

Matters Arising Report December 2025

New actions/issues and progress with ongoing actions

No.	Item	Background	Actions/updates
1.	Heritage issues	<p>Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA)</p> <p>Swale Borough Council currently does not have an ASCA. Since the adoption of the Heritage Strategy in 2020 and subsequent Action Plans wherein a number of Conservation Areas have been reviewed, it has been proposed that in order to better manage and maintain Swale's historic environment and heritage, targeted ASCA can prove beneficial for conservation areas with a commercial centre.</p> <p>Any designation needs to be based on public consultation and must follow specific legal steps, including consideration of the order by the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Following an all members briefing in May 2024, it was agreed that a draft consultation document be prepared for approval by the Planning Committee, before undertaking public consultation.</p>	<p>The draft consultation document is estimated to be ready by winter of 2025.</p>

2.	Swale Local Heritage List	<p>The Selection Panel met on 17 October 2024; 278 nominations were presented out of which 150 were shortlisted to be designated as Swale's Local Heritage.</p> <p>The proposed designation list was presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 27 November 2024, wherein it was unanimously agreed to designate the shortlisted assets with addition of one more asset- taking the total to 151 designated assets on Local Heritage List. The majority of mapping work on SBC GIS system and associated data organisation that includes photo and brief description of each asset is now complete and published on the SBC website.</p>	<p>At the Selection Panel meeting there were several deferrals. Also, the team have identified a few geographical gaps in terms of current nominations and wish to include some recommendations emerging from Conservation Area appraisal work. As such, an additional call for 'invitation to nominate' Local Heritage assets concluded on 31 October 2025, with the Selection Panel meeting estimated to be held before Christmas 2025, subject to Historic England's availability. Following that, it is anticipated the list would be updated every three years following a call for nominations and Selection Panel. The next one being scheduled for 2028.</p> <p>In addition to the above, a protocol for urgent designation of assets on Local Heritage was adopted at the June 2025 Policy & Resources committee.</p>
3.	Area Committees Review	<p>A review of Area Committees is currently underway and Area Committees were consulted during the summer round of meetings. The public, councillors and officers were consulted for their views.</p>	<p>The Member Working Group have reviewed the consultation responses, along with feedback from the sessions at Area Committee meetings. They have developed 14 recommendations which were agreed at the Policy & Resources Committee on 26 November 2025. They will now go to Full Council for final approval and if agreed will come into effect from May 2026.</p>
4.	Public Toilet Facilities Public Consultation	<p>The public toilet consultation was carried out based the recommendations in the July Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee report. The public consultation</p>	<p>There were over 800 consultations responses; 60 of which were paper submissions and 752 online. All the feedback from residents, visitors, Area Committees, Community groups, Town/Parish</p>

		<p>lasted 12 weeks was opened to Swale residents, visitors, community groups and businesses to ensure as many people could take part. Everyone was encouraged to share their honest opinions, particularly from representative groups such as those with a disability, older people, families with young children or those who are pregnant. There were also posters in all the public toilet facilities, posters in all Council offices along with paper forms, advertised on the Swale website and social media, shared with the local press, Area Committee presentations and directly contacting representative organisations (such as, Swale CVS, Age UK, Swale Seniors Forum, Freedom Centre and others).</p>	<p>Councils, letters and petitions have been collated and were presented at the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee on 12 November 2025 along with recommendations.</p> <p>Swale Borough Council Councillors agreed to new proposals to transform public conveniences. These new proposals expect to generate saving that can be used to ensure that the Council maintains financial stability and continue to deliver statutory services for our residents.</p> <p>Residents can now expect several public conveniences to be managed by Town and Parish Councils who are able to effectively keep public conveniences open and respond to local demand.</p> <p>We will also be working with local businesses to allow residents and visitors to use their toilet facilities free of charge. To participate businesses must be inclusive well-placed businesses with convenient operating hours, who will in turn receive contributions towards upkeep.</p> <p>To help residents and visitors be better informed about the locations of publicly accessible toilets, there will be information added to the Swale website and updated regularly. This will enable residents and visitors to plan their journeys more effectively, whether shopping, socialising, or visiting local attractions.</p>
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5.	Swale Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	A public consultation was carried out to assist with the development of a Swale-wide Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan. Area Committees gave their feedback at the September 2025 round of Area Committee Meetings.	<p>The LCWIP consultation closed on the 26th October 2025 with a total of 82 engagements ranging from paper responses, comments on map pins and on-line completions of the questionnaire. Currently, the feedback is being collated and analysed by consultants. Once this is done, necessary amendments will be completed and the report will go back to Committee for feedback. When the Committee is happy with the final report, this will then form part of the Council plan and can be cited for funding bids to start to design the routes in the LCWIP.</p> <p>A thank you to all that took the time to complete this complicated consultation.</p>