

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	12 October 2022
Report Title	Community Governance Review Lucas Close, Queenborough – second stage consultation recommendations
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery – Director of Resources
Head of Service	David Clifford - Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services
Lead Officer	Keith Alabaster – Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the results of the second stage consultation for the Community Governance Review conducted at Lucas Close – Sheerness Town Council area. 2. That having considered the results of the second stage consultation, the Council agrees the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Queenborough Town Council boundary is redrawn, so that Lucas Close becomes part of the Queenborough Town Council area and is no longer part of the Sheerness Town Council area. The new Queenborough Town Council boundary is moved north, from Moat Way to Brielle Way (A249).

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The council agreed to undertake the second stage Community Governance Review consultation, at its meeting on 27 July 2022. This followed the initial consultation, with residents and interested parties during May and June 2022.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the second stage consultation results and to ask council to make decisions regarding the next steps of the review.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to regularly review anomalous parish boundaries. Whilst it only has to commence a community governance review if a valid petition is received, it is good practice to undertake a review wherever anomalous parish boundaries have occurred.
- 2.2 Ward Members for Queenborough & Halfway requested a review of the anomalous town council boundary. A new housing development, which created

12 houses in Lucas Close, is now fully occupied by residents. Access to this street, is exclusively through Queenborough and their postal address is Queenborough. However, there is an anomalous “V” shape in the Sheerness Town Council boundary that has subsumed Lucas Close into Sheerness.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Taking into consideration the results of the consultation, as set out in the appendices, the council is asked to consider the following for the Lucas Close, Community Governance Review:

Summary of Responses for Lucas Close

3.2 **Residents’ responses:**

5 responses received out of 20 leaflets / questionnaires sent out – 25% response rate.

YES (in favour of changing the boundary = 100% / 5 responses.

NO (do not wish the boundary to be changed) = 0% / 0 responses.

3.3 **Ward members’ responses:**

Sheerness ward members x 2 = YES (in favour of changing the boundary)

Queenborough & Halfway ward members x 1 = YES (in favour of changing the boundary)

3.4 **Town Council responses:**

Queenborough Town Council = YES (in favour of changing the boundary)

Sheerness Town Council = YES (in favour of changing the boundary)

3.5 **Kent County Council (KCC) response:**

No comments from KCC

3.6 **Local Government Boundary Commission of England (LGBCE)**

LGBCE are impartial, so cannot comment one way or the other, however they acknowledged receipt of the information and await to hear the outcome of the consultation.

3.7 **Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)**

No comments from KALC

3.8 **Summary and recommendation:**

The responses from residents, both Town Councils and ward members from both borough wards affected, were 100% in favour of moving Lucas Close into the Queenborough Town Council area. In addition, the proposed new boundary was also supported and no other recommendations or amendments to the new boundary were presented.

It is therefore recommended that the Queenborough Town Council boundary is moved north, so that Lucas Close will become part of the Queenborough Town

Council area. The new boundary should move from Moat Way to Brielle Way (A249), as the A249 is the most logical 'natural' boundary and will remove the anomalous "V" shape to the current boundary, that has caused this issue.

A full list of responses and comments can be viewed in Appendix (I)

A map of the proposed new Queenborough Town Council boundary can be viewed in Appendix (II)

4 Alternative Options considered and rejected

- 4.1 The alternative is to conclude the current review and no further action will be taken and the boundary will remain as it is. If the boundary is left as it is, residents will still have to make an 8 mile round trip to vote at their polling station in Sheerness and will continue to be represented by Sheerness Town Councillors and Sheerness Borough Ward Councillors, despite being geographically part of Queenborough.

All responses from interested parties were in support of changing the boundary, as detailed in the 2nd stage consultation booklet. We also received a number of comments, with compelling reasons to make this change and received no comments that opposed the boundary change. It is therefore not recommended to leave the boundary as it is.

5 Consultations Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Initial stage consultation – this was started in May and ran to the end of June 2022, which asked residents, and all interested parties whether they wanted the boundary to be reviewed. Two thirds of respondents supported reviewing the boundary, therefore a 2nd stage consultation was commenced
- 5.2 Second stage consultation – this was started in July and ran until 16 September 2022, which asked residents and all interested parties, whether they supported the proposed new boundary, which would move Lucas Close from the Sheerness Town Council area into the Queenborough Town Council area. 100% of respondents supported this boundary change, as detailed in Section 3 and Appendix (I).

During both consultations, all registered electors in Lucas Close, were individually sent a booklet and questionnaire detailing the proposals. One property had no registered electors, so a non-personalised booklet and letter was sent to that household. Additional communications were undertaken to advertise the consultations.

In addition to residents, the following interested parties were asked for comment on the boundary review during both consultations and were also sent copies of the booklets and questionnaires:

- a) Ward members for Sheerness and Queenborough & Halfway wards
- b) Sheerness Town Council
- c) Queenborough Town Council

- d) Kent County Council – KCC members for Sheppey plus Lizzy Adam (Operations & Client Relationship Manager, Governance, Law & Democracy) and the Electoral & Boundary Review Committee.
- e) Kent Association of Local Councils
- f) Local Government Boundary Commission for England

A copy of the 2nd stage consultation booklet can be viewed in Appendix (III)

A copy of the 2nd stage questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix (IV)

- 5.3 If the town council boundary change is approved by Council, no further consultations will take place and an order will be raised to formally change the Queenborough Town Council boundary.
- 5.4 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England have confirmed that “None of the parish arrangements in your borough are protected so you can proceed with the parish changes without needing to seek the Commission’s consent.” However, if the proposed Town Council boundary change is approved, we would need to ask the Commission to also review the borough ward boundary, so it is co-terminus with the new town council boundary. The town council and borough ward boundaries would need to be done at the same time, so as not to adversely affect any voting arrangements for residents. The Commission has asked for borough ward boundary reviews to be requested by October 2022, in order to make the ward boundary changes in time for the May 2023 local elections.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Conducting the review in a way which fulfils our statutory obligations as efficiently as possible while also encouraging all sections of the community to make their views known will contribute to the council’s corporate Priority 4: Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.
Financial, Resource and Property	The reviews will be financed through existing resources and £5,000 has been budgeted to conduct the review, within the Electoral Services budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes, changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements including warding and numbers of parish councillors from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils in England. Principal councils are also required to have regard to guidance on undertaking community governance reviews, which has been published by the Boundary Commission.

Crime and Disorder	None identified at this time.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this time.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this time.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this time.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this time.
Equality and Diversity	In undertaking the consultation, the council will have regard to the joint statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of reflecting the identities and interests of the local community and that it is effective, convenient, and accessible to everyone.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this time

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix (I): Lucas Close CGR Stage 2 Responses
- Appendix (II): Lucas Close Map proposed new boundary
- Appendix (III): Lucas Close CGR Booklet 2nd stage consultation
- Appendix (IV): Lucas Close Questionnaire 2nd stage consultation

8 Background Papers

“Community Governance Reviews initial consultation stage recommendations” – Report to Council on 27 July 2022 (Agenda item 11). Report can be viewed at: <http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g3749/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2027-Jul-2022%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>