

COUNCIL	
Meeting Date	Wednesday 1 st April 2026
Report Title	Swale Community Governance Review – Second Stage Consultation Proposals
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Head of Service	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Lead Officer	Stephanie Curtis, Strategic Policy and Communities Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That Council approve the following proposals to be included within the second stage CGR consultation a) To change the name of Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council b) To create a Halfway Parish Council for the currently unparished area of Halfway (Map 1 in appendix 2) with transfer of identified land with Minster-On Sea Parish Council (Map 2 and 3), Queenborough Town Council (Map 3 and 5) and Sheerness Town Council (map 4) c) To expand the boundary of Queenborough Town Council to include the currently unparished area of Halfway (Map 6) with transfer of identified land with Minster on Sea Parish Council and Sheerness Town Council. d) To move Lucas Close from Sheerness Town Council area to Queenborough Town Council (Map 7). e) To increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward if split occurs) f) To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3. g) To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two (Map 8) h) To extend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to encompass Perry Court (Faversham Town Council owned land) from Ospringe parish council Map 9). i) To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover area shown in Map 10 currently within Ospringe Parish area. j) To extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover land within

	Boughton Under Blean Parish Council and Selling Parish Council (map 11) k) To transfer land from Faversham Town Council to Sheldwich Parish Council (Map 12) l) To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to transfer School Farm along Graveney Road, Graveney Road from Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council (Map 13) m) To amend the Iwade Parish Boundary, including that with Bobbing Parish Council (Map 14). n) To create a Murston Parish Council (Map 15) o) To create a Great Easthall Parish Council (Map 16) moving land from Tonge Parish Council. p) To merge the currently unparished area of Great Easthall with Tonge parish council (map 17) q) To create a Kemsley Parish Council (Map 18) r) To create a Milton Regis Parish Council (Map 19) s) To create a Meads Parish Council (Map 20) moving land from Bobbing Parish Council t) To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of the unparished area of the Meads (Map 21) u) To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of Grove Park (Map 22) v) To create an Urban Sittingbourne Town Council (Map 23) taking merging some land from Tunstall and the remainder of unparished areas. w) To create an Urban Sittingbourne Town Council including Grove Park (Map 24). 2. That Council agree the adoption of the updated Terms of Reference for the CGR, as shown in appendix 3.
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1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the results of the recent Stage 1 consultation for the Swale Community Governance Review (CGR) and puts forward a series of recommendations for the Stage 2 consultation, for agreement by Policy and Resources Committee before approval by Council.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act) devolves the power to local authorities to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England. Before a Parish or Town Council can be created the Council is required to undertake Community Governance Review (CGR)

- 2.2 Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils (SBC is the principal council) to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. This may include creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes/town councils; their naming; their electoral arrangements; or grouping.
- 2.3 Council agreed on the 30 July 2025 to undertake a CGR and to establish a cross-party Member Steering Group to lead this piece of work. Council agreed the Terms of Reference for the Swale CGR on the 19 November 2025.
- 2.4 A CGR must follow a two-stage consultation process. The first stage can include a series of informal options to gauge the feelings of local residents. The second stage consultation would ask for views on a series of refined, formal options. It is from this second stage consultation that the Principal Council can then formulate its final recommendations as the conclusion of the CGR.
- 2.5 The Member Steering Group met during November and December 2025 to agree the key areas of focus for the review that would be included within the Stage 1 Consultation. These were also informed by proposals from existing town and parish councils, for whom were directly invited to put forward their suggestions.
- 2.6 The proposals agreed to be considered as part of the first stage consultation were:

Isle of Sheppey:

- Name change for Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council
- To create a new parish council for the currently unparished area of Halfway; or for it to join with an existing neighbouring town or parish council.
- Establishing a parish council for whole of the Isle of Sheppey

Sittingbourne

- Review of the existing Iwade Parish Boundary
- To create a new parish/town council to cover the whole of the existing unparished Sittingbourne area or creating smaller parishes within this area.

Faversham

- To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two and review the number of councillors
- To extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover land within Ospringe Parish Council
- To extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover land within Boughton Under Blean Parish Council and Sheldwich Parish Council.
- To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward)

- To amend a boundary of Faversham Town Council to transfer land to Sheldwich Parish Council.
- 2.7 Faversham Town Council also submitted a proposal for a boundary change that would see land at Perry Court, now owned by Faversham Town Council, to be transferred into Faversham Town Councils Boundary. As this area didn't include any residential properties, the Member Steering Group previously agreed that this would only need to be included in the Stage 2 consultation.
- 2.8 The first stage consultation ran from 18 December 2025 to 9 February 2026 (7.5 weeks). A total of 644 responses were received which included the completion of the online/paper questionnaire and a number of written responses from existing town/parish councils. The full details of these responses were shared with the Member Steering Group.
- 2.9 Appendix 1 details the activities that took place and the engagement rate; along with a summary of the results from the consultation both from the survey and direct discussions with existing town and parish councils.
- 2.10 Questions in relation to the Sittingbourne area, included asking residents where they felt they had the strongest local connection. This information was requested to support Members in considering the boundaries of local parish/town councils for this area, if this was the preferred option from residents over a whole Sittingbourne Town Council.
- 2.11 The Member Steering Group met on the 10th and 19th February 2026 to review the results of the first stage consultation and to agree which proposals should progress to stage 2 consultation. This included detailed review of all consultation responses alongside internal legal advice.
- 2.12 In addition to the formal questions asked, residents were also asked to put forward any other suggestions for the CGR that they would like Members to consider. From the free text comments, Members considered and agreed to take forward a number of these proposals for the second stage consultation. The details of these are also summarised in Appendix 1 and the terms of reference for the review have been updated to include these additional areas (appendix 3).
- 2.13 Unfortunately, within the final days of the consultation, it was brought to the Councils attention of an administrative error on the wording of one of the proposals on the consultation form in relation to a Faversham boundary change that would affect a small number of properties. The Member Steering Group agreed to discount the stage 1 responses, but to include at stage 2 with the corrected wording. The consultation approach for stage 2 for this proposal will factor in this in its communication to residents.
- 2.14 In a previous CGR undertaken in 2022, it was agreed by Council to transfer Lucas Close from Sheerness Town Council to Queenborough Town Council as part of a boundary review. It has been identified as part of the research into previous CGR approaches by the Council, that the Order for this transfer was not

laid before Parliament. Legal advice has been sought and although the Decision remains sound and the Order could be placed, given the length of time that has passed and that some of the properties have changed hands, the CGR Member Steering Group felt it appropriate to include this proposal within the current second stage consultation before a decision is revisited.

2.15 Following the completion of Stage 1 consultation, internal legal advice was sought to ensure that the recommendations being taken forward for Stage 2 were compliant with our legal duties for the completion of CGR. It was recommended by Legal Services that the Terms of Reference for the CGR be formally updated and republished to show the new scope of the review, so that all new proposals are clearly identified. The amended Terms of Reference for the CGR are shown in Appendix 3. The amends made include:

- Revisions to section 5 of the terms of reference to include all areas under review and provide further information on parish boundaries and proposed changes;
- Update to timetable within section 8 to increase the length of time for stage 2 consultation to 9 weeks.

2.16 The proposals and amended Terms of Reference for the CGR were discussed by Policy and Resources Committee on the 11 March 2026. The Committee agreed to recommended to Council the proposals for second stage consultation; and for the amended terms of reference to be recommended to Council for approval.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The proposals that are put forward for the Stage 2 Consultation have been identified by the Member Steering Group, based upon the Stage 1 consultation responses. The Maps that notate each proposal are shown in appendix 2.

3.2 Recommendation 1: That Council agree that the following proposals are included within the second stage CGR consultation.

- a) To change the name of Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council
- b) To create a Halfway Parish Council for the currently unparished area of Halfway (Map 1 in appendix 2) with transfer of identified land with Minster-On Sea Parish Council (Map 2 and 3), Queenborough Town Council (Map 3 and 5) and Sheerness Town Council (map 4)
- c) To expand the boundary of Queenborough Town Council to include the currently unparished area of Halfway (Map 6) with transfer of identified land with Minster on Sea Parish Council and Sheerness Town Council.
- d) To move Lucas Close from Sheerness Town Council area to Queenborough Town Council (Map 7).
- e) To increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward if split occurs)
- f) To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3.

- g) To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two (Map 8)
- h) To extend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to encompass Perry Court (Faversham Town Council owned land) from Ospringe parish council (Map 9).
- i) To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover area shown in Map 10 currently within Ospringe Parish area.
- j) To extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover land within Boughton Under Blean Parish Council and Selling Parish Council (map 11)
- k) To transfer land from Faversham Town Council to Sheldwich Parish Council (Map 12)
- l) To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to transfer School Farm along Graveney Road, Graveney Road from Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council (Map 13)
- m) To amend the Iwade Parish Boundary, including that with Bobbing Parish Council (Map 14).
- n) To create a Murston Parish Council (Map 15)
- o) To create a Great Easthall Parish Council (Map 16) moving land from Tonge Parish Council.
- p) To merge the currently unparished area of Great Easthall with Tonge parish council (map 17)
- q) To create a Kemsley Parish Council (Map 18)
- r) To create a Milton Regis Parish Council (Map 19)
- s) To create a Meads Parish Council (Map 20) moving land from Bobbing Parish Council
- t) To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of the unparished area of the Meads (Map 21)
- u) To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of Grove Park (Map 22)
- v) To create an Urban Sittingbourne Town Council (Map 23) taking merging some land from Tunstall and the remainder of unparished areas.
- w) To create an Urban Sittingbourne Town Council including Grove Park (Map 24).

3.3 Recommendation 2: That Council agree the adoption of the updated Terms of Reference for the CGR, as shown in appendix 3.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To pause the Community Governance Review: It would be possible to pause any Community Governance Review, however having completed the Stage 1 consultation with a good level of engagement from communities on a number of the proposals, it would not be recommended to pause.
- 4.2 To reduce the number of proposals for the CGR second stage consultation: It would be possible to reduce/amend the number of proposals being recommended to progress to stage 2 consultation. However, those that have been put forward have been developed by the cross-party Member steering group following extensive review of all consultation responses for Stage 1; and are felt by the Member Steering Group to best reflect the needs of the local community that

responded. Appendix 1 details the number of responses to the individual proposals included at Stage 1 – some of these did not necessarily show a clear intent from the community and it was therefore felt by the Member Steering Group that these proposals should be asked again for clarity.

5.0 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 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. Swale Borough Council as the principal council will need to consult local people and take account of any representations received in connection with the review. When undertaking the review we 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.
- 5.2 Under the 2007 Act the council is required to consult local government electors in any area under review, and others who may have an interest in the review. Other bodies might include local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations - such as schools or health bodies. There is legal requirement on what constitutes a stage 2 consultation, but the consultation must be fair, proportionate and transparent.
- 5.3 The Plan for the Stage 2 consultation would be to follow similar activities as Stage 1 (as shown in appendix 1), but with increased focus on localised events/activities. The full consultation plan will be developed and signed off by the Member Steering Group. It will also ensure that the precept implications of any options chosen is clear for residents.
- 5.4 If approved, the Stage 2 consultation will run for a minimum of 8 weeks. It has been recommended by Legal Services that due to the complexity of the proposals and to ensure the process is fair and transparent that the consultation should run for 8-12 weeks. In order to meet the timescales required to run elections in 2027, any agreed recommendations from Council would need to be submitted to Government by summer recess to allow time for them to consider the proposals. This needs to be factored into the timetable when planning the second stage consultation dates.
- 5.5 All proposals, if agreed to be taken forward to second stage consultation, will include the option of 'no change' for residents. This will be made clear in the question wording so that residents do not feel that they are being made to make a choice that would see a new parish/town council put into place.
- 5.6 The consultation questions will include clear maps and reasoning for each proposal being put forward, along with any financial implications for residents.

6.0 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The work required to carry out Corporate Governance Reviews is in the Corporate Plan
Financial, Resource and Property	The cost of undertaking the CGR has been met through existing officer resources – the officer working on Local Government Reorganisation has led this piece of work
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act) devolves the power to local authorities to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England Following the completion of the stage 1 consultation and discussions in forming the proposals for stage 2 consultation, further advice was sought from internal Legal Services. To ensure procedural fairness, they have recommended that the terms of reference for the review are updated (as discussed in section 3 of this report). Any consultation documents must also be very clear if it was not included in the stage 1 consultation and how it arose from stage 1 representations. It was also confirmed that there is no prohibition on relying on stage 1 responses in addition to those received from stage 2 if they are asking identical questions with no material change. It was also advised that although there is no statute or fixed guidance on the consultation length for stage 2, the legal requirement is that it is fair, proportionate and transparent. It has been suggested that the preferred length for a stage 2 consultation runs for 8-12 weeks where proposals are numerous, complex or potentially contentious.
Crime and Disorder	There are no direct crime and disorder implications for these proposals.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	There are no direct Environmental Emergency implications for these proposals.
Health and Wellbeing	Although there is not direct Health and Wellbeing impact for these proposals, Town and Parish Councils are able to undertake work to improve Health and Wellbeing
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	There are no direct safeguarding implications for these proposals

Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are no direct health and safety implications for these proposals
Equality and Diversity	There are no direct Equality and Diversity implications for these proposals, however an equality impact assessment will be completed following the second stage consultation to accompany the final recommendations.
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no direct privacy or data protection implications for these proposals
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	The undertaking of a CGR ensures that all levels of governance within the borough have been reviewed ahead of LGR. This ensures that local government best meets the needs of local communities.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Swale Stage 1 CGR Consultation Summary

Appendix 2: Maps of proposed boundaries

Appendix 3: Revised Terms of Reference for Swale Community Governance Review.

8 Background Papers

CGR Full Council Decision 30 July 2025 – Agreement for Review - <https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g4329/Printed%20minutes%20Wednesday%2030-Jul-2025%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

CGR Full Council Decision 19 November 2025 – Terms of Reference Agreement <https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g4331/Printed%20minutes%20Wednesday%2019-Nov-2025%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

Lucas Close CGR Full Council Decision 2022 - (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Council, 27/07/2022 19:00

Ordnance Survey Election Maps – [Election Maps](#)