



Where can I find out about the review?

Web: www.swale.gov.uk/sheerness-cgr

Email: cgrconsultation@swale.gov.uk

Telephone Democratic Services: 01795 417330

Write to: **Democratic Services, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT**

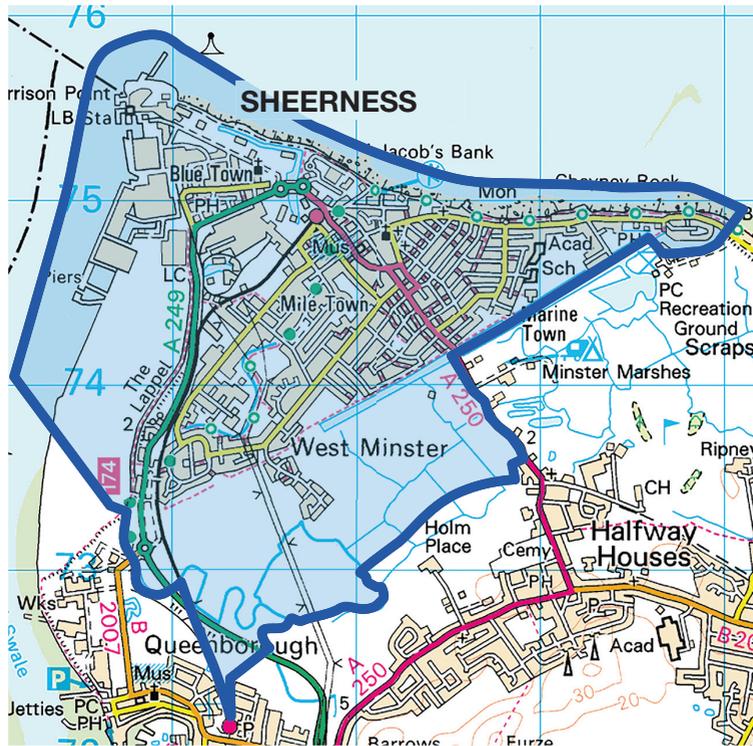
Where can I find out more about town councils?

Creating a new local council

www.nalc.gov.uk/createacouncil

Kent Association of Local Councils

www.kentalc.gov.uk



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Consultation on proposals for a Sheerness Town Council



Should Sheerness have a town council?

A petition has been received asking for a town council to be set up for Sheerness, which would cover the area shown in blue on the map on the back page.

Swale Borough Council would like to know your views about this proposal, and is carrying out a review.

Please read through this leaflet before completing and returning the questionnaire.

What is a town council?

A town council is:

- a statutory body with certain duties and legal powers, and is the first tier of local government closest to its community. There are over 9,000 town and parish councils in England.
- made up of elected individuals who represent the local community, and provides an additional voice to represent the community.
- paid for by increasing the council tax.

What difference could a town council make?

Town councils, like parish councils, have the power to provide some facilities themselves, or they can contribute to their provision by others.

Town councils can provide a focus for representing local issues and identity, and are also consulted on planning applications in their area. They can also apply for grants and loans and have powers under the Localism Act 2011.

You currently have a local MP, county councillors and borough councillors.

A town council's powers and responsibilities are limited and it could not replace the borough council or the county council.

What do town councils do?

There are large variations in the services provided by town councils, but they can provide, maintain or contribute to services in their community.

For example:

- ✓ Providing allotments
- ✓ Providing bus shelters
- ✓ Supporting local crime prevention initiatives
- ✓ Local highway matters such as street lighting and maintenance of roadside verges
- ✓ Village halls/community centres
- ✓ Local youth projects
- ✓ Car parks
- ✓ Community safety schemes
- ✓ Litter bins
- ✓ Parks and open spaces
- ✓ Street cleaning
- ✓ Provision of community transport schemes
- ✓ Sport and recreation facilities
- ✓ Tourism

How much will it cost?

Swale Borough Council would set up any new town council, but the town council itself would then be responsible for meeting all its expenditure, including the cost of premises, staffing and providing services. Town councils are funded through a charge added to your council tax, which is known as a precept. This is an additional amount that is collected with your council tax. Town councils set their own precept, and it will vary depending on what money it needs to maintain and improve services and facilities in the local community.

As an indication, the additional cost of existing town and parish councils in Swale currently ranges between £15.05 and £83.54 per year for a band D property, which is an average of £40, or 77 pence per week for each household. There are two town councils in the borough, Faversham and Queenborough, and the precepts for those are £53.06 for Faversham Town Council and £83.54 for Queenborough Town Council.

You can view information about individual precepts for town and parish councils for 2017/18 via our website: www.swale.gov.uk/sheerness-cgr

Are there similar organisations already?

There is a Sheerness Town Team that operates in the area, but this differs considerably from a town council, particularly as it is not democratically elected.

How many councillors would the new town council have and how would they be elected?

The legislation provides that the minimum number of elected members on a town council shall not be less than five. There is no maximum number. If a town council is set up, the first elections to the town council would be held on 2 May 2019. The term of office of a town councillor is four years.

What will happen next?

Swale Borough Council will consider the consultation responses and will report to the full Council meeting on 21 March 2018. All electors are being sent a questionnaire to complete and return by Friday 2 March 2018. We are also keen to find out views from other interested parties, and responses are welcome via email or in writing (see contact details on last page) by Friday 2 March 2018. We will also hold information sessions at the Sheerness Gateway and these will be advertised on our website and at the Sheerness Gateway.

