
REVIEW OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS - MARGATE

To: **Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party, 22 October 2014**

By: **Glenn Back, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager;**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Wards: **Cliftonville East, Cliftonville West, Dane Valley, Garlinge, Margate Central, Salmestone, Westbrook, Westgate-on-Sea**

Summary: This report sets out the results of the second-stage public consultation, and seeks recommendations from the Working Party to submit to the extraordinary Council meeting on 18 November.

For decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Working Party met on 3 and 24 July 2014 to consider the outcome of the first stage public consultation and agree proposals to be included in a second stage public consultation exercise, prior to reporting a recommended way forward to Council, at the extraordinary Council meeting on 18 November 2014.

1.2 On 3 July 2014 the Working Party agreed that:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A "Margate Town Council" be created for the un-parished area of Margate excluding the District Ward of Westgate on Sea; with the same number and distribution of Councillors as the current District Wards, that is to say 17 Councillors in all; and,2. A "Westgate Parish Council" be created for the area covered by the current District Ward of Westgate-on-Sea, with 10 parish councillors. |
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1.3 On 24 July 2014 the Working Party agreed that:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The programme and content of the second stage public consultation programme be agreed as amended;2. The consultation documents would cite possible Band D precepts of £14.86 for Margate Town Council and £24.58 for Westgate Parish Council. |
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2.0 Stage 2 public consultation – activities undertaken

2.1 Following the Working Party agreeing a programme of consultation on 24 July 2014, a very wide range of activities were undertaken. These included:

- a) A very wide range of information was made available on the Council's web site, including an on-line version of the consultation questionnaire. A "banner" highlighting the consultation was placed on the Council's home page for the duration of the consultation period (see Figure 1), linking directly to the information and questionnaire.
- b) Press advertisements were run in both the Isle of Thanet Gazette (page 14 Aug 15th edition & 19th Sept & 26th Sept editions): and the Thanet Extra (page 9 Aug 20th edition & 17th Sept & 24th Sept editions).
- c) There was a press release from which articles were printed on p.16 of the Thanet Extra (13 Aug edition) "Public given say on creation of fresh councils" and p.2 of the Isle of Thanet Gazette (15 Aug edition) 'Westgate plots to break from Margate in Review'.
- d) The PR & Publicity team liaised with local papers to seek further editorial coverage in the run-up to the consultation deadline.
- e) Two tweets per day were broadcast via the Council's Twitter account for the duration of the consultation period.
- f) A random sample of 1,000 Margate and Westgate residents were sent letters introducing the consultation process and inviting them to respond.
- g) Posters and postcards were hand-delivered to shops in the highest footfall areas of Margate, Westgate, Westbrook and Garlinge.
- h) There was a generic post card produced and a slightly different "door-drop" postcard that was delivered to all Margate and Westgate properties in September detailing the content of the proposal and how to respond (see Figures 2 to 4 regarding the post cards and Figures 5 and 6 regarding the posters).
- i) There were two public meetings held in August, one in Westgate and the other in Margate. Around seventy people attended the meeting in Westgate and around twenty people attended in Margate). The background to the review was outlined and the proposals made by the Working Party were explained. A wide range of questions were answered and many hard copies of the questionnaire and consultation posters were handed out. After those meetings, several people that attended also requested paper copies of the questionnaire.
- j) Hard copy consultation documents were provided to local libraries, the Council Reception and the Gateway.
- k) All Thanet District Councillors were provided with posters and postcards as well as some additional hard copy questionnaires.
- l) Posters and postcards were sent to community groups and leisure facilities in Margate and Westgate.
- m) Posters were displayed around the Council offices as well as information being displayed on the Council's intranet and in staff briefings.
- n) A full page advertorial in the KM Extra newspaper with the full consultation questionnaire, which could be cut out, completed and returned.

Figure 1

The “banner” on the home page of the Council’s web site.



Figure 2

The “post card” (front)



Figure 3

The generic “post card” (rear)



Figure 4

The door drop "post card" (rear)

The council's Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party has proposed, and would like YOUR views on, the following change to local governance in Margate.

The replacement of the Margate Charter Trustees by dividing the unparished area into two separate Parishes; a Town Council which will serve the wards of Cliftonville East, Cliftonville West, Dane Valley, Garlinge, Margate Central, Salmestone and Westbrook and will be known as Margate Town Council. Ward boundaries will not change and 17 Town Councillors will be elected;

a Parish Council which will serve only the ward of Westgate-on-sea and will be known as Westgate Parish Council. The ward boundary for Westgate-on-sea will not change and 10 Parish Councillors will be elected.

For more info and to complete the survey visit:
thanet.gov.uk/speakup

If you would like information in an alternative format please contact 01843 577165.
Closing date: Monday 29 September 2014



Figure 5

The A3 poster (for public meetings):

**Do YOU WANT A
MARGATE TOWN COUNCIL &
WESTGATE PARISH COUNCIL ?**

Give us your views.

Public meetings:

7pm 27 August:
Westgate Pavilion, 44 Sea Road, Westgate-on-sea CT8 8QW

7pm 28 August:
Council Chamber, TDC Offices, Cecil Street, Margate CT9 1RE

For more info and to complete the survey:
thanet.gov.uk/speakup

Closing date: 29 September 2014
If you need information in an alternative format please call 01843 577050.



Figure 6

The A3 generic poster:



3.0 Stage 2 public consultation - outcome

- 3.1 This section analyses the responses to the second stage consultation. Note that there were a few “non-responses” to some specific questions, and that where applicable, the analysis below focuses upon those responses that did express a preference one way or another. Thus it is possible that a small variation in the “totals” may appear from time to time.
- 3.2 Three-hundred and thirty-seven responses to the consultation were received. The overwhelming majority of responses were from people living within the un-parished area of Margate subject to the review; all but eight responses, in fact.

Where do you live?	Number	% of total
Not in Margate	8	2.4
Cliftonville East	41	12.3
Cliftonville West	25	7.5
Dane Valley	17	5.1
Garlinge	35	10.5
Margate Central	20	6.0
Salmestone	10	3.0
Westbrook	44	13.2
Westgate on Sea	134	40.1

- 3.3 Overall, a clear majority of respondents expressed a preference not to have a town/parish council

Do you agree with the proposal... for two new parish/town councils (a Margate Town Council and a Westgate Parish Council)?	Number	% of total
Yes	137	40.7
No	200	59.3

- 3.4 An analysis of responses to the previous question has been undertaken based upon area of residence, given that the public consultation meeting in Westgate did suggest a high level of support for the creation of a local parish council. For residents of Westgate, the result is as follows:

Do you agree with the proposal... for two new parish/town councils (a Margate Town Council and a Westgate Parish Council)? <i>Residents of Westgate Only</i>	Number	% of total
Yes	81	68.1
No	50	38.2

- 3.5 Thus, a significant majority of the responses in Westgate favoured the creation of a parish council.

- 3.6 A number of comments were made at the public consultation meeting held in Westgate by residents of nearby Wards, such as Westbrook, that they would like to form a parish council together with the Westgate area. Thus the following table shows the preference expressed within each of the other Wards of the review area, and for the un-parished area of Margate as a whole but excluding Westgate:

Do you agree with the proposal... for two new parish/town councils (a Margate Town Council and a Westgate Parish Council)?	Number of responses	%age supporting parish/Town Council	% opposing parish/Town Council
Clintonville East	41	24.4	62.5
Clintonville West	25	44.0	56.0
Dane Valley	17	35.3	64.7
Garlinge	35	17.1	82.9
Margate Central	20	30.0	70.0
Salmestone	10	30.0	70.0
Westbrook	42	26.2	73.8
The whole review area <u>except</u> for Westgate	190	27.9	72.1

- 3.7 It is therefore clear that in no Ward other than Westgate was there a majority of responses supporting the creation of a parish/town council.
- 3.8 For residents living outside of the review area (i.e. outside of the un-parished area of Margate), the result was as follows:

Do you agree with the proposal... for two new parish/town councils (a Margate Town Council and a Westgate Parish Council)? <i>Residents outside of the un-parished area of Margate Only</i>	Number	% of total
Yes	3	37.5
No	5	62.5

- 3.9 Some comments regarding the boundaries of a possible parish/town council were also made to the open-ended question at the end of the survey. Given the results of the specific survey questions, these have been analysed in terms of whether they favoured joining a Westgate parish council with any other area. Overall, 23 such comments favoured a Westgate parish council on its own, 11 supported a combined Westgate & Westbrook parish council, and 10 supported a combined Westgate, Westbrook and Garlinge parish council. If responses are analysed from Westgate residents only, 21 favoured Westgate parish council on its own, and only 13 combined with Westbrook or Garlinge.
- 3.10 It must be concluded that there is more support for a stand-alone Westgate parish council than there is for any other combination, plus it needs to be borne in mind in any case that a majority of responses from all the Wards except for Westgate were opposed the idea of creating a parish council.
- 3.11 Although it is for the Working Party to agree recommendations to Council, the above analysis does seem to suggest that it could possibly consider a different recommendation for Westgate, compared to the rest of the review area.

3.12 In terms of any new town/parish council boundaries, the responses were as follows:

Do you agree that the current ward boundaries within the two proposed parish/town councils remain unchanged?	Number	% of total
Yes	282	87.0
No	42	13.0

3.13 Bearing in mind that only in Westgate did a majority of responses favour the creation of a parish council, the following table shows the responses to this question for the Westgate area only:

Do you agree that the current ward boundaries within the two proposed parish/town councils remain unchanged? <i>Residents of Westgate only</i>	Number	% of total
Yes	107	85.6
No	18	14.4

3.14 In terms of the proposed number of parish/town councillors, it needs to be borne in mind that this was covered in two questions. One was a “closed” question – do you agree with the number proposed by the Working Party? The other was an “open” question – if you do not agree with the proposed number, how many do you think there should be? The responses to the “closed” question were as follows:

Do you agree with the suggested number of new parish/town councillors for each of the proposed parish/town councils?	Number	% of total
Yes	138	43.7
No	178	56.3

3.15 Again, bearing in mind that only in Westgate did a majority of responses favour the creation of a parish council, the following table shows the responses to this question for the Westgate area only:

Do you agree with the suggested number of new parish/town councillors for each of the proposed parish/town councils? <i>Residents of Westgate only</i>	Number	% of total
Yes	73	58.4
No	52	41.6

3.16 In contrast to the rest of the currently un-parished area of Margate, a majority of the residents in Westgate agreed with the proposed number of parish councillors serving on the parish council (ten).

- 3.17 There was also a separate “open” question asking how many parish/town councillors there should be. This has been analysed for residents of Westgate given that it is only there that a majority of responses supported a parish council. The responses to this open question included the following suggestions for the desirable number of parish councillors:

Suggested number of parish councillors: Residents of Westgate only	Number	% of total	Comment
Below five	3	16.7	Not lawful - too few
Five	5	27.8	
Six	2	11.1	
Seven	2	11.1	
Eight	4	22.2	
Nine	1	5.6	
Ten	1	5.6	The number proposed in the consultation
Above ten	0	0.0	

- 3.18 In terms of the responses to the open-ended question, there was a clear preference for fewer than 10 parish councillors (17 out of 18 responses). But that needs to be considered within the context that when responding to the "closed" question (do you agree with the suggested number of 10 parish councillors), many more (73 out of 125, or 58.4%) of the responses from residents of Westgate did indeed agree that there should be 10 parish councillors.
- 3.19 The consultation documents included indicative precepts if a Margate Town and Westgate parish Council were to be created. The views expressed regarding these were as follows:

Do you think the estimated precept for Margate Town Council is:	Number	% of total
Too high	148	55.0
The right amount	104	38.7
Too little	17	6.3

Do you think the estimated precept for Westgate Parish Council is:	Number	% of total
Too high	157	57.7
The right amount	102	37.5
Too little	13	4.8

- 3.20 Overall, respondents felt the suggested precepts were too high.

3.21 Because it is only in the Westgate Ward that a majority of respondents favoured the creation of a parish council, the responses to this question in the Westgate Ward are shown below:

Do you think the estimated precept for Westgate Parish Council is: <i>Residents of Westgate only</i>	Number	% of total
Too high	51	42.9
The right amount	61	51.3
Too little	7	5.9

3.22 Again, there is a significant difference from the rest of the review area, with a majority of responses from residents in Westgate thinking the indicative precept of £24.58 is about right.

4.0 Options available to the Working Party

4.1 There appear to be only three main options available to the Working Party, as follows:

4.1.1 The Working Party could recommend no change to the current arrangements; that is to say, no new town/parish council is created and the existing Charter Trustees remain.

4.1.2 Noting that it is only in Westgate that a majority of responses favoured the creation of a parish council, the Working Party might recommend the creation of a Westgate Parish Council, but that the remainder of the area retains Charter Trustees.

4.1.3 The third option is not supported by the above analysis of the consultation responses, but the Working Party could reaffirm its original proposals, to recommend the creation of a Margate Town Council and a Westgate Parish Council.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial and VAT

5.1.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the report for Thanet District Council. However, if the Working Party makes a recommendation to create a new town/parish council, consideration will need to be given to the impact on the Margate Charter Trustees, especially if the recommendation is to establish a Westgate Parish Council and retain the Charter Trustees in the remainder of the currently un-parished area of Margate.

5.1.2 As identified in previous reports, there would be a need to split the assets with any newly parished area, including but not limited to reserves, assets, accommodation and mayors regalia. This would need to be addressed through the legal process as part of creating the Community Governance Order, which could then potentially impact on any precept assumptions that had previously been made.

5.1.3 There are no VAT implications arising directly from this report.

5.2 Legal

- 5.2.1 Thanet District Council is conducting the review of community governance arrangements in the Margate area in accordance with Part 4 Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 5.2.2 The Council is having regard to the Statutory Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
- 5.2.3 In light of the responses to the stage two consultation, external legal advice is currently being sought on the possibility that the Working Party may wish to recommend the creation of a Westgate Parish Council and the retention of the Charter Trustees in the remainder of the currently un-parished area of Margate. The Council is also seeking external legal advice on the process for taking any recommendations forward (including creating any Community Governance Order).
- 5.2.4 It is hoped that the external legal advice will be received no later than Friday 17 October 2014, and when received, it will be circulated as a supplementary agenda.

5.3 Corporate

- 5.3.1 Consulting and involving Thanet people in decisions that affect them.

5.4 Equity and Equalities

- 5.4.1 None identified.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 On 3 July 2014, the Working Party made the following proposals which formed the subject of this consultation.
- 6.2 The Working Party is invited to consider whether and how those proposals ought to be amended in light of the stage two consultation responses, prior to submission to Council:

	Westgate-on-Sea	Remainder of currently un-parished area of Margate
Governance	Town/Parish Council to replace Charter Trustees	Town/Parish Council to replace Charter Trustees
Boundaries	Same as for current District Ward of Westgate-on-Sea	Same as for currently un-parished area of Margate except for Ward of Westgate-on-Sea
Names	Westgate	Margate
Styles	Parish Council	Town Council

	Westgate-on-Sea	Remainder of currently un-parished area of Margate
Electoral divisions	Same as current District Ward of Westgate-on-Sea	Retain current District Ward boundaries of: Cliftonville East, Cliftonville West, Dane Valley, Garlinge, Margate Central, Salmestone, and Westbrook.
Number of councillors	10	17
Whether any grouping or de-grouping is desired	No	No
Whether any consequential amendments to existing District or County electoral arrangements are to be recommended to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.	No	No
Date of first election	7 May 2015	7 May 2015

7.0 Decision Making Process

- 7.1 The District Council is responsible for conducting a review within its electoral area. The Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party has delegated authority to develop proposals to be the subject of public consultation, to consider the response to that consultation and to make final recommendations to Council.
- 7.2 Council will be required to approve the final recommendations prior to the Community Governance Order being made.
- 7.3 This process will be undertaken in accordance with the stages and timetable agreed at the previous meeting of the Working Party, with the outcome reported to an extraordinary meeting of Council on 18 November 2014.

Contact Officer:	Glenn Back, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, x7187
Reporting to:	Paul Cook, Interim Director of Corporate Resources

Future decisions

Council	18 November 2014
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Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007	<i>Via internet</i>

Annexes

None	
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Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Matt Sanham, Finance Manager (Service Support)
Legal	Steven Boyle, Interim Legal Services Manager