

Regeneration and Property Committee	
Meeting Date	07 July 2022
Report Title	Handover Report: Executive Model to Committee System
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property
Lead Officer	
Classification	Open
Recommendations	The committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is intended to ensure that all Regeneration and Property committee members share a common understanding of the committee's remit, including the services it has oversight of, and of current issues and major pieces of work relevant to that remit. Similar reports have been or will be provided to all of the new service committees.

2 Background

- 2.1 Council agreed unanimously in October 2021 to move to a committee system of governance from the 2022/23 municipal year, and the new constitution was adopted in April 2022. The constitution establishes five politically-balanced service committees to undertake the decision-making on what would previously have been executive matters.
- 2.2 The Regeneration and Property committee has a number of areas of responsibility on which it is able to make decisions under delegation from Council. These are set out in the constitution as follows:
- regeneration
 - economic development
 - town centres and markets
 - visitor economy
 - property asset management, including beach huts
 - learning and skills
 - sea fronts, harbours and quays
- 2.3. The majority of these functions are delivered by the Regeneration, Economic Development and Property service, although beach huts, sea fronts, harbours and quays are delivered by Environment and Leisure.
- 2.4. The Regeneration, Economic Development and Property service also delivers some functions which are within the remit of other Committees, such as Active Travel (Environment Committee) and support for local culture, e.g. Platinum Jubilee grants, Queen's baton relay (Community Committee)
- 2.5. The Regeneration, Economic Development and Property service is made up of three teams as follows:
- **Economic Development and External Funding:**
4.6FTE. Two vacant posts as at 1 July 2022.

- **Destination and Place:**
2FTE. One vacant post as at 1 July 2022.

- **Property:**
10.3FTE (including 7.7FTE print room, facilities and cleaning staff). Supported currently by a fixed-term Interim Property Manager.

2.6. Key management contacts are shown below:

- Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Property – Joanne Johnson
- Head of Environment & Leisure – Martyn Cassell
- Economic Development & External Funding Manager – Kieren Mansfield
- Destination & Place Manager – Lyn Newton
- Interim Property Manager – Jeremy Pilgrim

2.7 The 'Proposals' section below provides background information on the committee's areas of responsibility.

3 Proposals

Corporate plan objectives

3.1 The Corporate Plan 2020-2023, which was adopted by Council in October 2020, includes 20 strategic objectives grouped under four priorities. The Regeneration and Property Committee will support a number of the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2023 objectives. The most relevant of these are:

Priority	Objective
1 Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all	1.4 Develop a new economic improvement strategy to diversify the borough's economy, expand the range of employment opportunities, and boost wages so that payment of the UK living wage becomes the norm.
	1.5 Support residents and businesses to improve the borough's vocational skill levels, and vigorously pursue all opportunities to enhance the provision and accessibility of further and higher education for Swale residents at all stages of their careers.
	1.6 Implement the visitor economy framework to increase investment, address new visitor demands and grow the value of the sector to the Swale economy.
2 Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges	2.4 Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.

Key Policies and Strategies

3.2 One of the ways in which the committee system differs from the executive model is the absence of individual member decision-making and the need - which to some extent flows from that - for members to direct the activities of the organisation by means of policies and strategies. While it will be for the Policy and Resources Committee to adopt all of the council's policies and strategies which are not reserved to Full Council, the Regeneration and Property Committee will take a particular

interest in those policies and strategies which relate to matters within its own remit, including:

- [Swale Economic Improvement Plan 2020-2023](#)
- [Swale Visitor Economy Framework and Action Plan 2018-2023](#)
- Beach Hut Policy

Current issues and large pieces of work

3.3 Recent highlights include:

- Award of over £50m business grants from March 2020 – 2022, including development of a Clean Growth grant.
- Sheerness Clock Tower restoration complete
- Five UK Community Renewal Fund projects awarded funding, totalling £1.59m
- Delivery of Welcome Back Fund investment totalling £118k.
- Salix grant funding secured (£273k) to support restoration of Master's House
- Near completion of Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) works at Queenborough and Rushenden, on schedule and to budget.
- Imminent letting of final units at Bourne Place

3.4 Current workload includes:

- Development and submission of the £20m Sheerness Revival Levelling-Up Fund bid (by 6 July, decision due in the autumn)
- Development, submission and delivery of the £1.169m UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan (plan submission 1 August 2022, delivery ongoing to 31 March 2025)
- Completion of Master's House refurbishment (due 31 August 2022)
- Completion of Swale House improvement works – roofing, insulation and windows (due late 2022 / early 2023)
- Finalisation of the town centre regeneration schemes (including St Michael's church wall, Faversham wayfinding and Faversham pedestrianisation).
- Conclusion of the 22/23 service restructure (including recruitment to vacant posts)
- Ongoing promotion / optimisation of Visit Swale
- Snagging for Bourne Place / town centre schemes
- High Streets Task Force engagement with Sheerness town centre
- Development of Beach Hut Policy and future expansion programme
- Blue Flag applications
- Seafront concession opportunities and management of existing
- Barton's Point Coastal Park Concession EOI

3.5. Significant issues include:

- Need to promote appropriate opportunities to provide a mix of employment land to accommodate future business requirements across the borough
- Entrenched issues relating to the quality of secondary school provision on the Isle of Sheppey

3.6. Baseline data includes:

- The current claimant count rate in Swale (April 2022) is 4% which is a small reduction on the rate seen in March 2022. The claimant count represents the number of people claiming an out of work benefit such as jobseekers' allowance or universal credit.
- Sheppey has a claimant count of 5.6%, which is the highest of the area committees in Swale and has decreased slightly since March 2022.

Sittingbourne at 4.3% and the Eastern area at 3.6% have also seen small decreases. The Western area at 2.5% has stayed the same since the previous month.

- Of the 3,865 claimants in Swale, 2,190 were male and 1,675 were female.
- Swale youth unemployment (18-24) is the age group currently with the highest proportion of claimants at 6.1%. The rate has seen a decrease since March 2022 of -0.2%.
- In the English indices of multiple deprivation, Swale is overall the 56th most deprived borough, out of 317 lower-tier authority areas. On the education and skills domain, however, Swale is the 28th most deprived, making this one of the borough's worst-scoring areas. Over a quarter of Swale's lower super output areas are among the 10% worst off nationally on the education and skills domain. These low average skill levels are correlated with the borough's low average wages compared to the rest of Kent and the wider South-East.
- From the latest available data, there were 5,045 businesses in Swale in 2021.
- The business birth rate was 10.6% in 2020 which was a 6.5% decrease on 2019. The South East rate was 10.9% and saw a 7.4% decrease, while nationally the rate was 12% and saw an 8.4% decrease. The rates represent the number of new businesses as a percentage of total active companies.
- The one-year survival rate for Swale businesses was 89.4% in 2020, which was a 4.7% decrease on 2019's results. The South East Region was at 89.4% following a small decrease of 0.9%, and nationally the number was 88.4% after a 1% decrease since 2019.
- The three-year survival rate for Swale businesses was at 57.3% in 2020, after a 1.2% increase since 2019. The South East Region was at 58.5% having seen a 0.7% increase since 2019, and nationally there had been an increase of 1.2% to 53.1% in 2020.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 As the report is for noting only, there are no alternative options.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 As the report is for noting only, no consultation has been undertaken or is proposed.

6 Implications

6.1 As the report is for noting only, there are no implications arising from the recommendations.

7 Appendices

7.1 There are no appendices.

8 Background Papers

- [Corporate Plan 2020-2023](#)
- [Levelling-Up Fund prospectus](#)
- [Shared Prosperity Fund prospectus](#)
- [Monthly unemployment statistics – Kent and districts](#)
- [Property Asset Strategy](#)