

Dear Town and Parish Chairmen

We have been invited by MHCLG to give views on technical matters relating to the Structural Change Order that will be the enabling instrument for local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway.

One of the matters we are being consulted on, is whether we wish to align town and parish council elections with the new unitary authority elections (to take place in May 2027).

This would mean that, through the Structural Change Order (to be published this year), parish and town council elections due to take place in 2028, 2029 and 2030 would move to take place next year in 2027, and then on the same four-year cycle.

The benefits of this for the towns and parishes is that your elections costs will be shared with the unitary, and all other parish and towns, and any advertising or promotion about the elections would include the town and parish elections.

The disadvantages are that current terms will be shortened by the SCO, so if you have been elected recently, you may have to re-stand again next year.

You may have other advantages/disadvantages that are pertinent, so I would be pleased to communicate these to MHCLG on your behalf.

We would like to hear your opinions on whether you would like to see this change go ahead (ultimately, however, it will be a government decision), so that we can feed this into the consultation. Please send me your views by **Monday 1 June 2026**.

Best wishes
Jane Clarke

Head of Policy and Governance
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council