parish. A plan showing the changes can be found on our website.

The consultation period for this stage of the review closes on 30th October 2015.

These views will then be considered by Ashford Borough Council and help to shape firm proposals for change.

To take part in the consultation visit www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations and follow the instructions. Alternatively, responses to the consultation can be sent by email to review@ashford.gov.uk, or by post to Community Governance Review, Legal Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

For more details about the review, along with a full list of frequently asked questions and answers about the review visit:

www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review

www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review-faqs



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Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations Appendix 5 – Sample letter sent to households

Proposed changes to the arrangements for your Parish Council

Ashford Borough Council is reviewing the way that communities in the borough are represented and is proposing to change the arrangements for your Parish Council and we are now consulting on those changes.

Your property is currently situated within Kingsnorth Parish. A submission was received suggesting that the boundary between Sevington Parish and Kingsnorth Parish should be moved so that your property was situated in Sevington Parish.

The Council agrees with this submission and is proposing that the boundary be moved as shown on the enclosed plan. If the proposal is approved, in May 2019 your property would be situated within the parish of Sevington and you would be able to vote for and be represented by the Mersham & Sevington Parish Council.

Before any changes are made we are consulting with residents to take into account their views. You can comment on whether you agree or disagree with the proposals or have any alternative suggestions.

To take part in the consultation visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/consult and follow the instructions. Alternatively, any comments you have can be sent by email to review@ashford.gov.uk, or by post to Community Governance Review, Legal Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

Full details about the review and to view all of the draft recommendations and accompanying plans, please visit www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review. The website also has details of the review timetable and the answers to a number of frequently asked questions.

You are also invited to call into the Council offices on Monday 28th September between 4pm and 8pm to find out more information or ask any questions that you may have.

The consultation closes on Friday 30th October, after which all responses will be taken into consideration by councillors when they make the final decisions in December, so your participation is important. This review can only change boundaries at parish or parish ward level, however if these changes come into effect it is likely that any corresponding Borough or County boundary would also be changed. If any changes are made, these will take place in 2019 at the next parish elections.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



Sarah Hartles
Solicitor & Lead Officer for the Community Governance Review
On behalf of the Review Team

**Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 6 – Covering letter, ballot paper and sample leaflet**

Dear Sir/Madam

Community Governance Review Consultation

Ashford Borough Council is reviewing the way that communities in the borough are represented and is proposing to change the arrangements for the area in which you live. It has been suggested that we establish community councils for areas which are not currently represented by a parish, town or community council and we are now consulting on those changes.

Part of the consultation is to give all affected residents a chance to vote on the proposals. A 'Yes/No' ballot paper is enclosed and your vote needs to be cast by 3pm on **12th October 2015**. Please follow the instructions on the ballot paper to cast your vote.

A leaflet is enclosed to give you information on the proposed community council. You can also visit www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review to view more information including detailed maps of the area or to give your views on any other aspect of the proposals. The consultation ends on 30th October 2015 when the results of the ballot and any other consultation responses will be used by the council to make a final decision on these proposals.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Hartles
Solicitor & Lead Officer for the Community Governance Review

BALLOT PAPER



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Ashford Borough Council Community Governance Review

Cast your vote using one of the following methods



VOTE ONLINE

Go to:

www.votebyinternet.com/Ashford15

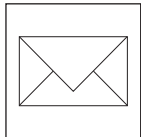
or scan the quick response barcode with
your smartphone

QUICK RESPONSE
BARCODE



Security Code Part One

Security Code Part Two



VOTE BY POST

Vote by marking a cross '**X**' in the box next
to your chosen answer.

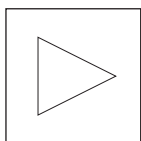
Your completed ballot paper should be
returned in the pre-paid envelope provided
and received by the Independent Scrutineer
no later than the time and date shown below.

Question

**Do you want a community
Council for your area?**

YES

NO



VOTING CLOSES

3PM on MONDAY 12 OCTOBER 2015



Do you want a community council for Central Ashford?

Ashford Borough Council is reviewing the way communities in the borough are represented. This is your chance to tell us whether you want local democracy extended in Ashford so that Central Ashford has a community council.

Currently you have:

- A local MP
- County councillors
- Borough councillors
- An unelected urban forum
- But no parish or community councillors

A community council would:

- Be the first tier of local government, similar to a parish council
- Have elected individuals representing you
- Be paid for by increasing your council tax
- Assert some influence over local decision making

A community council could:

- Be responsible for providing some local facilities
- Be a focal point for representing local issues
- Be responsible for providing some local services

For more information visit:

www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review

Or come along to our open evening:

28th September 2015, 4pm-8pm, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford.

We are consulting until **30th October 2015** on the proposal to have a community council. Part of that consultation process includes the Yes/No ballot, which is enclosed with this leaflet. The closing date for the ballot is **3pm on 12th October 2015** so that the results can be fed into the wider consultation.

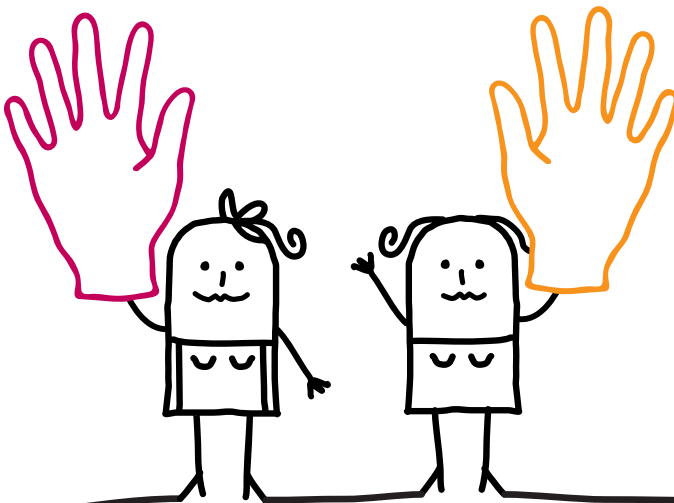
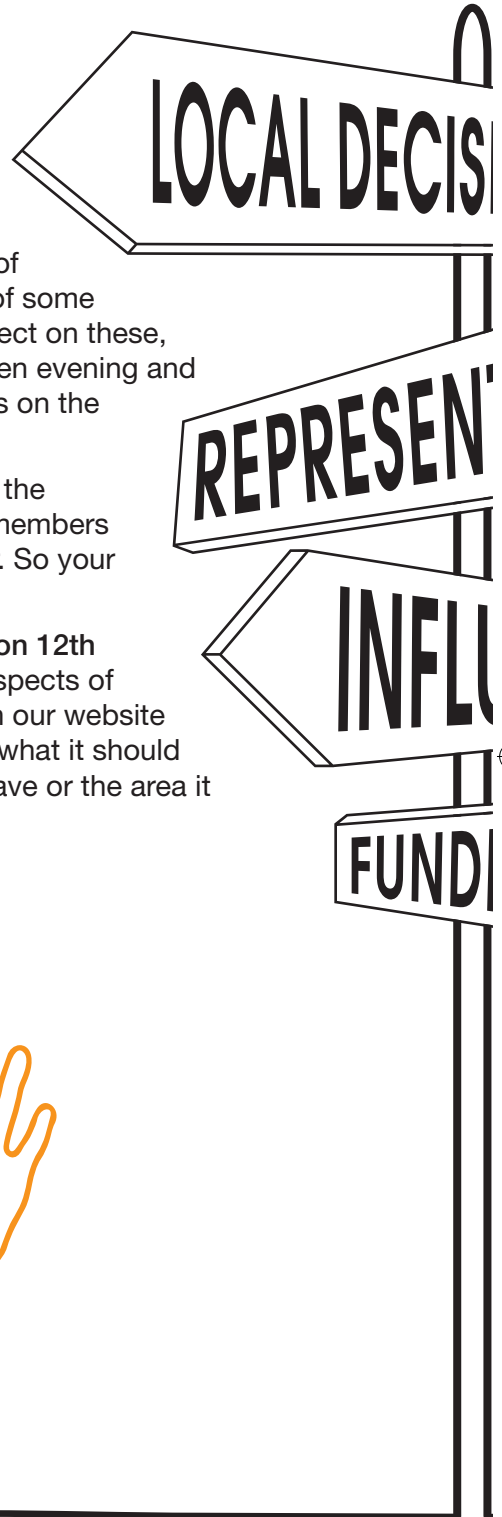


Helping you decide

Rules state that the council must remain impartial on any consultation material relating to the community governance proposals. However, to give you an idea of the views both for and against the creation of community councils, we've compiled a list of some of the issues for you to consider. Please reflect on these, research the website, come along to our open evening and respond to the consultation using the details on the front of the leaflet.

While the result of the ballot is non-binding, the result will influence the decision of council members when they make their decision in December. So your participation is important.

As well as responding to the ballot by **3pm on 12th October**, you can also comment on other aspects of the creation of a community council through our website or by post. This could include any ideas on what it should be called, how many councillors it should have or the area it should cover.



Issues to consider

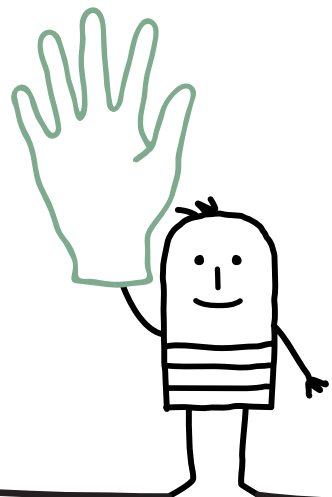
DECISION MAKING

REPRESENTATION

INFLUENCE

BOUNDING

- It would provide the opportunity to have an additional voice to influence local decision making
- The community council would be a consultee on planning applications
- It would add another tier of representation to local government in Ashford
- It extends local democracy to everyone in the area, where they have previously had no first-tier representation in local government
- It would be able to set a precept (an additional charge) to residents as part of their council tax. Currently, parish council precepts vary across the borough from £18.96 to £88.31, with an average charge of £39.55 per year
- It could manage or provide community facilities and services at a more local level
- Community and parish councils may be eligible to apply for funds for projects that specifically benefit their community
- It further enables the community through the council to endorse important projects – such as crime prevention, tourism and environmental initiatives
- It would have limited powers and responsibilities as it could not replace the borough council or the county council



The area that a community council for Central Ashford would cover:



For more information and to see a more detailed plan, visit:

www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review

To take part in the consultation:

visit www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations

email review@ashford.gov.uk

write Community Governance Review

Legal Services

Ashford Borough Council

Civic Centre

Tannery Lane

Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL



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**Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 7 – Promotional literature produced by the Urban Forums**

Central Ashford



✓ Vote **Yes** for Community Councils

Democracy:

We want to improve democratic representation in urban Ashford

Identity:

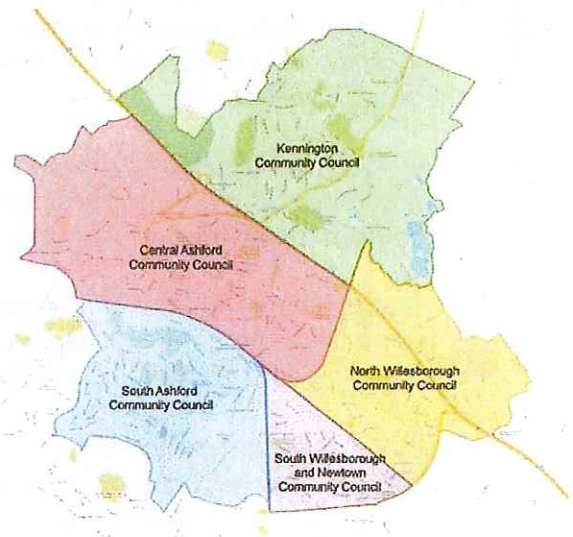
We want to strengthen the identity of the urban areas by putting them on the local government map.

Investment:

We want to invest in initiatives that directly benefit our communities with the money we raise.

Give urban Ashford a Voice

We believe that the Ashford urban areas can be better. And we think that the people who are best placed to make the areas better are those who live here. We want to empower our communities to deliver positive change and have a real voice in how we are governed.



www.ashfordcommunity.co.uk

Proposed Community Councils in Ashford



Vote **YES** for Central Ashford Community Council

Postal Ballot starts: 14th September

Ballot papers to be returned by: 12th October

YOUR CHANCE TO GIVE URBAN ASHFORD A VOICE

The Central Ashford Community Forum has been serving residents for over ten years. Seventeen voluntary members meet regularly to discuss issues affecting the Central Ashford Area. They organise regular public meetings, one of which is the Annual General Meeting where they are elected or re-elected. To date all activities of the Forum have depended entirely on the work of volunteers which has limited what it has been able to achieve.

Ashford Borough Council has recommended that **democratically elected** Community Councils be set up in the urban areas of Ashford, organised on the same lines as the Parish Councils which already represent the views of residents in villages in Ashford Borough.

A Community Council in Central Ashford would have more status and powers than the current Forum. For example:

1. It would have a say on planning applications
2. It could provide funding for community projects and groups
3. It could improve street cleaning, litter picking and maintenance of greens spaces

It would require a small amount of funding raised along with the Council Tax to allow it to employ staff to ensure it was properly run. This is likely to be no more than 50p per household per week, all of which would be spent to the benefit of the local area.

Community Councils will only be created if there is sufficient support from residents. Ashford Borough Council's postal ballot will be arriving on your doormat soon.
It is time for your voice to be heard!

Do you want a Community Council in your area?

It will be a postal ballot, with the papers arriving on your doormat on or around
14th September to be returned by **12th October**.

Please do not miss this chance to give the residents of the Ashford urban area a stronger voice in the management of where they live.

Without sufficient support from residents Ashford Borough Council will not proceed with the process of creating Community Councils.

Vote YES for a Community Council in your area!



Produced by Central Ashford Community Forum
For more detailed information please visit the websites:
www.centralashfordcf.kentparishes.gov.uk
www.ashfordcommunity.co.uk

Say *YES* to a Kennington Community Council



We believe that Kennington can be better. And we think that the people who are best placed to make the area better are those who live here. We want our community to deliver positive change and have a real voice in how we are governed.

ALL electors in Kennington are being given the opportunity to vote for the creation of a community council.

Ashford Borough Council is recommending a community council for Kennington with 16 councillors representing five wards:

Kennington, Little Burton Farm, Bybrook, part of **Bockhanger,** part of **Boughton Aluph** and part of **North Willesborough.**

But it needs to consult residents before a final decision is made in December.

It is sending out ballot papers which must be returned by 3pm on 12 October.

We are asking all residents to vote Yes. This is your chance to gain a more powerful voice and control over local affairs and a level of representation already enjoyed by 60% of the borough.

The opportunity may not arise again for 10 to 15 years

Kennington Community Forum submitted a petition signed by 1,090 electors calling for a community council.

Other community forums in Ashford have each submitted a proposal that a community

**‘This is your big chance.
The opportunity may not
arise again for 15 years’**

council is created for their respective areas.

The creation of community councils for the unparished areas of urban Ashford has come a step closer following recommendations by ABC published in its Community Governance Review.

The consultation period runs until 30 October, but *ballot papers must be returned by 12 October.*

This brochure explains how everyone will benefit if Kennington has a community council.

If you would like more information please visit www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review or come to a special open evening at the Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, on 28 September from 4pm-8pm.

**CHRIS MORLEY,
Chair, Kennington
Community Forum**



How everyone would benefit

A COMMUNITY COUNCIL is a great way to give residents a more powerful voice in the local area. It is the first tier of local government in England.

It is democratically and financially accountable to the community.

WHAT COULD KENNINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL DO?

Provide services to meet local needs and improve the quality of life and community well-being.

Respond to all consultations on behalf of the community. Have the legal right to be informed about planning applications.

Liaise with Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and other stakeholders.

Support groups in the area, through funding, providing somewhere to meet, or by publicity.

Receive money for community projects from

the profits of new developments in the area.

Maintain or contribute to street lighting and traffic calming measures.

Provide or contribute to safety schemes and crime reduction measures.

Contribute towards the cost of installing and maintaining play areas, such as in Little Burton, Spearpoint and Rylands Road.

Improve cycle paths and public rights of way.

Maintain or contribute to leisure centres, youth projects and street cleaning.

Provide litter bins, parking places for bicycles and motor-cycles, roadside seats and shelters.

Plant trees and lay out grass verges and maintain them.

Community councils have the right to create a Neighbourhood Plan, increasing local control over new developments. Without a community council we are unable to do this.



How are community councils funded?

Local councils are funded through a sum of money called a 'precept'— this is a separate charge which is added to, and collected along with, your existing council tax.

The community council will decide what it will need for the coming year and that depends on what services and facilities are needed by the local community. The estimated household contribution for the Kennington Community Council area would be about £25 a year.

The Community Governance Review recommends that Kennington Community Council would be made up of 16 councillors and warded to reflect borough council ward boundaries.

KENNINGTON (electorate 1,896):

Four councillors

LITTLE BURTON FARM (2,262):

Four councillors

BYBROOK (1,975): Four councillors

PART OF BOCKHANGER (1,645)

A new community ward named Grosvenor Hall: Three councillors

PART OF BOUGHTON ALUPH & EASTWELL

(513): A new community ward named Kennington North: One councillor

PART OF NORTH WILLESBOROUGH:

Kennington Ward would gain polling district NW1 from Willesborough (Conningbrook Lakes and Batchelors)

No residents, so no councillor.

(Properties in Sandyhurst Lane would become part of Westwell Parish Council)



Who can be a community councilloror?

In addition to the normal requirements for standing for public office, candidates must live within three miles of the area served by the council or work within it. That is one of the big benefits of having a local council – it will be local people taking decisions for local people.

The running costs of a community council include the clerk's salary and costs, insurance, costs for meeting rooms, communications (website, newsletters).

Thereafter, the money is all spent in the area on services to be provided by the local council. These will be targeted to benefit the local community. The money will not be going to the borough or county council. The council's spending will be

Value for money

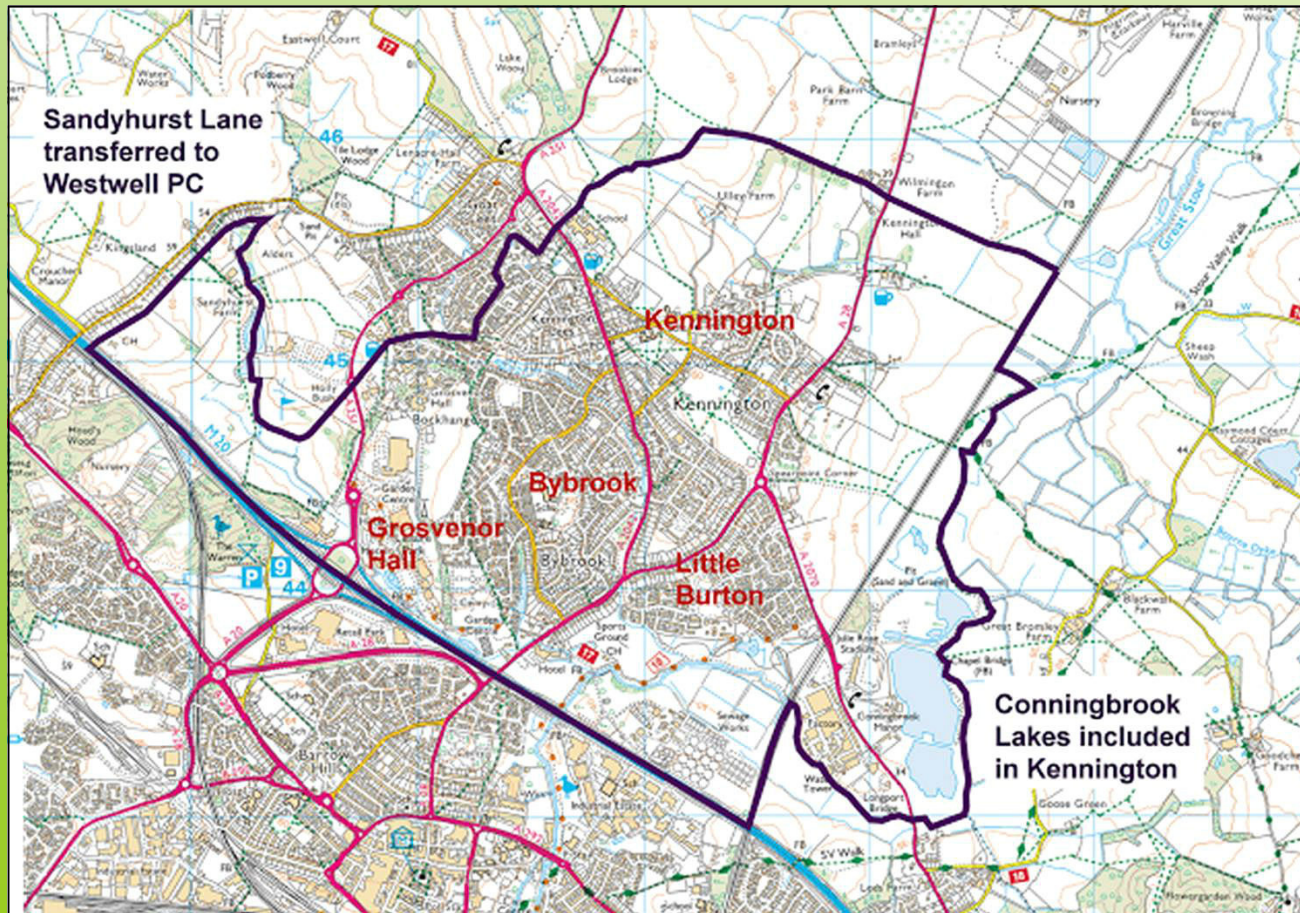
guided by what local people say they want.

By law, the council has to be publicly accountable for all money spent and to keep accurate and open records.

Unlike borough and county councillors, your local councillors will

not be paid any allowances. If they have to attend meetings outside the area then it is reasonable that their travel costs are reimbursed.

A local council can only do those things allowed by law and it has to be accountable to the public. This means that meetings are open to the public and accounts have to be published every year so everyone knows how money has been spent.



The area that would be covered by Kennington Community Council



Would the community council hire staff?

Yes. It would hire an accredited professional council clerk who would effectively act as a civil servant for the council.

He, or she, could be supported by part time staff. It is estimated the five community councils in Ashford would hire one clerk between them.

■ *There is a waiting list for allotments in Kennington. Community councils can provide, maintain or contribute to allotments.*

It could be you! As a councillor you can become a voice for the community and effect real change. **Community councillors are community leaders. As a local resident you can stand for the community council and make a difference to the community.**

Any councillors elected to the community council would be in addition to the existing local ward councillors who are members of Ashford Borough Council. It is possible for the same people to be elected to the borough council and the community council.

■ *A community council can help groups in the area through funding, providing somewhere to meet, or by publicity. It can maintain or contribute to services such as leisure centres and youth projects and support the arts.*

■ *Kennington's First World War Memorial is not recognised by Ashford Borough Council and is not on its maintenance schedule. A community council has the power to maintain, repair, and protect War Memorials.*

■ *Community Councils have the right to make Dog Control orders.*

**Make our area a better
place to live.
Vote *YES* for
a Kennington
Community Council**



Published by Kennington Community Forum. Chair: Chris Morley
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Secretary: Sandra Dunn sandradunn@sky.com 01233 634165

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WILLESBOROUGH COMMUNITY FORUM



2nd October 2015

Dear Resident

North Willesborough Community Council Campaign

Firstly, thank you for signing the Community Council petition last year - as you will no doubt know this led to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) starting the Community Governance Review (CGR) process. As part of this process ABC has made draft recommendations to create a Community Council for North Willesborough.

However, these recommendations are draft, and ABC will not establish a Community Council for North Willesborough without hearing from the residents (you), which is why they sent out ballot papers in the middle of September.

We hope you voted YES. If you have not yet voted please do so as soon as possible - the deadline is 3pm on the 12th October.

Moreover, please encourage your fellow residents (neighbours, friends, family etc.) to vote - ABC needs to be convinced that this is what the residents want, so the greater the support the better.

Whilst the ballot finishes on the 12th October the consultation continues until the 30th October, so if you have any further views please submit them to Ashford Borough Council as follows.

By email to review@ashford.gov.uk

or write to: CGR
 Legal Services
 Civic Centre
 Tannery Lane
 Ashford
 Kent
 TN23 1PL

Please include your name and address so that ABC knows that you are a resident.

I'm sure that, like me, you are hoping this campaign will be successful, especially as the opportunity will not arise again for 10 to 15 years, so let's make it happen now!

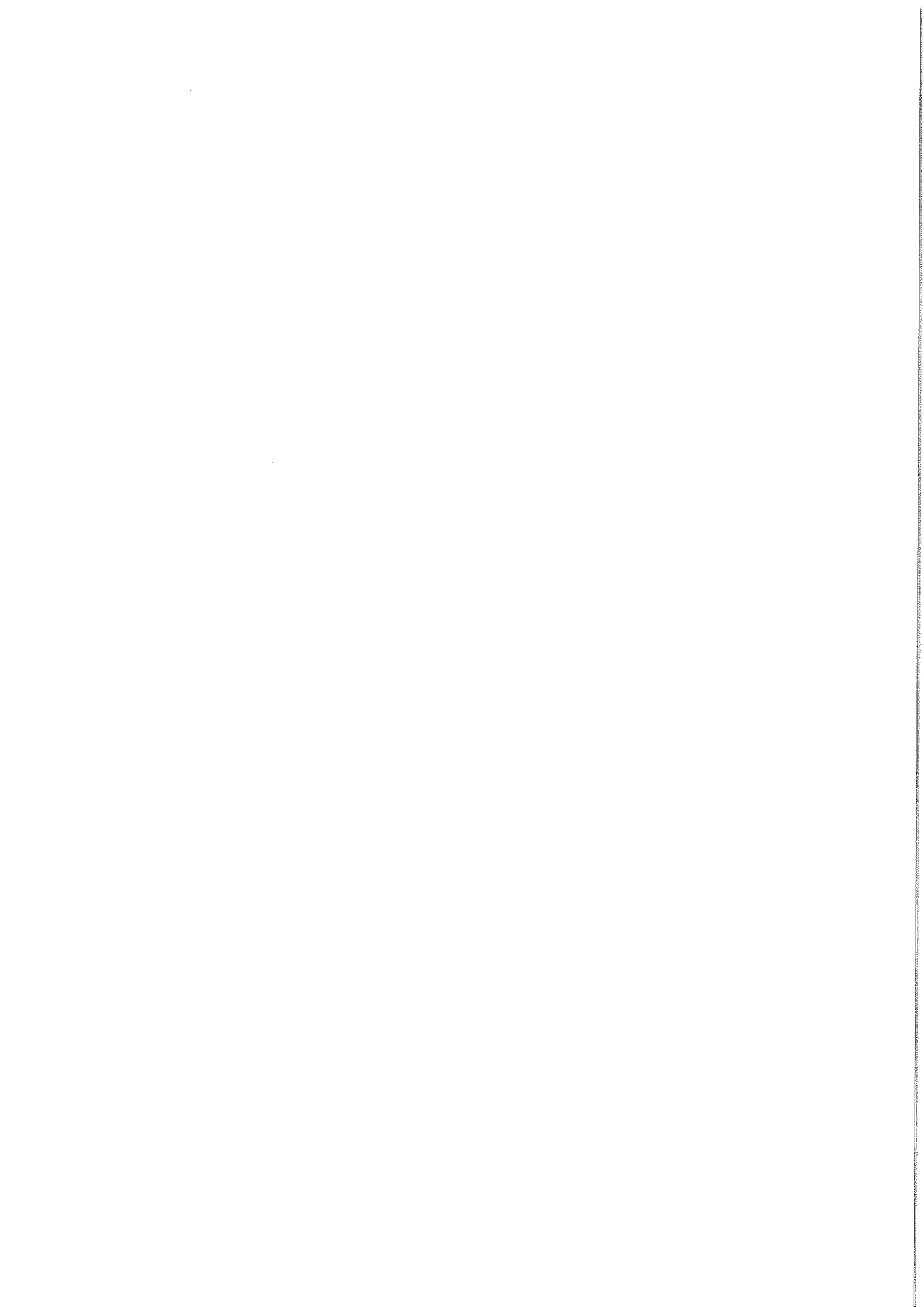
Help your Community help itself !

Thank you for your support.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Stevenson

Chair.





You will have received your Ballot Papers from Ashford Borough Council - to ensure the formation of a Parish/Community Council for North Willesborough

YOU MUST VOTE



However, a simple "YES" majority vote will not be enough - only an overwhelming "YES" vote will persuade Ashford Borough Council that North Willesborough should have a Parish/Community Council.

SO SPREAD THE WORD

Tell your neighbours, friends and family to vote **YES** today.
And please put the front page of this leaflet in your window to remind others.

This opportunity will not arise again for at least 10 years

DON'T DELAY - VOTE YES TODAY

Voting ends 3pm 12th October

Help your Community help itself !

SOME FACTS

There are over 300 Parish/Town/Community Councils in Kent. The whole of Ashford Borough has a Parish or Town Council, apart from the Ashford urban/suburban areas.

A Community Council is a non-political level of democracy with extensive legal powers and responsibility for the well-being of your local neighbourhood. Its purpose is to represent the local community and deliver services to meet local needs.

Community Councillors are elected from the community - it could be YOU!

Community Councils get Local Issues dealt with Locally. And if you don't like the way your Community Council is being run you can stand for election yourself.

With a Community Council you can get:

- Local participation and **improved community spirit.**
- Quicker local decisions and action.
- **A Council that will listen to the Community - i.e. YOU!**
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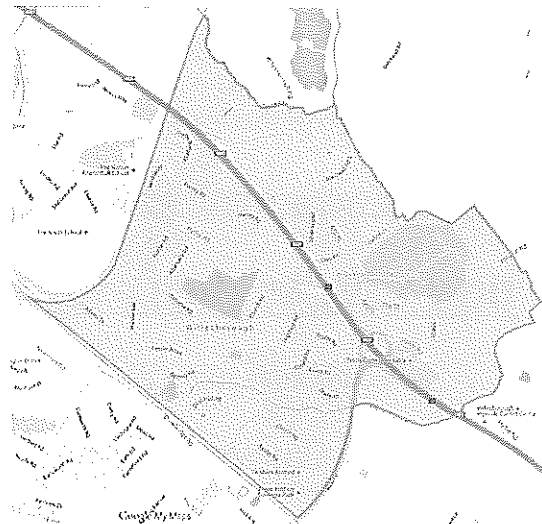
- Youth facilities (e.g. better equipped recreation ground)
- Cleaner, clearer streets, footpaths and grass verges
- Support for the elderly

There is a Cost - There will be a “precept” added to your Council Tax. For North Willesborough this would be around £1.50 - £2 per month, for a Band D household (This is half the average for Ashford which is £3.75 per month). This money would be spent **only for the North Willesborough Community**. Additional money can also be obtained via grants.

THE PROPOSALS

As part of the Community Governance Review (the official title for the process to review parishes) Ashford Borough Council has made certain proposals regarding the establishment of Community Councils for the unparished urban areas. For North Willesborough these are:

- Any new parish would cover the area shown in the map below:



- That there would be 16 councillors.
- That the area would be subdivided into wards, for better representation of neighbourhood needs.
- That the new parish would hold elections by 2019.

For more information see:

<http://north-willesborough.org.uk/campaign-for-community-council/>
<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/urban-areas>

Ian Stevenson (Chair)

Email chair@north-willesborough.org.uk

NORTH WILLESBOROUGH



VOTE !

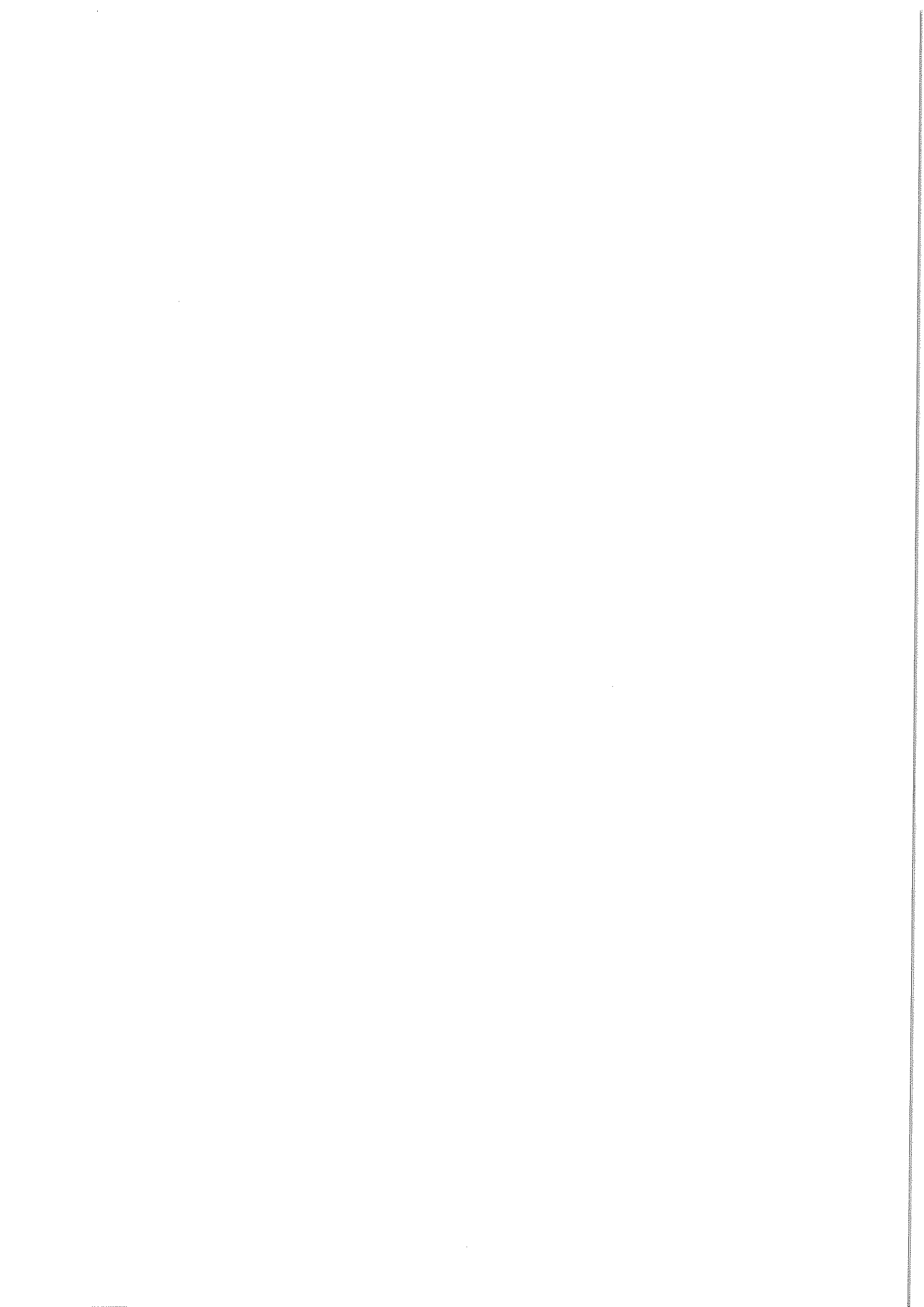
✓ YES

for a

**NORTH WILLESBOROUGH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Help your Community help itself !

www.north-willesborough.org.uk



NORTH WILLESBOROUGH



COMMUNITY COUNCIL CAMPAIGN

Along with the other Urban Forum areas in Ashford, Willesborough Community Forum has been campaigning for the creation of a Civil Parish for the residents of North Willesborough.

We thank everyone who has supported us so far and ask for further support during the Public Consultation phase (1st August to 31st October) of ABC's Community Governance Review.

www.north-willesborough.org.uk

NORTH WILLESBOROUGH



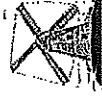
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NORTH WILLESBOROUGH



✓ YES

Do you want to bring back a sense of
Community to Willesborough?

Do you want to have a say in the way your
Community is managed?

Then vote ✓ **YES** for a

North Willesborough Community Council!

Help your Community help itself !

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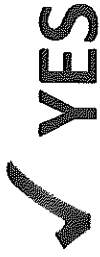
COMMUNITY COUNCIL REFERENDUM BALLOT

North Willlesborough, together with the other non-parished urban areas of Ashford, is very close to having a Parish/Community Council.

BUT YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

You will have received your Ballot Papers from Ashford Borough Council - to ensure the formation of a Parish/Community Council for North Willlesborough

YOU MUST VOTE



However, a simple "YES" majority vote will not be enough - only an overwhelming "YES" vote will persuade Ashford Borough Council that North Willlesborough should have a Parish/Community Council.

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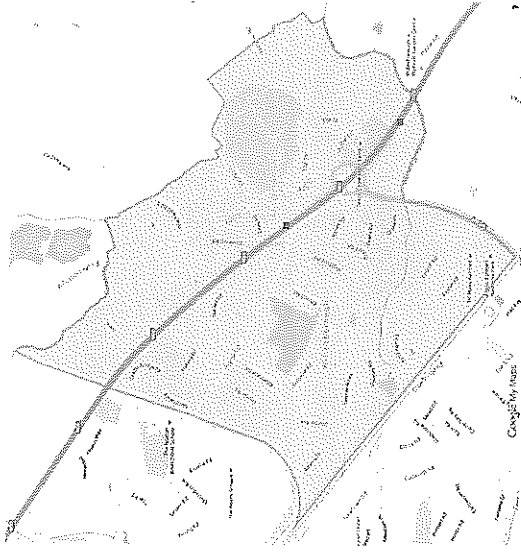
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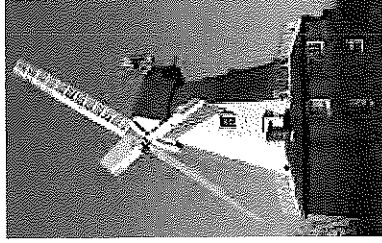
- That there would be 16 councillors.
- That the area would be subdivided into wards, for better representation of neighbourhood needs.
- That the new parish would hold elections by 2019.

As well as voting **YES** in the referendum you can also comment on these proposals - see the following for details:

<http://north-willesborough.org.uk/campaign-for-community-council/>
<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/urban-areas>

SOME FACTS:

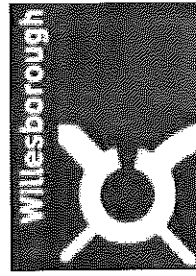
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 - Cleaner, clearer streets, footpaths and grass verges
 - Community transport schemes
 - Support for the elderly



There is a Cost - For North Willesborough this would be around £18 per year (£1.50 per month) for a Band D household - to be spent **only for the North Willesborough Community.**

To make it Happen - We need 1000 signatures, so start by signing the petition on page two of this pamphlet, and returning it to us **TODAY.**

For More Information:

- Visit www.ashfordcommunity.co.uk and follow the links on the North Willesborough page.
- Use the contact details on the Petition form.

NORTH WILLESBOROUGH



Do you want to bring back a sense of Community to Willesborough?

Do you want to have a say in the way your Community is managed?

Then let's get together to form a Community Council!



Help your Community help itself !

This campaign is supported by Willesborough Community Forum
For more information visit www.ashfordcommunity.co.uk

PETITION

"I/We the undersigned electors live in North Willersborough and believe that we should have our own Community Council. We request that Ashford Borough Council should make the necessary provisions for establishing a Community Council by conducting a Community Governance Review and that this review should be completed as soon as possible. We hope that the outcome will be an independent Community Council for North Willersborough."

PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	POSTCODE	SIGNATURE

Please return to one of the following:

- John Micklethwaite, 15 Housefield (Off Harvey Road) 01233 661556
- Colin Mills, 4 Collard Road (Highfield) 01233 627072
- Stella Cowland, 15 Blake Court 01233 334046
- Ed Oliver, 27 Longbridge (Willersborough Lees) 01233 638327

or scan and email to petition@north-willersborough.org.uk

Further copies may be obtained from our website or any of the above contacts

Help your Community help itself !

DEAR FELLOW RESIDENT,

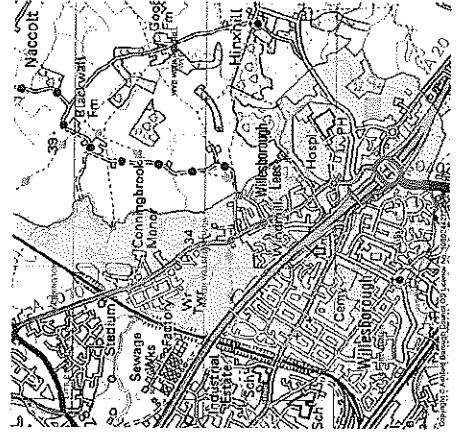
PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ THIS. IT CONCERNS THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

With austerity measures biting harder and the various levels of government cutting back on services it is, more than ever, up to the local community to look after its own.

Willersborough Community Forum would love to do more but it is an unelected and voluntary group with no power and no money and no real influence when it comes to speaking on behalf of North Willersborough to Ashford Borough and Kent County Councils.

There is now, however, the opportunity for change - as part of an Ashford-wide campaign, supported by Ashford Borough Council, we in North Willersborough have the chance to have our own **ELECTED COMMUNITY COUNCIL.**

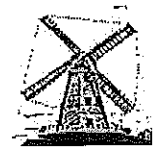
Willersborough Community Forum believes this is a chance not to be missed.



The area in question is comprised of North Willersborough ward, the part of Aylesford Green ward north of the railway and the part of Highfield ward not in the parish of Sevington, as illustrated by the shaded area on this map.

Cut along dotted line

NORTH WILLESBOROUGH



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PETITION FOR NORTH WILLESBOROUGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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This campaign is supported by Willesborough Community Forum

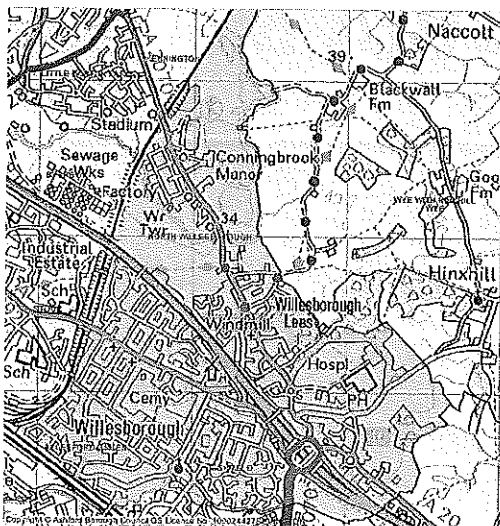
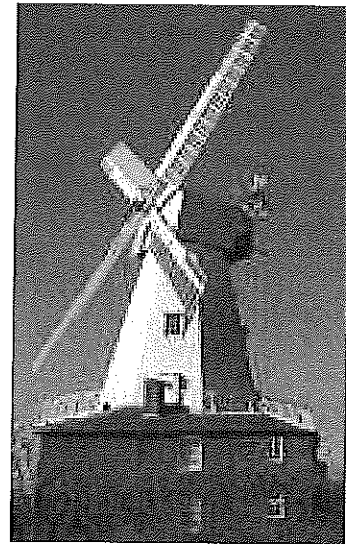
SOME FACTS:

A **Community Council** is a **non-political level of democracy** with extensive legal powers and responsibility for the well-being of your local neighbourhood. Its purpose is to represent the local community and deliver services to meet local needs.

Community Councillors are elected from the community - it could be **YOU!**

With a Community Council you will get:

- Local participation and **improved community spirit.**
- Quicker local decisions and action.
- **A Community Council that will listen to the Community - i.e. YOU!**
- Enhanced or new local services, such as:
 - Youth facilities
 - Cleaner, clearer streets, footpaths and grass verges
 - Community transport schemes
 - Support for the elderly



There is a Cost - For North Willesborough this would be around £18 per year (£1.50 per month) for a Band D household - to be spent **only for the North Willesborough Community.**

The area in question is comprised of North Willesborough ward, the part of Aylesford Green ward north of the railway and the part of Highfield ward not in the parish of Sevington, as illustrated by the shaded area on this map.

To make it Happen - We need 1000 signatures, so

PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION !



Community Council for South Ashford a step closer

Ashford Borough Council has brought the creation of Community Councils for South Ashford and the other unparished areas of urban Ashford a step closer by including proposals in the Draft Recommendations published under its Community Governance Review.

The Community Governance Review was started in February after Willesborough Community Forum submitted a petition requesting that the Borough considered creating a Community Council for North Willesborough. Kennington Community Forum and South Willesborough and Newtown Community Group also submitted petitions with the required number of signatures. All of the Urban Community Forums submitted proposals for Community Councils in their respective areas. The Borough Council have now considered those submissions and produced its own proposals for Community Councils in the urban areas.

We summarise the proposals, as they affect the unparished area of South Ashford on Page 4.

Why is SACF supporting the proposal for a Community Council?

South Ashford Community Forum believes that South Ashford can be better and that the people who are best placed to make it better are those who live here. We want to empower our community to deliver positive change and have a real voice in how we are governed.

Every community in England and Wales has the power to set up a local council if they want one. There are nearly 300 local councils across Kent.

Democracy:

We want to improve democratic representation in South Ashford

All towns and villages in the Borough including the newer developments of Park Farm and Singleton, but not the urban areas of Ashford, are represented by Local Coun-



McArthur Glen Designer Outlet

© Jonathan Rowles

cils. We want to bring the same level of representation to South Ashford

Identity:

We want to strengthen the identity of South Ashford by putting it on the local government map.

South Ashford does not exist. It has no boundaries, no legal personality, and no status in the eyes of the Government. We want put our community on the local government map by creating a statutory body to represent the South Ashford.

Investment:

We want to invest in initiatives that directly benefit South Ashford with the money we raise.

We want to give local people a say in how public funds are invested in our area. A community Council would be able to raise money to fund grants and initiatives, as chosen by the community. Other Local

Councils have invested in: community events, cleaning up public spaces, improving footpaths and green spaces, neighbourhood planning and community and youth clubs.

What happens next?

Ashford Borough Council will have sent ballot papers to all electors in the areas affected asking them whether they want a Community Council. We recommend that all residents of South Ashford answer "Yes".

This is your chance to gain a level of representation already enjoyed by 60% of the Borough.

The opportunity may not arise again for 10 – 15 years.

You can comment separately on the Draft Recommendations.

Read more about the Draft Recommendations and about Community Councils on page 4.



✓ Vote Yes for a Community Council

Democracy:
We want to improve democratic representation in South Ashford

Identity:
We want to strengthen the identity of South Ashford by putting it on the local government map.

Investment:
We want to invest in initiatives that directly benefit our community with the money we raise.



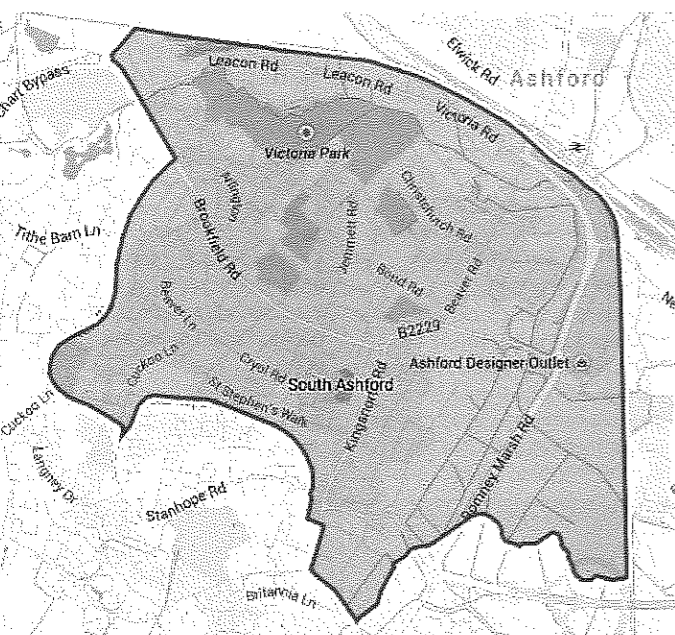
You could advertise here
e-mail forum@southashford.org.uk for enquiries

South Ashford Community Forum

South Ashford Community Forum was set up to represent the views of people living and working in South Ashford and to help communicate those views to Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and other statutory organisations. It is an independent voluntary group with its own constitution. The area it represents is that part of Ashford that lies to the South of the Charing Cross to Ashford and Ashford to Hastings railway lines, which do not form part of the parishes of Kingsnorth, Stanhope or Great Chart and Singleton. All who live or work in the area

it serves are welcome at its public meetings, which are held bi-monthly at South Ashford Baptist Church. The next meeting will be held on 17th November 2015. Meetings start at 7 pm. Those that cannot attend the meetings can be added to their distribution list and will receive copies of agendas and minutes and be kept informed of news relating to the Forum. The agendas, minutes and other Forum publications as well as news and information relating to South Ashford and the Community Forum can also be found on the 'South Ashford' website (southashford.org.uk)

New Community News-sheet for South Ashford



Area served by 'South Ashford'

South Ashford

South Ashford is the news-sheet for South Ashford produced by South Ashford Community Forum. We welcome information and news items relating to the unparished area of South Ashford. We also welcome enquiries regarding advertising. Our contact details are:
E-mail: forum@southashford.org.uk
Website: southashford.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/southashfordcf
Twitter: twitter.com/southashford
Telephone: 07546 930659
58 Bowens Field, Ashford, Kent TN23 4QW
© 2015 South Ashford Community Forum



SACF registered as Parliament Week Partner

South Ashford Community Forum has registered as a Parliament Week Partner. Parliament Week 2015 runs from 16th – 22nd November and is a programme of events and activities that connects people with Parliament and

democracy in the UK. The Forum's meeting on 17th November, during Parliament Week, will include a discussion on Local Councils and the opportunity they provide for all who live in the Community to be involved in decisions on local matters.

This is the first print edition of what we hope will become a regular news-sheet for South Ashford. We plan to publish quarterly. We have been fortunate to raise funding for distribution of this edition to every household in the area. To enable us to continue to publish we will need to include advertisements. Future editions may be distributed through community organisations.

If you

- have news or features relating to the unparished area of South Ashford for our next edition, or
- you are a local business or organisation that would be interested in advertising in South Ashford,

please contact us
E-mail: forum@southashford.org.uk

Act Now!

Do you want to make things happen and improve your community. Rather than sitting on the sidelines hoping things will get better why not get involved? You don't have to have experience, but if you have we will welcome your input.

Attend Community Forum meetings

Let us and your councillors know your views on what the Borough Council and County Council and other statutory organisations are doing or what you would like them to do.

Help to run the Community Forum

There are vacancies on the Community Forum Committee for people that would like to help to direct the Forum, liaise with councillors and other organisations and communicate with those we serve.

Help to produce 'South Ashford'

We need help to gather and compile news and information to put into 'South Ashford' and to lay it out.

Help the formation of a Community Council

We need people willing to promote the formation of a Community Council for South Ashford. During the coming month, promoting the Community Council, designing and producing material, telling members of the community about the benefits of a Community Council.

If the community agree with the proposals, a committee will be required to help the formation of the Council, including agreeing meeting arrangements, employing a Clerk, and working out a budget for the first year of operation.

Stand as a Councillor

Ashford Borough Council have proposed that the Community Council is formed of 16 Councillors. We would like each seat to be contested. You could make a real difference to your Community by becoming a Community Councillor.

Act Now!

E-mail: forum@southashford.org.uk
Telephone: 07546 930659

Choose the right care

If you suffer illness or injury make sure you make the best choice for your treatment

	Self Care	Grazed Knee Hangover Sore throat Cough
	NHS 111	Unwell? Unsure? Need help? GP surgery closed
	Pharmacy	Diarrhoea Hayfever Painful cough Runny nose
	Your GP	Ear pain Fever Persistent vomiting Unexplained pains
	Urgent Care Centre or Minor Injury Unit	Broken bones Severe sunburn Sprains Strains
	Emergency Department or 999	Chest pains Heavy bleeding Severe burns Stroke

Remember the Emergency Department and 999 are for Emergencies Only

Health Help Now

Find health help with NHS website and app

The NHS in Kent and Medway has a website and free app to help you find the right treatment, especially when you are not sure what to do or who to contact.

Whether you have a baby with a high temperature, a child who is being sick, a teenager who is feeling low or you have sprained your ankle and for many other health problems, the Health Help Now app can guide you to the service that will help you best. Health Help Now lists common symptoms for people of all ages and helps you find the best place for treatment for them in the local area. It shows the nearest services, whether they are open or closed, and provides a map of their location and directions. Health Help Now aims to help people find the right service in Kent and Medway for their

health needs, especially when they need medical help fast but it is not a life-threatening emergency.

There are almost 500,000 visits to Accident and Emergency departments (A&E) in Kent and Medway every year. Forty per cent of them do not result in any treatment. That does not mean those people are all in the wrong place. It is important for some conditions to be checked in A&E even if no treatment is needed. But national statistics suggest that between 75,000 and 150,000 of those visits to Kent and Medway A&Es could have been dealt with better by a different NHS service – such as pharmacists, GPs, or minor injuries nurses. Surveys in Kent and Medway show that between 50 and 70 per cent of patients do not try anywhere else first before going to A&E. New features available on the Apple and Android versions include a health wallet, where users can make notes about

New school to open at South School site

We are pleased to welcome, albeit for a temporary period, a new school to South Ashford. Although a new building for Finberry Primary School is expected to be ready for September 2016, the school will open this month on the old Ashford South Community School site in Jemmett Road, which has been refurbished for them.

The County Council have put forward the Stour Academy Trust as the preferred sponsor to the Department for Education following a competition and are pleased the DfE has selected the trust to run the new school. Finberry Primary School will be the fifth school within the Trust, which aims for all of its schools to be outstanding. Sturry CE Primary, its sponsor school received an out-

standing judgement by Ofsted earlier this year. The Trust's motto 'Bringing Learning to Life' aims to create an exciting and creative curriculum that engages all pupils, regardless of ability, and develop a life-long love of learning. Chief Executive Officer of The Stour Academy Trust, Simon O'Keefe, said: "I am hugely excited by the prospect of running a new primary school in my home town of Ashford. "The Trust works collaboratively across all of its schools sharing good practice, providing a high standard of professional development, one to one coaching for its teachers with frequent opportunities to observe outstanding teaching. However, above all, we have a simple rule – children come first"

symptoms or questions they may need to ask a GP, keep a list of health appointments and contacts, save favourite pages from Health Help Now and view other useful apps. Health Help Now also offers reliable health advice and links to other useful websites. It works on smartphones, tablets, and computers.

- Health Help Now for iPhone (Apple App Store)
 - Health Help Now for Android (Google Play Store)
 - Visit the website kent.healthhelpnow-nhs.net/
- Why not download it to your device now so you have it to hand when you need it?

There are almost 500,000 visits to A&E in Kent and Medway every year. Forty per cent of them do not result in any treatment.

National statistics suggest that Between 75,000 and 150,000 of those visits to Kent and Medway A&Es could have been dealt with better by a different NHS service

If you don't have internet access, or if you need medical help fast but it isn't a 999 emergency, dial 111.



You could advertise here

e-mail forum@southashford.org.uk for enquiries

Community Council for South Ashford a step closer

Continued from Page 1
Ashford Borough Council has brought creation of Community Councils for South Ashford and the other unparished areas of urban Ashford a step closer by including proposals in the Draft Recommendations published under its Community Governance Review. The following is a summary of the changes proposed for South Ashford

- that the elections to South Ashford Community Council take place in 2019
- that the number of councillors to be elected to the South Ashford Community Council is 16
- that the Community Council be warded as shown in the table below, to reflect the Borough Council ward boundaries.

South Ashford Community Council

The Borough Council is recommending the creation of a South Ashford Community Council. The recommended boundaries for the community council include the Polling Districts of NO1, NO2, VI1, VI3, BE1, BE2, BE3. 10,274 electors will be affected. The Borough Council is recommending

Other changes

Some of the changes recommended to adjacent parishes will affect South Ashford.

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Boundary

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment of the boundary of the Parish of Great Chart with Singleton to include 16-17 Lodge Close and 1-10 the Borrows within the Parish.

Borough Ward	Community Ward Name	Electorate	No. of Councillors
Norman	Norman	2082	3
Beaver	Beaver	4220	7
Part of Victoria	Victoria	3972	6

These properties are currently within the South Ashford Community Forum area.

Kingsnorth Parish Boundary

A boundary change is recommended to the boundary of the Parish of Kingsnorth with the boundary of Norman Ward. No properties are affected but it moves the boundary to the road, which is a sensible recognised boundary feature. The Draft Recommendations can be downloaded from the

Ashford Borough Council website: www.ashford.gov.uk/community-governance-review Ashford Borough Council will have sent ballot papers to every voter in the affected areas asking whether they want a Community Council. South Ashford Community Forum recommends that you answer "Yes". You can also comment on the Draft Recommendations by email to review@ashford.gov.uk or writing to *CGR, Legal Services, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL*

What is a Community Council?

Community Council is the title that has been adopted for a local council in Ashford's urban areas; they could also be called Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Councils or Town Councils. A Community Council is a great way to give residents a more powerful voice in the local area.

Community Councils have a range of powers and can provide, maintain or contribute to services. Examples include: Leisure centres, youth projects, bus shelters, car parks, community transport schemes, crime reduction measures (e.g. anti-social behaviour, CCTV), cycle paths, allotments, community safety schemes, street cleaning, street lighting and traffic calming. What community councils cannot do is take on the responsibilities of a principal authority e.g. education, transport, social services, development and building control, environmental health.

It could be you!

As a councillor you can become a voice for your community and effect real change. Community Councillors are community leaders and represent the aspirations of the public that they serve. As a local resident you can stand for your local Community Council and make a difference to your local community.

It is the first tier of local government in England. The Localism Act of 2011 gives more authority and power to local government. It is democratically and financially accountable to the community. Its role is to:

- represent and promote the community, provide services to meet local needs and improve the quality of life and community well-being.
- respond to all consultations on the behalf of the communities; they have the legal right to be informed about planning applications.
- liaise with Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and other stakeholders;
- support groups in the area, through funding, providing somewhere to meet, or by publicity.
- Do anything else that the electorate asks it to do!

How is the money invested?

The running costs of a community council include the clerk's salary and costs, insurance, costs for meeting rooms, communications (e.g. website, newsletters etc).

Community Councils can provide, maintain or contribute to services such as safety schemes and crime reduction measures.

Thereafter, the money is all invested in the area on services to be provided by the community council. These will be targeted to benefit the local community and the money will not be going to the Borough or County Council. The council's spending will be guided by what local people say they want. By law, the council has to be publicly accountable for all money spent and to keep accurate and open records.

A community council can also only do those things allowed by law and it has to be accountable to the public. This means that meetings have to be open to the public and accounts have to be published every year so that everyone knows how much has been spent and on what. Unlike borough and county councillors, your local councillors will not be paid allowances for attending meetings etc. If councillors have to attend meetings outside the area then it is reasonable that their travel expenditure is reimbursed.

When Kent County Council proposed changes to street lighting, parish councils were notified and asked for comments. Residents in the non-parished areas were not asked.

Community Councils would have been included in the consultation.

How are Community Councils funded?

Community councils are funded through a sum of money called a 'precept' – this is a separate charge which is added to, and collected along with, your existing Council Tax. The local council will decide what it will need for the coming year and that depends on what services and facilities are needed by the local community.

Community Councils can help groups in the area through funding, providing somewhere to meet, or by publicity, can maintain or contribute to services such as leisure centres and youth projects and provide entertainment and support the arts.

The average cost for Ashford Borough is £45 per year (for a Band D property), equivalent to 12p per day, per household! Whilst we cannot yet accurately assess the precept that would be sought in South Ashford, we do expect it to be below the average; probably in the region of £30.

Local councils can also apply for grants and loans. The money raised is invested into our Local community to improve facilities and services.

Would the Community Council hire staff?

Yes. It would hire an accredited professional Council Clerk who would effectively act as a Civil Servant for the Council. He or she would be supported by part time staff. In total We estimate that the five Community Councils would hire one

Community Forums do not have any statutory rights regarding planning issues. A Community Council has a statutory right to be notified of planning applications.

clerk between them.

How many Community Councillors would there be?

Councillors elected to the local council would be in addition to the existing local ward councillors who are members of Ashford Borough Council. It is possible for the same people to be elected to the borough council and a community council.

The Borough Council have recommended Community Council sizes based on guidance produced by the National Association of Local Councils. In the case of the proposed South Ashford Community Council there will be 16 Councillors

Who can be a Community Councillor

Community Councillors, in addition to the normal requirements for standing for public office, must live within three miles the area served by the Council or work within it. That is one of the big benefits of having a local council – it will be local people taking decisions for local people

Community Councils will receive a capped 15 % of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) revenue arising from developments in their area. Non-parished areas will not receive any money from CIL.



You could advertise here

e-mail forum@southashford.org.uk for enquiries



Vote Yes for a Community Council

Democracy:
We want to improve democratic representation in South Ashford

Identity:
We want to strengthen the identity of South Ashford by putting it on the local government map.

Investment:
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Give South Ashford a Voice

We believe that South Ashford can be better. And we think that the people who are best placed to make the area better are those who live here. We want to empower our community to deliver positive change and have a real voice in how we are governed. Every community in England and Wales has the power to set up a local council if they want one. There are nearly 300 local councils across Kent.

South Ashford Community Forum working together with Central Ashford, Kennington and Willesborough Community Forums and South Willesborough and Newtown Community Group
ashfordcommunity.co.uk

Be Scam Aware

In the electronic edition of South Ashford published in July we included some general advice on avoiding becoming a victim of a scam. As we have the opportunity to spread the word more widely we have repeated that advice here and give some detail regarding common types of scam.

Nearly half the UK has been targeted by a scam – that's why we took part in Scams Awareness Month 2015, to help people get 'scamaware'. If you spot a scam, report it!

Spotting scams

A scammer may:

- contact you out of the blue
- make promises that sound too good to be true – if something sounds too good to be true it probably is
- ask you to pay for something up-front – for example, they'll ask you to pay a fee before you can claim a prize
- ask you to make a quick decision by saying things like 'if you don't act now you'll miss out'. This puts you under pressure and doesn't give you time to think

Don't be rushed

- be over-familiar and over-friendly with you
- tell you an offer has to be kept secret

Don't be hushed

- ask for your bank account details.
- **Never give your bank details to people you don't know, especially people**

you meet online

- give a mobile number or PO Box number as the contact for their company- these are easy to close and difficult to trace. It may be a sign that the company doesn't exist or isn't legitimate. Check out the company's details with Companies House or look on the internet for more details.

If you think something might be a scam, don't reply – then throw it away, delete it or hang up and get further advice.

Phone scams

What is a vishing phone scam?

These cold call scams typically involve fraudsters deceiving people into believing they are speaking to a police officer, a member of bank staff, or a representative of another trusted agency.

Usually the fraudster will convince an individual that they have been a victim of fraud, and will ask for personal and financial information in order to gain access to their account.

Beware giving bank details
Never disclose the following details:

- four digit card PIN to anyone, including the bank or police
- full password or online banking codes
- personal details unless you are sure who you are talking to.

Top tactics to watch for

Another variation of a phone scam involves the fraudster persuading people to transfer money to other accounts or to hand over cash directly to a courier.

The fraudsters are known to encourage people to hang up and call their bank to verify the legitimacy of the call.

However, a phone line can stay open for up to two minutes, so the fraudsters remain on the line and play a dialling tone to trick the individual into thinking they're calling their bank.

In fact, the fraudsters are still connected and the individual is not speaking to their bank, but is still connected to the scammers.

To ensure you don't fall prey to this type of phone scam, remember that in no circumstances would your bank or the police ask you to take such actions.

These types of requests will only come from a fraudster. Our guide helps you if you think you may have given a fraudster your bank details.

Caller ID spoofing

Many phone handsets now let you see the number of the person calling before you answer.

This feature – known as 'Caller ID' or 'Calling Line Identity' (CLI) – is a handy way of screening the calls you want to answer from the ones you don't.

However, there have been growing instances of nuisance callers and criminals deliberately changing the Caller ID, a practice known as 'spoofing'. **Don't trust the number displayed.**

consumers.ofcom.org.uk/phone/tackling-nuisance-calls-and-messages/phone-spoof-scams/

Online scams

To protect your identity and cash from online scammers:

- only allow someone to remotely access your com-

DON'T BE
RUSHED
DON'T BE
HUSHED

puter if you are certain they are from a trusted source, such as your internet service provider

- create passwords which are long, unique and use a mix of random numbers and lower and upper case letters. The longer the password the harder it is to guess. A ten digit password is better than an eight digit one. Make sure you change passwords regularly and don't share them

- use antivirus software and keep it up to date. This will check for malicious computer programmes and monitor files before they are opened.

- if you buy software online make sure it is from a genuine supplier

- understand what software you are installing on your computer or phone and make sure you are using a secure site when you buy software, tablet or smart phone. A secure site will have a web address beginning with https not http

- before entering payment card details on a website, make sure the link is secure.

- make sure you leave your firewall switched on. A firewall is a security shield that stops scammers getting into your computer. Operating systems such as Windows come with built in firewall settings. They can monitor and warn you of unexpected access to your computer

- make sure you regularly install updates to your operating system and web browser.

- don't open suspicious or unknown emails, email attachments, texts or pop up messages. For example an email with an unusually worded subject heading

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/protection-for-the-consumer/scams



Pension scams

Don't be caught cold by investment scams: take your time, get independent advice. The Pensions Regulator has produced a booklet to help you understand more about pension scams and how to protect yourself against a lifetime's savings being lost: If you think you are being targeted by a pension scam

- Never be rushed into making a decision.
- Before you sign anything, call The Pension advisory Service on **0300 123 1047**.
- If you have already accepted an offer report it to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**.
- Before you agree to anything, make sure the adviser is approved by the FCA **0300 500 8082**

The Government has set up a new service called Pension Wise to help members approaching retirement or age 55.

Mail scams

Protect your friends & relatives from courier scams. Criminal callers pose as banks & send couriers to pick up your bank card. Mail scams cause misery.

- Never send money to someone you don't know

- Watch out for fake lottery letters. If you didn't enter, you haven't won!

Competitions, Prize draw and sweepstake scams

You get an official looking letter or saying you've won a large cash prize, but you'll need to pay an administrative or processing fee before it's handed over. Some of these mailings are outrageously deceptive, claiming in huge letters that you – and only you – have definitely won the top prize. Smaller letters elsewhere may reveal all you're really getting is an entry in a sweepstake, or indeed nothing at all. Scams like this cost 380,000 UK consumers £60m

every year.

How to avoid it?

Don't reply. We all dream of winning something, but ask yourself, how can you have won a competition you've probably never even entered?

Miracle health and slimming cure scams

You'll get a mailshot announcing an amazing health breakthrough or miracle treatment. These pills, lotions, creams and other products supposedly cure everything from baldness, cancer, impotency or promise easy weight loss. Around £20m a year is spent on these scam products, some of which might even cause harm.

How to avoid them?

A miracle slimming cure? Fat chance. If any of this stuff really worked, we'd have read about it in the papers. If you think you or a family member is receiving scam mail, you can report it to Royal Mail. If you have received items of mail you believe to be from fraudsters please send them to them, with a covering letter to:

FREEPOST SCAM MAIL. You can also email them at scam.mail@royalmail.com or report your concerns by calling **03456 113 413**. They will send you a scam mail report form for completion together with a prepaid addressed envelope in which to return the form with examples of the scam mail received.

The Mailing Preference Service is free and may help reduce unsolicited mail. Visit www.mpsonline.org.uk or call **0845 703 4599**.

Doorstep scams

Doorstep scams are still a big problem (13% of all scams) and often target vulnerable members of the public – stay safe and 'scamaware'.

If you want to avoid cold callers on your doorstep? Get a sticker for your front door from your local Trading Standards or police force

Never buy electricity from someone who knocks at the door. Electricity is not sold in this way by companies. Only buy credit for your pre-pay electricity meter from official outlets such as:

- **Post Office,**
 - **PayPoint or**
 - **Payzone,**
- or you'll end up paying twice.

Rogue traders – help stop them



Kent County Council Trading Standards is asking residents to report sightings of rogue traders.

Help them and Kent Police catch the rogues before they cause misery, devastation and financial hardship to you and someone you know.

How can you help?

Has a doorstep trader offered or have you received a leaflet offering the following work?

- Garden clearance – including removing tree branches
 - Roof repairs – including replacing loose tiles, repairing a leaking roof, chimney stack repairs
 - Driveways – including laying tarmac, paving stones
 - Removal of rubble or garden waste
- If so, please give Trading Standards the following information:
- Descriptions of the doorstep callers
 - Company details, name and address

- Descriptions of the vehicle including the registration number if you have it or part of it

- What type of work was offered

- Copy of the leaflet you received

Fly-tipping

Did you know that rogue traders often dump rubble and garden waste illegally across Kent which costs a lot of money to remove and is a blight on Kent's countryside? Rogue traders offer driveway and garden clearance work for a low price then dump the rubbish to avoid paying to dispose of it legally.

Not sure if they are a rogue trader?

Tell KCC anyway. You can report information to us and upload a copy of the leaflet on KCC's online sharing form www.kent.gov.uk/business/trading-standards/. You can also report it to Citizens Advice consumer service on 03454 040506.

Wordsearch

For a bit of light relief why not try our wordsearch containing thirteen words relating to South Ashford and Community

A	V	Y	W	I	L	I	C	Y	U	A	C	R	I	O
S	R	I	O	B	G	E	T	L	S	K	O	K	R	N
D	D	E	C	N	E	I	G	H	B	O	U	R	B	F
F	P	N	K	T	N	Q	F	V	Z	Y	M	K	D	U
Z	A	C	E	U	O	O	V	T	H	T	M	R	E	E
Z	V	M	M	I	R	R	G	N	I	T	E	E	M	V
U	X	M	I	D	R	E	I	O	D	V	O	L	H	O
M	O	C	N	L	F	F	J	A	A	N	X	F	E	R
C	L	Z	W	T	Y	U	Y	E	L	W	W	O	S	P
H	E	R	H	Z	P	E	B	W	H	D	E	U	P	M
N	O	R	M	A	N	I	T	S	D	H	I	N	S	I
K	Z	M	R	Y	M	H	F	Y	E	J	K	T	O	E
D	O	K	Y	Q	X	F	L	X	W	D	J	A	U	I
M	D	E	Z	P	T	V	L	Z	N	U	E	I	T	N
D	Q	Q	Z	C	T	O	T	O	N	F	F	N	H	H

You could advertise here

e-mail forum@southashford.org.uk for enquiries



You could advertise here

e-mail forum@southashford.org.uk for enquiries

Heritage Corner

Sometimes it is easy to forget that South Ashford doesn't consist entirely of estates built since 1950 and that there were people living and working here before that. We will include a few snippets about the history of South Ashford in this and future editions

Where do you think you are?

Sorry for the play on the TV programme title. The question is not about family history but about identification of the place called South Ashford. We refer to it as the unparished area, but most would say South Ashford is much larger, including Singleton, Stanhope and Park Farm. On the 1895 Ordnance Survey map, South Ashford was marked as the area around Christchurch including part of Christchurch Road, part Beaver Road possibly as far as what is now the junction with Norman Road, Torrington Road and the streets off of it. A place called Beaver is marked as being the area round the Beaver Inn along Beaver Road from the junction with Norman Road as far as what was then the Congregational chapel. There was a small settlement shown as Beaver Green where Marlow Butchers now is. Where do you think South Ashford is? Where do those from outside of the area think it is? We will post this article to the website and welcome comments.

Register to Vote

All properties receive an Electoral Registration Annual Enquiry Form once a year which lists who is currently registered. Ashford Borough Council (ABC) use this process to make sure that their information is not out of date. When you receive the form follow the instructions to make sure you remain on the register or are added. Do not wait for this form to register, you can use the online application site or by telephoning 01233 330402 if you need help registering. For more information go to www.ashford.gov.uk/electoral-registration.

What's in a name?

When we see **Beaver** associated with parts of South Ashford we think of the mammal of the same name. However Rev. AJ Pearman in his 'History of Ashford' states that in the reign of Henry II the district was owned by John de Beauvoir. Beaver is thus derived from Beauvoir.

Events

Autism Training

From **21 October 2015** Ashford ASD are running autism training sessions for parents and professionals. Refer to www.asdashford.com/training-days.html or ring 07891 648204 for details and booking.

SACF Meetings

All meetings at South Ashford Baptist Church, Brookfield Road, TN23 4EY

17 November 2015 7:00 pm
As the meeting occurs in Parliament Week the agenda will include an item covering local democracy.

20 January 2016 7:00 pm
The outcome of the Community Governance Review will be discussed

Jack and The Beanstalk

28-31 January 2016
Christchurch Amateur Theatrical Society's Performance of this panto. See www.ashfordpanto.co.uk for more information.

We will list events occurring in the South Ashford Community Forum Area that are free to participants or are provided by or on behalf of Not for Profit Organisations. Events listed here will also be added to the 'South Ashford' website.

If you are not registered you will not be entitled to:

- vote in UK or European Parliamentary elections, county or borough council elections or, if our campaign for a Community Council is successful the elections for Community Councillors
- stand as a Community Councillor
- take part in polls and referendums such as the forthcoming EU Referendum.

The primary criteria considered when deciding electoral boundaries in the UK is the number of voters. Failing to register can also create inequalities in representation.

Information

Your Borough Councillors

Beaver Ward	Jill Britcher	07456 034525
	jill.britcher@ashford.gov.uk	
	Beverly Murphy	07425 262647
	beaverwardcllr@gmail.com	
Norman Ward	Jenny Webb	01233 636939
	jennywebb@live.co.uk	
Victoria Ward	Harold Apps	01233 713161
	Dara Farrell	07902 304104
	dara.farrell@ashford.gov.uk	

Your County Councillors

Ashford South	Derek Smythe	03000 411009
	derek.smyth@kent.gov.uk	
Ashford East	George Koowaree	03000 411009
	george.koowaree@kent.gov.uk	

Local Policing

Beaver Ward	PCSO Cousins
Norman Ward	PCSO Cousins
Victoria Ward	PCSO Manning PCSO Maxlow PCSO Ghost

Telephone 101, ask for PCSO or give location to which call relates. Dial 999 for in progress emergency

Emergencies

- if someone's life is at risk, **Dial 999**
- if there is a risk of serious damage to property,
- if a crime is happening
- if someone suspected of a crime is nearby

Gas Leak

If you smell gas, you think there is a gas leak, or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance

Telephone
0800 111 999

Electrical Network Emergency

UK Power Networks

To report a power cut, or if you are concerned about the safety of UK Power Networks equipment

Telephone
0800 316 3105
or if calling from a mobile
0333 323 2105

National Grid

for a potential hazard on or near an overhead electricity line

Telephone
0800 40 40 90

Do not approach any hazard, even at ground level. Keep as far away as possible.

**SOUTH WILLESBOROUGH AND NEWTOWN
COMMUNITY GROUP**

IMPORTANT

**ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
HAVE GIVEN YOU THE OPPORTUNITY
TO VOTE TO DECIDE IF YOU WOULD LIKE
SOUTH WILLESBOROUGH AND NEWTOWN
TO HAVE MORE SAY IN WHAT HAPPENS
IN THIS AREA**

**IT IS A ONCE IN A
LIFETIME OFFER**

PLEASE DON'T WASTE IT

**ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
IS ASKING YOU TO DECIDE**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE
SOUTH WILLESBOROUGH AND NEWTOWN
TO HAVE OUR OWN**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**VILLAGES ALREADY HAVE THEIR OWN PARISH COUNCILS
GIVING THEM MORE SAY IN MANAGING THEIR VILLAGE**

**THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO HAVE THE
SAME SAY IN RUNNING OURS ! SO SAY**

YES

**YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP
ALONG WITH OTHER FORUMS FROM
THE TOWN HAVE WORKED HARD TO
WIN THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU**

PLEASE DON'T WASTE IT

HOW WILL WE BENEFIT FROM HAVING OUR OWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL ?

As a statutory body, the Community Council would have to be consulted on all Planning Applications in the area by Ashford Borough Council and a representative of the Community Council would be able to speak at Ashford's Planning Committee in a formal manner.

The Community Council would be better able to tackle those issues of concern such as dog bins, overgrown bushes and trees, litter, fly tipping, play areas, overgrown pathways and state of maintenance of rivers and dykes as examples.

As a statutory body, the Community Council would be able to apply for grant aid from other organisations to improve our area such as improvement to play areas, support for local organisations and to provide a community hub for use by residents of the Community.

WHO CAN BE A COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR?

Community Councillors, in addition to the normal requirements for standing for public office, must live within three miles of the area served by the Council or work within it. That is one of the big benefits of having a Community Council – it will be local people taking decisions for local people.

WHAT WILL IT COST

It is expected to cost less than 50p a week

VOTE



YES

TO RUNNING OUR OWN COMMUNITY

IF YOU HAVE DISCARDED YOUR VOTING FORM
BEFORE VOTING YOU CAN GET IT REPLACED FROM
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 8 – Summary of consultation responses

Responses received directly

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Parishes Affected</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Comment</u> (E = Email, F = Feedback Form, L = Letter, T = Telephone)	<u>In Favour?</u>
13 & 10.2	Charing/Egerton	Charing Parish Council	E: In support of proposal	Yes
15.1	Great Chart & Singleton – The Burrows & Lodge Close	Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council	E: In support of proposal.	Yes
15.2	Great Chart & Singleton Parish Ward boundary	Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council	E: In support of proposal.	Yes
15.3, 20.4 & 29	Great Chart & Singleton – Chilmington Green proposals including Shadoxhurst/Kingsnorth boundaries	Total responses: 3 In favour: 1 Not in favour: 1 Unclear: 1		
		Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council	E: Agree that a new parish council can't be created until there are sufficient residents, but agree with the Council that this is the long term aim. Support the creation of a Chilmington Green ward	Yes

			and the proposed. Would like to see an increase in parish councillors by 2, one for the Singleton South ward and one for the new Chilmington Green ward.	
		Resident	L: Compelling reasons why Chilmington Green should not be included as a ward of Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council. Has suggested alternatives such as a community forum to be run in conjunction with the CMO. Suggested amending the boundaries to remove Chilmington Green from Great Chart with Singleton completely.	No
		Resident	E: Writing in opposition to proposals, but suggest creating a new parish council for Chilmington Green. Responded to explain that is the long term aim of the Council.	
		Kingsnorth Parish Council	E (after the end of the consultation period):The proposed change removes the area which includes Chilmington Green and the Discovery park. It also covers the area of Brisley Farm which is naturally part of Kingsnorth, it is isolated from Chilmington Green and we consider it should remain in Kingsnorth Parish.	No
20.1	Kingsnorth Bridgefield Ward, increase in councillors	Ward Member	F: Supports the creation of a Bridgefield Ward, with one councillor.	Yes
		Parish Council	E (after the end of the consultation period): Proposed Bridgefield ward should include Bridgefield 1 as well as 2 and should have 2 councillors and Park Farm South should not have 3.	Unclear

		Resident	E: In favour of the creation of a Bridgefield Ward.	Yes
20.2	Kingsnorth boundary moved to road	South Ashford Community Forum	E: Support the proposed change, propose amending the Kingsnorth boundary where it meets the Great Chart with Singleton and Beaver Ward boundaries to the centre of the junction of Knoll Lane and Cuckoo Lane.	Yes
		Kingsnorth Parish Council	E (after the end of the consultation period):Agrees the amendment is sensible.	Yes
20.3	Kingsnorth Village Parish Ward boundary	Kingsnorth Parish Council	E (after the end of the consultation period):Boundary change looks ok but questions whether it should follow potential development boundaries.	Yes
21 & 10.3	Charing/Little Chart	Little Chart Parish Council	E: Support the boundary change.	Yes
		Charing Parish Council	E: Support the boundary change.	Yes
		Resident	E: Supports the boundary change.	Yes
22 & 20.5	Mersham/Kingsnorth	Ward Member	Support for Finberry being wholly put in Mersham & Sevington. This should pave the way for Mersham splitting from Sevington as Finberry will warrant its own Parish when fully occupied. Alternatively, Finberry should have its own ward so that it had a Finberry only parish councillor on Mersham & Sevington.	Yes
		Kingsnorth Parish	E (after the end of the consultation period):The	Yes

		Council	Parish Council has "little interest in this area".	
25 & 35	Orlestone/Warehorne	Total responses: 25 In favour: 7 Not in favour: 18 Unclear: 0		
		Orlestone Parish Council	L: In favour, but suggest using the A2070 as a boundary rather than the railway line.	Yes
		Warehorne Parish Council	L: Not in favour, concerns about the precept.	No
		Resident	T: Does not want to move to Orlestone, title deeds say Warehorne.	No
		Resident	T & L & F: Lives in Viaduct Terrace and would like to be in Orlestone not Warehorne, why aren't we suggesting moving the boundary to the A2070 rather than the railway line. Live 1 mile from Warehorne and on the edge of Hamstreet and use the facilities in Hamstreet.	Yes
		Resident	E: Does not want to change from Warehorne to Orlestone, concerned that Warehorne will be less viable and therefore less "heard". F: New residents being unable to read is not a good reason for altering the Domesday Book entry and the precept amount paid to Warehorne would be reduce which would hae a considerable effect on the viability of the Parish.	No

		Resident	L: Dismayed that the boundary is to be changed to come under Orlestone Parish. Will have a big impact on Warehorne and find Warehorne a much better Parish than Orlestone.	No
		Resident	L: Wish to stay in Warehorne, to move the boundary would mean Warehorne would lose a third of its properties making it vulnerable to being taken over. Also draws attention to the Warehorne Unknown Donors Charity, which is for the benefit of the children and the elderly of the Parish, and removing the properties would mean that they would lose out on this much needed charitable assistance.	No
		Resident	F: Would it be possible to use the field boundary to the right of the proposed new boundary to include the houses in Orlestone View in Warehorne instead?	No
		Resident	F: Agree with proposals.	Yes
		Resident	F: Don't agree, the village is small and if the changes go ahead then we would struggle to keep what we have in facilities.	No
		Resident	F: Doesn't agree.	No
		Resident	F & Online: Doesn't agree as it would reduce the Parish to an unviable size.	No
		Resident	F: Not in favour as Warehorne is a tightly knit community, a good distance from Hamstreet. Hamstreet is ever expanding and wish to remain in a small hamlet. Parish couldn't be run at the present level if smaller.	No
		Resident	F: Proposal makes sense as some of near	Yes

			neighbours are currently serving on Orlestone Parish Council.	
		Resident	F: Outrageous that we should suggest reducing the parish by one third of the properties thus increasing the precept for the remaining residents.	No
		Resident	F: Agrees with the proposal.	Yes
		Resident	F: Doesn't agree, change is suggested everytime there is a review and feels that the change in numbers of electors is total out of proportion and only to the detriment to the parish of Warehorne rate payers.	No
		Resident	F: Don't agree, boundary is quirky but is part of the history of the area and shouldn't be tinkered with.	No
		Resident	F: Agree with the proposed changes.	Yes
		Resident	F: Doesn't agree, Warehorne is small but has many clubs and activities taking place in the village.	No
		Resident	F: Doesn't agree, unacceptable to remove so many properties from Warehorne interdering with ancient boundaries and precept implications of a well run rural village.	No
		Resident	F: Don't agree, feel that if it is necessary to change the boundary then an even split of properties should be made to lessen the impact on the running of Warehorne parish at the current precept level.	No
		Resident	F: Agree as a non driver only visits Warehorne to vote, all other activities are based around Orlestone, but wants assurances that Warehorne Parish Council will not be weakened financially.	Yes

		Resident	F: Doesn't agree, only benefit of a change would be to ABC not the residents.	No
		Resident	F: Wants to remain in Warehorne and will oppose change.	No
26.1	Pluckley decrease in councillors			
26.2 & 3	Pluckley/Bethersden			
36	Westwell/ urban area	Total responses: 12 In favour: 7 Not in favour: 5 Unclear: 0		
		Westwell Parish Council	E: Not in favour following a vote at the Parish Council meeting on 22 nd October. Concerns about planning impacts, increase in the total population of the parish by 53%	No
		Sandyhurst Lane Residents Association	E: In favour. E: In favour, believe that the boundary change is the only way to protect Sandyhurst Lane residents and the wider Westwell Parish from the inevitable urbanisation.	Yes
		Resident	E: In favour.	Yes
		Resident	E: Strongly against the proposed extension of the Westwell parish boundary to include Sandyhurst Lane and Potters Close.	No
		Resident	E: Opposed to the boundary move. Sandyhurst Lane properties currently make up 17% of the Westwell	No

			<p>properties, the proposal would mean that Sandyhurst Lane would then be 45% of the Parish properties and if you include Potters Corner then that is 53%. Hard to see how the Parish can retain its rural identity and makes it likely that ABC planners will view the parish as “predominantly suburban” in nature when making planning decisions.</p> <p>Proposals would be bad for community cohesion, as Westwell Village and Tutt Hill and the rural properties would have their voices “drowned out” by Sandyhurst Land and Potters Corner in Parish matters. Does not consider that this could be adequately mitigated by warding.</p> <p>Would like to suggest that Sandyhurst Lane be moved into Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish.</p>	
		Resident	F: Yes, consider Lenacre Street should join Westwell as well.	Yes
		Resident	F: Yes, this must be kept under control, no more however.	Yes
		Resident	T & L: In favour of being in Westwell Parish. Have lived there since 1979 and identify with Westwell Parish through the Church, WI, Book Club and Westwell Players.	Yes
		Resident	Resident of the east side of Sandyhurst Lane and believes that it should stay part of Ashford. Wonder whether a more natural grouping might be Sandyhurst Lane with Repton and Godinton. Of the community council areas that are being proposed,	No

			thinks that the east side of Sandyhurst Lane would fit better with Central Ashford.	
		Central Ashford Community Forum	E: Support the proposals.	Yes
		Resident	E: Does not agree, thinks that the consultation should have been wider.	No
		Resident	E: In favour but does not think that warding the parish is necessary.	Yes
40-44	General comments on the whole Urban Area	Total responses: 3 In favour: 2 Not in favour: 1 Unclear: 0		
		Resident	E: Begrudge additional charges to fund a community council, as residents already provide substantial funds to ABC for what has become a disappointing service. If the proposals were intended as a replacement for the current council may be more supportive.	No
		Kent Association of Local Councils	E: In favour but want to see elections in 2017.	Yes
		Ward Member	E: In favour, but would like to see the areas for each council reduced in size, possibly by dividing each Forum area into two or three.	Yes

40	Central Ashford	Total responses: 7 In favour: 3 Not in favour: 4 Unclear: 0		
		Central Ashford Community Forum	E: Support the proposals for the creation of a community council for the Central Ashford area. Comments regarding the process and not being kept informed about the ballot. Believe that if community council's are not created then there is a risk that those involved to date will "melt away with disappointment". Request that if community council's are not created then action is taken to ensure that the Forums are retained and given practical support such as funding and officer support by ABC.	Yes
		Resident	E: Enquiry as to who was funding the "Yes" campaign. Response given that the Forums were independent of the Council and the Council had to remain impartial, directed him to his Ward Councillors.	No
		Resident	F: It would make no difference except higher council tax. All decisions are already made at council levels whatever we say, it would be a complete waste of money and pure bureaucracy.	No
		Resident	F: Will not be prepared for an increase in council tax to pay for this – will refuse to pay. Feel more bureaucratic nonsense to get more council tax.	No
		Resident	F: Would like to see the people of Central Ashford	Yes

			have a say in the projects proposed for that area and can have an influence. Worry that Albert Road is split in half by the boundary proposed, cutting the opinion of the community in half and to an extent reducing the community's say.	
		Resident	It appears to be another layer of local government resulting in increased bureaucracy at additional cost with no power but a voice that might be heard.	No
		Resident	The proposed area is rather large and very diverse, how does it relate to the size of parish councils?	Yes
41	Kennington	Total responses: 5 In favour: 4 Not in favour: 1 Unclear: 0		
		Kennington Community Forum	E: Support all of the proposals and wish to see a high level plan of actions required to create the community councils to ensure that the 2019 date can be met.	Yes
		Resident	E: Disagreement of the proposal to form another layer of local decision making, adds an additional and unwelcome financial burden to householders. Happy with the level of governance provided by the current structure and the work undertaken by local councillors.	No
		Resident	F	Yes
		Resident	Of the community council areas that are being proposed, thinks that the east side of Sandyhurst	

			Lane would fit better with Central Ashford.	
		Resident	Ideally to rethink the borough wards to better reflect neighbourhoods, but this should not delay current plans.	Yes
42	North Willesborough	Willesborough Community Forum	E: In favour of 42.1, 42.2 &, 42.5. Not in favour of 42.4 as want to see elections in 2017. Not in favour of 42.6 as ABC does not have appropriate knowledge to define the warding arrangements.	Yes
		Resident	T: Happy to be in North Willesborough even though she's in Aylesford Green borough ward, thinks she should be in North Willesborough ward as she lives north of the railway line.	Yes
		Resident	E: Support the proposal.	Yes
43	South Willesborough & Newtown			
44	South Ashford	South Ashford Community Forum	E: Support the proposal but want the community council to be created in 2017.	Yes

**Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 10 – Electoral Reform Service Ballot Result Report**

13 October 2015

**ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Our report of voting for the above ballot which closed on Monday 12 October 2015 at 3pm is as follows:

Question

Do you want a community Council for your area?

Central Ashford

Number of eligible voters:		9,900
Votes cast by post:	2,274	
Votes cast online:	554	
Total number of votes cast:		2,828
Turnout:		28.6%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		11
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		2,817

Result

Number voting YES	1,098	(39.0% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	1,719	(61.0% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	2,817	(100% of the valid vote)

Kennington

Number of eligible voters:		8,202
Votes cast by post:	2,321	
Votes cast online:	541	
Total number of votes cast:		2,862
Turnout:		34.9%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		4
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		2,858

Result

Number voting YES	1,522	(53.3% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	1,336	(46.7% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	2,858	(100% of the valid vote)

Continued...

The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London N8 0NW
Tel: 020 8365 8909 | Fax: 020 8365 8587
www.electoralreform.co.uk | enquiries@electoralreform.co.uk



North Willlesborough

Number of eligible voters:		7,836
Votes cast by post:	2,141	
Votes cast online:	453	
Total number of votes cast:		2,594
Turnout:		33.1%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		7
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		2,587

Result

Number voting YES	1,143	(44.2% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	1,444	(55.8% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	2,587	(100% of the valid vote)

South Ashford

Number of eligible voters:		9,220
Votes cast by post:	2,057	
Votes cast online:	352	
Total number of votes cast:		2,409
Turnout:		26.1%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		11
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		2,398

Result

Number voting YES	906	(37.8% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	1,492	(62.2% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	2,398	(100% of the valid vote)

Continued...



South Willlesborough and Newton

Number of eligible voters:		3,043
Votes cast by post:	688	
Votes cast online:	113	
Total number of votes cast:		801
Turnout:		26.3%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		1
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		800

Result

Number voting YES	437	(54.6% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	363	(45.4% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	800	(100% of the valid vote)

Electoral Reform Services can confirm that, as far as reasonably practicable, every person whose name appeared on the electoral roll supplied to us for the purpose of the ballot:-

- a) was sent the details of the ballot and
- b) if they chose to participate in the ballot, had their vote fairly and accurately recorded.

All voting material will be stored for six months.

Yours sincerely



Barnaby Ho
Head of Community Sector



Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations

Appendix 11 – Draft Final Recommendations and Plans

The Final Recommendations of Ashford Borough Council

Existing Parishes

1. **Aldington & Bonnington**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
2. **Appledore**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
3. **Bethersden**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. However, the Parish boundary would be affected by the recommendation set out at paragraph 26.2.
4. **Biddenden**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
5. **Bilsington**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
6. **Boughton Aluph & Eastwell**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
7. **Brabourne**
 - 7.1 The Parish Council has proposed the inclusion of Brabourne House within the Parish, it is currently within the Parish of Hastingleigh. This amendment is shown on Plan 1 in the Plans pack. One property and 2 electors would be affected. However, the current boundary runs along the road and this is a recognised boundary feature and to amend the boundary so that it goes around one property would be against the guidance. The Borough Council is not recommending amending this boundary at this time.
 - 7.2 The Parish Council has proposed moving the boundary with Monks Horton Parish so that it runs along Fiddling Lane. This is the Borough boundary as well as the parish, and as a result we are not able to amend it as part of this review. We could request that a principal area review is carried out but the Boundary Commission is unlikely to do this except in extreme circumstances.
 - 7.3 The Brabourne and Smeeth Community Led Plan Delivery Team have made a submission suggesting that the two Parish Councils are merged to form a new Parish Council.

This proposal has come forward as a result of the adoption of a joint Community Led Plan for both Parish areas. As part of the Community Led Plan consultation process, the Parishes sent out a questionnaire to all of the households in the Parish areas. This included a question on whether the two Parish Councils could be combined to form a single parish council. A total of 1,074 questionnaires were distributed and 248 returned. Of those 248, 222 answered this specific question and of those 150 opted to combine the Parish Councils and 72 chose the existing set up. That is 67% of the households that responded were in favour, which is 13% of the total number of households surveyed.

The villages of Brabourne and Smeeth are conjoined and the current parish boundaries are shown on Plan 2 in the plans pack. Brabourne consists of 1,104 electors and Smeeth 714.

The Borough Council is supportive of the ambition to form one Parish Council, particularly in light of the location of the two villages. However, the Borough Council is recommending that the two parishes are grouped rather than merged. A Grouping Order under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972 can be applied for by the Parish Councils at any time and does not have to form part of a Community Governance Review.

As a result, the Borough Council is recommending that it works with the Parish Councils to pursue a grouping order if desired in due course and outside of this Review.

8. Brook

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

9. Challock

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

10. Charing

10.1 The Parish Council has proposed an increase in the number of parish councillors for the Charing Parish Ward from 10 to 12. The reason that the Parish Council gives for this request is that new developments in the area, and an added workload mean that the community would be better served with more councillors. At the elections in May 2015, 8 councillors were elected and two vacancies remain, however during the previous term there were no vacancies.

The current electorate of the Charing Ward is 2,061. The guideline number of councillors for an electorate of this size is 9-10. 12 councillors is the recommended number for an electorate of 4,400, which even allowing for development in the Parish, is still significantly more than the current electorate.

As a result, the Borough Council does not feel that there is sufficient evidence to justify increasing the number of councillors at this time.

10.2 The Parish boundary with Egerton would be affected by the recommendation set out in paragraph 13.

10.3 The Parish boundary with Little Chart Parish would be affected by the recommendation set out at paragraph 21.

11. Chilham

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

12. Crundale

Crundale does not have a parish council as it has an electorate of 148, which is below the minimum number required by statute. The Borough Council has not received any submissions requesting the creation of a parish council and so is recommending no change.

13. Egerton

The Parish Council has proposed the inclusion of the properties Woodside, High Banks and Horseshoe Cottage within the Parish. These properties are currently in Charing Parish. This amendment is shown on Plan 3 in the plans pack. Three properties and 6 electors would be affected. The recommendation would affect the Borough ward boundaries of Weald North and Weald Central.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the boundary as shown on Plan 3.

14. Godmersham

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

15. Great Chart with Singleton

15.1 A previous Member has suggested that the south-east boundary of the Parish with Beaver Ward be amended to include 16 & 17 Lodge Close and 1-10 The Burrows within the Parish. These properties are currently within the un-parished urban area. This amendment is shown on Plan 4 in the plans pack. Twelve properties would be affected but as these properties have only recently been built there are no electors registered at them. The recommendation would affect the Borough ward boundaries of Beaver and Singleton South.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish boundary as shown on Plan 4.

15.2 It has been suggested that the boundary of the Parish Ward of Singleton South with the Parish Ward of Great Chart with Singleton North be amended as shown on Plan 5. 205 properties and 417 electors would be affected. This is a Parish Ward boundary amendment so the electors will remain in the Parish of Great Chart and Singleton. The Borough Ward boundary between the wards of Great Chart and Singleton North and Singleton South would be affected. The

proposal would position the boundary on a major road, which is a clear boundary feature between the two areas.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish Ward boundary as shown on Plan 5.

- 15.3 The Parish Council has submitted a proposal to create a new parish to reflect the development at Chilmington Green. The boundaries of the Parish Council's proposed new parish area is shown on Plan 6 of the plans pack.

Whilst the Borough Council recognises the need to acknowledge and reflect the Chilmington Green development in this Review, it is not possible to create a new parish area for Chilmington Green at this time. To do so would create a parish of 77 electors, which is below the statutory minimum number of electors required to have a Parish Council. In addition, there is the possibility that such a move would disenfranchise these 77 electors as they would no longer be represented by an elected body at parish level, currently they are represented by the Parish Council.

The Borough Council does think that it would be appropriate at this stage to create a Chilmington Green Parish Ward to sit within Great Chart and Singleton Parish. This could go on to form a new parish area of Chilmington Green in a future Community Governance Review once the development had been commenced and the number of electors resident in the new ward had increased beyond 150.

In order to reflect the development proposals, including the proposed Community Management Organisation, it is recommended that the boundary of the new Parish Ward is the same as the development boundary for planning purposes. This means that the Parish boundaries with Kingsnorth Parish and Shadoxhurst Parish will be amended as shown on Plan 7.

This would create the following wards for the Parish:

Parish Ward	Current Electorate	No. Parish Councillors	Proposed electorate	Proposed No. Parish Councillors
Chilmington Green	N/A	N/A	77 to rise to 1,000 in next 5 years (based on projected 400 new dwellings)	1
Great Chart with Singleton North	2,710	5	2,216	5

Singleton South	2,405	6	2,822	7
-----------------	-------	---	-------	---

The Borough Council is recommending:

- (a) That the boundaries of Great Chart and Singleton Parish with Kingsnorth Parish and Shadoxhurst Parish are moved as shown on Plan 7;
- (b) The creation of a new Chilmington Green Parish Ward as shown on Plan 8;
- (c) A parish councillor for the new Chilmington Green Parish Ward and an additional parish councillor for the Singleton South Parish Ward.

16. Hastingleigh

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

17. High Halden

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

18. Hothfield

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

19. Kenardington

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

20. Kingsnorth

20.1 The Parish Council has suggested reviewing its boundaries once the Local Plan has been completed and any new development sites identified. In the interim period, the Parish Council has requested an increase in the number of parish councillors from 10 to 12 to reflect the recent growth in the Parish.

The Borough Council recognises that it will be appropriate to review the boundaries of the Parish and agrees with the Parish Council that it would be sensible to carry out a further review once the Local Plan has been published.

In the interim period, the Borough Council must have consideration of electoral equality for the electorate of the Parish and it would be appropriate to increase the number of Parish Councillors at this time.

Kingsnorth Parish has 7 existing wards and consists of 10 councillors. The guidelines suggest that 15-16 councillors would be appropriate for the current size of the Parish. The electorate is set to increase further as the remainder of the Bridgefield development commences in due course. At the elections in May 2015, 6 councillors were elected unopposed and the Parish Council has subsequently co-opted 3 councillors and has 1 vacancy. During the previous term there were no vacancies.

The proposals in the table below take into consideration the recommendations made elsewhere in these draft recommendations.

Parish Ward	Current Electorate	No. Parish Councillors	Proposed electorate	Proposed No. Parish Councillors
Bridgefield	540	None	540	1
Kingsnorth Village	1,312	1	735	1
Park Farm North	1,603	2	1,603	2
Park Farm South	2,115	2	2,115	3
Stubbs Cross	232	1	232	1
Washford Farm	1,162	2	1,162	2
Brisley Farm	1,016	1	1,016	1
Westhawk	941	1	941	1

The Borough Council is therefore recommending:

- (a) The creation of a new Bridgefield Parish Ward as shown on Plan 9;
- (b) A parish councillor for the new Bridgefield ward;
- (c) An increase in the number of councillors for the Park Farm South Ward of 2 to 3.

- 20.2 A boundary change is recommended to the boundary of the Parish with the boundary of the South Willesborough Ward, as shown on Plan 10 of the plans pack. No properties are affected, but it moves the boundary to the road, which is a sensible recognised boundary feature.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish boundary as shown on Plan 10.

- 20.3 A boundary change is recommended to the boundary of the Kingsnorth Village Ward and the Stubbs Cross Ward. No properties are affected and no electors.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish ward boundary as shown on Plan 11.

- 20.4 The Parish boundary would be affected by the recommendation set out at paragraph 15.3.

- 20.5 The Parish boundary would be affected by the recommendation set out at paragraph 22.

21. Little Chart

The Parish Council requested through a Member that the boundary of the Parish with Charing Parish to be moved so that the properties "Memories" and Bridgend Farmhouse on Hurstford Lane are included within Little Chart rather

than Charing Parish. This amendment is shown on Plan 12 in the plans pack, two properties and 3 electors would be affected.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish boundary as shown on Plan 12.

22. **Mersham & Sevington**

Both the Parish Council and Ward Member have requested that the boundary should be amended so that the Finberry development is wholly included within the Parish. The new development of Finberry at Cheesemans Green, is located on the boundary of the Parish with Kingsnorth Parish. The amendment is shown on Plan 13 in the plans pack. 57 properties and currently 37 electors would be affected, although it is anticipated that a lot more electors will be registered soon as properties are completed.

Due to the increase in population, it is necessary to consider the number of councillors that will be required to maintain the electoral equality in the Parish and the recommendation is set out below.

Parish Ward	Current Electorate	No. Parish Councillors	2019 Forecast Electorate	Proposed No. Councillors
Mersham	880	7	<880	6
Sevington North	240	2	<240	2
Sevington South	39	1	<120	2

The Borough Council is therefore recommending:

- (a) The amendment to the boundary of the Parish as shown on Plan 13;
- (b) A reduction to the number of councillors for the Mersham ward of 1, to 6;
- (c) An increase in the number of councillors for the Sevington South ward of 1 to 2.

23. **Molash**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

24. **Newenden**

24.1 A submission was received from the Parish Council to amend the boundary of the Parish with Sandhurst Parish, which is in Tunbridge Wells. This is the Borough boundary as well as the parish, and as a result we are not able to amend it as part of this review. We could request that a principal area review is carried out but the Boundary Commission is unlikely to do this except in extreme circumstances.

24.2 A submission was received from the Parish Council to amend the boundary of the Parish and Northiam Parish, which is in Rother, East Sussex. This is the Borough boundary as well as the parish, and as a result we are not able to amend it as part of this review. We could request that a principal area review is carried out but the Boundary Commission is unlikely to do this except in extreme circumstances.

25. Orlestone

Whilst no submission has been made by the Parish Council, the Borough Council is aware that the current boundary with Warehorne has caused confusion at recent elections when electors have visited the wrong polling station because they believe they are part of the Hamstreet community which falls within Orlestone parish.

An amendment to the boundary is shown on Plan 14 of the plans pack, and suggests a new boundary. 25 properties and 45 electors would move from Warehorne Parish to Orlestone Parish. 5 properties and 6 electors would move from Orlestone Parish to Warehorne Parish.

26. Pluckley

26.1 The Parish Council has requested a reduction in the number of parish councillors from 9 to 7. The Parish has an electorate of 898 and having 7 councillors is within the guidelines for an electorate of this size.

The Borough Council is recommending a reduction in the number of Parish councillors for Pluckley Parish to 7.

26.2 A submission has been received from the Parish Council to amend the boundary of the Parish with Bethersden as shown on Plan 15 in the plans pack. No properties and no electors are affected the Borough Ward would also not be affected.

The Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish boundary as shown on Plan 15.

27. Rolvenden

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

28. Ruckinge

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

29. Shadoxhurst

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. However, the Parish boundary would be affected by the recommendation set out at paragraph 15.3.

30. Smarden

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

31. Smeeth

The Brabourne and Smeeth Community Led Plan Delivery Team made a submission, which is detailed at paragraph 1.3 above.

32. Stanhope

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

- 33. Stone-Cum-Ebony**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
- 34. Tenterden Town Council**
The Town Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the town council boundary.
- 35. Warehorne**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. However, the Parish boundary would be affected by the recommendation set out at paragraph 25.
- 36. Westwell**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make, but asked that if any changes were proposed that they had at least 2 months in which to consult the residents of the current Westwell Parish. The timetable for the Community Governance Review allows 3 months for the next consultation period.
- A submission was received from the Sandyhurst Lane Residents Association, requesting that the Westwell Parish Boundary be moved to include the residents of Sandyhurst Lane, as shown on Plan 16 in the plans pack. The residents association carried out a survey and asked the question of its 285 residents "Do you want to become part of Westwell Parish?" 145 responses were received of which 115 said yes to joining Westwell.
- Currently the boundary runs down the centre of Sandyhurst Lane and residents on opposite sides of the road are in different parishes and borough wards. Central Ashford Community Forum also recommended transferring residents of Hoads Wood Gardens and Potters Close to Westwell Parish along with those of Sandyhurst Lane.
- 145 properties and 319 electors would be affected.
- Following consideration of the consultation responses, the Borough Council is recommending the amendment to the Parish boundary as shown on Plan 16.
- 37. Wittersham**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
- 38. Woodchurch**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.
- 39. Wye with Hinxhill**
The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The Borough Council is recommending no change to the Parish boundary.

The currently unparished areas

For ease of reference we have used the current Urban Forum titles to describe each area.

40. Central Ashford

The Central Ashford Forum made a submission requesting that the Borough Council recommend creating a community council for its area. The Forum submitted details of a leafleting campaign that it has carried out where 570 people (approximately 5.4% of the electorate) said they were in favour of a community council.

However, as a result of the consultation responses received, the Borough Council is not recommending the creation of a parish area and subsequent community council for the Central Ashford area.

41. Kennington

The Kennington Forum submitted a petition signed by 1,090 electors and made a submission in support of the creation of a community council for its area.

Taking into account the consultation responses, the turnout for the ballot and the fact that in the consultative ballot only 18% of those eligible to vote voted in favour of the creation of a community council (albeit a majority of those who voted), gave the Council concern that this percentage was too low to justify such an important and long term decision, especially given the context that most of the promotional literature available to the public was in favour of the creation of community councils.

As a result the Borough Council is not recommending the creation of a parish area and subsequent community council for the Kennington area.

42. North Willesborough

The North Willesborough Forum, a part of the Willesborough Urban Forum, submitted a petition signed by 751 electors and made a submission in support of the creation of a community council for its area.

However, as a result of the consultation responses received, the Borough Council is not recommending the creation of a parish area and subsequent community council for the North Willesborough area.

43. South Willesborough & Newtown

The South Willesborough & Newtown Group, a part of the Willesborough Urban Forum, submitted a petition signed by 502 electors (15.6%) and made a submission in support of the creation of a community council for its area.

Taking into account the consultation responses, the turnout for the ballot and the fact that in the consultative ballot only 14% of those eligible to vote voted in favour of the creation of a community council (albeit a majority of those who voted), gave the Council concern that this percentage was too low to justify such an important and long term decision, especially given the context that most of the promotional literature available to the public was in favour of the creation of community councils.

As a result the Borough Council is not recommending the creation of a parish area and subsequent community council for the South Willesborough & Newtown area.

44. South Ashford

The South Ashford Forum made a submission requesting that the Borough Council recommend creating a community council for its area.

However, as a result of the consultation responses received, the Borough Council is not recommending the creation of a parish area and subsequent community council for the South Ashford area.

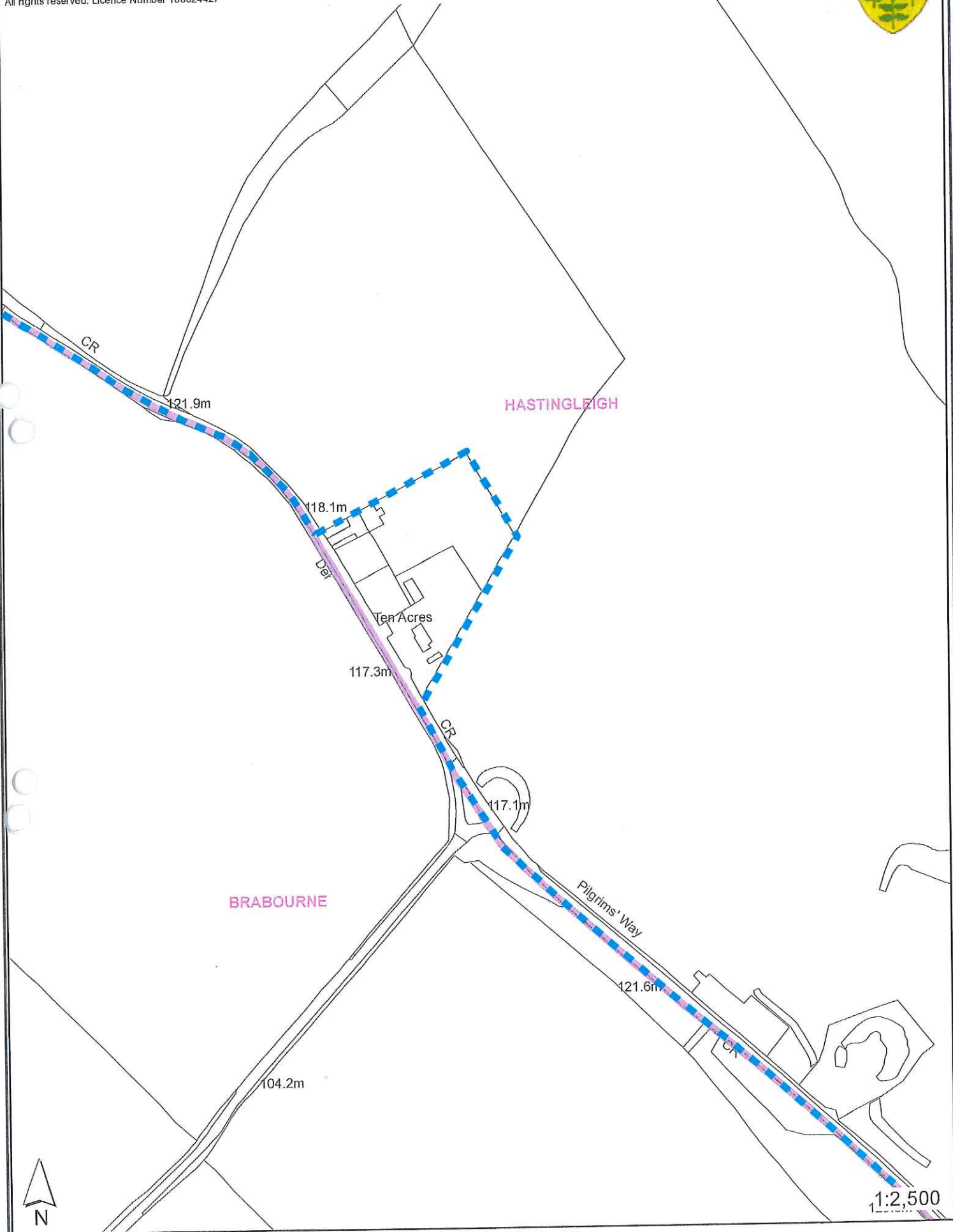
These final recommendations are published on [].

Community Governance Review – Plans Pack

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2	7.3	Brabourne & Smeeth
3	13	Egerton
4	15.1	Great Chart with Singleton
5	15.2	Great Chart with Singleton
6	15.3 (Chilmington - Parish proposal)	Great Chart with Singleton
7	15.3(a) (Chilmington - ABC proposal)	Great Chart with Singleton
8	15.3(b) (Ward proposal)	Great Chart with Singleton
9	20.1(a) (Bridgefield Ward proposal)	Kingsnorth
10	20.2 (Boundary proposal)	Kingsnorth
11	20.3 (Kingsnorth Village Ward proposal)	Kingsnorth
12	21	Little Chart
13	22(a)	Mersham & Sevington
14	25	Orlestone
15	26.2	Pluckley
16	36	Westwell
17	40	Central Ashford
18	41	Kennington
19	42	North Willesborough
20	43	South Willesborough & Newtown
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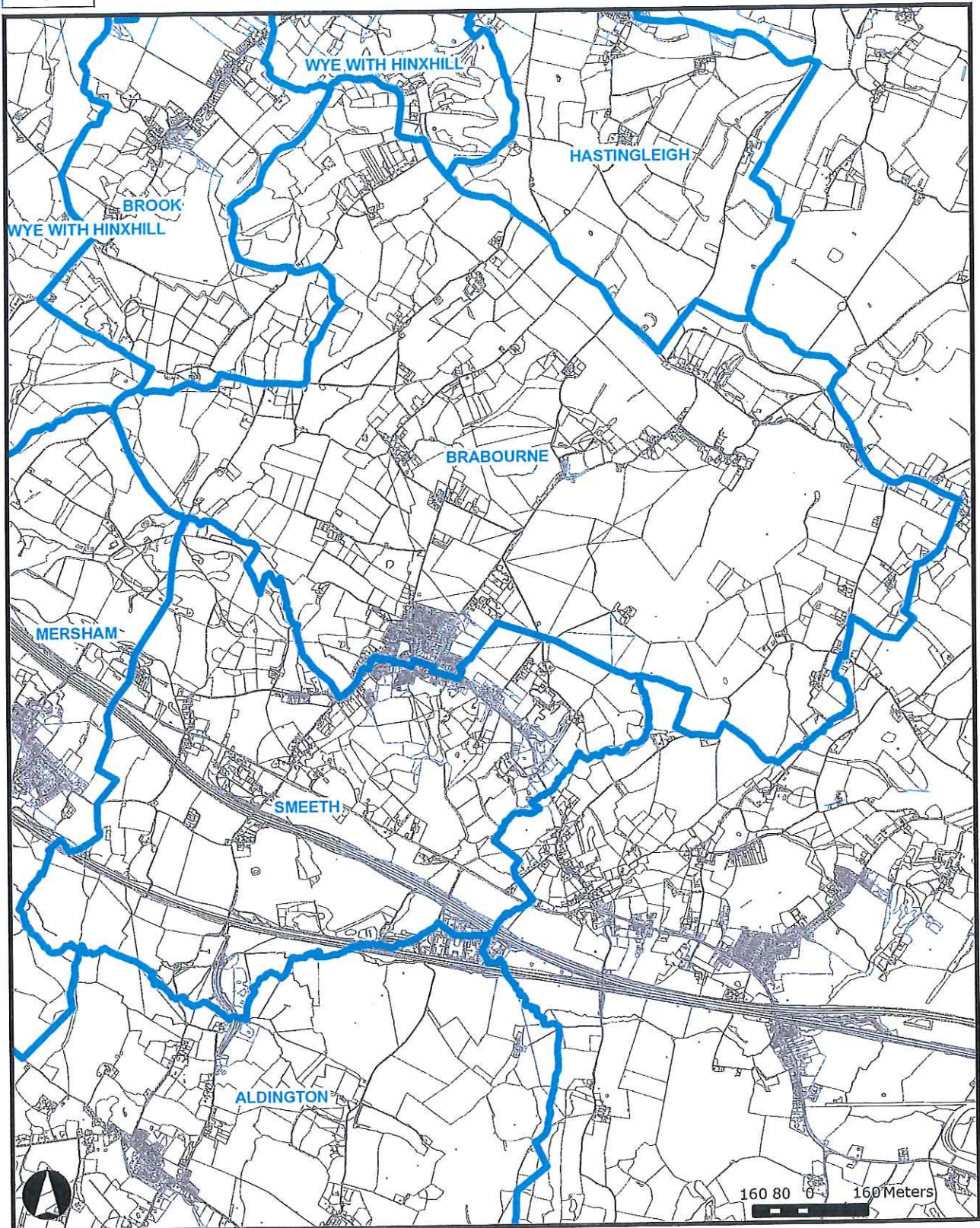
Plan 1



Plan 2



Ashford Borough Council Mapping



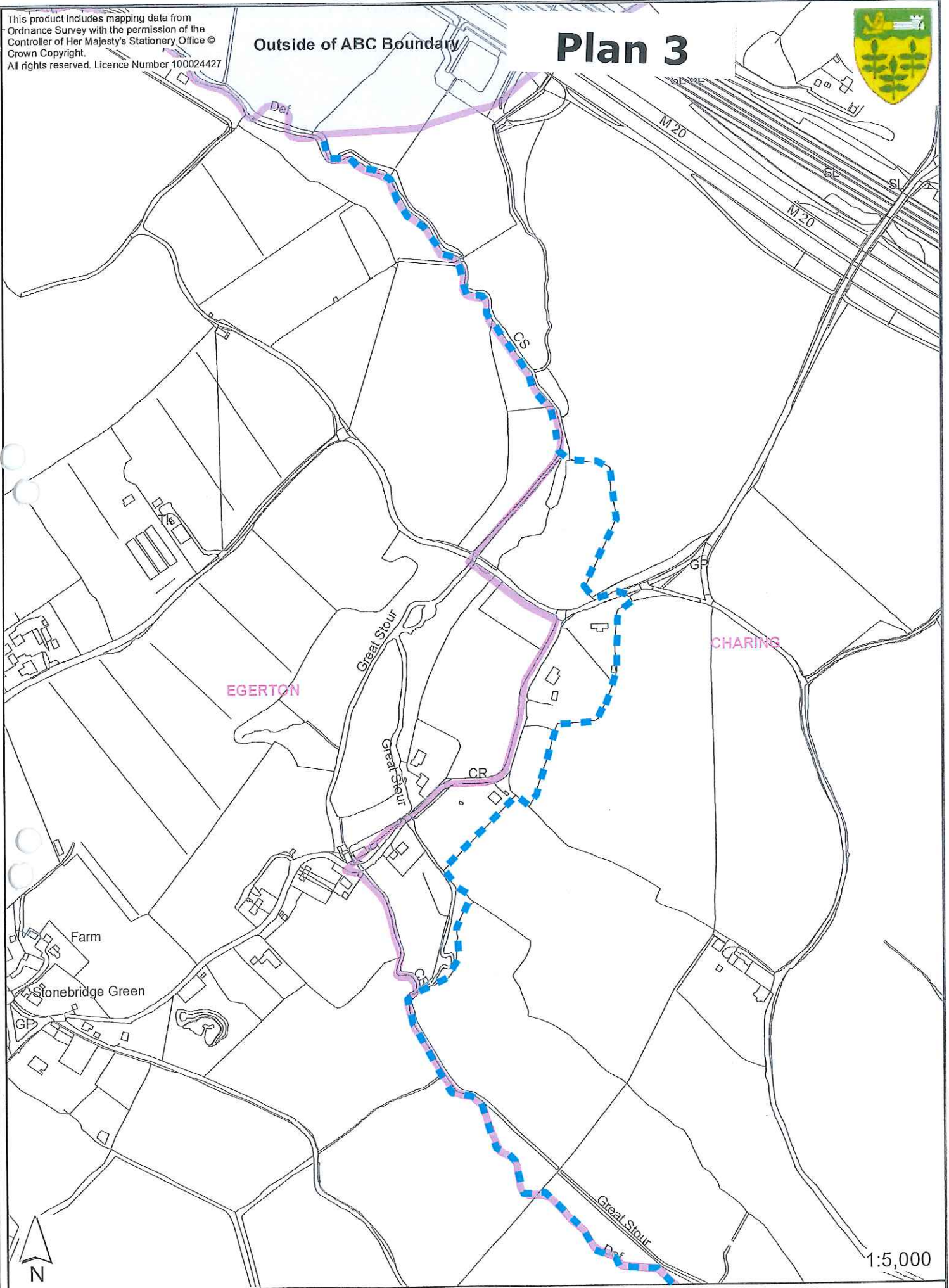
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Outside of ABC Boundary

Plan 3

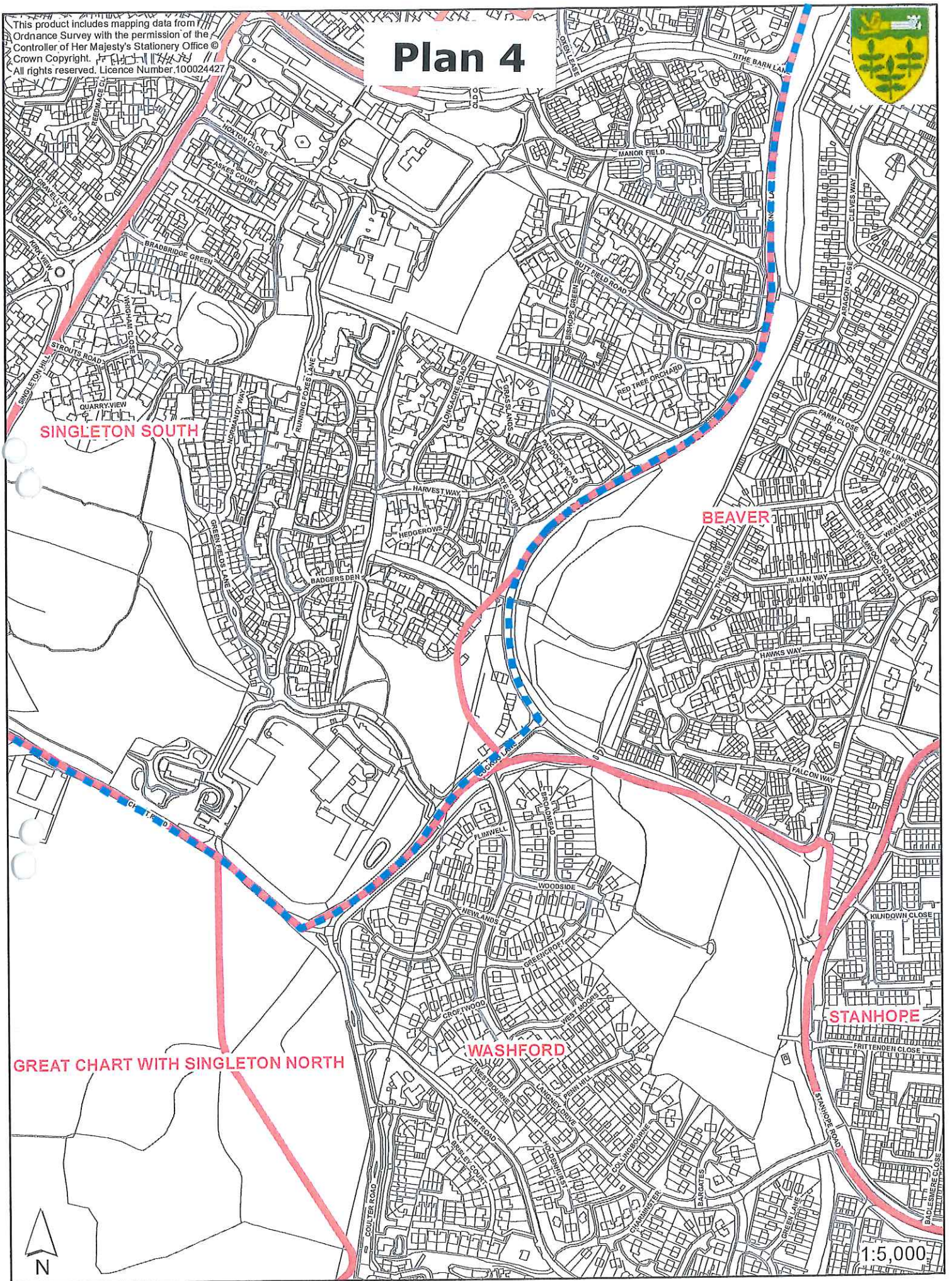


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-  Proposed

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Plan 4



GREAT CHART WITH SINGLETON NORTH

WASHFORD

STANHOPE

1:5,000

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Singleton South / Beaver

Existing
Proposed

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Plan 5



GREAT CHART WITH SINGLETON NORTH

SINGLETON SOUTH

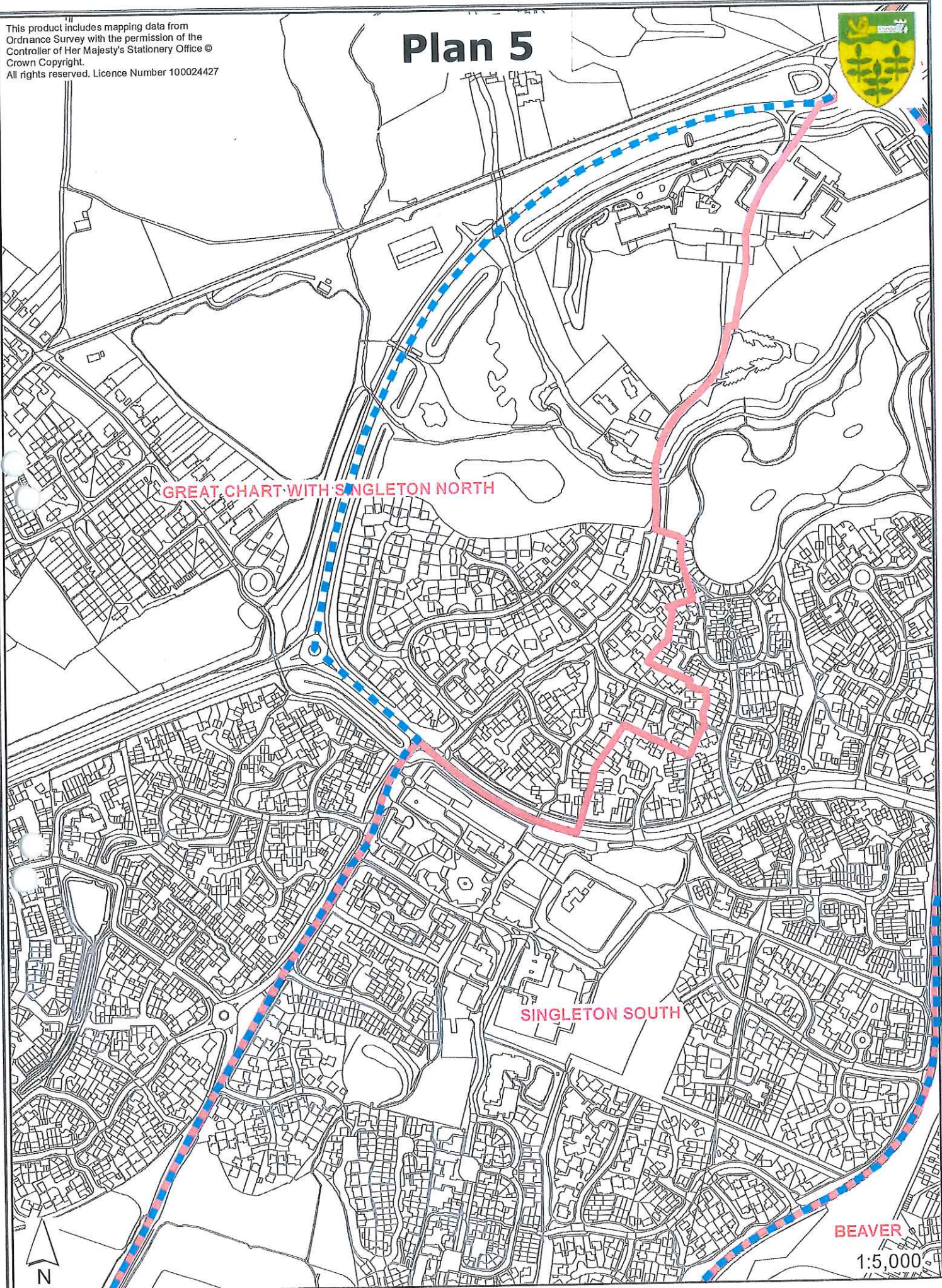
BEAVER

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ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Singleton South / Singleton North

Existing
Proposed



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HOTHFIELD

Plan 6



BETHERSDEN

GREAT CHART WITH SINGLETON

District Centre

STANHOPE

BETHERSDEN

Proposed new
Chilmington Green Parish

KINGSNORTH

SHADOXHURST

V DCHURCH

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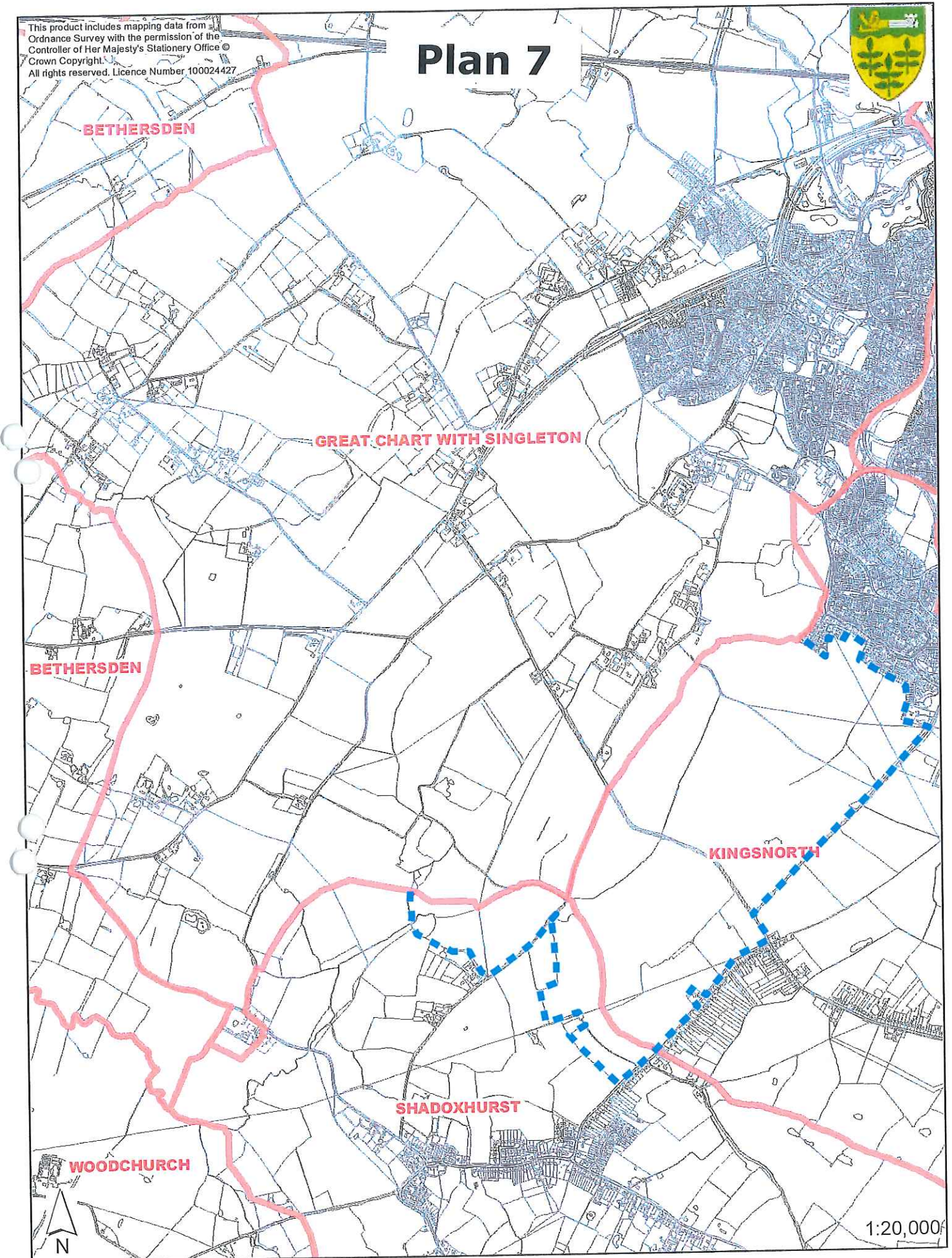
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Great Chart With Singleton



- Existing
- Proposed

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Plan 7

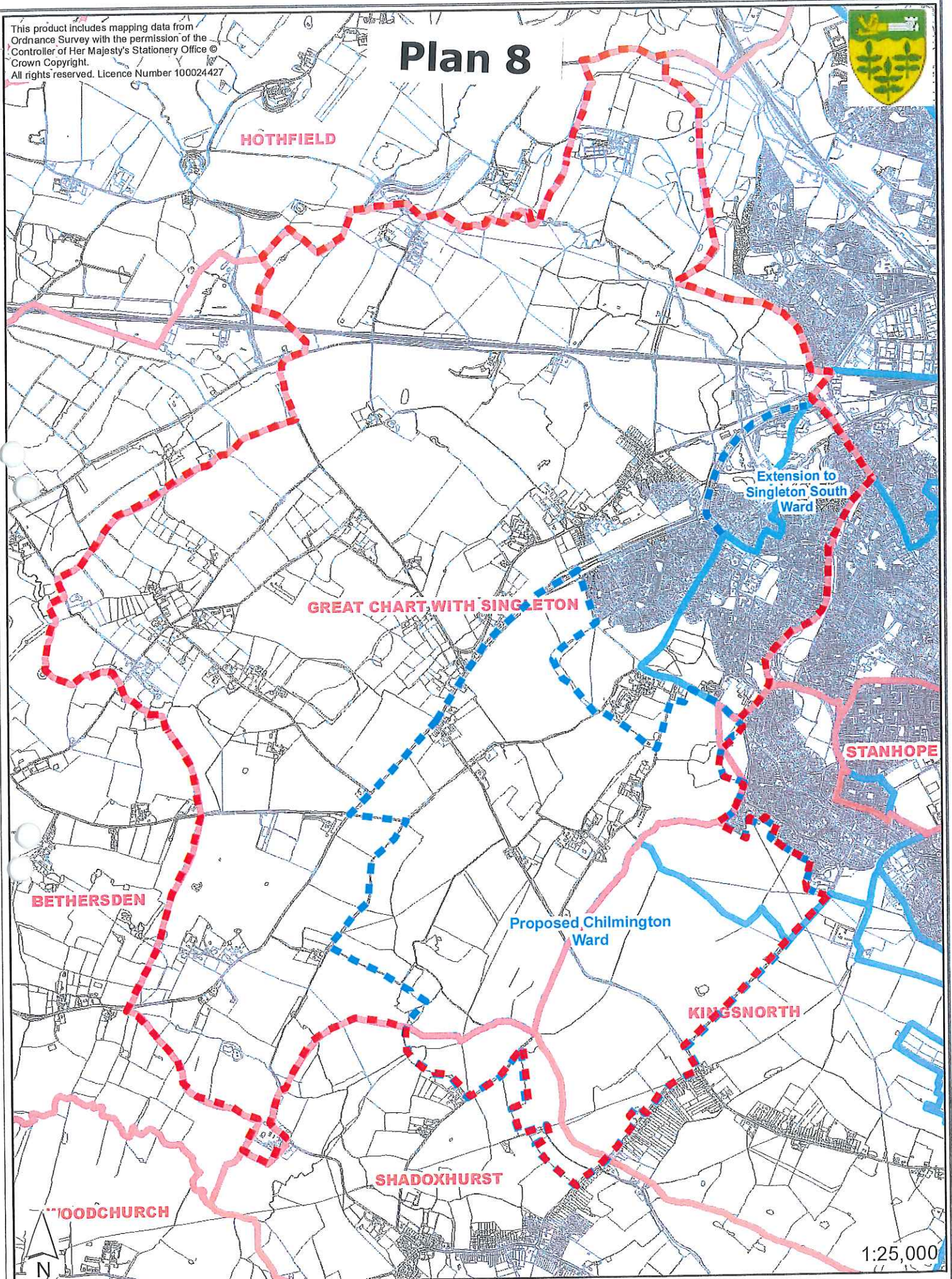


ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - New Chilmington Ward

-  Parish Boundary
-  Proposed Ward Boundary

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Plan 8

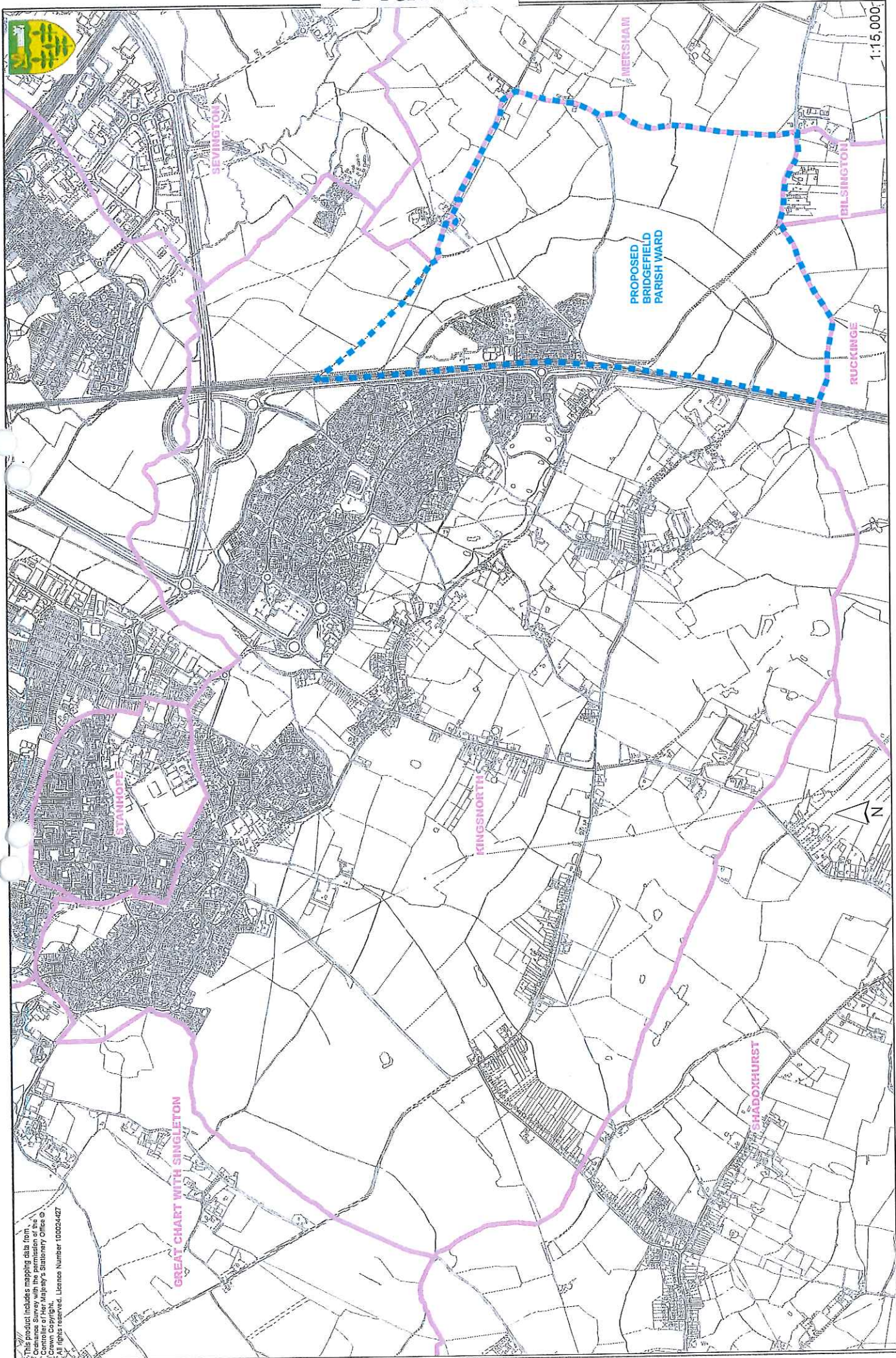


ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Great Chart and Singleton Sth

- ■ ■ ■ ■ Proposed Parish Boundary
- ■ ■ ■ ■ Proposed Ward Boundary

Plan 9



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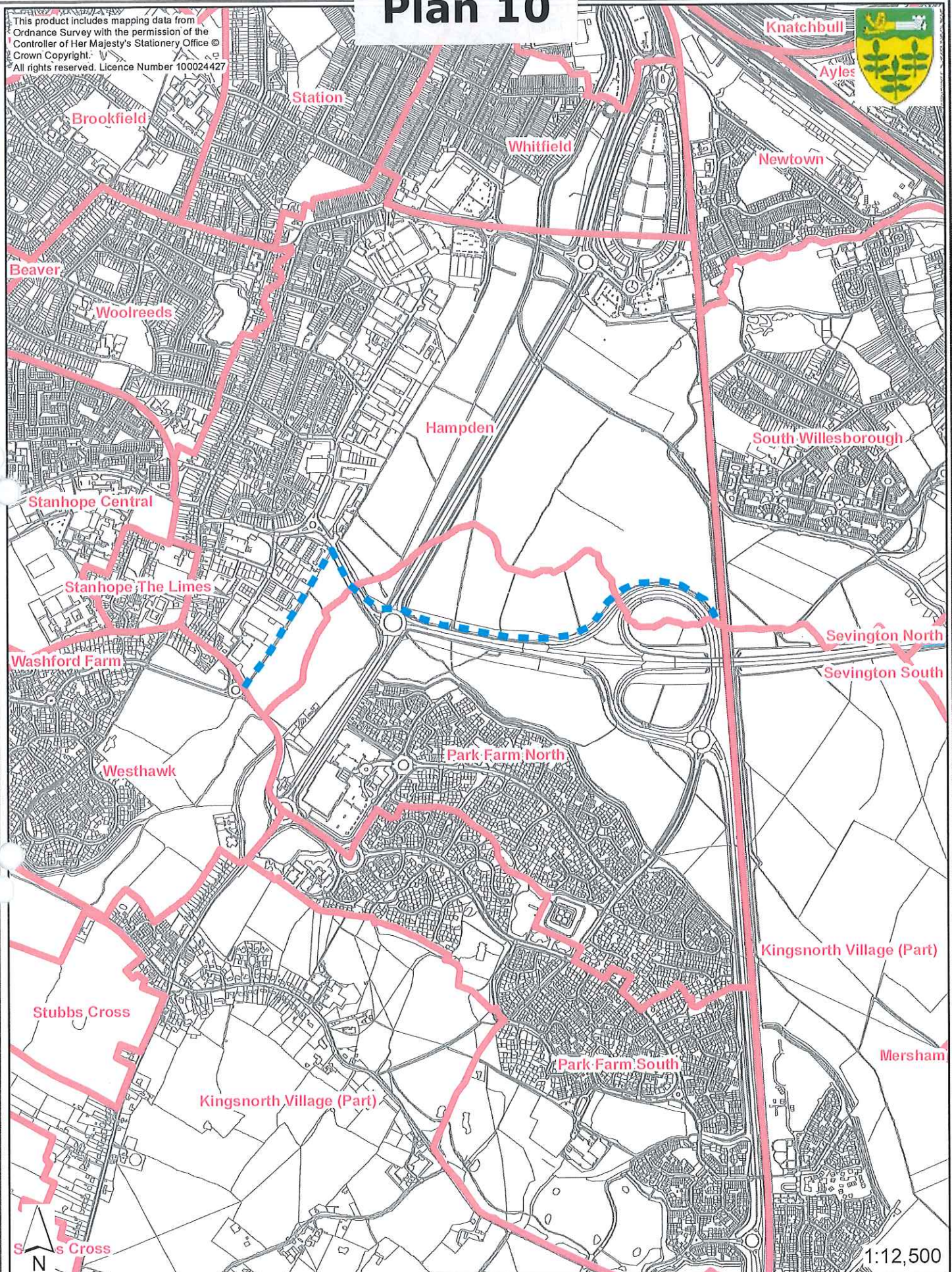
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Existing Parish Boundary
Proposed Boundary Change

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Kingsnorth / Bridgefield

Plan 10

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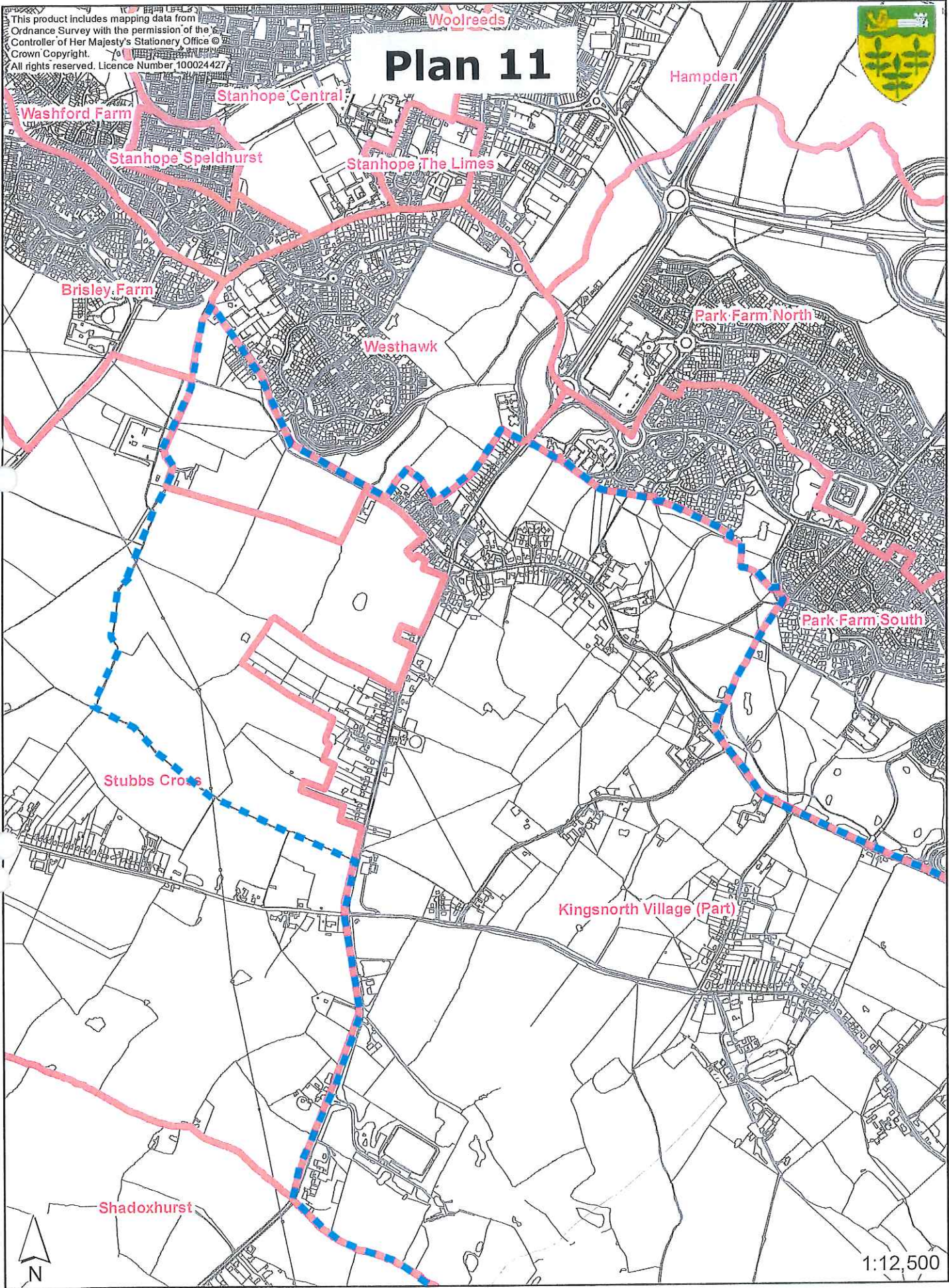
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Park Farm North

— Parish Ward Boundary
- - - Proposed Ward Boundary

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Plan 11

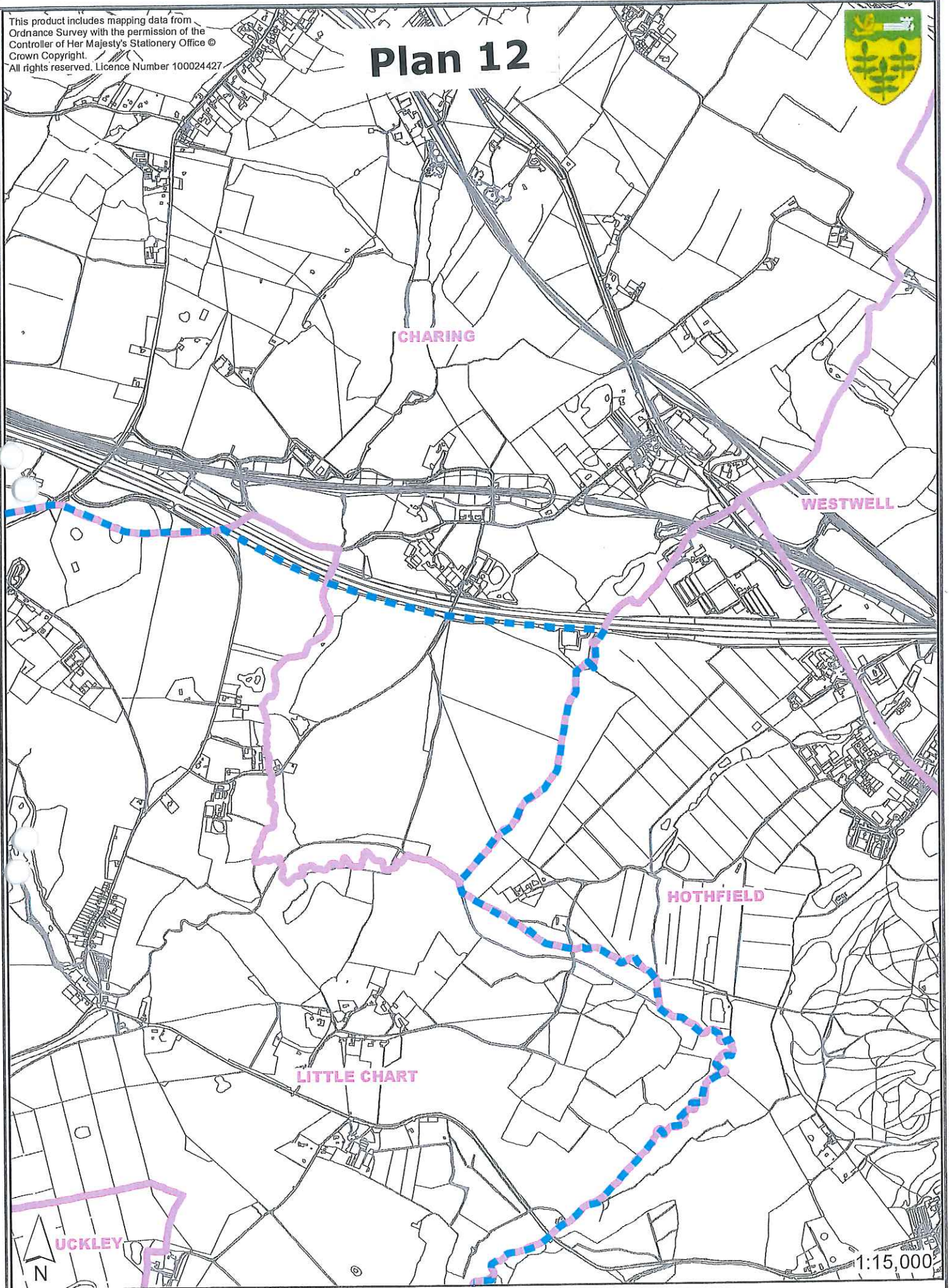


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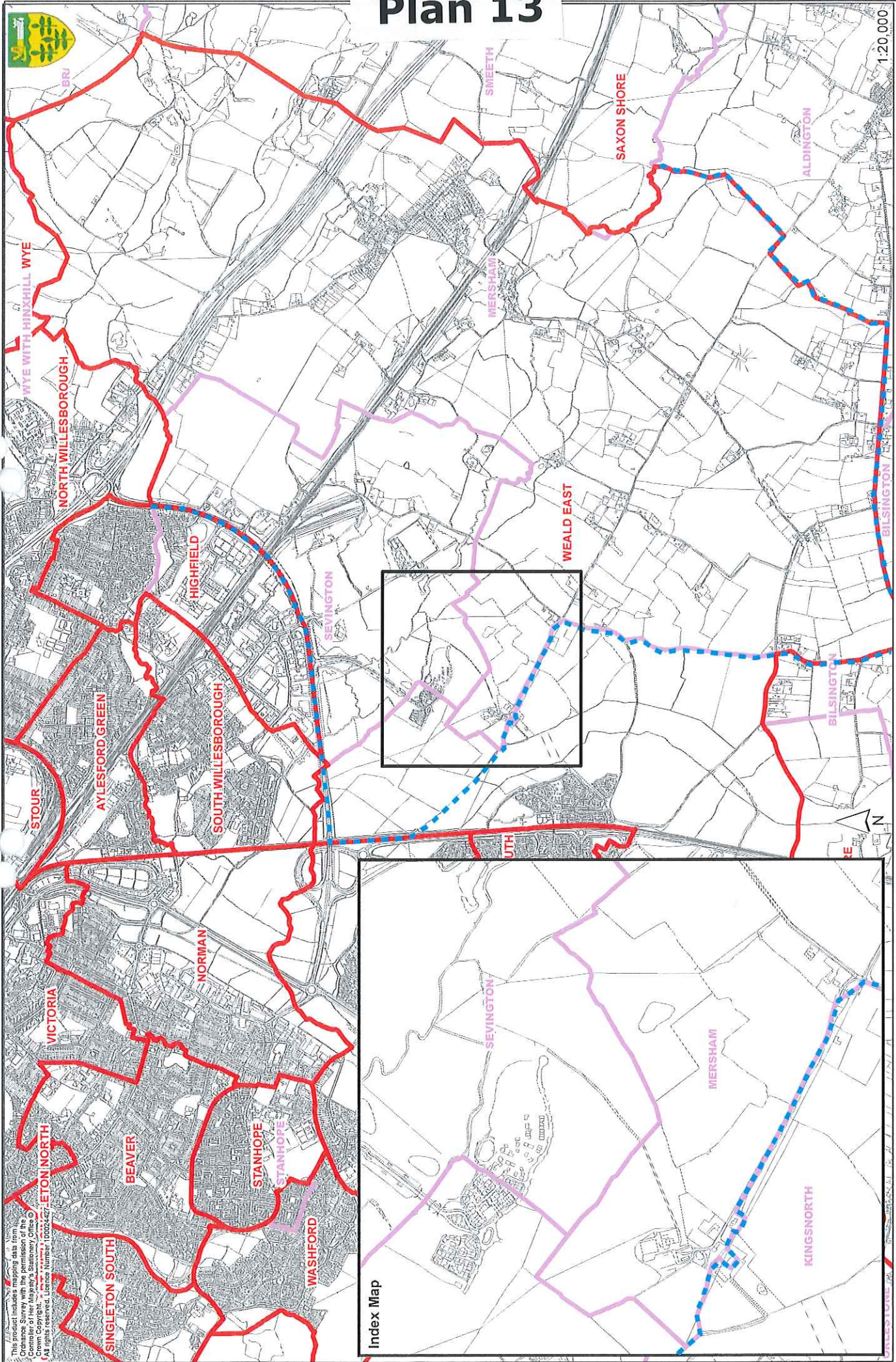
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Kingsnorth Village

- Parish Ward Boundary
- - - Proposed Ward Boundary

Plan 12



Plan 13



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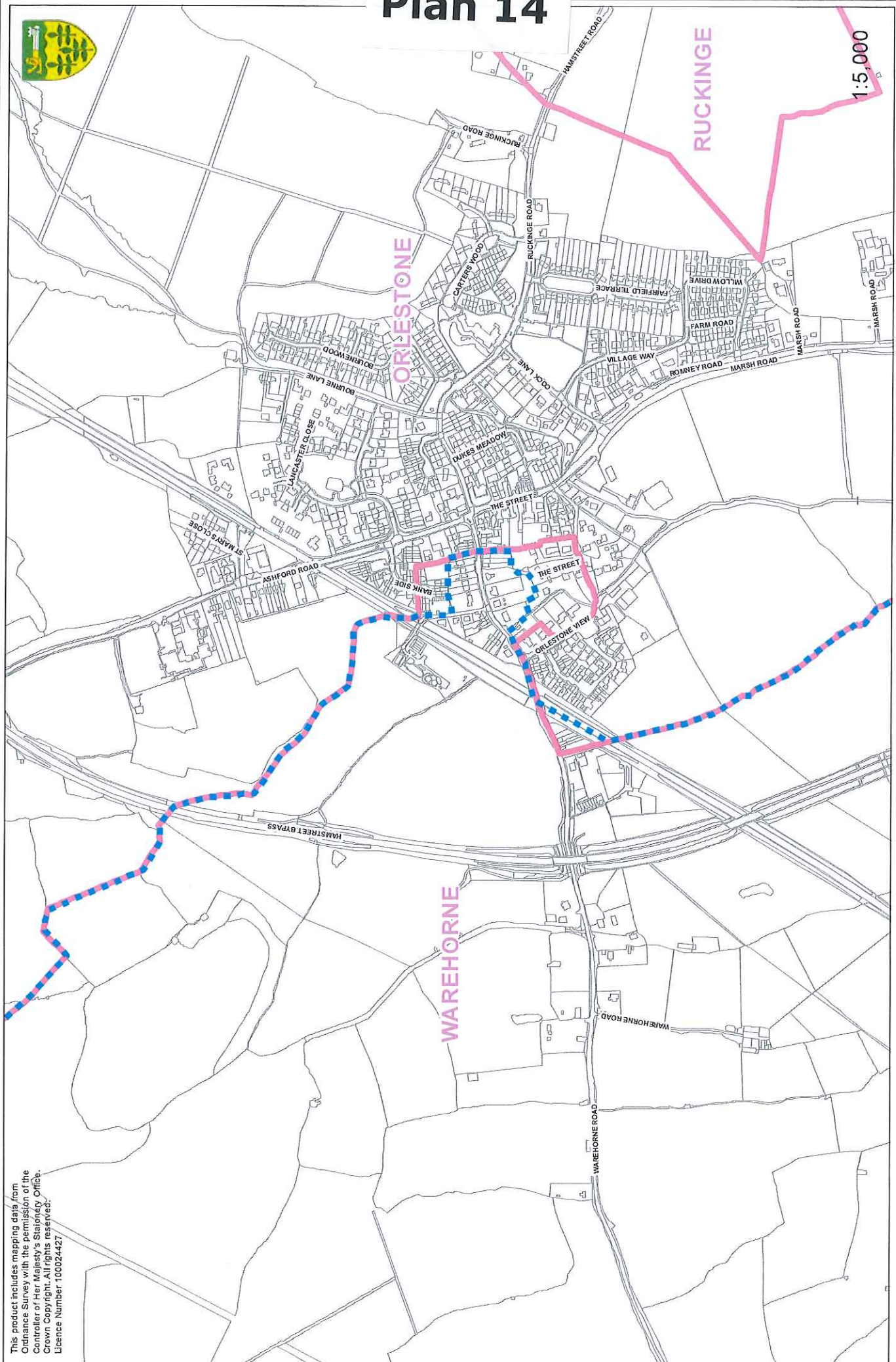
Existing
Proposed

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Mersham / Sevington

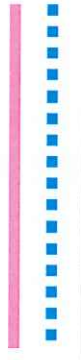
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Index Map

Plan 14



Existing
Proposed



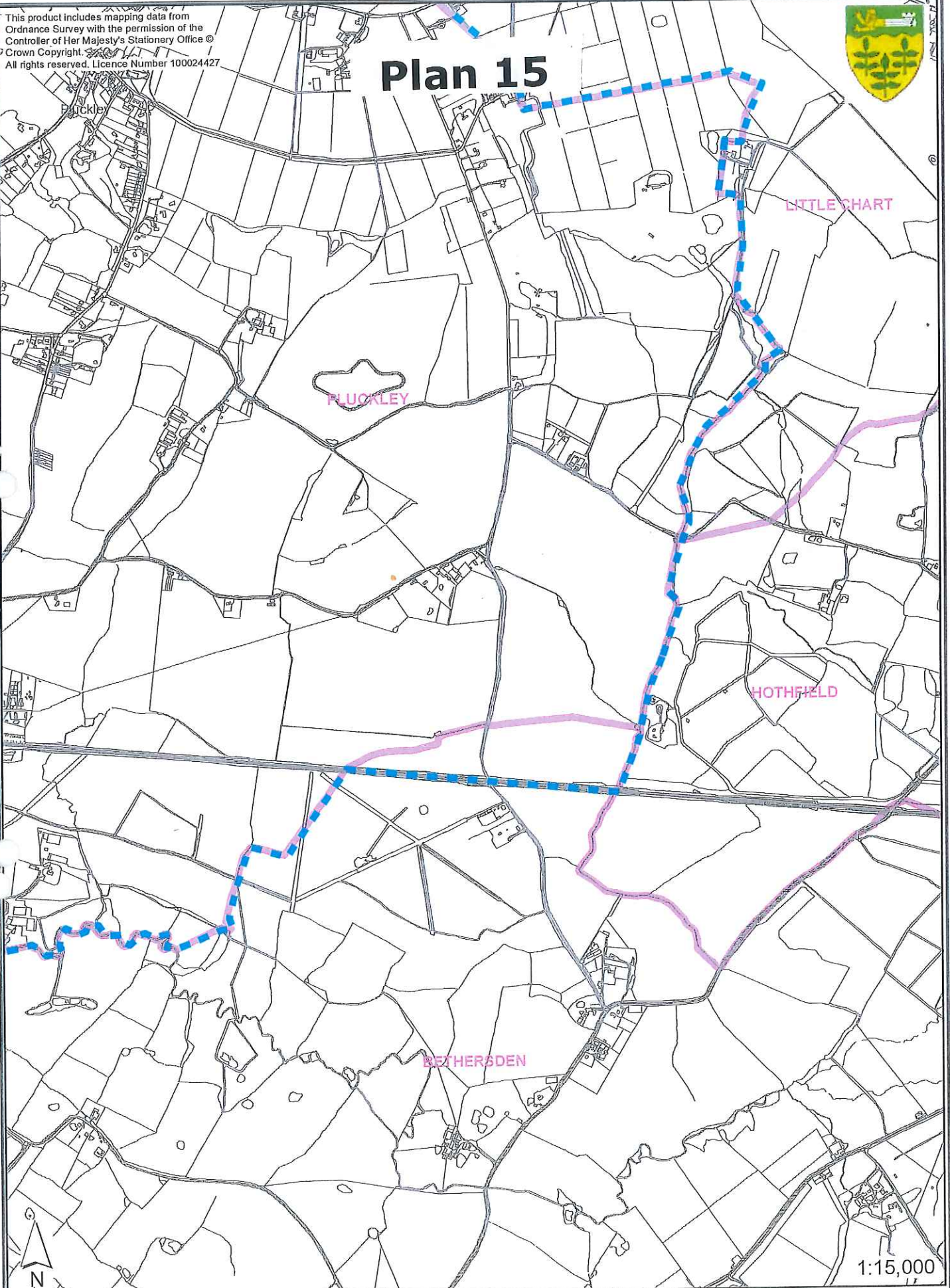
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL Proposed Parish Boundary Changes

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Plan 15



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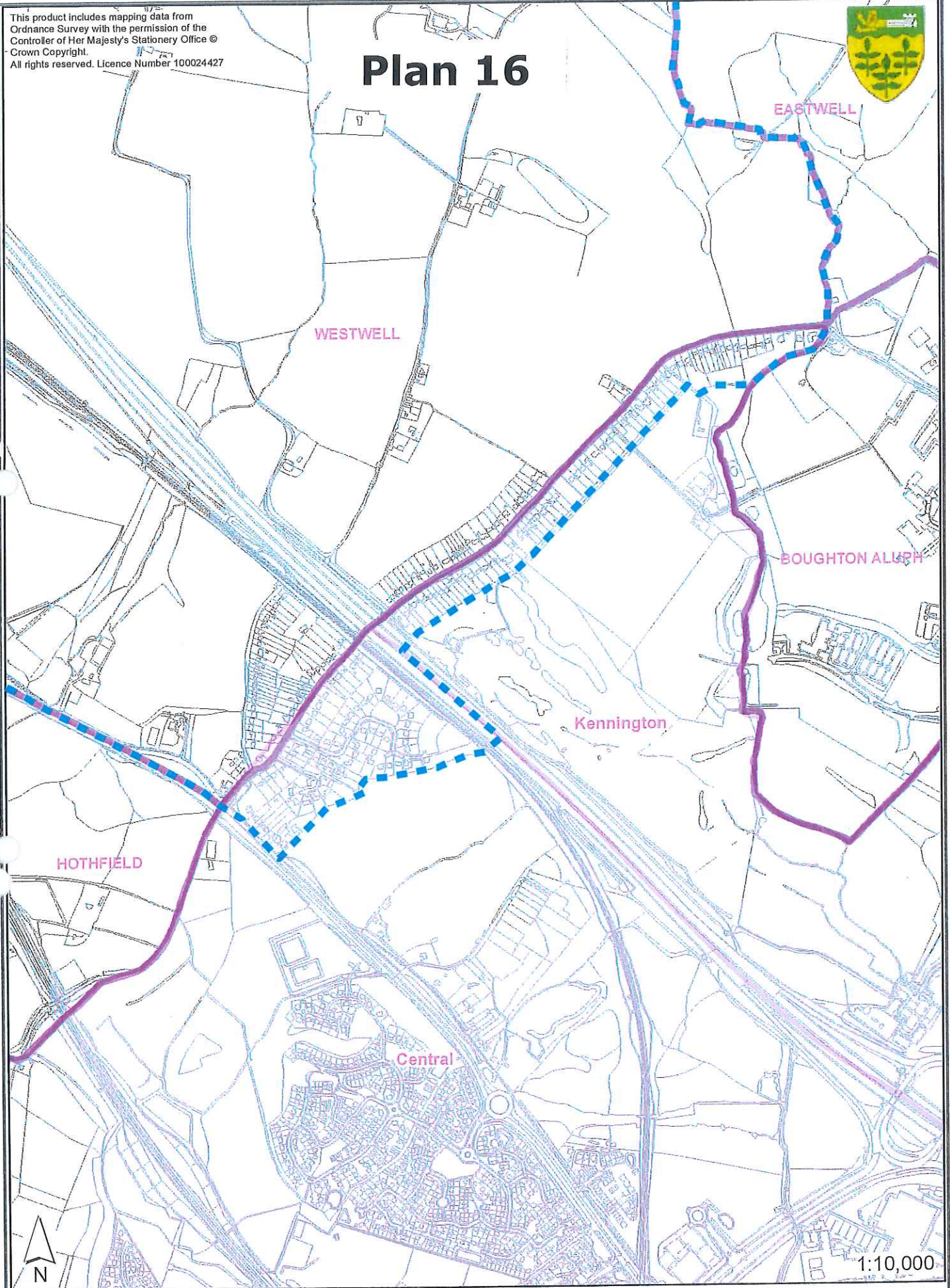
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Pluckley

-  Existing
-  Proposed

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Plan 16



ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

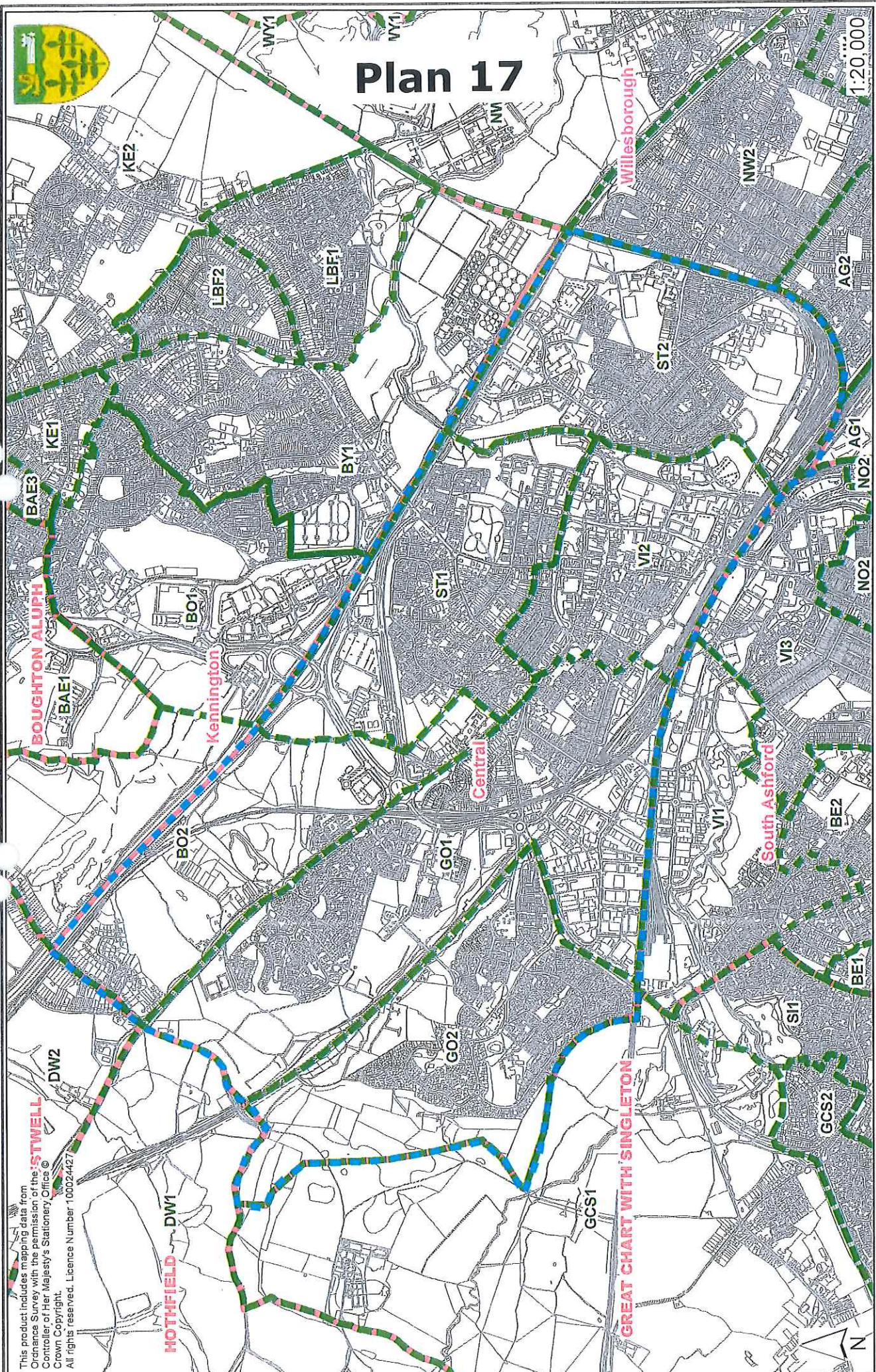
Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Westwell

- Existing
- Proposed



Plan 17

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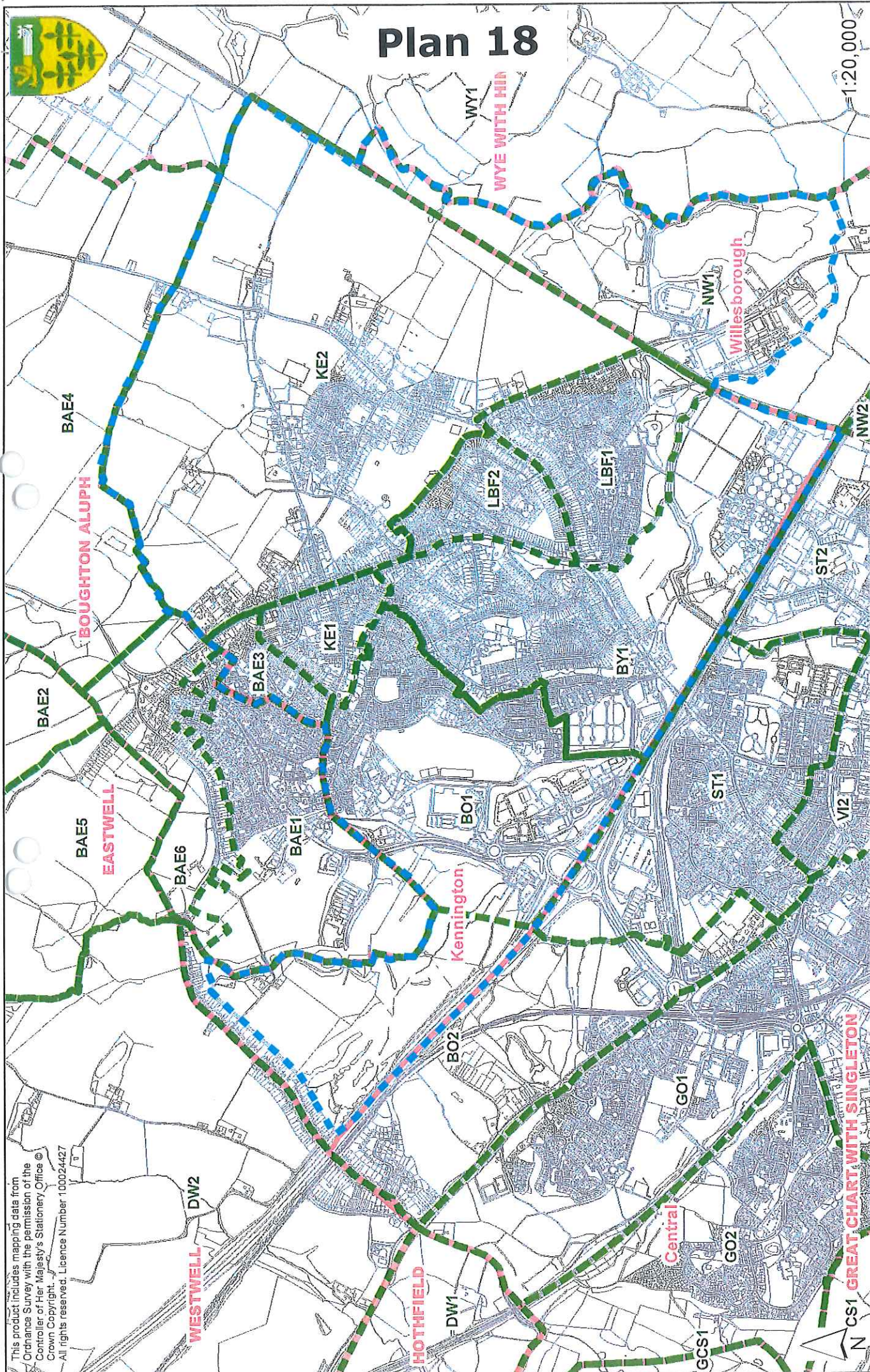
- Polling District
- Existing
- - - Proposed

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ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Central Community Forum

Plan 18

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- Polling District
- - Existing
- - Proposed

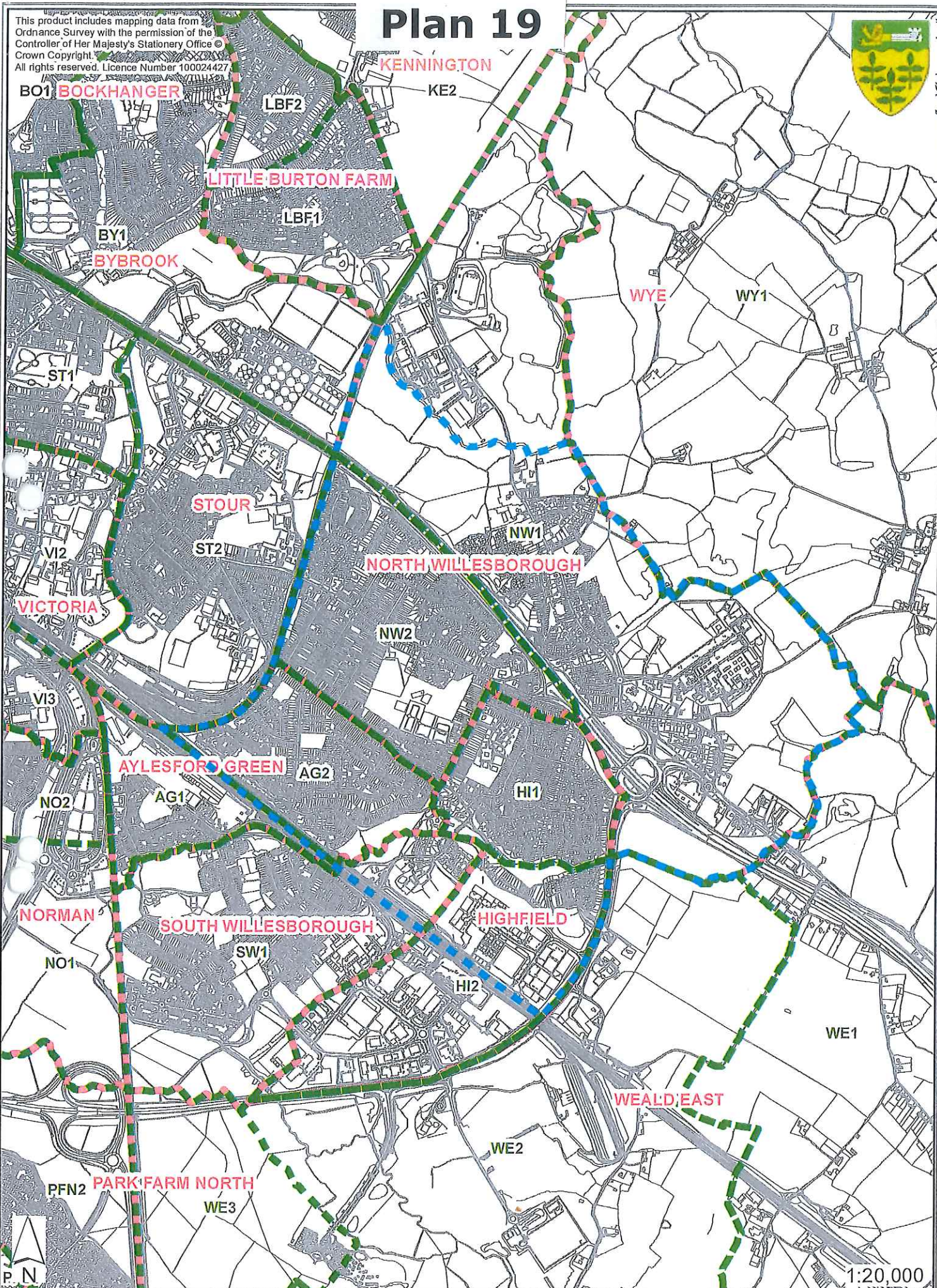
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Parish Boundary Changes - Kennington Community Forum

Plan 19



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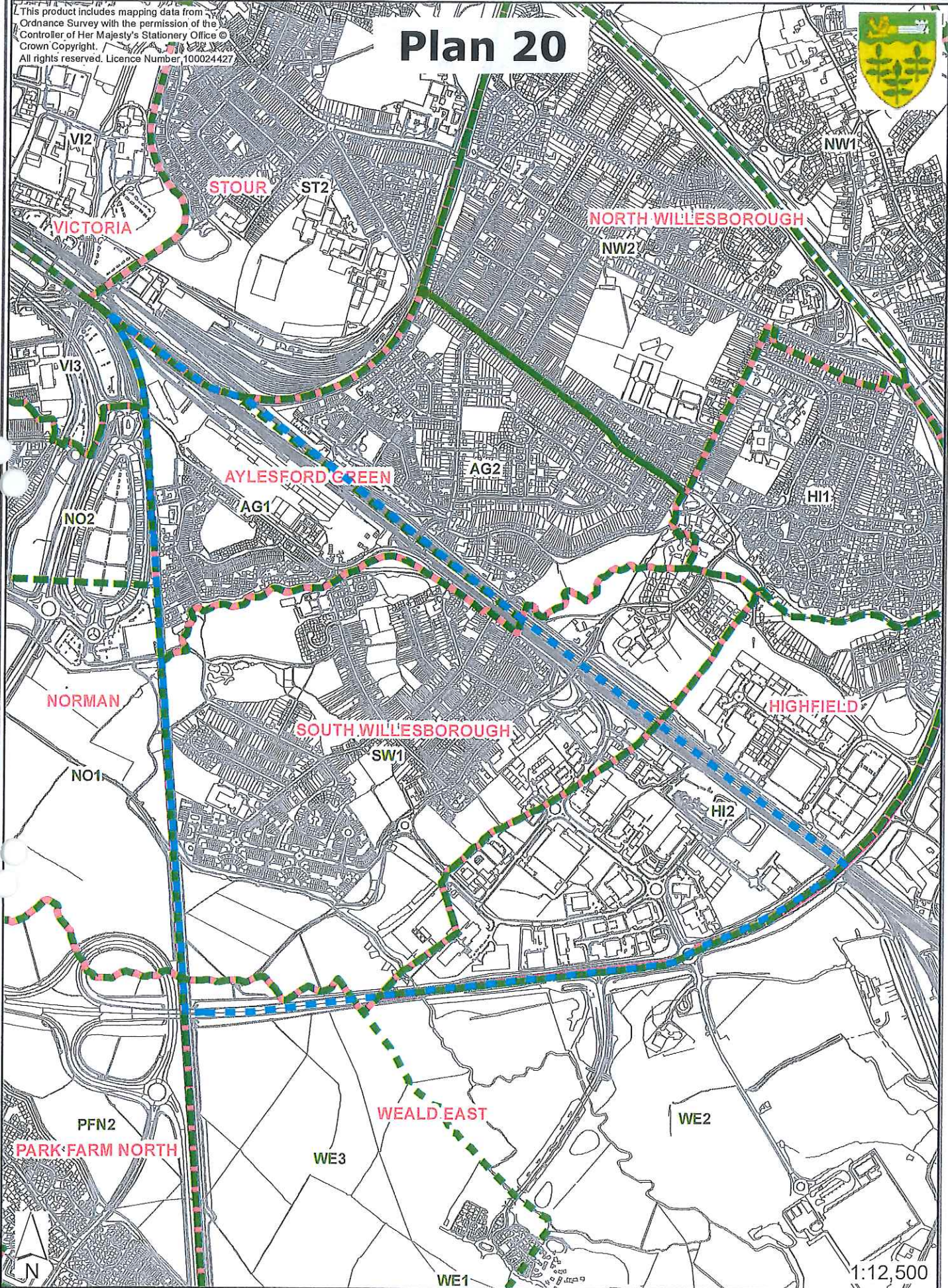


ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Willesborough North




-  Polling District
-  Existing
-  Proposed

Plan 20

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ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Proposed Ward Boundary Changes - Willesborough South

-  Polling District Existing
-  Existing
-  Proposed

Report Title: Community Governance Review Recommendations
Appendix 12 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Assessing the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics					
Does the evidence already available indicate that the decision may affect these groups differently? (please check the relevant box and provide evidence where possible)	Positive Impact?	Negative Impact?	Impact not Known	No Impact	Issue and related evidence
Impact Factors:					
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Whether community councils are created or not, there will be no particular impact for people with protected characteristics.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage / Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The changes to the existing parishes will have no particular impact for people with protected characteristics.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Religion / Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other socially excluded groups (this could include those with literacy issues, people living in poverty or on low incomes, or people who are geographically isolated from services)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If community councils are created, they will be able to set a precept (an additional charge) to residents as part of their council tax. This could affect those residents on a low income disproportionately.</p> <p>The changes to the existing parishes will have no particular impact for people in this category as they are already in parished areas so are already paying a precept as part of their Council Tax.</p>

