

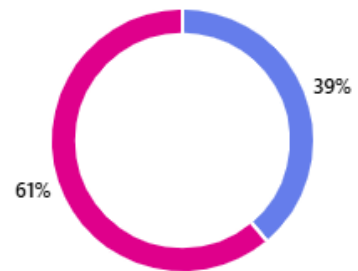
Swale Borough Council Area Committee Review

Results of Member survey carried out between 1 August and 31 August 2025

(17 responses received. Text responses have been summarised using AI)

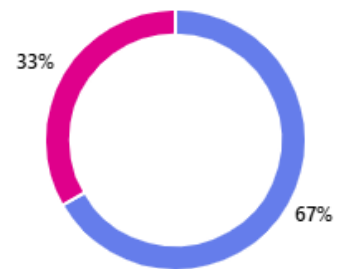
1. Do you believe that area committees in their current form meet the purpose stated above?

● Yes 7
● No 11



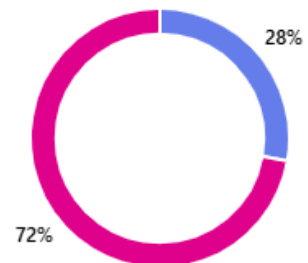
2. Do you encourage residents, parish/town councillors, local groups to attend area committee meetings?

● Yes 12
● No 6



3. Do you find area committees are a good way of engaging with residents in your ward?

● Yes 5
● No 13

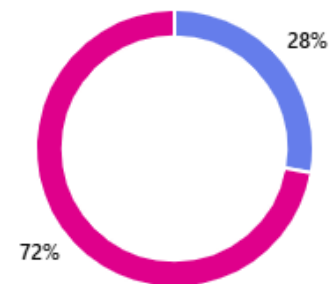


4. If you answered 'No' what do you think would be a better way to engage?

- Members suggested informal meetings, one-off events focused on major issues, direct engagement through door-knocking, attending local forums, and leveraging parish, borough, and county councillors.
- Some felt area committees attract only a narrow demographic and are not effective for wider engagement.

5. Do you feel the name "Area Committees" describe what they are for?

● Yes	5
● No	13



6. If you answered 'No' what would be a better name for the meetings?

- Suggestions included "Local Area Forums", "Community Lead", "Residents Forum", "Local Engagement Forums", and "Town Meetings".
- Some felt a name change alone wouldn't solve underlying issues with attendance and relevance.

7. What sort of things would you like discussed at future area committee meetings?

- Members wanted agendas to be resident-driven, focusing on major local issues, community governance, health, education, and urgent local matters.
- There was a desire for more meaningful, locally relevant topics and less repetition of issues covered elsewhere.

8. What could be done to improve area committee meetings?

- Suggestions included social meet-and-greet sessions, increased public participation, better advertising, more accessible venues, less formality, and greater control over local budgets.
- Some advocated for scrapping or radically changing the format.

9. In addition to inviting partner organisations along to area committees, who else would you like to be invited to come along and speak?

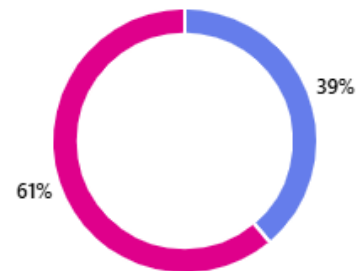
- Recommendations included local MPs, police, charities, developers, planning officers, social workers, and community groups.
- Some wanted open invitations to anyone affecting residents' lives, while others felt attendance should be issue-driven.

10. If area committees were to be stopped, how would you like the Council to engage with residents?

- Members suggested open forums, topic-specific meetings, roadshows, community events, and direct engagement through councillors.
- Emphasis was placed on using multiple communication channels and tailoring engagement to local needs.

11. Do you think area committees should continue in their current format of a formal committee with standard agenda items?

● Yes	7
● No	11

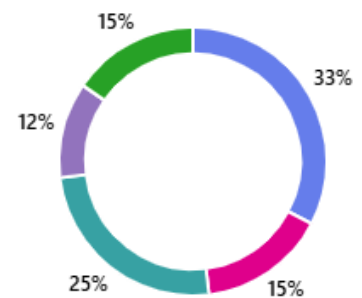


12. If you answered ‘No’, what format should area committees change to in the future?

- Ideas included more personal, resident-led formats, single-topic meetings, less formality, and area-specific agendas.
- Some advocated for abolishing committees in favour of more creative, locally driven engagement methods.

13. When decisions are made at area committee meetings, who should be able to vote (select all who you think should vote):

● SBC Ward Members	17
● Kent County Councillors	8
● Parish/Town Councillors	13
● Local community groups	6
● Residents	8



14. Would you be more inclined to attend if there was a networking session before the meetings where you could chat to residents and representatives from other organisations?



15. Would you be more inclined to attend if more community/voluntary/faith groups attended?



16. Do you think the current frequency and timing of area committees should continue (June, September, December and February)?



17. If you answered 'No', what frequency and timing do you think they should change to and why?

- Suggestions included stopping the December meetings and holding 3 rounds per year. Others suggested avoiding the winter months or holding 2 a year or one-off meetings to debate big issues.

18. Do you think the division of the areas should stay the same (Eastern, Sheppey, Sittingbourne and Western)?

- Yes 13
- No 5

