

MP shares regret over proposals for boundary changes

by Dan Wright

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Ashford MP Damian Green says he will "hugely regret" losing Tenterden and its surrounding villages from his constituency if a proposed boundary review goes through.

The Tory, who became First Secretary of State in June and is now Prime Minister Theresa May's top aide, has served Ashford and its villages since 1997.

But he will have to give up Tenterden – a traditional Conservative stronghold – to a new constituency called Mid Kent and Ticehurst if a plan to change the borders of parliamentary seats gets the green light.

"If this boundary review goes through, I will hugely regret losing Tenterden, Rolvenden and Smarden and the other areas," Mr Green said.

"I have always been happy to represent them for a long time.



Councillor Sue Ferguson, deputy mayor, has said that the town will be sad to lose MP Damian Green

'It is regrettable if I end up losing all of those areas around Tenterden'

– MP Damian Green

"The boundary change is no surprise because the growth of Ashford means I have a lot more constituents than I'm meant to, but it is hugely regrettable if I end up losing all of those areas around Tenterden."

The boundary review was put forward under former Prime Minister David Cameron in order to "cut the cost of politics", reducing the total number of MPs from 650 to 600.

It is aimed at ensuring a more even spread of voters per constituency, with each parliamentary electorate falling between 71,631 and 78,507 voters.

Mr Green's current Ashford and Tenterden constituency has about 83,000 voters.

Kent has 17 constituencies and will retain that number after the reorganisation, but two of them will be cross-border constituencies and include voters from East Sussex.

Tenterden deputy town mayor Sue Ferguson says the town will be sad to lose Mr Green, who will have to find a new constitu-

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ency office as his current base in Bethersden will slip out of the Ashford boundary.

Cllr Ferguson said: "We have been used to our MP for a long time, and he has worked well for us.

"We will be very sad to lose him as he has been very good to the town.

"You never know what something will be like until it happens, but hopefully our new MP will work for the town and we will see them in Tenterden as much as possible."

The public have been given until Monday, December 11 to give their views on the proposed boundary changes. If passed by parliament, the changes will come into effect in 2022.

■ Visit www.bce2018.org.uk for more details.

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MP Damian Green admitted that he will deeply regret losing Tenterden if the boundary changes go ahead