

POLICY AND RESOURCES	
Meeting Date	Wednesday 1 July 2026
Report Title	Swale Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Head of Service	Stephanie Curtis, Head of Policy and Transformation
Lead Officer	Sarah Porter, Project and Transformation Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Recommendation 1: That Policy and Resources Committee agree and recommend to Council that the following CGR Recommendations are adopted. 1. To change the name of Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council 2. To create a Halfway Parish Council (as shown in Map 1) with 7 seats. 3. To amend the Minster-on-Sea Council boundary to incorporate the properties shown within Map 2 (Appleford Drive area), Map 4 (Ovinia Chase area) and Map 5 (Minster Road) from the new Halfway Parish Council area, but to transfer the properties shown within Map 3 (Baird Way area) from Minster-on-Sea to the new Halfway Parish Council. 4. To amend the Queenborough Town Council boundary to incorporate land shown in Map 6, from the new Halfway Parish Council. 5. To not amend the boundary between Sheerness Town Council and the new Halfway Parish Council, as shown in Map 7. 6. To amend the boundary between Sheerness Town Council and Queenborough Town Council to move Lucas Close (Map 8) from Sheerness to Queenborough. 7. To increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward) 8. To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two 9. To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3 10. To extend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to encompass Perry Court (Faversham Town Council owned land)

	from Ospringe parish council as shown in Map 9. 11. To not extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council) to cover area currently within Ospringe Parish Council (Map 10). 12. To amend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council) boundary to incorporate land currently within both Boughton Parish Council and Selling Parish Council (Map 11). 13. To transfer land from Faversham Town Council and Sheldwich Parish Council (Map 12). 14. 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). 15. To amend the Iwade Parish Council boundary to incorporate previously unparished land (Map 14). 16. To amend the Bobbing Parish Boundary, moving land from Bobbing Parish Council into Iwade Parish Council (Map 14). 17. To create a Murston Parish Council as per the area within Map 15, with 9 number of seats. 18. To amend the Tonge Parish Council Boundary as per Map 16, incorporating the currently unparished area of Great Easthall, increasing their number of councillors from 5 to 7. 19. To create a Kemsley Parish Council as per the area within Map 17, with 9 seats. 20. To create a Milton Regis Town Council as per the area within Map 18, with 9 seats 21. To extend the boundary of Bobbing Parish Council, as per the area within Map 19, to include the unparished area of The Meads. 22. To create a Grove Park Community Council as per the area within Map 20, with 7 seats, incorporating the part of this estate previously within the Bobbing Parish boundary. 23. To not create a Sittingbourne Town Council as per Map 21.
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1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the results of the recent Stage 2 consultation results for the Swale Community Governance Review (CGR) and puts forward a series of recommendations for implementation, 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 Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out key criteria that must be considered by the principal council to ensure that the CGR is reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient. The principal council must also take into account a number of influential factors including: the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish. Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 A CGR must follow a two-stage consultation process. The first stage included a series of informal options to gauge the feelings of local residents. The second stage consultation asked 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.
- 2.6 Council agreed the below proposals to be considered as part of the second stage consultation on 1 April 2026.
- 2.7 The proposals agreed to be considered as part of the first stage consultation were (with all maps shown in appendix 4):

Isle of Sheppey

1. To change the name of Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council
2. To create a Halfway Parish Council for the currently unparished area of Halfway with transfer of identified land with Minster-On Sea Parish Council, Queenborough Town Council and Sheerness Town Council
3. To expand the boundary of Queenborough Town Council to include the currently unparished area of Halfway with transfer of identified land with Minster on Sea Parish Council and Sheerness Town Council.
4. To move Lucas Close from Sheerness Town Council area to Queenborough Town Council

Faversham

5. To increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward if split occurs)
6. To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3.
7. To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two
8. To extend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to encompass Perry Court (Faversham Town Council owned land) from Ospringe parish council
9. To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover area currently within Ospringe Parish area.
10. To extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover land within Boughton Under Blean Parish Council and Selling Parish Council
11. To transfer land from Faversham Town Council to Sheldwich Parish Council
12. To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to transfer School Farm along Graveney Road, Graveney Road from Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council

Sittingbourne

13. To amend the Iwade Parish Boundary, including that with Bobbing Parish Council
14. To create a Murston Parish Council
15. To create a Great Easthall Parish Council moving land from Tonge Parish Council.
16. To merge the currently unparished area of Great Easthall with Tonge parish council
17. To create a Kemsley Parish Council
18. To create a Milton Regis Parish Council
19. To create a Meads Parish Council moving land from Bobbing Parish Council
20. To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of the unparished area of the Meads
21. To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of Grove Park

22. To create an Urban Sittingbourne Town Council taking merging some land from Tunstall and the remainder of unparished areas.
 23. To create an Urban Sittingbourne Town Council including Grove Park/or separate Grove Park Parish Council.
- 2.8 The second stage consultation ran from 7 April 2026 to 2 June 2026. A total of 1692 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. This is considered a high response rate for similar exercises conducted around the county.
- 2.9 Appendix 1 details the consultation activities that took place and the engagement rate. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the results from the consultation survey. Appendix 3 provides a sample of Heat Maps produced using Power BI that show the spread of responses. These interactive maps were shared with the Member Steering Group as part of their analysis of the overall responses.
- 2.10 The Member Steering Group met on the 4 and 10 June 2026 to review the results of the second stage consultation and to agree which proposals should progress to final recommendations. This included detailed review of all consultation responses alongside internal legal advice. They were also provided with access to anonymised raw data from the consultation responses.
- 2.11 The Member Steering Group agreed the principle that the greatest weight should be provided to those respondents that live in the affected areas for each proposal, with consideration also given to consequential matters such as future development and local knowledge. All responses have been reviewed (using road name and postcode data) to determine whether they live in the affected area for that proposal.
- 2.12 Other residents may have responded to questions due to another interest in that area (such as business owner, parents living in that area), however this reason is not known. Heat Maps of the responses per question have also been reviewed, with more weighting given, where appropriate, to those that do live nearer to the affected area. Consideration was also given to the response rate versus the number of electorates living in that area affected by the proposal.
- 2.13 Where the proposals were also asked at Stage 1, consideration has been given to these responses, however not all questions were asked in an identical manner, and it is not possible to determine whether stage 1 and 2 responses were from the same respondents. A number of the Stage 2 questions were amended to become clearer with more direct proposals, where at stage 1 were scoping a number of ideas. Appendix 6 details the full reasoning of the proposals by the Member Steering Group and acknowledges the Stage 1 questions and their relatability to the Stage 2 decision.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals that are put forward for the for final adoption have been agreed by the Member Steering Group, based upon the totality of the consultation process. The Maps that notate each proposal are shown in appendix 4.
- 3.2 It is important to note, that were new parish/town/community councils are proposed to be established, that there will be a financial impact for residents by way of a new precept charge. Although it will be for the new councils to set and agree this, with a likely small charge of approximately £10 for the initial year, the average precept across Swale parishes is £67.
- 3.3 Consideration has also been given to the number of parish council seats for those new ones proposed and for any existing with boundary amendments. The reasoning for the proposals is outlined in appendix 5.
- 3.4 Appendix 6 provides a detailed review of all of the Stage 2 proposals for this Community Governance Review, along with the recommendation and reasoning for this by the cross party CGR Member Steering Group. These are summarised within the following section of this report.

Isle of Sheppey

Proposal 1: To change the name of Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council.

Reasoning and Recommendation: Given the clear indication of preference from the survey responses from both stage 1 and stage 2 consultations, it is recommended by the CGR Member Steering Group that this name change takes place.

Proposal 2: To create a Halfway Parish Council for the currently unparished area of halfway.

Reasoning and Recommendation: From the stage 2 responses, the greatest number of those living in the affected area responded that they would like a Halfway Parish Council. Although the overall response rate is low compared with the population of this area, this is in part felt by the Steering Group to be due to consultation fatigue. A petition to create a Halfway Parish Council was collated earlier in 2025 with 426 signatures; and the stage 1 consultation had 38 responses in favour of a parish of some kind. Although the previous consultation/petition cannot be completely factored in due to the slight differences in questions asked, these combined with the stage 2 consultation responses do show a clear desire for a new parish council. It is recommended by the Member Steering Group that a Halfway Parish Council (as shown in Map 1) is created, with 7 seats.

Proposal 3: To amend a number of boundaries between the new Halfway Parish Council Minster-on-Sea Parish Council.

Reasoning and Recommendation:

- Appleford Drive area (Map 2): Although the majority of respondents within the affected area did respond to request no change, the overall number of those living in the affected area is very low. The natural boundary around this half of this estate means that these residents cannot easily access Halfway Parish Council services. It is also felt that some may have responded with no change as wish to remain unparished, however leaving this small area unparished when the remainder of their estate is parished doesn't not seem sensible and these residents likely already benefit from Minster-on-Sea parish council services. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group to amend the Minster-on-Sea Parish Council boundary to include these properties.
- Baird Way area (Map 3): The greatest majority of respondents that lived in the affected area wish for this boundary change to take place. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group to amend the Minster-on-Sea Parish Council boundary to move these properties into the new Halfway Parish Council area.
- Ovinia Chase area (Map 4): The greatest majority of respondents that lived in the affected area wish for this boundary change to take place; and the wider majority of respondents do not live as locally to the affected area. Access to this new estate will all be through Minster-on-Sea parish land, with a natural boundary to the left preventing easy access to Halfway Parish land. It is recommended by the Member Steering Group to amend the Minster-On-Sea Parish Council boundary to incorporate this area, from Halfway Parish Council.
- Minster Road (Map 5): This proposal only affects a very small number of properties, with natural road boundaries around it. Only 1 response was received from residents living in the affected area, with other respondents as shown on heat maps provided to the steering group living in a greater area. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group to amend the Minster-on-Sea Parish boundary to incorporate these properties from Halfway Parish Council.

Proposal 4: To amend the boundary between Queenborough Town Council and the new Halfway Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: This proposal affects land only and is tidying an existing boundary line. The greatest majority of respondents replied to agree with the proposal. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group to transfer the land shown within Map 6 from the new Halfway Parish Council, to Queenborough Town Council.

Proposal 5: To amend the boundary between Sheerness Town Council and new Halfway Parish Council.

Reasoning and Recommendation: This proposal affects land only and is tidying an existing boundary line, but did not previously factor in that this piece of land is marshland shown within map 7. No local residents were in favour of this proposal, although there was only a very small response rate for this option. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group that this proposal doesn't go ahead.

Proposal 6: To Transfer Lucas Close from Sheerness Town Council to Queenborough Town Council.

Reasoning and Recommendation: This proposal was added to the stage 2 consultation process following identification of an issue with a previous CGR for this area in 2022. The legislation was never laid before Government to complete the transition of these properties from Sheerness Town Council to Queenborough Town Council. At the time of the original consultation, respondents were not in favour, but it was agreed by Council due to the responses from parish/existing ward councillors to go ahead. Of those residents living in the affected area that responded to this stage 2 consultation, they were in favour of the transfer. Therefore it is recommended by the Member Steering Group that this area (Map 8) is transferred from Sheerness Town Council to Queenborough Town Council.

Faversham

Proposal 7: To increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward if split occurs)

Reasoning and Recommendation: Total number of responses favoured increasing the councillor numbers for this ward at both total response level and for those that live in the affected area. Therefore, the Member Steering Group recommends to increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward).

Proposal 8: To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two.

Reasoning and Recommendation: Total number of responses favoured splitting the ward at both total response level and for those that live in the affected area. Therefore, the Member Steering Group recommends to split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two.

Proposal 9: To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3

Reasoning and Recommendation: Although the total number of responses favoured no change in stage 2, upon reviewing those that live in the affected area, the majority wished for the number to increase. Therefore, the Member Steering Group recommends to increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3.

Proposal 10: To extend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to encompass Perry Court (Faversham Town Council owned land) from Ospringe parish council

Reasoning and Recommendation: This proposal was put forward by Faversham Town Council as they are now the landowner of this piece of land, but it remains within Ospringe Parish Council area. The proposal would enable tidying of boundaries and would use a natural landmark as the boundary. There are currently no residents living within the affected area. The Heat Map provided of responses, showed that these were spread across a wider area of Faversham but those living nearest indicated a preference for the change to take place. Although the greater number of responses indicated residents preference to not make this change, as these are not residents living in the affected area and given the land ownership, it is recommended by the Member Steering Group to extend Watling Ward to encompass Perry Court from Ospringe parish council, as per Map 9.

Proposal 11: To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover area currently within Ospringe Parish area

Reasoning and Recommendation: Given the clear indication to the survey responses in stage 2 and the consultation comments from Ospringe Parish Council, it is not recommended that the proposal to transfer land from Ospringe to Faversham Town Council takes place (Map 10).

Proposal 12: To extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to cover land within Boughton Under Blean Parish Council and Selling Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: Although the overall response rate showed a preference for no change at Stage 1 and Stage 2, when reviewing responses for those directly living in the affected area, the preference was to extend the boundary for Faversham Town Council. There are a very small number of properties within the affected area. This proposal was put forward by Faversham Town Council to tidy boundaries ahead of further housing development in the future. The Heat Map reviewed by the Member Steering Group of responses, showed the distribution of wider responses were not adjacent to the affected area. It is not possible to determine from the stage 1 consultation responses whether these were the same residents responding and due to the split nature of the responses at Stage 1, this is why it was agreed to consult as part of stage 2 to seek clearer indication. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering

Group to transfer land from Boughton Parish Council and Selling Parish Council (Map 11) to Faversham Town Council Watling ward.

Proposal 13: To transfer land from Faversham Town Council to Sheldwich Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: Respondents are relatively split on this proposal, however there are no affected residents living directly in the affected area. This proposal was put forward by Faversham Town Council to transfer this boundary as it would ensure the entirety of the National Landscape is within the boundary of Sheldwich, and it is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group that this boundary amendment takes place (Map 12).

Proposal 14: To extend Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to transfer School Farm along Graveney Road, Graveney Road from Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: There are only 4 affected properties within this area (School Farm) and the majority of respondents do not live adjacent to the affected area. This proposal was put forward as a result of the stage 1 consultation where residents within this affected area requested this boundary tidy. Therefore, it is recommended by the Member Steering Group that this boundary change takes place (Map 13).

Sittingbourne

Proposal 15: To amend the Iwade Parish Boundary, moving previously unparished land into Iwade Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: This proposal was developed by the Member Steering Group to tidy this boundary line. There are only a small number of residents living within the affected area, but of those that responded, the greater number were in favour, at both stage 1 and 2. The Member Steering Group therefore recommends that this land (Map 14) is transferred to Iwade Parish Council.

Proposal 16: To amend the Bobbing Parish Boundary, moving land from Bobbing Parish Council into Iwade Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: This proposal was developed by the Member Steering Group to tidy this boundary line. There are no affected residents living within the affected area and although the majority of residents that responded were not in favour of this change, there are no houses in the affected area and is a boundary tidy. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group to amend this boundary, moving this land (Map 14) from Bobbing Parish Council to Iwade Parish Council.

Proposal 17: To create a Murston Parish Council.

Reasoning and Recommendation: The majority of respondents have said that they would like a Murston Parish Council, with this number increasing when including the Vincent Park area. It is therefore recommended by the Member Steering Group to create a Murston Parish Council, with 9 seats, as per Map 15 (which has been amended from the Stage 2 proposal to incorporate the Vincent Park estate).

Proposal 18: To create a Great Easthall Parish Council moving land from Tonge Parish Council/ to merge the currently unparished area of Great Easthall with Tonge parish council

Reasoning and Recommendation: The majority of respondents have said that they would like a parish council of some kind. Of comments made, there were concerns regarding payment to management companies with additional payments to a new parish council for those currently unparished – however a new parish council could take on functions of the management company. It is felt by the steering group that Great Easthall needs to be treated as one area, not split in two as it currently is with regard to parish coverage. Although there is a mixture of parish council options preferred by respondents, with concerns raised by Tonge Parish Council of their financial viability if they lost a large proportion of housing, the member steering group therefore felt that the whole of this estate should be covered by Tonge Parish Council, extending their boundary as per Map 16. It is also therefore recommended to increase the number of seats on Tonge Parish Council from 5 to 7. This would support the increase in electorate whilst also reducing the likelihood of inquorate meetings.

Proposal 19: To create a Kemsley Parish Council.

Reasoning and Recommendation: The majority of respondents have said that they would like a Kemsley Parish Council, therefore the Member Steering Group has recommended that a parish council for this area is created as per Map 17, with 9 parish council seats.

Proposal 20: To create a Milton Regis Parish Council

Reasoning and Recommendation: The majority of respondents have said that they would like a Milton Regis Parish/Town Council and therefore the Member Steering Group recommends that this new Town Council is created as per Map 18, with 9 parish council seats. It is felt that using the naming convention of a Town Council better reflects the identify of this area.

Proposal 21: To create a Meads Parish Council moving land from Bobbing Parish Council/ To extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of the unparished area of the Meads

Reasoning and Recommendation: The majority of respondents have said that they would like a parish/town council with the majority having indicated they

would prefer to join/remain part of Bobbing Parish Council. Part of The Meads is already part of Bobbing Parish area. Therefore the Member Steering Group recommends that the Bobbing Parish boundary is extended to include the currently unparished area of The Meads, as per Map 19.

Proposal 22: To create a Grove Park Parish Council/extend Bobbing Parish Council to encompass all of Grove Park

Reasoning and Recommendation: The greatest number of respondents have said that they would like some kind of parish/town council, with a new Grove Park Council being the highest response within those. Although concerns were raised by Bobbing Parish Council as to the loss of any properties within this area in their boundary, as per another proposal, they would gain a number of properties within the Meads area. The Member Steering Group has recommended that a Grove Park Community Council be created, including the area of Grove Park previously included within the boundary for Bobbing Parish Council, with 7 seats, as per Map 20. It is felt that using the naming convention of a Community Council better reflects the identify of this area. Both this proposal and proposal 21, see amendments made to the boundary of Bobbing Parish Council. It was not felt by the Member Steering Group that the change in elector numbers was significant enough to amend the total number of parish councillors.

Proposal 23: To create a Sittingbourne Town Council merging some land from Tunstall and the remainder of unparished areas.

Reasoning and Recommendation: Following the review of the responses from all of the wider Sittingbourne area, the greatest number of respondents were not in favour of a town council being established, therefore the Member Steering Group recommends that a Sittingbourne Town Council for the currently unparished area show in Map 21, is not taken forward.

- 3.5 Recommendation 1: That Policy and Resources Committee agree and recommend to Council that the following CGR Recommendations are adopted.
- 24. To change the name of Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council
 - 25. To create a Halfway Parish Council (as shown in Map 1) with 7 seats.
 - 26. To amend the Minster-on-Sea Council boundary to incorporate the properties shown within Map 2 (Appleford Drive area), Map 4 (Ovinia Chase area) and Map 5 (Minster Road) from the new Halfway Parish Council area, but to transfer the properties shown within Map 3 (Baird Way area) from Minster-on-Sea to the new Halfway Parish Council.
 - 27. To amend the Queenborough Town Council boundary to incorporate land shown in Map 6, from the new Halfway Parish Council.
 - 28. To not amend the boundary between Sheerness Town Council and the new Halfway Parish Council, as shown in Map 7.
 - 29. To amend the boundary between Sheerness Town Council and Queenborough Town Council to move Lucas Close (Map 8) from Sheerness to Queenborough.

30. To increase the number of councillors representing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council Ward) from 4 to 6 (3 per ward)
31. To split the existing Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) into two
32. To increase the number of councillors representing Priory Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) from 2 to 3
33. To extend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council ward) to encompass Perry Court (Faversham Town Council owned land) from Ospringe parish council as shown in Map 9.
34. To not extend the boundary of Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council) to cover area currently within Ospringe Parish Council (Map 10).
35. To amend the Watling Ward (Faversham Town Council) boundary to incorporate land currently within both Boughton Parish Council and Selling Parish Council (Map 11).
36. To transfer land from Faversham Town Council and Sheldwich Parish Council (Map 12).
37. 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).
38. To amend the Iwade Parish Council boundary to incorporate previously unparished land (Map 14).
39. To amend the Bobbing Parish Boundary, moving land from Bobbing Parish Council into Iwade Parish Council (Map 14).
40. To create a Murston Parish Council as per the area within Map 15, with 9 number of seats.
41. To amend the Tonge Parish Council Boundary as per Map 16, incorporating the currently unparished area of Great Easthall, increasing their number of councillors from 5 to 7.
42. To create a Kemsley Parish Council as per the area within Map 17, with 9 seats.
43. To create a Milton Regis Town Council as per the area within Map 18, with 9 seats
44. To extend the boundary of Bobbing Parish Council, as per the area within Map 19, to include the unparished area of The Meads.
45. To create a Grove Park Community Council as per the area within Map 20, with 7 seats, incorporating the part of this estate previously within the Bobbing Parish boundary.
46. To not create a Sittingbourne Town Council as per Map 21.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To reduce the number of final recommendations: It would be possible to reduce/amend the number of final recommendations. 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 Stage 2; and are felt by the Member Steering Group to best reflect the needs of the local community that responded. There are also interdependencies between the

proposals put forward which will need to be considered for any amendments to what may be taken forward.

- 4.2 To not take forward any of the recommendations: An alternative option would be to not go ahead with any of the proposals put forward within this report; and to halt the Community Governance Review in totality. This is not recommended as there was a good level of engagement with residents throughout the consultation process, with clear intent shown for proposals put forward.

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 Full details of the Stage 2 consultation are shown in appendix 1 and the full consultation plan that was developed and signed off by the Member Steering Group.
- 5.4 Residents were given clear information regarding any precept implications of any options chosen; and were also given the option for no change. This will made clear in the question wording so that residents no not feel that are being made to make a choice that would see a new parish/town council put into place. The consultation questions also included clear maps and reasoning for each proposal being put forward.

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. It is important to note that where proposals relate to establishing new parish/town/community councils, there will be a cost to local residents through the form of a precept. It will down to each new council to establish this precept. For its first year, the Borough Council will need to set the precept for each new parish/town/community council at a value that enables it to function. The average precept for the existing parish councils is £59.80 per year. In terms of implementation of these proposals moving forward, there will be a requirement for existing Swale BC officers to provide support (governance, elections, legal, HR). There will also be requirements to recruit clerks and possibly source office space. These and any additional costs or guidance required can be recharged to the new councils once formed. There is a risk that the new councils will not agree to cover these costs, however it is felt that the risk is minimal and that the costs are considered required to establish these councils on a strong as position as possible.
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 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. This has been the case for some of the proposals having been considered and where this has been the case, reference has been made within this report. There were also two petitions completed in the last 12 months in relation to requests for new parish councils. Again, as these did not ask the same direct questions, they cannot formally be considered, but they do provide an indication of desire from local communities and are referenced in the final recommendation reasoning. A number of the proposals relate to the creation of new town/parish/community councils – with different naming conventions having been suggested which are felt to best reflect those local areas. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 advises that there is no formal differences between these types of local councils – but allows for flexibility in the ‘styling/naming’. There is no difference between their powers or legal status. The proposals also recommend a number of boundary changes for existing parish/town councils. Formal processes will need to be followed for these to be implemented, if agreed. These may have

	an implication on future elections and how parish elections may need to be managed. Where the proposals suggested a boundary change to an existing parish/town council, the member steering group did feel that there was an argument to change the name of existing parish/town councils. However, following legal advice, as such a name change was not formally consulted upon as part of this CGR process, this is not something that could be taken forward at this stage. A change of name directly reflects the identity and interests of the community and would go beyond a consequential recommendation. The proposals do recommend a number of new town/parish/community councils being established. If agreed, their establishment will need to follow formal guidance set-out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Advice will be sought from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) in the establishing of proposed new councils and in recruitment of required clerks. The final recommendations have resulted in additional late recommendations that arise directly from the issues highlighted during stage 2 consultation. This is the case in relation to the recommendations to increase the size of both Bobbing Parish Council and Tonge Parish Council. When implementing the CGR and reviewing the consultation responses, the Council must take into account influential factors including the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish. With this in mind, it has been recommended to increase the number of seats on Tonge Parish Council to reflect the impact of the boundary changes.
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. As outlined within the proposals, each new parish/town/community council must have a certain number of seats. The expectation is

	that local residents are elected to these seats, however, there is a risk that not enough are filled for these councils to be quorate. If this was the case, there would be an expectation that Swale Borough Council officers (or a new unitary council) fill these seats. This is not a long-term viable solution and may result in future Community Governance Reviews to disband any parish/town/community council. In the 2023 Parish Elections for Swale there were only 6 contested parish areas/parish wards, with 3 parish areas/parish wards that were inquorate. For these, two were able to repeat the nomination process and filled the vacancies without the need to hold by-elections, as they were untested. For the remaining one, there was an borough council appointment to the vacancy to ensure that council was quorate. Currently, Swale parish elections are scheduled for 2027. It is anticipated that elections to these proposed new town/parish/community councils aligns with this date. However, as part of the LGR process, MHCLG are considering whether parish elections should be aligned with those for the new shadow authorities, which could see a delay in parish elections.
Equality and Diversity	An equality impact assessment has been completed following the second stage consultation to accompany the final recommendations and is shown in appendix 6. Key findings are that overall, while no clear direct discrimination has been identified, there are potential indirect impacts, particularly relating to financial burden. Consideration needs to be given as to whether information on council tax support scheme is included in all council tax bills being issued to areas that are newly parished as per the proposals.
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. It is also important to note that if agreed by Council, this CGR can take place irrespective of LGR and its timescales. There is a need to review warding as part of the implementation of LGR. At this stage, we do not know which geographical model will be implemented and therefore impact on warding.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Swale Stage 2 CGR Consultation and Engagement Summary

Appendix 2: Summary of Stage 2 High Level Consultation Figures

Appendix 3: Sample Heat Maps of Stage 2 Consultation Responses

Appendix 4: Maps of Proposals

Appendix 5: Parish Seat Number Analysis

Appendix 6: Detailed review of Stage 2 proposals and recommendations by Member Steering Group

Appendix 7: Equality Impact Assessment for CGR Final Recommendations

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

CGR Full Council Decision 1 April 2026

<https://democracy.swale.gov.uk/documents/g4336/Printed%20minutes%20Wednesday%2001-Apr-2026%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

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