
SHEPPEY AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held at Castle Connections, Queenborough Town Community Centre, Railway Terrace, Queenborough ME11 5AY on Tuesday, 21 February 2023 from 7.00 pm - 8.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Oliver Eakin, Simon Fowle, Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton (Chair), Elliott Jayes, Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Lee McCall, Pete Neal, Ken Pugh and Bill Tatton.

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Linda Brinklow (Sheerness Town Council (TC)), Chris Reed (Sheerness TC), and Ashley Shiel (Queenborough TC).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Virtually): Parish/Town Councillors Pat Sandle (Leysdown Parish Council (PC)) and Dolley White (Sheerness TC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Alister Andrews, Martyn Cassell, Janet Dart and Emma Wiggins.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Alister Andrews, Martyn Cassell and Kelly Mehmet.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Ben Sherread, Programme Manager, Kent County Council.

APOLOGY: Councillor Richard Darby.

674 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

675 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

676 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 December 2022 (Minutes Nos. 486 – 496) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Councillor Angela Harrison brought the Area Committee's attention to an action from a previous meeting to provide a briefing for the public on Material Considerations in Planning. Councillor Harrison advised that officers had produced a briefing note that could be circulated on request.

677 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SERVICES CONSULTATION

The Chair introduced Ben Sherread, the Programme Manager at Kent County Council (KCC), leading on the Community Services Consultation.

Ben Sherread explained which services were involved in the proposals within the consultation. The consultation proposed changes to the way KCC used their buildings to deliver some community services. They invited feedback on the proposals and the deadline was 26 March 2023. Once KCC had reviewed the responses, the revised proposals would be taken to Cabinet at KCC in June 2023 with a decision taken in July 2023. The changes would not take place until early 2024 and it would take three to four years to fully implement.

There was a link to the full consultation document in the agenda pack. Ben Sherread advised that there were drop-in events throughout Swale where residents could go along to talk about the proposals and ask questions.

A discussion took place on the proposals for the Isle of Sheppey, and the following comments were made:

- Regarding the proposal that all services in the Eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey would be outreach with no family hub, concerns were raised that there were a large number of deprived residents in that area and many did not have laptops or smart phones so engagement could be difficult;
- a Member said that some residents did not understand what this consultation was about as the title had not made it clear and the consultation had not been delivered correctly;
- the closure of buildings would result in people having to travel more. The bus services had been cut and KCC's job would be harder in the future when children grew up and needed more support;
- some roads in Eastern Sheppey had no footpaths or cycle-paths and this needed to be looked at;
- there was an issue with some of the holiday parks having permanent residents which would increase demand on the services and these residents would need to be consulted;
- a Member commented that the early years needed support and KCC had been running services down at Beaches Children's Centre, Leysdown, for sometime;
- Queenborough Library was not large enough to hold all the proposed community services;
- the consultation needed to be publicised further;
- there was no bus service between Leysdown and Queenborough;
- the old Halfway Primary School building was no longer in use and could be used for community services; and
- some of the buildings included in the proposals were old and would not be able to help with reducing carbon emissions.

Ben Sherread thanked the Area Committee for including this item on the agenda.

678 MARINE TOWN FOOD WASTE AND ALTERNATE WEEKLY COLLECTION TRIAL

The Environmental Services Manager and Environmental Contracts Manager were in attendance to provide an update on the Marine Town, Sheerness food waste and alternate weekly collection trial.

The Environmental Contracts Manager said that Swale was predominantly a wheeled bin authority with fortnightly collections for household waste and recycling and weekly food waste collections were rolled out in 2014. Marine Town stayed on a weekly household waste collection and fortnightly recycling with no food waste collections due to a lot of houses not having access to their back gardens so they could not have wheeled bins.

In 2021 a survey took place where a lot of residents in the area were supportive of food waste collections. In 2022 a trial on three roads in Marine Town took place with weekly household and food waste collections and fortnightly recycling collections. The trial went well and the household waste collections were moved to fortnightly. After the trial, a further survey took place and 88% of those who responded said they had used the food waste bins. The proposal was to roll this out to the rest of Marine Town; the current contractor was happy with this proposal and it would save money on the new contract. The proposal was to be taken to the Environment Committee in March 2023.

A discussion took place and Members were supportive of the proposal. Comments were made about the need to monitor and educate some households who produced a large amount of waste. Comments were also made regarding fly-tipping and enforcement.

679 LEVELLING-UP UPDATE

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods gave an update on the outcome of the Levelling-Up bid. She was pleased to report that the bid was successful and the scheme had been awarded the full £20 million applied for. There was also an additional £22 million in match-funding.

The scheme included:

- Improvements to Beachfields which included the café, soft play, TAGACTIVE, adventure golf, extended medical facility footprint, improvements to the Sheppey Matters facilities, new outdoor gym and toilets;
- public realm connectivity;
- Sheppey College extension; and
- Masters' House studios.

For the next steps, Swale Borough Council (SBC) were currently out to recruitment for the Programme Manager and Project Officer roles for the scheme. Governance structures were being set up so the project could be managed properly. There were tight timescales for the project and the aim was to ensure communications were carried out properly to keep everyone updated on progress.

A discussion took place and Members were pleased to hear about the positive outcome for the Isle of Sheppey. Comments made included:

- Officers, especially the Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Property, put a lot of work into this bid, and thanks should be passed onto the team;
- the expansion of the college was welcomed and vocational education was important;
- care needed to be taken to ensure confidentiality was maintained for residents when using the doctors' surgery and Sheppey Matters.
- Phil Crowther from the Sheerness Town Team sought reassurance that the Seaside Festival which was planned for August 2023 would not be disrupted by the works. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods responded that it was not possible to give that reassurance until schedules had been checked, and suggested that the Town Team liaise with SBC about the event; and
- it was suggested that Sheppey Matters could temporarily be located in Masters' House while the work was ongoing.

680 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted progress on actions.

Coach parking – a Member suggested that the layby in Blue Town High Street could be used for coach parking. The Criterion could also put out yellow cones when a group was expected.

Queenborough Guildhall – a Sheerness Town Councillor said that the condition survey was an inaccurate assessment on the building.

Coastal Policies Group – a Member said that pressure should be put on the Environment Agency. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods said that no progress had taken place due to resource and capacity issues.

681 PUBLIC FORUM

Phil Crowther (Sheerness Town Team) requested action on the lights at Beachfields Gardens, Sheerness, which were not coming on at night. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods agreed to look into this as it was a safety issue.

682 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

Councillor Simon Fowle spoke about the CCTV camera that had been installed to deal with the anti-social behaviour and jet skis off Queenborough Causeway. He said that the camera had been taken down and as a result the jet skis had returned. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods said she would look into the matter.

683 MATTERS REFERRED TO AREA COMMITTEE BY SERVICE COMMITTEES

No issues were raised.

684 MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION

No issues were raised.

Chair

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