

Agenda

Sittingbourne Area Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 5 September 2023

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: Diversity House, ISP House, Church Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3EG

Membership:

Councillors Derek Carnell (Vice-Chair), Shelley Cheesman, Simon Clark, Tim Gibson, James Hall, Mark Last (Chair), Charlie Miller, Angie Valls, Karen Watson, Tony Winckless and Ashley Wise.

Quorum = 4

Pages

Information about this meeting

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2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

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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 20 June 2023 (Minute Nos. 108 – 118) as a correct record.

5. Bus Services

6. Parking Policy

7. Corporate Plan update

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8. Public Forum

9. Matters arising from previous meetings

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10. Local issues to be raised

11. Matters referred to Area Committee by Service Committees
12. Matters referred to Service Committee Chairs for consideration

Issued on Wednesday, 23 August 2023

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

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Area Committees - Corporate Plan update

At the June 2023 round of Area Committee meetings, all those in attendance were asked to consider what were the priority issues for their Wards. These were to help inform the new Corporate Plan. Please see Appendix 1 for list of priorities suggested.

The Service Committee Chairs and their Vice-Chairs met on 11 July 2023 for a facilitated workshop, and on 3 August 2023 for a meeting with officers, to discuss their vision and ambition for the Borough and to consider what the priorities for the Council should be for the period 2023-2027.

Members agreed the following five proposed priorities and would like to hear Area Committees' comments before progressing further with work on the Corporate Plan:

Proposed Corporate Plan Priorities

Community:

To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our Borough; or
Supporting and enabling our communities.

Economy:

Support a thriving economy; or
Support the economy that helps businesses in a sustainable way; or
Working with our businesses and charitable organisations to improve the economy.

Environment:

To prepare our Borough for the challenges ahead; or
to provide a cleaner healthier more enjoyable environment.

Health & Housing:

Everyone to have access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing

Running the Council:

To engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in an open and efficient way, working within our resources.

The table below shows how the Corporate Plan proposed priorities take into account the themes put forward by Area Committees.

Proposed Corporate Plan priority	Ambition	Themes arising from Area Committees:
Community	To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our Borough; or Supporting and enabling our communities.	Crime and Community issues
Economy	Support a thriving economy; or Support the economy that helps businesses in a sustainable way; or Working with our businesses and charitable organisations to improve the economy.	Employment, skills, tourism and Leisure
Environment	To prepare our Borough for the challenges ahead; or to provide a cleaner healthier more enjoyable environment.	Waste and environment issues including the cleaner/greener agenda
Health & Housing	Everyone to have access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing	Health provision in Swale Access to housing
Running the Council	To engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in an open and efficient way, working within our resources.	Transport, roads, education, planning and utilities

Breakdown of Area Committee priorities by area and questions asked - lists all priorities put forward by each Area Committee.

Sheppey:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Fly tipping including industrial waste;
- littering, more bins were needed (recycling and dog waste);
- use of CCTV and tackling anti-social behaviour especially in Queenborough and Thistle Hill, Minster;
- youth issues, addressing anti-social behaviour;
- the Planning application process, ensuring there was an opportunity for residents to respond;
- the cleaner and greener agenda; and
- refuse collection.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Education, Health and Care Plans for children with special educational needs;
- GP/health coverage across the Isle of Sheppey, in particular Leysdown;
- street-lighting;
- roads and transport links across the Isle of Sheppey;
- increased Police presence;
- employment;
- leisure;
- road safety including lack of routes for emergency services when roads are blocked by accidents;
- highway maintenance (potholes, drains);
- bus services, lack of services affected employment opportunities;
- cycle paths (new and improved existing);
- traffic calming/road humps;
- schools – lack of choice; and
- air quality affecting health – farmers burning plastics.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Improved links from Lower Road to East Sheppey;
- improved transport links across the Isle of Sheppey;
- improved healthcare; and
- railings along Warden and Leysdown roads to protect pedestrians.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Transport;
- bus companies needed to improve services;
- youth/education;
- community maintenance (CCTV, lighting and roads);
- planning application process;
- healthcare, lack of services;
- environment;
- road safety; and
- providing an emergency access route to the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey.

Western:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Transferring land assets to parish councils;
- promote rural tourism;
- fly-tipping, and litter;
- anti-social behaviour;
- parking/idling outside schools;
- planning – including input on the design of housing developments;
- grounds maintenance;
- landscaping SBC properties in the Western area;
- protection of conservation areas;
- social housing;
- air quality; and
- housing levels.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- bus services – better provision to tackle isolation and loneliness;
- good schools in local areas, school places;
- speeding on roads;
- NHS, doctors, hospitals;
- maintenance companies on new developments;
- roads – potholes;
- pavements;
- water companies dealing with leaks;
- provision of high-speed Wi-Fi;
- local roads being used as ‘rat-runs’;
- youth services;
- lack of household waste collection centres;
- home to school transport;
- mis-use of quad-bikes;
- housing levels; and
- fly-tipping.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Better air quality and environment;
- keep/protect green spaces;
- training and jobs – rural apprenticeships;
- education;
- health services;
- road safety and maintenance;
- Wi-Fi
- bus services;
- putting infrastructure in before building houses; and
- anti-social behaviour.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Buses;
- school placements;
- protection of countryside and wildlife;
- school parking/idling;
- highways – roads and pavements;
- health services;
- infrastructure to go in before building homes;
- fly-tipping, litter; and
- maintenance companies in new developments.

Eastern:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Planning;
- bins;
- litter;
- fly-tipping;
- graffiti;
- housing overcrowding;
- air quality;
- enforcement; and
- affordability of housing (social housing, social rent targets and self-build).

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Anti-social behaviour;
- pot-holes;
- fly-tipping;
- air quality;
- flooding;

- public transport;
- climate change;
- loss of biodiversity;
- electric vehicle charging; and
- pushing back on the poor waiting lists for special educational needs provision.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Better planning enforcement;
- improved public transport;
- youth provision;
- bring housing back into use;
- partnership working;
- air quality;
- water and sewage; and
- lobby government/passing things back up that were competing with our objectives.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Biodiversity gains through reduced mowing;
- recycling hub and centre for re-useable goods;
- better cross agency communication on travel and public transport to try to improve transport across the area;
- air quality;
- develop a problem solving approach to electric vehicle charging to be shared across our area;
- local discussions and input into Section 106 spending and finding a way for this to happen without the challenge of pre-determination;
- look into the possibility of area committees being able to crowd fund;
- look at how area committees could apply for external funding; and
- the Council to collate sources of external funding and disseminate to parish/town councils.

Sittingbourne:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Safety – use of closed circuit television (CCTV);
- speed limits – 20 mph;
- grass cutting;
- anti-social behaviour;
- parking;
- graffiti;
- vandalism;
- bins;
- parks and open spaces;

- homelessness;
- housing;
- fly tipping/litter;
- planting green spaces and grass cutting;
- parking particularly outside schools; and
- lack of toilets in Milton Recreation Ground.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Noise;
- pot holes;
- bus services;
- crime;
- school and school transport;
- GPs and health services;
- public transport;
- lack of bus service in Milton;
- leisure services;
- overgrown trees (bottom and top); and
- illegal use of e-scooters.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Community Police, more police patrols;
- Swale road cleaning;
- heritage;
- improved situation for the homeless;
- empty shops, look to see if they could be used as a community asset;
- anti-social behaviour – use of CCTV;
- police community engagement; and
- more to do in Sittingbourne.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Increased CCTV;
- bins;
- pollution;
- anti-social behaviour including vandalism and policing, working with young people – constructive activities;
- tourism, leisure, hospitality and heritage offer – link together and provide information on attractions;
- bring rural element into the town, Milton Regis Country Park was an asset to the town;
- housing;
- employment;
- holistic approach to uniting the community (leisure, health, mental health services);
- condition and maintenance of roads;

- green spaces – improve and maintain;
- parking particularly outside schools;
- road safety;
- fly tipping; and
- improved transport to get around Swale.

Sittingbourne Area Committee: Progress on matters arising - September 2023

No.	Item	Background	Update on actions
1.	Sittingbourne Tennis Club	<p>A report concerning the proposed improvements to Milton Rec & King George's PF tennis courts was considered by the Area Committee at the December 2022 meeting and the Lawn Tennis Associations proposals were supported by Members.</p> <p>A report on the Tennis Court Improvement Project was taken to the Community Committee on 1 March 2023. The designated usage of courts from multi-use to tennis only at Milton Recreation Ground was agreed. It was also agreed that there would be a sinking fund commitment and ongoing maintenance responsibility as part of the bid for funding from the LTA and that the Council applied for improvement funding from the LTA.</p>	<p>Contracts have now been signed and works commenced on 10 August at both locations. Works are scheduled to last between 8 and 10 weeks. Signage has been installed and a new online bookings system at Milton is being designed. King George's already has online bookings available. The Tennis Club at Milton have been informed throughout the process. Works have progressed well in the first week with no issues of note.</p>
2.	Sports facilities in the area	<p>The Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) will go to the September 2023 Community Committee for adoption. Following that any Sittingbourne specific actions can be reported to the Area Committee.</p>	<p>The review meeting took place on 10 August 2023. The BFS is scheduled to go to October Community Committee meeting.</p>
3.	Pond safety in Swale	<p>A discussion took place on what could be done about the safety of ponds in Swale. A letter was sent by the Chair to the Swale Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) to see what sessions they could hold to</p>	<p>KCC Divisional Member Mike Dendor raised the issue of pond safety with the KFRS Director of Response and Resilience who advised that they do already go to some schools to talk about inland water safety, but they are currently</p>

		educate children and parents about safety around ponds.	reviewing their educational programme. He has agreed to have further discussions on expanding/improving the programme.
4.	Coombe Drive	A resident raised the issue of vandalism taking place in the alleyway at the back of houses on Coombe Drive, Sittingbourne. Residents had requested that the alleyway be shut and had raised this with SBC.	The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to gate the alley way between Elm Grove and Coombe Drive has now been implemented and gates installed.
5.	Heritage issues	<p>The Conservation & Design Team have been providing regular updates on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area Review; and • Milton Regis Conservation Area Review. 	<p>The Conservation & Design Team provided the following updates:</p> <p>The Sittingbourne Conservation Area Review - The adopted version of the Conservation Area appraisal document is now published on the Swale Borough Council website, along with a link to the latest map of the Conservation Area. All formal legislative requirements regarding notifications to local residents, the parish council, local newspaper, and the London Gazette are complete.</p> <p>Milton Regis Conservation Area Review - The consultant (Peter Bell) is in the process of being appointed to undertake the review work. Public Consultation for the document is estimated to be undertaken towards the end of the year (2023)/early 2024.</p>
6.	Periwinkle Water Mill Site	Regular updates have been given on this project.	Please see Appendix 1 for an update by the Conservation & Design Team.

7.	Swale Local Heritage List	Updates have been given at previous meetings on the Swale Local Heritage List.	<p>The 6-week duration initially provided for invitation for nominations was extended by another 3 weeks and finally concluded on 17th July 2023. The officers are in the process of collating all the nominations received.</p> <p>There will be a Selection Panel set up in Autumn 2023 to assess those considered worthy of including on the Local Heritage List</p>
8.	Swale Public Transport Group	<p>Mr Jackie Davidson (resident) said before the Pandemic there used to be a Swale Public Transport Group led by SBC which looked at improving public transport in Swale. Mr Davidson asked if this group could be reinstated.</p> <p>Related to this the Chair confirmed that bus companies and representatives from KCC would be invited to the September 2023 Sittingbourne Area Committee meeting.</p>	<p>The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods advised there were currently no plans to reinstate the Swale Public Transport Group.</p> <p>Before the pandemic there was a group that met called the Quality Bus Partnership (QBP). This was run by KCC. This stopped due to the government's new approach to bus infrastructure and their requirement that KCC establish what's called an Enhanced Partnership. This is run at a strategic level by KCC. It is responsible for delivering the county's Bus Service Improvement Plan. As such it will not cover any local district issues. To fill that gap, KCC are suggesting EP Local Focus Group (EP LFGs) meetings be set up in each district. They are happy to send representatives but cannot resource it like they used to do the QBP and so are asking districts to set up and resource them. These are not a statutory requirement.</p>

			<p>As such SBC are looking at if the local focus group should be set up and resourced. This is being discussed by members in September. If it is agreed to be set up it will be held every 6 months and be a forum for SBC, KCC and local bus operators to come together to discuss issues.</p> <p>Representatives of Stagecoach and Chalkwell have confirmed they will be attending the September 2023 meeting, a discussion will take place under item 5.</p>
9.	Anti-social behaviour	<p>Members reported a number of anti-social behaviour incidents in Sittingbourne Town Centre and Milton Regis High Street.</p> <p>It was agreed to invite a representative from Kent Police to a future Sittingbourne Area Committee.</p>	<p>The Policy & Engagement Officer has passed on details of the incidents to the Community Services Manager and responses were fed back to the Members.</p> <p>A representative of the Police will be attending the December 2023 meeting.</p>

Update for Sittingbourne Area Committee – 5 September 2023

By the Conservation & Design Team of Swale Borough Council.

Periwinkle Water Mill Enhancement Project

In view of the sole tender quote which came in at the end of last year significantly over the anticipated budget, the Conservation & Design Team has been in the process of exploring an alternative procurement option given the need to keep the project within budget.

In liaison with project advisors East Kent Engineering Partnership and the Council's Health, Safety & Risk Officer, the team has concluded it is feasible to eliminate structural interventions to limit project costs by combination of site management and warning signage/info, in order to help ensure that the project can be delivered within budget. Officers were previously waiting for an estimate for the landscaping works from the Council's term landscape contractors for green spaces, having already received a favourable estimate from a separate contractor for the general building and metalwork fabrication/installation needed. However, the term landscape contractor has advised it is not in a position to be able to carry out the proposed landscaping works, so we now have an updated quote from the Council's term building contractor for the landscaping works (in addition to the building related work), which is reasonable, this being based on the landscaping works being carried out by a subcontractor.

Landscaping works being carried out by the Council's term building contractor (albeit in the form of it managing a specialist subcontractor) is outside the scope of the Council's contract arrangement with the company, so officers are in the process of applying for the waiver which would need to be agreed to allow officers to effectively work around this issue. If the waiver is agreed, as anticipated, it is expected that works should be able to commence in September or October 2023, with the landscaping works being the last element of work to be carried out, to coincide with the start of the autumn planting season.

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