

## **Community Governance Review**

### **Sevenoaks District Council's Draft Recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIH) 2007 devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes, the boundaries of parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils. With effect from February 2008, district councils have had the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews (formerly known as parish reviews) and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, councils need to take account of the views of local people.
2. Councils are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission. Guidance suggests that it is good practice for a principal council to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years. In Sevenoaks, the last review was completed in 1999 and so it is timely to conduct a fresh review. There is an opportunity now, ahead of any scheduled elections, to conduct this review and have any recommendations implemented at the next full parish council elections in May 2015. At a meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2011 it was recommended that a community governance review be undertaken in respect of the whole of the Sevenoaks District Council area; Council ratified the Committee's decision.

#### **The Sevenoaks District Council Approach**

3. At previous parish reviews, Sevenoaks District Council has taken the view that it is for local people or local groups to suggest changes to the existing set-up. The District Council does not initiate changes but must, ultimately, decide upon any conflicting proposals. It has always placed great store upon proposals having the backing of the local community and neighbouring parishes that may be affected. It was expected therefore that any submissions to the District Council, which had to be in writing, would state what consultations had been held with affected persons or groups and the outcome of those consultations.
4. The LGPIH requires district councils to draw up terms of reference for a community governance review. The review begins when the terms of reference are published and this was done on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The terms are attached as Appendix 2 to this document.

5. The District Council must ensure that interested persons or groups have the opportunity to input to the review and the following actions were undertaken:
  - Notices displayed at the Council Offices in Sevenoaks and Swanley
  - Article on the District Council website
  - Article in In Shape (the District Council's quarterly magazine to all households)
  - Local news release
  - Letter to all parish councils within the Sevenoaks District
  - Letter to other known community groups within the Sevenoaks District
  - Letter to Sevenoaks District Councillors and to Kent County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the Sevenoaks District Council area
  - Letter to Kent County Council
  - Letter to MPs representing constituencies within the Sevenoaks District
  
6. The review is concluded when the District Council publishes its recommendations and this must be within 12 months of the review's commencement. The timetable is as follows:

Commencement of review	Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2011
Deadline for submissions	Friday, 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
Preparation of draft proposals followed by meeting of Electoral Arrangements Committee	By end of March 2012
Publication of the District Council's draft proposals	Mid May 2012
Consultation period concludes	End July 2012
Preparation of final proposals followed by meeting of Electoral Arrangements	Late August/early September 2012

Committee	
Full Council confirms final proposals	September 2012
The District Council publishes its recommendations	Before end November 2012
Effective date of any changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements (next full parish council elections)	Thursday, 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2015

### **Consideration of Submissions**

7. The Electoral Arrangements Committee met on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 to consider the submissions received. At a previous parish review of the Sevenoaks District in the early 1980s (the first in living memory), 26 of the 29 parish councils had changes to their boundaries; at the review in the late 1990s just 13 of 29 had changes. In this latest review, submissions have been received affecting the boundaries of 13 of the 30 parish councils, mostly of a minor nature. As this is the third review in 30+ years, it is perhaps not surprising that the number of boundary issues is relatively small. However, amongst the submissions are suggestions for the creation of parishes from existing parish wards. Parish warding is the division of a parish into areas for the purpose of electing councillors and the LGPIH requires consideration as to whether:

- The number of electors in a parish makes a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient
- It is desirable that any areas of the parish should be separately represented

8. Members of the Committee were provided with the submissions in their entirety and with the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission. The Officer's report stated that there is much advice in the guidance that can be quoted in support or against a particular argument but Members would want to consider each submission on its merits in relation to the particular circumstances in the parish and not attempt to find an apparently consistent approach to all parishes.

9. Electorate figures quoted in this document are as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 but these figures can change each month. Mileages quoted are as a result of site visits. Changes in parish boundaries that affect the boundaries of District Council wards and/or Kent County Council electoral divisions will be referred to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England with a recommendation that the appropriate changes be made to those boundaries at the next relevant full elections (2015 in the case of District Council elections, 2017 for Kent County Council elections).

10. At the committee meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012, the Chairman stressed that, at this stage of the review, the committee were making draft recommendations only and that they were to be subject to a 12 week consultation period.

**The Draft Recommendations** (alphabetic order of parish)

**11. Ash-cum-Ridley (Map 1 of Appendix 1)**

The Parish Council has proposed the inclusion of the Milestone School and New Ash Green Sports Centre within its Parish so as to bring the Parish office itself, situated on the site, into the Parish. Hartley Parish Council supports the proposal. The District Council recommends that the Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council proposal be adopted. The recommendation will affect the boundary between the District wards of Ash & New Ash Green and Hartley & Hodsoll Street (though no electors are affected).

**12. Brasted**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. However, a change to the Brasted Parish boundary is recommended under Westerham Parish (paragraph 39 below).

**13. Chevening**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**14. Chiddingstone**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**15. Cowden**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**16. Crockenhill**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**17. Dunton Green**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**18. Edenbridge**

The Town Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

## **19. Eynsford (Map 2)**

The Parish Council has proposed the transfer of the Austin Lodge Golf Course from Shoreham Parish as access is via Eynsford only. Shoreham Parish Council agrees that the Golf Club House should transfer to Eynsford in order to aid consultation on any planning matters, but would like to retain as much of the golf course as is currently in Shoreham Parish and was supported in this view by the Shoreham Society. It would appear more sensible for the whole of the golf course and associated buildings to be in one parish and, as access is from Eynsford Parish only, the District Council recommends that the Eynsford Parish Council proposal be adopted. The recommendation will affect the boundary between the District wards of Eynsford and Otford & Shoreham (though no electors are affected).

## **20. Farningham**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

## **21. Fawkham**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

## **22. Halstead**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

## **23. Hartley**

23.1 The Parish Council had no proposals to make. However, see Ash-cum-Ridley (paragraph 11).

23.2 Three Hartley residents have advocated the division of the parish into wards. The thrust of the submissions was that serving parish councillors live, in the main, across the middle of the Parish and therefore do not represent the Parish as a whole. Having smaller areas (wards) for councillors to represent would encourage democratic participation, would enable parish councillors to better serve electors and would enable electors to more easily identify their local councillors. The conduct of elections for the whole Parish was also highlighted as a difficulty, in particular the size of the ballot paper and the cost of by-elections for the whole parish.

23.3 Hartley Parish Council maintained, in its response, that the Parish is one whole community. It opposes the warding proposals believing that electors are best served by councillors representing the whole of the parish; it makes all areas inclusive and avoids conflict between ward interests. The Parish Council believes that the length of ballot paper at elections is testament to the interest shown in local affairs and does not pose a problem for electors.

23.4 The District Council is not convinced that warding would necessarily, of itself, bring a better spread of representation and, in the face of opposition from the Parish Council, recommends that no change be made to the electoral arrangements of Hartley Parish.

**24. Hextable (Map 3)**

The Parish Council has proposed the transfer of the 14 properties in Lower Road, Hextable currently situated in Swanley Parish. Swanley Town Council has submitted the same proposal. Both are of the view that it is sensible for all the properties in Lower Road to be in Hextable Parish and avoid issues, for example, regarding the completion of road works. The District Council recommends that the proposals of Hextable Parish Council and Swanley Town Council be adopted. The recommendation will affect the boundary between the District wards of Hextable and Swanley Christchurch & Swanley Village and the County electoral divisions of Swanley and Darent Valley; 4 electors will transfer.

**25. Hever**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**26. Horton Kirby & South Darent**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**27. Kemsing**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**28. Knockholt**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

**29. Leigh (Map 4)**

29.1 Submissions have been made by the residents of North Lodge, Redleaf and Woodside Kennels, both of Penshurst Road, Penshurst, for their properties to transfer into Penshurst Parish. They feel they have a greater affinity with Penshurst rather than Leigh. Penshurst Parish Council agreed to the proposal on the grounds of the geography (the properties are closer to the village of Penshurst than they are to the village of Leigh) and the families' involvement in Penshurst activities. Leigh Parish Council does not support the proposal believing the current boundary to be historic.

29.2 Successive reviews have changed historic boundaries in order to meet present circumstances and those reviews have also considered requests from individuals to transfer properties between parishes. The proposal appears to be made on appropriate grounds so, notwithstanding the opposition of Leigh Parish Council, the District Council recommends that the two properties North Lodge,

Redleaf and Woodside Kennels transfer from Leigh Parish to Penshurst Parish. The recommendation will affect the boundary between the District wards of Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway and Penshurst, Fordcombe & Chiddingstone; 6 electors will transfer.

### **30. Otford (Maps 5 & 6)**

30.1 The Parish Council has proposed a re-alignment of the parish boundary with Shoreham Parish in Row Dow Lane to ensure that the curtilages of 3 properties (Stursdon, Mount Farm and Mount Farm Cottage) fall within one parish rather than two. Shoreham Parish Council has submitted the same proposal which is supported by the Shoreham Society. The District Council recommends that the proposals of Otford Parish Council and Shoreham Parish Council be adopted (map 5).

30.2 Otford Parish Council has also proposed the inclusion of the whole hamlet of Twitton in Otford Parish, thereby transferring 8 properties and 12 electors from Shoreham Parish. Shoreham Parish Council has proposed that Twitton as a whole be included in Shoreham Parish, transferring 9 properties and 19 electors from Otford Parish. The Shoreham Society supports the Shoreham Parish Council proposal. Otford Parish Council contends that Twitton is nearer to Otford village (0.8 miles by road) than it is to Shoreham village (1.6 miles by road) and that placing the whole of Twitton in one parish would facilitate planning consultations. A survey of the affected residents by Otford Parish Council seems to show more support for the option of placing Twitton wholly within Otford Parish rather than in Shoreham Parish. The District Council recommends the transfer of the 8 Twitton properties currently in Shoreham Parish into Otford Parish (map 6). The recommendation will affect the boundary between the County electoral divisions of Darent Valley and Sevenoaks East; 12 electors will transfer.

### **31. Penshurst**

31.1 The Parish Council had no proposals to make. However, a change to the Penshurst Parish boundary is recommended under Leigh Parish (paragraph 29).

31.2 A great many submissions have been made concerning the structure of Penshurst Parish prompted, it appears, by the contentious issue of affordable housing. The submissions may be categorised into three distinct proposals:

- a) create separate parishes for Fordcombe (currently a ward of Penshurst Parish) and Penshurst (currently also a ward of the Parish);
- b) retain the present wards but limit parish councillors' decision making on matters relating to the ward they represent unless the matter is material to the Parish as a whole, and an associated proposal for a system of weighted voting by parish councillors in specified circumstances; and
- c) unward the Parish.

31.3 Proposal a) does not appear to emanate from a long standing difficulty of representation caused by separate warding of the two main communities of Fordcombe and Penshurst but rather is a reaction to the affordable housing issue. Opposition to the proposal has equal weight and there is no evidence of any desire for a separate Fordcombe parish from Fordcombe residents. The District Council is concerned that, however contentious the issue of affordable housing, the proposal seeks to break a seemingly strong relationship over a single issue.

31.4 The essence of proposal b) is that issues solely affecting either the Fordcombe or Penshurst wards of the Parish should be determined only by the parish councillors representing those wards. This proposal also emanates from the affordable housing debate but would be applied to any future issue specific to one or other village. At the request of the District Council, the Kent Association of Local Councils has advised the following:

*“The Parish Councillors Guide by Paul Clayden helpfully states ‘where a parish is divided into wards, the Parish Councillors for each ward are elected in the same manner as Councillors are elected for a parish. The rules relating to the election of Councillors apply to each ward as if it were a parish. The parish councillors for all the wards will form only one parish council, and there will still be a parish meeting for the whole parish for the purpose other than the election of councillors.’*

*It follows that even in warded areas they are therefore elected to the body corporate: i.e. the Council as a whole. It is also a sensible observation that the members are bound in as individuals but as part of the body corporate by the Code of Conduct and this is also designed to ensure that there are no obvious conflicts of interest because of the issue of warding. In short: they are elected to the Council to serve the entire electorate. Members may well have greater connect (particularly in areas with more distinct or larger electorates); but this is also balanced out in the Code of Conduct. They are ultimately Councillors and not just ward members.”*

The District Council does not, therefore, support proposal b).

31.5 In the difficult circumstances pertaining, proposal c) to unward the Parish has merit. There are instances of parishes in the Sevenoaks District that favour non-warding almost regardless of the size of the parish so as to avoid the sort of conflict confronting Penshurst Parish.

31.6 The District Council recommends that Penshurst Parish be unwarded and seeks views from all interested persons on a change of name from Penshurst Parish to Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish.

## **32. Riverhead**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

## **33. Seal**



The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

### **34. Sevenoaks**

34.1 The Town Council proposed, in effect, a grouping of parishes so that certain amenities already provided by Sevenoaks Town Council to neighbouring parishes could be extended. The proposal included in the grouping the following parishes: Chevening, Dunton Green, part of Otford (south of the M26), Riverhead, Seal, Sevenoaks Weald and Sundridge with Ide Hill. (Whilst mention was made of Brasted, Kemsing and Shoreham Parishes in the submission, they did not appear to be part of the proposal.)

34.2 Representations have been received from the parishes of Chevening, Dunton Green (twice, views endorsed by the two local District Councillors), Edenbridge, Kemsing, Otford, Riverhead, Seal (twice), Sevenoaks Weald and Sundridge with Ide Hill and all are opposed for a variety of reasons. Opposition for similar and additional reasons was also received from some residents: one from Seal, four from Riverhead and one from Otford. The Town Council proposal would clearly have a far reaching effect upon the governance of a large proportion of the Sevenoaks District and it must be expected to have fulsome support from the affected local communities and their representatives; the proposal does not have this support. The District Council recommends that the proposal of Sevenoaks Town Council is not adopted.

### **35. Sevenoaks Weald**

The Parish Council had no proposals to make. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

### **36. Shoreham (Maps 7 & 8)**

36.1 The Parish Council submitted a number of proposals whilst a number have been submitted by other Parishes and Residents Associations affecting Shoreham Parish. Proposals put forward by Eynsford and Otford Parish Councils have been considered in paragraphs 19, 30.1 and 30.2.

36.2 Shoreham Parish Council, supported by the Shoreham Society, proposed a change to the parish boundary in the vicinity of Well Hill with Crockenhill Parish who, whilst not averse to the change in principle, did request a more detailed consideration of the issue which has not been taken up. In view of the lack of any formal discussion between the two Parish Councils, the District Council recommends that this proposal is not progressed until further discussions between Shoreham Parish Council and Crockenhill Parish Council take place.

36.3 Shoreham Parish Council, again supported by the Shoreham Society, further proposed that the properties in East Hill Road (a cul-de-sac), currently situated in West Kingsdown Parish (160 properties and 272 electors), be transferred into Shoreham Parish to join the properties already situated in Shoreham (map 7). Shoreham Parish Council believes that better local services

can be provided to all residents if the road is wholly situated in one parish. West Kingsdown Parish Council has proposed the reverse of the Shoreham Parish Council proposal, suggesting the transfer of the East Hill Road properties currently in Shoreham Parish (23 properties and 48 electors) into West Kingsdown Parish (map 8). Whilst no reason is given by West Kingsdown Parish Council for the proposal, they do not consider the Shoreham Parish Council proposal to be a practical option as residents are nearer to the village of West Kingsdown than they are to the village of Shoreham (though measuring by the most direct road route from East Hill Road's junction with Bower Lane and Goodbury Road, it is 3.3 miles to Shoreham High Street and 3.6 miles to the shops in Hever Road, West Kingsdown). The majority of East Hill Road itself is situated in West Kingsdown Parish and forms the East Hill ward of West Kingsdown Parish Council. Shoreham Parish Council does not say whether the same area or the whole of East Hill Road would form a separate ward of the Shoreham Parish so there is the prospect of those residents who currently have separate representation on the Parish Council ceasing to have this status. East Hill is isolated geographically, a similar position held by its neighbour Knatts Valley (also a ward of West Kingsdown Parish), so is a considerable distance from the centre of any village. At the previous review of parish boundaries in the late 1990s, West Kingsdown Parish Council submitted a similar proposal and, on that occasion, the District Council were of the opinion that the properties at the southern end of East Hill Road (in Shoreham Parish) did not form part of the same community as the northern end of the road (in West Kingsdown Parish) and therefore proposed no change to the parish boundary. The District Council again recommends that the boundary between the two Parishes in the vicinity of East Hill remains unchanged.

36.4 The Badgers Mount Residents Association has submitted a proposal for a separate parish of Badgers Mount (258 properties, 526 electors), supported by the Shoreham Society. There has been previous debate regarding the formation of a separate parish for Badgers Mount and the Residents Association has now formulated a specific proposal. Badgers Mount is a distinct community; its geographic position means that its residents will be unlikely to look south towards Shoreham for amenity provision. A local District councillor has expressed support for the proposal; a local resident has voiced objection. Shoreham Parish Council set up a working group to consider the subject and then debated a motion at a Parish Council meeting that the Parish should be split into three separate parishes: Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill. The motion was defeated.

36.5 At the meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee, Members understood that local residents identified with Badgers Mount as a separate community but, notwithstanding the details given in the submission of the Residents Association, Members required further clarity on the following issues:

- The degree of support amongst Badgers Mount electors
- The number of electors subscribing to the Badgers Mount Residents Association
- A financial strategy/business plan drawn up to demonstrate the viability of a new parish council
- A plan to manage legal issues, planning issues and issues arising from the Localism Act 2011

36.6 The Well Hill Residents Association has submitted a proposal for a separate parish of Well Hill (101 properties, 215 electors), supported by the Shoreham Society. This is the second time the Well Hill Residents Association has made this request and has re-submitted its 2006 document along with the report of the Shoreham Parish Council working group that was convened to discuss community governance. Well Hill is a small community some distance from the village of Shoreham or any other village in the Sevenoaks District. Its residents look more towards the north and communities in London than to the south and Shoreham. The submission by the Shoreham Society gives a similar picture. Three submissions were received from Well Hill residents raising conflicting points in support and against a separate Well Hill parish.

36.7 In 2006 the Electoral Arrangements Committee invited the Well Hill Residents Association to address some concerns of Members around the degree of support amongst local residents and the financial viability of a Well Hill parish. The new submission still relies on the 2006 document and doesn't appear to have addressed the issues raised by the District Council in 2006. As already noted, Shoreham Parish Council debated the motion that the Parish should be split into three separate parishes and that motion was defeated. The District Council therefore asks the same questions of the Well Hill Residents Association bulleted in paragraph 36.5.

36.8 The submission from the Shoreham Society proposed the creation of a new parish of Shoreham (516 properties, 887 electors) without the Badgers Mount and Well Hill wards. The Society contends that the three communities of Shoreham, Badgers Mount and Well Hill have a clear sense of their own independent identities and little affinity with one another. The District Council recommends that this proposal cannot be moved forward until the Badgers Mount and Well Hill issues are resolved.

36.9 Shoreham Parish Council also proposed a reduction from 6 to 5 of parish councillors elected for the Shoreham ward, so as to more fairly represent the number of electors in each of the three wards making up the Parish Council. The electorate of Shoreham ward is 887 (6 parish councillors presently, a councillor/elector ratio of 1:148), Badgers Mount ward is 526 (3 and 1:175) and Well Hill ward is 215 (1 1:215). 5 councillors for the Shoreham ward would give a ratio of 1:177 for that ward. The District Council recommends that, provided the three wards of Shoreham Parish are retained, the number of Parish Councillors representing the Shoreham ward be reduced from 6 to 5.

### **37. Sundridge with Ide Hill**

The Parish Council has written to the District Council but has no specific proposals for changes to parish boundaries or electoral arrangements. The District Council is recommending no change to the parish boundary.

### **38. Swanley**

Swanley Town Council submitted a proposal that has been considered under paragraph 24.

### **39. Westerham (Map 9)**

The Parish Council has proposed the transfer of High View Cottage from Brasted Parish as access to the property is from Westerham Parish only. There is support from Brasted Parish Council and from the property's owner. The District Council recommends that the Westerham Parish Council proposal be adopted. The recommendation will affect the boundary between the District wards of Westerham & Crockham Hill and Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge; 2 electors will transfer.

### **40. West Kingsdown**

West Kingsdown Parish Council has submitted a proposal that has been considered under paragraph 36.3.

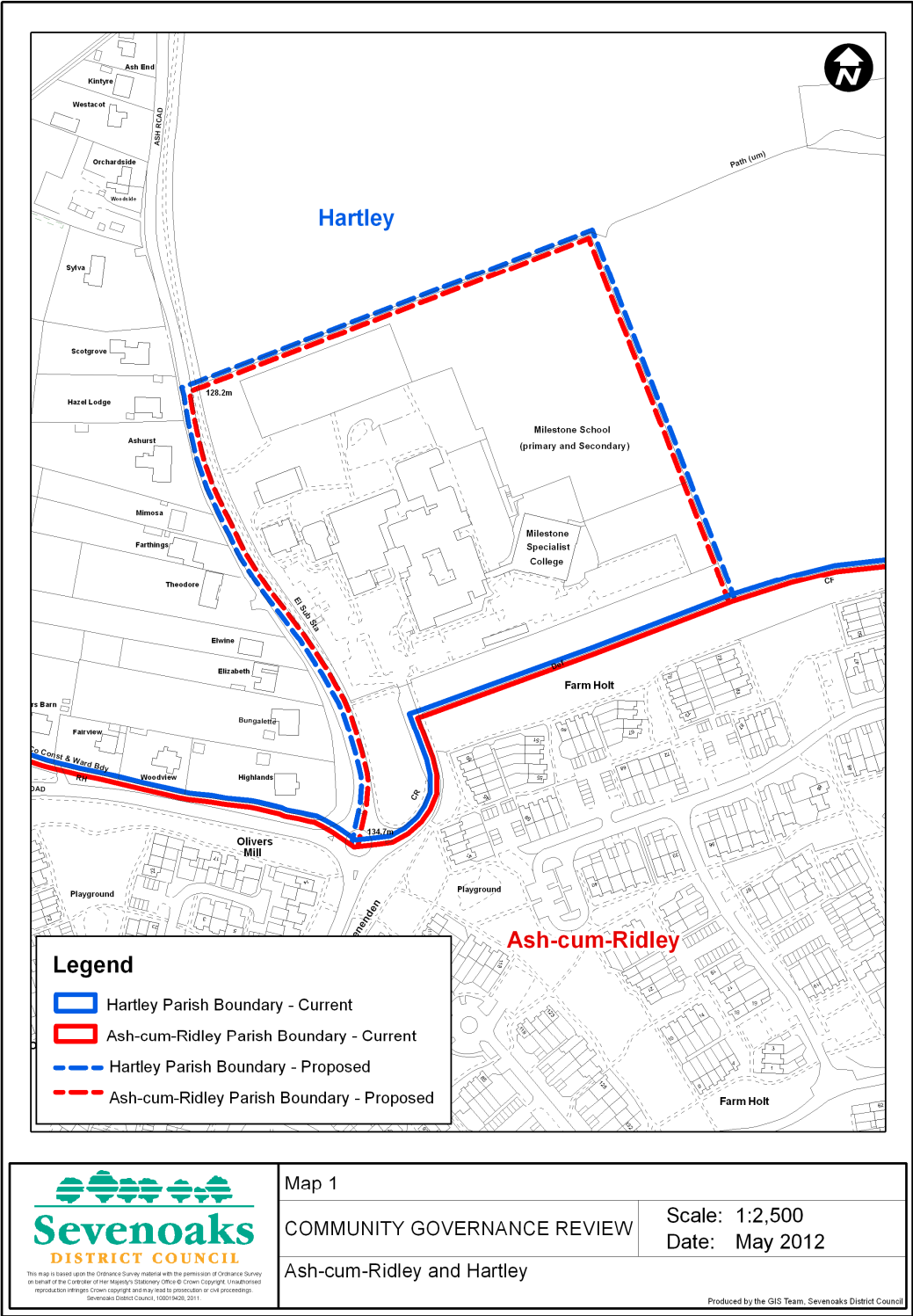
## **Responding to the District Council's Draft Recommendations**

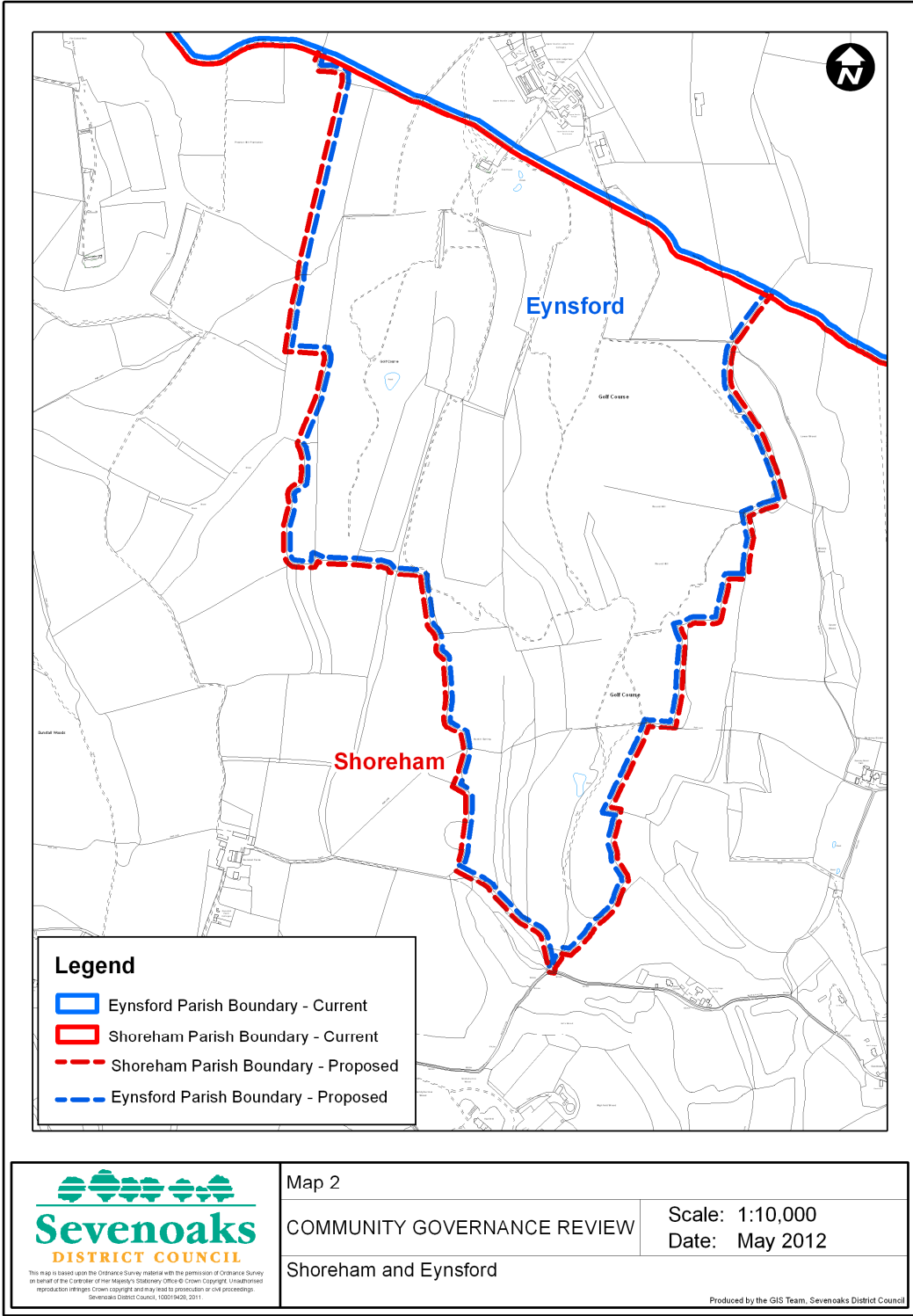
41. The District Council would welcome representations about its draft recommendations which may be made as follows:

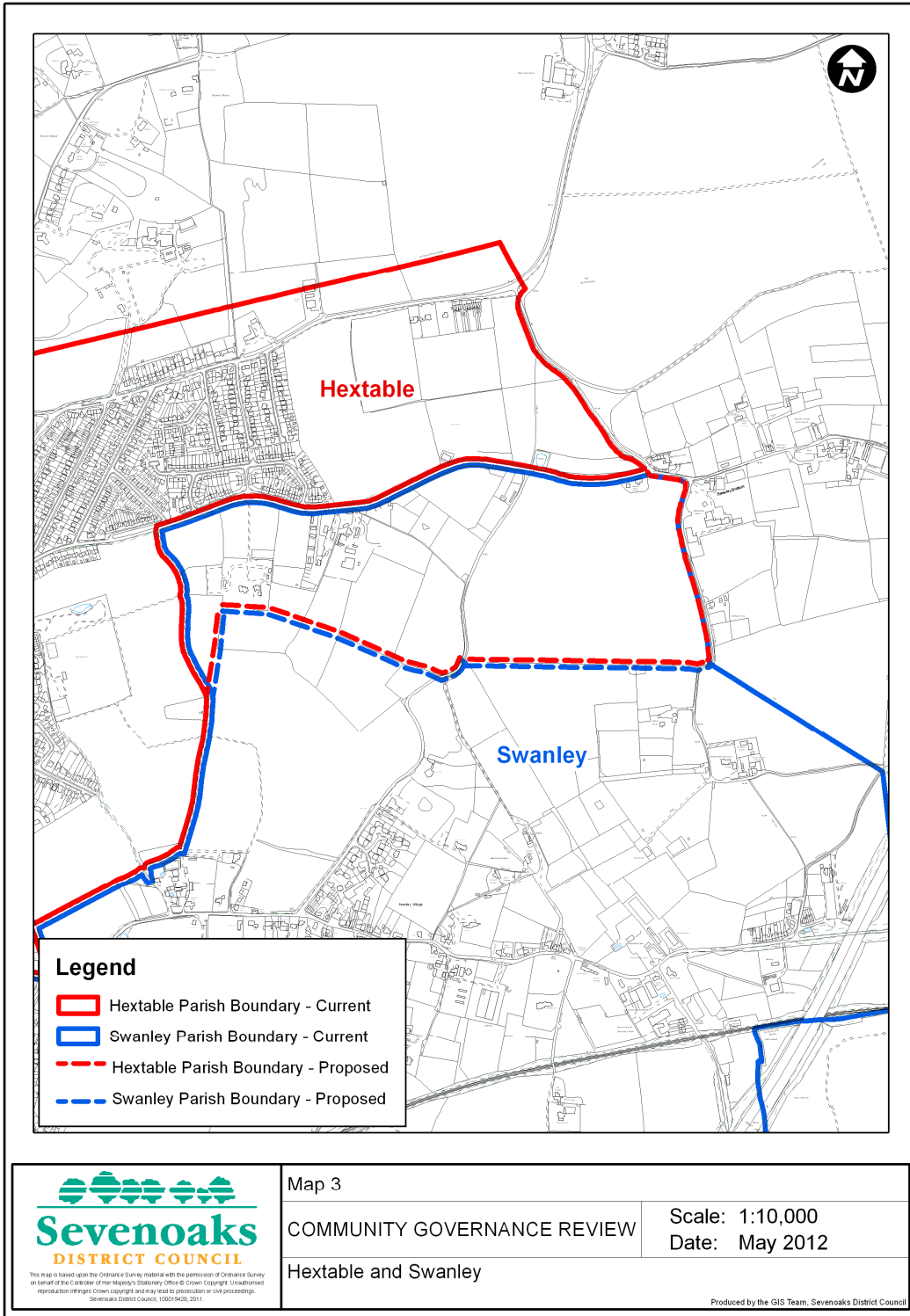
In writing to	Ian Bigwood, Electoral Services Manager, Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG
By e-mail to	<a href="mailto:elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk">elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk</a>

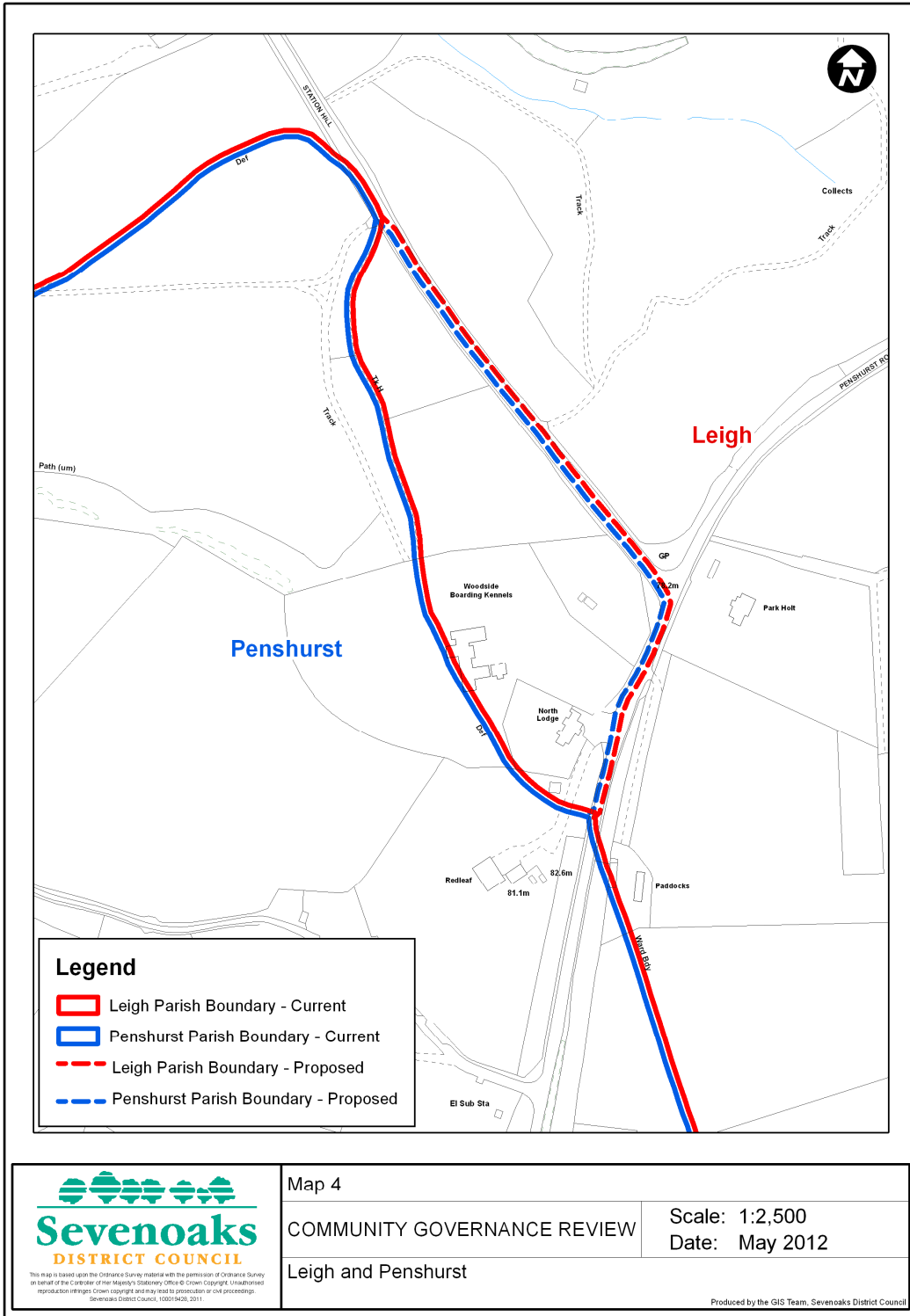
The deadline for representations to reach the District Council is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012. After that time, the District Council will consider all submissions and publish its final recommendations before the end of November 2012. Changes to parish boundaries will take effect at the next full parish council elections on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

May 2012

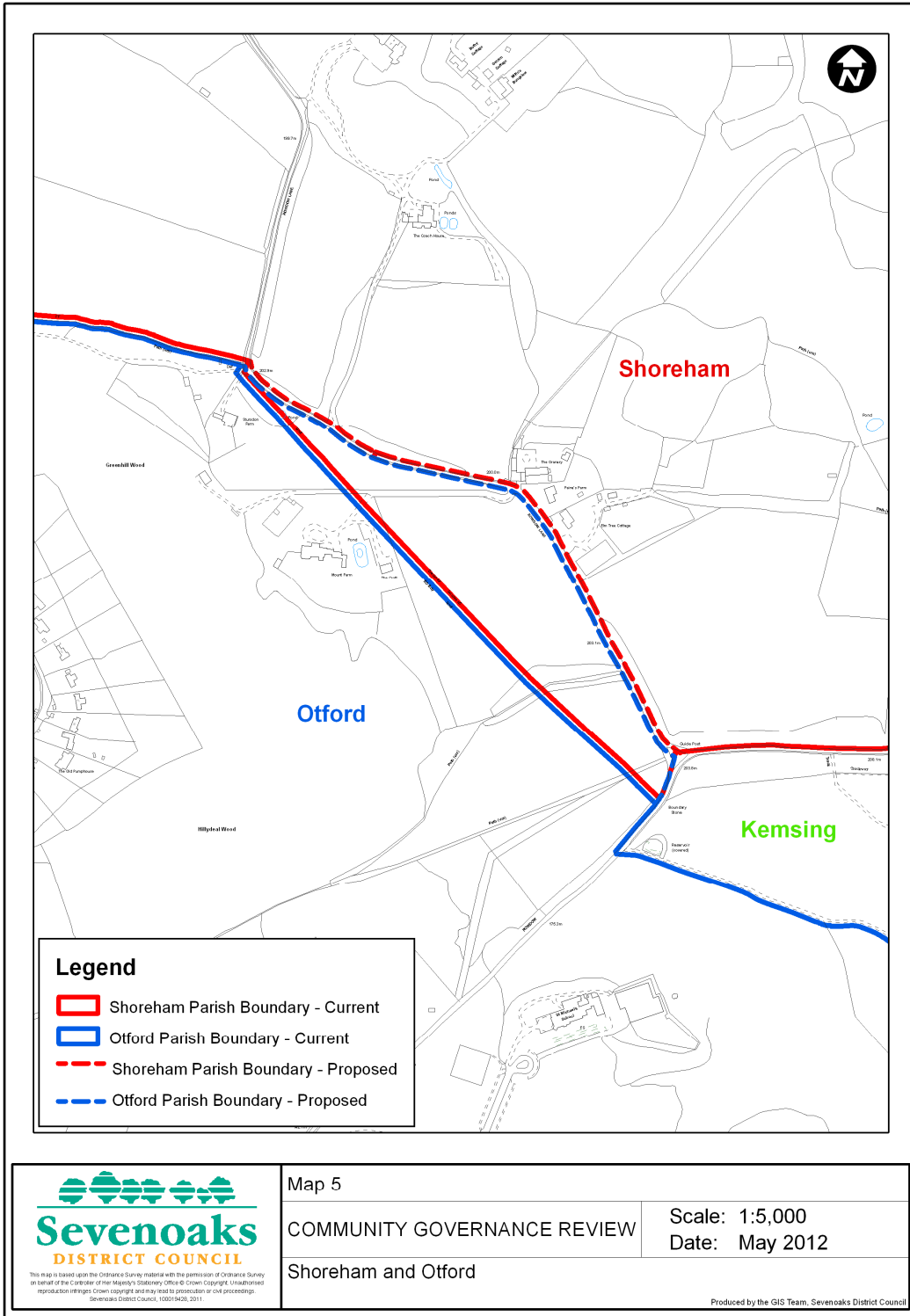


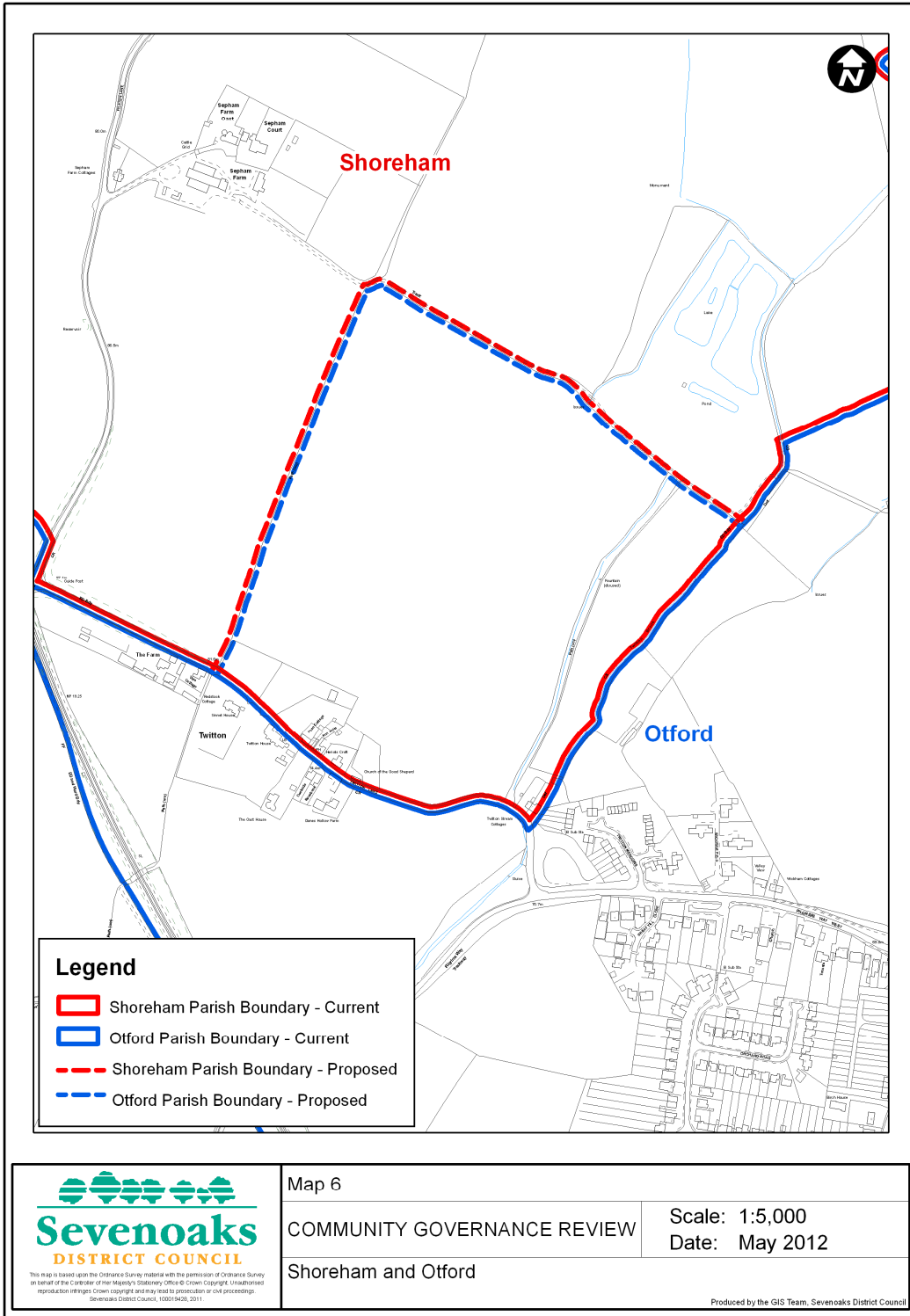


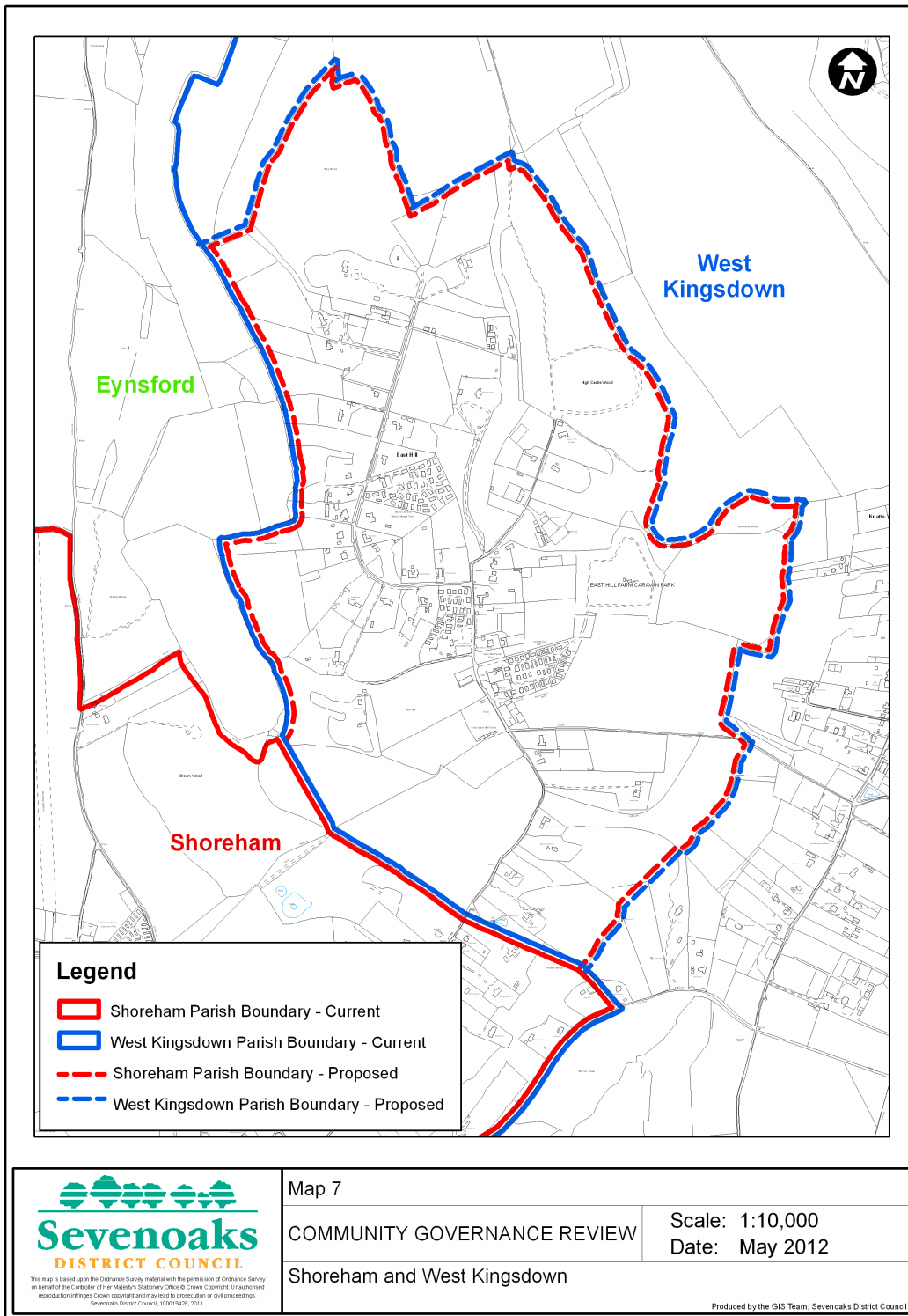


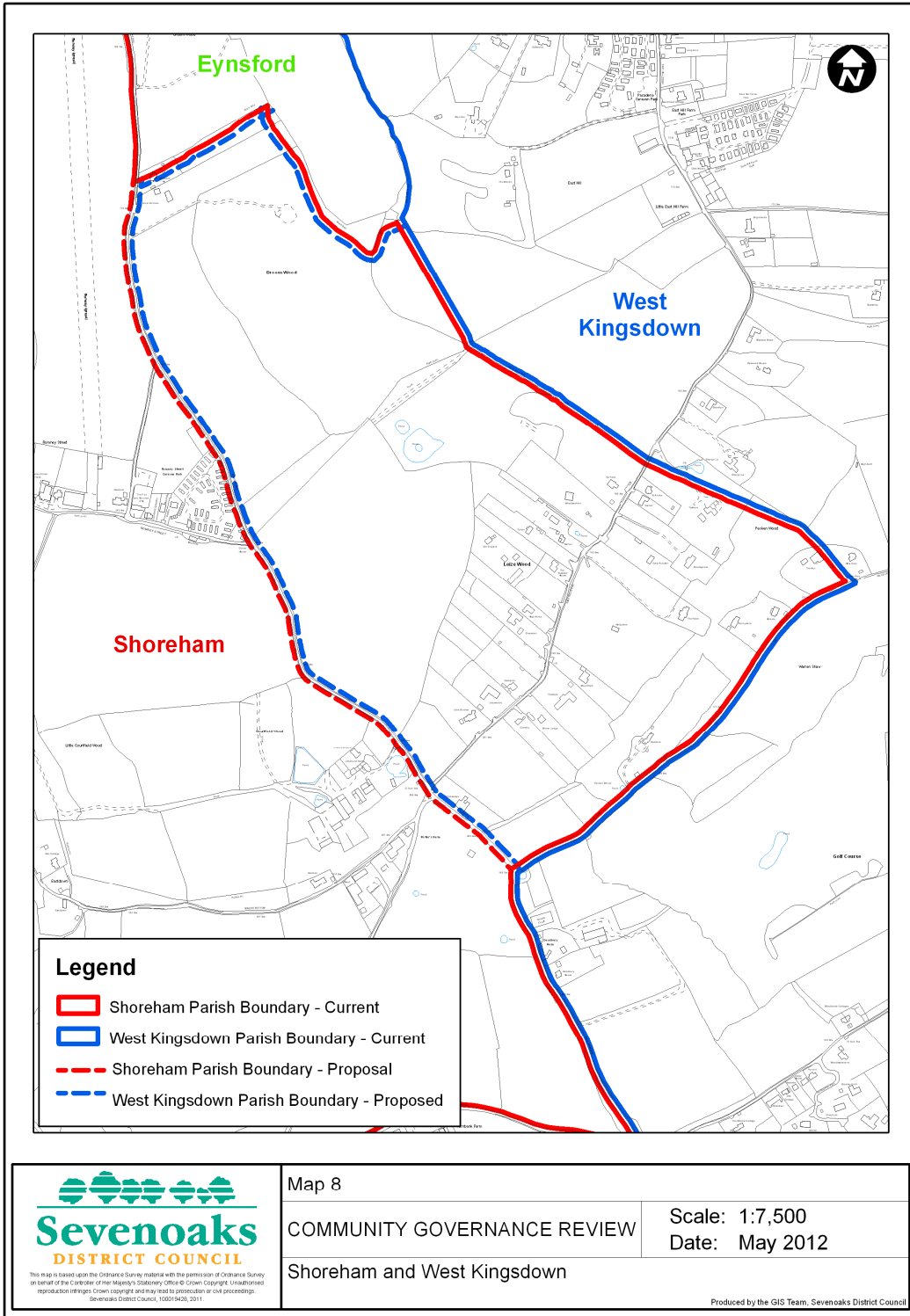


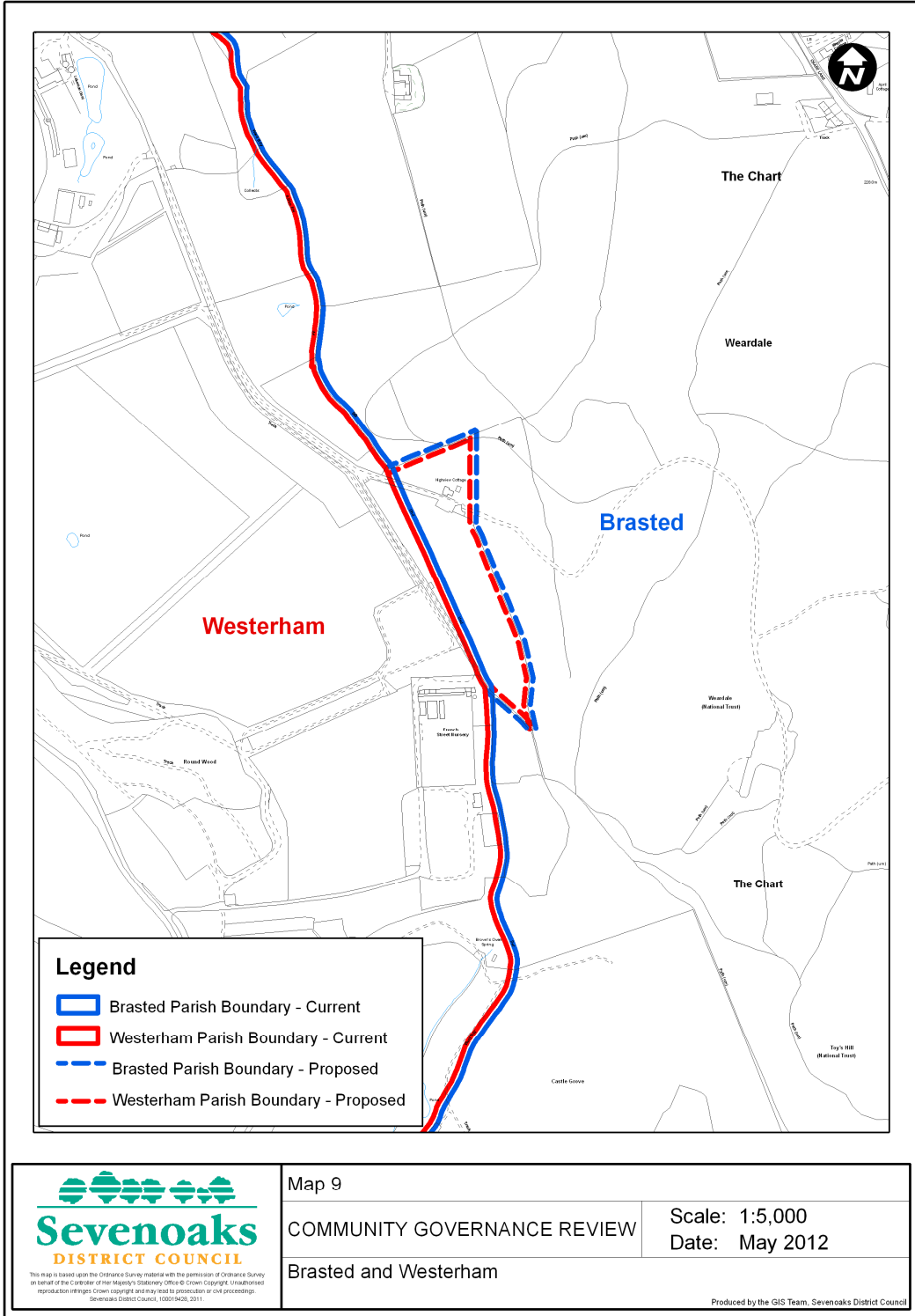












## **Community Governance Review**

### **Terms of Reference**

Sevenoaks District Council has resolved to undertake a community governance review of the whole of the Sevenoaks District. The District Council will be guided by the relevant legislation and guidance, in particular the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission).

#### **Why is the District Council undertaking the review?**

Government guidance recommends a review every 10-15 years. The last review was completed in 1999.

#### **What is a community governance review?**

It is an opportunity for interested persons to consider how local communities are represented by considering:

- creating, merging, grouping, altering or abolishing parishes
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (overall number of councillors, parish warding and number of councillors for those wards)

#### **Parish governance in the Sevenoaks District Council area**

Parish councils, representing local communities, cover the whole of the Sevenoaks District Council area. The District Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and is keen to ensure that parish governance in the Sevenoaks District continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges ahead. Government guidance states that “Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.”

#### **How will the District Council publicise the review?**

The District Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Council Offices in Sevenoaks and Swanley, placing articles on the District Council’s website and in the In Shape magazine and by issuing local news releases. Specifically, the District Council will write to all parish councils and to other known community groups, to District Councillors and to the relevant County Councillors and MPs and also to Kent County Council.

#### **What does the District Council expect from interested persons?**

Anyone may make representations to the District Council and those views will be put before Members of the Council at meetings of the Electoral Arrangements Committee. The Council would like to ensure that:

- electors are able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident because it considers this sense of identity and community gives strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride
- parishes reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity
- boundaries between parishes will normally reflect the “no-man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or pronounced physical barriers
- any proposals have been discussed and, preferably, agreed with affected parishes before a submission is made to the District Council

#### **Timetable for the review** (revised March 2012)

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
Commencement of review	Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2011
Deadline for submitting views	Friday, 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
Submissions considered by the District Council’s Electoral Arrangements Committee	End of March 2012
Publication of the District Council’s draft proposals	Mid May 2012
Deadline for submitting views on the District Council’s draft proposals	End July 2012
Further submissions considered by the Electoral Arrangements Committee	Late August/early September 2012
Meeting of the full Council to confirm the District Council’s final proposals	September 2012
Publication of the District Council’s recommendations	Before end November 2012
Effective date of any changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements	Thursday, 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2015 (next full parish council elections)

#### **How to submit your views**

In writing to	Ian Bigwood, Electoral Services Manager, Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG
By e-mail to	elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk