

Western Area Committee Priorities

This discussion paper follows on from the previous item which reviewed the achievements of the Area Committees over the last three years.

As explained in that report, there is no longer funding available for Area Committees to allocate to support their priorities, however, Western Area Committee can feed into and influence the corporate priorities and objectives that are relevant to their specific areas.

One of the first tasks for the new council will be create a corporate plan to set out what the council wants to achieve in the next four years. This will help make sure council resources are allocated in a coherent, accountable and effective way.

The current Corporate Plan priorities are:

- Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all;
- investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges;
- tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone; and
- renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.

Area Committees are being asked to have an input into the Corporate Plan at an early stage, by outlining their own aspirations for their individual areas, which will help inform the new Corporate Plan.

When considering what these aspirations should be, it is important to bear in mind the challenging budget position which is likely to continue over the next few years and the capacity of the organisation to deliver on them on top of previously agreed workloads.

The aspirations of the Area Committee could be issues that are the responsibility of Swale Borough Council to achieve, or things that are the responsibility of external organisations which we could try to influence. They could also be ambitions to work towards for the future.

Council Services:

Examples of things that fall within the area of responsibility of Council services are:

- Identifying areas that would benefit from being prioritised for deep cleans; and
- addressing problems that affect our open spaces.

External Services:

Examples of things that fall within the area of responsibility of external partners are:

- Lobbying Kent County Council on matters such as education, youth provision and transport issues;
- lobbying the Government on the need for policy change specific to the needs of the borough;

- lobbying water companies and or/the Environment Agency on matters such as fresh water supply, waste water and flooding;
- lobbying the Police on matters such as traffic management enforcement, rural crime or drug related crime; and
- lobbying the Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Activity:

The Chair will invite those in attendance – including members of the public - to split into groups of 4 or 5 to talk about what is important for the Western area and put a list of suggested priorities together. Ten minutes have been set aside for this task.

Please focus on answering the following questions:

1. What issues affect residents in your Ward that fall within the responsibility of Swale Borough Council?
2. What issues affect residents in your Ward that fall within the responsibility of an external partner?
3. What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?
4. What are the top three issues you would like to Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

You will be provided with paper and pens to make a note of your suggestions, one person from your group will be asked to feed back at the end of this session.

Those attending remotely are invited to type their suggestions in the meeting 'chat'.

All suggestions will be collated and fed into the preparation of the Corporate Plan.

If anyone has further ideas after the meeting, please email them to areacommittees@swale.gov.uk