

Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters arising – 1 March 2022

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
1.	Heritage issues	<p>Cabinet adopted a Heritage Strategy and Action Plan on 18 March 2020. The Action Plan contains a programme of Conservation Area (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> <p>In December 2020, the Western Area Committee agreed that £6,270 be allocated to a firm of consultants to undertake CA reviews in Rodmersham, Milstead and Tunstall in line with a quote submitted to members. Since that meeting, the Conservation and Design Manager has been giving regular update reports on the progress of the CA reviews.</p> <p>The position reported at the September 2021 meeting was that the Milstead CA should be re-designated and the associated character appraisal and management plan adopted for development management purposes in December 2021. This has not been possible due to work pressures but Cabinet agreement has been given for the re-designation/adoption. Final editing work on the document is near completion and once this is complete and the necessary statutory notices arranged, the completed document will be made available to view on the Council’s website, in late</p>	<p>An update will be provided by the Conservation & Design Manager along with a briefing on the proposed Rodmersham Church Conservation Review.</p> <p>Please see the three presentations attached to this paper.</p>

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
		<p>February or early March. The Rodmersham Green and Tunstall CA review work has now been subject to public consultation and whilst there is still some further work to do around this, it is anticipated that reports can be prepared in time to allow for Cabinet approval for re-designation/adoption in April. A report with the recommendation to designate a new conservation centred around Rodmersham Parish Church is due to be presented to Cabinet in March. No new or continued work on possible new conservation areas is feasible for the foreseeable future given the existing Heritage Strategy Action Plan 1 work commitments (including further conservation area review work – to include at-risk Cellar Hill and Green Street CA at Teynham) and the need for the Conservation & Design Team (of just two officers) to continue to contribute to the development management element of the Planning Service and to work streams from other services, including the provision of advice on closed churchyards (for which the Council is responsible for) and Council-owned heritage properties.</p>	
2.	Changing Places Toilets	<p>A Parish Councillor for Bobbing brought the Committee's attention to the Government Fund Changing Places Toilets. Local Authorities were invited to submit expressions of interest by 26 September 2021 to install larger accessible toilets. This was also raised at the Sittingbourne Area Committee meeting.</p>	<p>In progress - an Expression of Interest was submitted within the deadline. The relevant Government department has been chased and they have confirmed that announcements of funding have not been made yet and they could not give a date when they would be.</p>

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
3.	Charging of electric cars at home where there is no driveway.	A Parish Councillor for Bobbing raised the issue of residents in the future needing to charge electric cars at home when they had no driveway. There needed to be a policy change to allow for a wire to be run either under or over the pavement. The Committee agreed that this issue was not specific to the Western Area and should be referred to Cabinet. Additionally, a Member said that the infrastructure needed to be put in place locally for high-speed rapid chargers. If such chargers were installed in communal parking areas, there would be a quick turnover of cars using them.	The EV policy is being drafted but it will pay reference to this type of issue and point to Kent County Council guidance as it is their responsibility.
4.	Agricultural Bill	A Parish Councillor asked if the Area Committee could advise where guidance can be found on the Agricultural Bill so that parish councils can engage with land-owners.	The Agricultural Bill was due to be discussed at the September 2021 Swale Area Committee Meeting. A Tunstall Parish Councillor had done some work on this and would feedback.
5.	The Air Cadet Squadron	<p>This item was raised at the Sittingbourne Area Committee meeting and passed to the Western Area Committee to look into.</p> <p>The Air Cadet Squadron building at Westlands School was discussed as it was under threat.</p>	Further to the Cabinet Member for Community contacting the Air Cadet Squadron, discussions have been ongoing. The Economy and Community Services Manager met with two of the Air Cadet Squadron's officers and discussed a number of proposals that might suit their relocation needs. Their notice to quit is not effective until the end of March 2022 and they want to invest the time to get the best possible outcome. They will keep SBC updated on their progress.

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
6.	Woodland Management Plan	In March 2021, Western Area Committee awarded £2,758.79 for a Woodland Management Plan at the Meads and Rose Hill. At the September meeting it was reported that an order had been placed with White Horse Ecology to update the previously drafted management plan.	This item will be discussed under Item 8.
7.	Walking and Cycling Project	At the March 2021 meeting, the Area Committee awarded £13,000.00 in funding for a walking and cycling project.	<p>Cllr Stephen is in the process of setting up a member working group and discussing planning routes with community groups.</p> <p>Linked to this is the new Active Travel Co-ordinator who will take up the role at the end of February. This will be to co-ordinate the technical elements of the project's work and move towards engaging with the Highways Authority to ensure the necessary highways safety audits have been undertaken ahead of any development and promotion of route(s).</p>
8.	Closed Churchyards	The Area Committee considered the report and agreed to add this to the work plan to discuss further at a future meeting.	This item will be discussed under Item 9.

Bring back to future meetings:

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
9.	Conservation issues, including ponds	<p>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.</p> <p>Both the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group and Kent Fire and rescue have confirmed they are happy to work with Swale Borough Council to pull this information together for Swale.</p> <p>This will be considered as part of the wider environmental work and prioritisation of work programme. No work is currently underway on ponds.</p>	Bring back to a future meeting.
10.	Youth provision in villages	<p>As part of the considerations for priorities and ambitions going forward for the Western Area Committee Meeting, the lack of youth provision in villages was raised as an issue.</p> <p>Councillor Richard Palmer agreed to take this forward and said that a report would come back to the next meeting.</p>	Cllr Palmer proposes inviting a representative from the Kent County Council Youth Service to attend a future meeting to discuss this further.