

REPORT TO WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL 1st September 2026

By the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors for

Aylesford North and North Downs Ward
Councillors Dave Davis, Alex McDermott and Roger Dalton

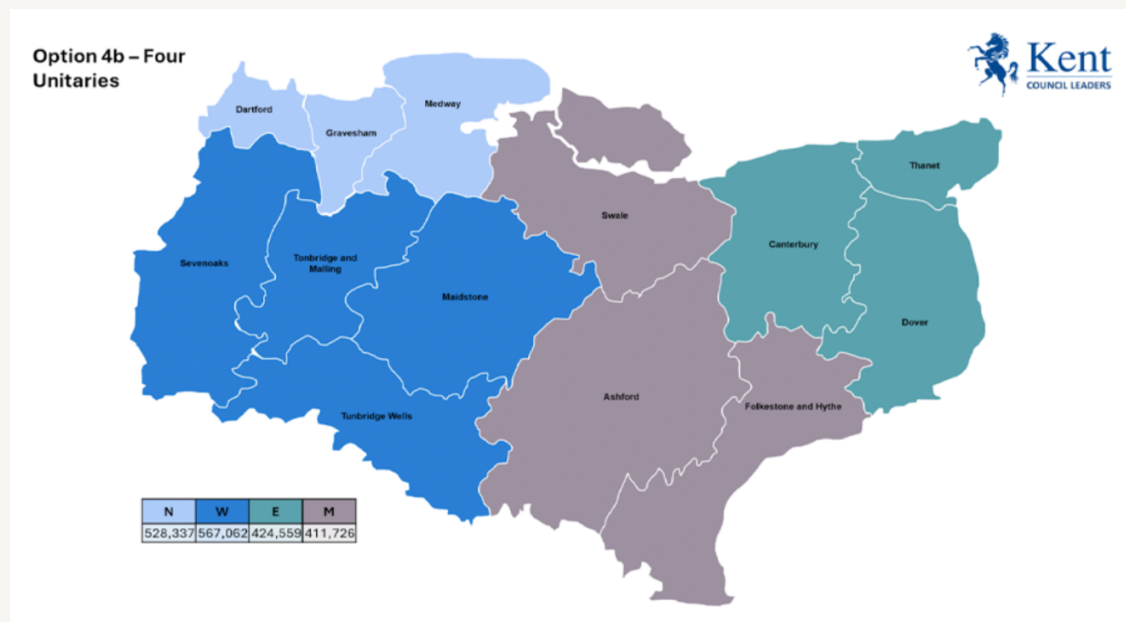
GENERAL

1. On the surface this has been a quiet period with little going on.
2. We have however attended a mass of briefings, on the new Local Plan being prepared for its final presentation to the TMBC Extraordinary Council Meeting on 3rd September, prior to going to the Regulation 19 Consultation. The briefings have been an opportunity for us councillors to raise concerns, about the detailed wording of the various policies, that are laid out in the Plan. This will be the final iteration of the Local Plan that will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate along with any public comments raised in the public consultation.
3. If passed by the Inspectorate, this Local Plan will be a key planning document used to decide planning applications by the new Unitary Authority. It will be a valid until that unitary authority produce their own Local Plan a number of years from now.

LOCAL GOVERNEMENT REORGANISATION

4. On Thursday 16th July, Government ministers decided that Kent and Medway will be served by four councils from April 2028, in the biggest shake up of local authority arrangements in 50 years.
5. The Government is replacing Kent County Council, Medway Council and the 12 district, borough and city councils that currently deliver services in the county with four new unitary councils.
6. Those councils will deliver all the services in their area, much like Medway Council does today, including education, social services, highways, libraries, emptying bins, leisure centres and housing services.
7. Following a government consultation which attracted around 3,000 responses, the Secretary of State has opted for Option 4b.

Option 4b



[View Business Case 4b](#)

The four unitary council option which stuck to existing boundaries and consisted of Dartford, Gravesham and Medway in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west; Swale, Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe in the middle of Kent and Canterbury, Thanet and Dover in the east has been supported by:

- Dover District Council
- Swale Borough Council
- Thanet District Council

8. · The 4 Councils are:

- A West Kent Unitary Council covering the areas currently served by Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.
- A North Kent Unitary Council covering Dartford, Gravesham and Medway in the north.
- A Mid Kent Unitary Council covering Swale, Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe in the centre of Kent.
- An East Kent Unitary Council covering Canterbury, Thanet and Dover in the east.

9. Leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Matt Boughton says:

“We welcome ministers’ decision to move forward with a four unitary council model for Kent and Medway. Throughout this process, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has consistently supported an approach based on strong

independent evidence that offers the best balance of high-quality, cost-effective services and alignment with local communities. We will now continue to work constructively with partners to ensure a smooth transition and the best possible outcomes for our residents.”

10. In a statement, Kent and Medway’s council leaders said:

“We want to reassure our residents that not one of our services will change overnight – you will still be dealing with the same council staff tomorrow and the day after that. The new councils will come into effect from 1 April 2028.

“All of the councils in Kent and Medway have a long history of working closely together to do the very best for the people we serve and that will not change one bit.

“This is the start of the process of bringing our different teams together with the aim of designing then delivering the best possible services for the people we serve. Of course, this change affects the thousands of council staff across the county who work incredibly hard day in and day out. Our focus will be supporting them through this change while helping them to carry on delivering our business-as-usual services seamlessly.

“There is a lot of work to do but we will make sure we take every opportunity to make our services the very best they can be.”

11. For more information visit: <https://kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/>

PLANING APPLICATION 21/01939/OAEA SOUTHERN EXTENSION

12. **Southern Extension to Peters Village.** We have asked the officers for an update on 21/01939/OAEA - Land Adjoining Scarborough Lane Burham and Peters Pit Hall Road that we know at the Southern Extension which appears to have lapsed. Enforcement Officers are looking into this and we will update you when they have completed their investigations.

13. This was very much in Trenport’s hands and as such any action will now be through their administrator.

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