

**Dartford Borough Council  
Council Size Submission**

**DARTFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

An electoral review of Dartford Borough Council has been triggered by the Local Government Boundary Commission as 41% of the Council's current wards have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average.

Whilst the initial stage of the review is limited to determining the number of elected members required to deliver effective and convenient local government to this community (Council Size), the Council's Leadership committed itself at an early stage to take the opportunity of the review to embed wider and positive change of its own. Like all Councils, Dartford has adopted patterns of working practice over the years that have not, in themselves, always required changes to committee structures or a public reassertion of the culture of the Council and the positive way it does business. The clear focus of the review, and the deadlines which drive it, are seen as a great opportunity to 'reset' the Council and prepare it for the huge challenges of providing community leadership to a Borough experiencing unprecedented growth and change.

To that end, the Leader established a fully-cross-party Working Group bringing together senior Members of not only the leading Conservative Group (of which there are 34 Members) and Labour opposition (7 Members) but the Council's minority Independent group (3 Members) too.

Usual proportionality was abandoned so that each group had equal representation in order to fuel open and frank conversation. The Working Group's conversations were as interesting as they were productive.

At the heart was a clear desire to rebalance the role of Members as truly empowered community advocates and ambassadors with the traditional committee roles at the Civic Centre.

The final submission on Council Size therefore provides evidence not only of the important governance roles undertaken by Members, but also of the current (and increasing) ways in which Members have opportunities to 'connect' with communities - many of which are welcoming new populations and experiencing significant growth and change.

Whilst the Commission has been perfectly clear as to the limits of its review period and horizons, the Council can justifiably point to the inevitability of massive and ongoing change underpinned by national identification of the borough as a high-growth area and by initiatives such as Ebbsfleet Garden City which are driven by national investment. These programmes are substantial and unstoppable.

Taken together, the Working Group have concluded that the need for robust governance, decision making and scrutiny, a response to the significant proportion of future growth falling within the Commission's review period and the rising empowerment of Members in their own communities, leads to an optimum Council size of between 40 and 42.

In truth, the Working Group believes the evidence creates a fair case for both figures, but on the grounds that the higher number provides greater opportunities to serve the Borough's residents and resilience to volatile levels of growth, the submission has been fixed at 42.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Local Government Boundary Commission provides guidance on the key elements of an electoral review. The key factors for consideration in an electoral review are as follows:

- Governance and Decision-Making – how decisions are taken across the Council and the volume and distribution of responsibility amongst elected members and staff.
- Scrutiny Functions – these must be capable of being administered in a convenient and effective way.
- Representational Role of Councillors – how members engage with communities and how this affects workload and responsibilities.
- The future – known future trends and developments that may affect the issue of Council size.

This submission will consider each of the above factors to support the proposal to reduce the Council size from 44 members to 42.

## **GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING**

The Council moved to the Leader and Cabinet form of local governance in 2001. In 2010 the Council adopted the “new style” Leader and Cabinet model which took effect following the elections in May 2011. This provides for the Leader to be elected by Council for a four year term and for the Leader to be responsible for appointing a Deputy Leader and Cabinet.

### **The General Assembly of the Council (GAC)**

*Always Civic, sometimes Political – The whole Council in full flight.*

All members sit on the GAC. The GAC is responsible inter alia for:

- Agreeing the Council’s Constitution which contains the key governance documents including executive arrangements
- Agreeing the policy framework and key strategies
- Agreeing the budget
- Appointing Statutory Officers
- Appointing committees to discharge Council functions.

The GAC has six scheduled meetings a year.

### **The Cabinet**

*Accountable and responsible for operational decisions.*

Cabinet consists of the Leader and six Portfolio Holders.

The Cabinet is responsible inter alia for:

- Proposing the policy framework
- Proposing the budget
- Implementing the policy framework and key strategies

There are eight scheduled Cabinet meetings a year.

The Portfolio Holders are responsible for providing advice on specific issues within their portfolio areas of responsibility to help inform Cabinet decisions. The Portfolio areas are:

- Strategic service provision and town centre;
- Strategic Council finances and major capital projects;
- Community development;
- Frontline services, customer champion and housing;
- Transport and infrastructure;
- Events, leisure and heritage.

The Council has also innovated the use of Lead Members, nine in total, who take specific responsibilities for detailed policy development working to each Portfolio Holder. The structure has proved useful in ensuring that the focus on the delivery of detailed policies does not falter under the pressure upon Portfolio Holders to contribute to wider Council leadership. It has also proved to be a

useful 'first step' for Members with ambition to serve in leadership roles and contributes to credible succession planning.

## **Cabinet Advisory Panels**

*Better decisions from wider advice. A timely and influential voice for elected local Members*

The majority of decisions are made at Cabinet. However, non-executive Members have an important role to play in the decision making of the Council - sharing in the policy and budget decisions of GAC, suggesting policy improvements and scrutinising the Cabinet's policy proposals and their implementation.

Most importantly though, Dartford Borough Council's local Members are provided with a timely opportunity to advise, to warn and to suggest improvements to ALL Cabinet decisions BEFORE they are taken.

Although the practice is now less rare, Dartford Borough Council was an early innovator of a fully inclusive pre-Cabinet advisory committee – The Cabinet Advisory Panel (CAP)

The entire Membership of the Council, save for Cabinet postholders, serve on one of two CAPs which meet on a Monday before the Thursday's Cabinet (eight times a year). The entire Cabinet agenda is open to their consideration. The common practice of substitution of Members between one Panel and another mean that, in effect, any Member can address issues of local importance or comment where they have experience, or even just an opinion.

The importance of CAP in better, stronger decision making cannot be overstated. In the decade or more since its introduction, the Cabinet has frequently accepted its advice, suggestions or amendments. Local members may draw down ANY Cabinet item and even commission additional information and data to be made available. CAP minutes are presented to each Cabinet meeting and are read alongside the agenda as each meeting progresses. It is common practice, indeed routine, for Cabinet to accept CAP advice into resolutions.

## **Regulatory Committees/Quasi Judicial**

### **Planning (Development Control Board)**

The majority of planning decisions are delegated to officers. The Development Control Board deals with the major, complex and controversial applications. During the 2016/17 municipal year, a total of 1,372 planning decisions were made. Of these, 1,333 (97.2%) were dealt with by officers under delegated powers.

### **Licensing Committee**

This Committee has responsibility for exercising the Council's licensing and registration functions. The Committee has delegated responsibility for determining some licensing applications to a Licensing Sub-Committee. The sub-committee meets as required.

## Committee Meetings

The following Committees were constituted for the 2016/17 Municipal Year. All meetings were quorate.

	2016/2017 No. of meetings	No. of Members	Projected No. of Attendances	Actual No. of Attendances	% of Attendance
<b>GAC (including Budget and Annual Meeting)</b>	6	44	264	234	89%
<b>Cabinet Advisory Panels</b>	7 (one cancelled)	37	130	84	65%
<b>Cabinet</b>	8	7	56	52	93%
<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	3	17	51	38	75%
<b>Policy Overview Committee</b>	4	17	68	51	75%
<b>Development Control Board</b>	12	17	204	165	81%
<b>Audit Board</b>	4	7	28	24	86%
<b>Hearing Panel</b>	0				
<b>Licensing Sub-committee hearings</b>	2	3	6	6	100%
<b>Licensing Committee</b>	2	15	30	22	73%
<b>Appeals Panel</b>	0				
<b>Joint Transportation Board</b>	4	7	28	21	75%
<b>Deed, Trust and Obligations Committee</b>	3	9	27	21	78%
<b>Resident Involvement</b>	2	4	8	4	50%

<b>Joint Liaison Group</b>					
<b>Electoral Provisions Subcommittee</b>	0				
<b>Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee</b>	2	8	16	12	75%
<b>Treasury Management Panel</b>	3	3	9	6	67%
<b>Appointments Panel</b>	0				
<b>Discretionary Housing Payments Panel</b>	0				
<b>Remuneration and Performance Management Panel</b>	0				
<b>Independent Remuneration Panel</b>	0				
<b>Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Health and Wellbeing Board</b>	5	1	5	5	100%
<b>Parish Forum</b>	3	0			
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>80.10%</b>

As part of this submission, the Boundary Review Working Group have considered the number of members on each committee and type of committees that an effective governance structure would need moving forward. The table below models what committee membership would look like with various levels of reduction to member numbers compared to current size:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Places</b>								
Cabinet	7								
Cabinet Advisory	37	Cabinet Advisory	35	Cabinet Advisory	33	Cabinet Advisory	31	Cabinet Advisory	29
Scrutiny	17								
Policy Overview	17								
Development Control Board	17								
Audit Board	7								
Licensing	15								
Licensing Sub	3								
Joint Transportation Board	7	Joint Transportation Board	5						
DTOC	9								
Resident Liaison	4								
Crime & Disorder	8	Public Services Scrutiny	17						
Treasury Management Panel	3								
		Enterprise Committee	TBD						
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Members</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.17</b>

The current average committee membership per member is 3.43 places (this excludes GAC and those committees that did not meet in 2016/17 (Hearing Panel, Appeals Panel, Electoral Committee, Independent Remuneration Panel and Appointments Panel)). A number of changes to the current committee arrangements are proposed moving forward:

- The Working Group have concluded that membership of the Joint Transportation Board could be reduced without compromising the decision making process.
- They also recommend a new working group, the Enterprise Working Group – this group will focus on supporting local businesses to promote a growing economy in the Borough and will explore commercial opportunities. At this stage, terms of reference for this Committee have not been agreed and therefore the number of Members required to sit on this Committee cannot yet be determined. It is anticipated though that representation from each of the key parts of the Borough would be required on this Committee.
- As detailed under the Scrutiny section of this report below, it is proposed to widen the remit of the Crime and Disorder Committee and therefore membership of this Committee will be increased to 17 Members, in line with the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The table highlights that whilst the committees could still be adequately supported with a reduction in members, reducing the Council size to 36 members would effectively mean that each member would be required to take on membership of an additional committee, with the associated work load that this would involve (this also assumes that the new committee would require a membership of ten members). Significantly increasing attendance required at committee meetings may discourage those in full-time employment or education from considering a role as an elected councillor, thus reducing the diversity of representation and limiting the skills and experience of members.

## Outside Bodies

Representation on outside bodies is considered to be important in supporting the community. The table below shows current representation on outside bodies:

<b>Organisational Body</b>	<b>Councillor Membership</b>	<b>Membership Capacity</b>
Dartford Almshouse Charity	4 Members	Trustees (4 yr term)
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	2 Members	Observers
Age UK North West Kent	1 Member	Observer
Becket Sports Centre at Dartford Grammar School – Management Committee	1 Member	Management Committee
Choices	1 Member	Management Committee
Council for Voluntary Service – North West Kent	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Dartford (1051) Squadron Air Training Corps	1 Member	Liaison purposes
Dartford and District Town Twinning Association	2 Members	Observers
Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership	1 Member	Ex Officio

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust	1 Member	1 as Ordinary Member and 1 as substitute
Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley Health & Wellbeing Board	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Dartford Citizens Advice Bureau	2 Members	1 as Ordinary Member and 1 as Trustee
Dartford Local Children's Partnership Group	1 Member	Ex Officio
District Council Network Assembly	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Ebbsfleet UDC Planning Committee	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Eltham Crematorium Joint Committee	1 Member	1 Member and 1 substitute
Family Action North and West Kent	1 Member	Observer
Groundwork South	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Dartford Health Inequalities Group	1 Member	Management Committee
Ingress Park (Greenhithe) Management Ltd	1 Member	Director
Joydens Wood Residents Community Association	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Kent County Playing Fields Association	1 Member	Observer
Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme – Steering Group	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Kent Resource Partnership Members Board	1 Member	Management Committee and 1 Substitute
Local Economic Partnership (Essex, Kent & East Sussex)	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Local Government Association General Assembly	1 Member	1 as Ordinary Member and 1 substitute
Mick Jagger Centre for the Performing Arts at Dartford Grammar School – Consultative Committee	1 Member	Ordinary Member
PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	1 Member	1 as Ordinary Member and 1 substitute
Police and Crime Panel for Kent and Medway (Joint Committee)	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Relate Medway & North Kent	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Rural Age Concern Darent Valley	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Samaritans (Bexley & Dartford)	1 Member	Ordinary Member
South East District Leaders Steering Group	1 Member	Ordinary Member
The Tiger Project North Kent Approval Panel	1 Member	Ordinary Member
Town Centre Board	2 Members	Ordinary Members

Membership on these bodies requires little preparation work in advance of meetings so the main time commitment is actual attendance at the meetings themselves. The Working Group considers that more involvement in community groups in the future is important, particularly to support the new emerging communities as new housing developments progress. This would increase member

workload but not significantly and therefore could be supported within the proposed small reduction in Council size.

## **SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS**

The Council currently has three Scrutiny committees: Scrutiny, Policy Overview and Crime & Disorder. Seats are allocated in accordance with political balance rules.

### **Scrutiny Committee**

The Scrutiny Committee is currently chaired by the Leader of the Opposition. No Cabinet member is allowed to sit on Scrutiny.

The Committee may scrutinise the following:

- Decisions made and/or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's and/or Cabinet's functions;
- Performance of the Cabinet, Officers, Committees, Boards and Panels whether generally or in relation to service plans and targets, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- Performance of the Council in relation to policy and budgetary objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- Any matter which affects the Borough of Dartford and its inhabitants;
- Any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the Borough of Dartford by a local health service body;
- The planning, provision, operation and performance of other public bodies/organisations whose services affect the Borough;
- Councillor Calls for Action;
- Local improvement targets.

Draw downs are also allowed for the purposes of scrutinising decisions/actions of the Council, Cabinet and/or the scrutiny of the effects/outcomes of a decision post implementation. Scrutiny can call in Cabinet decisions but very rarely do so. This is difficult due to the current strong majority held by the leading party. In addition, the Council's Cabinet Advisory Panel acts as a sounding board and source of advice to Cabinet, giving backbench and opposition members an opportunity to comment on Cabinet reports before Cabinet make their decision, thus reducing the need for scrutiny of Cabinet decisions.

Preparatory work for Scrutiny requires reading reports and papers in advance of the meeting. Committee reports and supporting information for the committee are collated by the relevant officer who will attend the meeting.

### **Policy Overview Committee**

The Policy Overview Committee is made up of 17 members. Committee membership may include no more than one Cabinet member. It may review the following:

- Council policy development and budgetary framework;
- Local improvement targets;
- Decisions/actions of key local public service providers;

- Performance of the Council in relation to policy and budgetary objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- Any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the Borough of Dartford, by a local health service body;
- The planning, provision, operation and performance of other public bodies/organisations whose services affect the Borough.

Draw downs are allowed following the same format as Scrutiny.

The focus for discussion for this Committee has predominately been around the health agenda with limited focus on policy itself. It is proposed to change the focus of the committee moving forward so that it concentrates on the development of new policy and looking at performance and how things are done elsewhere within the county. The Committee would still meet quarterly.

### **Crime and Disorder Committee**

The Crime and Disorder Committee is made up of 8 members. Its remit is to:

- Review and scrutinise the discharge of the crime and disorder functions of the responsible authorities which comprise the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership;
- Review and scrutinise the discharge of any other local crime and disorder matter related to the Council's crime and disorder functions.

It is proposed to make this a Public Services Scrutiny Board moving forward. Full terms of reference will need to be agreed but it is suggested that this could review the role of other public sector bodies in supporting the Council's corporate objectives – the Health Service, Fire and Police – as well as reviewing the discharge of the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities and addressing rural issues. It could also look at the wider health and wellbeing issues of the Council's communities and how these are being addressed.

This Committee currently only meets twice a year but to be effective in addressing its wider remit, it will be necessary to increase the number of meetings to at least quarterly. It is also considered that the membership of the Committee would need to be increased to 17 members to reflect its wider remit and to bring it in line with both the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committees.

The development of a more strategic role for the scrutiny committees may lead to pressures on the work programme which in turn may require more frequent meetings or at least minimum reductions to the membership of these committees. A reduction in member numbers below 40 may limit the support and therefore the effectiveness of the scrutiny role, whilst setting the Council size at 42 would ensure that Members can undertake their roles thoroughly.

## REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE OF MEMBERS

The role of a member is very much more than just attending committee meetings. A significant proportion of their time and a very important part of their role is spent representing and engaging with their local constituents. This involves engaging with the local communities, representing their views, responding to casework from constituents, liaising with other tiers of local government, pro-actively addressing local issues, supporting local community events, involvement in community meetings, awarding of community grants etc.

The amount of work currently depends on the degree of visibility that each member chooses to have. The way in which members undertake this engagement again varies per member though will involve surgeries, blogs, meeting residents face-to-face etc. Members will also attend local community meetings, such as Parish Council meetings and meetings organised through resident associations or local community groups. The main purpose of this is to listen to the views of the residents and, where appropriate, represent those views within the Council.

The role of members within the community has changed over time. The public can now more readily find the answers to some of their queries on the internet so will now 'self-serve' to a greater extent. However, they will still engage with their local councillor on more general issues, where there is a need for liaison with other tiers of government, or in relation to community events etc. Whilst the use of social media has reduced the need for face to face contact with residents, the increased use of emails and social media has resulted in the public expecting their councillor to be instantly contactable which means that members have less ability to directly manage their time. The nature of enquiries may have changed but the view of the Working Group is that the demand on councillors' time has not reduced.

The Working Group sees the profile of a member changing still further in the future. They will become more engaged with the community, rather than just addressing constituents' individual issues. They will be community ambassadors, empowered to support their constituents in addressing local concerns. For example, this may be in being more active in supporting community events or through supporting residents with local campaigns such as an anti-litter campaign to address a litter problem within their ward. Members will also be more involved in supporting and allocating grants to local community groups. These changes will enable Members to connect with their local community and to have a more visible and active presence.

Moving forward, the electorate is expected to increase significantly and new communities will emerge and this too will have an impact on the amount and complexity of community work that members do.

Whilst a small reduction in member numbers is not expected to have a significant impact on the number of hours that members will be required to devote to this element of their representational role, a larger reduction could have a detrimental impact with regard to ward work and engagement with local communities, particularly at a time when the population is growing at a fast pace.

## THE FUTURE

The Council has faced significant funding reductions in recent years and these reductions are continuing. Significant growth in the area will place additional strains on resources as the demand for services increases. The Council must meet the challenges for the future of the area whilst retaining its focus on key services and customer satisfaction, but with greater innovation and less cost. It will be necessary to explore new ways of working, whilst continuing to strive for ever-increasing levels of efficiency and value for money.

The Council already works in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council for the delivery of its Revenues & Benefits, Audit and Environmental Health functions. This has provided greater resilience at a lower cost. However, the two Councils still maintain their own separate policies in respect of these functions and therefore this has had little, if any, impact on the role of members in relation to these services. No changes are proposed with regards to these shared service arrangements moving forward.

The Council has also passed what services it can to its parish councils and there are very limited opportunities for community-based organisations to take on local assets or provide services on the Council's behalf.

Members' priority is now to continue to protect frontline services by finding efficiencies and savings from within and maximising income generation. With no planned reductions or deletions to discretionary services, no significant changes are anticipated with Members' workload in support of these services. However, the Council may need to consider investing in assets or other income generating initiatives moving forward, and such initiatives will need both member involvement and scrutiny.

The allowance paid to each member is currently £5,075 per annum. A reduction in two members would therefore result in an annual saving of £10,150. Whilst the aim of the review is not about savings, in times of limited resources, such a saving clearly sends a signal to staff and the public that members are making a small but necessary contribution towards the savings requirements of the Council.

However, there is a balance to be met between becoming leaner and fitter whilst also meeting the needs of a growing population. A significant increase in the electorate is anticipated over the next few years. Whilst this increase is dependent on the speed of development, current projections indicate that the current electorate of 77,884 is expected to rise to around 87,900 by 2023. As the population of Dartford grows, the needs of residents will continue to grow with increased demand for some services. Members will need to work with residents to ensure they continue to provide support and representation to all sections of the community. This growth will increase the complexity of the work of Members as they look to work with the new communities to integrate them into the wider Borough.

The following table shows the electorate numbers of those 15 other councils with the most similar statistical characteristics in terms of social and economic features to Dartford Borough Council (this is according to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)).

CIPFA STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS					
	No. of electors at Dec. 2016	No. of wards	No. of members	Electors per Cllr	Last review
<b>Dartford</b>	<b>76205</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1732</b>	<b>2001</b>
Rushmoor	66900	13	39	1715	2011
Watford	69666	12	36	1935	2015
Worcester	75150	15	35	2147	2002
Gloucester	90788	17	39	2328	2015
Broxbourne	72067	10	30	2402	2011
East Staffordshire	84690	21	39	2172	2000
Preston	95206	22	57	1670	2000
Rugby	78221	16	42	1862	2011
Cheltenham	87081	20	40	2177	2000
Stevenage	63664	13	39	1632	1998
Cherwell	113151	16	48	2357	2015
Exeter	86678	13	39	2223	2015
Crawley	76751	15	37	2074	2002
Basildon	133845	16	42	3187	2000
Kettering	72823	17	36	2023	2006
<b>Average</b>				<b>2102</b>	
	<b>No. of electors at 2023</b>				
Dartford	87900		42	2093	

This shows that the current average number of electors per member for this group is 2,102. Dartford's current average is 1,732 which is 17.6% away from the average and is one of the lowest in the group. As highlighted above, by 2023 Dartford's electorate is expected to rise to around 87,900. By reducing the number of members to 42, the average number of electors per member would be 2,093 which is only 0.4% away from the average. This therefore demonstrates that the Council size proposed within this submission is comparable to Dartford's statistical neighbours.

## CONCLUSIONS

Taking account of the information and evidence set out in this submission, it is the view of the Working Group that the current number of members should be reduced from 44 to 42.

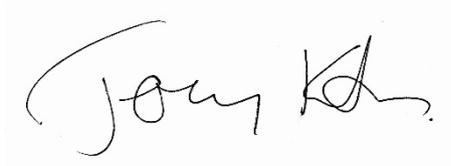
The proposed number of members will be able to support the committee structure as identified within this report without this having a significant impact on workloads. A greater reduction in member numbers would result in a more noticeable increase in the number of committee meetings each member is required to attend. Recognising the need to ensure diversity of representation amongst members, workloads must be reasonable and not discourage those in full-time employment or education.

The Scrutiny functions of the Council have been reviewed as identified within this report. Extending the remit of one of the Scrutiny committees will result in increased workloads. Whilst this could be accommodated within a small reduction to member numbers, a more significant reduction would again put increasing pressure on members.

The role of members within the wider community is very important. The role has changed over time as more constituents self-serve and communicate electronically with their ward member. The Working Group, however, see this role being expanded in the future and Members becoming empowered community ambassadors. New developments will have a significant impact on electorate numbers and will see the emergence of new communities. It is important that the Council retains sufficient Members to support both their stronger role within the community and the new communities themselves.

The Council has concluded that a reduction in the Council size by two would not impact on its ability to deliver its services or adversely affect the needs of and engagement with residents. A Council size of 42 would enable the Council to continue to deliver its decision making and scrutiny functions effectively whilst responding to the demands of a growing electorate.

**On behalf of the Working Group:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Kite', written in a cursive style.

**Councillor Jeremy Kite, MBE**

**Leader of the Council**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Shippam', written in a cursive style.

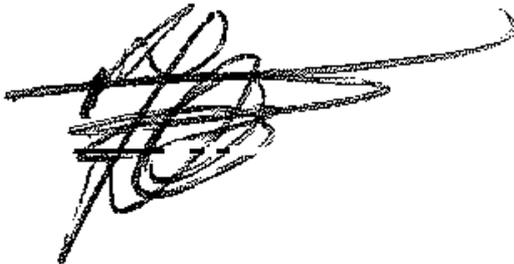
**Councillor Chris Shippam**

**Deputy Leader of the Council**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathon Hawkes', written in a cursive style.

**Councillor Jonathon Hawkes**

**Shadow Leader**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Lees', written in a cursive style.

**Councillor Richard Lees**

**Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association**