

Summary and analysis of consultation responses and summary of representations from named consultees

Background

1. A statutory consultation on proposals for unitary local government in Kent and Medway was opened on 5 February and closed on 26 March 2026. We received a total of 3038 responses.
2. The five proposals being consulted on were made by councils and submitted to the Government on 28 November 2025.
3. This document provides a summary of the 3038 responses received to the Government's consultation on the proposals for future unitary local government in Kent and Medway.
4. The Government announced to Parliament on 16 July 2026 that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for **4 unitaries submitted by Dover District Council, Swale Borough Council and Thanet District Council**.
5. The consultation invited views on the proposal submitted by:
6. **Kent County Council proposed 1 unitary council comprising the current areas of:**
 - a) Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, and Medway

From here, this is referred to as the '1 unitary proposal'.

7. **Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council proposed 3 unitary councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**
 - a) North: Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, and Swale
 - b) West: Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, and Tunbridge Wells
 - c) East: Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, and Thanet

From here, this is referred to as the '3 unitary proposal'.

8. **Dover District Council, Swale Borough Council, and Thanet District Council proposed 4 unitary councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**

- a) North: Dartford, Gravesham, and Medway
- b) West: Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells
- c) Mid: Swale, Ashford, and Folkestone & Hythe
- d) East: Canterbury, Dover, and Thanet

From here, this is referred to as the '4 unitary proposal (Dover)'.

9. **Medway Council, Ashford Borough Council, and Canterbury City Council proposed 4 unitary councils. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**

- a) North Kent: Medway (98%), Gravesham (87%), Swale (81%), Dartford (78%), small parts of Tonbridge and Malling (3%), and Maidstone (2%)
- b) West Kent: Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling (61%), Dartford (22%), Gravesham (13%), and Medway (2%)
- c) East Kent: Canterbury, Dover, Thanet, Folkestone and Hythe (64%), and Swale (Faversham area 17%)
- d) Mid Kent: Ashford, Maidstone (98%), Folkestone and Hythe (36%), Tonbridge and Malling (36%), and Swale (3%)

From here, this is referred to as the '4 unitary proposal (Medway)'.

10. **Dartford Borough Council and Gravesham Borough Council proposed 5 unitary councils. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**

- a) North Kent: Dartford, Gravesham, Medway (25%), and Sevenoaks (18%)
- b) West Kent: Maidstone, Sevenoaks (82%), Tonbridge and Malling, and Tunbridge Wells
- c) East Kent: Canterbury, Swale (24%), and Thanet
- d) Mid Kent: Medway (75%) and Swale (76%)
- e) South Kent: Ashford, Dover, and Folkestone & Hythe

From here, this is referred to as the '5 unitary proposal'.

11. The consultation on these proposals has informed an assessment of the merits of each proposal. All the proposals have been considered carefully, alongside the responses received to this consultation, representations and any other relevant information, in assessing the proposals against the criteria before a judgement was taken on which proposal to implement.
12. The criteria by which proposals for local government reorganisation have been assessed are set out in the letter of invitation, sent to councils in area on 5

February 2025 [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The consultation asked questions relating to the criteria for each of the above proposals.

13. This consultation relates to the structure of local government in Kent and Medway. These proposals relate to England only.

Methodology

14. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 states that the Secretary of State may not implement a proposal unless they have consulted with every authority affected by the proposal and other such persons as they consider appropriate. Those councils and persons considered appropriate are hereafter referred to as 'named consultees'.
15. The list of named consultees is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
16. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (the Ministry) welcomed the views of any other persons or bodies interested in these proposals, including local residents, town and parish councils, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.
17. The Ministry used Citizen Space, a third-party consultation programme to collect responses. Citizen Space was open to both named consultees and all other interested parties. Further information on the statutory basis for, and methodology of, the consultation is provided on the [publication page](#).
18. Responses to the consultation were also received by email and letter.
19. The Ministry used a tool named Consult AI to assist in the analysis of responses. The AI tool identified themes present in the responses which Ministry officials have checked for accuracy. The tool did not have access to any personal data. All responses from named consultees were read by Ministry staff.
20. The department has conducted an evaluation of the Consult tool and concluded that Consult's theme mappings are consistent with human reviewers' assessments. For this consultation, human reviewers independently checked the theme assignments Consult had produced and likewise found that Consult's theme mappings were broadly consistent with the human reviewers.

Consultation Questions

21. Respondents answered the questions below using a five-point agree–disagree scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', with an additional 'don't know' option.
22. The questions were as follows:

- a) **Question 1:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?
- b) **Question 2:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?
- c) **Question 3:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?
- d) **Question 4:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of exceptional financial support?

As of 5 February 2026, within the Kent and Medway area, Medway Council had received in-principle Exceptional Financial Support to support their 2025/26 budget. This council will not necessarily be in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support in future financial years. Updates on Exceptional Financial Support can be found on the [Exceptional Financial Support gov.uk page](https://gov.uk/exceptional-financial-support)

- e) **Question 5:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?
- f) **Question 6:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?
- g) **Question 7:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?
- h) **Question 8:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?
- i) **Question 9:** If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1 - 8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.
- j) **Question 10:** This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for boundary change?
- k) **Question 11:** If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 10.

Summary of responses

23. There were 3038 responses to this consultation, 24 from named consultees and 3014 by other respondents.

Responses from named consultees

Named Consultee respondents	Number of Responses
Principal councils	7
Neighbouring councils	2
Strategic Authority	0
Health Bodies	2
Police and Fire	1
Education Bodies	5
Other Public Sector	1
Voluntary and Community Sector	0
Business Organisations	1
National Bodies	5
Other named consultees	0
Total named consultees	24

Responses from other respondents

<i>Other respondents</i>	Number of Responses
Individual living in Kent and Medway	2850
Individual not living in affected area or who did not specify their location	37
Organisation	127
Total other respondents	3014
Total responses (Including named consultees)	3038

Summary of findings

24. Tables in this report include numbers rounded to the nearest whole number, and as such, not all cumulative scores will equal 100%.
25. Respondents were invited to respond to 9 number multiple choice questions per proposal and could provide a rationale for their answers in a free text box. Where a proposal included boundary change, respondents were invited to answer an additional question and provide an additional free text response. The multiple choice questions invited respondents to state whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed/agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, somewhat disagreed/disagreed, strongly disagreed, or did not know when responding to a statement.
26. Quantitative scoring against specific questions was applied to responses submitted by email and post only where respondents provided explicit answers

based on the scale provided. No assumptions or inferred positions were applied to submissions that did not directly address those questions.

27. Responses received by email and post are not included in the respondent count for questions 9 and 11. A summary of the relevant views expressed in those responses against each criterion is included within the summary of free text responses for each respondent type.
28. In addition to this round of consultation, the Government undertook consultation on 6 other local government reorganisation areas between 19 November 2025 and 11 January 2026. One response received as part of that consultation is relevant to all local government reorganisation areas, including those in this round of consultation. A summary of the relevant views expressed in that response against each criterion is included within the summary of free text responses for that respondent type.
29. For the purposes of this document we have classified positive responses as strongly agree, somewhat agreed or agree and negative responses as somewhat disagree or disagree and strongly disagree.
30. The table below takes the average response across the multiple choice questions to provide an overall view of whether all respondents viewed a proposal positively or negatively.

All respondents

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 UA	21325	19%	71%	7%	2%
3 UA	19430	48%	40%	10%	2%
4 UA (Dover)	14657	32%	50%	15%	3%
4 UA (Medway)	19953	22%	66%	10%	3 %
5 UA	19523	24%	62%	11%	3%

31. Overall, the responses demonstrate a preference for the 3 unitary proposal. 48% of respondents to the 3 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 40% of respondents provided negative responses. 10% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The 4 unitary (Dover) performed as the second highest preference. This was then followed by the 5

unitary proposal and 4 unitary (Medway) performing similarly, and the 1 unitary proposal performing as the least preferred option.

Named consultees

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 UA	72	11%	56%	33%	0%
3 UA	64	17%	44%	39%	0%
4 UA (Dover)	56	0%	55%	45%	0%
4 UA (Medway)	90	23%	46%	31%	0%
5 UA	72	43%	18%	39%	0%

32. Overall, the responses from the named consultees demonstrate a preference for the 5 unitary proposal. 43% of respondents to the 5 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions whilst 18% of respondents provided negative responses. 39% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The 4 unitary (Medway) performed as the second preferred option amongst named consultees. This was then followed by the 3 unitary proposal, 1 unitary proposal, with the 4 unitary (Dover) proposal set out as the least preferred option amongst named consultees.

Individuals living in Kent and Medway

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 UA	20282	19%	71%	7%	2%
3 UA	18493	48%	40%	10%	2%
4 UA (Dover)	13914	32%	50%	15%	3%
4 UA (Medway)	18947	21%	66%	10%	3%
5 UA	18607	24%	62%	11%	2%

33. Overall, the responses from individuals living in Kent and Medway demonstrate a preference for the 3 unitary proposal. 48% of respondents to the 3 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 40% of respondents provided negative responses. 10% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The 1 unitary proposal was the least preferred option.

Individuals living outside of the affected area

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	272	28%	63%	6%	3%
3 Unitary	240	50%	41%	8%	2%
4 Unitary (Dover)	168	25%	54%	17%	4%
4 Unitary (Medway)	225	32%	54%	11%	2%
5 Unitary	216	21%	71%	6%	2%

34. Overall, the responses from individuals living outside of Kent and Medway demonstrate a preference for the 3 unitary proposal. 50% of respondents to the 3 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions while 41% of respondents provided negative responses. 10% of responses were neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The 4 unitary (Medway) performed as the second highest preference. The 5 unitary proposal was the least preferred option.

Organisations

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	699	8%	76%	11%	5%
3 Unitary	633	61%	26%	10%	3%
4 Unitary (Dover)	519	30%	44%	22%	3%
4 Unitary (Medway)	691	37%	7%	13%	4%
5 Unitary	628	18%	61%	16%	5%

35. Overall, the responses from organisations demonstrate a preference for the 3 unitary proposal. 61% of respondents to the 3 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 26% of respondents provided negative responses. 10% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. the 1 unitary was the least preferred option.

Analysis of responses by question

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Council 1 Unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Council 1 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Other named consultees 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	13%	50%	38%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	57%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	10	20%	50%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	50%	13%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 Unitary</i>	2542	26%	70%	4%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 Unitary</i>	2318	57%	38%	4%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	1989	40%	50%	10%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2108	24%	69%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 Unitary</i>	2076	29%	64%	7%	1%

<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 1 Unitary	34	41%	59%	0%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 3 Unitary	30	53%	43%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	24	46%	54%	0%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	25	40%	60%	0%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 5 Unitary	24	29%	71%	0%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> 1 Unitary	86	11%	77%	8%	3%
<i>Organisations</i> 3 Unitary	77	65%	26%	8%	1%
<i>Organisation</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	73	43%	41%	16%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	74	40 %	51%	8%	1%
<i>Organisations</i> 5 Unitary	69	21%	63%	13%	3%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses</i> 1 Unitary	2674	26%	70%	4%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> 3 Unitary	2439	58%	38%	4%	0%
<i>Total all responses</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	2096	40%	49%	10%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	2222	25%	68%	6%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> 5 Unitary	2180	29%	63%	7%	1%

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Council 1 Unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Council 1 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Other Named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	13%	50%	38%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	57%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	10	20%	50%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	50%	13%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 Unitary</i>	2534	21%	73%	5%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 Unitary</i>	2314	51%	39%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	1991	35%	50%	13%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2108	22%	67%	9%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 Unitary</i>	2072	25%	62%	11%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 Unitary</i>	34	26%	68%	3%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 3 Unitary</i>	30	53%	40%	7%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected</i>	24	33%	50%	17%	0%

area 4 Unitary (Dover)					
Individual living outside affected area 4 Unitary (Medway)	25	40%	52%	8%	0%
Individual living outside affected area 5 Unitary	24	29%	71%	0%	0%
Organisations 1 Unitary	87	9%	75%	11%	5%
Organisations 3 Unitary	79	63%	24%	10%	3%
Organisation 4 Unitary (Dover)	74	31%	43%	22%	4%
Organisations 4 Unitary (Medway)	77	36%	45%	13%	5%
Organisations 5 Unitary	70	16%	60%	19%	6%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses 1 Unitary	2664	20%	73%	6%	1%
Total all responses 3 Unitary	2431	52%	39%	8%	1%
Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)	2096	34%	50%	14%	2%
Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)	2220	22%	66%	10%	2%
Total all responses 5 Unitary	2174	25%	62%	11%	2%

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal Council 1 Unitary	5	20%	80%	0%	0%

Principal Council - 3 Unitary	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)	5	40%	60%	0%	0%
Principal Council 5 Unitary	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Council 1 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	25%	38%	38%	0%

Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	57%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	10	30%	40%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	50%	13%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 Unitary</i>	2536	22%	71%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 Unitary</i>	2310	51%	40%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	2	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2106	22%	65%	10%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 Unitary</i>	2071	25%	64%	9%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 Unitary</i>	34	29%	68%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 3 Unitary</i>	30	53%	40%	7%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	25	32%	56%	12%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 Unitary</i>	24	21%	75%	4%	0%

Organisations 1 Unitary	87	10%	76%	8%	6%
Organisations 3 Unitary	79	63%	27%	8%	3%
Organisation 4 Unitary (Dover)	1	0%	0%	0%	100%
Organisations 4 Unitary (Medway)	77	40%	47%	9%	4%
Organisations 5 Unitary	69	16%	62%	16%	6%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses 1 Unitary	2666	22%	71%	6%	1%
Total all responses 3 Unitary	2427	52%	40%	8%	1%
Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)	10	0%	60%	30%	10%
Total all responses 4 Unitary(Medway)	2218	23%	65%	10%	2%
Total all responses 5 Unitary	2172	25%	64%	9%	2%

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of exceptional financial support?

As of 5 February 2026, within the Kent and Medway area, Medway Council had received in-principle Exceptional Financial Support to support their 2025/26 budget. This council will not necessarily be in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support in future financial years. Updates on Exceptional Financial Support can be found on the [Exceptional Financial Support gov.uk page](#).

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal Council 1 Unitary	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
Principal Council 3 Unitary	4	25%	75%	0%	0%

Principal Council - 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
Principal Council 5 Unitary	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Council 1 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Princi pal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary(Medway)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 4 Unitary(Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	13%	50%	38%	0%
Total Named Consultees	7	0%	57%	43%	0%

4 Unitary (Dover)					
Total Named Consultees					
3 Unitary (Medway)	10	20%	50%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees					
5 Unitary	8	38%	25%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area					
1 Unitary	2537	20%	70%	8%	2%
Individual living in affected area					
3 Unitary	2315	45%	41%	12%	2%
Individual living in affected area					
4 Unitary (Dover)	1990	29%	52%	16%	3%
Individual living in affected area					
3 Unitary (Medway)	2108	20%	66%	11%	3%
Individual living in affected area					
5 Unitary	2067	23%	63%	12%	3%
Individual living outside affected area					
1 Unitary	34	29%	56%	6%	9%
Individual living outside affected area					
3 Unitary	30	53%	40%	3%	3%
Individual living outside affected area					
4 Unitary (Dover)	24	17%	58%	21%	4%
Individual living outside affected area					
4 Unitary (Medway)	25	32%	52%	12%	4%
Individual living outside affected area					
5 Unitary	24	13%	71%	13%	4%

Organisations 1 Unitary	88	8%	76%	13%	3%
Organisations 3 Unitary	79	57%	24%	14%	5%
Organisation 4 Unitary (Dover)	74	26%	43%	26%	5%
Organisations 4 Unitary (Medway)	76	34%	50%	12%	4%
Organisations 5 Unitary	70	16%	59%	19%	7%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses 1 Unitary	2668	20%	70%	8%	3%
Total all responses 3 Unitary	2432	46%	40%	12%	2%
Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)	2095	28%	52%	17%	3%
Total all responses 4 Unitary(Medway)	2219	21%	65%	11%	3%
Total all responses 5 Unitary	2169	22%	63%	12%	3%

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal Council 1 Unitary	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
Principal Council 3 Unitary	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
Principal Council - 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
Principal Council 4 Unitary(Medway)	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
Principal Council 5 Unitary	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Council	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

1 Unitary					
Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	13%	38%	50%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	57%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	10	20%	50%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees	8	38%	25%	38%	0%

5 Unitary					
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Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 1 Unitary	2532	18%	72%	8%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 3 Unitary	2311	45%	41%	13%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	1989	30%	52%	16%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	2099	20%	65%	12%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 5 Unitary	2065	23%	62%	13%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 1 Unitary	34	21%	68%	9%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 3 Unitary	30	50%	43%	7%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	24	29%	58%	13%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	25	36%	52%	12%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 5 Unitary	24	21%	75%	4%	0%

Organisations 1 Unitary	88	9%	75%	11%	5%
Organisations 3 Unitary	79	63%	24%	10%	3%
Organisation 4 Unitary (Dover)	74	27%	49%	22%	3%
Organisations 4 Unitary (Medway)	76	36%	42%	17%	5%
Organisations 5 Unitary	70	16%	64%	16%	4%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses 1 Unitary	2663	17%	72%	8%	2%
Total all responses 3 Unitary	2428	45%	40%	13%	2%
Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)	2094	30%	52%	16%	3%
Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)	2210	21%	64%	12%	3%
Total all responses 5 Unitary	2167	23%	62%	13%	2%

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal Council 1 Unitary	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
Principal Council 3 Unitary	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
Principal Council - 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
Principal Council 5 Unitary	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Council	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

1 Unitary					
Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

National Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	13%	50%	38%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	57%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	10	20%	50%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	38%	25%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 1 Unitary	2533	15%	75%	7%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 3 Unitary	2309	43%	45%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	1982	28%	53%	16%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 3 Unitary (Medway)	2104	18%	68%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 5 Unitary	2060	22%	64%	11%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 1 Unitary	34	26%	68%	6%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 3 Unitary	30	40%	43%	13%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	24	13%	54%	25%	8%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	25	20%	48%	24%	8%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 5 Unitary	24	13%	75%	4%	8%
<i>Organisations</i> 1 Unitary	87	3%	82%	10%	5%
<i>Organisations</i> 3 Unitary	79	53%	28%	16%	3%
<i>Organisation</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	74	23%	47%	28%	1%
<i>Organisations</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	77	36%	49%	12%	3%
<i>Organisations</i> 5 Unitary	70	17%	69%	10%	4%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 Unitary</i>	2664	19%	64%	13%	5%
<i>Total all responses 3 Unitary</i>	2419	46%	36%	14%	4%
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	2091	31%	46%	19%	4%
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2214	22%	59%	14%	5%
<i>Total all responses 5 Unitary</i>	2168	24%	56%	16%	4%

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Council 1 Unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council - 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	5	40%	60%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Council 1 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	4	25%	0%	75%	0%

<i>Education Bodies</i> 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector</i> 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector</i> 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector</i> 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies</i> 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies</i> 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies proposal</i> 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies</i> 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies</i> 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>National Bodies</i> <i>4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies</i> <i>4 Unitary</i> <i>(Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies</i> <i>5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named</i> <i>consultees</i> <i>1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named</i> <i>consultees</i> <i>3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other</i> <i>named consultees</i> <i>4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named</i> <i>consultees</i> <i>4 Unitary</i> <i>(Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named</i> <i>consultees</i> <i>5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	25%	38%	38%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	57%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary (Medway)	10	30%	40%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	50%	13%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 1 Unitary	2534	19%	64%	12%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 3 Unitary	2302	46%	36%	14%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	1986	31%	46%	18%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	2102	22%	59%	14%	5%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 5 Unitary	2066	24%	56%	16%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 1 Unitary	34	26%	56%	12%	6%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 3 Unitary	30	50%	40%	3%	7%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	24	17%	54%	21%	8%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	25	32%	44%	16%	8%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 5 Unitary	24	21%	63%	8%	8%
<i>Organisations</i> 1 Unitary	87	10%	67%	15%	8%
<i>Organisations</i> 3 Unitary	79	59%	25%	10%	5%
<i>Organisation</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	74	28%	43%	24%	4%
<i>Organisations</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	77	36%	44%	14%	5%
<i>Organisations</i> 5 Unitary	70	21%	60%	13%	6%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 Unitary</i>	2664	19%	64%	13%	5%
<i>Total all responses 3 Unitary</i>	2419	46%	36%	14%	4%
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	2091	31%	46%	19%	4%
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary(Medway)</i>	2214	22%	59%	14%	5%
<i>Total all responses 5 Unitary</i>	2168	24%	56%	16%	4%

Question 8 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Council 1 Unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	3	0%	67%	33%	0%
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary(Medway)</i>	5	40%	60%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Council 1 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 3 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

4 Unitary (Medway)					
Neighbouring Principal Council					
5 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 1 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies	4	25%	0%	75%	0%

4 Unitary (Medway)					
Education Bodies 5 Unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies proposal 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 1 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>National Bodies 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 3 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 Unitary	9	11%	56%	33%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	8	25%	38%	38%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Dover)	7	0%	43%	57%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary (Medway)	10	30%	40%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	50%	13%	38%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 1 Unitary	2532	15%	77%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 3 Unitary	2311	45%	43%	11%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	1983	34%	51%	14%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	2104	21%	67%	10%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 5 Unitary	2065	26%	60%	12%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 1 Unitary	34	24%	65%	12%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 3 Unitary	30	47%	37%	17%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	24	21%	50%	25%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	25	28%	60%	12%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 5 Unitary	24	25%	67%	8%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> 1 Unitary	88	5%	81%	10%	5%
<i>Organisations</i> 3 Unitary	79	59%	30%	8%	3%
<i>Organisation</i> 4 Unitary (Dover)	74	34%	45%	19%	3%
<i>Organisations</i> 4 Unitary (Medway)	77	36%	48%	13%	3%
<i>Organisations</i> 5 Unitary	70	21%	61%	13%	4%

Total Responses Question

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 Unitary</i>	2663	15%	77%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 3 Unitary</i>	2428	45%	42%	11%	1%
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	2088	33%	50%	14%	2%
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2216	22%	66%	10%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 Unitary</i>	2167	26%	60%	12%	2%

Question 9: If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1- 8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>Total Named consultees</i>	<i>Total Individuals living in area</i>	<i>Total individuals not in area</i>	<i>Total Organisation</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 Unitary</i>	5	1472	19	53
<i>Total all responses 3 Unitary</i>	5	1221	13	51
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Dover)</i>	7	976	9	41
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	9	1124	12	46
<i>Total all responses 5 Unitary</i>	8	1042	11	44

36. We also received 112 responses by email and post. 15 were from named consultees, 91 were from individuals living in the area, 6 were from individuals not in area or who did not specify their location, 31 were from organisations. A summary of the views shared in these responses is included within the summaries below.

Summary of named consultee responses

37. Principal Councils

Responses from principal councils supported the proposals that they put forward. There was no additional support for the 1 unitary, with concern expressed regarding the size of the council, lack of capacity to address diverse

need, and loss of local identity. Some responses also set out significant concern with 4 unitaries (Medway) due to the complexity of boundary change. A number of councils did not respond to the consultation, instead they sent a representation setting out their preference for 3 unitaries after the consultation had closed.

38. Neighbouring principal councils

There were two responses from neighbouring principal councils. One expressed a preference for the 1 unitary. One expressed a preference for the 5 unitary.

39. Strategic authorities

There were no responses to the consultation from Strategic Authorities.

40. Health Bodies

Two health bodies responded. One health body remained neutral, and their response focused on maintaining existing partnerships, the importance of place-based working, and future arrangements to reflect local circumstances. One health partner favoured the 1 unitary and the 3 unitary which align with NHS footprints. The response highlighted the risk of increased complexity, cost and disruption particularly in relation to proposals which cut across key NHS footprints.

41. Other public sector

One other public sector body responded. The response remained neutral and did not comment on specific proposals.

42. Education Bodies

Five education bodies responded. The responses either remained neutral and did not comment on the merits of a specific proposal or they set out a preference for 4 unitary (Medway). Many stressed the need for future joint working and accelerated devolution.

43. Voluntary and Community Sector

There were no responses to the consultation from voluntary and community sector organisations.

44. Business Bodies

One business body responded. Responses remained neutral but highlighted risks for businesses across Kent and Medway with an absence of devolution.

Comments against the criteria

45. For criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government:

- a) There was concern that the scale of the 1 unitary would be too large and centralised to address local need and would overlook the diversity of the region, particularly in coastal areas.

- b) There was some concern that the 3 unitary would create unitaries too large to deliver local services, although named consultees expressed support for the 3 unitary proposal due to the alignment service partner footprints.
- c) There was concern expressed regarding uneven economic profiles in 4 unitary (Medway), which do not reflect local identity and split up travel to work areas, particularly around the establishment of a boundary along the M2.
- d) There was some concern that the 4 unitary (Dover) may create uneven economic profiles which risks widening economic disparities and inequalities and creates challenge in balancing service demand across the area.
- e) There was also concern that the 5 unitary proposal created unitaries which are too small and may hinder their ability to generate economies of scale and restrict financial resilience.

46. For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks:

- a) There was concern that the size and scale of the 1 unitary risked centralisation, slow decision making, and inability to be agile with services to reflect diverse need.
- b) There was support for the 3 unitary, as it created unitaries of the necessary scale to absorb shocks and manage rising demand while remaining locally responsive. However, other respondents noted concern that proposed geographies created an uneven level of service demand across east and west Kent.
- c) There was concern that the 4 unitary (Dover) may create uneven economic profiles, particularly in terms of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), financial resilience and operational costs.
- d) There was concern that the 4 unitary (Medway) created uneven economic profiles and significant population imbalance.
- e) There was also concern expressed regarding the size of the 5 unitary, and that it would have a limited funding base, restrict financial resilience, and an inability to manage service demand.

47. For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens:

- a) Some respondents noted that the 1 unitary would avoid service disaggregation and support partnership working, though other respondents' concern's noted challenge in maintaining responsiveness to partners of need across a single unitary.
- b) There was support noted for the 3 unitary proposal with named consultees considering it to be coherent and sustainable for integrated service delivery, allowing for collaboration and joint planning. Alignment to existing service, partnership and emergency planning geographies is also noted.

- c) Some concerns were expressed that smaller unitaries within the 4 unitary (Dover) risked embedding disparities, though noted that risk to service delivery in this proposal was less than that in the 4 unitary (Medway) due to less complexity in boundary changes.
 - d) For the 5 unitary, concern with uneven service demand, inequality of population sizes and significant sustainability challenges for smaller unitary authorities was expressed.
48. **For criteria 4: Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views:**
- (a) There was limited comment on local need and engagement in regards to all proposals. Responses did note the importance of maintaining strong local accountability and community identity across all proposals.
49. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:**
- a) Many respondents noted significant concerns that the 1 unitary proposal will not support devolution and would therefore block opportunities presented through local government reorganisation.
 - b) Some respondents noted that the 3 unitary proposal creates sufficient size and scale to enable strategic discussion across the combined authority and key partners.
 - c) Responses did not provide significant responses to the 4 unitary (Dover) and 4 unitary (Medway) .
 - d) There were concerns regarding the size, capacity and limited budget of the unitaries of the 5 unitary proposal, noting the 48% population variation between proposed North and West Kent, which would not align with the government's devolution ambitions
50. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:**
- a) There was concern expressed regarding the size of the electorate in the 1 unitary proposal which respondents felt would create unmanageable councillor ratios, reduced accountability and the potential for a democratic deficit.
 - b) There was also concern raised regarding the larger structures in the 3 unitary which may result in democratic deficit and weaker community consensus, and diminished local accountability.
 - c) Respondents noted that community engagement would be stronger in the 4 unitary options than the 1 unitary and 3 unitary proposals.
 - d) Responses noted that the 5 unitary proposal would enable stronger community engagement than that in larger unitaries.

The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

51. **Risk to local identity and reduction in democratic accountability:** Responses indicated concerns about the creation of larger authorities eroding local identity, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. and reducing democratic accountability and representation.
52. **Concern about centralisation, bureaucracy and service remoteness:** Concern regarding centralisation and an increase in bureaucracy, making decision making more remote, and resulting in less responsiveness and less efficient services, particularly for rural and diverse communities across Kent and Medway.
53. **Difficulty addressing diverse local needs with a single authority:** Some respondents expressed concern that a single unitary will neglect the unique needs, prioritises and identities of diverse communities across Kent and Medway.
54. **Financial risk and doubts about efficiency:** Some respondents expressed scepticism that reorganisation will deliver promised efficiencies or cost savings and could create financial instability and may result in higher taxes or reduced frontline services.
55. **Fragmentation and decline in service quality:** Concerns were raised that changes could disrupt services and reduce their quality, especially for vulnerable and rural communities, that reorganisation may cause short-term disruption to important services and may not fix existing problems.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

56. Across responses, recurring themes included the importance of maintaining strong local accountability and community identity; the perceived trade-off between scale, efficiency and closeness to communities; and the need for clarity about governance arrangements below the unitary level (including the role of town and parish councils and any area-based or neighbourhood arrangements). Many respondents raised questions about financial resilience, transition costs and the distribution of legacy debt, alongside concern about the ability of new councils to sustain demand-led services such as adult social care, children's services and SEND. Some respondents argued that larger geographies could offer greater strategic capacity, consistent service standards and stronger commissioning and partnership working. Some respondents specifically highlighted border-related pressures and countywide infrastructure as reasons to avoid fragmentation. Others raised concerns that a single county-wide council could be too remote, and that creating several councils could better reflect distinct local areas and travel-to-work patterns. Responses were mixed on proposals that would split existing district areas, with concerns raised about complexity, disruption and potential confusion for residents and partners.

Question 10: This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change or that affects wider public services. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for boundary change?

This question and question 11 were asked in relation to the 4 unitary proposal (Medway) and 5 unitary proposal.

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	4	50%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Council 5 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
<i>Education Bodies</i>	3	0%	0%	100%	0%

5 Unitary					
Other Public Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 5 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 Unitary (Medway)	10	20%	40%	40%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 Unitary	8	25%	25%	50%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> <i>4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2106	19%	70%	8%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area</i> <i>5 Unitary</i>	2063	21%	66%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> <i>4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	25	32%	64%	4%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> <i>5 Unitary</i>	24	17%	75%	8%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	77	34%	43%	19%	4%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>5 Unitary</i>	69	16%	55%	23%	6%

Total Responses Question 10

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
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<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	2218	20%	69%	8%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 Unitary</i>	2164	21%	66%	11%	3%

Question 11: If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 10.

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>Total Named consultees</i>	<i>Total Individuals living in area</i>	<i>Total individuals not in area</i>	<i>Total Organisation</i>
<i>Total all responses 4 Unitary (Medway)</i>	6	873	9	39
<i>Total all responses 5 Unitary</i>	4	785	8	34

57. We also received 112 responses by email and post. 15 were from named consultees, 91 were from individuals living in the area, 6 were from individuals not in the area or they did not specify their location, 31 were from organisations. A summary of the views relevant to this question shared in these responses is included within the summaries below.

Summary of Local Government Boundary Commission (The Commission) Response

58. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England provided observations on the evidence provided to support the boundary change request within the 4 unitary (Medway) proposal and the 5 unitary proposal drawing on its Principal Area Boundary Review expertise. It considered the evidence in proposals as it related to the identity and interests of local communities, and the promotion of effective and convenient local government. The Commission observed that neither proposal provided direct evidence to support the precise boundaries proposed, other than the general principle of establishing smaller councils. The Commission noted the complexity of some of the boundary changes in both proposals, particularly noting that the 4 (Medway) proposal would split several parishes, which would need to be addressed to ensure that all parishes, whether under existing or revised boundaries, are in a single unitary area.

Summary of named consultee responses

59. Principal Councils

- a) Responses noted additional complexity and risk introduced by boundary changes and highlight increased costs, particularly in relation to splitting up of parishes. Respondents also noted significant concerns created through complex boundary change, notably service disruption,

inconsistency and reduced resilience which will directly impacting frontline service delivery and wider public service partner agencies.

60. Neighbouring principal councils

- a) One response set out that the boundary change within the 5 unitary proposal creates coherent place-based geographies which reflect travel-to-work patterns and local economies. There were no further significant comments on boundary change from neighbouring principal councils.

61. Strategic Authorities

- a) No strategic authorities responded to the consultation.

62. Health and Police Bodies

- a) Health and Police bodies generally disagreed with both 4 unitary (Medway) and 5 unitary proposal, with significant concerns to service delivery and risk of disruption due to the complexity associated with the scale of boundary change.

63. Other public sector

- a) Responses did not provide comment on boundary change in either proposal.

64. Education Bodies

- a) Most responses did not comment on the boundary change, although one respondent noted that the boundary change within the 4 unitary (Medway) would create unitaries which reflect genuine communities and provides the scale needed for sustainable, high-quality public services.

65. Voluntary and Community Sector

- a) No Voluntary and Community Sector responded to the consultation.

66. Business Bodies

- a) Responses did not comment on boundary change in either proposal.

Comments against the criteria

67. For criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government:

- a) Views expressed against this criterion were largely negative for the 4 unitary (Medway). Respondents considered that the significant scale and complexity of boundary change, arguing that it was not justified, and would create economic and geographical imbalance, which would disproportionately impact West Kent.
- b) There were mixed views among respondents in relation to the 5 unitary proposal, with some expressing the view that the councils would be too small noting concerns about additional cost and complexity. While some considered that the boundary changes proposed made sense by

enabling councils to be built around coherent geographies and natural communities.

68. **For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks:**
- a) In relation to 4 unitary (Medway) respondents set out concerns regarding population imbalance and uneven economic profiles and financial and transitional risks.
 - b) In relation to 5 unitary, some respondents noted that the size of the proposed unitaries would create a limited funding base and restrict financial resilience. Others noted Kent's growth potential, which will allow unitaries to harmonise population numbers.
69. **For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens:**
- a) Views expressed concern regarding the impact of scale and complexity of boundary change in the 4 unitary (Medway) which would impact service delivery and risk disruption. While there was some recognition of the benefits of aligning boundaries such that authorities can better meet the needs of residents.
 - b) In the 5 unitary proposal, some respondents highlighted concerns that the unitaries are too small to deliver high quality, sustainable public services and cut across key NHS footprints.
70. **For criteria 4: Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views:** Some respondents raised concerns that local views had not been considered in relation to boundary change in either proposal.
71. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:** Comments on boundary change did not relate to criterion 5.
72. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Comments on boundary change did not relate to criterion 6.

The themes identified by the AI tool for the 4 unitary (Medway) proposal were as follows:

73. **Increased costs and administrative burden:** There were concerns that boundary changes are likely to raise costs, add unnecessary complexity, and introduce financial risks without guaranteeing improved services or savings.
74. **Lack of clear justification for boundary changes:** Respondents felt the proposal lacks sufficient evidence or strong rationale, especially regarding improvements to public services and financial sustainability.
75. **Negative impact on community identity and cohesion:** There were concerns that boundary changes may divide established communities, erode local identity, reduce representation, and disrupt community cohesion.

76. **Support for modern boundaries and improved services:** Respondents were positive about new boundaries that could better reflect current communities and service needs, potentially improving service delivery and resource allocation if implemented thoughtfully.
77. **Preference for maintaining existing boundaries:** Respondents felt that retaining current boundaries or making minimal changes is seen as less disruptive, more cost-effective, and better for preserving local identity and service integration.

The themes identified by the AI tool for the 5 unitary proposal were as follows:

78. **Increased costs, complexity, and bureaucracy:** There were concerns that proposed boundary changes are likely to raise administrative complexity, costs, and bureaucracy, potentially leading to inefficiency, higher taxes, and reduced resources for frontline services.
79. **Lack of clear justification and evidence for changes:** Respondents felt that the proposal does not provide convincing evidence or a strong rationale for boundary changes, with insufficient analysis and unclear benefits regarding public services or financial sustainability.
80. **Preference for retaining current boundaries:** There was a preference for retaining existing boundaries or making minimal changes, as current arrangements are seen as effective and further alterations are viewed as unnecessary and disruptive.
81. **Negative impact on communities and local identity:** There were concerns that boundary changes could disrupt established communities, undermine local identity and cohesion, and reduce local representation and democratic accountability.
82. **Specific local concerns and exceptions:** Respondents highlighted particular issues relating to localities such as opposition to splitting Medway or merging certain areas.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

83. Respondents expressed concerns about, or opposition to, splitting existing district, borough, parish and community boundaries. Many considered that existing boundaries provide clearer and more coherent geographies. Some respondents argued that proposed district splits could weaken community identity, reduce accountability, increase complexity and create challenges for service delivery and implementation. Some respondents questioned whether the proposed geographies reflected natural communities, local service patterns or functional economic areas, particularly where rural and urban areas would be combined. A smaller number of respondents supported boundary changes where they were considered necessary to create sustainable unitary councils, improve strategic alignment or strengthen local governance. Many respondents did not express a clear view on boundary change, while overall views were mixed, with concerns raised about district splits, community identity, representation and deliverability.

