

Swale Youth Forum



Wednesday 20th June 2018
Council Chamber, Swale House
09:30-12:30

Schools:	Delegates from Westlands Academy, Sittingbourne Community College, Abbey School, Isle of Sheppey Oasis Academy and Borden Grammar School.
In Attendance:	Mayor Cllr Samuel Koffie-Williams, Cllr Ken Ingleton, Cllr Nicholas Hampshire, Sophia Ramm (SBC), Daniel Quinn (SBC), Dean Radmore (SBC), Mark Pearson (Group Violence), Alex Wilkes (Duke of Edinburgh Award), Mark Pearson (Excelsior Safeguarding), Anna Stonor (SBC); on behalf of Alan Best (SBC), Stephanie Curtis (SBC); on behalf of Brooke Buttfeld (SBC)
Apologies:	Fulston Manor School, Cllr Andrew Bowles, Cllr Mike Henderson

NO	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Welcome, Introductions and apologies	
1.1	The Chair of the Forum, Mayor Cllr Samuel Koffie-Williams, Cllr Ken Ingleton and Cllr Nicholas Hampshire welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Minutes and Actions from Last Meeting	
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were checked for their accuracy and were agreed as correct.	
3.	Swale Youth Forum Promotional Video	
3.1	The newly created video promoting the Swale Youth Forum was showcased, and all of the members of the Forum showed their support for the video and agreed to help promote the video and the Forum itself within their schools.	
4.	Duke of Edinburgh Award	
4.1	Alex Wilkes introduced himself and asked the Swale Youth Forum to discuss amongst themselves about their existing knowledge of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Most of the Forum had heard of the Award and knew that it promoted positive values amongst young people including confidence and team	

	<p>building skills; however few knew about the Award’s programme in any great detail. Alex explained that despite 80% of Kent schools offering the DoE Award, only 25% of schools in Swale offered the DoE Award. He then asked the Forum to consider the following two questions;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What could Alex do to help to bring the DoE Award to Swale? 2. What could the Swale Youth Forum do to help bring the DoE Award to Swale schools? <p>After some conferring, the Forum generally agreed that a combination of DoE Award awareness raising events (such as coming into schools which do not currently offer the Award and hosting presentations) and getting previous local DoE Award participants to voice their reasons for completing the programme and to encourage young people to participate.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration</p>	
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Dean Radmore explained that he was the scheme manager for the works currently going on during the Sittingbourne Town Centre (STC) regeneration. After briefly explaining what the construction industry does and civil engineering as a whole, Dean then explained that there were main six areas for the STC regeneration. These are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residential zones at the Cockleshell Walk car park area. 2. Residential zones at the Spring Street car park area. 3. An additional residential zone. 4. The newly created square, christened ‘Bourne Place’ after a public poll is now under way with planned developments including multiple restaurants (most recently announced being Nando’s, with more TBA) a new cinema (run by The Light) and a new hotel (Travelodge) for visitors to the area. 5. A new Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) located on St. Michael’s Road, opposite Kwik Fit. The new MSCP which began construction earlier in the year will be 5 floors and host to over 300 spaces and aims to provide a source of car parking for visitors to the STC; which are likely to increase as a result of the regeneration. 6. The new Princes Street Retail Park which is now mostly finished containing 3 retailers; Food Warehouse (open), Home Bargains (due to be opened on the 30th June) and a drive through Costa Coffee (due to be opened on 5th 	

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	<p>July)</p> <p>Phase 1: mid 2017 - Dec 2017 Phase 2: 12th June lasting for 4 months – Roadworks surrounding the station</p> <p>Phases 3 and 4 will follow but are yet to be specifically programmed, as this will depend on how the current Phase progresses.</p> <p>Dean Radmore then took questions from the Forum and explained the Spirit of Sittingbourne partnership (Swale Borough Council, U+I plc and Quinn Estates) as a regular source of information at spirit@swale.gov.uk. if any additional information was required.</p>	
6.	Group Violence Workshop	
6.1	<p>Mark Pearson of Excelsior Safeguarding introduced the work the CIC does, a non for profit organisation which provides help and support to vulnerable young people and adults which are affected by Group Violence (Gangs), drugs and other forms of exploitation; such as Human Trafficking, CSE and Extremism. Mark advised the Forum of the fact that across the UK, attacks involving knives, firearms and acid are becoming increasingly common as a direct result of organised crime.</p> <p>Excelsior Safeguarding run the ‘Need to Know’ programme, an initiative designed to make young people aware of the risks of gang violence, across Kent at a wide range of primary and secondary schools. Mark then gave the Forum an oversight on the pressing issue of organised crime, which is believed to be consistently rising, with a particular focus on ‘county lines’ activity with drug running from the capital having a knock-on effect for neighbouring counties, Kent and Surrey.</p> <p>There has also been a significant increase in the number of children, drug users, mentally ill and physically disabled individuals which are specifically targeted by gangs for recruitment. Mark also provided an insight into common ways young people are exploited to join gangs and on the most likely reasons young people join gangs, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protection. ● Friend in the gang. ● Money. ● Respect. 	

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	<p>Mark also took many questions from the SYF which covered a range of topics, particularly involving on how young people can avoid being 'groomed' into gangs and what to do if a young person they know is at risk of entering a gang. Mark also offered his contact details if there were any further questions and mentioned that the Voice Out Programme offered by Excelsior Safeguarding acts as a direct line for young people to voice their concerns, and would be a useful tool if any members of the Swale Youth Forum had identified areas of concern amongst their local schools.</p>	
7.	Break	
8.	Local Plan	
8.1	<p>Anna Stonor explained what a local plan is and they are used by district authorities in preparing the local area for future planning applications and developments. Anna Stonor also outlined the process of the adoption of a new local plan which are created by a local council after community consultation and are approved by Government Planning Inspectors; and informed the Forum that the last local plan adopted by Swale Borough Council was done so in July 2017. Anna Stonor then went on to say that the Government now requires that local authorities update their local plan every 5 years. In response to this, Swale Borough Council recently ran 'Looking Ahead', a public consultation in order to give the public the chance to state their views on how to shape the Borough for the future. The consultation which has since closed saw only 8% of replies from 18-29 year olds and only 2% of responses from students.</p> <p>In order to ensure that young people in Swale's views were accurately represented, the Council has decided to run another questionnaire just for young people. This questionnaire was then handed out and completed by all members of the Swale Youth Forum. Copies of the questionnaire were forwarded to each of the present school's teachers so that they could promote the questionnaire at their respective schools, and the Forum agreed to help promote the questionnaire as much as possible. The questionnaire may be completed by hand and sent to the Council's offices (Swale House) or on an online link at https://swale-consult.objective.co.uk/public/la/youth_questionnaire and is due to close on the 6th July.</p>	
9.	White Ribbon Campaign	

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9.1	<p>Stephanie Curtis gave an update on update on the White Ribbon campaign since Swale Borough Council made their pledge. Stephanie explained that the national White Ribbon campaign aims to tackle male violence towards women and that the Council has taken significant steps towards reducing this serious issue within the Borough; including new and improved community safety measures, signing the White Ribbon campaign pledge, and encourage male staff at all levels to become 'White Ribbon ambassadors' in order to help make a difference (note that the female equivalent at the White Ribbon organisation is to become a 'Champion'). Stephanie ended the presentation by saying that the goal is to make Swale a safe area for all and that the end game is to make Swale a 'White Ribbon Borough'.</p>	
10	Hot Topics	
10.1	<p>Opportunity for delegates to raise and discuss key issues affecting young people in their school & wider area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Forum raised an issue of local public transportation (specifically buses and trains) being too expensive. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Forum advised that Cllr Mike Whiting is actively exploring the issue of buses as part of his role as Kent County Council (KCC) member for transport and environment; the Forum was advised to contact him for bus specific issues. The Forum was also made aware that any railway issues would be outside of Swale Borough Council's scope as the fares are monitored by the Government. 2. The Forum raised concerns over lack of things to do in Swale for young people. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Forum was advised to research local clubs and activities as well as planning their own events using local parks etc. b. The Forum also received an update on Sittingbourne skatepark; construction is planned to begin on the 23rd July and is a 16 week program. 3. The Forum stated that they were concerned over youth unemployment and lack of work experience opportunities. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This problem is affecting the country as a whole and not just Swale. However the Swale Youth Forum were advised of steps they could take to help increase their chances of finding 	<p>Invite Cllr Mike Whiting to attend the next SYF to answer questions on public transportation and highways.</p> <p>Sophia to circulate summer scheme timetable.</p> <p>Kelly Wynn (KCC, New House Youth Club) to look at launching a girls club.</p> <p>Sophia to look at someone to provide an update on Neats Court</p>

<p>opportunities, which included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your local school’s career advice service. • Make use of networking both inside and outside school. • Consider looking outside the Borough if the career which you are seeking has little or no opportunities in the local area. <p>4. Safety issue surrounding local parks due to litter particularly with drugs and waste products of these illegal substances</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Report any sites of litter to the Council so that in addition to being able to clear any present waste, the Council may also be able to build an image of hotspots where this is a particular issue, so that further measures may be taken. b. Due to a change of legislation, Swale Borough Council has also recently been able to increase the fine for littering from £80 to £150; a move which hopes to deter potential litterers as well as more harshly penalise offenders. <p>5. Some members of the Forum objected to differences between school uniforms issued; a particular issue was that some schools disallowed girls to wear ties and trousers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Unfortunately the Council was unable to assist in this issue, as school uniform policy is set by the schools themselves. <p>6. Concerns were voiced over the number of potholes across Swale’s roads, particularly in the Sittingbourne area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advised to contact Cllr Mike Whiting, member for transport and environment at KCC. b. Informed that KCC and Highways England have recently undertaken a ‘potholes blitz’ along the A249 between the Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne. c. Members of the Swale Youth Forum also advised to report locations of potholes to KCC as these can be earmarked for repair. <p>7. Matter of lack of public transport across the Isle of Sheppey to the less accessible areas of the Island raised to Cllrs; particularly problematic areas included Eastchurch and Leysdown.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advised to contact Mike Whiting, KCC b. Informed that transport operators will axe routes that are not deemed economically viable, so due 	<p>to the Forum</p>
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<p>to supply and demand to remote areas being unbalanced, this is likely to be an argument against new bus routes etc.</p> <p>8. Cllrs queried on whether planned housing sites in Swale would affect the current traffic situation when completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Inevitably once houses are completed and individuals move in, the traffic situation will progressively deteriorate if appropriate measures are not undertaken; such as moves to increase the volume of traffic the roads can handle or improvements to public transportation.b. With any development, the effect of the project on traffic is considered during the planning stage in both the short term (during construction) and long term (once the project is complete).c. Highways England are also undertaking an ambitious upgrade project to the M2 Junction 5, which will benefit Swale particularly in reducing the journey times due to increased effectiveness of traffic management measures (the introduction of a flyover being the flagship element of the project). <p>9. Issue raised about a lack of sports facilities in Swale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Advised the Forum of key existing sports facilities across Swale (I.e. playing fields, leisure centres swimming pools)b. New housing development contracts often require the inclusion of leisure and sports facilities before planning permission is granted.c. Recommended to contact both SBC and KCC with ideas for new sports facilities, with the case study of the Sittingbourne skatepark being given as an example of how the local youth can potentially influence developments. <p>10. The Forum was concerned over the numbers of Swale youths taking up smoking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Schools often promote the risks of smoking although arguably more could be done to further educate pupils.b. Advised that if this is occurring on school property then this is against the rules of the school, and should be reported to the relevant authority at the school for them to enforce.c. Cllr Hampshire made the point that ultimately it is down to the individual to make an informed decision about whether to smoke. <p>11. What has Swale Borough Council achieved in the past 5</p>	
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years and what does Swale Borough Council hope to achieve in the next 5 years?

- a. Swale Borough Council has helped make the Swale area an attractive place to live, with new developments and regeneration efforts being made across the Borough. Cllr Hampshire also highlighted the fact that Swale also features some of the lowest Council Tax rates in Kent.
- b. Swale Borough Council will continue to make progress with the Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration and Sittingbourne skatepark, and plans to focus on other areas in the Borough as soon as this is completed.

12. Some members of the Forum were concerned over the safety of cyclists who travel between the Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne, due to a variety of issues with traffic.

- a. There are currently talks to improve infrastructure in this area of Swale as well as improving cycling access across the Borough entirely; potential ideas including cycle hire schemes, new routes and upgrading existing routes.

13. A number of the Swale Youth Forum felt that there was a lack of things to do in Swale that specifically catered for teenage girls.

- a. Suggested to contact SBC with ideas that would be suitable as the Council does not currently know what events or attractions would be suitable.
- b. Also alerted to the fact that New House Youth Centre in particular have trialled events in the past designed to specifically cater to the teenage girl demographic, however at the time there was a lack of uptake to justify continuing the programmes; advised to contact the club directly.

14. An idea was motioned by the Swale Youth Forum to establish a club which would have branches in each of Swale's main towns (Faversham, Sheerness and Sittingbourne), which would aim to unify young people across Swale.

- a. There are many clubs which exist across Swale, and effort is being made to coordinate their activities and events so that they are better unified across the Swale Borough.

15. Following on from the previously raised issue of lack of things to do for teenage girls in Swale (Question number 13), it was stated there was a lack of Women's Football clubs or football clubs that accepted women, in Swale.

- a. Forum advised on the existence of the Swale

<p>Ladies F.C. organisation. Added that if it is thought to be a lack of appropriate clubs, then members of the Forum could help (along with suitable adults; such as parents or teachers) to establish new clubs.</p> <p>16. Not enough retail units for newly planned housing sites; both in terms of shopping in Swale and employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Planning applications have considered this, and in the case of Sittingbourne Town Centre, Sites 4-6 have been undertaken before Sites 1-3 so that appropriate progress is made before housing developments begin.b. However it was agreed that there was a need to hold housing developers to account where developments involving areas other than purely residential zones were concerned. <p>17. Are there any plans to merge district/borough councils within Kent (e.g. SBC, MBC, TWBC) into KCC?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. This is an issue currently being debated by the Government and more information will be available on this subject as talks progress. <p>18. Idea by the Forum to implement the use of decorative or 'fun' bins across Swale, as a measure to combat litter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. This is actively being considered for motorists who use the A249.b. Encouraged to contact SBC with ideas and suggestions. <p>19. The Forum requested information regarding plans surrounding Neats Court Retail Park, Queenborough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The next step is to secure additional businesses to the retail park and improve access to the retail park (particularly via pedestrian traffic). Once this is done, there is potential for new residential zones to be created in Queenborough. <p>20. Issue of a lack of local shops in rural villages; queried the effect that this would have on the local economy when shoppers are forced to go to other Swale towns at best, although often must travel outside the Borough for goods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Cllrs responded that this is a natural issue of supply and demanded; although if locals were encouraged to buy local then existing retailers could expand and new retailers would be attracted to the area.b. Also recommended that affected members of the SYF contact their local parish council; as they	
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	would know the local socioeconomic situation better and would be able to work with SBC.	
11.	Any other business	
11.1	<p>Today's meeting was the last Swale Youth Forum for the 17/18 academic year. The dates of the next meetings for the 18/19 period are as follows...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd October 2018 • 21st November 2018 • 16th January 2019 • 6th March 2019 • 8th May 2019 • 19th June 2019 	
12.	• Close	
12.1	Chair Jordan Lindo closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming	
13.	End of Meeting	