



New electoral arrangements for Swale Borough Council

August 2012

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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Swale Borough Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in May 2011.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
14 November 2011	Information gathering – Council invited to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
10 January 2012	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
2 April 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
9 June 2012	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 47 comprising five single-member wards, 15 two-member wards and four three-member wards. During the information gathering period on a warding pattern for Swale, we received four submissions, including warding proposals from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat groups and general comments from an Independent member.

Our draft recommendations for Swale sought to reflect the evidence of community identities received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government. The proposals were based on elements of the Conservative group and Labour group submissions with some minor amendments to better reflect our statutory criteria.

Submissions received

During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 19 submissions, including one from the Chief Executive of Swale Borough Council, one from a borough councillor, four from parish and town councils, six from political groups and seven from local residents.

All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Swale Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2017, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 4.4% over this period.

Following publication of our draft recommendations, we did not receive any comment on the electorate figures. We are therefore content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our final recommendations.

General analysis

We have considered all submissions received during the consultation on our draft recommendations. As a result, we have proposed one amendment to a ward boundary in the Faversham town area and two ward name changes in the Sittingbourne area. Elsewhere, we confirmed our draft recommendations as final.

Our final recommendations for Swale are that the Council should have 47 members representing five single-member, 15 two-member and four three-member wards. Only one ward will have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2017. Having taken into account the evidence we have received during consultation, we believe that our final recommendations will ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Swale Borough Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Swale Borough Council, in 2015.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Swale Borough Council's electoral arrangements, to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to Swale Borough Council inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during this information gathering period informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Swale Borough Council*, which were published on 2 April 2012. Consultation on our draft recommendations took place until 8 June 2012.

What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure electoral equality, which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Swale?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on December 2010 electorate figures, one ward – Iwade & Lower Halstow – had 48% more electors than the borough average.

How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change as a result of our recommendations.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Swale Borough Council.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Swale is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In so doing, we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

10 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of the end of the review. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

11 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

12 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Swale Borough Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

13 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

14 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority ward arrangements. However, principal councils have powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct Community Governance Reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

Submissions received

15 Prior to, and during the initial stage of the review, we visited Swale Borough Council and met with members and officers. We received 15 submissions during our consultation on council size, four submissions from our information gathering period with the Council, and 19 submissions during our consultation on draft recommendations. All submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of Swale Borough Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

16 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions received were carefully considered before we formulated our final recommendations. Officers from the Commission have been assisted by officers at Swale Borough Council who have provided relevant information throughout the review.

Electorate figures

17 As part of this review, Swale Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2017, projecting an increase in electorate of 4.4% over the period from 2011–2017. This included substantial growth in the Iwade and Minster areas. The forecasts were accompanied by a detailed methodology and mapping of scheduled future developments. Based on the evidence received, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

18 Swale Borough Council currently has 47 councillors elected from 25 wards. At the outset of the review, we met with elected members and officers to discuss council size. The Conservative and Labour groups on the Council both proposed an unchanged council size of 47. We subsequently held a six-week consultation to enable members of the public to give their views on council size.

19 During the consultation on council size we received 15 submissions with council size proposals ranging from 23 to 47 members. We also held a further meeting with each of the three political group leaders to discuss their views on council size in more detail.

20 All three political groups on the Council agreed that the council size should remain unchanged at 47 members. Justifications for this included the Council's participatory system of governance, the representational role of members, and the disparate nature of communities in Swale that made it important for each area to be

adequately represented. We were therefore minded to adopt a council size of 47 as part of our draft recommendations.

Electoral fairness

21 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations should provide for electoral fairness whilst ensuring that we reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

22 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we calculate the average number of electors per councillor. The average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (96,920 in 2011 and 101,366 in 2017) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council – 47 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,062 in 2011 and 2,157 by 2017.

23 Under our final recommendations, only one of our proposed 24 wards will have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2017. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Swale.

General analysis

24 Prior to formulating our draft recommendations, we received four submissions on a warding pattern for Swale. The Conservative and Labour groups made borough-wide proposals, while the Liberal Democrat group made proposals for the mainland part of the borough. The submission from an Independent councillor made general comments but did not make any detailed proposals for ward boundaries.

25 Our draft recommendations for Swale proposed a council size of 47 members, comprising a pattern of five single-member, 15 two-member and four three-member wards.

26 Our draft recommendations sought to reflect the evidence of community identity received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government. Our draft recommendations reflected the Labour group proposals in the Sittingbourne area, the Conservative group proposals on the Isle of Sheppey, and elements of all submissions in the Faversham area with some minor amendments to better reflect our statutory criteria.

27 During consultation on our draft recommendations, 19 submissions were received. These included one from the Chief Executive of Swale Borough Council, one from a borough councillor, four from parish and town councils, five from political groups and eight from local residents.

28 Four submissions made no objection to our draft recommendations or proposed only changes to ward names. We received some objections to our proposed boundaries in the parishes of Borden and Tunstall in the Sittingbourne area, in

Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey, and in the town of Faversham.

29 We have considered all submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. In our final recommendations for Swale, we have sought to address evidence received during consultation and achieve good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests. Based on the evidence received, we have proposed a minor amendment to a ward boundary in Faversham town and two ward name changes in the Sittingbourne area.

30 Our final recommendations for Swale are that the Council should have 47 members, with five single-member wards, 15 two-member wards and four three-member wards. We consider our final recommendations provide for good electoral equality while reflecting our understanding of community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government. Only one ward will have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the county by 2017.

31 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table B1 (on pages 21-24) and Map 1.

Electoral arrangements

32 This section of the report details the submissions received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Swale. The following areas are considered in turn:

- Sittingbourne area (pages 8-10)
- Isle of Sheppey (pages 10-11)
- Faversham area (pages 11-12)

33 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table B1 on pages 22-25 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Sittingbourne area

34 The Sittingbourne area was allocated 21 members under our draft recommendations. The Conservative and Liberal Democrat group submissions proposed a 48-member council and so allocated 22 members to this area, while the Labour group proposed a council size of 47 and therefore allocated 21 members to this area.

35 Our draft recommendations in this area were based on proposals made by the Labour group, with an amendment to provide for single-member wards in the Chalkwell and Meads areas to better reflect community identity

36 During consultation on our draft recommendations, nine submissions were received concerning the Sittingbourne area.

37 The Conservative and Labour groups supported our draft recommendations for the area. The Conservative group, and two submissions from the Sittingbourne & Sheppey Conservative Party, proposed that Rural Sittingbourne ward be renamed

West Downs ward, and Sittingbourne South ward be renamed Woodstock ward. The Chief Executive of Swale Borough Council proposed that Rural Sittingbourne be renamed Sittingbourne Rural.

38 We consider the proposed ward names of Woodstock and West Downs to better reflect communities in the area, and to provide greater consistency with other ward names across the borough. We have therefore adopted these ward names as part of the final recommendations.

39 We received two objections to our proposed Borden & Grove Park ward, which combines the parish of Borden with suburban parts of Sittingbourne to the north of the A2.

40 Borden Parish Council stated that the proposed ward would 'have a serious impact on the "rural" position of Borden'. As an alternative, it proposed that the ward should be split into two single-member wards, with the boundary between them running along the A2 to Cryalls Lane. The Australian estate would also be transferred into the Grove Park ward from Homewood ward, while the Auckland estate would be transferred into Homewood ward from Borden ward.

41 We have not adopted this proposal as part of our final recommendations as it would result in an unacceptable level of electoral inequality in the proposed single-member Grove Park ward. It is forecast to have 23% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2017.

42 We have also not adopted a proposal submitted by the Swale branch of UKIP to transfer the Auckland Drive area into Homewood ward and the Adelaide Drive area into Borden & Grove Park ward. This also provides for unsatisfactory electoral equality, as the amended Borden & Grove Park ward would be forecast to have 12% more electors than the borough average by 2017.

43 Overall, we consider that retaining the two-member Borden & Grove Park ward proposed in our draft recommendations provides for the best balance between our statutory criteria in this area. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final.

44 We received six objections to our draft recommendations in the area of Tunstall parish, which we proposed to divide between the wards of Sittingbourne South and Rural Sittingbourne.

45 Tunstall Parish Council argued that the split of the parish would divide the community and proposed as an alternative that the entire parish be included in the Sittingbourne South ward, with a residential area in the north of this proposed ward being transferred to Roman ward to improve electoral equality. Four submissions from local residents also opposed the split of Tunstall parish.

46 We consider that the boundary proposed in our draft recommendations provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria. In particular, we consider that the boundary clearly reflects the divide between rural and suburban residential areas within Tunstall parish. The alternative boundary proposed by Tunstall Parish Council

also does not provide for satisfactory electoral equality, with Roman ward being forecast to have 19% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2017.

47 A local resident objected to the proposed boundary of the Bobbing, Iwade & Lower Halstow ward, and suggested that the part of Bobbing parish to the south of the railway line should be part of the Borden & Grove Park ward. This proposal would result in Borden & Grove Park becoming under-represented and require the creation of unviable parish wards, so we have not adopted it as part of our final recommendations.

48 No other comments were received with regard to our draft recommendations in the Sittingbourne area. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final, with the exception of the ward name changes to Woodstock and West Downs wards. All wards are forecast to have electorates within 10% of the borough average by 2017.

Isle of Sheppey

49 The Isle of Sheppey is allocated 14 members under a 47-member council. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the proposals of the Conservative group, which was also supported in elements of the Labour group's proposals.

50 Our draft recommendations proposed a two-member ward of Sheppey East and a three-member Sheerness ward covering the unparished area of Sheerness. The three-member Queenborough & Halfway, Sheppey Central and Minster Cliffs wards were largely unchanged from existing boundaries. One ward, Sheerness, was forecast to have an electorate more than 10% from the borough average by 2017.

51 We received four submissions relating to the Isle of Sheppey during the consultation on our draft recommendations. The Conservative group and Minster-on-Sea Parish Council indicated support for our draft recommendations in this area, stating that they provided a stronger reflection of the island's communities.

52 The Labour group objected to our draft recommendation for a three-member Sheerness ward, arguing that it did not reflect community identities in the town. The submission also argued that the consolidation of Sheerness into a single ward would not lead to effective and convenient local government.

53 The Labour group proposed that a more appropriate solution would be to include part of Halfway Houses in the Sheerness East ward to improve electoral equality. It argued that this part of Halfway Houses was separated from Sheerness by 'a mere small golf course'. These views were echoed by the Sheppey Branch Labour Party, which stated that high levels of deprivation in Sheerness would result in an unacceptable workload for councillors in a three-member ward.

54 We do not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to warrant departing from our draft recommendation for a single three-member Sheerness ward. We did not consider the evidence relating to increased member workload to be persuasive and the alternative proposal from the Labour group would divide the

community of Halfway Houses.

55 The Labour group and UKIP Swale Branch also objected to the general pattern of three-member wards on the Isle of Sheppey. However, no evidence was received to indicate why three-member wards are inappropriate in this area. We have not therefore been persuaded to move away from a pattern of three-member wards on this part of the island.

56 The Chief Executive of Swale Borough Council noted that the existing boundary of Queenborough & Halfway ward crosses the Swale and proposed this could be amended. However, this ward boundary follows a parish ward boundary and cannot be amended without creating an unviable parish ward. We have not therefore amended this boundary as part of our final recommendations.

57 Overall, we do not consider we have received sufficient evidence to justify amending our draft recommendations on the Isle of Sheppey. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final with no amendments. The Sheerness ward is forecast to have 14% more electors than the borough average by 2017, while all other wards are forecast to be within 10% of the borough average.

Faversham area

58 The Faversham area is allocated 12 members under a 47-member Council. Our draft recommendations were based on proposals from the Conservative and Labour groups with our own amendments in some areas to provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations, no ward was forecast to have an electorate of more than 10% from the borough average by 2017.

59 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received five submissions with regard to the Faversham area. Faversham Town Council indicated support for our draft recommendations, as did Swale Borough Council's Labour and Conservative groups.

60 Two submissions were received with regard to the naming of Priory ward in our draft recommendations. A local borough councillor supported the name Priory ward on the basis that much of the Davington ecclesiastical parish is located outside the ward. A local resident provided evidence indicating that the name Davington Priory ward provided a better reflection of the community.

61 On balance, we consider that insufficient evidence has been received to change the proposed name of Priory ward to Davington Priory ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendation for the name Priory ward as final.

62 The local borough councillor argued that the boundary between St Ann's ward and Priory ward should run along Faversham Creek, rather than diverting along Brent Road to incorporate a proposed residential development within the proposed St Ann's ward.

63 The councillor stated that access to this proposed development would be at the junction of Brent Road and Flood Lane, and that residents of the development would

have a closer connection to Priory ward than to St Ann’s ward.

64 We consulted planning officers who confirmed that the access point for this development was envisaged to be from the north. On this basis, we propose an amendment to the boundary between St Ann’s ward and Priory ward in this area. The revised boundary would run along Faversham Creek, to the south of the new development, rather than along Brent Road to its north. This change would transfer 12 forecast electors between the two wards and have no significant impact on electoral equality.

65 We did not receive any further comments on our proposed wards in the Faversham area. With the exception of the minor boundary change between St Ann’s ward and Priory ward, we confirm our draft recommendations in the area as final. All wards in this area are forecast have electorates within 10% of the borough average by 2017.

Conclusions

66 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2011 and 2017 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2011	2017
Number of councillors	47	47
Number of wards	24	24
Average number of electors per councillor	2,062	2,157
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation
 Swale Borough Council should comprise 47 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Table B1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

67 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

68 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Swale Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

69 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Bobbing, Faversham, Minster-on-Sea and Tunstall.

70 As a result of our proposed borough ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Bobbing parish to reflect our proposed warding arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Bobbing Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Grove Park (four members), Bobbing (three members) and The Meads (two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3b.

71 As a result of our proposed borough ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Faversham parish to reflect our proposed electoral arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Faversham Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Abbey (four members), Priory (two members), St Ann's (four members) and Watling (four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3a.

72 As a result of our proposed borough ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Minster-on-Sea parish to reflect our proposed electoral arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Minster-on-Sea Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Minster East (one member), Minster North (five members) and Minster South (five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2.

73 As a result of our proposed borough ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Tunstall parish to reflect our proposed electoral arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Tunstall Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Tunstall Urban (five members) and Tunstall Rural (two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3b.

3 What happens next?

74 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Swale Borough Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Swale Borough Council in 2015.

Equalities

75 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

4 Mapping

Final recommendations for Swale

76 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Swale Borough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed ward boundaries for Swale.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates in detail proposed ward boundaries in the north of the Isle of Sheppey.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3a** illustrates in detail proposed ward boundaries in Faversham town.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3b** illustrates in detail proposed ward boundaries in Sittingbourne town.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish Council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town Council'
Parish (or Town) Council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town Council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the borough council

Appendix B

Table B1: Final recommendations for Swale Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey	2	4,053	2,027	-2%	4,337	2,169	1%
2	Bobbing, Iwade & Lower Halstow	2	3,505	1,753	-15%	4,104	2,052	-5%
3	Borden & Grove Park	2	4,575	2,288	11%	4,654	2,327	8%
4	Boughton & Courtenay	2	4,241	2,121	3%	4,395	2,198	2%
5	Chalkwell	1	2,005	2,005	-3%	2,029	2,029	-6%
6	East Downs	1	2,137	2,137	4%	2,137	2,137	-1%
7	Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch	2	4,482	2,241	9%	4,513	2,257	5%

Table B1 (cont): Final recommendations for Swale Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
8	Homewood	2	4,637	2,319	12%	4,719	2,360	9%
9	Kemsley	2	4,209	2,105	2%	4,209	2,105	-2%
10	Milton Regis	2	4,247	2,124	3%	4,265	2,133	-1%
11	Minster Cliffs	3	5,607	1,869	-9%	5,856	1,952	-9%
12	Murston	2	3,898	1,949	-5%	4,408	2,204	2%
13	Priory	1	1,923	1,923	-7%	2,071	2,071	-4%
14	Queenborough & Halfway	3	5,432	1,811	-12%	5,821	1,940	-10%
15	Roman	2	4,672	2,336	13%	4,699	2,350	9%

Table B1 (cont): Final recommendations for Swale Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
16	Sheerness	3	7,295	2,432	18%	7,365	2,455	14%
17	Sheppey Central	3	5,224	1,741	-16%	6,096	2,032	-6%
18	Sheppey East	2	3,757	1,879	-9%	3,965	1,983	-8%
19	St Ann's	2	4,021	2,011	-3%	4,035	2,018	-6%
20	Teynham & Lynsted	2	4,075	2,038	-1%	4,124	2,062	-4%
21	The Meads	1	1,874	1,874	-9%	2,289	2,289	6%
22	Watling	2	4,418	2,209	7%	4,428	2,214	3%
23	West Downs	1	2,145	2,145	4%	2,167	2,167	0%

Table B1 (cont): Final recommendations for Swale Borough Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24 Woodstock	2	4,488	2,244	9%	4,680	2,340	8%
Totals	47	96,920	-	-	101,366	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,062	-	-	2,157	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Swale Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.