

Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters arising – March 2021

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
Heritage issues	Cabinet Member for Planning	Cabinet adopted a Heritage Strategy and Action Plan on 18 March 2020. The Action Plan contains a programme of CA reviews. It has been suggested by the Cabinet Member that the Area Committee may want to fund CA reviews for areas which are outside of the planned programme of reviews in the Action Plan.	<p>The Conservation & Design Manager has advised that work is well advanced on the review of the three conservation areas. The consultant has visited all areas and met with local representatives from each. The consultant has done things slightly differently this time and has produced the proper digitised maps as she goes. This will allow the parish representatives that she met on the site visits to respond to the draft text. The initial draft appraisal documents should be available soon and then once finalised it is hoped to go out to public consultation after the May election.</p> <p>The Conservation & Design Manager will be carrying out an assessment to ascertain whether there is any scope for a conservation area at Iwade. The outcome of the assessment will be reported to the June meeting.</p>
Conservation issues, including ponds	Cabinet Member for Planning	SBC only has details of the ponds which it manages directly. There is a strategic and heritage, conservation and tourism need for information, including ownership, condition and management of the ponds in the area. Policy and	<p>The Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group have confirmed they are happy to work with SBC on this in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They can provide species data for all ponds in Swale, not just the ponds in public ownership. This will require

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
		<p>Performance Officer to explore with officers and other organisations what information currently exists on the areas ponds.</p>	<p>Swale to sign a data sharing agreement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. They would be happy to attend meetings and provide advice and guidance where possible. 3. They can provide a database of known ponds, however they will need to get agreement for a third party for this. <p>Kent Fire and Rescue have also indicated that they hold data on all known water sources they are able to use for firefighting operations, including ponds and are happy to share this data with SBC.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Environment has advised that this should be dealt with as a borough-wide issue and referred to the appropriate officer to deal with in due course.</p>
Walking and cycling routes around the villages	Committee member	<p>The Council is currently undertaking a review of its Local Plan. One of the documents that is being developed alongside this review is a Transport Strategy.</p> <p>The Cabinet would welcome any input from the Committee on walking and cycling to feed into the developing</p>	The Deputy Cabinet Member for Economy and Property is leading on this and will provide a verbal update at the meeting.

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
		<p>Transport Strategy which is being developed through the Local Plan Panel. It is important that there is no duplication of effort by the Committee's and Local Plan processes.</p>	
<p>Friends Groups - Maintenance and care of woodlands</p>	<p>Committee member</p>	<p>The Council has a grounds maintenance contract for its parks and open spaces. Maintenance of woodland owned or managed by the Council forms part of this contract, but priority is given to maintaining areas which have a heavy footfall, so inspection of woodland is therefore generally done on an ad hoc basis in response to information received.</p>	<p>Cllr Palmer will give a verbal update at the meeting. Please also see the attached paper on Friends Groups.</p>
<p>Addressing littering in parks and open spaces including litter picking and awareness campaigns</p>	<p>Committee member</p>	<p>The Council has a contract in place to maintain Swale's parks and open spaces. It also has details of all the litter picking and friends groups who help maintain our parks and open spaces.</p>	<p>The Chair suggests that Ward Members may wish to arrange litter picks in their areas. If they wish to do so they should contact the Environmental Projects Officer (Vikki Sedgwick) who co-ordinates any volunteer litter picks. She will arrange for any equipment you may want to borrow and agree a place to leave the waste once collected.</p> <p>Requests can be made directly to Vikki Sedgwick or to the Environmental Projects email address – EnvironmentalProjects@swale.gov.uk</p>

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
<p>Research into how lower tier councils Area Committees tackle upper tier issues</p>	<p>Committee member</p>	<p>Road safety and youth provision were raised at the December meeting and it was noted that these were county-led matters. Members wondered how other councils Area Committees tackle upper tier matters.</p>	<p>The Kent County Councillor advised that if the Area Committee has questions about specific issues relating to activity where KCC is the responsible authority and there isn't an existing route then Swale should write to the relevant officers at KCC. With regard to road safety or youth provision, routes already exist. He suggested the Joint Transportation Board for road safety, and the Swale Young People's Partnership Conversation, where youth provision could be raised.</p> <p>A mechanism for raising issues with a higher tier authority when there isn't an existing route is something that the Area Committee Review Working Group may wish to consider.</p>
<p>Phoenix House</p>	<p>Committee Member</p>	<p>An update was provided and at the time of the December meeting all but two users of the building had managed to find alternative premises from which to operate.</p>	<p>The Cabinet Member for Community chaired a high level meeting with the Chairman of the Swale Community Centres on 27 January 2021. The meeting reviewed the background and context to current situation relating to Phoenix House in Sittingbourne including the Trust's own position and to take a view on possible options moving forward with regard to future provision</p>

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
			and how that might be provided. Current community hub models were noted and it was agreed that a project team be formed to consider the business case for future provision in the town. A further meeting, likely to be March, will be called when contact has been established with KCC.

Items to bring back to future Area Committee Meetings:

Item	Who initiated?	Background	Progress on actions
Brown tourism signs	Cabinet Member for Planning	<p>To commence an audit of existing local brown signs in concert with parish councils. Progress to be reported at next meeting on 1 December 2020.</p> <p>Cabinet adopted a Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan on 28 October 2020. This includes a medium term action to undertake a wayfinding audit of signage and identify any gaps. The delivery partners identified for this action are: SBC; town and parish councils; Visit Swale; Kent Highways; and local businesses.</p>	There have been no requests for brown tourism signs in the Western Area. The Chair proposes bringing this back in 6 months' time to see if any requests come forward.