

Electoral Services

T/K 9/8/18
DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Please ask for: Electoral Services
Direct Line: (01322) 343501

E-mail: community.review@dartford.gov.uk

DX: 142726 Dartford 7

We welcome calls via Typetalk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: CGR_S&G

Date: 23 July 2018

P11543726/006445



Dear Resident(s)

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Dartford Borough Council is currently undertaking a Community Governance Review. The review is carried out to consider arrangements for parish councils such as creating, merging, altering or abolishing parish councils, changing a parish council's boundary or the naming of parish councils and reviewing their electoral arrangements.

The areas of Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe and Swanscombe has seen and will continue to experience major growth in residential properties which is increasing the electorate significantly in this area and this would be an opportune time to review the parish arrangements.

There are three proposals that have been agreed that all include the option for areas to become unparished: -

Option one - Subject to any minor boundary adjustments, the wards recommended by the Local Government Boundary Committee are implemented with a representation as follows: -

LGBCE Wards	No. of Cllrs
Ebbsfleet Ward	7 Councillors
Greenhithe & Knockhall Ward	7 Councillors
Swanscombe Ward	6 Councillors

Continues overleaf



WOODEN

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Option Two: That subject to any minor boundary adjustments, the area is divided into the following councils and warding arrangements.

Ebbsfleet Valley Community Council	Un-warded	5 Councillors
Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council	Swanscombe Ward	6 Councillors
	Greenhithe Ward	4 Councillors
	Knockhall Ward	3 Councillors

Option Three: That subject to any minor boundary adjustments, the area is divided into the following councils:

Ebbsfleet Valley Community Council	Un-warded	5 Councillors
Swanscombe Town Council	Swanscombe Ward	6 Councillors
	Broomfield Ward	3 Councillors
Greenhithe Parish Council	Greenhithe Ward	5 Councillors
	Knockhall Ward	4 Councillors

You can submit your views and review the proposals and maps at: - <https://www.dartford.gov.uk/community-governance-review/swanscombe>

Yours sincerely

Electoral Services

Electoral Services



TOWN COUNCIL
5 JULY 2018

109/18-19. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW (CGR) – DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC).**

On 19 June 2018 the Electoral Services Manager, DBC had supplied information/report regarding the CGR and advised that the DBC Electoral Provisions Sub-Committee would be meeting on 27 June 2018 to consider the report. The recommended proposals by the Sub-Committee would then be submitted to the DBC General Assembly of Council on 16 July 2018.

DBC welcomed any comments from the Parish and Town Councils on the draft options contained in the report and advised that were any to be received they would be considered by the General Assembly of Council on 16 July 2018.

The Electoral Services Manager, DBC had also confirmed that all Parish and Town Councils will be consulted separately about the draft options – seeking their views and advising on how the consultation will be undertaken.

Officers had included draft comments for members' consideration and also tabled an addendum to these.

After a lengthy debate it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed that the Town Council should submit comments at this stage and that the draft comments and addendum be agreed with the draft comments being amended to bullet points and to include:

"The Town Council does not understand, or see the benefit to tax payers, of creating the cost for changing the governance arrangements and feels that this is the wrong time to be doing this. The Town Council welcomes the opportunity to discuss future local governance arrangements for the Ebbsfleet area but feels that this is not the time to be implementing changes at the moment and that a review should be undertaken in 10 years' time."

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Council submit comments, on the draft options contained in the DBC Electoral Provisions Sub-Committee report, for consideration by the DBC General Assembly of Council on 16 July 2018.
2. That the draft comments, to include the addendum and amendments as detailed above, be agreed and submitted.

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T/C 9/8/18



Comments from Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council to Electoral Services Manager, DBC email dated 19 June 2018, and for consideration by the General Assembly of the Council on 16 July 2018.

Introduction:

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council have noted the recommendations to the Electoral Provisions Sub-Committee on 27 June 2018 and would welcome the opportunity to input into the draft options for all Parish Councils when these are put out for public consultation following the General Assembly of the Council meeting on 16 July 2018.

Before expressing the comments on the proposals available for Swanscombe & Greenhithe, as at 5 July 2018, the Town Council wanted to acknowledge that the considerations of a Community Governance Review regarding whether existing parish arrangements should be changed in any way include abolishing an existing parish.

The Town Council hope that this option is not one that the borough council would realistically consider as it would not only take away an important local level of representation, governance and service provision for an area it would also threaten the identities of the communities within the parish and also break all the ties built up by the communities and the links with similar community councils.

Any initial consideration of abolishing an existing parish should only be undertaken where there is clear and sustained support for the abolition which has been demonstrated and evidenced over an appropriate period (at least two terms of elected office), as referenced in the House of Commons White Paper on 'Parish Councils: Creation and Abolition' SN/PC/04827.

Without this clear and sustained support, over an appropriate period, the reasons and motives behind the proposal could be open to misinterpretation and it would seem to be undemocratic to consider this for one or two parishes in isolation within the borough?

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Dartford Borough Council - Community Governance Review

Comments:

The following are Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Councils comments to each of the options set out for the Town.

- **Option 1**
 - This is the recommendation made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and supports the existing community that is being built throughout the Town.
 - The LGBCE noted, in their rationale behind their recommendation, that the growing community of Ebbsfleet would be best served by having a significant number of councillors represent them within the Town Council.
 - As noted by Dartford Borough Council (DBC) this was supported by the Town Council and would enable the partnership work already undertaken between the Town Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC), towards building a cohesive community, to continue.
 - It is worth noting that the Chief Executive Officer of the EDC felt, in his comments to the LGBCE that a review of governance arrangements for Ebbsfleet would be more prudent in the future when further development has been undertaken and natural communities have been formed.

- **Option 2**
 - This option would separate the new communities within Ebbsfleet Valley and the existing community within Phoenix Parc from the remainder of the Town of Swanscombe and Greenhithe.
 - The rationale provided for this is that the growing community of Ebbsfleet would be better served with its own Community (Parish) Council to enable better representation and the ability to set its own taxes.
 - Although some may argue that this would be appropriate, given the future size of the area, it is hard to see how a Community Council consisting of only 5 elected members could effectively represent such a potentially large community.
 - The LGBCE recommended 7 councillors to represent the area, but felt this would be far better served within the established community governance setting of the Town Council.
 - As a newly formed parish council, the Ebbsfleet Community Council would be limited in providing its statutory functions, or any that it has the power to deliver, as the intention is that the majority of facilities in the area will be managed by private companies.
 - Beyond the separation of Ebbsfleet, the Town Council note DBC have proposed a change to internal ward boundaries that differ from both the existing ward boundaries and those suggested by the LGBCE. The Town Council would welcome the rationale for this change as we are aware the LGBCE would have to give formal consent for this.

Dartford Borough Council - Community Governance Review

- **Option 3**
 - This option dissolves the existing Town Council for Swanscombe and Greenhithe and creates three new smaller parish councils for Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe and Swanscombe.
 - This includes Ebbsfleet being an un-warded parish council and the newly formed parishes of Greenhithe and Swanscombe having two wards each.
 - The Town Council strongly object to this option as it would reverse, during a four month period, in excess of 92 years of history of this community being successfully supported by the existing council.
 - This area is rich in shared history and identity and separating the communities, in the same way as separating Ebbsfleet, would create natural divides between residents from existing communities and reverse all the good work undertaken by the existing Town Council in forging strong links and bonds between the communities. At present the Town Council is able to provide the rich variety of services and events it currently does because it has the economies of scale, which we are sure the Borough Council will understand, benefit when serving a large and diverse community. In this time of financial uncertainty that all local authorities face, the Town Council feels that this community would not benefit from withdrawing the existing financial strategy that the Town Council have worked towards for the last 5 years, providing best value for services.
 - Given that this Governance Review is proposed to be in place for May 2019, with the final order being made in December 2018, the Town Council would welcome the Borough Councils input on how this option would be delivered within this timeframe. As mentioned this would be turning back in excess of 92 years of governance for this Town and with that comes in excess of 92 years of assets that would need to be legally resolved. This is not just the simplicity of freehold transfers but leases that have been negotiated in the name of a proposed dissolved Town Council. As the Borough Council will understand, managing community assets involves a number of contracts and contractors that are not simple to renegotiate. In short the Town Council feels that this option is both unjustified given the history and close links within the community and also unrealistic given the timescales involved.

The Town Council does not understand, or see the benefit to tax payers, of creating the cost for changing the governance arrangements and feels that this is the wrong time to be doing this. The Town Council welcomes the opportunity to discuss future local governance arrangements for the Ebbsfleet area but feels that this is not the time to be implementing changes at the moment and that a review should be undertaken in 10 years' time.

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Graham Blew

T/C 9/8/18



From: Sarah Martin <sarah.martin@dartford.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 July 2018 15:11
To: Graham Blew
Subject: Comments did not go to GAC : Enquiry: SGTC Comments : Welcome comments for GAC on 16 July 2018 : Community Governance Review

Dear Graham,

I can confirm that members were made aware at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Council last night that Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council have submitted a detailed response to the draft proposals, however, after discussion with the Leader of the Council before the meeting, it was decided that the response itself would not be shared at this stage but would instead be considered by members alongside all the other consultation responses received during the consultation period. These responses will be used to help inform the final recommendations.

With kind regards,
Sarah

From: Graham Blew <graham.blew@swanscombeandgreenhithetowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 July 2018 11:12
To: Sarah Martin <sarah.martin@dartford.gov.uk>
Subject: Enquiry: SGTC Comments : Welcome comments for GAC on 16 July 2018 : Community Governance Review
Importance: High

Sarah

Further to my email below can you clarify whether the Town Councils comments (attached) were produced and presented to members for their consideration at the DBC GAC last night?

Yours sincerely,

Graham Blew
Town Clerk

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council | Council Offices |
The Grove | Swanscombe | Kent | DA10 0GA.
Tel: 01322 385513 | Fax: 01322 385849

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From: Graham Blew
Sent: 06 July 2018 10:54
To: 'Community Review' <Community.Review@dartford.gov.uk>
Subject: SGTC Comments : Welcome comments for GAC on 16 July 2018 : Community Governance Review
Importance: High

In response to your email below, dated 19 June 2018, please find attached the Town Councils comments on the draft options which **we would like to have included, in their entirety, for consideration by the General Assembly of the Council at its meeting on 16 July 2018.**

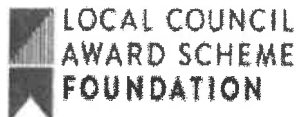
Please acknowledge receipt of this message.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Blew
Town Clerk

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From: Community Review [<mailto:Community.Review@dartford.gov.uk>]
Sent: 19 June 2018 14:06
Subject: Welcome comments for GAC on 16 July 2018 : Community Governance Review

Clerks,
Could you please pass on this message to your Parish Chairman

Many thanks

Dear Parish Chairman,

As you are aware the Local Boundary Commission for England have published their final recommendations for Dartford. In some areas these have resulted in changes to the Parishes which are different to those that were

proposed at the draft stages which you have commented on. Hopefully you have had time to digest the LGBCE proposals and will be able to provide us with your Council's views in due course.

As part of the Community Governance Review, Dartford Borough Council, as the principal council, have the powers to review and change the arrangements and the options that will be considered by the Electoral Provisions Sub-committee. The link to the agenda papers will be found here when published:

<http://committedmz.dartford.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=349&MId=2781&Ver=4>

Members of the Sub-committee will consider these at their meeting and recommended their proposals to the General Assembly of the Council at its meeting on the 16 July 2018 for approval. Following this meeting, the draft options for all Parish Councils will be put out for public consultation.

We welcome any comments from the Parish Councils on these draft options, which if received will be considered by the General Assembly of the Council. All Parish Councils will be consulted separately about the draft options – seeking their views and advising on how the consultation will be undertaken.

Jeanette Pegler
Electoral Services Manager
Dartford Borough Council

Total Control Panel

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To: graham.blew@swanscombeandgreenhithetowncouncil.gov.uk

[Remove this sender from my allow list](#)

From: sarah.martin@dartford.gov.uk

You received this message because the sender is on your allow list.

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Graham Blew

From: Community Review <Community.Review@dartford.gov.uk>
Sent: 21 June 2018 13:48
To: Graham Blew
Subject: Ensure they are provided to the GAC : Enquiry: Community Governance Review

Graham,
If we could receive your comments following your meeting on the 5 July that will be fine and we will ensure that they are provided to the GAC. Discussions with your council will continue through the next stage of the consultation and a letter was sent yesterday to your chairman

Jeanette Pegler
Electoral Services Manager
Dartford Borough Council

From: Graham Blew [mailto:graham.blew@swanscombeandgreenhitetowncouncil.gov.uk]
Sent: 21 June 2018 11:04
To: Community Review
Subject: Enquiry: Community Governance Review
Importance: High

Dear Electoral Services Manager

As per your email below, could I seek clarification as to the deadline for you to receive any comments from the Parish Councils on these draft options so that they are included in the consideration by the General Assembly of Council on 16 July 2018?

Our next meeting for Town Councillors to consider the draft Options is on 5 July 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Blew
Town Clerk

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council | Council Offices |
The Grove | Swanscombe | Kent | DA10 0GA.
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Subject: Community Governance Review

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We welcome any comments from the Parish Councils on these draft options, which if received will be considered by the General Assembly of the Council. All Parish Councils will be consulted separately about the draft options – seeking their views and advising on how the consultation will be undertaken.

Jeanette Pegler
Electoral Services Manager
Dartford Borough Council

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T/C 9/8/18



DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Electoral Provisions Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 27 June 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Chris Shippam (Chairman)
Councillor Drew Swinerd (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Jonathon S Hawkes
Councillor John Hayes
Councillor Keith M Kelly
Councillor Denzil J Reynolds
Councillor Richard J Wells

ABSENT: Councillor Bryan E Read

Dartford Borough Council Officers:-

Sarah Martin – Strategic Director (Internal Services)
Jeanette Pegler – Electoral Services Manager (ESM)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the presence of the Strategic Director (Internal Services) and the Electoral Services Manager.

It was confirmed that all Members had received a published copy of the Addendum to Item 4 – Community Governance Review.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Bryan Read due to ill-health (Substitute Cllr. J Hayes). Members wished Cllr. Read a speedy recovery.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2017

The Minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 31 October 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

4. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Sub-Committee received a report and addendum document from the Electoral Services Manager which asked Members to consider draft recommendations for the Community Governance Review (CGR) for the

ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

Borough of Dartford and put forward recommendations to the General Assembly of the Council for further consideration and approval.

The Strategic Director (Internal Services) advised Members of the background to the CGR including the following principal points:

- The terms of the CGR were published on the Council's website and looked at the Parish arrangements across the Borough;
- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had published their final recommendations following their wider review of the Borough's Ward boundaries, which had included some changes to Parish internal electoral arrangements. However, the Council were able to seek consent to alter those recommendations concerning the Parishes;
- The timing of the CGR was therefore unusual; it would normally have been undertaken before the wider Borough Warding review; and the Council's request to the LGBCE to make changes to their Parish recommendations (in the period between the Commission publishing their final recommendations and actually implementing them) was also unusual;
- The Council had therefore sought advice from the LGBCE on their proposal to conduct a CGR [normally a delegated power of a Council's Chief Executive] and the Commission had commented that given the unusual timing, they might wish to consider whether or not to grant consent for the CGR themselves;
- The Council had therefore shared their *draft* proposals with the Commission on that basis, but had received no indication that the proposals would give the LGBCE any concerns. However, their consent would still need to be obtained for the final CGR proposals agreed by the GAC.

She advised Members that, in general terms, the Council's Community Governance Review would look at creating, merging or abolishing parishes, altering the boundaries of existing parishes and making changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils, to ensure that parish governance of the borough was robust, representative and able to meet the challenge of Dartford's growing population. The Review could not make any changes to the Borough Wards or County Divisions: those arrangements should, wherever possible, be kept coterminous to avoid any confusion amongst electors.

The 1st stage of the Review, to invite initial submissions from Parishes, had been completed and their submissions considered and reflected in the *draft* proposals set-out in the report. Further comments, received following the publication of the Commission's wider Borough Ward boundary review, were contained in the tabled Addendum document before Members that evening.

ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

Following approval of the *draft* proposals that would be presented to the GAC on 16 July 2018; the wider public consultation phase of the CGR would begin. All Parished properties would receive a separate notice advising them of the Review and inviting them to respond with their views. In some areas it was clear that there were a number of possible options to consider, and the views of residents of Stone, Darenth and Wilmington Parishes would be sought on those options. In addition, the Council would be arranging meetings with the Parishes to discuss the *draft* proposals and seek their views.

Finally, as part of the report to the Sub-Committee, Members' views were sought on using the Aston Business School scale of representations, to ensure that the number of Parish Councillors would be proportionate to the electorate. The suggested levels of representation were set-out in paragraph 3.11 of the report [Agenda page 7].

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Director for providing the background and principal points concerning the process for the Council's proposed Community Governance Review, and expressed his thanks to the Electoral Services Manager (ESM) for a very comprehensive report to aid Members in their deliberations.

He invited Members to comment on the report and the *draft* proposals for Parishes, prior to the presentation of a final report to the General Assembly of the Council on 16 July 2018.

In response to a specific question from the Shadow Leader of the Council, it was confirmed that Sub-Committee Members could make recommendations and give opinions on the *draft* proposals for Officers consideration, prior to the submission of a final report to Cabinet on 16 July.

On that basis, Members initially discussed the *draft* proposals for Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council as set out in Appendix G of the report [agenda pages 28-33].

Members suggested that an additional option be included in the *draft* proposals for Swanscombe & Greenhithe, namely for any of the areas to become 'Unparished'. The Shadow Leader of the Council supported the proposal.

A Member advised that the Town Clerk of the parish council was not in agreement with all the comments that had been submitted in respect of Swanscombe & Greenhithe TC in the Addendum document [page 3]. In particular, the Town Clerk rejected the comment that '*sporadic requests had been made over a number of years from Greenhithe residents for a separate Greenhithe Parish Council*' –he had never received such a request.

The Electoral Services Manager confirmed for Members that an officer at Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council had commented that over the past 12 years they had not received any requests, sporadic or otherwise, from Greenhithe residents for a separate Greenhithe Parish Council.

ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

The Chairman noted the conflicting comments received, which he advised would be resolved when all Swanscombe and Greenhithe residents were asked to complete the Council's questionnaire as part of the wider consultation exercise.

Members then considered the *draft* proposals for the Dartford Parishes in alphabetical order and made the following comments:

Bean: Appendix A - no comments.

Darenth: Appendix B page 15 – Members discussed the rationale for creating smaller/larger represented wards for parishes.

A Member advised that Fleet estate residents had no sense of belonging to Darenth Parish. The Fleet estate had been built across boundary lines and its Parish identity never properly resolved.

The comments received during stage one of the review indicated that the deletion of Fleet Downs parish Ward seemed to be correct, but would be confirmed or otherwise when the fact finding consultation was undertaken with the affected residents.

The ESM noted the Member's comments and advised that Darenth Parish Council had advised that their meeting which reviewed the proposals, had been held on 20 June 2018 not 20 May as enclosed in Parish submission.

Longfield and New Barn: Appendix C – no comment but see Addendum p.2 regarding transfer of one property at Studley Crescent [Southfleet Parish] be transferred to Longfield and New Barn.

Southfleet: Appendix D – no comments.

Stone: Appendix E – The Shadow Leader commented that the proposed representation of seven Councillors made no sense and did not offer effective local government arrangements.

He asked if the current boundaries of St. John's Ward would be reviewed, as the new developments in and around the Stone House hospital shared common facilities but were divided by this boundary.

The Shadow Leader also sought clarification on whether Bluewater could become unparished. There were no registered electors at the shopping complex which would be affected, and if Bluewater became 'unparished' it would markedly improve the Parish's crime statistics.

The ESM noted the comments and advised that she would review the suggestion made to see if they were possible, however, she also confirmed that the County Divisions did mean that some changes could not be made.

Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley: Appendix F – no comments.

ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council: Members gave further consideration to Appendix G - in addition to the proposal that an 'Unparished' option be added to the *draft* recommendations (as recorded above).

Members supported the proposal that residents be given the opportunity to put their views forward as part of the consultation.

They also noted that the area was changing and different community identities were being created, and that an area such as Ebbsfleet should possibly have its own representation.

The S&GRA Member noted the proposal for an 'Ebbsfleet Ward' at the Parish and Borough level [map agenda p. 29]. He advised that historically, Ebbsfleet formed part of the Swanscombe Church Parish and that it should remain within the new Swanscombe Ward on that basis.

The ESM noted the Member's comment.

The Chairman concluded the debate and renewed his thanks to the Strategic Director for her contribution to the discussion and to the Electoral Services Manager for her report and the work of her Team in sourcing the material.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members approve the *draft* recommendations for the Community Governance Review for the Borough of Dartford as set out in the report, subject to consideration by Officers of their recommendations as detailed above, prior to submission of a final report and *draft* recommendations to the General Assembly of the Council for consideration and approval on 16 July 2018;
2. That Members approve the use of the Aston Business School Scale of Representation when considering Parish Council representation;
3. That Members approve an additional consultation exercise for selected areas within the parishes of Stone, Darenth and Wilmington be undertaken, and that the findings of that further consultation exercise be reported as part of the final recommendations to the General Assembly of the Council in due course;
4. That Members propose that a 4th Option be added to the *draft* Recommendations for Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council [Agenda Item 4 Appendix G pages 28-33] that "*Subject to any minor boundary adjustments the area becomes un-Parished*";
5. That Members note that this Community Governance Review cannot make any changes to Borough Wards of County divisions.

ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm

Councillor C J Shippam
CHAIRMAN

UNCONFIRMED

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the proceedings of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Council held on Monday 16 July 2018.

PRESENT:

The Mayor

Councillor D J Mote

The Deputy Mayor

Councillor R S L Perfitt

Councillor Mrs A D Allen, MBE
Councillor I D Armitt JP
Councillor A Bardoe
Councillor S H Brown
Councillor J Burrell
Councillor L A Canham
Councillor P F Coleman
Councillor Paul Cutler
Councillor M J Davis
Councillor B Garden
Councillor D A Hammock
Councillor J S Hawkes
Councillor D E Hunnisett
Councillor S R Jarnell
Councillor J Jones
Councillor Dr B K Kaini
Councillor K M Kelly
Councillor M B Kelly
Councillor P Kelly

Councillor J A Kite, MBE
Councillor E J Lampkin
Councillor M A Maddison
Councillor T A Maddison
Councillor C S McLean
Councillor J M Ozog
Councillor Mrs J A Ozog
Councillor M I Peters
Councillor B E Read
Councillor D J Reynolds
Councillor L J Reynolds
Councillor A S Sandhu, MBE
Councillor C J Shippam
Councillor D Swinerd
Councillor Mrs P A Thurlow
Councillor R J Wells

ABSENT:

Councillor R M Currans
Councillor J A Hayes
Councillor R Lees
Councillor A R Lloyd
Councillor D Page
Councillor Mrs R L Shanks
Councillor Mrs R F Storey

24. PRAYERS: REVEREND ANDREW AVERY

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayers.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Currans, Hayes, Lees, Lloyd, Page, Mrs Shanks and Mrs Storey.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Armitt declared an interest in Agenda item 14, Community Governance Review, as he is an employee of Wilmington Parish Council.

There were no other declarations of interests.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Council held on 9 May 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record.

28. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that since he had taken office in May he and the Mayoress had attended 90 events and were thoroughly enjoying their Mayoral duties. He praised the work carried out on the Dartford Festival which had once again been highly successful and in particular thanked the volunteers from the Dartford Youth Council who had assisted him in raising funds for the Mayor's Charity at the Festival. He invited Members to contribute to the Charity Treasure Hunt by buying a square on the treasure map. The Mayor congratulated Councillor Thurlow and her organising team and officers for making the Festival a great success. Finally he said that he had circulated a list of forthcoming Mayoral events and invited Members to support as many of these events as possible.

29. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

- **Councillor Drew Swinerd and family**

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillor Drew Swinerd and his wife Alison on the birth of their baby daughter, Romily, earlier in the day. Members expressed their congratulations and best wishes to the family for the future.

- **Dartford Festival**

The Leader of the Council said that he had attended the Dartford Festival at the weekend which had again been very enjoyable and well attended. He believed that attendance on the Saturday may have been the highest recorded to date. He congratulated Councillor Thurlow, the Festival organisers and the officers who attended and worked so hard to make it such a great success. He said that it was regrettable that some technical difficulties



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL

MONDAY 16 JULY 2018

**36. CAPITAL PROGRAMME INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS -
OUTTURN 2017/18**

The Council considered a report on the final pre-audit figures for the 2017/18 Capital Programme, the capital resources that were used to fund it and those resources which remained available to fund future investments and approved the carry forward of capital budgets into the 2018/19 financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the capital budget set out in Appendix C to the report be carried forward into the 2018/19 financial year.

**37. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS
FOR DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The General Assembly of the Council (GAC) considered a report which presented the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) final recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Dartford. This followed a process of review carried out by the LGBCE in response to electoral imbalances that had arisen across parts of the Borough due to organic change and development over time. The LGBCE had accepted the Council's recommendation for the size of the Council to be reduced from 44 Members to 42 and had considered the Council's and other responses to consultation on warding arrangements. The Council's draft warding recommendations had been submitted to the GAC on 30 November 2017 and the LGBCE issued its draft recommendations in January 2018. The Council's final response to the draft recommendations was agreed by GAC on 5 April 2018.

The Council accepted the majority of the LGBCE's draft recommendations but suggested some changes where it was considered that the proposals did not truly reflect local communities or it was considered that slight adjustments were required to reflect natural boundaries or road lines. The LGBCE published its final recommendations on 5 June 2018. These would result in an increase of 3 wards from the existing 17 wards to 20 (7 three Councillor wards; 8 two Councillor wards and 5 one councillor wards). The boundaries of all of Dartford's current wards would change. The LGBCE had made some changes to their earlier proposals as a result of the consultation and these were described in the report. The LGBCE had also included changes to some parish internal electoral arrangements but the Council would be seeking consent from the LGBCE to change some of these as part of the forthcoming Corporate Governance Review. It was envisaged that the new electoral arrangements for the Borough would take effect for the Borough Council elections in May 2019.

A Member noted that the LGBCE had amended its proposed arrangements for Darenth ward as a result of local submissions for the ward to include Darenth Country Park and Darenth Wood. Another Member thanked officers

and the Electoral Provisions Sub-committee for their work on the review of electoral arrangements.

RESOLVED:

1. That the General Assembly of the Council note the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's final recommendations for new electoral arrangements for the Borough, as detailed in Appendix A to the report; and
2. That the General Assembly of the Council approve the commencement of a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations on 1 October 2018.

38. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW DRAFT PROPOSALS

The General Assembly of the Council considered draft recommendations arising from the Community Governance Review (CGR) launched in January 2018 to examine existing parish council arrangements across the eight parish and town council areas in the Borough and previously unparished areas. The CGR looked at existing parish arrangements and had the power to create, merge or abolish parishes, to alter the boundary of existing parishes or make changes to their existing arrangements. The CGR however could not make changes to borough wards or county divisions and where possible would seek boundary coterminosity to avoid voter confusion.

The wider review of the Borough Council's electoral arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had resulted in some proposed revisions to parish internal electoral arrangements which were detailed in the appendices to the Community Governance Report. As a result of the CGR the Council would be seeking consent from the LGBCE to alter some of these changes which were also outlined as alternative options in the appendices.

?

< The first stage of the review, which was to invite formal submissions from the Parish Council's had now been completed and their submissions had been considered and reflected in the draft proposals in Appendix A to the report. The next stage would be to consult the wider public and all parished properties would receive details of the review and how to submit their views along with their annual Household Enquiry Form. Wider consultation would also be carried out on the draft proposals which could include options for parished areas to become unparished.

Whilst carrying out the initial review it had become clear that for certain areas, parts of Stone, Darenth and Wilmington, there were a number of possible options for different arrangements. The views of affected residents would therefore be ascertained on these options through additional fact finding exercises, including an additional fact finding exercise proposed in the published addendum to the report relating to Wilmington, regarding possible amendments to the parish boundary lines. Further meetings were being held with the Parishes to discuss the draft proposals and the Council had already received a detailed response from Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL

MONDAY 16 JULY 2018

Members were asked to approve the draft recommendations to enable the wider public consultation exercise to commence.

The Leader of the Council stressed that this exercise offered a real opportunity for residents to shape the electoral arrangements that applied to them to reflect their wishes and it was right that they were given a say in the detailed options. The Deputy Leader of the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents Association expressed concern about the timing of the CGR and stressed the difficulties in achieving community cohesion in areas covered by the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council area where there were well established communities and also new and rapidly evolving ones. He was concerned that in some of the growing areas the relatively small number of current residents might be committing to arrangements which might not be supported by the people joining those communities in the future. He also expressed concerns at maintenance fees being charged by some developers on top of Parish Council precepts which could mean that some tenants effectively paid twice for similar services. As a result he suggested that there should be no changes in Swanscombe and Greenhithe apart from the changes suggested by the LGBCE.

Other Members felt that it was necessary to carry out the CGR now because of the speed of development and population growth and to offer people sensible options. In terms of the consultation options for Swancombe and Greenhithe, there should be an additional option within each of the identified options, for areas within the Town Council to become unparished.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the draft recommendations for the Community Governance Review for the Borough of Dartford, as referred from the Electoral Provisions Sub-committee, and as amended for Wilmington Parish Council and Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council, be approved and put out to consultation.
2. That Members note that this Community Governance Review cannot make any changes to borough wards or county divisions; and
3. That the Strategic Director (Internal Services), in consultation with the chairman of the Electoral Provisions Sub-committee, be granted delegated authority to expand or create new consultation exercises for any areas or suggestions that may arise during the review.

39. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

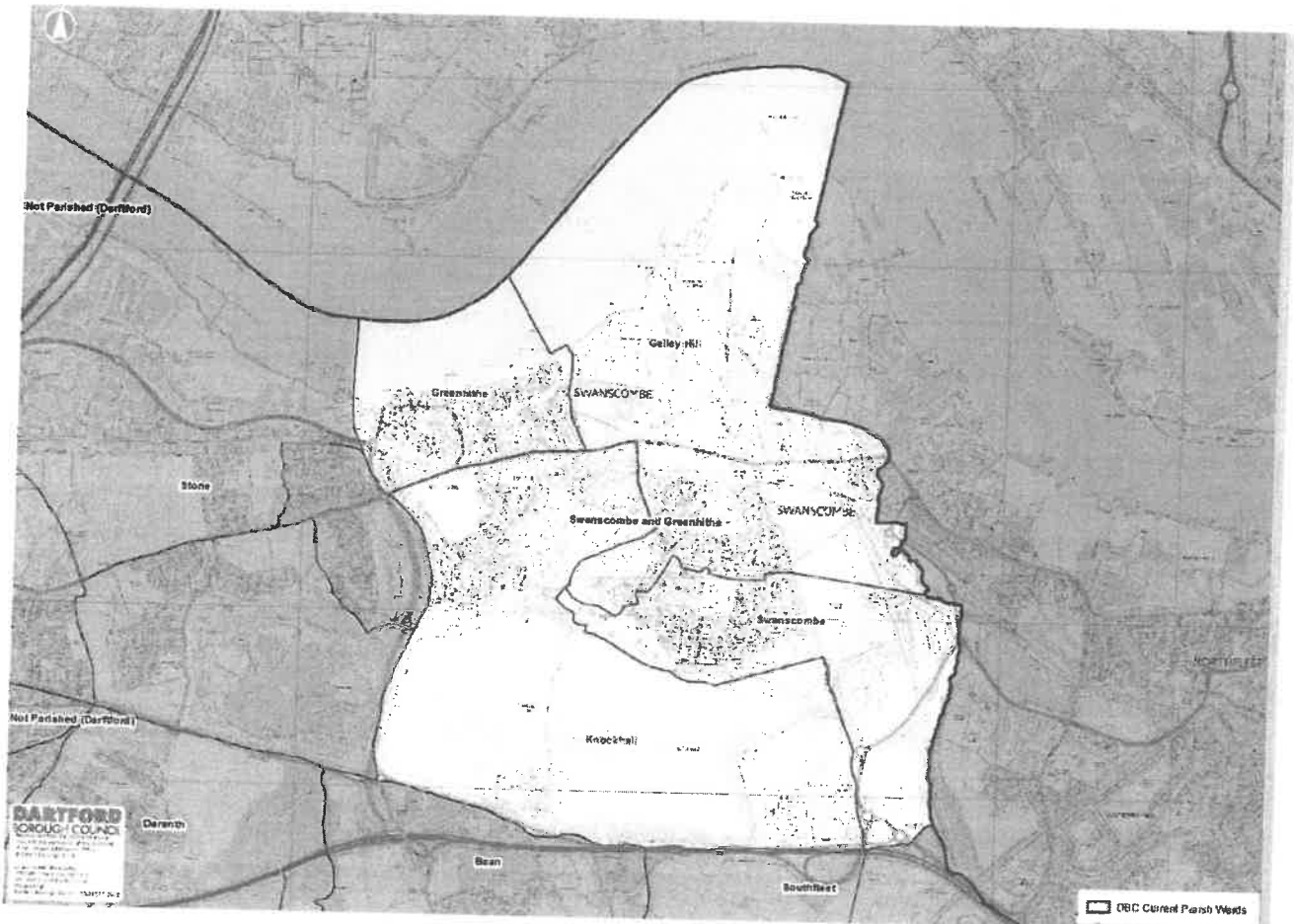
The Council considered the work carried out by the Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18 which was described in its annual report. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee thanked the Members of the committee and the Vice Chairman for their input during the year and also thanked the Committee Co-

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SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL

The Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council has an electorate of 11086 and is currently represented by 20 town councillors and is divided into five wards.

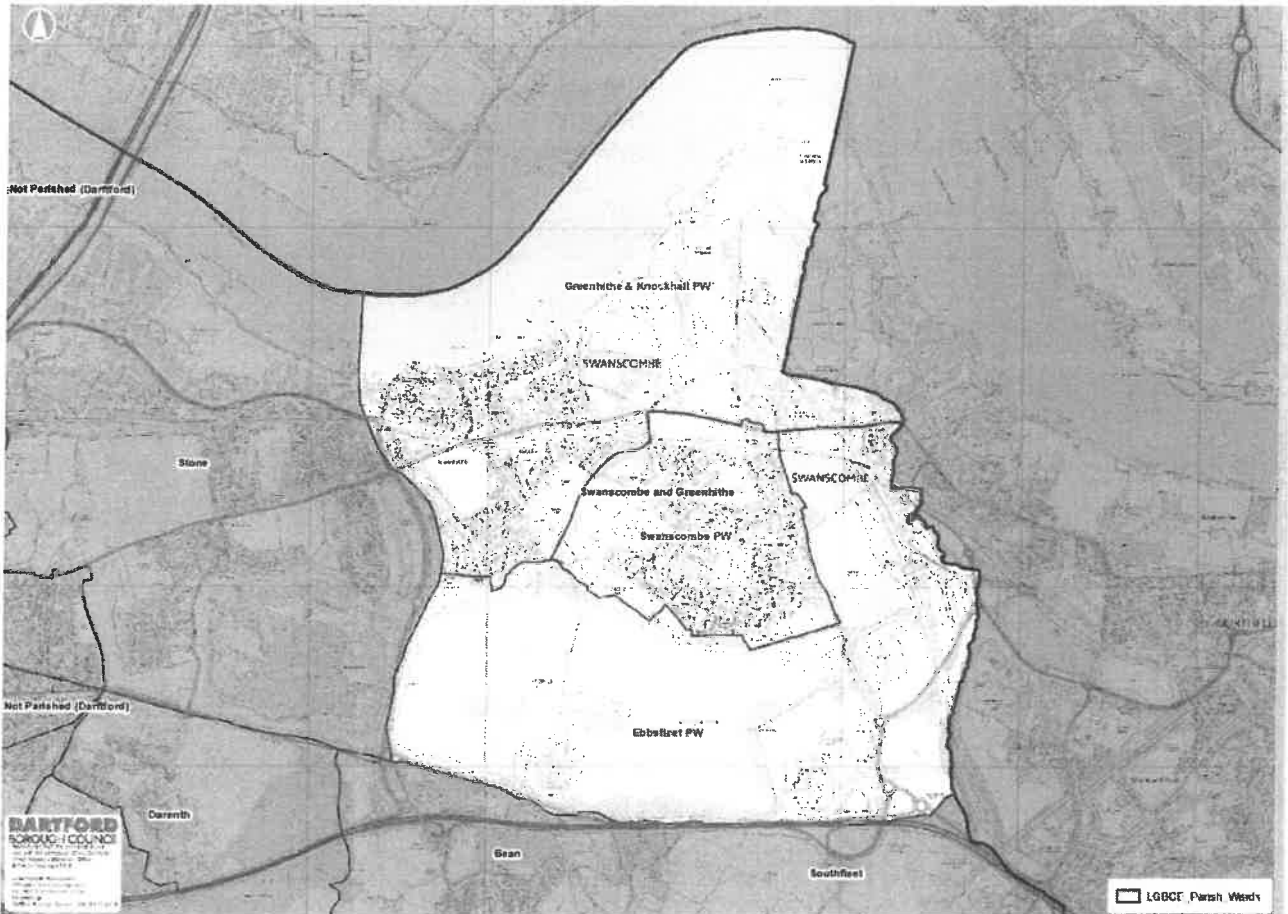
Current Wards	No. of Cllrs	Electorate
Galley Hill Ward	5 Councillors	3066
Greenhithe Ward	5 Councillors	2906
Knockhall Ward	5 Councillors	2904
Swanscombe Ward	5 Councillors	2210



(Current Ward Arrangements – Fig. 16)

Under the review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, changes to the warding arrangements have been put forward to amend the internal warding arrangements to the parish so that there are only three parish wards. If no further changes are proposed as part of this review, these are the arrangements which will be put into place for the May 2019 elections.

LGBCE Wards	No. of Cllrs	Estimated Electorate
Ebbsfleet Ward	7 Councillors	1167
Greenhithe & Knockhall Ward	7 Councillors	5167
Swanscombe Ward	6 Councillors	4752



(LGBCE Ward Arrangements – Fig. 17)

At the stage one of the Community Government Review, five consultation responses were received. One wanted the wards to remain as they were, three were happy with the original LGBCE proposal for three wards and one commented that the area of Ebbsfleet should have its own identity.

The LGBCE proposal was supported by Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council who commented as follows: -

'We are certain your proposals for the Parish boundaries are correct and accurate, as such we would not seek to see any further changes. The Town Council therefore supports the Parish ward boundary recommendations for Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe & Knockhall and Swanscombe.

Also, we agree to the Parish member numbers of seven for Ebbsfleet, seven for Greenhithe & Knockhall and six for Swanscombe'⁵.

The areas of Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe and Swanscombe has seen and will continue to experience major growth in residential properties which is increasing the electorate significantly in this area. By 2023, the predicted electorate for this parish is projected to be 17,217 electors. This is substantially larger than any of the other parishes.

⁵ Stage 1 Consultation response from Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council

In particular the creation of the Ebbsfleet Garden City has created a new community which could benefit from its own lower tier authority council in preparation for when the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation legacy ends.

This would give the electorate in the Ebbsfleet borough ward, which is predicted to grow to 6531 by 2023, an independent voice and a structure for taking community action for its environment and facilities and also independence in its own tax raising powers.

If this was to be introduced, then the remaining areas of the current town council could remain unchanged or be separated, to form two separate parish councils – separating the areas of Greenhithe and Swanscombe.

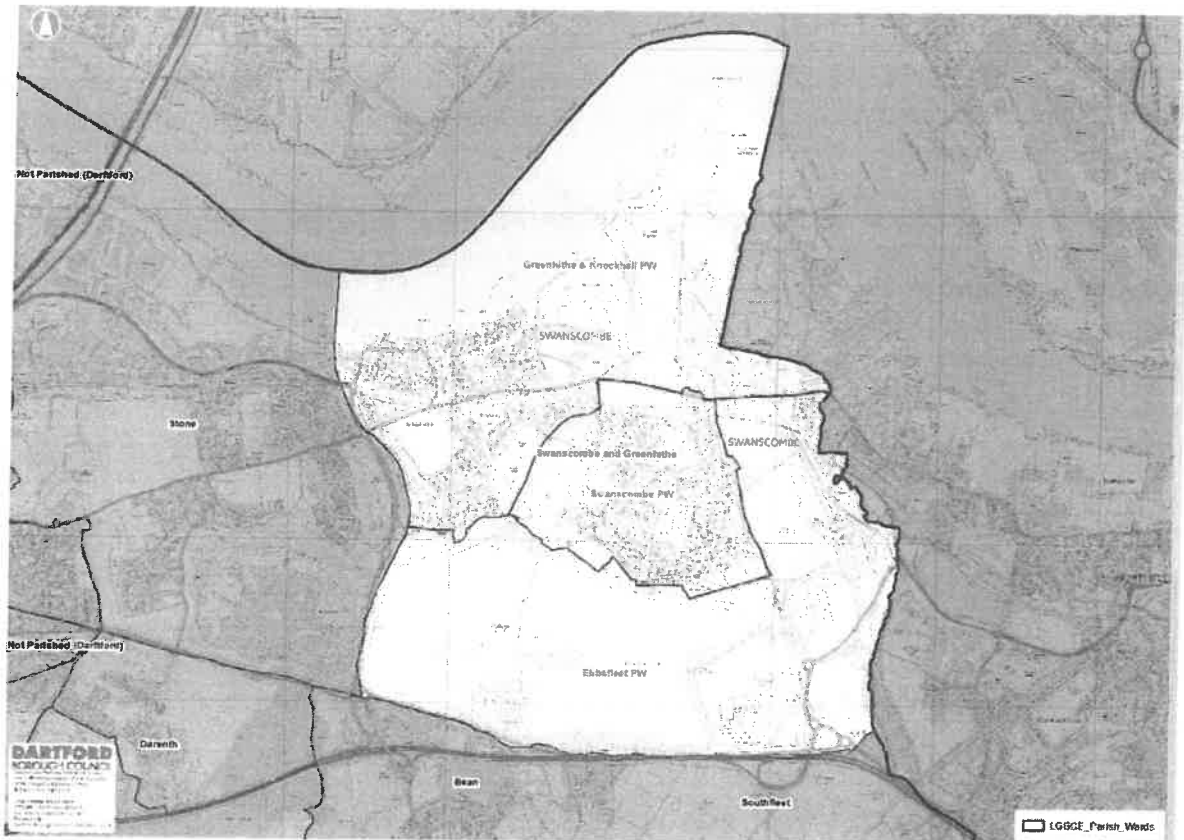
The Council has also carefully considered the number of electors per parish councillor and option three below proposes increasing the number of councillors for both Greenhithe and Swanscombe to nine.

The options for consultation were supported by the Electoral Provisions Sub-committee; however Members requested that the additional option for any of the areas to become unparished be included in the consultation exercise.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Option One: Subject to any minor boundary adjustments, the wards recommended by the LGBCE are implemented with a representation as follows: -

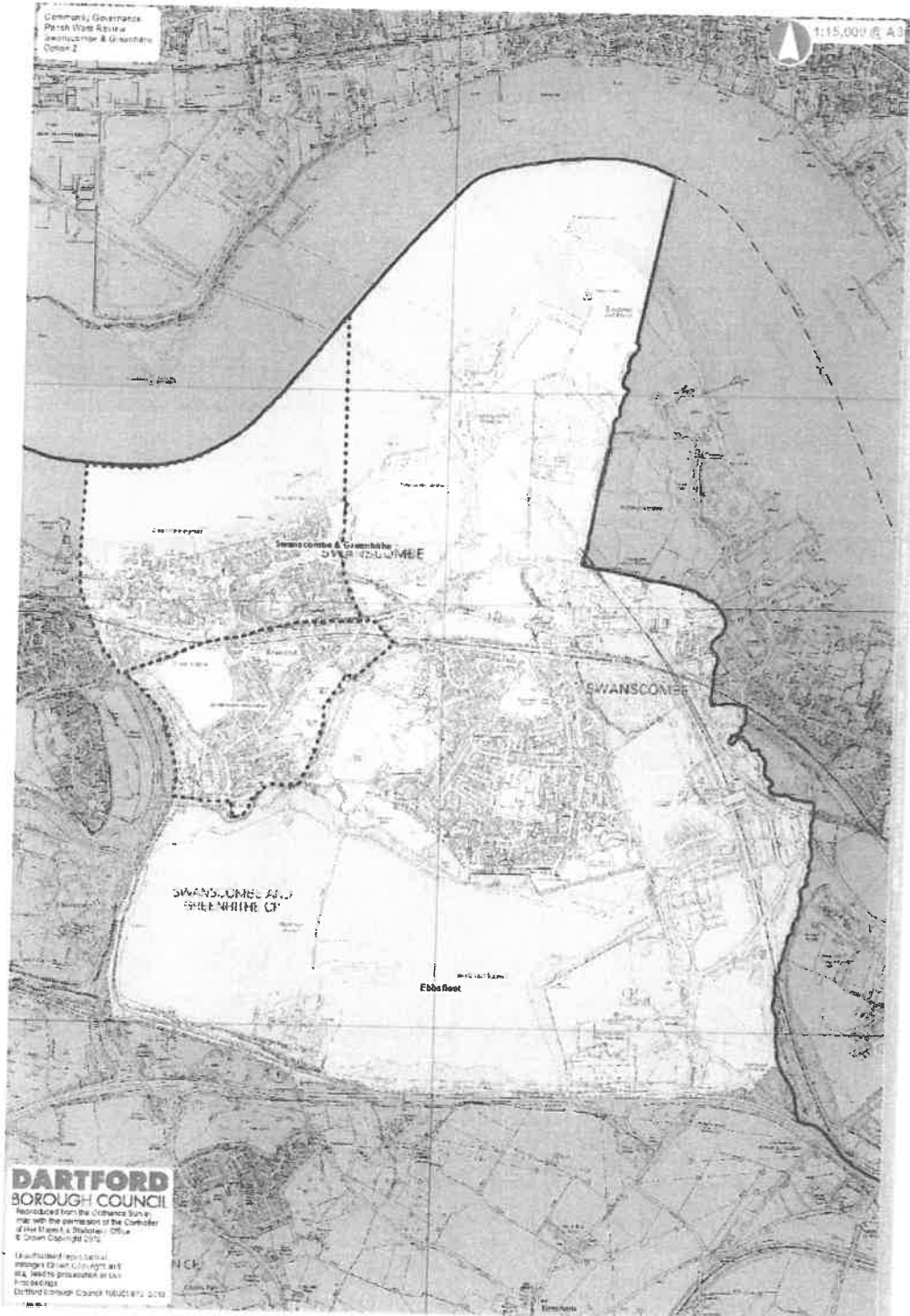
LGBCE Wards	No. of Cllrs	Estimated Electorate
Ebbsfleet Ward	7 Councillors	1167
Greenhithe & Knockhall Ward	7 Councillors	5167
Swanscombe Ward	6 Councillors	4752



(LGBCE Ward Arrangements – Fig. 18)

Option Two: That subject to any minor boundary adjustments, the area is divided into the following councils and warding arrangements.

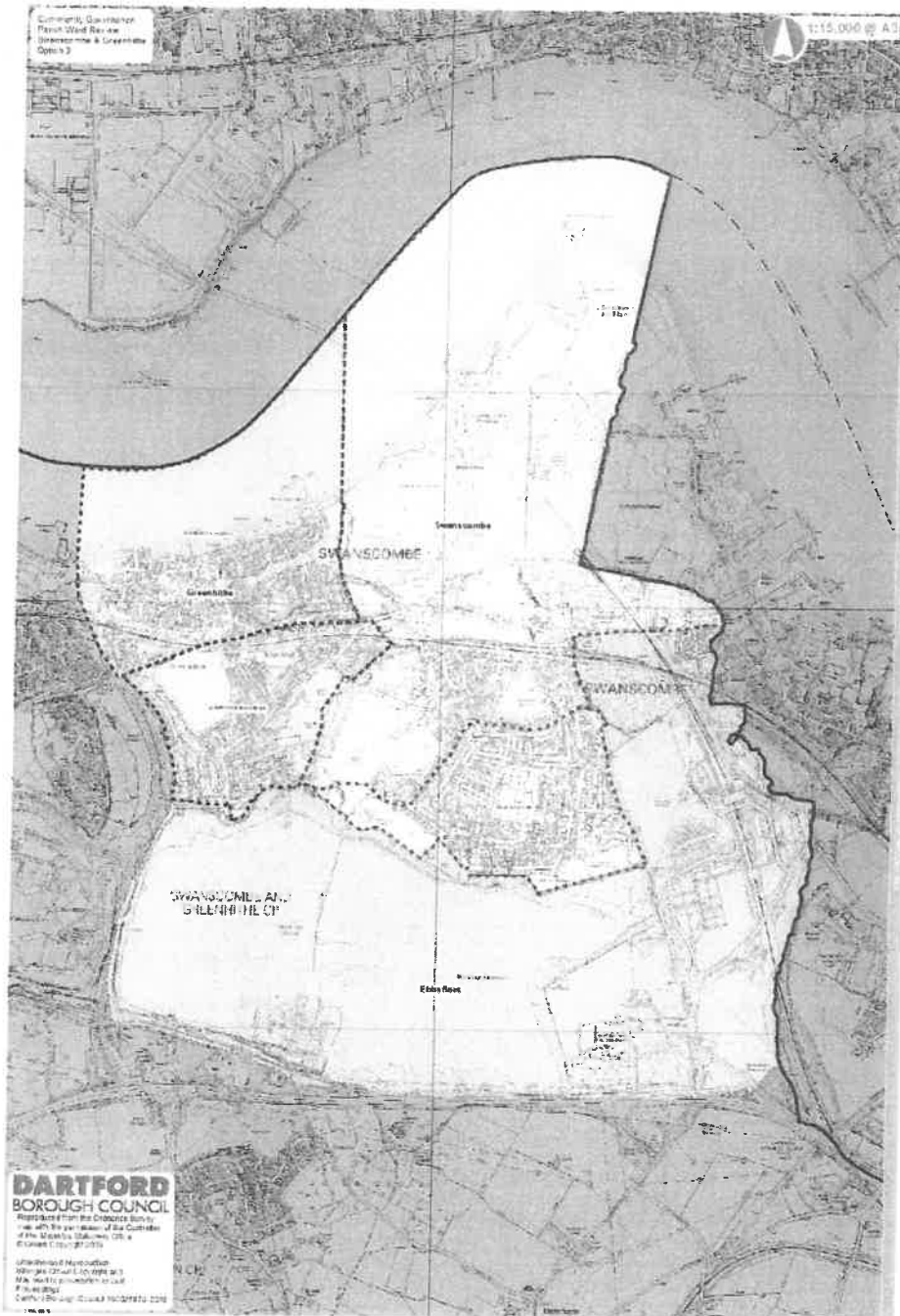
Ebbsfleet Valley Community Council	Un-warded	5 Councillors (1167)
Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council	Swanscombe Ward	6 Councillors (4753)
	Greenhithe Ward	4 Councillors (2906)
	Knockhall Ward	3 Councillors (2260)



(Option Two - Ward Arrangements – Fig. 19)

Option Three: That subject to any minor boundary adjustments, the area is divided into the following councils:

Ebbsfleet Valley Community Council	Un-warded	5 Councillors (1167)
Swanscombe Town Council	Swanscombe Ward Broomfield Ward	6 Councillors (3323) 3 Councillors (1430)
Greenhithe Parish Council	Greenhithe Ward Knockhall Ward	5 Councillors (2906) 4 Councillors (2260)



(Option Two - Ward Arrangements – Fig. 20)



SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL

TK @ 6/18



RESPONSE TO LGBCE

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Certified Copy

Review Officer (Dartford)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
Millbank, London
SW1P 4QP

22 March 2018

Dear LGBCE

**RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DARTFORD
(DEADLINE 9 APRIL 2018).
SUBMITTED ONLINE VIA : [HTTPS://CONSULTATION.LGBCE.ORG.UK/NODE/10379](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/10379)**

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council (The Town Council), thank you for your draft recommendations on the proposed Borough ward boundaries for Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe, Knockhall and Swanscombe.

The Town Council believe that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has achieved a forward thinking solid evaluation of reviewing all of the evidence supplied, together with the key factors of good electoral equality, historic elements to the area and existing/emerging communities.

Draft Proposals for Borough Wards.

We credit and accept your proposed ward boundaries are correct and accurate and that we would not seek to see any further changes. The Town Council therefore supports the Borough ward boundary recommendations for Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe, Knockhall and Swanscombe.

We agree three members for Ebbsfleet, three for Greenhithe & Knockhall and two for Swanscombe is the correct balance.

Your recommendations will enable stronger links for residents and will give strength to continue formally with greater support to the local community and truly reflect the needs of the growing population of the area.

Draft Proposals for Parish Wards.

We note in the report for draft proposals for Parish wards that 'under the 2009 Act you only have the power to make changes to Parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of your recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Dartford Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public

Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements’.

We note and understand the criteria and your proposed ward boundaries with regard to LGBCE having the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act. We welcome that you have provided the revised Parish electoral arrangements for Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council.

We are certain your proposals for the Parish boundaries are correct and accurate, as such we would not seek to see any further changes. The Town Council therefore supports the Parish ward boundary recommendations for Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe & Knockhall and Swanscombe.

Also, we agree to the Parish member numbers of seven for Ebbsfleet, seven for Greenhithe & Knockhall and six for Swanscombe.

Your recommendations will enable us to continue to build and develop the existing relationships between the new Ebbsfleet community, the almost unchanged Swanscombe community with the evolving Greenhithe & Knockhall communities. Your approach enables us to continue to build ties between the old and the new to reflect the changing needs of our whole community.

Further Observations.

We would draw your attention to the value of the combined villages into a single Town Council to the East of Dartford. Given that our area is at the heart of Dartford Borough’s population growth over the next ten years, it is essential that we have a strong Town Council that can speak for all parts of the community.

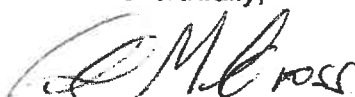
That it has the scale to meet diverse needs and the resources to provide so many of the new community facilities that will be a legacy of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) and its development.

As of February 2018, the tailored review of the EDC by the Department of Communities, Local Government and also Housing recommended (26), the EDC needs **“to develop a community focus and formalised programme of engagement with an appropriate skilled resources.”** We believe that there is no more effective or low cost option to achieve this than working through the Town Council.

In conclusion, we are convinced, given the rapid and demanding change our community faces, the Council’s parish boundary should remain intact and take in the wards you have identified as Ebbsfleet, Greenhithe & Knockhall and Swanscombe to maintain continuity.

Thank you for giving the Town Council the opportunity to put forward our views and in return, we are always available for further discussion.

Yours faithfully,



Councillor Ms L M Cross
Town Mayor 2017- 2018

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