

What is this survey about?

As part of a review of our constitution, a working group of the Council's Policy Development and Review Committee is investigating whether the council should set up three or more area committees.

We want to ask for your views on whether we should set up area committees, and, if we do, what form they should take, and what powers they should have.

Responses to this survey will let the working group know what residents think, and will help them come up with options for their report.

What Area Committees can do

Area committees can take many forms. For example, their membership can be made up of:

- **borough councillors**
- **representatives from other bodies in the area, including parish and town councils**
- **members of the public**

They can undertake a variety of roles, they can act as:

- **an engagement mechanism**
- **advisory and consultative committees**
- **decision-making committees that allocate money to certain projects**

Why we're asking about introducing them

Devolving power making and decisions to local areas is one of the priorities of the new administration, along with improving public engagement in decision-making. Area committees can give local residents an opportunity to observe and take part in our decision-making arrangements.

Other information

A special projects fund of up to £1m per year is being made available to spend on public realm and open spaces. This fund will be spent on local projects which benefit residents. It is predicted that projects would include real improvements on a meaningful scale to play areas, improving the public realm and funding new initiatives to promote social inclusion.

We would also like to understand whether you think area committees could decide how some of these funds could be allocated.

These would be non-political committees that would not be politically balanced but would be made up of Councillors representing their areas.

1. Do you think we should have area committees and what difference do you think they could make to you and your area?

What should they do?

2. What do you think area committees should do? (you can choose more than one)

- area based meetings where Councillors take decisions on local matters
- engagement (for example listening to presentations and giving feedback)
- make decisions on what projects get funding from the special projects fund
- a combination of engagement and consultative
- consultative (for example actively responding to consultations as part of a deliberative process)

Other (please specify)

Membership

*** 3. Who should be invited to attend?**

Note: Area committees are likely to be fully constituted committees with published agendas, reports and minutes, and with meetings held in public and minuted to record decisions and actions, therefore only borough Councillors could vote on decisions. Other members would be unable to vote in decisions, but would be able to contribute their opinions and views

You can choose more than one

- Swale borough Councillors
- local Kent county council Councillors
- representatives from local parish and town councils
- local service delivery partners (such as Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, Optivo, Swale Community and Voluntary Services etc)
- Other (please specify)

Areas covered

4. How many committees should there be and which areas should they cover?[click here to view ward map of Swale](#)

- Three** covering:
- **Faversham** (Abbey; Boughton and Courtenay; East Downs; Priory; St Ann's; Teynham and Lynsted; and Watling)
 - **Sittingbourne** (Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow; Borden and Grove Park; Chalkwell; Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch; Homewood; Kemsley; Milton Regis; Murston; Roman; The Meads; West Downs; and Woodstock)
 - **Sheppey** (Minster Cliffs; Queenborough and Halfway; Sheerness; Sheppey Central; and Sheppey East)
- Four** covering
- **Faversham** (as above)
 - **Sittingbourne urban** (Chalkwell; Homewood; Kemsley; Milton Regis; Murston; Roman; The Meads; and Woodstock)
 - **Sittingbourne rural** (Bobbing, Iwade and lower Halstow; Borden and Grove Park; Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch; West Downs)
 - **Sheppey** (as above)
- Other (please specify)

Public participation

5. What role would the public have?

- Speaking about an item
- Nominating particular project for funding
- Advocating for a particular project for funding
- Other (please specify)

Frequency

6. How often would you be willing to attend an area committee?

- Quarterly (4 times a year)
- Six monthly (2 times a year)
- Bi-monthly (6 times a year)

Other (please specify)

7. Any other comments, thoughts or suggestions?