
SHEPPEY AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in Eastchurch Village Hall, Warden Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4EH on Tuesday, 7 June 2022 from 7.00 pm - 9.26 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart (Vice-Chair), Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton (Chair), Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Lee McCall, Pete Neal and Bill Tatton.

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Malcolm Newell (Eastchurch PC), Ben Pointing (Minster-on-Sea PC) Linda Brinklow (virtually), Charlie Buckingham, Phil Crowder, Chris Reed and Brian Spoor (Sheerness TC), Dolley White (Sheerness TC and Minster-on-Sea PC) and Ashley Shiel (Queenborough TC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Janet Dart, Joanne Johnson Adrian Oliver and Emma Wiggins.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Billy Attaway.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Monique Bonney.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillors Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes and Richard Palmer.

Kent County Councillor Andy Booth, Divisional Member for Sheppey.

Matt Drewitt – GT3 Architects.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Richard Darby, Oliver Eakin, Simon Fowle and Ken Pugh.

47 **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

48 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

49 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 March 2022 (Minute Nos. 677 – 686) and the Meeting held on 18 May 2022 (Minute Nos. 28 – 29) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

50 **LEVELLING-UP FUND UPDATE**

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development introduced Matt Drewitt from GT3 Architects. She thanked everyone for their comments and support and spoke about the challenges of matching ambition and budget. The deadline to get the bid in was 6 July 2022 and the proposals were being refined. She explained the proposals for Master's House and Sheppey College.

Matt Drewitt gave a presentation setting out the placemaking, connections and Beachfields site proposals. The project was divided into two phases, phase 2 would require a separate funding source and was not a target of the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) bid.

There was an opportunity for questions and comments which are summarised below:

- Concerns were raised about transport links which would mean that some people in rural areas would not be able to access the facilities. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development advised that LUF funding could only be spent on capital infrastructure, achieving connections would require a separate funding source;
- there was disappointment that a swimming pool had been left out of the bid. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development responded to say that the LUF plans were designed to accommodate a pool extension to the leisure complex as a future phase, but the maximum budget set by government did not allow for the inclusion of a pool within the bid;
- access issues along the promenade where a gate needed to be installed at Neptune Terrace were raised;
- the groynes on Sheerness Beach needed to be reinstated but the Environment Agency would not commit the funds to do this;
- connectivity issues between the town and beach were mentioned and a suggestion was put forward to put the café upstairs;
- the poor state of the railway station was raised;
- doubts about the need for crazy golf and soft play area were expressed. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development noted a distinction between smaller-scale crazy 'mini' golf, and the more ambitious adventure golf offer targeted by the bid; and
- questions were asked about the proposed college provision, once the proposals were agreed they would go on the website.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development gave an update on the Montgomery Masts. The potential to bring them onshore had been explored but there was not the budget to do this. Parish Councillors and residents expressed their wish for them to be brought onshore as they were an important part of the Island's heritage.

51 SWALE LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)

The Active Travel Coordinator, introduced himself and spoke about the Government ten-year walking and cycling initiative, the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which was to help local authorities establish good cycling and walking routes. For a scheme to receive funding it needed to match the guidelines.

The Active Travel Coordinator was writing a Swale LCWIP and he welcomed suggestions from residents and Parish/Town Councils.

There would be an online survey which would ask about trips that were currently made that could be taken by foot or cycle and what were the barriers to taking such trips. There would also be workshops with community groups.

Any ideas for inclusion in the infrastructure plan or where to hold a workshop should be sent to The Active Travel Coordinator.

Some initial ideas were discussed which included the need to create an east/west corridor, the poor condition of paths, the use of e-scooters making some pavements dangerous to use and dovetailing the plan into the Round Britain Footpath scheme.

52 BARTON'S POINT COVERED WALKWAY

The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods presented the paper on Barton's Point covered walkway and explained that many of the concrete roof panels and supporting posts were missing and others were damaged which left it in a potentially dangerous condition.

Swale Borough Council (SBC) had identified three options and had a budget of £10k to spend on the agreed works:

1. Demolition with floor slab retained – estimated cost £30k;
2. removal of roof slab and metal stations only – estimated cost £10k; or
3. full restoration works to structure – estimated cost £200k to £250k.

After a discussion on the options, Councillor Angela Harrison moved the following motion: that Option 2 - removal of roof slab and metal stations only at a cost of £10k be the selected option. This was seconded by Councillor Bill Tatton and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) That Option 2 - removal of roof slab and metal stations only at a cost of £10k be the selected option for Barton's Point covered walkway.**

53 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

Coach Parking

The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods asked that the position on this matter be clarified for the Minutes. The update in the papers stated that "The Cabinet Member decision was not progressed in time for the change of Constitution." To expand on this for accuracy, Councillor Elliott Jayes approached Kent County Council (KCC) as the parking spaces in question were on KCC land which limited SBC's ability to progress this matter. Councillor Jayes asked for a meeting with the KCC Traffic Team but due to lack of resource on that team, the meeting had not yet taken place. For the Minutes the update should read that

owing to issues outside SBC's control, this matter could not currently be progressed but when feedback was received, any decision making would go to the Communities Committee.

A Member stated that nothing could be done about the Ship on Shore car park until it could be accessed and suggested a report go to the Communities Committee seeking vacant possession. The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods agreed to look into the legal issues.

Resolved:

- 1) *The Matters arising update should read that owing to issues outside Swale Borough Council's control, this matter could not currently be progressed but when feedback was received, any decision making would go to the Communities Committee.***

54 PUBLIC FORUM

Chris Reed, Sheerness Town Council, asked for an update on Neptune Terrace and the removal of the steps so that people could cycle from Minster to Sheerness. The Director for Regeneration & Neighbourhoods advised that it was the responsibility of the Environment Agency but they had stated they could not fund the work. The Head of Regeneration & Economic Development was working with Sheerness Town Council to send a letter to the Environment Agency to pursue this matter.

Chris Reed asked for a progress report on the lighting replacement along Sheerness Promenade. She was advised that there was an agreed programme for this work and the Sheppey Area Committee had provided funds towards this project. An update would be given at the next meeting.

Questions were asked about the cement works planning application. The KCC Divisional Member for Sheppey advised that this sat within the remit of KCC and a site visit would take place. All consultees' responses would be taken seriously and it would be considered at a public KCC Planning Meeting. Anyone could respond to the application.

Linda Brinklow, Sheerness Town Council, asked about re-routing of buses and an additional bus hub. She was advised that this was not part of the criteria for the Levelling-Up bid.

55 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

KCC Councillor Andy Booth asked if a report could be brought back to a future Sheppey Area Committee meeting providing details about the spoil that has been dumped on the Eastchurch shoreline. He said that it was important that the public were aware of what was happening. The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods agreed to take this back but added that if it was a Police matter it could restrict how much could be said.

Councillor Peter MacDonald asked what progress had been made by the Coastal Policies Group regarding the change from no intervention on erosion to one of protection. The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods advised a meeting would take place on Thursday 9 June 2022 between stakeholders and officers to progress this matter.

Councillor Peter Marchington suggested a project to make an esplanade at Queenborough as more people were attracted to that area. He would submit a proposal at the next meeting.

The Chair commented that there should be consideration for the bigger picture at Barton's Point.

Parish and Town Councillor Dolley White suggested a plaque should be installed on the Island to recognise the work of key workers during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Chair suggested this could be a future bid for the Area Committee to consider.

56 UPDATE ON WORK PLAN

The Interim Area Committee Coordinator introduced the Work Plan Proposal Report and explained that the Area Committees Review Working Group had met and recommended that funding be considered at the September 2022 meeting instead of the December 2022 meeting. It was therefore necessary to consider the Work Plan at this meeting so that the funding scheme would be ready to launch on 1 July 2022.

The Review Working Group also recommended that Heads of Service should be consulted to see if there were any existing projects that would benefit from additional funding to help achieve the projects earlier and benefit the Sheppey Area.

The third recommendation by the Review Working Group was that each Area Committee should decide how widely publicity should take place for the funding scheme.

Members considered the report and commented on the proposed projects as follows:

- Sponsorship could be sought to fund the 'Beach Cams';
- the toilets at Queenborough Park would benefit from refurbishment. The lack of toilets at Eastchurch was discussed along with a proposal for a radar key scheme to be installed in public toilets on the Island;
- the Barton's Point vision needed to be reviewed to consider if it was still reasonable; and
- support for interventions around the cost-of-living crisis were welcomed.

It was requested that should any Area Committee Member wish to put a bid in for any of the proposed projects, they should liaise with the relevant Head of Service and submit a Member bid form to the Area Committees Coordinator by 1 August 2022.

Members agreed the proposal in the report to carry forward the criteria from last year that bids should demonstrate they have a positive impact on the appearance, environment and facilities in the Sheppey Area.

Members agreed that the funding scheme should be publicised widely in the Sheppey Area without expense to SBC.

Resolved:

- 1) That the projects suggested by Heads of Service be included in the Sheppey Area Committee's Work Plan for 2022/23.***
- 2) That the criteria for bids should demonstrate they have a positive impact on the appearance, environment and facilities in the Sheppey Area.***
- 3) That the funding scheme should be publicised widely in the Sheppey Area without expense to SBC.***

57 MATTERS REFERRED TO AREA COMMITTEE BY SERVICE COMMITTEES

No issues were raised.

58 MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEES BY AREA COMMITTEE

Sheppey Area Committee agreed that the following item should be referred to Service Committees:

1. That the Regeneration & Property Committee look at the poor state of Queenborough Guildhall.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Regeneration & Property Committee look at the poor state of Queenborough Guildhall.***

Chair

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel