
EASTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Sydney Room, The Alexander Centre, 17 Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NZ on Tuesday, 3 September 2024 from 7.00 pm - 8.48 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Charles Gibson (Chair), Alastair Gould, Carole Jackson, Rich Lehmann, Julien Speed and Terry Thompson.

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Louise Bareham and Rob Crayford (Faversham Town Council (TC)), and Jeff Tutt (Dunkirk Parish Council (PC)).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Virtually): Parish Councillors Annie Adams (Eastling PC), Alan Stewart (Graveney with Goodnestone PC), Emma Turner (Newnham PC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Janet Dart and Larissa Reed.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Welch (Kent County Council), Mike Ellsmore and John Lazenby (Faversham Pools).

APOLOGIES: Councillors Kieran Golding, Ben J Martin and Hannah Perkin.

179 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

180 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of the Faversham Pools briefing item, Councillor Charles Gibson declared a non-pecuniary interest as a regular user of Faversham Pools.

181 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 29 February 2024 (Minute Nos 702 – 712) and 15 May 2024 (Minutes Nos. 19 – 20) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

182 KENT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 5

Mark Welch, the Principal Transport Planner at Kent County Council (KCC) advised that a briefing on the Local Transport Plan 5 Consultation was being presented to all four Area Committee Meetings.

He said that this was a statutory plan for KCC which developed policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area and carried out their functions which would implement those policies. The plan would cover the period up to 2037.

KCC wanted to improve the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transport network across the county and as an international gateway. KCC would plan for growth in Kent in a way that enabled them to combat climate change and preserve Kent's environment.

He said that KCC would do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure for electric vehicles, increase public transport use and make walking and cycling attractive. This would be enabled by maintaining their highways network and delivering their 'Vision Zero' road safety strategy.

Mark Welsh said that KCC were consulting on the ambitions and outcomes set out in the document. He said the consultation closed on 8 October 2024 and responses would then be reviewed before going to a KCC Full Council meeting in December 2024. People could either respond by emailing comments to LTP5@kent.gov.uk or via their 'Let's Talk' online platform at www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5. He said there would be drop-in sessions on 10 September 2024 at Sheppey Gateway and 24 September 2024 at Sittingbourne Library.

The following comments were made:

- Why was the Lower Thames Crossing supported in the Plan as this increased carbon emissions?;
- the objectives included increased use of public transport, however, KCC had reduced bus services;
- proposed improved links to the M2 were dependent on the approval of large housing developments;
- how would the proposals be paid for when funding at KCC had been cut?; and
- why did KCC not make representations and attend planning decisions on small scale development applications?

Mark Welsh responded and said that KCC felt that the Lower Thames Crossing was vital for resilience in the South East. He agreed on the points regarding funding and acknowledged that it was a challenging situation. KCC needed to receive funding from government to achieve the outcomes in the plan. None of the proposed options in the plan endorsed any development proposals. Regarding the last point on KCC making representations on development applications, he would need to find out and respond to the councillor who had asked the question.

183 FAVERSHAM POOLS BRIEFING

Mike Ellsmore and Jon Lazenby gave a presentation on Faversham Pools and outlined the benefits to the community. They said that their funding from Swale Borough Council (SBC) had been reduced by £20,000 in 2023/24 and they were concerned about the possibility of further cuts as this would affect day-to-day revenue expenses. He asked if any Members involved in budget discussions could ask what was happening with Faversham Pools going forward.

A question was asked about repairs to the roof, Mike Ellsmore advised that repairs were scheduled to take place between September and November 2024.

184 SCRUTINY OF WASTE CONTRACT

Councillor Rich Lehmann, Chair of the Waste & Street Cleansing Scrutiny Review Member Panel, gave a presentation on the review being carried out.

He said that SBC were the collection authority and this was a statutory duty. The previous contract with Biffa expired in March 2024 and Suez had been awarded an 8-year contract. SBC were part of a Mid-Kent Joint Partnership (Swale, Ashford and Maidstone Borough Councils).

When the new contract started, a period of settling in was always anticipated. However, several months of disruption had been experienced by some residents.

On 16 July 2024 the Environment & Climate Change Committee agreed that a scrutiny review be carried out and a panel of five councillors was set up. They would look at a range of issues around the start of the new contract, including resources and staffing, data and rounds, contract and project management and communications.

The panel would spend the next couple of months carrying out detailed investigations into these topics, using a range of methods to get information and feedback, including workshops, consultation with Area Committees and the Local Councils' Liaison Forum. A public survey had already been launched which asked for residents' experiences with the new contract.

Councillor Lehmann asked for comments to feed into the review.

The following comments were made:

- Replies from officers to emails from Members were normally prompt, but there had been occasions when no response had been received from officers;
- thanks were noted for the excellent clean up by Suez following the Hop Festival in Faversham;
- thanks were also noted for Suez removing graffiti at the West Faversham Community Centre;
- a blue recycling bin that had been missed in Watling Ward was set on fire;
- the public would only be interested in their bin collections taking place, they would not be interested in the detail relating to the start of the contract;
- problems with collections in rural areas were raised; and
- roles and responsibility should be made clear in the report that was submitted to the Environment & Climate Change Committee.

Councillor Lehmann thanked everyone for their comments and said the public survey would close on 2 October 2024 and the report would be taken to the Environment & Climate Change Committee on 20 November 2024.

185 FLOODING IN THE EASTERN AREA

Members noted the updated flooding tracking report and the following comments were made:

- Was there an alternative way to engage with Southern Water (SW)?:
- could the sludge drains be cleared in Tanners Street, Faversham?;
- when an unknown substance had been detected at Teynham Water Treatment Plant and the sewage had to be pumped out, SW did not respond to queries on the incident;
- could the list be updated with outcomes?;
- a new culvert had been installed at the Boughton and Courtenay, Staple Street Crematorium, it would take some time to see if this had resolved the run-off issues; and
- it was suggested that the Member of Parliament Helen Whately, be contacted to see if she would be agreeable to holding another meeting with SBC, SW and KCC to resolve the flooding issues in Faversham.

Resolved:

- 1) ***That the Chair of the Eastern Area Committee writes to the Member of Parliament Helen Whately, to request that she arranged a meeting with Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council and Southern Water with the aim of resolving the flooding issues in Faversham.***

186 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the update report.

Councillor Lloyd Bowen proposed that the Chair of Eastern Area Committee writes to the Chair of the Planning Committee to request that local concerns about the earth bunds at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Faversham altering the hydrology of the area, be discussed at a Planning Committee meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Alastair Gould and on being put to the vote was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) ***That the Chair of Eastern Area Committee writes to the Chair of the Planning Committee to request that local concerns about the earth bunds at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Faversham altering the hydrology of the area, be discussed at a Planning Committee meeting.***

187 PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised.

188 REPORTS/UPDATES FROM PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS

Councillor Julien Speed, Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council, advised that the Parish Council owned 41 street lights. They applied for a rural grant to replace all the bulbs with light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs which would reduce the running costs and their carbon footprint. The cost was £12,000 and 75% of that was met by the grant. The remaining 25% should be recovered in the savings they would be

making. Councillor Speed suggested other parish councils might wish to consider doing something similar.

189 ENHANCED BUS PARTNERSHIP - SWALE LOCAL FOCUS GROUP

No issues were raised.

190 SWALE TRAFFIC FORUM

The Eastern Area Committee representative on the Swale Traffic Forum was asked to request that after road closures had taken place and the work was completed, road closure signs should be promptly removed. It was suggested this matter should also be taken to the Swale Joint Transportation Board.

Councillor Charles Gibson proposed that the issue of road closure signs being left in place either before or after works had taken place should be taken to the Swale Joint Transportation Board. This was seconded by Councillor Lloyd Bowen and on being put to the vote was agreed.

A Member said that the signage was not adequate enough to discourage Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) from using Cambridge Road, Faversham and asked if the matter could be taken to the Swale Traffic Forum.

Resolved:

- 1) That the issue of road closure signs being left in place either before or after works had taken place be taken to the Swale Joint Transportation Board.***

191 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

A Member noted that the Police were not as visible as they used to be in the Faversham area and asked if they could be invited to attend a future Eastern Area Committee meeting.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Chair of the Eastern Area Committee invites a representative from the Police to attend a future Area Committee meeting.***

192 MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION

No further issues were to be reported to Service Committee Chairs other than those listed in earlier items.

Chair

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