

## COUNCIL UPDATE 8/2021

### BELLAMY GURNER SCHEME



#### A2070 TRUNK ROAD – FINBERRY, ASHFORD TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited has made an Order on the A2070 Trunk Road in the County of Kent, under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order is:-

- 1) to authorise, as required, the overnight and 24-hour closure of:-
  - a) both carriageways of the A2070 and A2042 between Jet Roundabout and Flanders Field Roundabout (A2042);
  - b) all of the slip roads leading to and from the carriageways in a) above at Park Farm Interchange (A2042);
  - c) all of the side roads at junction with the carriageways in a) above;
  - d) the gap in the central reservation at the junction of the carriageways in a) above with Church Road (thereby preventing right turns into Church Road); and
  - e) the cycle tracks
    - i) adjacent to the westbound carriageway of the A2070 between Waterbrook Avenue and Avocet Way; and
    - ii) adjacent to the eastbound carriageway of the A2070 between a point opposite Avocet Way and the northbound carriageway of the Boulevard;
- 2) to impose, over 24-hour periods, a mandatory 40 mph speed restriction on:-
  - a) the eastbound carriageway of the A2042 and A2070 between Flanders Field Roundabout (A2042) and a point 230 metres south-west of the centreline of Church Road junction;
  - b) the westbound carriageway of the A2070 between a point 230 metres south-west of the centreline of Church Road junction and its divergence from the off-slip at Park Farm Interchange (A2042);
  - c) the northbound carriageway of Avocet Way between its junction with the A2070 and a point 60 metres south;
  - d) both carriageways of Waterbrook Avenue between its junction with the A2070 and a point 20 metres south; and
  - e) the southbound carriageway of the Boulevard between its junction with the A2070 and a point 20 metres north; and
- 3) to operate a 24-hour contraflow alternately westbound and eastbound as required on either carriageway of the A2070 between a point 220 metres east of the centreline of Park Farm Interchange underbridge and a point 130 metres west of Jet Roundabout.

Lane closures and carriageway closures under traffic light control will also be operated. These measures are in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake junction improvement works, to include the conversion of the Orbital Park Roundabout into a signalised junction, and any and all necessary and associated works.

It is expected that the work will last for approximately 13 months starting on or after Monday 26th June 2021.

The Order will come into force on 26th June 2021. Although the work is proposed to take 13 months to complete, its location may cause suspension of work owing to circumstances beyond the project's control, and under the terms of the Road Traffic Regulation Act Section 15(2), Highways England accepts therefore that the overall period of work may exceed 18 months and the order will continue in force as necessary and be revoked under the terms of that section.

Traffic affected by the carriageway and slip closures will be diverted using the A28, A2042, A2070, North Street and Canterbury Road. Traffic wishing to join the westbound A2070 from Church Lane will be diverted using Cheesemans Green Lane, Finn Farm Road, Church Hill, and Ashford Road to join the A2042. Traffic affected by the Church Road right turn ban will continue northbound on the A2070 to Jet Roundabout and return. Light vehicles (only, owing to low bridges on route) affected by the closure of the Boulevard at junction with the roundabout/works will be diverted northbound on the Boulevard, Crowbridge Road, and Newtown Road to join the above carriageway diversion.

The cycle tracks will be closed alternately so pedestrians and cyclists will use the available alternative on the other side of the road, or use a segregated area of the carriageway as available.

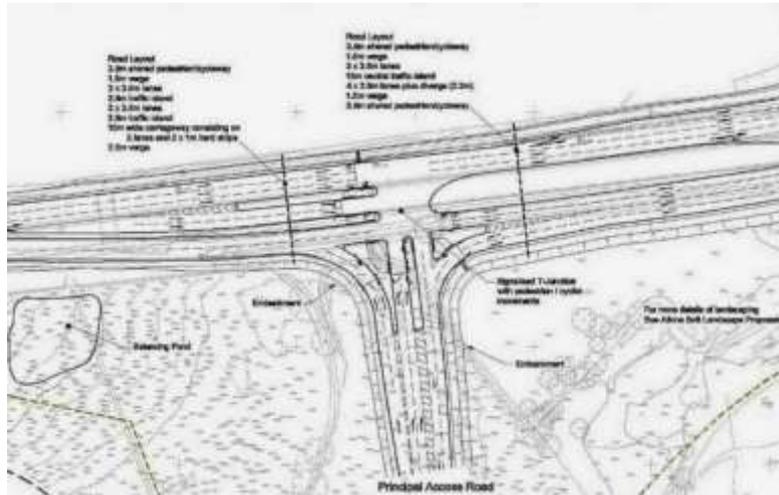
The temporary closures, speed restrictions, contraflow, and diversion routes will be clearly indicated by traffic signs when they are in operation during the works period.

**J Downham**, an Official of Highways England Co Ltd,  
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Work will start in July, by contractors on behalf of Crest, on the scheme to remove the roundabout at McDonalds / Orbital and replace it with traffic lights. This work also includes the right hand turn out of Finberry. The work on the A2070 is going to be inconvenient and will cause delays for up to 18 months but when the work is complete residents can finally choose to turn left or right in and out of Finberry.



Both the Parish Council and ABC have been pushing Crest for details of when they will be opening the new road to Rutledge Avenue (via Swift Avenue) - this road should have already been open due to hitting over 400 houses.

### IBF

Damian, Gerry Clarkson, and I met with Rachel McLean, DfT Minister, on 21 June 2021 to discuss lighting, HGV traffic in Mersham and Sevington, Biodiversity and the acquisition of the High Field.



Additional resources are being deployed by DfT to address the Postcode issue. The Minister agreed that the motorway signs in particular were inadequate.

The consultant's report on lighting expected in July. The following pictures were helpful as they enabled us to point out the effect of lighting.



## **BIODIVERSITY**

A Kent Wildlife Trust report for the Parish Council has been shared with the Borough Council and it demonstrates the potential wildlife and nature benefits from the High Field. We obtained Ashford BC's agreement to acquire the site in October 2020; all that remains is securing the DfT's agreement to sell the site to ABC (for a reasonable sum) and resolve the issue of who pays for ongoing management of the site.

## TREE WARDEN SCHEME

ABC is committed to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030. The strategy to achieve this consists of many strands, including carbon sequestration through tree planting initiatives. Tree planting and woodland developments are long term initiatives that require ongoing support, long term maintenance and champions to protect them for generations to come. Over the next three years ABC will spend £271k on planting 135,500 trees, one for every person in the borough, over the next three winters.

ABC are looking for volunteer Tree Wardens to help with this task. Prospective tree wardens do not need to be tree specialists, but simply be enthusiastic, enjoy the outdoors and be able to commit some of their time to championing trees. The types of activities that volunteers can get involved in with ABC support, include:

- Planting and care of trees (in new and existing woodlands that need management)
- Setting up tree nurseries using locally collected seeds – seed sharing schemes
- Surveying local trees and gathering information about them to help us monitor impact
- Providing 'eyes and ears' to inform Local Authority about disease, decay or vandalism and breaches of TPO's
- Raising funds and identifying suitable land for local tree planting projects
- Going into schools to talk to young people about the value of trees.
- Giving leaded tree walks
- Acting as a tree ambassador, championing local trees and woodlands
- Volunteers will be provided with training to undertake basic tree inspections.

Time commitment is not specified and varies according to workload needs. It may vary seasonally, with more time required at certain times of the year. Whatever time you feel able to give will then determine what you may be able to do.

To find out more about the scheme and register your interest please complete the online enquiry form at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/outdoor-spaces/tree-warden-scheme/>

Please note that for this round of induction consideration can only be given to applicants that are able to attend a general induction session on 30th July and a full day training course on 7th September 2021.

## **COMMUNITY GRANTS**

ABC's Community Grants fund has been re-opened. Capital Grant funding is available for not-for-profit groups who are delivering community projects and services in the borough of Ashford, up to a maximum grant of £5k or 25% of the total project costs. A good example for the use of capital grants would be the purchase of equipment or renovation of community buildings and other facilities. Please note revenue funding is no longer available.

There is one application deadline per year for all capital grant applications, closing on 30 July. Further information about the Community Grant scheme and application process can be found on our website:

[www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/grants-and-funding/](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/grants-and-funding/)

## **SHORT TERM ACCOMODATION PROPOSAL**

ABC has, on average, 100 people in some form of paid-for nightly accommodation such as B&B which costs the taxpayers c£260 per week for each person. The Council has a legal duty to provide advice, assistance, and temporary accommodation. ABC has agreed to explore using an under-used car park at Henwood (subject to planning permission and consulting with the local community) for 23 modular "ZedPods". There will be 12 x One beds, 10 x two beds and 1 x three bedroom homes. The units are prefabricated, high quality and low energy homes.

## **BUS SERVICES**

A plan for the future of bus services in Kent is being created by Kent County Council which is asking the public for its help. In March, the government published a new National Bus Strategy which set a framework for recovery for the pandemic and a vision for future bus service improvement across the UK.

The strategy requires all Local Transport Authorities, such as KCC, to work with Bus Operators to form a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which would act as the local vision for buses and for it to be used to inform Enhanced Partnership Schemes covering all services in the area.

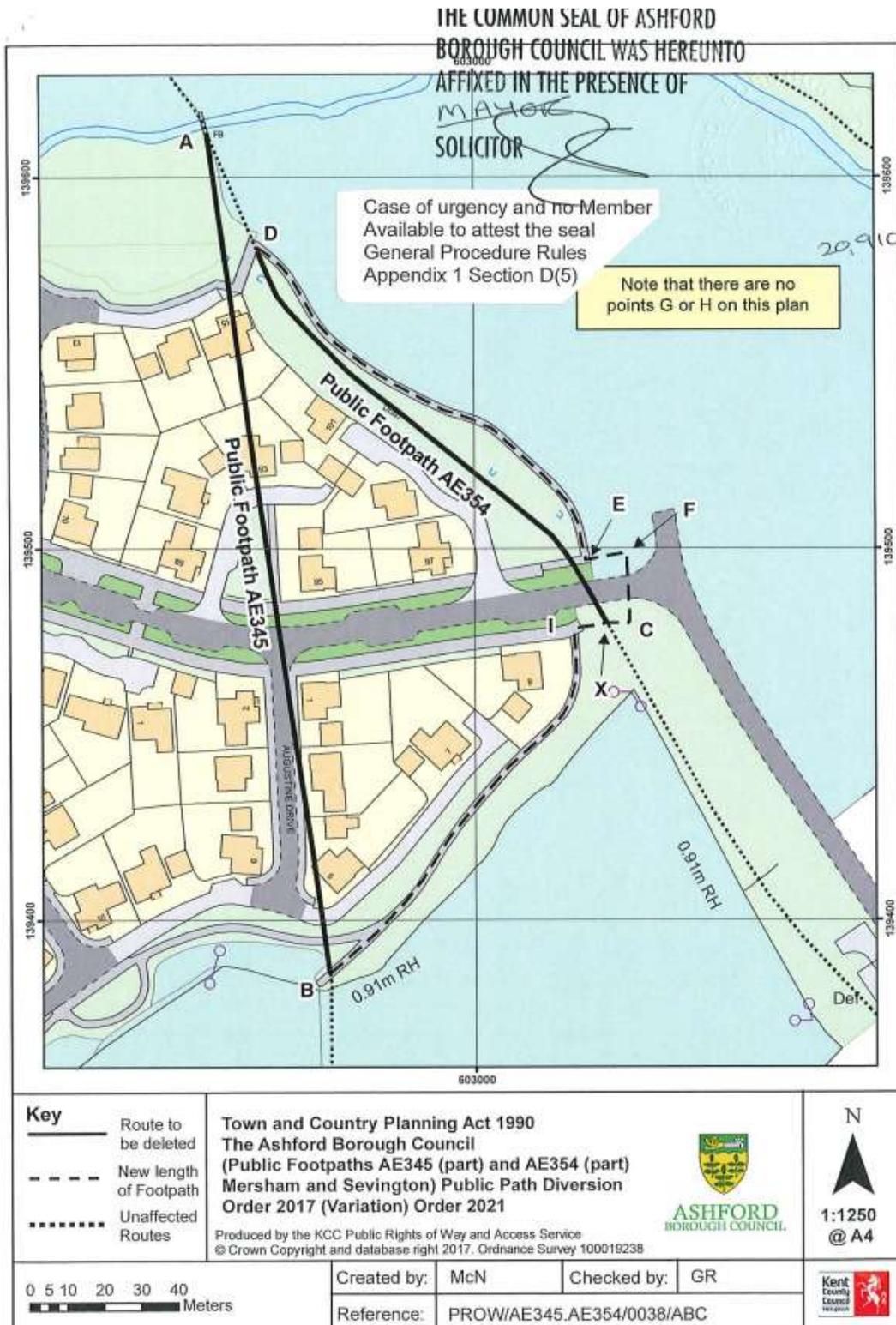
An Enhanced Partnership Scheme is an agreement that enables local authorities with operators to set a shared aims and service standards with a view to improving bus services. KCC has published a statutory notice confirming its intention to introduce Enhanced Partnership Schemes.

BSIPs will be used by Government as the basis on which to award extra funding which, if successful, KCC hope could be used to support some of the improvements and initiatives being developed.

KCC wants to hear from residents to help shape this BSIP and make sure that it reflects our communities right across the county. To find out more, to see the notice and to give your views by 25 July, visit [kent.gov.uk/busfuture](http://kent.gov.uk/busfuture)

### FOOTPATH AE345

A proposal to move the footpath has been made:



## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

Solid progress continues around the Quantock Drive area with Cheddar Close being the latest Operational Neighbourhood Watch scheme launched.

Discussions with residents during recruitment have identified a number of issues. Drug use and activity around garages and alleyways around the area of Exmoor Rise, Brecon Rise and that area of Quantock Drive is a concern to residents and Police officers been alerted and attended. Working together with NHW can further enhance and develop a community spirit.

Don't forget the police are not clairvoyant....matters need to be reported, that would normally be on 101 or online HOWEVER if needed use 999.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Local authorities in England and Wales will be able to apply for powers to issue fines of as much as £70 to drivers committing traffic offences such as banned turns, stopping in box junctions and driving in formal bus or cycle lanes.

Powers to enforce against moving traffic offences are expected to help keep roads moving and make air cleaner. Drivers will need to know how enforcement is taking place, what's really needed is clear guidance on making sure enforcement is always carried out fairly

I hope this will be an important step towards opening up the bus link between Finberry and Bridgefield as the biggest impediment (aside Stagecoach not wishing to provide a service) has been how enforcement will operate. Enforcement must prevent cars using the route given the pinch point at Damara Way and preventing cars speeding past the school.

## **COVID-19**

The Government's decision to extend lockdown will be tough for many in Kent but latest COVID-19 figures show the virus has not gone away. Dedicated COVID support is available to employers and the self-employed, including sole traders and limited company directors. In addition to loans, people may be eligible for tax relief and cash grants, whether your business is open or closed. To learn what help is available use this support finder <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>

Kent County Council's Kent Together initiative is also still available and ready to support Kent residents who may need a bit of extra help during the pandemic, including with food deliveries and medication. Launched over a year ago, the Kent Together helpline is a collaboration between KCC, central

Government, District, Borough and local councils, the voluntary and community sector, the NHS, emergency services and other partners to ensure help is at hand for those who need it most. It is also the place to report your concerns about the welfare of someone else. Go to [www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether](http://www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether) or call the 24 hour helpline at 03000 41 92 92. The Kent Together advice pages can also guide people who have had a reduction in their household income and are struggling.

In addition to practical and material challenges, Coronavirus has also created a lot of uncertainty and anxiety. Read more about all the wellbeing support available via the Kent Together wellbeing page at [www.kent.gov.uk/wellbeing](http://www.kent.gov.uk/wellbeing)

## **RECONNECT**

The Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme (or 'Reconnect' for short) is a programme which aims to reconnect children and young people in Kent with things they have missed during the Covid-19 pandemic. It runs until August 2022. The programme is focussed on five key themes:

- learning missed;
- health and happiness;
- friends, family and community;
- sport, activities and the outdoors;
- economic wellbeing.

The aim of the programme is to provide additional activities and opportunities, rather than replace existing services.

Reconnect is a universal programme for all children and young people in Kent aged 2 – 19 (or up to 24 for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities). There will be some flexibility with the age range for specific issues, such as youth unemployment.

More information about the programme can be found on the Reconnect website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/reconnect>

## FRIENDS OF BYBROOK NATURE RESERVE (FOBNR)

The FOBNR held its AGM on Wednesday 10 June and agreed the design of the new sign at the entrance to the reserve in Nine Acres.



## CONNINGBROOK

Following a recent consultation Ashford Borough Council has introduced a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Conningbrook Lakes. The PSPO encompasses an area including and surrounding the main lake and aims to reduce anti-social behaviour.

PSPOs allow councils to tackle anti-social behaviour which takes place in a specific, geographical area (as opposed to criminal behaviour orders and injunctions which are directed at individuals). A PSPO covers particular activities, meaning that anyone carrying them out in an area under one of these orders can be prosecuted or issued with a £100 fixed penalty notice.



## **HIGHWAYS: WEED CONTROL**

In terms of managing highway assets, KCC carries out a targeted weed control on the highway hard surface twice per year. KCC do this to carry out their statutory duty to provide a safe and maintained highway infrastructure and to remove trip hazards. KCC do not use herbicide weed control on soft verges or shrub borders or for preventative and residual effect, except rarely to deal with plants which cause health and safety concerns or are invasive or injurious. KCC does not use neonicotinoids.

KCC only use products which are authorised for use and comply with UK legislation, codes of practice and industry best practice. Glyphosate is widely available to the public from retail outlets and is approved safe to use in gardens, parks, amenity areas and highway by the UK Government Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

KCC has a rolling review on the use of herbicides on the highway and continue to carry out trials, discussions and work with partners to find suitable methods to minimise the use of herbicides and find effective alternative solutions which enable KCC to maintain a safe highway for all users. This is in line with Kent's Plan Bee.

On rural roads KCC carries out road safety swathe and visibility splay cuts to clear vegetation obstruction at road junctions, dangerous bends and along roads to help stop encroachment, road edge obstruction and provide a refuge for pedestrians. In urban areas KCC cuts verges to provide local amenity for residents in addition to safe footpaths for pedestrians, which are free from vegetation obstruction, and clear sightline visibility splays for all highway users.

As part of Kent's Plan Bee, KCC have been working with KWT (Kent Wildlife Trust), BBCT (Bumblebee Conservation Trust) and Buzz for the Coast to concentrate efforts on known rural and urban verges with high pollinator value. These conservation verges, with verges in SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest), RNR (Roadside Nature Reserves) and Bee Roads, have not been cut as part of "No Mow May" and will not be cut until the autumn. KCC are assessing these high value verges to see how KCC can change and expand verge management to benefit pollinators, while also achieving their statutory duty to maintain a safe highway free from vegetation obstruction and hazards.



More information on our maintenance of the highway soft landscape asset can be found at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after>

KCC's continuing work will improve the highway soft landscape for the benefit of pollinators and biodiversity. It will identify opportunities for change in verge management and meet the objectives of Kent's Biodiversity Strategy and Plan Bee while also, importantly, balancing the need to maintain our assets to provide a safe highway for all users.

### **KENT ELECTRIC VAN SCHEME**

In the first four months of the Kent REVS scheme, 48 local businesses have taken electric van loans, all telling KCC they have had a positive experience, and some are sharing their stories on social media. One business has already switched from diesel to electric and a further seven organisations, including the charity Age UK (Sittingbourne and Faversham branch) have indicated they are now considering switching to electric, which could deliver up to another 21 electric vehicles operating across the County. The scheme now has 36 vans, out of a total of 48 vans ordered.



## Kent REVS up for Cleaner Air

Do you want to play your part in helping KENT become Net Zero by 2050?

If so, the REVS scheme can give you that opportunity to transform for the better.

- ☑ Offering businesses the opportunity to 'try for free' an electric van for up to 2 months.
- ☑ Kent Realising Electric Vans Scheme is one action KCC are taking to help reduce emissions across the Kent road network.
- ☑ To further support Kent's ambition for cleaner transport, more electric vehicle charging points are being installed throughout the county too!

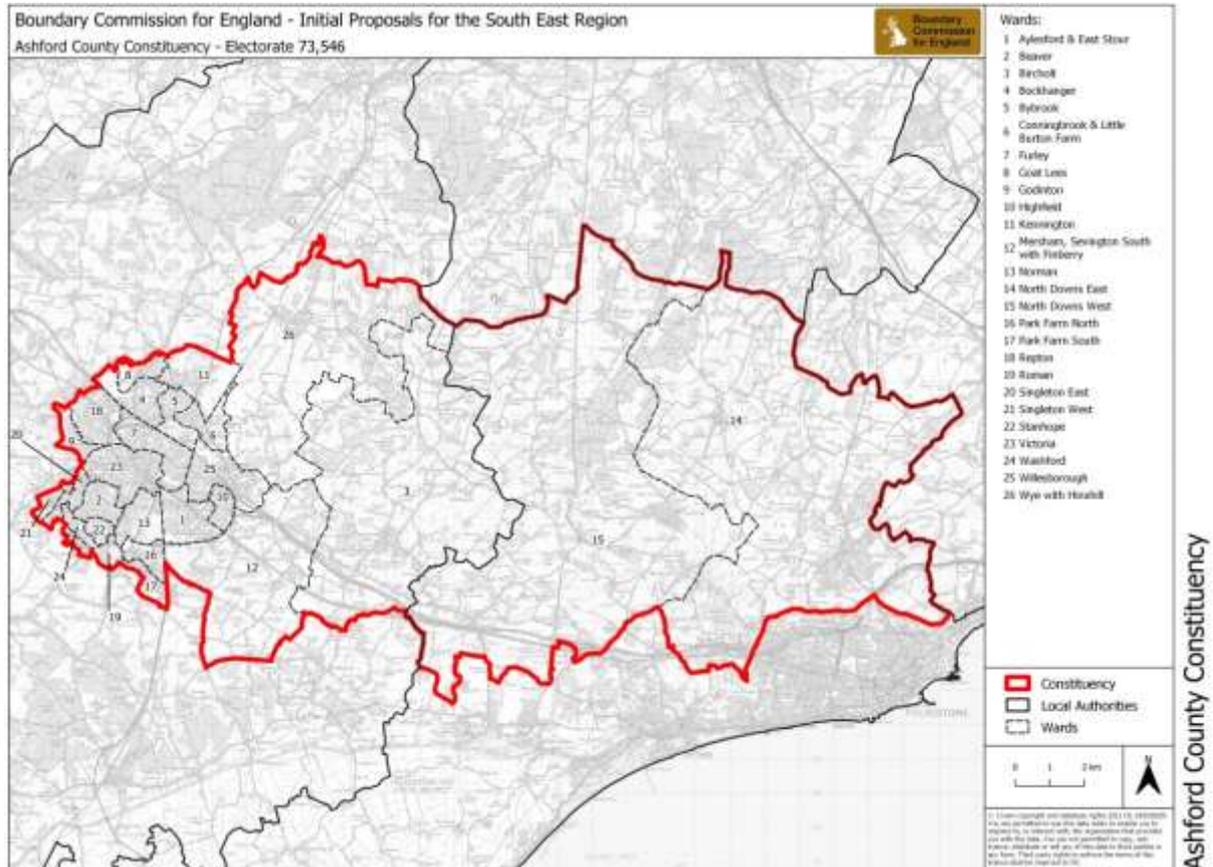
To find out how REVS could benefit your business visit [lowcarbonkent.com/kent-revs-van-trial](https://www.lowcarbonkent.com/kent-revs-van-trial)



## PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

This is a possible new constituency boundary map for Ashford from 2023, further details at

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/south-east/> Submit your views at <https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/> by 2 August 2021



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