

**Proposed Response to the LGBCE consultation on the recommended New Electoral Arrangements for Dover District Council**

**Eastry Rural, Little Stour & Ashstone and Sandwich Wards**

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Variance 2023</b>
Eastry Rural	2	-1%
Little Stour and Ashstone	2	4%
Sandwich	2	-1%

**Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards.

**Consultation Question Response**

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q1. Several submissions were received regarding the parish of Sholden. These submissions uniformly opposed Dover District Council's proposal to link the parish of Sholden with an area of Deal. The respondents argued that Sholden is not linked with Deal; the Council's proposal linked the parish with the northern part of the town. Residents argued that the Council's proposal linked two areas that have significant differences. We are therefore proposing to include the parish of Sholden in the proposed Eastry Rural ward, with the exception of the area that lies to the east of the railway line. We note that this area has no road links with the rest of the parish of Sholden, and we consider that the railway line forms a strong and identifiable boundary. We are therefore proposing to include this area in the proposed North Deal ward, as proposed by the Labour Group and by a local resident. We are also proposing to include the housing around Hyton Drive and Church Meadows in the proposed Middle Deal ward, to allow residents on Hyton Drive and Cornfield Row access into the road without leaving the ward. We consider that evidence received supported the village of Sholden being included in the more rural Eastry Rural ward. ***We would particularly welcome submissions regarding this area during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 42)

A1. The Council supports the proposal to include the housing around Hyton Drive and Church Meadows within the proposed Middle Deal Ward as the area is connected by road to the Middle Deal Ward and access to the remainder of Sholden would be by footpaths or driving through another ward.

The Council also supports the proposal to include the Golf Road area to the east of the railway line within the North Deal Ward as the area is connected by road to the North Deal Ward and access to the remainder of Sholden would also be by footpaths or driving through another ward.

**Deal and Walmer**

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Variance 2023</b>
Middle Deal	2	-1%
Mill Hill	2	4%
North Deal	2	-2%
Walmer	2	4%

**Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards and has nothing to add to the comments made under the Eastry Rural, Little Stour & Ashstone and Sandwich Wards in relation to North and Middle Deal Wards.

**Consultation Question Response**

The LGBCE does not ask a specific question as part of the consultation on these wards.

**Guston & St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Kingsdown Rural and Whitfield**

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Variance 2023</b>
Guston & St Margaret's-at-Cliffe	1	-2%
Kingsdown Rural	1	7%
Whitfield	2	-7%

**Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards.

In respect of the proposed Whitfield Ward, the Council understands and supports the electoral equality and topographical reasoning behind the decision to create the proposed Dover Town Council Rokesley parish ward and include it within the Whitfield Ward at district level. We recognise that the LGBCE cannot alter the external boundaries of parish councils and this supports the logic of creating a new parish ward within the boundaries of Dover Town Council. In addition, there is anecdotal evidence that many of the children in the area of the Rokesley parish ward attend the nearby Green Park Community Primary School, which is within the administrative area of Dover Town Council.

We also recognise that the -7% variance for the Whitfield Ward allows for future housing growth beyond 2023.

**Consultation Question Response**

The LGBCE does not ask a specific question as part of the consultation on these wards.

**Aylesham and Eythorne Ward**

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Aylesham and Eythorne Ward	3	0%

**Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for strong electoral equality and maintains community cohesion by not splitting communities.

We also recognise that the 0% variance for the Aylesham and Eythorne Ward allows for future housing growth beyond 2023.

**Consultation Question Response**

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q2. Our proposed three-councillor Aylesham & Eythorne ward comprises the parishes of Aylesham, Eythorne, Nonington, and Shepherdswell with Coldred, and would have a variance of 0% by 2023. Whilst we acknowledge that this proposed ward would combine a number of different communities, we consider that this is preferable to splitting any of the constituent communities between wards for the sake of achieving electoral equality. This proposal is based on the submission made by Eythorne Parish Council, and ***we would particularly welcome submissions regarding this proposed ward, and the name of the ward, during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 70)

A2. As previously stated, the Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for strong electoral equality and maintains community cohesion by not splitting communities. There are three main communities within this proposed ward - Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdswell. Although we recognise the desire to keep ward names reasonably concise, it is our view that the community in the south of the proposed ward (Shepherdswell) be reflected in the name of the ward and to that end the Council suggests a new ward name to become Aylesham, Eythorne & Shepherdswell Ward. This also has the advantage of continuing the names of the two previous wards that comprise this electoral area.

**Capel-le-Ferne and River, Dover Downs Wards**

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Capel-le-Ferne and River	2	-7%
Dover Downs	1	5%

**Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards and agrees with the LGBCE view that there is not a persuasive argument for joining the two wards in a single 3 member ward as this, in our view, would not best reflect community identity. It would also result in a large ward in the southwest of the district covering a diverse range of urban and rural areas with little in common.

## Consultation Question Response

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q3. We propose to adopt the Labour Group's proposed warding pattern here, as it provides for good electoral equality and uses the parishes of the area as building blocks. We acknowledge Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council's wish to be separate from River and we recognise that this ward is not ideal given the distance between these areas. However, as stated above, the alternative proposal here would result in significant electoral inequality. We considered a number of alternatives here; in addition to the proposals outlined above, we also considered combining the parishes of Capel-le-Ferne, Hougham Without, River, Alkham, Temple Ewell, Lydden, and Denton with Wootton into a three-member ward with a variance of -3%. This three member ward would allow for the parish of Capel-le-Ferne to be linked with Alkham. However, we are not persuaded that this would provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria here but ***we particularly welcome submissions regarding this area during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 76)

A3. The Council recognises that the LGBCE has come across the same difficulty that it had in trying to balance electoral equality and community identity in what is largely a rural area with dispersed population centres. The exceptions are River which is an urban settlement with strong links to the town of Dover; Temple Ewell and Lydden which are smaller village settlements nestled in the North Downs; and Capel-le-Ferne situated close to the White Cliffs with links to Folkestone. Therefore whatever ward pattern and ward names that are proposed face the challenge of trying to balance these issues. The ward of Capel-le-Ferne and River benefits from being combined in terms of electoral equality, but the two settlements are at the opposing ends of the ward and there is little shared community identity. However, the Council recognises that this is the best proposal that can be achieved within the guidelines.

Although the Dover Downs Ward name has little recognition within the local communities it will contain, it doesn't favour one village over another and the Council acknowledges that it is probably the best name that can be proposed within the guidelines.

## Dover Town

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Buckland	2	-7%
Maxton and Elms Vale	1	5%
St Radigunds	2	-2%
Tower Hamlets	1	2%
Town and Castle	2	8%

## Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards.

## Consultation Question Response

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q4. We consider that the proposals for Dover put forward by the Labour Group are the most representative of the evidence we have received during the consultation. We are therefore proposing to include Alfred Road and Brookfield Place in the proposed Buckland ward, as we consider that the River Dour here provides for a strong boundary between Buckland and St Radigunds; this change also improves the electoral equality in the proposed Buckland ward. We consider that this ward follows strong and identifiable boundaries, and reflects Buckland's geographical position in Dover, but ***we would welcome submissions regarding this ward during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 82)

A4. In drafting the original proposals officers had considered similar options using the River Dour as a ward boundary and while ultimately a decision was taken to pursue a different option the Council supports the proposal of the LGBCE to include Alfred Road and Brookfield Place within the proposed Buckland Ward as it provides for a strong ward boundary and community cohesion.

### **Parish Electoral Arrangements**

The LGBCE is proposing amendments to parish wards in respect of three areas – Dover Town Council, Sholden Parish Council and Walmer Parish Council. In summary, these are as follows:

#### **Dover Town Council**

<b>Parish Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Parish Councillors</b>
Buckland	4
Maxton and Elms Vale	2
Rokesley	1
St Radigunds	4
Tower Hamlets	2
Town and Castle	5

#### **Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for effective and convenient local government by providing coterminosity with district ward boundaries.

#### **Sholden Parish Council**

<b>Parish Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Parish Councillors</b>
Hyton	2
Sholden	4
Tenants Hill	1

#### **Suggested Response**

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for effective and convenient local government by providing coterminosity with district ward boundaries.

**Walmer Parish Council**

<b>Parish Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Parish Councillors</b>
Gladstone	2
Walmer	13

**Suggested Response**

While the Council recognises and supports the changes in respect of the southern ward boundary of North Deal Ward and the subsequent need to create the revised Gladstone Parish Ward, it is concerned that the proposed Walmer Parish Ward of Walmer is too large in terms of the criteria of effective and convenient local government. This has a number of aspects as follows:

- Walmer previously had four parish wards (Upper Walmer; Lower Walmer, Wellington; Lower Walmer, St Saviour's; and Gladstone) which allowed for a more representative distribution of councillors with more manageable electorates.
- The number of candidates (13) in the largest of the two parish wards risks over/under voting and voter confusion/apathy due to the number of candidates.
- Administratively we are concerned that in a contested election the size of the ballot paper could cause difficulties and that there would be a financial burden on the parish council in the event of a by-election for the largest parish ward.

It is the Council's view that these issues could be overcome by dividing the proposed Walmer Parish Ward of Walmer into two smaller parish wards. We propose that these be as follows:

<b>Parish Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of Parish Councillors</b>
Gladstone	2
Lower Walmer	7
Upper Walmer	6

The Gladstone Parish Ward would remain unchanged from the LGBCE proposals while the subdivided Walmer Parish Ward would be split along the boundary of current polling district AA1 (Upper Walmer Parish Ward) to create the parish wards of Upper Walmer and Lower Walmer.