

Tenterden Division September Update

KCC Cllr Wayne Chapman

Kent County Councillor for Tenterden: Appledore, Biddenden, High Halden, Kenardington, Newenden, Rolvenden, Rolvenden Layne, St Michaels, Stone-cum-Ebony, Tenterden and Wittersham

September 2026 — Special Update: Local Government Reorganisation and the May 2027 Elections

Local Government Reorganisation — Now Paused

I want to update residents of our Parish and Town councils directly. The Government has paused its Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) decisions for Kent and a number of other areas following new legal advice, and has formally withdrawn restructuring plans in Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. But Surrey is unaffected and proceeds as planned.

This follows sustained pressure from the Reform UK Group Leader and KCC Leader Linden Kemkaran, she had been preparing a judicial review after Government failed to respond to three letters raising concerns about the proposed four unitary model Option 4B. This places Tenterden Division within a new Mid Kent unitary alongside Swale and Folkestone & Hythe.

This period of uncertainty is wholly unfair to you all as residents and businesses as well as all the council's staff, the Government's handling of this is shambolic.

The timetable agreed last July, with shadow unitary elections planned for May 2027 and new councils live from April 2028, is no longer certain. It is unclear whether, or in what form, reorganisation now proceeds, and it may fall to whichever government is in office after the next election. I will report further as the picture becomes clearer.

May 2027 Elections — Existing Councils Confirmed

The Government has confirmed that elections due in May 2027 will now go ahead on existing council boundaries. This means Ashford Borough Council elections proceed as normal, rather than being replaced by shadow elections to a new unitary authority as previously expected.

For Tenterden Division, this means Ashford Borough Council continues in its current form for now, alongside Kent County Council, with no change to who is responsible for which services in the immediate term. I will keep you updated as Government sets out further detail.

Get in Touch

As always, please report local issues via the KCC portal in the first instance, and email me for anything else, always happy to help.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-or-track-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement>

Email: wayne.chapman@kent.gov.uk