

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in Dover District 2023

The online response form for Part 1 of the Review had an optional section for suggested alternatives for polling stations / districts. Where this section was not completed as part of the response, there will be no entry for 'Alternative suggestions' in the table below.

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1	Nadeem Aziz, (Acting) Returning Officer for the current Dover Constituency and the future Dover & Deal Constituency, and Returning Officer for the Dover District.	Dover District	<p>In response to your letter dated 2 October 2023, I would request that the following changes be considered as part of the Polling District Review. The proposed changes are in line with the Boundary Commission for England's recent Parliamentary Boundary Review and to keep the polling places/stations within the recommended electorate thresholds from the Electoral Commission; the maps for the proposed polling districts can be viewed online at https://www.dover.gov.uk/elections</p> <p>In the event that the changes take place, I propose to use the indicated Polling Stations.</p> <p><u>Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdswell District Ward / Aylesham Parish</u></p> <p><u>Proposed Change</u></p> <p>1) Splitting Aylesham Parish into two separate polling districts, Aylesham East and Aylesham West, and keeping the currently used polling places, siting one in each polling district.</p> <p><u>Rationale behind proposal</u></p> <p>1) There has been a significant amount of new housing built in Aylesham in recent years and the Local Plan forecasts more housing on the way.</p> <p>2) Aylesham already needs two polling stations in order to keep under the maximum electorate thresholds recommended by the Electoral Commission. Splitting the area into two polling districts will allow each polling place in each polling district to have the potential to be split and used as a double polling station, thereby increasing the number of electors that can be allocated to each polling place.</p> <p><u>Proposed Polling Stations for Aylesham Parish</u></p> <p>Aylesham West – Aylesham Baptist Free Church, Dorman Avenue South, Aylesham</p> <p>Aylesham East – St Finbarr's Church, Market Place, Aylesham</p> <p><u>Eastry Rural District Ward & Sandwich District Ward / Worth Parish</u></p> <p><u>Proposed Change</u></p> <p>1) The recent Parliamentary Boundary Review has moved the Worth Village Parish Ward / polling district part of Worth Parish into the Dover and Deal Constituency (formerly known as Dover Constituency) from the Herne Bay and Sandwich Constituency (formerly in the South Thanet Constituency). The Sandwich Bay Parish Ward / polling district part of Worth Parish will be in the newly formed Herne Bay and Sandwich Constituency (The South Thanet Constituency will be reformed and known as East Thanet. No part of the Dover district will be in East Thanet).</p> <p><u>Rationale behind proposal</u></p> <p>1) The changes are part of the recently completed Parliamentary Boundary Review by the Boundary Commission for England.</p>	<p><i>Representation by Local Resident, Maxton:</i> All voting areas and stations should be free of any government interference (local or National) and fixed in a law that can not be changed by the government. As all changes appear to be done for the government in power's advantage.</p> <p><i>Representation by Martin Porter, DDC Councillor, Little Stour & Ashstone:</i> Quality of venues are variable and as a poll clerk and presiding officer I have some experience of venues</p>	<p>Polling districts, places and stations are reviewed and consulted on every 5 years to ensure that what was relevant 5 years ago is still relevant today.</p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the buildings used as polling stations haven't been demolished or changed use, • polling boundaries haven't changed as part of a boundary review, • better sited polling stations haven't been built / become available, • an increase in electorate hasn't rendered a current polling station ineligible for use, • a polling district boundary which previously ran through an empty field and now runs through several houses on a new housing estate would need adjusting. <p>If polling districts, places and stations were fixed in law – and a law that cannot be altered - these things could not be changed or updated.</p> <p>The review goes to public consultation so electors have the opportunity to influence the decisions being made, should they chose to take part.</p>

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			<p><u>Proposed Polling Stations</u> Worth Parish; Worth Village Parish Ward – Worth Parish Hall, The Street, Worth (no change) Worth Parish; Sandwich Bay Parish Ward – Sandwich United Reform Church, 12 Cattle Market, Sandwich (no change)</p> <p><u>Little Stour and Ashstone District Ward / Ash Parish</u></p> <p><u>Proposed Change</u> 1) The polling station in Ash is very close to the threshold of electorate recommended by the Electoral Commission. It is proposed that we use the main hall of the village hall (instead of the library which has been used on previous occasions) and split the existing polling station into two polling stations in the same hall.</p> <p><u>Rationale behind proposal</u> 1) A new polling district is not necessary as splitting the area between two polling stations in the same polling place would ensure no confusion amongst electors who have traditionally voted at the village hall.</p> <p><u>Proposed Polling Stations</u> Ash Parish - Ash Village Hall (Main Hall), Queens Road, Ash to be used as a double polling station</p> <p><u>Buckland District Ward / Dover Town Council, Buckland Ward</u></p> <p><u>Proposal</u> To leave polling districts BC1 and BC2 unchanged, and if the electorate figures for polling station voters increase to above recommended levels, to make a double polling station in the same polling place.</p> <p><u>Rationale behind proposal</u> 1) A new polling district is not necessary as splitting each polling place into two polling stations would ensure no confusion amongst electors. There are also very limited choices for new polling stations in those areas, so if the polling district was split, electors could then be forced outside of their own polling district to vote in what would have been the original polling place.</p> <p><u>Proposed Polling Stations</u> BC1 Buckland North - Buckland Community Centre, Roosevelt Road, Dover (no change) BC2 Buckland South - The Phoenix Railway Social Club, Crabble Road, Dover (no change)</p> <p>I recommend that all other polling districts, places and stations remain unchanged as there are no current issues with them.</p>		
2	Local Resident, Tilmanstone	Tilmanstone / Tilmanstone Village Hall	<p>Reduce need for Polling Stations in rural areas by promoting postal voting. Alternatives suggested: Much better promotion of Postal Voting would substantially reduce the need for expensive Polling Stations in rural</p>		There will always be a need for polling stations in rural areas because not everybody wants to vote by post and electors must be given the option of a polling station in their area.

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			<p>areas. The cost to parish councils is substantial and impacts council tax payers by increases to parish council precepts. I have conducted a bit of a straw poll among the elderly in Tilmanstone , many of whom are not internet savvy , and did not know how simple postal voting is ! If I had not been a subscriber to Keep me Posted I would have been unaware of this consultation.</p>		<p>Changes to postal vote applications will come into force on 31 October 2023, and anyone with an existing postal vote will need to reapply within a set timeframe. There will be a national campaign by the Electoral Commission and DLUHC and DDC will advertise locally as well. This should help to raise awareness of postal voting, although the option to choose to vote by post is given to new electors when they register to vote and existing electors on their annual canvass form, and is on every polling station poll card so the options are already made available to everyone.</p> <p>The polling district review was posted on parish noticeboards throughout the district, as well as sent out on Keep Me Posted, social media posts and a press release. More responses from the general public have been received this year than on any previous polling district reviews, so the methods of advertising the consultation have been successful.</p>
3	Local Resident, Shepherdswell	Shepherdswell with Coldred / Shepherdswell Village Hall	<p>Venue seems adequate. Alternatives suggested:</p>	<p><i>Representation by a Local Resident, Shepherdswell:</i> The current arrangement for using the Shepherdswell Village Hall is ideal. We have several new builds here and more to come it would appear; so coupling us with Coldred is ideal and keeps Coldred within this area. Not sure why we appear to be lumped with Aylesham.</p> <p><i>Representation by a Local Resident, Shepherdswell:</i> Current arrangement for Shepherdswell polling station is ideal. Shepherdswell looks like it's being swallowed by Aylesham. Keep our villages at Coldred and Shepherdswell independent from Aylesham. So many villages and Hamlets are being lost through boundary changes. English Heritage ought to be involved.</p>	<p>The polling district review can only amend polling districts, and not parish boundaries, parish wards or district wards. Each parish must be its own polling district, so Shepherdswell could not be merged with Aylesham under this review as they are different parishes.</p> <p>Parish boundaries can only be changed as part of a Community Governance Review (CGR) run by the local authority or as part of a district wide boundary review run by the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC). The next CGR is due to start mid 2025 and our most recent boundary review run by LGBC was completed in 2019. Parishes would only be merged as part of a CGR if enough people suggested / agreed with it. There are currently no plans to merge any parishes.</p>
4	Local Resident, Whitfield	Whitfield (North) / Whitfield Village Hall	<p>Perfect size and run well. Ideal distance to walk to. Alternatives suggested:</p>	<p><i>Representation by a Local Resident, Whitfield:</i> No comment to make</p>	<p>No further comment.</p>
5	Local Resident, Sandwich	Sandwich (South) / Jubilee Centre	<p>Works fine, access to it is a little tight but realistically aren't many viable alternatives. Alternatives suggested:</p>		<p>No further comment.</p>
6	Local Resident, Dover	Buckland (South) / Phoenix Railway Social Club	<p>With postal voting I haven't used a polling station for years. I didn't even realise my old one at Shatterlocks school wasn't even used anymore as it's not on above list. Alternatives suggested: Advertise postal voting particularly to people who complain about having to produce ID at a face to face polling station, it's so much easier.</p>		<p>Shatterlocks has not been a polling station for several years; the use of schools as polling stations is avoided wherever possible as it is too disruptive to the school. Changes to postal vote applications will come into force on 31 October 2023, and anyone with an existing postal vote will need to reapply within a set timeframe. There will be a national campaign by the Electoral Commission and DLUHC and DDC will advertise locally as well. This should help to raise</p>

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					awareness of postal voting, although the option to choose to vote by post is given to new electors when they register to vote and existing electors on their annual canvass form, and is also on every polling station poll card, so the options are already made available to everyone.
7	Local Resident, Nonington	Nonington / Nonington Village Hall	Perfect location as the village hall is in the centre of the village and well accessible by everyone. There is parking available and no problems for disabled access. Alternatives suggested: The existing village hall is perfect, there are no other suitable alternatives in the village.		No further comment.
8	Local Resident, Deal	North Deal (Victoria) / Salvation Army Hall, West Street	This venue makes a lot more sense for North Deal residents than the previous venue at Victoria Baptist/Community Church. Alternatives suggested: No alternative to suggest.		No further comment.
9	Local Resident, Sandwich	Sandwich (North) / United Reform Church	Alternatives suggested: All via Guildhall.		Unfortunately, the previous room used at the Guildhall is no longer available for use as a polling station, and the alternative rooms offered were not suitable. The United Reform Church is in the same area as the original station so easy to find and meets the requirements for use as a polling station.
10	Roger Loukes, Parish Councillor, Staple Parish Council	Staple / Staple Village Hall	A good site, no changes are required. Plenty of parking and the Hall is perfectly adequate. Alternatives suggested:	<i>Representation by Lynne Ewart, Parish Councillor for Staple:</i> I agree the present hall is a good size, has plenty of parking and is well lit on darker evenings. Perhaps more publicity regarding postal votes would be helpful for residents without transport.	No further comment.
11	Local Resident, Deal	North Deal (Sandown) / Golf Road Centre	Easy access for disabled; spacious hall well laid out for voting and always a friendly greeting. Alternatives suggested:		No further comment.
12	Local Resident, Deal	All areas	Alternatives suggested: To increase the uptake of our younger generation to vote, maybe looking at an alternative or an additional venue where there is more footfall, such as a supermarket? A social media platform could be considered?	<i>Representation by Local Resident, Walmer:</i> Can only speak for St. Saviours church polling station. Good access, good administration. Blunt pencil.	Although these are good ideas, they are not practical right now. It is not currently legal to vote in local government or Parliamentary elections or referendums electronically, so a social media platform as a method of voting cannot be considered at this time. Polling stations are currently run as a paper based administration, and in line with the law, people are allocated to a particular polling station within a polling district. A register of electors entitled to vote there is used to mark off electors as they vote, to ensure they only vote once. Although it is possible to use a supermarket as a polling station, only people allowed to vote at that particular polling station would be able to enter, as entry to a polling station is restricted to the Returning Officer's staff and people casting their vote. Unfortunately, portacabins in a supermarket car park do not fit the criteria for a polling station as they have no toilet facilities for staff who cannot leave the polling station during their 16 hour shift and do not fit with the new Elections Act requirements for being disabled access friendly.
13	Local Resident, Sandwich	Sandwich (North)/ United Reform	This is a convenient location, but it is not as accessible for disabled people as the previous polling station in the Guildhall.		As mentioned above, the previous room used at the Guildhall is no longer available for use as a

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		Church	Alternatives suggested: Guildhall - in the previous location.		polling station, and the alternative rooms offered were not suitable. The United Reform Church was the best alternative in the area.
14	Local Resident, Dover	St Radigund's Town (Baptist Church Hall) & Tower Hamlets West (One Church, Noah's Ark Road)	Both venues are easily accessible with sufficient parking and access for all. Facilities are good for both voters and the teams running the polling stations. Plenty of room, not overlooked or at risk of anyone feeling viewed during the process. Would recommend both for continued use. Alternatives suggested: I don't think there are any better options than those already in use		No further comment.
15	Local Resident, Lydden	Lydden / Lydden Village Hall	This is an excellent location for a Polling Station for those with cars, it has parking and level access to the building although requires walking up from the car park which could be difficult for those with walking difficulties or in a wheelchair. For walkers the last part of Canterbury Road needed to walk along does not have a footpath on either side. Crossing from the side of the road where the path ends, cars travel notoriously "fast" despite the 30mph speed limit which starts approx. 300 yards prior to this point. Alternatives suggested: No, only traffic calming to the area which is discussed on a regular basis but so far has not come to any suitable or successful resolution.		No further comment.
16	Local Resident, Dover	Buckland (South) / Phoenix Railway Social Club	This is far too far from my house to make voting accessible. Why can't we have a polling station at Charlton School as we used to have or at least at a venue within 15 minutes walking distance. Alternatives suggested: Charlton School, St Edmunds School hall, St Richard's school, Charlton church hall	<i>Representation by a Local Resident, Buckland South;</i> As mentioned Phoenix Club is not user friendly for those who have to travel either on foot or by car in order to cast their vote. Parking is charged and access to site by car is dangerous due to narrow access and restricted view due to parked cars. Also same entrance/exit is used by cars and pedestrians. An accident waiting to happen. As a resident living nearer town the distance & access issues are enough to put people off voting. Charlton Primary, St Edmunds, Barton primary, Shatterlocks are ideal for access & locality or maybe the church hall off Frith road or Girls Grammar sites.	Shatterlocks School has previously been used as a polling station for Buckland, but as mentioned previously, the use of schools is avoided where possible, because the schools find it too disruptive to be used as polling stations. St Richard's School is in the Town & Castle Ward / polling district, and Barton Primary, Dover Girls Grammar School and Charlton Church Hall are in the St Radigund's Ward / polling district, rather than Buckland, so they are precluded from consideration. Unfortunately, Buckland South is a long thin polling district/ward, and there are no suitable alternative polling stations in the middle of the polling district, so with an absence of other non-school options within the polling district, the Phoenix Railway Club is the best option for a DDA compliant polling station with free parking.
17	Local Resident, Wingham	Wingham/Wingham Village Hall	Good appropriate venue. Alternatives suggested: No		No further comment.
18	Local Resident, Dover	St Radigund's (West)/ St Radigund's Community Centre	I have a postal vote. Alternatives suggested: Should I not have a postal vote St Radigunds School would be much more convenient for me.		As mentioned in previous responses, where possible, the use of schools is avoided to prevent disruption to children's education. St Radigund's Community Centre is the best option for a polling station within the St Radigund's (West) polling district/ward.
19	Local Resident, Deal	Middle Deal (Park) / Linwood Youth Centre	Great difficulty finding it. One website showed it somewhere along Mill Road towards Tesco. I found it after I decided to give up and go home. As Conservatives were low in the polls, I thought it was a deliberate policy. Alternatives suggested: I am a new resident. Perhaps the name is wrong. You would have to be a long term resident to know where it is.		Victoria Park is a large site and other buildings share the space so an extra descriptive line on the poll card address could be useful for people who are new to the area. We will amend it to read 'Dover Youth Hub, Linwood Youth Centre, Nr Tides Leisure Centre, Park Avenue, Deal'. We can supply the polling staff with more polling station signs as well. You do not mention which website you tried, but there used to be a Linwood Youth Club along Mill Road, so the map

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					used may have pointed to historical data. The polling stations in the Dover local authority area are online if you follow the 'Where is my polling station?' link on the DDC website here: www.dover.gov.uk/elections Another useful website showing where polling stations are situated is run by the Democracy Club - https://wheredoivote.co.uk/
20	Local Resident, Ash	Ash / Ash Village Hall	Keep the Polling Station where it is, do not centralise or move. Alternatives suggested: No alternative. To move or close the Polling Station in Ash will result in inconvenience and ultimately reduce the number of votes cast.	<i>Representation by a Local Resident, Ash:</i> It is important from a village perspective that this continues to be open to support the local community	There are no plans to change from Ash Village Hall.
21	Local Resident, Shepherdswell	Shepherdswell with Coldred / Shepherdswell Village Hall	A very suitable polling station Alternatives suggested:		No further comment.
22	Local Resident, Dover	Tower Hamlets (East) / Curzon Hall	This polling station is needed because a lot of the local people are elderly Alternatives suggested: None because the next nearest one is up a steep hill		No further comment.
23	Local Resident, River	River / River Village Hall	Always well supervised and organised for voting in all elections. Alternatives suggested: None		No further comment.
24	Local Resident, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe	St Margaret's-at-Cliffe / Village Hall	The village hall polling station has always worked well in the past and I see no reason to change the way it is run or the location. Alternatives suggested: None needed.	<i>Representation by a Local Resident, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe:</i> I believe it essential we keep the Village Hall as a polling place because of the proportion of elderly and infirm members of the village community. <i>Representation by a Local Resident, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe:</i> The venue is centrally located and easily accessible and is the right place for a polling station.	No further comment.
25	Local Resident, Deal	Mill Hill (South) / Deal Pentecostal Church	I think that this hall is very well suited. It is a big enough space for there to be adequate room for all the desks needed and the polling booth, good access, with a ramp for the less able at the side. The only real challenge is parking nearby. Alternatives suggested: I think that the only realistic alternative would be the welfare club in Cowdray Square, where parking may be less of an issue.		No further comment.
26	Local Resident, Dover	Tower Hamlets (West) / One Church, Noah's Ark Road	The site is easy to reach. I use a mobility scooter and was able to get inside to cast my vote without getting off the scooter Alternatives suggested: I am happy with the venue		No further comment.
27	Local Resident, Finglesham	Northbourne / Northbourne Parish Hall	Very happy with Northbourne Parish Hall. I declare an interest as I am a Trustee for the Parish Hall and its use for elections generates hire income. Alternatives suggested:		No further comment.
28	Local Resident, Walmer	Walmer (St Saviour's) / St Saviour's Church	Good access. Good signing Alternatives suggested:		No further comment.
29	Local Resident, Dover	St Radigund's (West) / St Radigund's Community Centre	Good choice for venue. Old venue was St Radigunds School which meant another less day of schooling for children. venue easily accessible. Alternatives suggested: alternative is a postal vote, which is my (and my household) preferred choice. In the past we were shift workers and voting was not always accessible to us, with a postal vote, it is not only easy but better for those with mobility problems. Though, as a negative, I can see it may be open to abuse of the system if a letter gets posted in the wrong letterbox.		No further comment.

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30	Local Resident, Sandwich (South)	Sandwich (South) / Jubilee Centre	The former Phoenix Centre is ideal for Sandwich South to use as a polling station, it has good disability access and toilets. It is big enough and has parking and easy to walk too. Alternatives suggested: There are no other public buildings apart from the junior school in St Bart's Road that could really work.		No further comment.
31	Local Resident, Whitfield	Whitfield (North) / Whitfield Village Hall	Handy central location with good access and well known Alternatives suggested: There is no obvious place with the facilities and convenience of the village hall		No further comment.
32	Local Resident, Walmer	Walmer (Wellington) / Walmer Parish Hall	Very convenient for my husband who is 82. I have a postal vote. Alternatives suggested:		No further comment.
33	Local Resident, Eastry	Eastry / Eastry Village Hall	Perfect location Alternatives suggested: Parish council room if the village hall is already booked		No further comment.
34	Local Resident, Preston	Preston / Preston Village Hall	I would like Preston kept please as it has great parking...I do wonder, being a small community, that perhaps the polling hours should be reduced and that if people feel they couldn't make it during the reduced hours then perhaps they could obtain a pass e.g. within perhaps obtaining a postal vote time frame, to go to another larger polling station open for longer hours, obviously they would have to be able to commute. At present with cyber crime I am not in favour of online voting. Alternatives suggested: See previous answer.	<i>Representation by a Local Resident, Preston;</i> The present Village Hall/Community Centre is very suitable for electoral needs, as it has off road parking for disabled and easy access for all.	Changing polling hours and online voting at local government and parliamentary elections and referendums would require a change in the law by Parliament and is not something an ARO, RO or local authority can alter. There are no plans to change Preston polling station as part of this review.
35	Aylesham Parish Council, Aylesham	Aylesham / Aylesham Baptist Free Church & St Finbarr's Church	Aylesham - Aylesham Baptist Free Church and Aylesham St Finbarr's Church Aylesham Parish Council have No further comments to make. Alternatives suggested: None		No further comment.
36	Paul Carter, Town Councillor, Sandwich Town Council	Sandwich (South) / The Jubilee Centre	A large number of residents have said that they would prefer one voting poll station in Sandwich and that the two ward system is not a good idea, they would prefer the voting to go back to one ward. Having two polling stations is very confusing and a lot of voters even from the Sandwich South area are unaware of the Jubilee Centre especially as it was called the Phoenix Centre recently as well. it is also difficult for parties to travel or allocate tellers and candidates to both stations adequately. I think one central polling station would work best with lots of car parking and known sign posting/address. I am wondering how many residents knew where the new, United Reform Church was in Sandwich? Alternatives suggested: As stated above I would have a temporary DDA compliant polling station in the Guildhall car park adequately sign posted and allowing 20 mins free parking for voting only. Everyone knows where the Guildhall is, it's the central/administrative centre and well known.	<i>Representation by a Local Resident, Sandwich (North):</i> I agree with the sound points that Councillor Paul Carter has made. In the new constituency Sandwich Guildhall is the most accessible and popular site for a polling station	This review cannot change town and parish wards, only polling districts and stations. As there are two wards, there are two polling districts and there has to be a polling station in each polling district, unless there are no suitable polling stations in the area. Both venues currently in use are suitable polling stations. Using the figures on the 'Current Polling Stations and Electorate' document, Sandwich Town currently consists of a total of 4,193 electors, 3,453 of which vote at polling stations. Each polling station can only have a maximum of 2,250 electors, so even if Sandwich were unwarded, it would need a minimum of two polling stations based on those figures. Jubilee Road is a short residential street with the Jubilee Centre, formerly the Phoenix Centre, at the end of it. The road name had not changed and anyone travelling to Jubilee Road to find the polling station should not have had difficulties in finding it, no matter the name. However, a descriptive line can be added onto the address on the poll card of 'Formerly known as the Phoenix Centre' to ensure there is no confusion. In answer to your question of how many of the polling station voters in Sandwich (North) ward knew where the new venue was, all polling station voters in the ward were sent a letter in January 2023 advising of the change of venue

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					<p>from the Guildhall to the United Reform Church and a map was enclosed showing the location of the new venue, as well as a postal vote application form in case they wished to vote by post instead of visiting the new station. The full address would also have appeared on the poll card, should anyone not have received the January letter so the majority, if not all, polling station voters would have had access to the information of where the new station was sited.</p> <p>A small portacabin, (large enough for one polling station) was quoted at over £3,000 for one weeks hire (the minimum hire period) when last quoted in 2018. As the cost is covered by the Town Council for their own elections, it is not a justifiable cost, especially when the two venues we already use are much more suitable – they are DDA compliant, and they have toilet facilities inside the building for the staff who cannot leave the polling station during their 16 hour shift.</p>
37	Tricia Marshall. Acting Returning Officer for the future Herne Bay and Sandwich Parliamentary Constituency	Herne Bay and Sandwich future Parliamentary Constituency	I am happy with the proposed arrangements in respect of the areas that fall within the Herne Bay and Sandwich constituency.		No further comment.