

Consultation on proposals for a Whitstable Town Council



SHOULD WHITSTABLE HAVE A TOWN COUNCIL?

A petition has been received asking for a town council to be set up for Whitstable.

This would cover the area shown in blue on the map on the back page.

Canterbury City Council is carrying out a Community Governance Review and would like to know your views about this proposal.

Please read through this leaflet before completing the questionnaire online or ask for a paper copy.

WHAT IS A TOWN COUNCIL?

A town council has the same powers as a parish council.

Through an extensive range of discretionary powers, which they can choose to exercise, councils like these can provide, maintain and support a variety of important and visible services including:

- allotments, parks and open spaces
- bus shelters and community transport schemes

- community centres and leisure facilities
- crime reduction and community safety measures
- festivals, celebrations and tourism activities
- litter bins, street lighting and street cleaning

A town council, which will be made up of elected councillors, provides an extra voice to represent the community.

What difference could a town council make?

Town councils can work with the city and county councils and others to:

- promote cultural events (for example civic pride in the town)
- provide a focus for representing local issues and the area's identity
- champion residents and local businesses and represent Whitstable's interests to other organisations
- act as a statutory consultee, give its collective view on planning applications
- make external funding bids

You currently have a MP, county councillors and city councillors.

A town council could not replace the city council or the county council but it can choose to work with others to use its money to improve the area by delivering the services like the ones listed above.

How much will it cost?

Canterbury City Council would set up any new town council, but the town council itself would be responsible for raising the money it spends including the cost of premises such as offices and somewhere to hold its meetings, staffing and providing services.

Town councils are paid for through an extra charge added to people's Council Tax bills which is known as a precept.

Town councils set their own precepts and the size of it will vary depending on what money it needs to maintain and improve services and facilities in the community.

As an indication, nearby town councils such as Folkestone, Broadstairs, Ramsgate and Faversham charge between £60 and £80 per annum for an average Band D property.

Are there similar organisations already?

There are community groups, residents' groups and business groups that operate in the area.

But these differ considerably from a town council, particularly as they are not democratically elected and do not share the same powers to deliver services or raise money.

How many councillors would the new town council have and how would they be elected?

The legislation provides that the minimum number of elected members on a town council is five. There is no maximum number.

If a town council is set up, the intention is for the first elections to take place in May 2025.

The term of office of a town councillor is usually four years but we are allowed to put interim arrangements in place to bring them into line with other local elections in 2027.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Canterbury City Council will consider the consultation responses and will report to its General Purposes Committee and the Full Council meeting in April 2024.

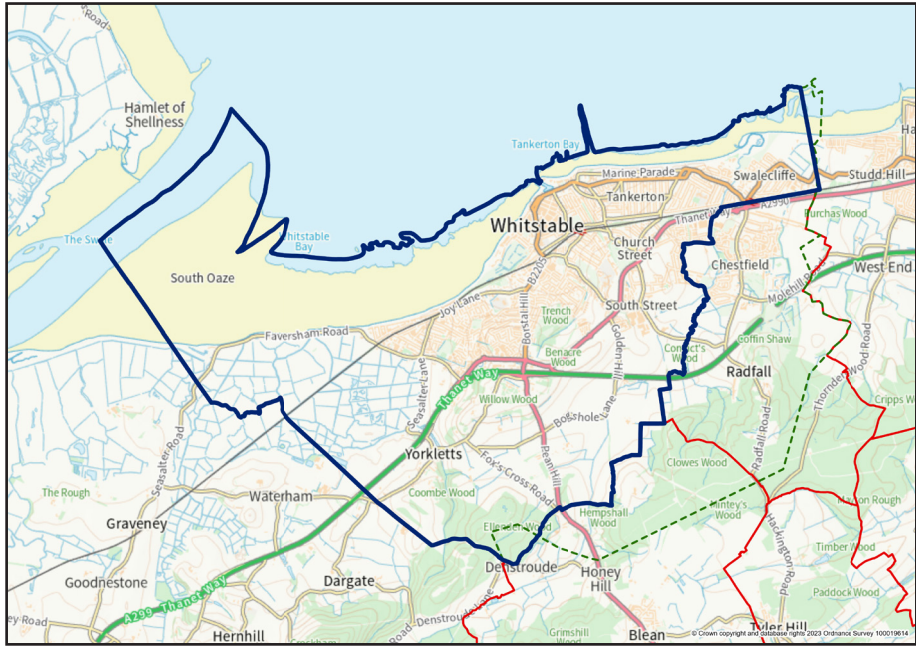
We are also keen to find out views from other interested parties and responses are welcome via the website, email or in writing (see contact details on last page) by 1 March 2024.




We will also hold information sessions at:

Swalecliffe & Chestfield Community Association
18 January 2024, 5pm

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Seasalter Christian Centre
22 January 2024, 5pm

.....
Whitstable Umbrella Centre
1 February 2024, 5pm



-  Parished areas
-  CT5 area
-  Unparished Whitstable

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?

Have your say at [canterbury.gov.uk/consultations](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations)
or scan the QR code below

If you need a paper copy, please contact
consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

You can also respond to this consultation by emailing your comments
to consultations@canterbury.gov.uk or writing to:

Victoria Asimaki, Principal Policy Officer (Engagement)
Canterbury City Council
Military Road
Canterbury CT1 1YW



Give us your views before **Friday 1 March 2024**