

## AGENDA

### REGENERATION AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday, 26 September 2022

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT\*

Membership:

Councillors Cameron Beart, Monique Bonney (Chair), Lloyd Bowen, Simon Clark, Richard Darby, James Hall, Angela Harrison, James Hunt, Peter Marchington, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair), Eddie Thomas, Roger Truelove, Tim Valentine and Mike Whiting.

Quorum = 5.

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Pages

#### Information about this meeting

\*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website on 26 September 2022.

#### Recording and Privacy Notice

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and procedures are advised that:

- (a) The fire alarm is a continuous loud ringing. In the event that a fire drill is planned during the meeting, the Chair will advise of this.
- (b) Exit routes from the chamber are located on each side of the room, one directly to a fire escape, the other to the stairs opposite the lifts.
- (c) In the event of the alarm sounding, leave the building via the nearest safe exit and gather at the assembly point on the far side of the car park. Do not leave the assembly point or re-enter the building until advised to do so. Do not use the lifts.
- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPIs) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

4. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the [Meeting](#) held on 7 July 2022 (Minute Nos. 179-185) as a correct record.

**Part B Reports for the Regeneration and Property Committee to decide**

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| 5. | Forward Decisions Plan   | 5 - 8   |
| 6. | East Kent Skills Summit  | 9 - 16  |
| 7. | Property Condition Surveys   | 17 - 22 |
| 8. | Rural Shared Prosperity Fund – Report to-follow<br>Report to-follow. |         |
| 9. | Exclusion of the Press and Public                                    |         |

To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following item:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3.

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

10. Sale of Land at St Michael's Road, Sittingbourne

23 - 28

### **Issued on Thursday, 15 September 2022**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Cabinet, please visit [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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**Regeneration and Property Committee Forward Decisions Plan**

<b>Report title, background information and recommendation(s)</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Open or exempt?</b>	<b>Lead Officer and report author</b>
Handover report	07.07.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: Joanne Johnson
Procurement of Provision of RNLI Lifeguard Service	07.07.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Environment and Leisure  Report author: Mike Knowles
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	07.07.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: Kieren Mansfield
East Kent Skills Summit	26.09.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: Kieren Mansfield

Property Condition Surveys	26.09.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: Joanne Johnson
Disposal of Land at St Michael's Road, Sittingbourne	26.09.22	Exempt	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: David Johnson
Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	26.09.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: Kieren Mansfield
Queenborough Guildhall	Extraordi nary 26.09.22		Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: Joanne Johnson
Central Stadium – Options Report	09.11.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property  Report author: David Johnson
Master's House – Expressions of Interest for Future Operation	09.11.22	Open	Head of Service: Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property

			Report author: Kieren Mansfield
Barton's Point – Expressions of Interest	Nov 22/ Jan 23	Open	Head of Service: Head of Environment and Leisure  Report author: Jay Jenkins

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<b>Regeneration and Property Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Title</b>	East Kent Skills Summit
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson, Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Kieren Mansfield, Economic Development and External Funding Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	To agree to continue to work with East Kent partners on the development of an East Kent Skills Pledge and a clear action plan.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the themes and suggested actions that came forward from an East Kent Skills Summit, held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Hosted by East Kent College (EKC) Group, attendees included local authority and business representatives from across the area in which EKC Group operates i.e. Thanet, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, Ashford and Swale.
- 1.2 The report also considers the initial actions suggested by EKC Group, with a commentary provided as they relate to the Council and its operations.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The East Kent Skills Summit was organised by East Kent College Group to bring together civic and business perspectives on the skills challenge across East Kent, including:
  - lower skills levels than the national average, particularly at level 3 and above, alongside higher levels of people with no qualifications.
  - a need to upskill and re-skill the existing workforce.
  - poor perceptions of what career opportunities exist locally amongst young people
  - a gap between new entrants to the labour market and industry and employer demand.
- 2.2 The summit was based around a series of facilitated workshops and the themes that came to prominence have been summarised as follows:-
  - Civic and business leaders should set an example by investing in skills

- Use of a collective voice to emphasise the importance of skills, to influence policy and funding, and to make a positive difference to our communities
  - High quality, accessible careers education, information, advice and guidance is critical and should be developed collaboratively with employers
  - Upskilling and retraining the existing workforce across East Kent in key transferrable skills such as digital skills and green skills
  - The same transferrable skills for our young people need to be embedded and enhanced
  - The importance and impact of environment and place on people's aspirations and the decisions they make about where they live and develop careers
- 2.3 East Kent College has also provided a list of suggested actions, circulated to attendees, which can be found at appendix 1. The table in appendix 1 also sets out some commentary against each of the actions, as they relate to Swale Borough Council.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The principle of what the East Kent Skills Summit is seeking to achieve aligns closely with the Council's position in respect of skills, reflected in both the Corporate Plan and the Council's Economic Improvement Plan. The Summit and the subsequent suggested actions arising from it are intended to be the start of the conversation between stakeholders and this is reflected in the commentary provided at appendix 1.
- 3.2 The actions arising from the Skills Summit are early-stage proposals and, as per the commentary provided at appendix 1, the detail, resource and wider implications of any commitments need to be much better understood. The recommendation is, therefore, to agree to continue to work with East Kent partners on the development of an East Kent Skills Pledge and a clear action plan.

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Do nothing. This is not recommended. Skills remains one of the most significant issues impacting on the Borough and it is a shared agenda with many other districts in Kent. East Kent College Group are also a key partner for the Borough Council and we continue to work closely with them, most recently in respect of the Levelling-up Fund bid and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan. Working within available resources, and mindful of the medium-term financial plan, participating in strategic partnerships with goals that align to the Council's own priorities can only support progress.
- 4.2 The proposals are too early a stage to identify a clear alternative mix of approaches against the proposed actions.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The report sets out proposed actions from the East Kent Skills Summit and reflects discussion involving senior representatives from District Councils and business. To date it has not involved a wider discussion with other stakeholders, including learning and skills providers, other than East Kent College Group.
- 5.2 Further consultation will be required. EKC Group will continue to facilitate discussions across the East Kent area to further develop proposals. The Council will need to consult further, both internally (e.g. HR and procurement) and with local stakeholders relevant to those actions to which it may consider making a commitment.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan identifies the following objective which relates directly to the report. <i>“Support residents and businesses to improve the borough’s vocational skill levels, and vigorously pursue all opportunities to enhance the provision and accessibility of further and higher education for Swale residents at all stages of their careers.”</i>
Financial, Resource and Property	At this early stage, each of the actions need to be considered through service planning and in the light of available resources and the emerging Medium Term Financial Strategy. There is a specific concern in respect of the action relating to procurement and contracting, which if implemented as a contractual obligation could have cost implications for the Council and may deter potential suppliers. There are also no identified staff or financial resource for the suggested skills fairs.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	As noted in appendix 1 there are concerns in respect of the suggested action in relation to the Council’s procurement procedures. Practically, it is unclear how this would be applied and managed especially for suppliers that are not local to the Borough or providing relatively specialised goods or services. Any contractual condition has the potential to increase cost pressures and/or dissuade potential bidders to consider Council contract opportunities. In light of further discussion and detail there may be opportunities to work positively with appropriate suppliers.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage

Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage, although the underlying objective to improve access to skills and related employment opportunities can have a significant positive impact on health and well-being.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

**Appendix 1** - Actions proposed from the East Kent Skills Summit

## 8 Background Papers

None.

## Appendix 1 – Actions proposed from the East Kent Skills Summit

Action Proposed	Commentary
<p><b>East Kent Skills Pledge</b>, which might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a commitment to carrying out a skills health check on our organisation</li> <li>• a commitment to engaging with learning providers on careers information</li> <li>• a commitment to provide apprentices, work placements and other activities to support young people and adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an organisation Swale Borough Council is already largely committed to what is suggested.</li> <li>• The nature of a skills health check is not clearly defined at this stage.</li> <li>• The Council’s approach to staff reviews and service planning includes a review of learning need within the organisation. The staff resources available have placed some limitations on the ability to engage with learning providers as regularly as was once the case</li> <li>• The more dispersed pattern of working since COVID has impacted on the ability to provide work placements and similar, with close, on-site supervision required.</li> </ul>
<p>Partners commit to <b>5-year workforce development plan</b> to consider apprenticeships and other entry routes for adults and career pathways for college leavers, as well as existing staff development. Use our collective voice to encourage other East Kent organisations to develop these.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council currently has a Workforce Strategy covering the period 2019-2022, The theme “Developing the workforce of the future” covers much of the suggested approach.</li> <li>• A review could consider the timeframe suggested and the specifics of apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Campaigns can be developed to encourage other local employers to engage in workforce development</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund proposals submitted include activity to engage employers in this agenda from 2024/25, a timeframe set by Government.</li> </ul>
<p>Public sector partner <b>procurement policies</b> and <b>processes</b> include the need for suppliers to commit to a skills health check, as a contractual condition. Potentially to be developed into an <b>East Kent procurement framework</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of and means by which a skills health check is carried out and any costs is not clear at this stage.</li> <li>• Practically, it is unclear how this would be applied and managed especially for suppliers that are not local to the Borough or providing more specialised goods or services.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any contractual condition has the potential to increase cost pressures and/or dissuade potential bidders to consider Council contract opportunities.</li> <li>• Procurement processes currently seek to ensure that sufficient skills are in place to deliver against the specification.</li> <li>• The Council's current procurement includes 20% of the scoring to take account of social value.</li> <li>• Potential to adapt existing procurement approach to encourage take up of skills related activity within the context of social value.</li> </ul>
<p>Holding an <b>annual Skills Fair</b> in each District and Borough, that include separate sessions for children, young people and adults across multiple days to find out about different sectors, job roles, career pathways, and what skills and qualifications are required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is not included in the Council's existing set of priorities, and staff and financial resource would need to be made available to facilitate.</li> <li>• Partners to support delivery would need to be engaged, including business, schools, Jobcentre Plus, private learning providers as well as the local Further Education Colleges.</li> <li>• For children and young people in particular there is existing information advice and guidance provision through the national careers service, KCC and others, that would need to be considered.</li> <li>• The approach to delivering an effective skills fair would need to be explored. More recent experiences of officers indicates that traditional, open events have proved of more limited value.</li> </ul>
<p>The development of an <b>East Kent Prospectus</b> to promote the area as place to live work and learn and the career opportunities. This could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summit partners to act as East Kent Ambassadors</li> <li>• the development of a training programme module to educate about the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the sub-areas of Kent, Swale is currently positioned primarily as a part of Greater North Kent.</li> <li>• However, Swale's identity is complex and it can align according to need/opportunity, being positioned at the meeting point between East, North and mid-Kent</li> <li>• Careful thought would need to be given as to how the Borough might present itself within this context.</li> </ul>



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<b>Regeneration and Property Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 September 2022
<b>Report Title</b>	Property Condition Surveys
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson, Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property
<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Johnson, Interim Property Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	To agree to outsource a programme of Condition Surveys for Swale Borough Council's property portfolio.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises Swale Borough Council's current approach to understanding and managing building maintenance and repairs, and proposes outsourcing a programme of Condition Surveys.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council's Property Asset Strategy (2017 – 2020) directs the strategic management of property assets across the Council's portfolio. These assets are diverse and range from offices to historic buildings.
- 2.2 The Property Asset Strategy sets out that with 'constrained' financial resources, 'it is important that the Council has a robust repair and maintenance strategy to allow repair and maintenance activities to be prioritised appropriately' (p5). This holds true and is indeed amplified for the current day. A robust repair and planned maintenance strategy is essential to enable the Council to:
- ensure facilities maintenance which allows compliance to legislation.
  - allow properly maintained equipment and buildings to last longer, so replacement costs decrease over time
  - promote increased energy efficiency which reduces utility costs.
  - set and manage budgets effectively and robustly to reduce unexpected impact to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
  - Ensure a proactive response meaning fewer unexpected issues and costs
- 2.3 The foundation of any robust repair and planned maintenance strategy is a solid understanding of the existing condition of each asset to inform future financial and resource requirements, to minimise, as far as possible, reactive spend and to prioritise the spending of limited resources. The last set of Condition Surveys for the Council's property estate were commissioned in 2018 and set out priorities and

recommendations for works over a five-year period from 2019- 2023. The properties reviewed are listed at Appendix A.

- 2.4 The Council's property, plant and equipment assets are valued at £85,925,000 in the draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. (NB. This is the book value of the assets, assuming continued use by the Authority. The figure does not represent the value that may be secured from the disposal of the assets on the open market.)
- 2.5 This book value is considerable and demonstrates the importance of property assets to Swale Borough Council, in terms of the contribution they make to the functioning and amenity of local communities, and in underpinning Council finances.
- 2.6 The Property Strategy is dated 2017 – 2020, and as such merits refresh. This refresh has been delayed as a result of a number of factors, primarily the impact of Covid-19 on work programmes and key staff vacancies within the Property Team.
- 2.7 The Property team is currently headed by a part-time Interim Property Manager whose contract ends in February 2023. Whilst he has pressing operational matters to attend to in the first months of his contract, it is intended that he will support the commencement of the refresh of the Property Strategy in the final weeks of his employment with Swale.
- 2.8 To support the Medium Term Financial Strategy, officers will also review the structure of the Property Team to ensure that it is appropriately resourced to manage Swale Borough Council's portfolio, and optimise its usage and income. Clearly there is correlation between the evidence base available, the strategic approach to property and the staff resources required to deliver

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1. That quotations be sought to undertake Condition Surveys for those properties where the Council has full or partial maintenance responsibility to include estimated costs for repairs and maintenance over a five- year period from 2023.
- 3.2. That this work be used to inform the refresh of the Property Asset Strategy and any staff restructure proposals linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Do nothing. This is not recommended. As set out above, Condition Surveys are the foundation of a robust Property Asset Strategy / Maintenance and Repair Strategy.
- 4.2 Delay the commissioning. This may deliver some short-term cost savings, but the sequencing of the Condition Survey work prior to the refresh of the Property Asset Strategy and potentially revised structure is significant. In addition, delaying the

understanding of required works will potentially increase the costs of reactive repairs.

- 4.3 Complete the work in-house. This is not viable with the currently available staff resource and other high priority work.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 There has been no formal consultation, as this is not considered a topic where external views would be sought. The views of the Property team have been sought and taken into account when determining the recommended option.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan identifies the following relevant objective: “Continue to reduce dependence on government-controlled funding sources.” Effectively-managed property assets will ensure income from Swale’s property portfolio is maximised, reactive expenditure minimised, and dependence on external funding sources reduced.
Financial, Resource and Property	A well-managed estate supports optimum income generation and effective resource management. Condition Surveys underpin effective estate management and robust financial planning.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The value of the contract is expected to be within officer delegations. It will be procured in line with Swale Borough Council’s agreed procedures and frameworks.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None specifically identified at this stage, although optimised building maintenance can contribute to reduced carbon footprints.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage, although a well-maintained estate will have positive impacts on residents’ and visitors’ perceptions and wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	A planned maintenance programme informed by a robust evidence base will help minimise health and safety risks within Swale’s property portfolio.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage

Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage
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**7 Appendices**

Appendix A – list of Swale Borough Council properties reviewed in 2018.

**8 Background Papers**

Swale Borough Council’s [Property Asset Strategy](#) 2017-2020.

## **Appendix A – list of Swale Borough Council properties reviewed in 2018.**

Bell Road Chapel  
Halfway Cemetery  
Love Lane Cemetery  
Central Clock Tower  
Sheerness Clock Tower  
Creekside Boxing  
Queenborough Guildhall  
Court Hall  
Minster Abbey Gatehouse  
Rose Street Cottage  
47 Oak Road  
Coronation Road  
Faversham Bowls Club  
Festival Pavilion  
King George Pavilion, Lodge & public toilet  
Milton Rec Pavilion  
Oare Gunpowder  
Shelters  
Barton Point Café  
Beachfields Pavilion  
Chart Mills  
Church Milton Community Hall  
Masters House  
Former Library  
Neptune Boat Store  
Rodmersham PO  
Sheppey Weight Training  
44 High Street  
Central House  
Swale House  
Bank Street toilets  
Forum toilets  
Queenborough park toilets  
Rose Street toilets  
Grove Beach toilets  
The Spinney toilets  
Whitehouse toilets

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