

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

### Council 14 November 2018 - Questions submitted by Members

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1.	Councillor John Wright	<p>Knowing that the Leader is an advocate for clean air in Swale, would he not agree and argue that the Swales Clean air policy should be a specific planning policy document and placed alongside the emerging local plan?</p> <p>By giving this document weight in planning terms, this would ensure the planning team, planning committee and developers give proper consideration to Clean Air for Swale's Residents, which can only be a good thing for all. Under the stronger Leader model would he therefore instruct officers to do so in conjunction and agreement with the cabinet and this council?</p>	Councillor David Simmons, Cabinet Member for the Environment	Tracey Beattie, Mid Kent Environmental Health Manager
<p><b>Response:</b> At its meeting of 29 October, the Local Plan Panel supported the suggestion that the emerging Local Plan Review should include a specific Air Quality Policy to accord with new National Planning Policy on this matter. This new policy can be informed by and promote the actions within the Swale Air Quality Action Plan as well as be informed by and promote the guidance in the Swale Air Quality Planning Technical Guidance (December 2016) and its updates. In an area where technological innovation is fast paced technical guidance which can be updated fairly easily is felt to be more appropriate and efficient than the production of a Supplementary Planning Document. The Local Plan Review will also need to consider potential development strategies which reduce the need to travel and promote green infrastructure and non- vehicular modes of transport.</p> <p>In the interim there is already provision within Policy DM6 of the Bearing Fruits adopted Local Plan for consideration of Air Quality issues in relation to planning applications which can be applied in parallel with the forthcoming Swale Air Quality Action Plan.</p>				

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
2.	Councillor John Wright	<p>There is at present a new planning application for another waste incinerator proposed to be built at Kemsley bringing the waste that could be incinerated at facilities along the creek to over a million tonnes of waste per annum.</p> <p>Bearing in mind one is operational, two has permission and is currently being built and is not yet in operation, this would be a proposed third. Also that the flue gas cleaners in these plants only clean up to 90% of the harmful waste gases and particulates.</p> <p>Can he demonstrate and say that the 10% plus of toxic gases and particulates will not fall upon the residents of Sittingbourne and the surrounding areas. Whether that be the nationally important SSSI, residential areas of Minster and Eastchurch that are predominantly down wind.</p> <p>Will there be physical monitoring both on site and off site to monitor the situation before and after the plants open in the interest of residents health and air quality?</p> <p>Will human and animal health in the area be monitored to quantify there effects before and after the plants start operating and who will be responsible for this?</p> <p>Does he accept that there is a cumulative effect at play here if three incinerators are operational, which will with their associated lorry movements impact severely on Air quality</p>	Councillor David Simmons, Cabinet Member for the Environment	Tracey Beattie, Mid Kent Environmental Health Manager

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
		within the area? How is this going to be dealt with and who is going to pay for mitigation or clean up the operator or the residents?		
<p><b>Response:</b> The proposals referred to relate to a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) to be submitted to the Secretary of State for determination. This NSIP application has not yet been submitted to the Council for comments. Once the application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), SBC will be sent a formal consultation request, at which point officers can liaise with Members as to the nature of the Council's response and if necessary report through the Council's Planning Committee.</p> <p>Whilst I note Cllr Wrights comments and questions, the correct forum to address them is through the formal process I have just mentioned. It is not appropriate to discuss these issues at Council or to respond directly to these issues without the NSIP application being submitted and a full review by officers of the proposals and associated evidence. Otherwise, members could be perceived as predetermining the Council's position and / or potentially fettering their discretion when it comes to consideration of the NSIP application. Cllr Wright should be reassured that all the issues he raises can be considered during the assessment of the application.</p>				
3.	Councillor Mike Baldock	What steps are being taken to ensure that those residents without access to cars, particularly those in rural villages such as Hartlip and Milstead, young people and disabled people, will be able to fully take advantage of Sittingbourne's future nightlife?	Councillor Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
<p><b>Response:</b> We have ensured that the new leisure offer is available to serve all members of the community and will be available during the day whilst public transport is running. With over 90% car ownership in rural areas and as high as 95% in Hartlip and 97% in Milstead I am sure these residents will be able to enjoy the new leisure offer.</p> <p>In August this year we responded to Kent County Council's Big Conversation about Rural Transport. We said that we were supportive of the new proposed approaches to improve rural accessibility for those without alternative means of travel. We also noted that improvements to the flexibility of services could have an added benefit for those in Swale who are looking to access leisure activities, which could boost the</p>				

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
<p>visitor economy in Swale. We look forward to the results of their pilot programmes in announced a few weeks ago.</p> <p>Of course for those who have difficulty using public transport, Swale CVS offer an excellent volunteer transport scheme.</p>				
4.	Councillor Roger Truelove	Is there now any investment or development plan for the land in East Street previously acquired from the Mormon Church?	Councillor Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Nick Vickers, Chief Finance Officer
<p><b>Response:</b> Cllr Truelove thank you for your question and I know that you had long advocated the Council purchasing this piece of land.</p> <p>The purchase was an opportunistic one and in the short term we have extended the lease to VW for vehicle storage to maintain an income stream from the land.</p> <p>The longer term solution is linked to a piece of work which we are involved with called One Public Estate where we are working with KCC and other public sector organisations owning property in the town centre to review the scope for redevelopment to achieve capital receipts and make revenue savings. The Head of Property Services is currently leading the procurement of a third party to undertake the feasibility study and master planning which is externally funded by the Kent Estate Partnership.</p> <p>This will look to report back in mid-2019.</p>				
5.	Councillor Roger Truelove	Would you ever think of publicly describing people evicted from private sector housing, made homeless and in need of foodbank assistance as "feckless"?	Councillor Alan Horton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
			Communities	
<b>Response:</b> No.  To be absolutely clear, not only would I not publicly describe people in these circumstances as feckless, I would not do so privately either.				
6.	Councillor Mike Whiting	We know that crime and fear of crime is an issue for many in Swale, particularly the vulnerable and those in rural areas. Does the Leader, like me, welcome the additional 200 police officers being recruited into Kent's police force, and congratulate the 100 new police officers who recently completed their training?	Leader	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services
<b>Response:</b> Absolutely, I am delighted that Kent Police are recruiting additional officers to ensure that our borough along with the rest of Kent is a safe place to live. As one of our key partners, particularly in relation to delivering the work of the Community Safety Partnership I am looking forward to working with these additional officers and congratulate those who have already completed their training.				
7.	Councillor Ghlin Whelan	When will the Skate Park be opened to public use?	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services
<b>Response:</b> The Skate park will be open in the new year. Our contractor Gravity Engineering is busy discharging the pre-commencement planning conditions and completing the site clearance and will mobilise on site shortly. Once on site the works are programmed to be complete in 90 days.				
8.	Councillor	In the Sittingbourne Town Centre Project, has the Cinema company signed a lease to occupy the cinema and if so for	Cabinet	Emma Wiggins, Director of

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
	Ghlin Whelan	how long?	Member for Regeneration	Regeneration

**Response:** The Light Cinema has signed an Agreement to Lease which means that on Practical Completion they will enter into the 25 year lease. This is a legally binding agreement and is what all development leases are based on.

9	Councillor Mark Ellen	Can the cabinet member for communities tell me if there has been any change in membership at our leisure centres in Sittingbourne and Sheerness since parking charges came into place?	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure
---	-----------------------	--	---	--

**Response:** The Leisure Centres users parking subsidy was introduced in 2004 and jointly funded by Swale Borough Council and Swale Community Leisure throughout the subsequent 14 years. The 2017/18 annual cost of subsidy was £190,000.

The Cabinet meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 approved the £2M capital improvement funding for the Council's Leisure Centres and a 5.5 year contract extension. The withdrawal of the subsidised parking was also approved and became effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The parking changes and the timetable of improvements were widely published to centre users and clubs during late August and September.

The figures below show a 6.3% reduction in memberships at Swallows and a 1.7% reduction at Sheerness Pool/Healthy Living Centre since the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

Swallows Numbers;

Swallows	Health & Fitness	Gym & Swim	H2O	Swimlife D/D	Total Members
Sep	1354	1284	462	1520	4620
Oct	1286	1248	455	1547	4536
Nov	1215	1249	425	1457	4346

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:																								
Sheppey Numbers;																												
<table><tr><td>Sheppey</td><td>Health &amp; Fitness</td><td>Gym &amp; Swim</td><td>H2O</td><td>Swim Lessons</td><td>Total Members</td></tr><tr><td>Sept</td><td>590</td><td>906</td><td>387</td><td>634</td><td>2517</td></tr><tr><td>Oct</td><td>599</td><td>879</td><td>392</td><td>654</td><td>2524</td></tr><tr><td>Nov</td><td>605</td><td>853</td><td>375</td><td>640</td><td>2473</td></tr></table>					Sheppey	Health & Fitness	Gym & Swim	H2O	Swim Lessons	Total Members	Sept	590	906	387	634	2517	Oct	599	879	392	654	2524	Nov	605	853	375	640	2473
Sheppey	Health & Fitness	Gym & Swim	H2O	Swim Lessons	Total Members																							
Sept	590	906	387	634	2517																							
Oct	599	879	392	654	2524																							
Nov	605	853	375	640	2473																							
<p>The drop in memberships, primarily at Swallows, reflects the impact of the Swallows Pool closure for 17 weeks and some disruption of fitness classes while construction and upgrading of new facilities is undertaken. We always anticipated that this would lead to a short term cancellation of memberships. This is on par with the experience of other Leisure Centres that undergo improvements where there is a pattern of initial loss of members and then an uptake by returning members and growth of new memberships post the completion and opening of the new facilities.</p> <p>There will always be a small percentage of former members and users that join other leisure clubs/gyms for a variety of reasons which could also include the offer of free parking.</p>																												
10	Councillor Tony Winckless	In the Sittingbourne Town Centre Leisure Scheme how many diners have made legal agreement to occupy properties?	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration																								
<p><b>Response:</b> We have three restaurants who have signed an Agreement to Lease. We have also agreed terms with a further restaurant and Spirit of Sittingbourne is in active discussion with a further organisation.</p>																												
11	Councillor Tony	Given the funding put into this year’s budget to play area improvements. Can you tell me how many play areas in Swale have seen improvements made, or been commissioned, and	Cabinet Member for	Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning,																								

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
	Winckless	where are they?	Environment and Rural Affairs	Environment and Leisure

**Response:** The Open Spaces Strategy (2018-2022) highlighted the need to improve the Council's aging stock of play areas and also to introduce new 'flag ship' play areas that will serve a wider population such as Minster and the planned Faversham play area .

A new capital sum of £500,000 was agreed for play area improvements over a 4 year period. The new funding supplements the Section 106 planning agreement funds which has facilitated 11 new/refurbed sites in the last 15 months. An excellent example delivered this year was the £45k investment at Milton Recreation ground which delivered a range of different styles of equipment.

As a result of the new capital, Members were subsequently invited to nominate a play area in their ward for improvement and their nominations were included in a 4 year plan, signed off by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs. Officers are preparing a simple summary leaflet of the full 4 year plan which will be circulated to all Members.

Four sites are in the planning/consultation /final tender stage. The table below sets out the detail. Obviously dates are indicative and can be affected by weather or contractor/equipment availability.

Location	Area	Description of improvements	Cost (approx.)	SBC Capital	OTHER Funding Streams	Date Completed
Faversham Pool Play Area	Faversham	Complete replacement/refurbishment of play area	£ 50,000.00	£ 40,000.00	Fav Rotary Club £10,000.00	Due February 2019.
Beachfields Sandpit Play Area	Sheerness	Replacement of galleon ship including surfacing	£ 50,000.00	£ 50,000.00		Due March 2019.
Rectory Play Area	Sittingbourne	Replacement of swings and play unit and new play equipment	£ 50,000.00	£ 50,000.00		Due April 2019.
Faversham Rec Play Area	Faversham	Complete replacement/refurbishment of play areas	£ 150,000.00	£ 35,000.00	HLF Grant £115,000.00	Due April/May 2019.
			<b>£ 300,000.00</b>	<b>£ 175,000.00</b>	<b>£ 125,000.00</b>	



Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
12	Councillor Harrison	Whilst it is a hypothetical and unrealistic idea, would you ever condone the notion of using Sheerness as an alternative dock to Dover, given the already congested state of the A249 which is due to be made worse by intensive new housing in the A249 corridor?	Leader	
<b>Response:</b> With deep water and investment in its bulk handling capabilities, the Port of Sheerness already has the potential to play an important role in a post-Brexit economy. With existing ro-ro facilities it is also capable of being part of a package to provide resilience for the Port of Dover. This said, there are practical considerations around the road access, via the A249 and in particular at Junction 5 of the M2, and this exemplifies why it is important that we continue to lobby – not just for improvements to the strategic road infrastructure, but also to support the Port’s ambitions to move freight from road to rail and develop domestic waterborne freight opportunities.				