

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL CROSS-PARTY WORKING GROUP -
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS IN MEDWAY**

February 2023

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Legislative Reform (Community Governance Review) Order 2015), devolved decision making powers relating to certain parish matters from central to local government. These powers include the creation and grouping of parishes and everything pertaining to their electoral arrangements.
- 1.2 This decision making process is laid out in the Act as a Community Governance Review (CGR). It can be instigated in one of three ways: by a petition from local electors demanding a review; by the Principal Authority agreeing to a request for a review; or by a Principal Authority resolving to conduct a review.
- 1.3 Subsequent to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of Medway, Full Council on 22 July 2021 agreed that a Community Governance Review (CGR) be instigated to identify whether any changes to the electoral arrangements to the parishes. A cross-party working member and officer group was established, and Full Council also agreed the Terms of Reference for the review and noted the likely costs. The Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.4 It had been intended to report the outcome of the Review to the meeting of Full Council in January 2023 but unfortunately the sad death of the Queen delayed the start of the consultation process which has a consequent impact on the working group consideration of the responses.
- 1.5 The Working group was established with the following membership:

Elected members	Officers
Councillor Buckwell	Chief Legal Officer
Councillor Fearn	Head of Elections & Member Services
Councillor Hubbard	Corporate Intelligence Analyst
Councillor Mahil	
Councillor Potter	
Councillor Elizabeth Turpin	

- 1.6 The working group met on 31 January 2022, and 24 January 2023 in addition to electronic communications to agree an overall timetable for the Review, approve the consultation methods, consider the types of evidence it wanted to gather regarding existing community governance arrangements in the Parished area, and to consider the outcome of the consultation and its recommendations to Full Council.

Factors for consideration

- 1.7 Under section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, a Principal Council must comply with various duties when undertaking a Review, including:
1. Having regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
 - a. Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area
 - b. Is effective and convenient
 2. Taking into account any other arrangements, apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions that have already been made, or that could be made for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in respect of the area under review
 3. Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.

In addition, the Council is required to take account of any statutory guidance published by the Secretary of State. In March 2010 the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England published such Guidance on Reviews.

- 1.8 The guidance expands on the two main criteria above and highlights that:
- the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities. Community cohesion is seen as recognising the impact of the changes brought about by migration and diversity and responding to them so that different groups of people get on well together.
 - cohesion issues are connected to the way people perceive how their local community is composed and what it represents. An important aspect of this is allowing effective participation by local people and organisations in the way their neighbourhoods are managed.
 - it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity.

- Size, population and boundaries are linked to both community cohesion and the identity of local communities, but more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient. The guidance stresses that whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and likely to remain, easily identifiable and reflect the “no man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways.

1.9 The guidance acknowledges that how people perceive where they live is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents. The pattern of daily life in each of the communities, the local centres for education, and childcare, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication will have an influence on the extent to which all of the residents in the proposed area share a sense of community although the focus of peoples’ day-to-day activities may not be reflected in their feeling of community identity, if for instance overwhelming historic loyalty is to another feature.

1.10 The working group took the view that it was important to understand the existing community governance arrangements in the Parished area, and the extent to which local residents contribute to local democracy as well as considering the responses received from the survey.

1.11 The working group spent some time collating and considering information and data that provided evidence of the extent to which existing community governance arrangements satisfied those considerations. It then considered the impacts of the proposed changes to the Parish electoral arrangements might have on community governance in the area, and whether each of the parish councils, as adjusted, would be effective, convenient and viable in terms of size, population and boundaries. This was undertaken in conjunction with the results of the consultation exercise.

2. Consultation arrangements

2.1 When undertaking a Review, the Council is required to consult the local government electors for the area under review as well as any other person or body which appear to have an interest in the Review.

- 2.2 The working group took the view that “any otherbody” included local businesses as well as local public and voluntary organisations. Although such bodies would not be responsible for paying the additional precept for a Parish Council, they might want the opportunity to provide their views on whether a Parish Council would improve the community governance arrangements in the area.
- 2.3 However, in recognition of the importance of the Parish Councils to the process, early meetings were held with all the Parish Councils to ascertain whether the existing electoral arrangements are reflective of the identities and interest of the community and are effective and convenient and if Parish Councils were of the view that any changes to the electoral arrangements were necessary. As part of the consideration of whether existing arrangements are effective and convenient, one important factor that may affect views, is the ratio of Parish Councillor to elector. Each Parish was provided with a spreadsheet showing the existing ratio as well as the projected change to the ratio taking into account the increase in electorates forecast to come into effect by 2026. This was the date used by the LGBCE when they made their recommendations about Medway Council.
- 2.4 As a result of those meetings and having considered the existing and projected ratios of Parish Councillors to electors, the working group concluded that there were some changes to electoral arrangements and some anomalies regarding the allocation of properties between Parishes and between wards within Parishes affecting 3 Parish Councils. The changes suggested were as follows:

Halling

- Change to the parish wards with Formby Terrace moving from Lower ward to North Ward to better reflect local communities
- Adjust the number of Parish Councillors in each of the Parish wards as follows: Upper ward from 3 to 2, North ward from 2 to 4 and Lower ward from 6 to 7 making a total of 13 Parish Councillors

High Halstow

- An amendment to the Parish boundary with Parbrook House moving from Hoo St Werburgh Parish to High Halstow Parish to better reflect local access and communities.

Hoo St Werburgh (supported by the Parish Council)

- Reduce the current three wards, West, Central and East, to two wards and to be named Hoo and Chattenden to provide more effective governance

- Parbrook House is moved from Hoo St Werburgh Parish to High Halstow Parish to better reflect local roads and communities
- Include the properties between 200 and 252 Main Road, Hoo St Werburgh, including Broad Street Cottages, in the proposed Hoo Parish Ward to better reflect local roads and communities
- Increase the number of parish councillors from 14 to 17 (14 councillors for Hoo ward and 3 councillors for Chattenden ward) to provide more effective governance
- The Parish name is changed to Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council to better reflect the community identity

2.5 The working group agreed that the most effective and efficient way of capturing the views of the local government electors and “other bodies” was to undertake a consultation over a 12 week period, comprising a survey which could be completed on-line or by completing and returning a paper form. Two different surveys were devised – one for electors and organisations in Parish Council areas where changes were being proposed, and another survey for those in Parish Council areas where no changes were proposed.

2.6 Covering letters accompanied the surveys which explained the background to the CGR and some of the powers that Parish Councils have. The working group were mindful that the information provided needed to be neutral whilst also seeking to answer the most obvious questions that consultees would ask and encouraging a response.

2.7 The survey for the Parish Councils where changes were proposed was sent to 13,210 electors and “interested parties” including the Parish Councils affected. A total of 509 responses were received representing a 4% response rate. The survey for the Parish Councils where no changes were proposed was sent to 16,833 electors and “interested parties” including the Parish Councils affected. A total of 844 responses were received, representing a 5% response rate. Lake Market Research was engaged to analyse and report on the consultation responses in accordance with the Council’s procurement rules. The report by Lake Market Research is attached as Appendix 2 and includes copies of both questionnaires.

3. Consultation responses

- 3.1 Out of the 30,043 consultees, a total of 1353 responses were received which represents a response rate of 4%. 13,210 questionnaires were sent out to electors and organisations in Parishes where changes were being proposed and the response rate in these areas overall was 4%. 16,833 questionnaires were sent to electors and organisations in Parishes where no changes were proposed and the response rate in these areas was 5% overall. The response rate is not necessarily disappointing but suggests that overall, interest in Parish electoral arrangements is of interest to a small proportion of the electorate and relevant organisations.

4. Analysis of existing community governance arrangements, consultation responses and evidence collected

Identities and interest of community and impact on community cohesion

- 4.1 One of the first factors the working group considered was whether the existing community governance arrangements reflect the identities and interests of the community and the extent to which current arrangements in the area enable and empower the local community to fulfil its own potential and overcome difficulties and encourage community cohesion. It also looked at the extent to which local people participate in the democratic processes already in place. Neighbourhood renewal is also an important factor of building and maintaining successful communities and the working group looked at the extent to which the local community have ways of influencing the quality of planning and design of public spaces and the built environment, improving the management and maintenance of such facilities.
- 4.2 From the consultation responses in the Parishes where changes are being suggested, 42% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the recommended changes for the Parish reflect the identities and interests of the community. 14% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses varied between each of the Parishes where changes are proposed but generally 38% of those answering the questions related to this issue, gave positive answers in their own words, such as the Parish had clear boundaries and made sense in terms of the identity of the population, that the changes would have a positive effect on communities and that the changes were needed due to increased population.

- 4.3 From the consultation responses in the Parishes where no changes are being suggested, the responses were similar to those where changes are being proposed. 44% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current governance arrangements for the Parish reflect the identities and interest of the community. 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses varied between each of the Parishes where no changes are proposed but generally 42% of those answering the questions related to this issue, gave positive answers in their own words, such as being happy with arrangements as they are, the Parish Council is well run, represents the area and understands local issues and is responsive.
- 4.4 The Working Group were also able to find ample evidence of the Parish Councils in those areas where changes are being proposed as well as those where no changes are being proposed, fulfilling the potential of their residents and overcoming difficulties including community conflict, extremism, deprivation and disadvantage by addressing issues such as the maintenance and improvement of local parks and other community facilities and grants to vulnerable people in the community for example.
- 4.5 One of the changes proposed relating to Hoo St Werburgh Parish Council was to reduce the current three wards, West, Central and East, to two wards and to be named Hoo and Chattenden and to change the name of the Parish to Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden. 35% of respondents agreed with the proposed change and the proposed names for the two Parish wards.

Effectiveness and convenience

- 4.6 As stated previously, an important factor for the Council to take into account is the extent to which the community governance arrangements in place and those being proposed are effective and convenient. The guidance clarifies that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity and that whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and likely to remain, easily identifiable.
- 4.7 The current Parish boundaries have been in place since at least 2003 and the only Parish boundary changes being proposed in Halling, High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh are to resolve relatively minor errors that have been in place for some time.
- 4.8 From the consultation responses in the Parishes where changes are being suggested, 38% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the recommended changes for the Parish provide effective and convenient local government. 14% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses varied between each of the Parishes where changes are proposed

but generally 36% of those answering the questions related to this issue, gave positive answers in their own words, such as they provide more effective local representation and governance, and the changes make sense geographically.

- 4.9 From the consultation responses in the Parishes where no changes are being suggested, the responses were similar to those where changes are being proposed. 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current governance arrangements for the Parish reflect the identities and interest of the community. 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses varied between each of the Parishes where no changes are proposed but generally 45% of those answering the questions related to this issue, gave positive answers in their own words, such as the current situation is fine, the Parish Council is well run etc.

5. Other forms of community representation

- 5.1 In accordance with the statutory guidance, the Working Group undertook some research into other forms of community representation and found that many of them exist across the country and that their status, format and management arrangements differ widely.
- 5.2 Area committees enable authorities to fulfil their community governance roles and deliver policy on issues such as social inclusion. The local authority provides resources and Councillors are usually integral to their constitution. They can be set up to advise on issues such as parks, off-street parking, public toilets, street cleaning, abandoned vehicles and planning applications as well as contributing to shaping council services and improving local service provision. Some Councils have established community councils which in addition to advising on local issues, manage funds and allocate money for local projects and activities.
- 5.3 Neighbourhood management bodies offer similar opportunities for residents to work with local agencies, usually facilitated by a neighbourhood manager, to improve services at neighbourhood level through implementation rather than advising or making decisions on better management of local environment, increasing community safety etc. These bodies usually cover smaller geographical areas than area committees.

- 5.4 Area or community forums can be set up to comment on a specific project or initiative that will impact on the local area. They aim to influence decision making rather than having powers to implement services.
- 5.5 Community associations offer a particular and widespread democratic model for local residents and local community-based organisations in a defined neighbourhood to work together for the benefit of that neighbourhood. They usually manage a community centre as a base for their activities and local councillors are often represented on the committee.
- 5.6 Partners and Communities Together (PACTs) are a relatively recent initiative which allows the community to identify and focus on issues of importance and concern to them. PACT processes have been established across Medway, including at least one in the area of the proposed Parish Council.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The evidence the working group gathered, and the results of the consultation seem to indicate that there is broad support for the relatively minor changes being proposed to the Parish electoral arrangements in Halling, High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh and that the electoral arrangements in the remaining Parishes do not require any changes. The Parishes provide and maintain a range of facilities for the benefit of the local people and the local electorate have a healthy and comprehensive range of organisations and groups catering to their needs and helping them to overcome difficulties and fulfil their potential.
- 6.2 The working group considered the possible alternative and additional forms of community governance such as those described in paragraphs 5.1 – 5.6 above. However, given all the evidence gathered showing (a) an existing comprehensive range of organisations, (b) that there was broad agreement amongst respondents that they thought the proposed changes would reflect the identities and interest of the local community and that the changes provided effective and convenient local government and (c) that there is broad agreement respondents were happy with the existing electoral arrangements in the Parish areas where no changes were proposed the working group are of the view that the introduction of any of the alternative forms of community governance would not improve the extent to which community governance better reflected the identities and interests of the community or was more effective or convenient.

6.3 On balance therefore and having taken into account all of the information considered as part of the Review, the recommendations of the informal working group are that :

(1) proposed changes in Halling, High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh as set out below should be implemented:

Halling

- Change to the parish wards with Formby Terrace moving from Lower ward to North Ward to better reflect local communities
- Adjust the number of Parish Councillors in each of the Parish wards as follows: Upper ward from 3 to 2, North ward from 2 to 4 and Lower ward from 6 to 7 making a total of 13 Parish Councillors

High Halstow

- An amendment to the Parish boundary with Parbrook House moving from Hoo St Werburgh Parish to High Halstow Parish to better reflect local access and communities.

Hoo St Werburgh

- Reduce the current three wards, West, Central and East, to two wards and to be named Hoo and Chattenden to provide more effective governance
- Parbrook House is moved from Hoo St Werburgh Parish to High Halstow Parish to better reflect local roads and communities
- Include the properties between 200 and 252 Main Road, Hoo St Werburgh, including Broad Street Cottages, in the proposed Hoo Parish Ward to better reflect local roads and communities
- Increase the number of parish councillors from 14 to 17 (14 councillors for Hoo ward and 3 councillors for Chattenden ward) to provide more effective governance
- The Parish name is changed to Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council to better reflect the community identity

(2) the electoral arrangements in the Parishes of Allhallows, Cliffe & Cliffe Woods, Cooling, Cuxton, Frindsbury Extra, St James Isle of Grain, St Mary Hoo and Stoke should remain unchanged.

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – PARISHED AREA OF MEDWAY

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF REVIEW

That a Community Governance review (CGR) is carried out by Medway Council under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the Act”) as amended by the Legislative Reform (Community Governance Review) Order 2015 in response to the Ward Boundary review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Review will consider the existing Parished area of Medway as set out in the attached map.

The review will comply with the legislative requirement, have regard to the associated statutory guidance and will be conducted in accordance with these terms of reference which were approved by Medway Council on 22 July 2021.

The review will be conducted within 12 months.

As per the 2007 Act (as amended), Medway Council will take account of the necessary criteria when conducting the review, namely:

- The identities and interests of the community in the area
- The effective and convenient governance of the area.

and the Council should take into account influential factors such as the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

In undertaking the review, Medway Council will be guided by Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the Act”) as amended by the Legislative Reform (Community Governance Review) Order 2015 and the guidance on CGRs published by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.

The review shall be of the community governance needs and electoral arrangements of the existing Parished area of Medway and must make the following recommendations in relation to each of the existing parishes under review:

- one of the following recommendations
 - That the parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered
 - That the area of the parish should be altered
 - That the parish should be abolished
- As to whether or not the name of the Parish should be changed
- As to whether or not the parish should continue to have a Parish Council

- If the Review recommends that a parish should continue to have a Parish Council, it must also consider and make recommendations as to what changes, if any, should be made to the electoral arrangements that apply to each of the Parish Councils, i.e.:
 - The number of councillors to be elected to the Parish Council
 - Whether the parish should or should not be, or continue to be, divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors
 - And if it recommends that the parish should be divided into wards, it will also consider and make recommendations on the name of wards, the size and boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward
- whether or not the council should make a reorganisation order including such incidental, consequential, transitional or supplementary provision as may appear to be necessary for giving full effect to the order for the establishment of the parish. This may include provisions with respect to the transfer and management, or custody of property, transfer of functions, property, rights and liabilities.

The Review may not make any recommendations for any of the existing Parishes to begin to have an alternative style or cease to have an alternative style or to have a different alternative style if it already has one.

A Working Group has been established comprising of Councillors and Officers to work on the review; however, it does not have any decision making powers and so formally the authority to conduct the Review has been delegated to the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance in consultation with the working group. The final decision will be made by the full Council based on the recommendations of the working group.

In coming to its recommendations in the Review, the working group and the Council will need to take account of the views of local people. The Act requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the Review and to take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended).



MEDWAY COUNCIL PARISH GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

Written report

Prepared by Lake Market Research



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Background

Medway has eleven parishes covering the rural areas on the Hoo Peninsula and the upper reaches of the River Medway. These each have a parish council, which has limited powers but provides and maintains services such as recreation grounds, village greens, bus shelters, public toilets and allotments.

Parish Community Governance Reviews are an opportunity to ensure communities have effective community governance in place, with parish councils that can effectively make use of their powers and responsibilities. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.

Medway Council is responsible for setting the terms of reference of any Review and must also undertake consultation when considering what changes to make. Through this review Medway Council must ensure that community governance arrangements for parished areas are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and are effective and convenient.

A working group of Medway Council Elected Members, supported by Council officers, met to review the community governance arrangements in each of Medway's parished areas and recommendations for each Parish were generated. The purpose of this research exercise is to give all electors and interested parties (e.g. organisations) in each of the eleven parishes the opportunity to provide feedback on these recommendations.

Methodology

A postal methodology was adopted so all electors and interested parties could be contacted and invited to take part. All contact addresses were provided to Lake Market Research by Medway Council. All questionnaires were addressed to the names provided by Medway Council.

An 8-page questionnaire was sent out with a 2 page covering letter, with a unique reference number printed on each questionnaire. The covering letter explained the purpose of the survey and gave contact details of the Project Lead at Lake Market Research if respondents required further information. The covering letter also gave details of a web link for completing the questionnaire online. The online questionnaire followed a consistent format to the paper questionnaire and those take part were required to enter their unique reference number. All questionnaires have been processed by Lake Market Research at their head office.

A summary of questionnaires sent out and the response rate achieved can be found below:

- 13,210 questionnaires were sent out and successfully delivered to individuals / organisations in **parishes with changes suggested**. 509 questionnaires were returned / completed online; a 4% response rate
- 16,833 questionnaires were sent out and successfully delivered to individuals / organisations in **parishes with no changes suggested**. 844 questionnaires were returned / completed online; a 5% response rate.

The following context reading was included in the questionnaire pack sent to **parishes with changes suggested**:

What is a Parish Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review can make a number of changes to how parishes are governed when there is clear evidence to do so. These potential changes are summarised below:

- It can make changes to parish areas (e.g. boundary changes, mergers or new parishes)
- It can make changes to electoral arrangements within parish areas (e.g. changes to the number of parish councillors or changes to parish wards)
- Parish name changes
- Grouping parishes together under a common Parish Council

Why conduct a Community Governance Review now?

As of 2 March 2021, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) conducted a review of electoral arrangements for Medway Council. It made changes increasing the number of wards from 22 to 24 wards from 2023. As a result of this review there are changes to the boundaries of the principal wards which cover Medway's existing eleven parish councils.

Medway Council feels a Community Governance Review is needed now as:

- The increase in the number of Medway Council wards from 22 to 24 provides an opportunity to review the wider governance arrangements in parishes
- The last governance review of existing parishes in Medway was undertaken before Medway Council came into existence

What changes are being proposed?

A working group of Medway Council Elected Members, supported by Council officers, has met to review the community governance arrangements in each of Medway's parished areas. **After meeting with each of the Parish Councils, the working group has made recommendations to change the electoral arrangements in three of the eleven parishes, including the one you live in:**

Halling

- Change to the parish wards with Formby Terrace moving from Lower Ward to North Ward to better reflect local communities.

High Halstow

- An amendment to the Parish boundary with Parbrook House moving from Hoo St Werburgh Parish to High Halstow Parish to better reflect local access and communities.

Hoo St Werburgh

- Reduce the current three wards, West, Central and East, to two wards and to be named Hoo and Chattenden to provide more effective governance
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- Include the properties between 200 and 252 Main Road, Hoo St Werburgh, including Broad Street Cottages, in the proposed Hoo Parish Ward to better reflect local roads and communities
- Increase the number of parish councillors from 14 to 17 (14 councillors for Hoo ward and 3 councillors for Chattenden ward) to provide more effective governance
- The Parish name is changed to Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council to better reflect the community identity

The following context reading was included in the questionnaire pack sent to **parishes with no changes suggested**:

What is a Parish Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review can make a number of changes to how parishes are governed when there is clear evidence to do so. These potential changes are summarised below:

- It can make changes to parish areas (e.g. boundary changes, mergers or new parishes)
- It can make changes to electoral arrangements within parish areas (e.g. changes to the number of parish councillors or changes to parish wards)
- Parish name changes
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What changes are being proposed?

A working group of Medway Council Elected Members, supported by Council officers, has met to review the community governance arrangements in each of Medway's parished areas.

After meeting with each of the Parish Councils, the working group has made recommendations to make no changes to the parish electoral arrangements for the parish which you live.

Points to note

- All electors in each Parish were sent a postal invitation to take part in the research programme.
- 1,164 invitations were sent to organisations to take part.
- The vast majority of those responding are individuals / residents (95%) and this should be considered when interpreting response patterns.
- Participation in the research is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses. Completed questionnaires are based on a non-probability (non-random) sample of those who chose to complete and return the questionnaire / complete online. This raises the possibility of non-response bias. The sample should therefore be treated as a non-random sample of the population, and the validity of the estimates of parameters based on them unknown. Therefore, the confidence level in relation to the target population is unknown. Despite this, analysis provides a considerable insight into opinion.
- Questions in each questionnaire were not compulsory. As such those responding were given the choice of which questions they wanted to answer / provide comments for. The number of people providing an answer to each question is shown on each chart featured in this report.
- Medway Council was responsible for the design and promotion of both questionnaires. Lake Market Research was appointed to conduct to manage the collection of responses and provide an independent analysis of feedback.

Profile of those responding

The tables below show the profile of those responding to each questionnaire. Please note that the demographic questions were only asked of those who indicated they are an individual / resident. The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

RESPONDING AS...	PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED	PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED
Individual / resident	94%	96%
An organisation	0.2%	2%
An elected representative	1%	1%
A parish council	0.2%	0.2%
Prefer not to say / blank	5%	2%

SEX (residents only)	PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED	PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED
Male	44%	45%
Female	46%	49%
Prefer not to say / blank	10%	6%

AGE (residents only)	PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED	PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED
18-24	3%	2%
25-34	4%	4%
35-44	7%	9%
45-54	14%	14%
55-64	17%	21%
65-74	20%	25%
75 & over	27%	20%
Prefer not to say / blank	8%	5%

DISABILITY (residents only)	PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED	PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED
Yes	22%	18%
No	61%	72%
Prefer not to say / blank	17%	10%

ETHNICITY (residents only)	PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED	PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED
White – English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	76%	84%

White – Irish	1%	1%
Any other white background	5%	1%
Mixed / multiple ethnic background	1%	0.5%
Black / Black British ethnic background	1%	1%
Asian / Asian British ethnic background	0%	1%
Other ethnic background	0.2%	0.3%
Prefer not to say / blank	16%	11%

PARISH (residents only)	PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED	PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED
Allhallows	N/A	7%
Cliffe and Cliffe Woods	N/A	25%
Cooling	N/A	2%
Cuxton	N/A	18%
Frindsbury Extra	N/A	33%
Halling	21%	N/A
High Halstow	16%	N/A
Hoo St Werburgh	56%	N/A
St James, Isle of Grain	N/A	6%
St Mary Hoo	N/A	2%
Stoke	N/A	3%
Prefer not to say / blank	7%	4%

Executive summary

Those completing were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposed recommendations to either change parish governance arrangements or keep them as they are currently via the following:

- Whether recommendations reflect the identities and interests of the community
- Whether recommendations provide effective and convenient local government
- Overall agreement with Medway Council's recommendations for governance arrangements for their Parish
- The opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations proposed via free text

response from [parishes with changes suggested](#)

Agreements levels to the key measures sought can be found below:

	Net agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Net disagree
Agreement <u>recommended governance changes</u> reflects the identities and interests of the community	42%	44%	14%
Agreement <u>recommended governance changes</u> provides effective and convenient local government	38%	48%	14%
Overall agreement with Medway Council's recommendations for <u>recommended governance changes</u>	39%	46%	15%

A higher proportion of those responding agree with the recommended governance changes than disagree with the changes. However, it should be noted that a significant proportion neither agree nor disagree with each of the statements suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or whether the changes are needed and how they reflect the identities and interests of the community and/or provide effective and convenient local government.

Amongst those providing it, free text feedback reveals that those agreeing with the recommended changes believe they make sense geographically / make boundaries clearer and will have a positive effect on communities and provide more effective local representation. However, there is an evident lack of understanding of what the current or recommended governance changes mean in practice and how they impact the day to day lives of those taking part. Some indicate that they are unaware of what the arrangements are and how Parish Councils work with other tiers of local government. A proportion also comment that Parish Councils are seen as limited in their influence and involvement with local communities. Those responding would like to see better communication of responsibilities and improved local engagement.

response from [parishes with no changes suggested](#)

Agreements levels to the key measures sought can be found below:

	Net agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Net disagree
Agreement <u>current governance arrangements</u> reflects the identities and interests of the community	44%	41%	15%
Agreement <u>current governance arrangements</u> provides effective and convenient local government	40%	47%	13%
Overall agreement with Medway Council's recommendations to keep <u>current governance arrangements</u>	48%	39%	13%

A higher proportion of those responding agree to keep the current governance arrangements than disagree to keep them. However, it should be noted that a significant proportion neither agree nor disagree with each of the statements suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence and/or how current arrangements reflect the identities and interests of the community and/or provide effective and convenient local government.

Amongst those providing it, free text feedback reveals that those agreeing with keeping the current governance arrangements do so because they are happy / satisfied with how things stand and have positive experience of their local Parish Council in terms of being well run, understanding local issues and listening to residents. However, consistent with trends observed in the governance changes survey, there is an evident lack of understanding of what the current governance arrangements are in practice and how they impact the day to day lives of those taking part. Some indicate that they are unaware of what the arrangements are and how Parish Councils work with other tiers of local government. A proportion also comment that Parish Councils are seen as limited in their influence and involvement with local communities, and there could be conflicts of interest of those involved. Those responding would like to see better communication of responsibilities and improved local engagement.

Response from parishes with changes suggested

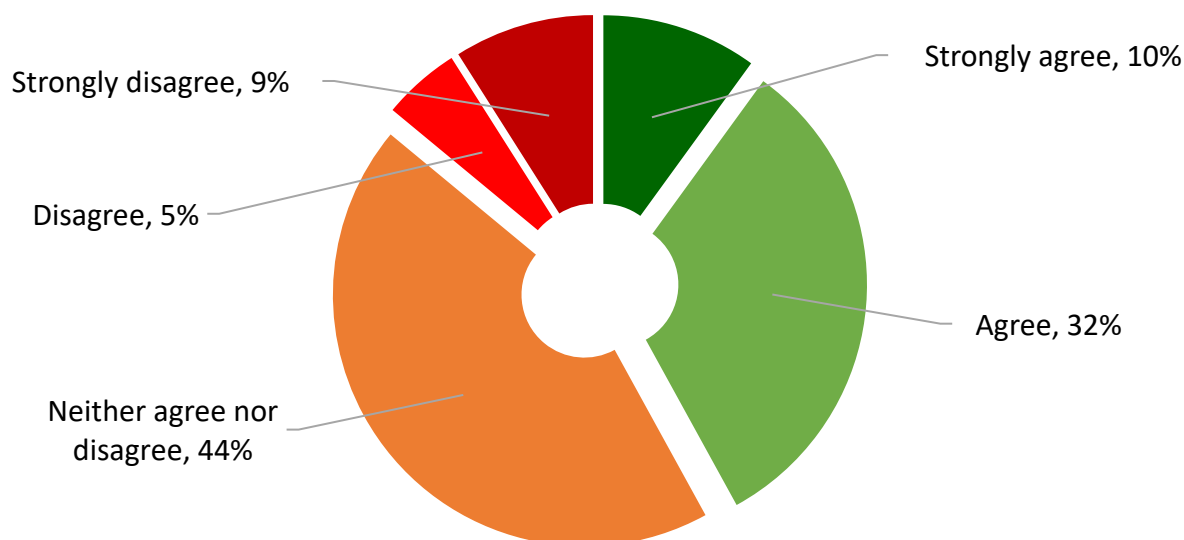
This section of the report summarises response to the questionnaire sent to individuals and organisations in Halling, High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh.

perception of changes reflecting the identities and interests of community

Just over four in ten of those responding (42%) agree that the recommended governance changes for the parish they live in / are based in reflects the identities and interests of the community; 10% strongly agree and 32% agree. 14% disagree the recommended governance changes reflects the identities and interests of the community. A significant proportion neither agree nor disagree (44%) suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or how the changes reflect the identities and interests of the community.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the recommended governance changes for the parish you live in / are based in reflects the identities and interests of the community?

Base: all answering (503)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% of total answering 503
Net agree (strongly agree / agree)	42%
Net disagree (strongly disagree / disagree)	14%

There are no significant changes in agreement by age or gender. However, there are significant differences in the proportion who agree by parish:

- 58% of those responding from High Halstow agree the recommended governance changes reflects the identities and interests of the community (the highest of the three parishes). 13% disagree the recommended changes do this.
- Comparatively, 41% of those responding from Halling and 38% of those responding from Hoo St Werburgh agree the recommended governance changes reflects the identities and interests of the community. 8% (Halling) and 17% (Hoo St Werburgh) disagree the recommended changes do this.

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide their reasons for their answers in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 54% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common positive mentions are that the changes make sense geographically / boundaries are clearer (14% of those answering), they agree with proposals and they will have a positive effect on communities (12%) and will provide more effective local representation / governance (8%).

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (272)

POSITIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 272
Makes sense geographically / clearer boundaries / identities	14%
Agree with proposals / makes sense / positive effect on communities	12%
More effective local representation / governance	8%
Changes needed due to increased housing / population	3%
Parish Council are well run / do a good job / represents the area	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“The population and area covered by the parish councils are increasing all the time. At this time of expansion, increased representation and significant area partitioning, can only be beneficial.”

“It will provide a better service to the people in the area hopefully as it will be directed solely on the people living in the Parish and not surrounding areas.”

“Maybe we will gain more say over what goes on in Hoo. With all the new homes & lack of infrastructure maybe we will get more independent councillors who care about our area.”

“I don't have a thorough understanding of the boundaries for the parish in which I live in. I trust the working group that this change is in the interest of the community and in line with its identity.”

Consistent with the high proportion of those responding indicating they neither agree nor disagree with the recommendations reflecting the identities and interests of the community, there are a number of comments made with reference to the limited perceived impact of the changes and a lack of awareness of Parish Council responsibilities. 13% of those answering believe the proposed changes will not make a difference / affect them and 11% claim they don't know what the current governance arrangements / recommendations / changes / benefits are.

A higher proportion of those responding from High Halstow commented that the proposed changes will not make a difference / won't affect them (23%) compared to those responding from Halling (16%) and Hoo St Werburgh (8%).

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (272)

IMPACT / AWARENESS MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 272
Proposed changes will not make a difference / won't affect me	13%
Don't know what the current governance arrangements / recommendations / changes / benefits are	11%
Ambivalent / not interested / not thought about it	3%
Not aware of Parish Council roles / what they do / who the councillors are	3%
Do not understand the question	2%
Don't know enough about it to make a decision / give an opinion	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“There is no information as to how these proposed changes are going to "better reflect local access and communities".”

“Without detailing a little about the identities and interests of the parish, it is challenging to feel anything other than ambivalence.”

“Looking at the boundaries for Halling wards and parishes, it would make sense to move Formby Terrace from Lower Ward to North Ward, however, whether the changes would reflect the identities and interests of this community more is hard to say.”

“It does not matter if governance changes or not, nothing will change, services are poor and will remain poor. Services provided by the current Parish council are not well communicated and I do not think that will change. I do not know where the money allocated to the Parish council is spent. The local plan and expansion has been decided so there is no point.”

The most common negative mentions are that things are fine as they are / no changes are needed / they disagree with proposals / waste of time (11% of those answering), Parish Councils are ineffective / don't listen / consult / represent communities / do not communicate (7%) and a belief that decisions have already been made (6%). 6% would like to see areas split out and have more councillors / more wards.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (272)

NEGATIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 272
Things are fine / no changes needed / disagree with proposals / waste of time	11%
Parish Councils are ineffective / don't listen / respond / consult / represent communities / do not communicate	7%
Would like to see areas split out / need more councillors / more wards	6%
Decisions have already been made / opinions are irrelevant	6%
Concerned about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	2%
Sounds expensive / costly / waste of money	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“Do not feel there will be any benefits and the money spent on this could be used to provide better doctors surgeries.”

“This whole idea doesn’t make any sense to me and I suspect many residences. There’s no reason to change a system that works on the Peninsula.”

“I feel that if we merge with another parish council less will get done in both areas as only so much money will be allocated and it will be two bigger areas.”

“Hoo has expanded and expanded yet the facilities roads and other amenities have not been improved or expanded to include the additional population we therefore need more wards not less.”

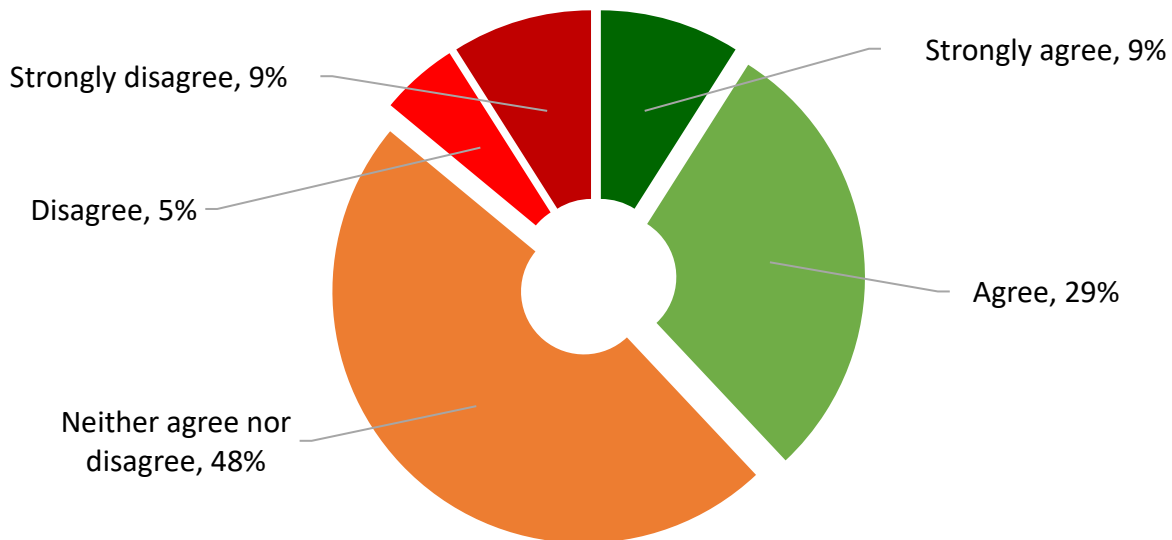
“I think Medway Council will go ahead no matter what, without considering my points of view.”

perception of changes providing effective and convenient local government

Broadly consistent response patterns observed with just under four in ten of those responding (38%) agreeing that the recommended governance changes for the parish they live in / are based in provides effective and convenient local government; 9% strongly agree and 29% agree. 14% disagree the recommended governance changes provides effective and convenient local government. A significant proportion neither agree nor disagree (48%) suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or how the changes provide effective and convenient local government.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the recommended governance changes for the parish you live in / are based in provides effective and convenient local government?

Base: all answering (493)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% of total answering 493
Net agree (strongly agree / agree)	38%
Net disagree (strongly disagree / disagree)	14%

There are no significant changes in agreement by age or gender. However, there are significant differences in the proportion who agree with the recommended governance changes by parish:

- 52% of those responding from High Halstow agree the recommended governance changes provides effective and convenient local government (the highest of the three parishes). 14% disagree the recommended changes do this.
- Comparatively, 40% of those responding from Halling and 33% of those responding from Hoo St Werburgh agree the recommended governance changes provides effective and convenient local government. 8% (Halling) and 16% (Hoo St Werburgh) disagree the recommended changes do this.

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide their reasons for their answers in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 43% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common positive mentions are broadly consistent with response to agreement with changes reflecting identities and interests of the community – changes will provide more effective local representation / governance (16% of those answering), make sense geographically / boundaries are clearer (10%) and they agree with proposals and they will have a positive effect on communities (6%).

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (219)

POSITIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 219
More effective local representation / governance	16%
Makes sense geographically / clearer boundaries / identities	10%
Agree with proposals / makes sense / positive effect on communities	6%
Changes needed due to increased housing / population	2%
Parish Council are well run / do a good job / represents the area	2%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“Increase in population and gives recognition that the parish is larger than it.”

“I believe changes are needed to reflect the real situations and make governance more efficient.”

“Having a ward for each different community provides effective and convenient local government. Parish councillors will then be able to understand the needs of each ward.”

“Parishes have their own identity, having local government reflects the opinions of the people living in each of the different villages.”

Consistent with the high proportion of those responding indicating they neither agree nor disagree with the recommendations providing effective and convenient local government, there are a number of comments made with reference to the limited perceived impact of the changes and a lack of awareness of Parish Council responsibilities. 16% of those answering believe the proposed changes will not make a difference / affect them and 8% claim they don't know what the current governance arrangements / recommendations / changes / benefits are.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (219)

IMPACT / AWARENESS MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 219
Proposed changes will not make a difference / won't affect me	16%
Don't know what the current governance arrangements / recommendations / changes / benefits are	8%
Ambivalent / not interested / not thought about it	3%
Not aware of Parish Council roles / what they do / who the councillors are	3%
Do not understand the question	2%
Don't know enough about it to make a decision / give an opinion	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“Things will be the same for me no change or improvements will be noticed by me.”

“At this moment in time I have no interest in the proposed question.”

“I have no knowledge of the parish council therefore I can give no evidence.”

“The right move due to logic of geography but makes no apparent difference to the efficiency or convenience of local government. A distinct council for Hoo Peninsula would be much more effective.”

The most common negative mentions are that things are fine as they are / no changes are needed / they disagree with proposals / waste of time (12% of those answering), Parish Councils are ineffective / don't listen / consult / represent communities / do not communicate (7%) and a belief that decisions have already been made (6%). 6% would like to see areas split out and have more councillors / more wards.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (219)

NEGATIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 219
Things are fine / no changes needed / disagree with proposals / waste of time	12%
Parish Councils are ineffective / don't listen / respond / consult / represent communities / do not communicate	7%
Would like to see areas split out / need more councillors / more wards	6%
Decisions have already been made / opinions are irrelevant	4%

Concerned about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	2%
Concern about political / money saving motivations behind the proposed changes	2%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“The views of the local parishes do not seem to be considered by local government, e.g. increased number of houses being built/purposed to be built in the Hoo and Chattenden area, we have exceeded the number to which local services can cope but still applications are being granted even on green belt/agriculture land.”

“This whole idea seems to be a waste of money and to try to keep people unaware of the mass building up of the area where there is no infrastructure.”

“Hoo St Werburgh Parish Council is effective and understands the needs of the people living there. A new Parish Council would not have the same level of understanding as Chattenden have their own needs and requirements.”

“There is no evidence that the changes will improve an already poor parish council; indeed, adding more councillors would seem to worsen the situation.”

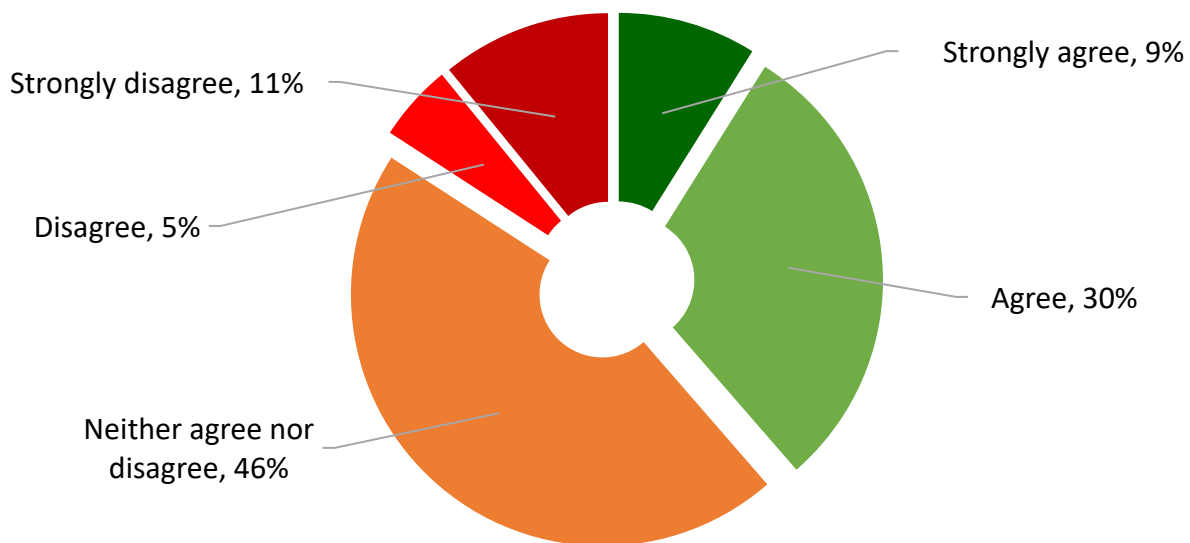
“Hoo has expanded out of all proportion and is still expanding we need more councillors and wards not less.”

agreement with medway council’s proposed recommendations for governance arrangements

Broadly consistent response patterns observed with just under four in ten of those responding (39%) agreeing with Medway Council’s proposed recommendations for governance arrangements for the parish they live in / are based in; 9% strongly agree and 30% agree. 15% disagree with Medway Council’s proposed recommendations. A significant proportion neither agree nor disagree (46%) suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or the rationale for making changes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with Medway Council’s proposed recommendations for governance arrangements for the parish you live in / are based in?

Base: all answering (492)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% of total answering 492
Net agree (strongly agree / agree)	39%
Net disagree (strongly disagree / disagree)	15%

There are no significant changes in agreement by age or gender. However, there are significant differences in the proportion who agree with the recommended governance changes by parish:

- 56% of those responding from High Halstow agree with Medway Council's proposed recommendations for governance arrangements (the highest of the three parishes). 16% disagree with the recommendations.
- Comparatively, 40% of those responding from Halling and 34% of those responding from Hoo St Werburgh agree with Medway Council's proposed recommendations for governance arrangements. 9% (Halling) and 18% (Hoo St Werburgh) disagree with the recommendations.

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide their reasons for their answers in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 36% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common positive mentions are broadly consistent with opinions outlined previously - agreement with proposals and perceptions they will have a positive effect on communities (10% of those answering), changes make sense geographically / boundaries are clearer (8%) and will provide more effective local representation / governance (5%).

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.
Base: all answering (183)

POSITIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 183
Agree with proposals / makes sense / positive effect on communities	10%
Makes sense geographically / clearer boundaries / identities	8%
More effective local representation / governance	5%
Parish Council are well run / do a good job / represents the area	4%
Changes needed due to increased housing / population	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“I think it will benefit residents to be able to have a say in their village.”

“I feel this will concentrate resources where they are needed.”

“Hoo has grown in the last 50 years and the representation on the Pc should be reflected in an increase of Councillors.”

“The people that live there would see that we need more structure as the village is now a town without benefits of more shops of better access in and out of Hoo.”

“Reading the proposed plans I agree with the changes that have been reviewed as they make logistical sense.”

Consistent with the high proportion of those responding indicating they neither agree nor disagree with the Medway Council’s recommendations, there are a number of comments made with reference to the limited perceived impact of the changes and a lack of awareness of Parish Council responsibilities. 16% of those answering believe the proposed changes will not make a difference / affect them and 5% claim they don’t know what the current governance arrangements / recommendations / changes / benefits are.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (183)

IMPACT / AWARENESS MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 183
Proposed changes will not make a difference / won’t affect me	16%
Don’t know what the current governance arrangements / recommendations / changes / benefits are	5%
Ambivalent / not interested / not thought about it	4%
Do not understand the question	3%
Don’t know enough about it to make a decision / give an opinion	3%
Not aware of Parish Council roles / what they do / who the councillors are	2%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“A small residential area and possibly only applies to those residents, who I would estimate number approximately 20-30 adults in total.”

“Due to increased housing (population) I feel the proposed recommendations are redundant in the face of such an increased level of housing and this is just a political exercise.”

“I feel that whatever my points of view may be I have never been asked before now and won’t make any difference ongoing.”

“I don’t have enough information on how those proposed changes have been arrived at.”

The most common negative mentions are that things are fine as they are / no changes are needed / they disagree with proposals / waste of time (9% of those answering) and a belief that decisions have already been made (5%). 6% would like to see areas split out and have more councillors / more wards.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (183)

NEGATIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 183
Things are fine / no changes needed / disagree with proposals / waste of time	9%
Would like to see areas split out / need more councillors / more wards	6%
Decisions have already been made / opinions are irrelevant	5%
Parish Councils are ineffective / don't listen / respond / consult / represent communities / do not communicate	3%
Sounds expensive / costly / waste of money	3%
Concern about political / money saving motivations behind the proposed changes	3%
Concerned about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	2%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“Provide no evidence or details of why this will improve service or if it will effect costs.”

“This is more about saving money than giving locals the service and government needed.”

“I strongly disagree with the proposed reduction from 3 wards to 2 wards for Hoo St Werburgh as the residential area has expanded exponentially over the past few years and shows no signs of slowing for the foreseeable future. This will make the area of Hoo St Werburgh too vast to be represented by two wards.”

“I am unable to see how the proposed changes are any better than existing ones, as no information has been given.”

“Medway Council just want more control to change boundaries and build more houses.”

alternative suggestions for ensuring parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide alternative suggestions for making sure their parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 26% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common suggestions put forward include Parish Councils needing to address local concerns / issues / must be from local area (18% of those answering), engage / communicate / make more information available (10%) and have more power / influence / Medway should listen to Parish Councils / consult with them (8%). 11% commented that the current governance arrangements are fine and no changes are needed.

If you have any alternative suggestions for making sure the parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government, please write them in the box below. Base: all answering (130)

	% of total answering 130 (count in brackets)
Parish Councils must address local concerns / issues / must be from local area / listen	18% (23)
Arrangements are fine as they are / no changes needed	11% (14)
Parish Councils must engage / communicate / make more information available	10% (13)
Parish Councils should have more power / influence / Medway should listen to Parish Councils / consult with them	8% (11)
Parish Councils are well run / do a good job / represent the area	7% (9)
Concerns about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	5% (7)
Not aware of Parish Council / its role / what it does / benefits	5% (7)
Parish Council should be scrapped / ineffective	5% (6)
Increase number of councillors	4% (5)
Querying specific property allocations between Hoo and High Halstow	4% (4)
Would like to see Hoo be considered a town / part of Kent not Medway	4% (4)
Decisions have already been made / won't make any difference	4% (5)
Don't waste money	4% (5)
Create central hub to make decisions / collaboration	2% (3)

feedback on names for changes wards if changes go ahead

Those taking part were given the opportunity to comment on proposed new ward names and put forward alternative names, if ward changes were to go ahead, in their own words. This question was asked for two scenarios – 1) Hoo and Chattenden and 2) Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the tables below.

In the first scenario, 20% of those taking part provided a comment. 35% of those answering the question agree with the proposed names of Hoo and Chattenden. 26% indicated they would prefer Hoo St Werburgh kept in the new names.

Proposed names – 'Hoo' and 'Chattenden'

If the proposed changes go ahead, the changed wards will require names. The Parish Council has suggested the names 'Hoo' and 'Chattenden'. If you would like to propose alternative suitable name(s) for the new Parish wards, please write your suggestions below.

Base: all answering (106)

	% of total answering 106 (count in brackets)
Agree with Hoo and Chattenden	35% (37)
Hoo St Werburgh (do not want name shortened)	16% (17)
Would prefer Hoo (on its own)	7% (7)

Would prefer Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden	10% (11)
Don't waste money changing names	6% (6)
Querying whether the names really matter	6% (6)
Comments requesting to not change current names / disagree with name changes	8% (9)
Other name changes suggested (all unique)	6% (6)

In the second scenario, 17% of those taking part provided a comment. 35% of those answering the question agree with the proposed names of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden and 11% agree with the name Hoo St Werburgh. 6% indicated they would prefer Hoo.

Proposed names – ‘Hoo St Werburgh’ and ‘Chattenden’

If the proposed changes go ahead, the changed wards will require names. The Parish Council has suggested the names ‘Hoo St Werburgh’ and ‘Chattenden’. If you would like to propose alternative suitable name(s) for the new Parish wards, please write your suggestions below.

Base: all answering (84)

	% of total answering 84 (count in brackets)
Agree with Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden	35% (29)
Agree with Hoo St Werburgh	11% (9)
Would prefer Hoo	6% (5)
Would like to integrate Peninsular into name	7% (6)
Don't waste money / time changing names	4% (3)
Name change will happen irrespective of what is fed back	6% (5)
Querying whether the names really matter	5% (4)
Comments requesting to not change current names / disagree with name changes	15% (13)
Other name changes suggested (all unique)	6% (5)

[any other comments on community governance review](#)

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide any other comments about the Community Governance Review in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the tables below. 12% of those taking part provided a comment at this question

Whilst a small proportion of those taking part in the survey provided a comment at this question, the most commonly noted themes are that the governance review sounds costly / querying what the cost implications are (22%) and that the review will not make any difference / is a waste of time (8%). Other comments made reiterated earlier points made about Parish Council workings and information provision.

If you have any other comments about this Community Governance Review, please write them in the box below.

Base: all answering (59)

	% of total answering 59 (count in brackets)
Sounds costly / querying what the cost implications are	22% (13)
Will not make any difference / waste of time	14% (8)
Need more information about local governance / impact of changes	12% (7)
Arrangements are fine as they are / no changes needed / disagree with proposals	8% (5)
Parish Councils must understand local concerns / issues / be from local area	8% (5)
Parish Council are ineffective / don't listen / consult / represent / communicate	8% (5)
Perceived lack of transparency about processes / elections / personal agendas	7% (4)
Concerns about motivations for changes / politically motivated	5% (3)

Response from parishes with NO changes suggested

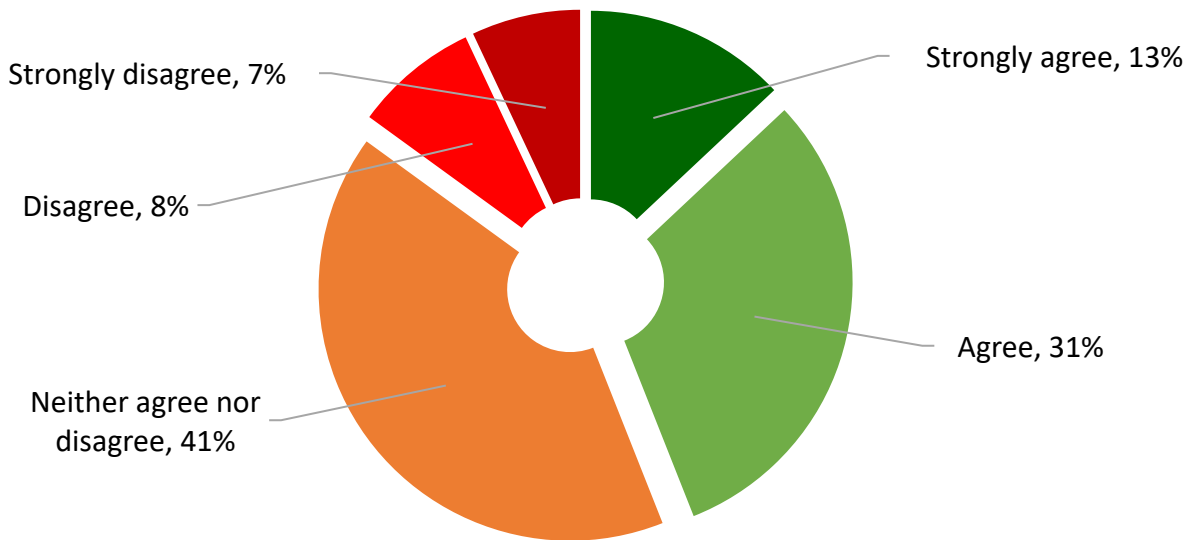
This section of the report summarises response to the questionnaire sent to individuals and organisations in Allhallows, Cliffe and Cliffe Woods, Cooling, Cuxton, Frindsbury Extra, St James Isle of Grain, St Mary Hoo and Stoke.

perception of changes reflecting the identities and interests of community

Just over four in ten of those responding (44%) agree that the current governance arrangements for the parish they live in / are based in reflects the identities and interests of the community; 13% strongly agree and 31% agree. 15% disagree the current governance arrangements reflects the identities and interests of the community. A significant proportion neither agree nor disagree (41%) suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or how arrangements reflect the identities and interests of the community.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current governance arrangements for the parish you live in / are based in reflects the identities and interests of the community?

Base: all answering (839)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% of total answering 839
Net agree (strongly agree / agree)	44%
Net disagree (strongly disagree / disagree)	15%

There are no significant changes in agreement by gender. However, there are significant differences in the proportion who agree by age and by parish:

- 53% of those aged 75 & over agree the current governance arrangements reflects the identities and interests of the community (the highest of all age groups).
- 68% of those responding from Cuxton agree the current governance arrangements reflects the identities and interests of the community (the highest of the eight parishes). 4% disagree the recommended changes do this.
- Comparatively, 32% of those responding from Frindsbury Extra and 29% of those responding from St James Isle of Grain agree the recommended governance changes reflects the identities and interests of the community.
- A comparatively low proportion of those from St Mary Hoo agree (28%). However, it should be considered that this statistic is based on a small number of residents responding.

SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% Net agree (strongly agree / agree)
Allhallows (base answering – 58)	38%
Cliffe and Cliffe Woods (base answering – 206)	49%
Cooling (base answering – 15)	53%
Cuxton (base answering – 151)	68%
Frindsbury Extra (base answering – 276)	32%
St James, Isle of Grain (base answering – 52)	29%
St Mary Hoo (base answering – 18)	28%
Stoke (base answering – 29)	45%

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide their reasons for their answers in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 65% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common positive mentions are that the current situation is fine / they are satisfied / happy with arrangements as they are (19%), their local Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area (12%) and knows the area / understands local issues / requirements (9%).

A higher proportion of those responding from Cuxton commented that the Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area (19%) and listens to residents / concerns / is responsive / contactable (13%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (519)

POSITIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 519
Current situation is fine / satisfied / happy as arrangements are	19%
Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area	12%
Parish Council knows the area / understands local issues / requirements	9%
Parish Council listens to residents / concerns / is responsive / contactable	5%
Parish Council is communicative / hold meetings / keep people informed	3%
Parish Council supports community / good community spirit / holds events	3%

Some example comments from the key themes can be found below:

“I feel each area is represented correctly and different areas, although neighbouring, have different concerns which the current governance can see to.”

“I feel each community deserves its own voice, and not to be lumped in with the whole of the Medway towns.”

“Problems that need fixing get fixed and get fixed quite promptly so I am happy with the current governance.”

“The councillors are elected from the local community and are therefore understanding of the needs of our area.”

“They listen to the residents and act upon our behalf, which is hugely more than the actual council, without the Parish who knows what the state of our village would be.”

Consistent with the high proportion of those responding indicating they neither agree nor disagree with the current arrangements reflecting the identities and interests of the community, there are a number of comments made with reference to a lack of awareness of Parish Council responsibilities and governance arrangements. 10% of those responding don't know what the current governance arrangements are, 8% don't know enough about arrangements to make a decision / give an opinion and 8% claim they are not aware of their local Parish Council / its role / what it does / who the councillors are.

A higher proportion of those responding from Frindsbury Extra commented they don't know enough the current governance arrangements are (18%) and they are not aware of the Parish Council / its role / what it does / who the councillors are (13%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (519)

IMPACT / AWARENESS MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 519
Don't know what the current governance arrangements are	10%
Don't know enough about arrangements to make a decision / give an opinion	8%
Not aware of Parish Council / its role / what it does / who the councillors are	8%
Ambivalent / not interested / not thought about it	4%
Don't understand the question	2%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“I do not have significant knowledge of the current arrangements to make an informed decision.”

“Lived here for 30 yrs. In that time I have had no contact with the Parish council, I do not know what they do or what they are viable for.”

“I don't confess to really understanding this question. I don't really know what the Parish council does or how well they do it or otherwise.”

“There is nowhere near enough information in this document to know what the current governance arrangement actually are. i.e. who attends/is invited to meetings, agendas, minutes, decisions.”

The most common negative mention is that their local Parish Council doesn't listen / consult / respond / act on concerns / are not contactable (8%). There are also some concerns raised in relation to integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors (4%), perceived limited powers / influence of Parish Councils (3%), a lack of visible / tangible benefits that the Parish Councils offer (3%) and a perceived lack of diversity in Parish Councils (3%); but these are in the minority.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (519)

NEGATIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 519
Parish Councils don't listen / consult / respond / act on concerns / not contactable	8%
Concerned about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	4%
Parish Councils do not have enough power / limited influence	3%
A lack of visible / tangible benefits of Parish Councils	3%
Lack of diversity in Parish Councils / does not reflect community / not representative / out of touch	3%

Parish Council could do more / room for improvement	2%
Exercise is a waste of money	1%
Do not need more government bureaucracy	1%
Proposed changes will not make a difference	1%

Some example comments from the key themes can be found below:

“Nothing gets done in our village apart from what the local committee wants, they do not listen to villagers.”

“Having attended meetings, I believe some members have their own agenda and do not represent the community.”

“Current parish council have been in position for a very long time. the decision making is not always in the interests of the community. In my view they should stand down every year or two to be re-elected.”

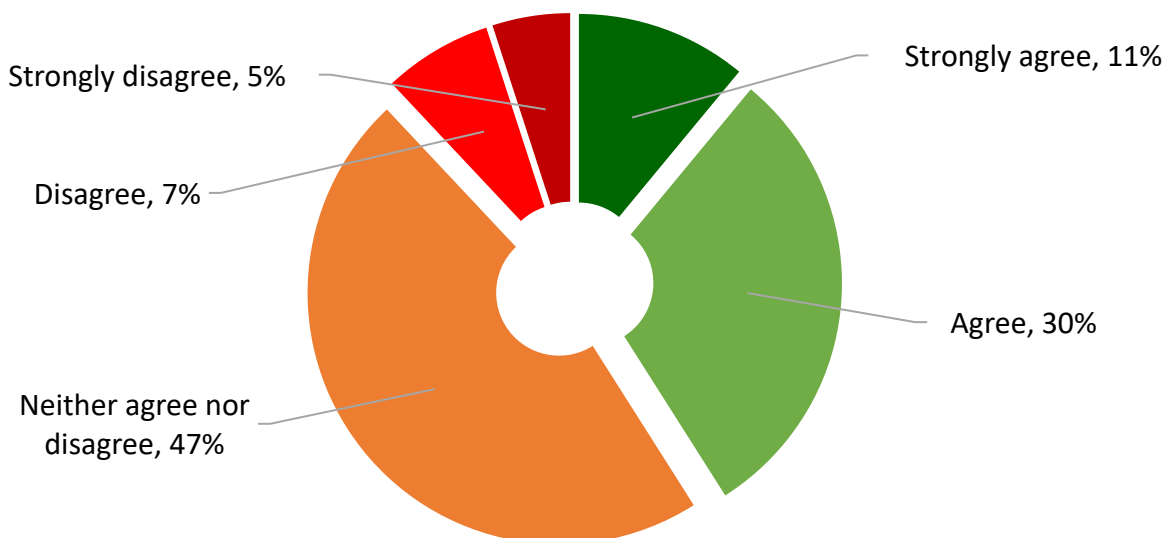
“I don't think parish councils add anything to local gov. It's just another pointless level of bureaucracy filled by (mainly older) people who act in their own interest.”

perception of changes providing effective and convenient local government

Broadly consistent response patterns observed with just over four in ten of those responding with just over four in ten of those responding (41%) agreeing that the current governance arrangements for the parish they live in / are based in provides effective and convenient local government; 11% strongly agree and 30% agree. 13% disagree the current governance changes reflects the identities and interests of the community. A significant proportion neither agree nor disagree (41%) suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or how arrangements reflect the identities and interests of the community.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current governance arrangements for the parish you live in / are based in provides effective and convenient local government?

Base: all answering (825)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% of total answering 825
Net agree (strongly agree / agree)	41%
Net disagree (strongly disagree / disagree)	13%

There are no significant changes in agreement by gender. However, there are significant differences in the proportion who agree by age and by parish:

- 48% of those aged 75 & over agree the current governance arrangements provides effective and convenient local government (the highest of all age groups).
- 63% of those responding from Cuxton agree the current governance arrangements provides effective and convenient local government (the highest of the eight parishes). 3% disagree the recommended changes do this.
- Comparatively, 30% of those responding from Frindsbury Extra agree the recommended governance changes provides effective and convenient local government.
- A comparatively low proportion of those from St Mary Hoo agree (22%). However, it should be considered that this statistic is based on a small number of residents responding.

SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% Net agree (strongly agree / agree)
Allhallows (base answering – 58)	31%
Cliffe and Cliffe Woods (base answering – 202)	40%
Cooling (base answering – 15)	53%
Cuxton (base answering – 149)	63%
Frindsbury Extra (base answering – 269)	30%
St James, Isle of Grain (base answering – 52)	35%
St Mary Hoo (base answering – 18)	22%
Stoke (base answering – 28)	57%

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide their reasons for their answers in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 51% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

Consistent with trends observed previously, the most common positive mentions are that the current situation is fine / they are satisfied / happy with arrangements as they are (15% of those answering), their local Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area (12%) and knows the area / understands local issues / requirements (9%).

A higher proportion of those responding from Cuxton commented that the Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area (29%) and knows the area / understands local issues / requirements (16%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (431)

POSITIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 431
Current situation is fine / satisfied / happy as arrangements are	15%
Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area	12%
Parish Council knows the area / understands local issues / requirements	8%
Parish Council listens to residents / concerns / is responsive / contactable	6%
Parish Council is communicative / hold meetings / keep people informed	3%
Parish Council supports community / good community spirit / holds events	1%

Some example comments from the key themes can be found below:

“Local issues raised and dealt with by local people. Very effectively run parish council.”

“Meetings are held locally should any members of the public wish to attend.”

“The Parish councillors are all familiar with the needs of the village and are regularly in contact with villagers and have the needs of the village at heart.”

“Local residents making discussions on behalf on local people knowing the areas.”

Consistent with the high proportion of those answering indicating they neither agree nor disagree with the current arrangements providing effective and convenient local government, there are a number of comments made with reference to a lack of awareness of Parish Council responsibilities and governance arrangements. 10% of those answering don't know what the current governance arrangements are and claim they are not aware of their local Parish Council / its role / what it does / who the councillors are. 9% claim they don't know enough about arrangements to make a decision / give an opinion.

A higher proportion of those responding from Frindsbury Extra commented they don't know enough the current governance arrangements are (18%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (431)

IMPACT / AWARENESS MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 431
Don't know what the current governance arrangements are	10%
Not aware of Parish Council / its role / what it does / who the councillors are	10%
Don't know enough about arrangements to make a decision / give an opinion	9%
Ambivalent / not interested / not thought about it	3%
Don't understand the question	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“I do not know what our local parish council does and cannot comment on the governance policy.”

“I don't know what the current governance arrangements are.”

“Neutral - It would have been ideal to have included with this survey a summary of current governance arrangements in some detail, so people can identify whether interests of community are truly reflected in governance.”

“Don't know what the governance arrangements for the parish are? Who arranges this? Never get told when, why or how for anything!”

The most common negative mention is that their local Parish Council doesn't listen / consult / respond / act on concerns / are not contactable (12% of those answering). There are also some concerns raised in relation to perceived limited powers / influence of Parish Councils (5%) and integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors (3%); but these are in the minority. 2% would like to see more representatives / councillors / wards.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (431)

NEGATIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 431
Parish Council don't listen / consult / respond / act on concerns / not contactable	12%
Parish Councils do not have enough power / limited influence	5%
Concerned about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	3%
Need more representatives / councillors / wards	2%
Proposed opinions will not make a difference	1%
Parish Council could do more / room for improvement	1%
Local representatives must be separate from Medway Council	1%

Some example comments from the key themes can be found below:

“Members of my local governance arrangements do not live in my local area and do not understand the ongoing issues.”

“What parish council? They are appointed to look after the parish that includes any constant untidy areas to be dealt with or residents to clear the unsightly rubbish.”

“Parish councils are too small to be meaningful and barely anyone attends a parish council meeting.”

“Councillors mostly now not elected do not reflect the age or demographic of the parish. Self interest again. The village plan is not reflective of the needs of the parish as less than 10% of residents filled it in. So cannot be effective in representing local views.”

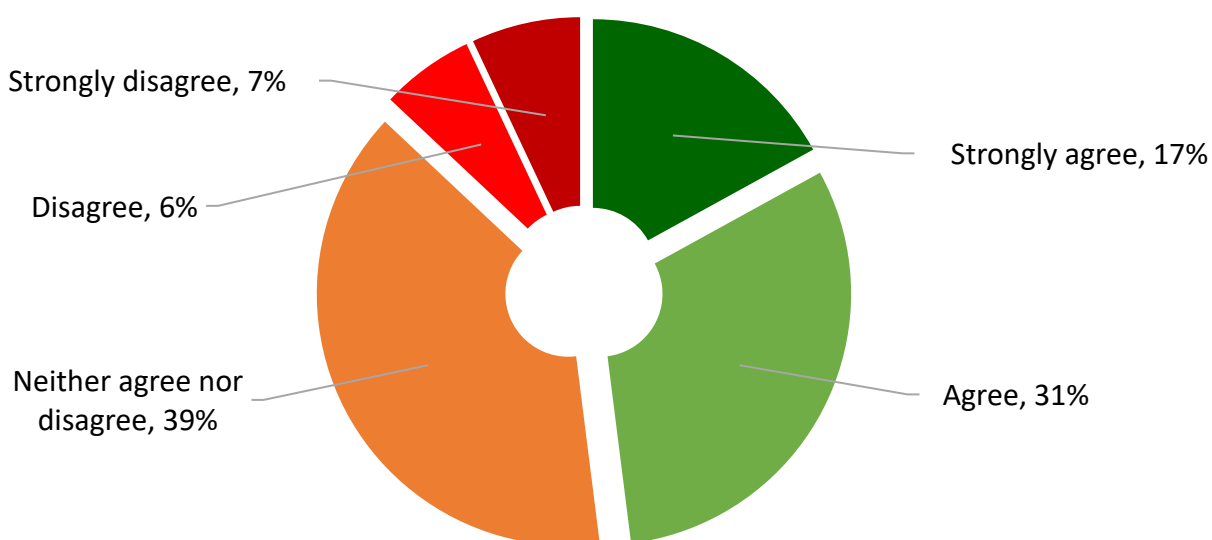
“A review is necessary as existing Parish Councils are seen to be inaccessible to provide effective and convenient local governments.”

agreement with medway council's proposed recommendations for governance arrangements

Broadly consistent response patterns observed with just under half of those responding (48%) agreeing with Medway Council's proposed recommendations for the parish they live in / are based in; 17% strongly agree and 31% agree. 13% disagree with Medway Council's recommendations. A significant proportion neither agree nor disagree (39%) suggesting a potential lack of awareness of parish council responsibilities / influence or the rationale for not making changes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with Medway Council's proposed recommendations for governance arrangements for the parish you live in / are based in?

Base: all answering (823)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% of total answering 823
Net agree (strongly agree / agree)	48%
Net disagree (strongly disagree / disagree)	13%

There are no significant changes in agreement by gender or age. However, there are significant differences in the proportion who agree by parish:

- 75% of those responding from Cuxton agree with Medway Council's proposed recommendations (the highest of the eight parishes). 3% disagree the recommended changes do this.
- Comparatively, 36% of those responding from Frindsbury Extra and 35% of those responding from St James Isle of Grain with Medway Council's proposed recommendations.
- A comparatively low proportion of those from St Mary Hoo agree (39%). However, it should be considered that this statistic is based on a small number of residents responding.

SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	% Net agree (strongly agree / agree)
Allhallows (base answering – 57)	47%
Cliffe and Cliffe Woods (base answering – 202)	50%

Cooling (base answering – 13)	46%
Cuxton (base answering – 150)	75%
Frindsbury Extra (base answering – 269)	36%
St James, Isle of Grain (base answering – 51)	35%
St Mary Hoo (base answering – 18)	39%
Stoke (base answering – 29)	48%

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide their reasons for their answers in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 49% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common positive mention is broadly consistent with opinions outlined previously - the current situation is fine / they are satisfied / happy with arrangements as they are (36% of those answering). 7% commented that their local Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area and knows the area / understands local issues / requirements.

A higher proportion of those responding from Cuxton commented that the current situation is fine / satisfied / happy as it is (53%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (411)

POSITIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 411
Current situation is fine / satisfied / happy as arrangements are	36%
Parish Council is well run / does a good job / represents the area	7%
Parish Council knows the area / understands local issues / requirements	7%
Parish Council supports community / good community spirit / holds events	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“Although there has been a lot of new housing developments and new residents, I feel there are enough parish boundaries and local governors at this time.”

“I strongly agree that the current governance arrangement work well for my local community.”

“Without the understanding and backing of our Parish council, no one else would listen.”

“Don't see reason for change here, local enough and numbers seem right. May change if more houses are built.”

“The current system seems to work. In the absence of any alternative suggestions the status quo remains.”

Consistent with the high proportion of those answering indicating they neither agree nor disagree with Medway Council's recommendations, there are comments made with reference to a lack of awareness of Parish Council responsibilities and governance arrangements. 9% of those responding don't know what the current governance arrangements are and don't know enough about arrangements to make a decision / give an opinion.

A higher proportion of those responding from Frindsbury Extra commented they don't know enough the current governance arrangements are (19%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (411)

IMPACT / AWARENESS MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 411
Don't know what the current governance arrangements are	9%
Don't know enough about arrangements to make a decision / give an opinion	9%
Not aware of Parish Council / its role / what it does / who the councillors are	6%
Ambivalent / not interested / not thought about it	1%
Don't understand the question	1%

Some example comments from these key themes can be found below:

“I would offer more of an opinion if I understood exactly what the Parish council represents for me. I doubt if Medway council itself would actually improve things.”

“I do not have any knowledge of the current arrangements to make an informed decision.”

“I do not know what present governance arrangements are in detail.”

The most common negative mentions are that Parish Councils should be scrapped and Medway take on their responsibilities to save money (8% of those answering) and their local Parish Council doesn't listen / consult / respond / act on concerns / are not contactable (4%). 3% would like to see some local changes and suggest a further governance review.

A higher proportion of those responding from Frindsbury Extra commented Parish Councils should be scrapped and Medway take on their responsibilities to save money (12%) compared to those responding from other parishes.

Please explain your reason(s) for your answer, including any supporting evidence you may have.

Base: all answering (411)

NEGATIVE MENTIONS - SUMMARY

	% of total answering 411
Parish Council should be scrapped / Medway take on responsibilities / could save money	8%
Parish Council don't listen / consult / respond / act on concerns / not contactable	4%
Local changes needed / different governance review needed	3%
Those elected must be diverse / reflect community / be representative	3%

Parish Councils do not have enough power / limited influence	2%
Concerned about integrity / conflict of interest of Parish councillors	1%
Concerns decisions have already been made / opinions are irrelevant	1%
Proposed opinions will not make a difference	1%

Some example comments from the key themes can be found below:

“Parish councils are irrelevant in the 21st century and should be scrapped to save expenditure on the public purse.”

“Parish councils should be eradicated unnecessary and an expense.”

“Keeping arrangements as they are doesn’t address the fundamental issues we have that our Parish Councillors are looking out for their own best interests discouraging local residents from participating and being stuck in their ways.”

“Last governance review was before Medway Council existed so a review seems overdue.”

“Very strongly disagree and if something doesn’t change I will be lodging a formal complaint and I know others will too.”

[alternative suggestions](#)

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide alternative suggestions for making sure their parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents’ comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 27% of those taking part provided a comment at this question.

The most common suggestions put forward include Parish Councils needing to communicate more effectively / make more information available / consult (26% of those answering), address local concerns / issues / must be from local area (14%) and have more power / influence / Medway should listen to Parish Councils / consult with them (10%). 8% commented that Parish Councils should reflect local communities / be diverse / reform recruitment approaches.

If you have any alternative suggestions for making sure the parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government, please write them in the box below. Base: all answering (228)

	% of total answering 228 (count in brackets)
Parish Councils must communicate more effectively / make more information available / consult	26%
Parish Councils must address local concerns / issues / must be from local area / listen	14%
Parish Councils should have more power / influence / Medway should listen to Parish Councils / consult with them	10%
Parish Councils should reflect local community / be diverse / reform recruitment	8%
More information / awareness of Parish Councils / their role / what is does / who the councillors are	5%

Parish Councils are essential to represent the area	5%
Ward / boundary / area mergers / numbers of councillors needs reviewing	5%
Parish Councils should be scrapped	5%
Arrangements are fine as they are / no changes needed	4%
Parish Councils should have integrity / behave ethically / have no conflict of interest / personal agendas	3%
Don't know what the current governance arrangements are	3%
Parish Councils should support community events / groups / provide community hubs	2%

any other comments on community governance review

Those taking part were given the opportunity to provide any other comments about the Community Governance Review in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the tables below. 15% of those taking part provided a comment at this question

Whilst a small proportion of those taking part in the survey provided a comment at this question, the most commonly noted themes are that the governance review sounds costly / querying what the cost implications are (15% of those answering) and that the review will not make any difference / is a waste of time (2%). Other comments made reiterated earlier points made about Parish Council workings and information provision.

If you have any other comments about this Community Governance Review, please write them in the box below.

Base: all answering (125)

	% of total answering 125 (count in brackets)
Sounds costly / querying what the cost implications are	15%
Will not make any difference / waste of time	12%
Parish Councils have little input from residents / doesn't communicate / listen / doesn't act in best interests of community	9%
Perceived lack of information about governance arrangements / need more information to make a decision	9%
Perceived lack of transparency about processes / elections / personal agendas	6%
Need more information about Parish Councils / its role / details of meetings	5%
Parish Councils should reflect local community / diverse / currently out of touch	5%
Arrangements are fine as they are / no changes needed	4%
Parish Councils should know the area / understand local issues / requirements / live in area	4%
Parish Councils should support community events / groups / provide community hub	4%
Don't understand review / should be easier to understand	3%

Parish Councils should have more power / influence / more input	2%
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QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO PARISHES WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED

Please answer the questions below about the parish you live in / are based in:

Q1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <u>recommended governance changes</u> for the parish you live in / are based in reflects the identities and interests of the community? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BELOW)	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	1
	<i>Agree</i>	2
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3
	<i>Disagree</i>	4
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5

Q2	Please explain your reason(s) for your answer above, including any supporting evidence you may have in the box below.	

Q3	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <u>recommended governance changes</u> for the parish you live in / are based in provides effective and convenient local government? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BELOW)	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	1
	<i>Agree</i>	2
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3
	<i>Disagree</i>	4
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5

Q4	Please explain your reason(s) for your answer above, including any supporting evidence you may have in the box below.	

Q5	To what extent do you agree or disagree with Medway Council’s proposed recommendations for governance arrangements for the parish you live in / are based in? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BELOW)	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	1
	<i>Agree</i>	2
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3
	<i>Disagree</i>	4
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5

Q6	Please explain your reason(s) for your answer above, including any supporting evidence you may have in the box below.	

Q7	If you have any alternative suggestions for making sure the parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government, please write them in the box below.

PLEASE ANSWER Q8A AND Q8B IF YOU LIVE IN HOO ST WERBURGH, OTHERWISE PLEASE GO TO Q9

Q8a	If the proposed changes go ahead, the changed wards will require names. The Parish Council has suggested the names 'Hoo' and 'Chattenden'. If you would like to propose alternative suitable name(s) for the new Parish wards, please write your suggestions below. If possible, please provide details of how your suggested names would reflect the identity of the local area.

Q8b	The Parish Council has suggested that the parish be called Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden. If you would like to propose alternative suitable name(s) for the parish, please write your suggestions below. If possible, please provide details of how your suggested name would reflect the identity of the local area.

Q9	If you have any other comments about this Community Governance Review, please write them in the box below. Please only include comments on areas that you have been unable to include in your responses to previous questions.

Medway is committed to consulting with all its residents and interested parties so, to ensure that all groups within the community have the opportunity to participate, we would appreciate it if you could provide us with the following information. The information provided will remain private and confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. You are under no obligation to provide the following information and it will not affect your response if you choose not to.

Q10A Are you responding as...? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY ONLY BELOW)			
<i>An individual / resident</i>	1 GO TO Q11	<i>An elected representative</i>	3 GO TO Q10B
<i>An organisation</i>	2 GO TO Q10D	<i>A parish council</i>	4 GO TO Q10C

Q10B If you are responding as an elected representative, are you? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY BELOW)			
<i>A Medway councillor</i>	1	<i>A member of parliament</i>	3
<i>A Parish councillor</i>	2	<i>Other elected representative</i>	4

Q10C Please write the ward / parish / constituency that you represent below	

Q10D Please write the name of the organisation you are responding on behalf of below	

PLEASE ANSWER Q11-Q15 IF YOU ARE RESPONDING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Q11 What is your sex? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
<i>Male</i>	1	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	3
<i>Female</i>	2		

Q12 Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
<i>18-24</i>	1	<i>55-64</i>	5
<i>25-34</i>	2	<i>65-74</i>	6
<i>35-44</i>	3	<i>75 and over</i>	7
<i>45-54</i>	4	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	8

Q13 Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Do you have any long-standing health problem or disability? Long-standing means anything that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
<i>Yes</i>	1	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	3
<i>No</i>	2		

Q14 Which of the following describes your ethnic group? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
<i>White – English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British</i>	1	<i>Any other Black / African / Caribbean background</i>	11
<i>White – Irish</i>	2	<i>Asian / Asian British Indian</i>	12
<i>White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller</i>	3	<i>Asian / Asian British Pakistani</i>	13
<i>Any other White background</i>	4	<i>Asian / Asian British Bangladeshi</i>	14
<i>Mixed White and Black Caribbean</i>	5	<i>Asian / Asian British Chinese</i>	15

	<i>Mixed White and Black African</i>	6		<i>Any other Asian background</i>	16
	<i>Mixed White and Asian</i>	7		<i>Arab</i>	17
	<i>Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background</i>	8		<i>Any other ethnic background (write in</i>	18
	<i>Black / Black British African</i>	9		_____	
	<i>Black / Black British Caribbean</i>	10		<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	19

Q15	In which of the following parishes do you live? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)				
	<i>Allhallows</i>	1		<i>High Halstow</i>	7
	<i>Cliffe and Cliffe Woods</i>	2		<i>Hoo St Werburgh</i>	8
	<i>Cooling</i>	3		<i>St James, Isle of Grain</i>	9
	<i>Cuxton</i>	4		<i>St Mary Hoo</i>	10
	<i>Frindsbury Extra</i>	5		<i>Stoke</i>	11
	<i>Halling</i>	6			

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO PARISHES WITH NO CHANGES SUGGESTED

Please answer the questions below about the parish you live in / are based in:

Q1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <u>current governance arrangements</u> for the parish you live in / are based in reflects the identities and interests of the community? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BELOW)	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	1
	<i>Agree</i>	2
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3
	<i>Disagree</i>	4
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5

Q2	Please explain your reason(s) for your answer above, including any supporting evidence you may have in the box below.	

Q3	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current governance arrangements for the parish you live in / are based in provides effective and convenient local government? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BELOW)	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	1
	<i>Agree</i>	2
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3
	<i>Disagree</i>	4
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5

Q4	Please explain your reason(s) for your answer above, including any supporting evidence you may have in the box below.	

Q5	To what extent do you agree or disagree with Medway Council's recommendations to keep current governance arrangements as they are for the parish you live in / are based in? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BELOW)	
	<i>Strongly agree</i>	1
	<i>Agree</i>	2
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3
	<i>Disagree</i>	4
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5

Q6	Please explain your reason(s) for your answer above, including any supporting evidence you may have in the box below.

Q7	If you have any alternative suggestions for making sure the parish council reflects local identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government, please write them in the box below.

Q8	If you have any other comments about this Community Governance Review, please write them in the box below. Please only include comments on areas that you have been unable to include in your responses to previous questions.

Medway is committed to consulting with all its residents and interested parties so, to ensure that all groups within the community have the opportunity to participate, we would appreciate it if you could provide us with the following information. The information provided will remain private and confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. You are under no obligation to provide the following information and it will not affect your response if you choose not to.

Q9A	Are you responding as...? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY ONLY BELOW)				
	<i>An individual / resident</i>	1 GO TO Q10		<i>An elected representative</i>	3 GO TO Q9B
	<i>An organisation</i>	2 GO TO Q9D		<i>A parish council</i>	4 GO TO Q9C

Q9B	If you are responding as an elected representative, are you? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY BELOW)				
	<i>A Medway councillor</i>	1		<i>A member of parliament</i>	3
	<i>A Parish councillor</i>	2		<i>Other elected representative</i>	4

Q9C	Please write the ward / parish / constituency that you represent below

Q9D	Please write the name of the organisation you are responding on behalf of below

PLEASE ANSWER Q10-Q14 IF YOU ARE RESPONDING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Q10	What is your sex? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)		
	<i>Male</i>		1
	<i>Female</i>		2
	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>		3

Q11	Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
	<i>18-24</i>	1	<i>55-64</i>	5
	<i>25-34</i>	2	<i>65-74</i>	6
	<i>35-44</i>	3	<i>75 and over</i>	7
	<i>45-54</i>	4	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	8

Q12	Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Do you have any long-standing health problem or disability? Long-standing means anything that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)		
	<i>Yes</i>		1
	<i>No</i>		2
	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>		3

Q13	Which of the following describes your ethnic group? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
	<i>White – English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British</i>	1	<i>Any other Black / African / Caribbean background</i>	11
	<i>White – Irish</i>	2	<i>Asian / Asian British Indian</i>	12
	<i>White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller</i>	3	<i>Asian / Asian British Pakistani</i>	13
	<i>Any other White background</i>	4	<i>Asian / Asian British Bangladeshi</i>	14
	<i>Mixed White and Black Caribbean</i>	5	<i>Asian / Asian British Chinese</i>	15
	<i>Mixed White and Black African</i>	6	<i>Any other Asian background</i>	16
	<i>Mixed White and Asian</i>	7	<i>Arab</i>	17
	<i>Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background</i>	8	<i>Any other ethnic background (write in</i>	18
	<i>Black / Black British African</i>	9	_____	
	<i>Black / Black British Caribbean</i>	10	<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	19

Q14	In which of the following parishes do you live? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY BELOW)			
	<i>Allhallows</i>	1	<i>High Halstow</i>	7
	<i>Cliffe and Cliffe Woods</i>	2	<i>Hoo St Werburgh</i>	8
	<i>Cooling</i>	3	<i>St James, Isle of Grain</i>	9
	<i>Cuxton</i>	4	<i>St Mary Hoo</i>	10
	<i>Frindsbury Extra</i>	5	<i>Stoke</i>	11
	<i>Halling</i>	6		

Diversity Impact Assessment

TITLE Name / description of the issue being assessed	Community Governance Review (CGR) – Parish Electoral arrangements
DATE Date the DIA is completed	1 February 2023
LEAD OFFICER Name, title and dept of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.	Jane Ringham, Head of Elections & Member Services

1 Summary description of the proposed change

- What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed?
- How does it compare with the current situation?

Subsequent to the Ward boundary changes to be implemented on 4 May 2023, it has been felt necessary to review the electoral arrangements in the Parished areas of Medway. They have not been reviewed since at least 2003. The Council conducted the CGR including a consultation exercise involving all the registered electors in the Parished area, and relevant businesses and organisations, and gathered evidence of existing community governance arrangements in the area. An informal working group of members and council officers have considered the results of the consultation.

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- E.g.: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.
- E.g.: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile

The survey for the Parish Councils where changes were proposed was sent to 13,210 electors and “interested parties” including the Parish Councils affected. A total of 509 responses were received representing a 4% response rate. The survey for the Parish Councils where no changes were proposed was sent to 16,833 electors and “interested parties” including the Parish Councils affected. A total of 844 responses were received, representing a 5% response rate.

The main outcome of which was that from the consultation responses in the Parishes where changes were suggested, 42% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the recommended changes for the Parish reflect the identities and interests of the community. From the consultation responses in the Parishes where no changes are being suggested, the responses were similar to those where changes are being proposed. 44% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current governance arrangements for the Parish reflect the identities and interest of the community. From the consultation responses in the Parishes where changes are being suggested, 38% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the recommended changes for the Parish provide effective and convenient local government. From the consultation responses in the Parishes where no changes are being suggested, the responses were similar to those where changes are being proposed. 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current governance arrangements for the Parish reflect the identities and interest of the community.

45% of the responses were from men, and 48% from women with 8% preferring not to say. 29% of the respondents were in the age group 17-54 and 73% were in the age group 55 and over. These figures reflect generally the demographic profile in the Parished areas. 20% of respondents indicated they had a long term health condition. This is not greatly different to the 16.4% of the overall population who indicated they had a Limiting Long Term Illness in the 2011 census.

1.37% of respondents indicated that they were of black or minority ethnic origin which compares with 10.4% of Medway’s population in the 2011 census.

Evidence gathered by the working group shows that the local population has an aptitude to form organisations and associations to represent them, and their interests, including those for people of different faith groups, groups of people of particular ethnic backgrounds or cultures and to allow them to identify and resolve issues and improve community cohesion.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age			✓
Disability			✓
Gender reassignment			✓
Marriage/civil partnership			✓
Pregnancy/maternity			✓
Race			✓
<i>Religion/belief</i>			✓
Sex			✓
Sexual orientation			✓
Other (e.g. low income groups)			✓

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- Who will be affected?
- How will they be affected?

The results of the consultation indicated that most residents supported the changes [proposed to the electoral arrangements in the Parish where they live and that there was support for the existing electoral arrangements in those Parish areas where no changes were proposed. The recommendation of the working group is therefore to implement the changes and for the electoral arrangements in the remaining Parishes to remain unchanged.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Are there alternative providers?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

As well as the Parish Councils themselves providing local services, there are a good selection of local associations and groups in the Parish areas which enable local people to share interests, identify and resolve issues and improve community cohesion.

6 Action plan

- Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

Proposed changes in Halling, High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh should be implemented and that the electoral arrangements in the Parishes of Allhallows, Cliffe & Cliffe Woods, Cooling, Cuxton, Frindsbury Extra, St James Isle of Grain, St Mary Hoo and Stoke should remain unchanged

The report of the working group will be submitted for consideration at the meeting of Full Council on 23 February 2023.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal & Governance

Date