



## AGENDA

### CABINET MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 10 September 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Swale House

Membership:

Councillors David Simmons, Mike Whiting, Ted Wilcox, Gerry Lewin (Vice-Chairman), Bowles (Chairman), Mike Cosgrove, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Ken Pugh and John Wright

Quorum = 3

#### RECORDING NOTICE

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1. Apologies for Absence

Pages

2. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2014 (Minute Nos. 139 - 148) as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

**Advice to Members:** If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Corporate Services as Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

#### **Part B Reports for Decision by Cabinet**

- |    |   |         |
|----|---|---------|
| 4. | Beach Huts  | 1 - 14  |
|    | To consider the proposal to introduce further beach huts at Minster Leas, Isle of Sheppey.  |         |
| 5. | Complaints Annual Report 2013/14  | 15 - 24 |
|    | To consider the presentation of the annual report on complaints received during 2013/14.  |         |
| 6. | 1st Quarter Financial Monitoring Report   | 25 - 40 |
|    | To consider the 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Monitoring Report.  |         |
| 7. | Procurement of Utility Supplies   | 41 - 44 |
|    | To consider the strategic review of the purchasing arrangements of gas and electricity supplies across the Council's assets to secure value for money arrangements and to consider options for length of any purchasing arrangements. |         |
| 8. | Local Engagement Forums June and July 2014  | 45 - 66 |
|    | Cabinet is asked to consider this report which sets out the discussion and outcomes from the three Local Engagement Forum meetings held during June and July 2014.  |         |
| 9. | Exclusion of the Press and Public   |         |
|    | To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the  |         |

following item:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:

3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any individual including the authority holding that information.

10. Proposed Relocation of Sittingbourne Market

67 - 72

To consider proposals for the relocation of Sittingbourne Market.

**Issued on Tuesday, 2 September 2014**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Cabinet, please visit [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)

Corporate Services Director, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

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# Agenda Item 4

<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>	<b>Agenda Item: 4</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	10 September 2014
<b>Report Title</b>	Beach Huts
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact
<b>Head of Service</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Charlotte Knowles, Commissioning Officer
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. To retain the existing huts beyond the trial period and to introduce a further 15 huts at The Leas, Minster, by April 2015. The final mix of huts available for rent or sale to be agreed by the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance.
	2. To commence a separate project to review the provision of public toilet facilities in the Minster area.
	3. To delegate authority to the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact to finalise licence conditions in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with the Beach Hut Pilot project to date, includes a summary of consultation undertaken and proposes introducing a further 15 huts by April 2015.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 On 19 March 2013, SMT approved the recommendation that the Council would work in partnership with Minster Beach Hut Association (MBHA) to introduce beach huts along the Leas at Minster, Sheppey for a two year pilot project. MBHA assisted with the location, size and style of the huts and installed steps to access the huts from the promenade. They invested £25,000 of their own money and in return members of the Association own 10 huts on the site. The agreement was entered into on the condition that if the scheme was unsuccessful, MBHA would remove the huts at the end of the trial period.

- 2.2 Members of the association pay a minimal ground rent of £50 per annum during the trial period to reflect their investment in the project and the level of risk involved for them if the scheme fails.
- 2.3 The Council introduced 10 huts to rent out to members of the public at a rate of £650 per annum, and implemented a waiting list to judge the level of interest in the huts.
- 2.4 Since the trial began in June last year, the scheme has received a significant amount of positive feedback. There are currently over 370 people on the waiting list. To date there have been no incidents of vandalism or serious issues relating to the huts.
- 2.5 Consultation was undertaken with members of the public who are on the waiting list. Of the 56 respondents, 29 (57%) said that they would prefer to purchase a hut, 12 (23%) stated that they would prefer to rent, and 10 (20%) were undecided. Four of the six SBC licensees who responded said they would prefer to buy their hut if given the option.
- 2.6 When asked whether they would consider another location on the Island, 26 (52%) said no, 22 (44%) said yes, and 2 (4%) were undecided. They were also asked to suggest additional locations; suggestions included Leysdown, Shellness, Sheerness, Warden Bay, and Queenborough. Leysdown was the most popular suggestion.
- 2.7 Fourteen respondents commented on the lack of toilet facilities at that end of the promenade. Many stated that the existing toilets next to The Whitehouse are in a poor condition and in the wrong location. If consideration is given to addressing the issue of public toilet facilities in this area, discussions could be initiated with MBHA or Minster Parish Council regarding a management agreement for those facilities. As background, of the other 13 beach hut providers consulted as part of the British Destinations and East Riding Council Chalet Study, all 13 had toilets within the vicinity of their huts, four had standpipes/water facilities, and three had showers.
- 2.8 Quinneys (who are based near Canterbury) were used for the provision of huts for the trial period, so that a recognised specification could be used that has been successful in other areas (e.g. Tankerton). However, a procurement exercise would be undertaken for any additional huts.

### **3 Proposal**

- 3.1 With the positive reaction received for this project so far, it is recommended that the existing huts are retained and a further 15 additional huts are introduced at Minster in April 2015. These will be a combination of huts for rent and for sale, so as not to exclude those who would prefer to rent a hut on an annual basis.

- 3.2 This will mean there is a total of thirty five huts at Minster Leas; consisting of ten owned and maintained by MBHA and twenty five provided by the Borough Council. The final mix of huts available for rent or sale from the Borough Council will be agreed by the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance.
- 3.3 The current licensees of the ten Council owned huts will be offered the first opportunity to purchase the huts that they currently occupy.
- 3.4 It is also recommended that authority be delegated to the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance, to finalise licence conditions.
- 3.5 A separate project to review the provision of public toilets in the area will be commenced before the end of the trial period, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental & Rural Affairs.
- 3.6 Further research will be undertaken on the feasibility of introducing beach huts at Leysdown and elsewhere, with a separate report brought forward once that has concluded.

#### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 One option would be to agree for the pilot project to continue until the end of March 2015 but not introduce any further huts. The existing 20 huts would then remain on a permanent basis. The Council could then either continue to rent out the 10 huts that it owns or sell them. This option is feasible but would limit income generation.
- 4.2 A second option would be for the pilot project to continue until the end of March 2015 but then remove the existing 20 huts. This option is not recommended as it would mean that the Council would fail to benefit from any future income opportunities through either rent or sale of beach huts, as well as losing a popular new amenity.
- 4.3 A further option would be to introduce more or fewer than 15 additional huts. This is not recommended because at this time it is considered that 15 will best balance income potential with concern regarding parking and the current toilet provision.

#### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 In 2011/12 Beckwith Consulting Ltd undertook consultation with 111 people on the Isle of Sheppey, a mix of residents, visitors and local businesses.
- 5.2 Comments have been invited on the beach hut pilot project from members of the public since the pilot began. There have been signs located at Minster Leas since the huts were constructed.

- 5.3 SBC took part in a Chalet survey conducted by British Destinations and East Riding Council. SBC were one of 14 respondents.
- 5.4 Further consultation has been undertaken with the members of MBHA, the occupiers of the Council-owned huts, and members of the public who are on the waiting list. Of the 156 people who were on the waiting list at the time of the consultation, 56 of these responded. Of the 10 SBC licensees, six responded and all 10 members of MBHA responded to the consultation.
- 5.5 Residents of the Leas were also consulted. Of the 53 residents, 10 responded. Of these eight were in favour and two were opposed.
- 5.6 Other stakeholders consulted include: Cabinet members (Regeneration & Finance), Ward members, Kent Police, KCC Wardens, Sheppey Matters, Sheppey Tourism Alliance, Minster Parish Council, Swale Community Leisure Limited, licensee of the former lifeguard hut, The Beach PH, Little Oyster Tea Room, The Playa PH, The Whitehouse Restaurant, and Sheppey Beach Users Forum.
- 5.7 Minster Parish Council suggested that the consultation process was flawed with insufficient opportunities for Minster residents to comment on or oppose the proposal, in part because there was no online survey. In response to this, the consultation has been added to the Council's website and extended until 5 September 2014.
- 5.8 It should be noted that Minster Parish Council have suggested that the Borough Council maintain ownership of the scheme, that the hours of use be reduced and that a sound structure limiting the numbers and establishing the exact cut off points in Minster for future huts be created. They have asked that the decision for expansion be postponed until the Borough Council has acted on the Parish Council's recommendations (please refer to Appendix I).

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports tourism on the Isle of Sheppey, and supports the Council's regeneration programme.
Financial, Resource and Property	The one-off cost of the project will be funded from the Regeneration Fund via a top up from reserves. The revenue budget implications will be picked up through the 2015/16 budget process.
Legal and Statutory	Planning permission is not required; however the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance will consider whether the proposal will be considered by



	planning committee.
Crime and Disorder	The huts have the potential to attract vandalism and anti-social behaviour. However, to date there have been no incidents reported.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this time.
Equality and Diversity	An initial CIA was completed prior to the commencement of the trial project. The introduction of beach huts has no negative impact on people who possess any of the protected characteristics. The only potential impact identified refers to access to the huts for those with the disability protected characteristic. As a result the plans will ensure that the huts are accessible for those with disabilities.
Sustainability	As far as practicable, appropriate construction materials will be used from sustainable sources.

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I – Consultation Comments
- Appendix II – Map

## 8 Background Papers

- SMT Paper – Beach Huts, 16/08/2011
- SMT Paper – Beach Hut Option Appraisal, 21/02/2012
- SMT Paper – Beach Huts, 26/06/2012
- SMT Paper – Options for the introduction of Beach Huts, 19/03/2013

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## Consultation Comments

Organisation	Address	Comments
Minster-on-Sea Parish Council	Love Lane, Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 2LP	<p>Minster-on-Sea Parish Council is happy with the process for advertising the chalets. Members are also happy with the selection process feeling that the 'first come first served" approach is sensible.</p> <p>Its concerns about the consultation process have been resolved by the Borough Council's decision to agree to its request to add the consultation to its website and extend the deadline. However, Members want the net cast wider in future so that the consultation is not weighted towards only those supportive of the scheme. Its failure to include the Parish Council as a previous stakeholder is a sore point. To prevent this happening again, may I suggest you add Minster-on-Sea Parish Council's name to the list of stakeholders so that its views can be considered as part of any future consultations.</p> <p>Regarding the financial process, members believe that allowing 'ownership' presents certain difficulties and will open the floodgates to speculative investment. Members would like the Borough Council to maintain overall ownership of the scheme. They see this as a protective measure and view any "selling off of these assets" as not being in the best interests of the public or indeed of the organisation itself. Maintaining ownership would provide a guaranteed stream of income from the beach hut rental agreements and ground rent fees which could be reinvested in the locality to improve facilities such as the Whitehouse public toilets etc</p> <p>Although the Parish Council is happy with the majority of the conditions of tenure, it feels that one of the conditions is open to abuse. In this case, condition 2.7 "to use the beach huts between the hours of 05.00 and 23.00" is considered excessive. Members understand that the planning permission related to Minster Community Centre (55 New Road, ME12 3PT) which is itself a temporary building allows usage between the hours of 08.00 and 22.00 on Monday to Friday and from 09.00 to 21.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays and believe that restriction of hours would work well in this location.</p> <p>Members are happy with the enforcement arrangements and agree that the Seafront Manager is best placed to oversee this.</p> <p>Regarding the master plan, based on your response, it is worrying that there appears to be no real plan. The lack of an agreed limit on the number of huts and non existence of an established cut off point supports this view. May I suggest that these issues are immediately reviewed in an open and transparent discussion with the Parish Council.</p> <p>For all of the above reasons, Minster-on-Sea Parish Council asks that the decision for expansion is postponed until such time as the Borough Council has acted on the Parish Council's recommendations. This includes maintaining ownership and creating a sound structure limiting the numbers and establishing the exact cut off points in Minster. If the Borough Council can guarantee that these recommendations are included in the expanded scheme and a better more protective structure is in</p>

		place to prevent abuse then Minster-on-Sea Parish Council will support it.
Vintage Vending	Licensee of Former Lifeguard Hut, The Leas	Yes that would be good news if it was possible to do a second phase of beach huts. I have only heard positive comments about them, and they certainly add some charm to the seafront. I suppose that there is a waiting list of over 300 people speaks for itself!
Sheppey Tourism Alliance / Sheppey Matters	N/A	Thank you for the email and letter and I think another 15 Beach Huts in Minster is a splendid idea. From a tourism point of view any improvements will attract day visitors but also being a resident of Minster and walking the promenade regularly I delight in these beautiful surroundings which are definitely enhanced by the beach huts.

### Members of the public in support:

No.	Comments
1	I believe this project is a fantastic idea and progressing well with ever growing interest from many people.
2	The beach huts are fantastically successful. When we walk the dog on the Leas, people are buzzing round the huts and the occupiers are constantly being asked how to get one. And now they are being painted, they really look the business. They should certainly attract more visitors and the café must be seeing extra trade. I would recommend that if a significant number are built, it may be worth building more facilities like toilets and kiosks at that end. Only downside, the little car park is always full now, even at 20.00! Well done to whoever had that bright idea for regeneration.
3	I walked my dog there and saw them for the first time and I thought they were being built very well, and what a fantastic idea! I have only just moved to the Island and knew what fantastic wildlife you had to offer, but the more I explore, the more I find, and blow the island's trumpet!!!!!! I think the Island of Sheppey is so undervalued by residents, and I do tell them to open their eyes and look properly!
4	They look very impressive.
5	I visited your beach for the very first time yesterday. I found it clean & tidy, well manned by your friendly lifeguards, and I was absolutely enchanted by the memorial seats, the exercise machines and to totally top it your new beach hut scheme. Reminiscent of the Brighton beach huts. A big congratulations, I can see this being a great success, and will follow the development with interest.
6	Love the huts, but where are the nearest toilets? I guess next to the White House - too far away.
7	I live in Sheerness and during a recent walk to the Leas in Minster, noticed the new beach huts. I think this is a fantastic idea and would certainly be interested in finding out more about them.
8	I visited Minster Beach for the first time this week and was impressed how clean the area was. I particularly like the beach huts which add a lovely splash of colour and friendliness. It gave the beach a family feel with children on bikes and families enjoying their time at the beach. I will now be a regular visitor.
9	I would like to see more beach huts in Minster. However, I think that there needs to be toilet facilities at that end of the Leas as well as on The Broadway. Also I would like the ability to rent a beach hut for a shorter period of time e.g. a week, this would give more people the opportunity to enjoy this wonderful facility.
10	Congratulations, the beach huts look wonderful. I hope we see many, many more of them. They have brightened up the end of the Leas.
11	As a sea-front resident, I fully support the plan to extend the huts; it enhances the area and helps make the front more attractive to residents and visitors alike. I was originally concerned that there might possibly be some element of vandalism, but fortunately, this appears to be totally unfounded

	thus far. Consequently, I wish to endorse the plan to provide another 15 huts.
12	<p>Delighted that the beach huts have not been vandalised - I think they add a lovely addition to The Leas so the more the merrier.....but, we also desperately need a toilet this end, a lot of elderly people visit here and to have a sign saying <u>Toilets the other end of The Leas</u>' is ludicrous in this day and age, I have had quite a number of people knock at my door and ask to use the toilet, I live alone and sometimes I refuse, which, I find myself feeling mean and cranky.</p> <p>A pay as you enter toilet would suffice and I may point out that I remember the toilets near The White House in 1946 which is almost 70 years ago so it is not before time we had new ones. I have written to you before regarding this matter and nothing has ever been done or acknowledged.</p>
13	I myself have no objection at all about extra beach huts being erected. They are well out of view of my property and others in the Leas and possibly they will bring more money into the area. I just hope they never extend to the point they are directly in front of any property in the Leas.
14	So long as beach huts are not being built in front of houses bought for their sea view, it does not matter. So in this case we are all in favour.
15	I completely support this. You need to do more of this sort of thing for Sheppey.
16	<p>Thanks for your letter containing information regarding the additional beach huts.</p> <p>I have lived along the Leas for the last 47 years and remember all of the original beach huts which were situated in front of the Playa. I think the addition of more beach huts is an excellent idea, and believe they should continue, more towards the beginning of the Leas.</p> <p>It would be even better if toilets were available and possibly some sort of cafe to serve these huts and all the tourist that flock to the Leas every summer and in fact most of the year round. These huts are low enough as not to affect the views of the houses along the Leas.</p> <p>The Leas used to have parking on the cliff top, before the sea wall was constructed, chains in between each of the wooden bollards and a red tarmac road. The small sea defence, at the start of the Leas was decorative, unlike the concrete eyesore that is there now.</p> <p>Bring on any and all of the improvements you can.</p>
17	I am in favour of the continued building of the Minster beach huts. They are a welcome addition to the seafront. My only gripe is that I did not jump in at the beginning and buy one for my family.
18	<p>I'm pleased the council are going to build more huts as there is a demand for them, and it is a great scheme!</p> <p>The new lot should be built with a beach hut gap of one or two hut lengths away from the first lot because to preventing fire risk spreading from one lot to another, the backs of the huts, the long grass/ straw should be kept cut for a greater distance up the slope, to stop fire from dried hay/grass from potential fire risk if the grass caught light and with the prevailing SW wind from blowing fire onto huts. The plan shows the proposed huts from continuing on from the first lot or phase, but think it would be wise to consider the gaps as above!</p>
19	I feel the beach huts bring a much needed colourful lift to an otherwise overgrown unkempt part of the beach. I am rather puzzled that if there is a waiting list of over 300 people, why only 15 additional huts?

### Objections from members of the public:

1	In the summer Minster sea front is very congested, with insufficient parking for cars. The addition of even more Beach huts would make the situation intolerable, and indeed dangerous if there is no increase in safe parking adjacent to the huts. All those who use beach huts have to travel by car, no one who lives within a short walk would need a beach hut in order to have the amenity of the sea front. Each additional beach hut means yet another parking space.
2	We have received your circular about the beach huts in Minster. You invite us to get in touch if we would like further information. Quite frankly, we don't know where to begin - or how to frame the questions that we need to be answered. And in many ways we feel there is no point, since we are never consulted about anything in advance, and have no opportunity to put our views forward. The

fiasco of the beach huts will destroy the natural unspoiled nature of the area. Reading your letter was the first we'd heard about the beach huts. We have never been consulted. We were not invited to the focus group in September 2012, nor did we know anything about it. We have many reasons to oppose the scheme. However, what is the point of listing our objections? The huts are already being built, so it is a fait accompli. Your Borough Council strapline next to your logo is 'Making Swale a better place'. We do not agree that this is the case in relation to Minster and the area surrounding The Leas. The second strapline, at the bottom of the letter, says 'Have your say - help shape Swale', bears no resemblance to our experience. There has been no information, no consultation, no dialogue, nothing at all.

The first beach huts have been erected, and we could not expect you or any other non-resident of the Island to realise the immediate detrimental effect to the area which we know will go unnoticed in time. The footpath from the end of Seathorpe Avenue car park - a popular viewing point- down to the beach has long offered a rare, if not unique, uninterrupted view of the Sheppey shoreline in both east and west directions. Even with the erection of the first huts this has been lost. We are confident you will take this into consideration during any reviews of this trial.

Thank you for your letter dated 18 July advising that you are considering introducing up to 15 further huts – an increase of 75 per cent – and attaching a plan of proposed positioning. You will no doubt remember that residents of The Leas were not extended this courtesy regarding the initial huts, and that the first letter we received on that occasion arrived on the day work commenced!

Once again we assume this is in fact another fait accompli, as you have only invited us to comment if we are in support – and we are not! – or alternatively raise questions. We would merely ask if you have our previous correspondence on file – we can provide copies if not – and whether this will be included as part of the report going to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 10 September. We otherwise presume you have previously satisfied yourselves about parking, toilet facilities etc.

We would, however, take this opportunity of reminding you of the Council's strapline – "Making Swale a better place". The Council did not make Swale a better place by allowing a few self-serving and self-interested parties exclusive access to part of a public space. In the reported excitement and enthusiasm for what is still claimed to be a pilot project, it went unnoticed that a unique unspoiled and uninterrupted view of the shoreline from the path to the promenade from the Seathorpe Avenue car park would be lost. We would implore you and your officers to take a walk from the car park at the top of Seathorpe Avenue down to the promenade, to see how irreparably the exquisite natural shoreline has been ruined.

Can we at least ask for reassurance that any future beach huts for the other 285 people on the waiting list will be restricted to this area, and that the green area in front of houses on The Leas will be left to be enjoyed by everyone – tourists, local visitors and residents – as at present?

#### Other comments:

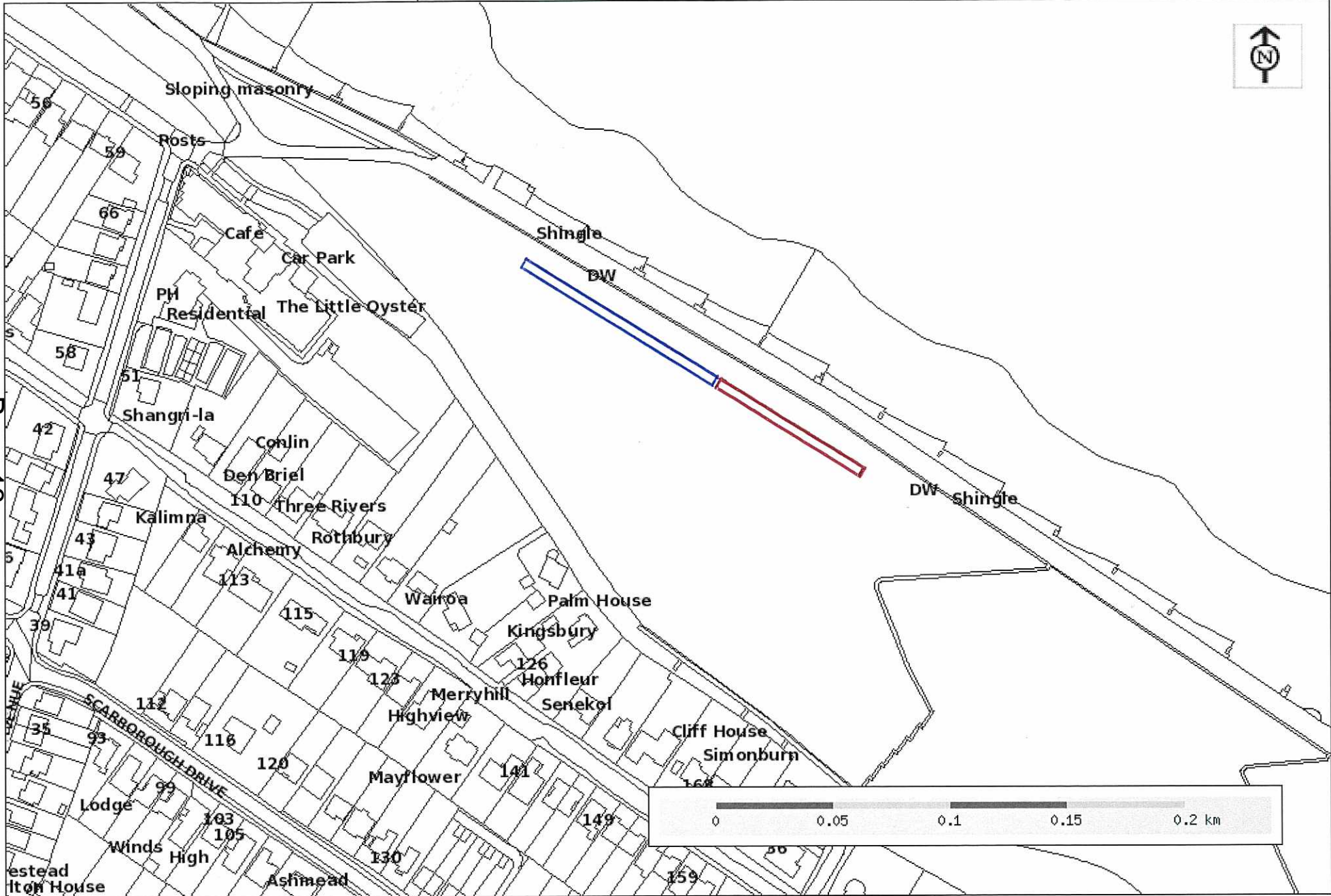
1	<p>My husband and I had a most enjoyable afternoon at Minster beach yesterday and, after lunch at the little cafe we decided to walk down the hill to look at the beach huts. We do not venture down to this area much as my husband is disabled and I am not able to walk too far myself. The beach huts looked wonderful and when we saw your notice asking for comments on this 2 year pilot scheme I thought I would offer you our ideas.</p> <p>As I have said, we have mobility problems and I am sure lots of elderly of disabled people would love to either buy or hire a beach hut themselves but would be prevented from even considering it due to the steps leading up to them. Our suggestion would be to have a hard path BEHIND the huts and a door to the rear to gain access. This would, of course, restrict the amount of usable space for those not requiring this access but a day bed, table etc could be placed in front and it kept permanently locked if not required.</p> <p>I value your time in reading this comment and would welcome your response in the near future please.</p>
2	<p>I have by chance read of the consultation on the above matter via the Minster Parish Council minutes. Would you please clarify what public notice has been given regarding this consultation, as the</p>

	residents of Minster deserve a full and proper opportunity to have their say.
3	Can you tell me please whether the Council will consider a draw system to make it fair on people, as at the moment it does appear that a lot of builders and business people seem to have acquired the ones that are occupied at the moment. I personally believe that if, names were drawn it, would be a much fairer system, perhaps this is something you can put forward to management.
4	Concerns for his grandchildren about the slope.
5	Enquiring if there are to be any new public toilets near the beach huts.
6	I understand from the current local paper that there's a public consultation which is due to finish next Thursday. Can you tell me why you consider it reasonable to conduct a public a consultation during August, when many people are away on holiday?

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- Existing huts  
- Proposed new huts .

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<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>		<b>Agenda Item: 5</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	10 September 2014	
<b>Report Title</b>	Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2013/14	
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader	
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Carol Sargeant, Customer Service Manager	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	
<b>Classification</b>	Open	
<b>Forward Plan</b>	Reference number:	
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. Members are asked to note the report	

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the annual summary of complaints, compliments, and comments received by Swale Borough Council during the year from April 2013 to March 2014.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 This is the fifth annual report summarising the Complaints, Compliments, and Comments (CCC) received by the Council during the ensuing year.
- 2.2 Swale is an organisation that welcomes and encourages feedback from our customers. We endeavour to deliver our services in ways which best suit the needs of our customers, and one way of ensuring that this is the case is to listen and learn from their feedback, whether it be complaints, compliments, or general comments on the services we provide.

## 3. Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the 2013/14 Annual Complaints Report set out at Appendix I.

## 4. Alternatives

- 4.1 None.

## 5. Consultation

- 5.1 There has been no formal consultation relating to this report, though the Complaints, Compliments and Comments system is a process by which customers are able to deliver feedback on the current provision of services.

## 6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	No direct implications, though better use of customer feedback through the Complaints, Compliments and Comments process will enable the Council to improve its service provision.
Financial, Resource and Property	None.
Legal and Statutory	None.
Crime and Disorder	None.
Sustainability	None.
Health and Wellbeing	None.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None.
Equality and Diversity	Responding to complaints in a positive and effective manner demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring that access to Council services is available to all.

## 7. Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Swale Borough Council – Annual Complaints Report 2013/14
  - Local Government Ombudsman's Summary Review of Swale Borough Council 2013/14.

## 8. Background Papers

- Swale Borough Council – Annual Complaints Report 2012/13

## Swale Borough Council – Annual Complaints Report 2013/14

### 1. Introduction

This is the fifth annual report summarising the Complaints, Compliments, and Comments (CCC) received by the Council during the ensuing year.

Swale is an organisation that welcomes and encourages feedback from our customers. We endeavour to deliver our services in ways which best suit the needs of our customers, and one way of ensuring that this is the case is to listen and learn from their feedback, whether it be complaints, compliments, or general comments on the services we provide.

Our commitment is evidenced by our ongoing programme of earning Customer Service Excellence accreditation for our main areas of customer service delivery, including the Customer Services Team, Housing, Planning, Revenues and Benefits, and Environmental Response.

### 2. Our approach to complaints

The current CCC system has now been in operation for three full years and as a result is well established throughout the organisation. It has contributed to a much more robust and transparent approach to the management of CCC, with greater ease of access to the system for our customers.

Swale's complaints system comprises a four stage process:

Stage	Description
Stage 1	This is the first stage whereby a complaint relating to a service should first be made to and be dealt with by the service area it relates to.
Stage 2	This is the first level of escalation, whereby the complainant is not satisfied with the response (or lack of response) from the service area, or the complaint relates to the behaviour of a member of staff.
Stage 3	This next level of escalation, to the Council's Independent Arbitrator, is a discretionary stage to be used where the circumstances suggest that arbitration will result in the successful conclusion of the case. If invoked, the Independent Arbitrator will investigate the complaint and suggest a way forward for all parties to agree to.
Stage 4	The final level of escalation (to the Local Government Ombudsman) is available to the complainant if they are not satisfied with the way in which the Council (and if used the Independent Arbitrator) has dealt with their complaint.

The printed CCC leaflet which is available to all our customers clearly illustrates the process for recording formal complaints, comments and compliments. The leaflet will be reviewed again in the autumn to ensure the information we provide is still current or can be simplified.

The CRM system on which all our CCC are logged provides monitoring, including weekly summaries to Heads of Service, so we can be assured that all complaints are logged, tracked, and responded to and improved reporting facilities so we can learn from feedback and ensure that our response times are meeting the standards we have set.

### **3. Developments during 2013/14**

In addition to the improvements to the process which we introduced and reported on last year (see the 2012/13 Annual Complaints Report), during 2013/14 we have:

- (i) continued to raise the profile of the importance of CCC to Swale as a customer-centric organisation, through managers' meetings, all staff briefings, and individual team meetings;
- (ii) carried out further training on handling complaints and using the CCC system for all relevant managers and staff;
- (iii) published and circulated monthly summary reports for Heads of Service to enable regular monitoring of progress of complaints in their respective service areas;
- (iv) continued to provide quarterly reports on complaints at service level which are used to inform the quarterly performance report to SMT;
- (v) sought examples from Heads of Service of service improvements which have been initiated in response to customer complaints, comments and compliments;
- (vi) published the CCC reports on the intranet; and
- (vii) introduced surveys of all customers who have raised a formal complaint to gain feedback from them and seek to improve the complaints process accordingly.

In addition to the above we have continued to make further efforts to make the system more accessible to our customers. For example, we have established a clear link to our complaints procedure on our website at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/comment-complain-and-feedback/>.

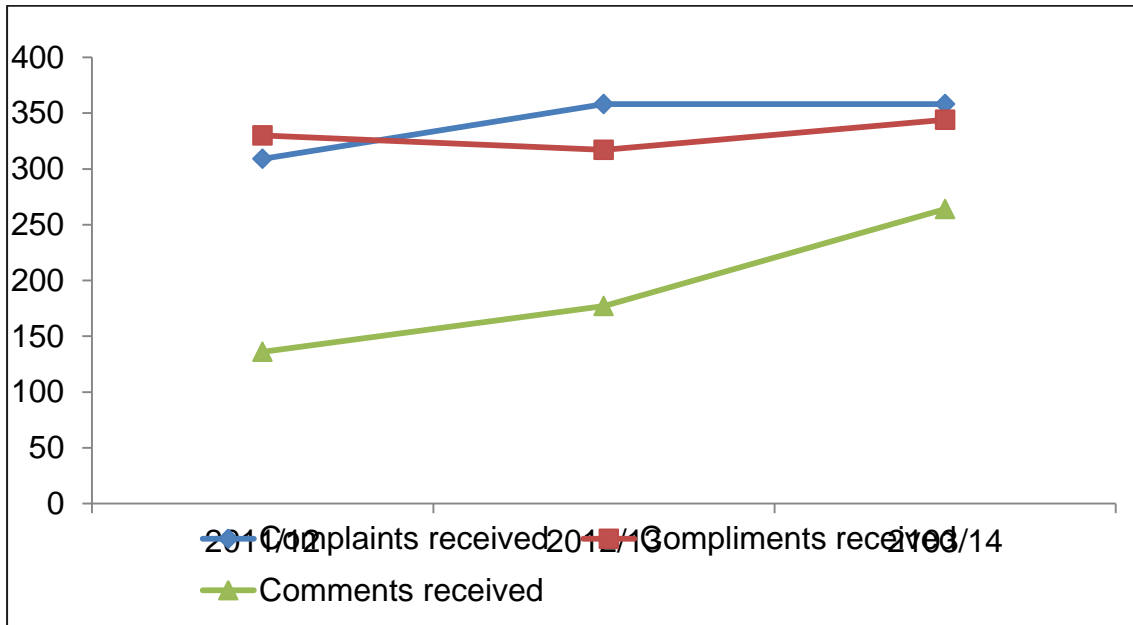
During the year, the Customer Service Centre, Environmental Response Team, Housing Services, and Revenues & Benefits Team all gained a renewal of the externally verified Customer Service Excellence assessment. In addition, Planning gained accreditation for the first time during the autumn of 2013. We are now turning our attention to seeking accreditation for some internal support services also.

One of the components of the CSE accreditation process is to examine the complaints procedures within an organisation. Again, during this year's assessments, Swale's CCC system was cited as an example of good practice.

### **4. 2013/14 Complaints Performance**

The total number of CCCs received during 2013/14 was 966 compared with 852 in 2012/13; an increase of 12%. The number of complaints was the same and comments increased by 33%. There was also an increase in compliments of 12%.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Trend against previous year
Complaints received	309	358	<b>358</b>	0%
Compliments received	330	317	<b>344</b>	+8%
Comments received	136	177	<b>264</b>	+33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>+12%</b>



There was no increase in overall complaints received, however the nature of the complaints for the service areas may differ from previous years.

The CCC system requires that a response to all complaints be made (whether justified or otherwise) within a corporate standard of 10 working days. During 2013/14, 89% of all complaints justified, were responded to within the corporate standard of 10 days, which represents a year-on-year improvement – see table below.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Target
Percentage of complaints responded to within 10 days	83%	88%	<b>89%</b>	<b>85%</b>

The table overleaf provides a breakdown of complaints received, by service area. It is to be expected that the main services, such as Cleansing (including refuse collections), Planning (a small increase), Parking, and Revenues & Benefits (both small decreases) have attracted the highest level of complaints. In particular, there was an anticipated increase in complaints relating to Cleansing during the final quarter of this year, related to the commencement of the new contract, where changes in arrangements did cause confusion for some residents.

Complaints by Service Area	Qtr 1 2013/14	Qtr 2 2013/14	Qtr 3 2013/14	Qtr 4 2103/14	Total 2013/14	Total 2012/13	Total 2011/12	Responded within 10 working days 2013/14		Responded within 10 working days 2012/13		Responded within 10 working days 2011/12	
								No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Commercial	0	0	1	0	1	5	1	1	100%	5	100%	1	100%
Communications	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	100%	-	-	1	100%
Community Safety	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	1	50%	3	100%	1	100%
Contracts (Cleansing)	25	25	27	54	131	95	81	123	94%	74	78%	69	85%
CSC	1	0	0	1	2	4	5	2	100%	4	100%	5	100%
CSC (Gateway)	0	1	0	0	1	3	3	1	100%	3	100%	3	100%
Cultural Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	-	-	-	-	2	100%
Electoral	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	100%	-	-	-	-
Planning	19	20	13	12	64	46	47	52	81%	38	83%	30	64%
Economy & Regeneration	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	100%	-	-	1	50%
Engineering	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0%	-	-	-	-
ERT	9	4	1	1	15	10	11	14	93%	10	100%	10	91%
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	1	100%
Grants	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	100%	2	100%	1	50%
Hackney	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	2	100%	-	-
Housing Options	6	3	2	1	12	26	30	11	92%	23	88%	21	70%
Housing Services	1	0	0	2	3	4	7	2	67%	2	50%	7	100%
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	-	1	50%	-	-
Leisure/Open Spaces	3	4	2	2	11	12	17	8	73%	10	83%	11	65%
Licensing	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0%	-	-	-	-
Parking	16	18	14	19	67	80	48	62	93%	77	96%	44	92%
Policy	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	0	0%
Pollution	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%
Property	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	2	100%	1	100%	1	33%
Revenues & Benefits	11	15	3	10	39	58	38	38	97%	56	97%	35	92%
Staying Put	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	0	-	3	100%	4	80%



The vast majority of complaints (89%) were resolved at the first stage of the process, with 29 having been escalated to Stage Two (Chief Executive), and just 10 having been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (NB – some complainants self-refer direct to the Ombudsman but these will not be investigated by the LGO unless they have exhausted our own local procedures).

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Total complaints	309	358	<b>358</b>
Justified complaints*	135	202	<b>195</b>
Non justified complaints*	170	153	<b>156</b>
Partially justified	4	6	<b>4</b>
Justification not stated	35	1	<b>3</b>
Escalated to stage 2 (Chief Executive)	12	19	<b>29</b>
Escalated to stage 3 (Local Arbitrator)	3	0	<b>0</b>
Escalated to stage 4 (Ombudsman)	8	7	<b>10</b>

**\*Definitions**

Justified: where it is deemed that the relevant process/procedure has not been followed.

Unjustified: where it is deemed that the relevant process/procedure has been followed.

*It should be noted that this criteria is open to the interpretation of the officer and their opinion at the time of completing the complaint.*

The Customer Service Manager regularly monitors performance standards, both corporately and in local areas, and has dialogue with the respective Heads of Service to address any performance issues, which include administrative efficiency improvements as well as seasonal or service-related issues which will inevitably cause occasional peaks in levels of complaints.

Whilst there has been a significant improvement in response rate performance, there still remains a degree of room for improvement in particular teams. More effective monitoring and reporting, in particular the weekly summary reports sent to Heads of Service, have contributed to the significant improvement during the year.

**5. Ombudsman Complaints**

This year’s Ombudsman’s Annual Report for 2013/14 is again disappointing with a lack of detail compared with previous years, instead simply stating that the Ombudsman handled ten complaints relating to Swale. It also states that the average number of complaints for a district Council is ten.

Members may recollect that it was not possible to provide the previous full breakdown of LGO complaints for 2012/13. For 2013/14 we have collated data from our own CRM and complaints processes, though it has not been possible to entirely reconcile this figures with the Ombudsman’s much reduced data.

<b>LGO complaints numbers</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Rejected as being premature	7	No data	<b>3</b>
Investigated	3	No data	<b>6</b>
Not pursued	2	No data	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	14		<b>10</b>

Of the ten complaints that were formally investigated by the Ombudsman none were found to be cases of maladministration, though two were ultimately upheld, and in one case a modest compensatory payment of £200 was made to the complainant by way of compensation under a local settlement.

<b>LGO Complaints outcomes</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Found to be no maladministration	3	No data	<b>8</b>
Discontinued following local settlement	3	No data	<b>2</b>
Outside of Ombudsman's jurisdiction	0	No data	<b>0</b>
Still in progress	2	No data	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	8		<b>10</b>

We have improved our own system for this year so that we can capture the information that the Ombudsman used to provide as part of their annual report, so the data in next year's annual complaints report will be considerably more reliable and informative.

In summary therefore, of the 358 complaints received by the Council during 2013/14, only 29 (8%) were escalated to the Chief Executive, and 10 (less than 2%) were ultimately referred to the Ombudsman, none of which resulted in finding evidence of maladministration.

## **6. Compliments and Comments**

The number of compliments and comments received during the year have both increased. These are a useful method for passing on positive customer experiences to members of staff, or suggestions for changes to delivery of services too. However, they are relatively "free format" methods of feedback, so it is difficult to categorise them. Where appropriate, these have been passed to the relevant departments for noting and action if relevant.

In next year's annual report it is intended that we provide more information on these areas of feedback, in terms on their nature and any actions that have been taken.

## **7. Reviews and improvements**

Whilst many examples of complaints are caused by individual human errors, or are sometimes used by complainants as quasi-appeals mechanism (eg for planning or for benefits assessments), where patterns are detected they can be used to identify and implement service improvements.

Some examples of this are asset out below:

- (i) enhanced cross-departmental working to implement changes to waste collections, educating residents, and ensuring landowner responsibilities;
- (ii) review of a process in relation to bonfire complaints and documentation following complaint by a service user;
- (iii) the Environment Response Team have introduced 'You said, we did' cards in relation to keep customers informed of progress; and
- (iv) changes made to standard correspondence issued.

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<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>		<b>Agenda Item: 6</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>10 September 2014</b>	
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Financial Management Report: April – June 2014</b>	
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Cllr Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Cabinet Member for Finance</b>	
<b>SMT Lead</b>	<b>Nick Vickers, Head of Finance</b>	
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Nick Vickers, Head of Finance</b>	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Phil Wilson, Chief Accountant</b>	
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>	
<b>Forward Plan</b>	<b>Reference number:</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the projected revenue underspend of £406,000.</li> <li>2. To approve the capital allocations for Love Lane Cemetery Chapel, Milton Creek Footpath, the Sittingbourne War Memorial and Tree Works at all three Cemeteries.</li> <li>3. Agree the amendments to the earmarked reserves.</li> </ol>	

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report shows the revenue and capital projected outturn for 2014/15 as at the end of period 3, covering the period from April to June 2014. The report is based on service activity up to the end of June 2014, and is collated from monitoring reports from budget managers.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 As part of the monthly financial reporting arrangements, detailed reports by Heads of Service have been produced to help focus accountability and reporting at the overall level. Based on the responses and discussions with Service Managers, a budget underspend of £406,000 is projected for the period April 2014 to June 2014 (three months).
- 2.2 Financial monitoring reports will be presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis as well as to Scrutiny Committee.

### 3. Proposal

#### Revenue Spend

3.1 Based on the responses and discussions with Service Managers, a projected underspend of £406,000 is forecast.

3.2 Table 1 analyses the projected variance by Service

**Table 1: Underspend by Service**

	Service Manager	Working Budget	Projected Outturn 2014/15	Projected Variance
		£	£	£
Chief Executive	A. Kara	253,900	253,900	0
Policy	D. Clifford	203,900	203,900	0
Economy & Communities	E. Wiggins	1,913,620	1,925,620	12,000
Communications	E. Wiggins	230,690	235,690	5,000
Housing	A. Christou	1,105,180	1,110,180	5,000
Planning	J. Freeman	914,990	878,990	(36,000)
Commissioning & Customer Contact	D. Thomas	6,875,330	6,574,330	(301,000)
Service Delivery	B. Planner	(681,700)	(707,700)	(26,000)
Director of Corporate Services & Director of Regeneration	M. Radford / P. Raine	348,830	348,830	0
Information Technology	A. Cole	978,290	978,290	0
Audit	R. Clarke	150,760	150,760	0
Environmental Health	T. Beattie	458,080	458,080	0
Finance	N. Vickers	653,770	653,770	0
Human Resources	D. Smart	366,820	366,820	0
Legal	J. Scarborough	330,010	330,010	0
Democratic Services	K. Bescoby	808,100	808,100	0
Property	A. Adams	655,190	590,190	(65,000)
NNDR Discretionary Relief		146,980	146,980	0
KCC Second Homes Discount		(46,000)	(46,000)	0
Provision for Bad Debts		(434,930)	(434,930)	0
Corporate Items		2,989,190	2,989,190	0
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>18,221,000</b>	<b>17,815,000</b>	<b>(406,000)</b>
Contribution to/ (from) General Fund (after requests for roll forward of ring fenced grants)		63,000	63,000	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>18,284,000</b>	<b>17,878,000</b>	<b>(406,000)</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>			0	
Business Rates		(4,556,000)	(4,556,000)	0
Revenue Support Grant		(4,117,000)	(4,117,000)	0
New Homes Bonus		(2,269,000)	(2,269,000)	0
Preceptors Council Tax Support		(125,000)	(125,000)	0
Council Tax Freeze Grant		(349,000)	(349,000)	0
Council Tax Surplus		(178,360)	(178,360)	0
Council Tax		(6,689,640)	(6,689,640)	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>(406,000)</b>	<b>(406,000)</b>

3.3 Table 2 below details the main variations by Service:

**Table 2: Main variations by Service**

<b>Projected Net (Under)/Overspend / Income Shortfall as at end of June 2014</b>		
<b>Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE - Cllr A. Bowles (Abdool Kara)</b>		
Chief Executive	0	Nil Variance reported.
Corporate Costs	0	Nil Variance reported.
Policy	0	Nil Variance reported.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES – Cllrs M. Cosgrove, M. Whiting &amp; K. Pugh (Emma Wiggins)</b>		
CCTV	12	Reduced income for CCTV re previous customers cancelling use of the service.
Community Halls/Centres	3	Quinton Hall additional costs (rates £1.5k and estimated utility costs £1.5k).
Learning & Skills	(3)	Minor underspend.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>COMMUNICATIONS, PRINTING, ADVERTISING &amp; PROMOTION – Cllrs M. Cosgrove, M. Whiting &amp; K. Pugh (Emma Wiggins)</b>		
Communications	5	Staff costs savings from vacant posts not probable.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>HOUSING – Cllr J. Wright (Amber Christou)</b>		
Stay Put Scheme	13	Overspend on small repairs offset by additional Primary Care Trust grant.
Housing Options	(8)	Minor underspend on salaries and additional grants.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>PLANNING - Cllr G. Lewin (James Freeman)</b>		
Development Control	(14)	Additional planning fees.
Development Services	(22)	Additional staff costs recovery from other authorities for part year of Head of Planning and full year for s106 post.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(36)</b>	

<b>Projected Net (Under)/Overspend / Income Shortfall as at end of June 2014</b>		
<b>Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>COMMISSIONING AND CUSTOMER CONTACT – Cllrs D. Simmons &amp; M. Whiting (Dave Thomas)</b>		
Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards	26	Additional grounds maintenance required to trees and footpaths in cemeteries.
Commissioning & Customer Contact	19	Overspend on salaries.
Cleansing	(5)	Minor underspend on salaries.
Public Conveniences	(9)	Underspend on contract costs and energy costs.
Refuse & Street Cleansing	(332)	Change in recycling credits has resulted in a saving.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(301)</b>	
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY – Cllr D. Simmons (Brian Planner)</b>		
Parking Management	10	Increase in contract cost.
Service Delivery	(36)	Salary underspend on Head of Service Delivery post.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(26)</b>	
<b>DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES – Cllrs D. Dewar-Whalley &amp; T. Wilcox (Mark Radford)</b>		
Corporate Costs	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>EMERGENCY PLANNING – Cllr A. Bowles (Della Fackrell)</b>		
Emergency Planning	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION (Pete Raine)</b>		
Strategic Directors	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>IT SERVICES – Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley (Andy Cole)</b>		
GIS	0	Nil variance reported to date.
Computer Equipment & Materials	0	Nil variance reported to date.
IT MKIP	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>INTERNAL AUDIT – Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley (Rich Clarke)</b>		
Audit Services	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – Cllr D. Simmons (Tracey Beattie)</b>		
Environmental Services	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	



<b>Projected Net (Under)/Overspend / Income Shortfall as at end of June 2014</b>		
<b>Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>FINANCE – Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley (Nick Vickers)</b>		
Financial Services	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES – Cllr T. Wilcox (Dena Smart)</b>		
Organisational Development	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>LEGAL – Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley (John Scarborough)</b>		
Legal	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – Cllr A. Bowles (Katherine Bescoby)</b>		
Democratic Process	0	Nil variance reported to date.
Administration	0	Nil variance reported to date.
Elections & Electoral Registration	0	Nil variance reported to date.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>PROPERTY – Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley (Anne Adams)</b>		
Health & Safety	0	Nil variance reported to date.
Property Services	(2)	Underspend on salaries.
Administrative Buildings	(13)	Variance reported on rates and energy costs.
Property Management	(50)	Additional property rental income based on 13/14 outturn.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(65)</b>	
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(406)</b>	

## Improvement and Regeneration Funds

3.4 The balance as at the end of June 2014 on these funds is shown in Table 3 below:

**Table 3: Improvement & Regeneration Funds**

	<b>Balance Unallocated as at 1 April 2014</b>	<b>2014/15 Approved Allocations</b>	<b>Balance Unallocated as at 30 June 2014</b>
<b>Funds:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Performance	579,984	27,022	552,962
Regeneration	368,290	47,000	321,290
Localism	35,813	2,236	33,577
Transformation	252,418	69,964	182,454
Local Loan Fund	250,000	0	250,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,486,505</b>	<b>146,222</b>	<b>1,340,283</b>

3.5 The Regeneration Fund was topped up by £250,000 from the 2014/15 budget.

3.6 Further details of the approved allocations to the end of June 2014 are available in Appendix I.

3.7 If any of the above allocations are not required the balance will be added back to the relevant fund as at 31 March 2015.

## Reserves

3.8 The below earmarked reserves are no longer needed and require Members' approval to be added back to the General Fund.

**Table 4: Reserves**

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Balance as at 30 June 2014 £</b>
Earmarked Capital Programme	Nick Vickers	This reserve was set up from the 2010/11 under spend. Its purpose was to fund those capital schemes that were funded from revenue but which slipped from 2010/11 capital programme. This funding is no longer required due to the capital projects coming in under budget.	42,380
Vehicle Leasing Costs for Pest Control/ Wardens	Brian Planner	To fund the cost of a new van. The cost of the van came in under budget.	2,079
Election Booths	Katherine Bescoby	The cost of the new election booths was less than forecast.	1,215
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>45,674</b>

## Capital Expenditure

- 3.9 This report details the latest position on the 2014/15 capital programme and highlights any variations between the 2014/15 capital budget and expenditure to the end of period 3 (June 2014).
- 3.10 Actual expenditure to end of June 2014 (month 3) is £305,094. This represents 18.1% of the working budget (as per Appendix II).
- 3.11 Some additional capital schemes have been identified which require the allocation of capital monies:
- Love Lane Cemetery Chapel, Faversham - £25,300 is requested to connect the Chapel to the mains electricity supply (Head of Service – Dave Thomas);
  - Sittingbourne War Memorial - £8,100 is required to undertake capital works relating to WW1 and in particular the setting of a new commemorative VC stone for Donald Dean within the Sittingbourne War Memorial and the relocation of four existing VC stones to the Sittingbourne War Memorial for the dedication service on Sunday 9 November 2014 (Head of Service – Emma Wiggins);
  - Milton Creek Footpath - £30,000 is required for repairs to the footpath following tidal surge and subsequent storm damage (Head of Service – Dave Thomas);
  - Tree Works identified as high risk following a tree survey in all three cemeteries - £45,000 (Head of Service – Dave Thomas);
  - Tree works identified as medium risk following a tree survey in all three cemeteries - £10,000 (Head of Service – Dave Thomas).

The above are to be funded from capital receipts.

- 3.12 Table 5 details the movement from the Original 2014/15 budget to the Working Budget 2014/15.

**Table 5: Actual Expenditure to Date and Forecast Variations**

	£
<b>Original Estimate</b>	<b>1,106,740</b>
Add Supplementary Approvals:	
Rollovers agreed at Cabinet 16 July 2014	372,150
External Funding	97,090
Capital Receipts	80,480
Earmarked Reserve	25,000
<b>Total Working Budget</b>	<b>1,681,460</b>
Actual to end of June 2014	305,094
Variance to date	(1,376,366)
<b>Projected Variance</b>	<b>0</b>

- 3.13 Further details are available in Appendix II.

## Capital Receipts

- 3.14 Balance of capital receipts as at 31 March 2014 was £1,330,818.

## Payment of Creditors

3.15 The latest monitoring position is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Invoice payment**

	<b>Target 2014/15</b>	<b>Cumulative year to date</b>	<b>June 2014</b>	<b>May 2014</b>	<b>April 2014</b>
Invoices paid in 30 days	97.25%	98.33%	97.61%	97.97%	99.15%

## Debtors

3.16 Tables 7, 8 and 9 analyse the debt outstanding. The debt over six years old relates to charges on property, i.e. where the debt cannot be collected until the property concerned is sold.

**Table 7: Debt outstanding by due date (not including Rent Deposit Scheme)**

	<b>Current Year</b>		<b>Previous Year</b>
	<b>June 2014</b>	<b>March 2014</b>	<b>June 2013</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
0 – 2 Months	166	325	133
2 – 6 Months	243	75	1,137
6 – 12 Months	18	188	17
1 – 2 Years	21	25	21
2 – 3 Years	15	14	25
3 – 4 Years	25	24	14
4 – 5 Years	13	11	4
5 – 6 Years	4	5	2
6 Years +	28	27	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>1,380</b>
<b>Total Over 2 Months</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>1,247</b>

**Table 8: Debt outstanding by due date (including Rent Deposit Scheme)**

	<b>Current Year</b>		<b>Previous Year</b>
	<b>June 2014</b>	<b>March 2014</b>	<b>June 2013</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
0 – 2 Months	164	284	132
2 – 6 Months	206	81	1,138
6 – 12 Months	37	217	21
1 – 2 Years	43	32	27
2 – 3 Years	21	23	53
3 – 4 Years	51	71	276
4 – 5 Years	258	238	4
5 – 6 Years	4	5	2
6 Years +	28	27	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>1,680</b>
<b>Total Over 2 Months</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>1,548</b>

**Table 9: Debt outstanding (including Rent Deposit Scheme) by Department**

	<b>June 2014</b>	<b>March 2014</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Rent Deposit Scheme	279	282
Commissioning and Customer Contact	232	210
Property	164	126
Housing	51	46
Legal	36	43
Economy and Communities	30	27
Planning	14	63
Environmental Health	9	0
Service Delivery	6	40
Finance	0	14
Communications	0	11
Democratic Services	0	4
Director of Regeneration	0	94
Other	(9)	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>976</b>

### **Business Rates Monitoring**

3.17 In 2013/14 the Council had a surplus of £450,000 on its business rates income. Given that once again Small Business Rate Relief was not taken into the base budget we would expect a similar figure to the 2013/14 surplus. We are not formally updating that figure until the half year business rate return is undertaken in October. This figure will then inform the 2015/16 projected income which will be taken into the base in that year.

## **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 None identified – this report is largely for information.

## **5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 Heads of Service and Strategic Management Team have been consulted in preparing this report.

## **6. Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	Embracing Localism Open for Business Healthy Environment
Financial, Resource and Property	As detailed in the report
Legal and Statutory	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Sustainability	None identified at this stage

## **7. Appendices**

7.1 The following documents are published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I – Improvement and Regeneration Fund allocations as at end of June 2014;
- Appendix II – Capital Programme - Projected outturn as at end of June 2014.

## **8. Background Papers**

8.1 The Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17.

**IMPROVEMENT AND REGENERATION FUND ALLOCATIONS (PERIOD 3)**

	Amount £
<b>Performance Fund</b>	
Communications Service Interim Support	10,027
Grove toilets, Leysdown	4,995
Local Area Perception Survey 2014/15	12,000
<b>Total Approved as at June 2014</b>	<b>27,022</b>
<b>Regeneration Fund</b>	
Members Regeneration Grants	47,000
<b>Total Approved as at June 2014</b>	<b>47,000</b>
<b>Localism Fund</b>	
Volunteer Week Campaign	1,186
Funding Fair	1,050
<b>Total Approved as at June 2014</b>	<b>2,236</b>
<b>Transformation Fund</b>	
Redundancy Payments 2014/15	69,964
<b>Total Approved as at June 2014</b>	<b>69,964</b>
<b>TOTAL APPROVED AS AT JUNE 2014</b>	<b>146,222</b>

CAPITAL MONITORING TO END OF JUNE 2014 (PERIOD 03)

Appendix II

	Funding SBC / P	2014/15 Original Budget £	Approved Roll overs £	Other Adjustments £	2014/15 Working Budget £	2014/15 Budget to end of period 03 June 2014 £	2014/15 Actual to end of period 3 June 2014 £	2014/15 Variance to end of period 3 June 2014 £	% of Revised Budget Spent to End of June 2014 %
<b>SUMMARY</b>									
<b><u>PARTNERSHIP FUNDING SCHEMES</u></b>									
Economy & Communities	P	0	0	72,540	72,540	18,135	33,736	15,601	46.51
Commissioning & Customer Contact	P	0	127,200	0	127,200	31,800	67,065	35,265	52.72
Housing	P	926,740	0	0	926,740	231,685	163,763	-67,922	17.67
Corporate Services	P	0	0	20,000	20,000	5,000	6,216	1,216	31.08
Property Services	P	0	0	4,550	4,550	1,138	0	-1,138	0.00
<b>TOTAL PARTNERSHIP FUNDING SCHEMES</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>926,740</b>	<b>127,200</b>	<b>97,090</b>	<b>1,151,030</b>	<b>287,758</b>	<b>270,780</b>	<b>-16,978</b>	
<b><u>SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL FUNDING SCHEMES</u></b>									
Commissioning & Customer Contact	SBC	35,000	39,760	0	74,760	18,691	0	-18,691	0.00
Economy & Communities	SBC	15,000	0	0	15,000	3,750	0	-3,750	0.00
Housing	SBC	100,000	152,150	0	252,150	63,038	34,314	-28,724	13.61
Finance	SBC	30,000	26,570	0	56,570	14,143	0	-14,143	0.00
Property	SBC	0	26,470	60,480	86,950	21,739	0	-21,739	0.00
Service Delivery	SBC	0	0	45,000	45,000	11,250	0	-11,250	0.00
<b>TOTAL SBC FUNDING SCHEMES</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>244,950</b>	<b>105,480</b>	<b>530,430</b>	<b>132,611</b>	<b>34,314</b>	<b>-98,297</b>	
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		<b>1,106,740</b>	<b>372,150</b>	<b>202,570</b>	<b>1,681,460</b>	<b>420,369</b>	<b>305,094</b>	<b>-115,275</b>	



	Funding SBC / P	2014/15 Original Budget £	Approved Roll overs £	Other Adjustments £	2014/15 Working Budget £	2014/15 Budget to end of period 03 June 2014 £	2014/15 Actual to end of period 3 June 2014 £	2014/15 Variance to end of period 3 June 2014 £	% of Revised Budget Spent to End of June 2014 %
<b>ECONOMY &amp; COMMUNITIES - Cllrs M. Crosgrove, M. Whiting &amp; K. Pugh (HoS E. Wiggins)</b>									
CCTV (R&R)	SBC	15,000	0	0	15,000	3,750	0	-3,750	0
Capital Expansion of CCTV service	P	0		38,800	38,800	9,700	0	-9,700	0
Meads Community Centre	P	0	0	33,740	33,740	8,435	33,736	25,301	99.99
<b>TOTAL ECONOMY &amp; COMMUNITIES</b>		<b>15,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>72,540</b>	<b>87,540</b>	<b>21,885</b>	<b>33,736</b>	<b>11,851</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>CORPORATE SERVICES - Cllrs D. Dewar-Whalley &amp; T. Wilcox (DIR M. Radford)</b>									
Miscellaneous I.T Equipment - Scanners	P	0	0	20,000	20,000	5,000	6,216	1,216	31.08
<b>TOTAL CORPORATE SERVICES</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>6,216</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>COMMISSIONING &amp; CUSTOMER CONTACT - Cllrs D. Simmons &amp; M. Whiting (HoS D. Thomas)</b>									
Cemeteries - future burial provision in the borough	SBC	0	32,590	0	32,590	8,148	0	-8,148	0
Waste Collection and Recycling (Wheelie bins) (R&R)	SBC	35,000	0	0	35,000	8,750	0	-8,750	0
Beach Huts, Minster Leas, Sheppey	SBC	0	7,170		7,170	1,793	0	-1,793	0
Thistle Hill Community Woodland - Trim Trail	P	0	35,000	0	35,000	8,750	0	-8,750	0
New Play Area - Iwade Schemes	P	0	92,200		92,200	23,050	0	-23,050	0
Kemsley Community Facilities	P	0	0	0	0	0	4,866	4,866	0
S106 - Kemsley West	P	0	0	0	0	0	62,199	62,199	0
<b>TOTAL COMMISSIONING &amp; CUSTOMER CONTACT</b>		<b>35,000</b>	<b>166,960</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>201,960</b>	<b>50,491</b>	<b>67,065</b>	<b>16,574</b>	<b>0</b>

CAPITAL MONITORING TO END OF JUNE 2014 (PERIOD 03)

Appendix II

	Funding SBC / P	2014/15 Original Budget £	Approved Roll overs £	Other Adjustments £	2014/15 Working Budget £	2014/15 Budget to end of period 03 June 2014 £	2014/15 Actual to end of period 3 June 2014 £	2014/15 Variance to end of period 3 June 2014 £	% of Revised Budget Spent to End of June 2014 %
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY - Cllr D. Simmons (HoS B. Planner)</b>									
Ground Floor Reception Area - Revenue Funding	SBC	0	0	25,000	25,000	6,250	0	-6,250	0
Ground Floor Reception Area - Capital Receipts	SBC	0	0	20,000	20,000	5,000	0	-5,000	0
<b>TOTAL SERVICE DELIVERY</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>11,250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-11,250</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>HOUSING - Cllr J. Wright (HoS A. Christou)</b>									
DFG Mandatory Grants	SBC	100,000	152,150	0	252,150	63,038	0	-63,038	0
<i>DFG Mandatory Grants (CLG)</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>926,740</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>926,740</i>	<i>231,685</i>	<i>163,763</i>	<i>-67,922</i>	<i>17.67</i>
HRG - Housing Repair Grants Over 60	SBC	0	0	0	0	0	5,298	5,298	0
HRG - DFG Remedial	SBC	0	0	0	0	0	2,717	2,717	0
RHB2 - Decent Home Loans Owner Occupier	SBC	0	0	0	0	0	25,849	25,849	0
Housing - Emergency Accommodation	SBC	0	0	0	0	0	450	450	0
<b>TOTAL HOUSING</b>		<b>1,026,740</b>	<b>152,150</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,178,890</b>	<b>294,723</b>	<b>198,077</b>	<b>-96,646</b>	<b>18</b>

	Funding SBC / P	2014/15 Original Budget £	Approved Roll overs £	Other Adjustments £	2014/15 Working Budget £	2014/15 Budget to end of period 03 June 2014 £	2014/15 Actual to end of period 3 June 2014 £	2014/15 Variance to end of period 3 June 2014 £	% of Revised Budget Spent to End of June 2014 %
<b>FINANCE - Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley (HoS N. Vickers)</b>									
Agresso Upgrade	SBC	0	26,570	0	26,570	6,643	0	-6,643	0
Cash Receipting System - Replacement (Cap Receipts)	SBC	30,000	0	0	30,000	7,500	0	-7,500	0
<b>TOTAL FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</b>		<b>30,000</b>	<b>26,570</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56,570</b>	<b>14,143</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-14,143</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PROPERTY - Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley HoS A. Adams)</b>									
Swale House Window Rep & Blding Refurbishment	SBC	0	26,470	0	26,470	6,618	0	-6,618	0
Central Plaza Sittingbourne	SBC	0	0	25,740	25,740	6,435	0	-6,435	0
Folder Inserter Machine	SBC	0	0	15,970	15,970	3,993	0	-3,993	0
<i>Folder Inserter Machine</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4,550</i>	<i>4,550</i>	<i>1,138</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-1,138</i>	<i>0</i>
Committee Room Adaptations	SBC	0	0	18,770	18,770	4,693	0	-4,693	0
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>26,470</b>	<b>65,030</b>	<b>91,500</b>	<b>22,877</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-22,877</b>	<b>0</b>

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<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>		<b>Agenda Item: 7</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	10 September 2014	
<b>Report Title</b>	Procurement of utility supplies	
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Cabinet Member for Finance	
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Mark Radford	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Anne Adams	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Sharon Edmead	
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>	
<b>Forward Plan</b>	<b>Reference number:</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That Cabinet approve that the current arrangement for energy purchasing via the Laser Energy Buying Group continue for the period October 2016- September 2020	

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report makes a recommendation to Cabinet regarding purchase of energy supplies for the period October 2016 – September 2020.
- 1.2 Due to previous good performance and changes recently made to the working arrangements of the Laser Energy Buying Group it is recommended that Swale Borough Council join this framework for a further four year contract to purchase electricity and gas supplies for all council owned buildings and external lighting.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 In 2013/14 total spend on electricity was £93,714 and on gas was £31,108. Expected contract value over four years therefore exceeds £499,000, making this procurement a key decision for Cabinet.
- 2.2 There are three main methods of buying energy:
  - traditional fixed price contract (where prices for two years are based on the figure applicable on the date of the offer, which may be artificially high)
  - flexible fixed price contract (which allows the purchase of raw energy to be fixed over a number of trades from the wholesale market)
  - flexible variable price contract (where purchases are made as required, following the trends of the energy market, resulting in little budget certainty)
- 2.3 The Pan Government Energy Project, now part of Cabinet Office, recommended that all Public Sector organisations adopt flexible fixed price energy procurement as the best solution to cost reduction in this complex and volatile market. This

approach does need technical knowledge of the energy markets, requiring external support in the procurement of Swale Borough Council's energy supplies. In response to this need, Laser Buying Group was set up by Kent County Council's Commercial Services Unit and now purchases energy on behalf of 115 local authorities and 45 wider public sector bodies.

- 2.4 Within the Laser Group framework there are different purchasing arrangements, according to each site's energy usage, which are tendered through the Official Journal of the European Union to meet compliance with legislation and standing orders.
- 2.5 To maximise cost efficiency and to spread the risk of purchasing in a volatile market, Laser Group purchase energy in response to changes in the energy market, sometimes 2 years ahead of when the supply is required. Contracts for public sector groups to access the framework are therefore for a four year period. The current contract with Laser Group expires on 30 September 2016 and purchasing of supplies from 2016 will be taking place from December 2014.
- 2.6 Buying energy as part of a large purchasing group increases resilience and reduces the risk of pre-purchasing too much or too little energy, as each member's different peaks in usage will be smoothed out in the overall requirement. As Laser Group was implemented by Kent County Council, the objective of the organisation is to deliver an expert energy service to public bodies, rather than to create profit levels. Laser's energy purchasing is overseen by a Governance Panel on which there are industry experts as well as customers.
- 2.7 Where Trusts and community groups have taken on management of council buildings they have been permitted to purchase their energy supplies from Laser also to access bulk purchasing arrangements.

### **3 Proposal**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the council continues to purchase energy supplies via Laser Buying Group for the period 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2020, with Property Services leading organising contract renewals for each site on a category management basis.
- 3.2 As future energy costs cannot be predicted or tendered before a contract award is made, as would be the usual approach in procuring supplies, the proposal to purchase energy via the Laser Group framework is made due to the good service received and savings made to date. In the period September 2009 to October 2013, participation in the Laser Buying Group flexible framework has saved Swale Borough Council £24,100 against the maximum market prices that may have been secured if the council did not have access to technical expertise on predicted fluctuations in the energy market.
- 3.3 In the last year Laser has reorganised its management and staffing structure to provide a more tailored service to each council, and as a result Swale Borough Council has received added value in this contract, such as provision of free

specialist advice, in addition to more proactive contract management. As community groups have taken on responsibility for the management of council buildings, they have also been able to benefit from the council's arrangement with Laser.

- 3.3 As part of the commissioning process some benchmarking work was carried out on approaches taken to energy procurement by other Kent local authorities; all of the Kent councils that responded procure their energy supplies through Laser except one, which is planning to return to Laser when their current energy contract expires.

## **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Laser Group has begun to offer an alternative to a four year contract: a two year rolling contract is now being offered where the contract can be terminated on the first contract anniversary after two year's notice has been given by the council. This has not been recommended as a two year commitment restricts the financial benefit that the council may gain from longer term energy purchases.
- 4.2 Tendering could be carried out internally or by an external consultant, however this approach would not allow the council to access the wholesale prices that Laser is able to obtain through aggregating the demand of 160 public sector customers. In addition, this approach would require accepting the energy prices offered at the point of tender in two-yearly cycles, as the council would not have the facility or required technical knowledge to pre-purchase energy at the time of lowest prices, creating a risk of buying energy at the peak of the market and increasing costs.
- 4.3 Alternative energy purchasing frameworks have been investigated, in particular Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) which is based in eastern England), and from our investigations we have no reason to believe that ESPO will provide better value for money than Laser buying group. As Laser already has a successful track record of working with Swale BC, along with the majority of councils based in the South East of England, it is considered that there would be no benefit to changing to another buying group that offers the same services.
- 4.4 Crown Commercial Services provide separate single supplier frameworks for electricity and gas on a rolling two or three year basis, but this arrangement does not provide the same range of procurement choices that are available via Laser buying group.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 The advice of the Procurement and Commissioning teams was taken and confirmation was given that use of this framework complies with contract standing orders and legal requirements.
- 5.2 Consultation of neighbouring local authorities has taken place to assess service and value for money of Laser Buying Group.

## 6 Implications

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	None at this stage
Financial, Resource and Property	Using a buying group to purchase energy provides value for money advantages, both in terms of savings achieved through bulk purchasing, and in much reduced staff time in tendering for supplies for each site.
Legal and Statutory	Statutory requirements are met using the Laser framework, as all energy procurement is carried out in line with the Public Contracts (Amendments) Regulations 2009. Use of frameworks for procurements is supported in the council's procurement strategy and approved in contract standing orders.
Crime and Disorder	None at this stage
Sustainability	Option to purchase 'green' energy is made available during procurements, at an additional cost per kWh.
Health and Wellbeing	None at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None at this stage
Equality and Diversity	None at this stage

## 7 Appendices

None

## 8 Background Papers

None



<b>Cabinet</b>		<b>Agenda Item: 8</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	10 September 2014	
<b>Report Title</b>	Local Engagement Forums June and July 2014	
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism	
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Pete Raine	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Emma Wiggins	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Brooke Buttfield	
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>	
<b>Forward Plan</b>	<b>Reference number:</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note and consider the discussion and outcomes of the three Local Engagement Forums held during June and July 2014.</li> <li>2. To suggest topics as agenda items for future Local Engagement Forums.</li> </ol>	

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report draws together notes of the discussion, outcomes and recommendations for Cabinet to consider following the recent Swale Local Engagement Forums (LEFs) of Faversham (1 July 2014), Sheppey (10 June 2014), and Sittingbourne (17 June 2014).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to formalise the reporting relationship and encourage greater connectivity between the LEFs and Swale Borough Council's (SBC) Cabinet.
- 1.3 The report demonstrates to residents the potential of the forums to advise and influence local public services.
- 1.4 The next Swale Local Engagement Forums are being held during September 2014; Sheppey (23 September 2014), Sittingbourne (16 September 2014), and Faversham (9 September 2014). Cabinet is also asked to consider and suggest agenda items for these and future LEFs.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The LEFs are one of the key consultation methods for the Council, providing a route for residents as a group to advise on the shape and future of public services in the Borough.

- 2.2 This report summarises the ‘You Said We Did’ reports that are compiled after each LEF, including discussion and outcomes from the LEF for noting and discussion by the SBC Cabinet. It is anticipated that this report will foster a two-way dialogue. The You Said We Did reports are attached as Appendices I, II and III.

### 3. Proposals

- 3.1 Members are invited to note the outcomes from each meeting (shown in Table 1 below) and feed back to the LEF chairmen as appropriate.

**Table 1: Summary of recent round of LEFs**

<b>Faversham LEF 1 July 2014 (Chairman Cllr Anita Walker)</b>
<p><b>Matters discussed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kent Police led a discussion about the continuing need to target those areas most affected by crime in Faversham, specifically fires, as well as the ongoing support with the community, working with partners to focus on helping vulnerable people.</li> <li>▪ A representative from PS Breastfeeding CIC raised the issue that the breastfeeding services available which provide information and support to the community needs to become more common knowledge. It was identified that KCC work with various Health Boards in relation to breastfeeding.</li> <li>▪ Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, and Brian Planner, Head of Service Delivery, gave a presentation and answered questions from residents and Members on parking enforcement, enabling the community and Members to become aware of the legalities related to parking, and also the work completed by SBC’s Civil Enforcement Officers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Issues to follow up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Following the discussion led by Kent Police, SBC reported that the plans for the new junction on A251 went to the Joint Transportation Board Meeting and a roundabout was the recommended option. This recommendation is to be reported to Kent Highways, KCC. Liaison with an engineer to provide a full update at the next LEF.</li> <li>▪ Further to the conversation relating to breastfeeding, SBC suggested communication between Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health, and PS Breastfeeding to examine how SBC can assist with communication about the service.</li> <li>▪ An issue was raised regarding lack of presence from Civil Enforcement Officers in rural areas. Jeff Kitson asked that he be notified of any rural areas which do not seem to be fully resourced.</li> </ul>
<b>Sheppey LEF 10 June 2014 (Chairman Cllr Patricia Sandle)</b>
<p><b>Matters discussed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The KCC ‘Safe and Sensible Street Lighting’ project was discussed, and residents</li> </ul>

and Members' raised a number of questions and issues.

- A representative from PS Breastfeeding CIC raised the issue that the breastfeeding services available which provide information and support to the community needs to become more common knowledge. It was identified that KCC work with various Health Boards in relation to breastfeeding.
- Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, and Brian Planner, Head of Service Delivery, gave a presentation and answered questions from residents and Members on parking enforcement, enabling the community and Members to become aware of the legalities related to parking, and also the work completed by SBC's Civil Enforcement Officers.
- Amicus Horizon provided an update on their current projects, and the progress each is making.
- 'The Green Doctor' from the Sustainable Sheppey project provided an update for the community on the services available.

**Issues to follow up:**

- Further to the conversation relating to breastfeeding, SBC suggested communication between Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health, and PS Breastfeeding to examine how SBC can assist with communication about the service.
- The issue regarding road surfacing along Minster Broadway was raised, and SBC confirmed that it is currently being reviewed at various meetings.

**Sittingbourne LEF 17 June 2014 (Chairman Cllr Mike Whiting)**

**Matters discussed:**

- Kent Fire and Rescue Service discussed the ever increasing issue of irresponsible parking, leading to emergency vehicles being unable to reach the scene of a fire.
- Kent Police informed the community of the recently employed Community Sergeants. The introduction of Community Sergeants has enabled proactive policing throughout Swale.
- A representative from PS Breastfeeding CIC raised the issue that the breastfeeding services available which provide information and support to the community needs to become more common knowledge. It was identified that KCC work with various Health Boards in relation to breastfeeding.
- Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, and Brian Planner, Head of Service Delivery, gave a presentation and answered questions from residents and Members on parking enforcement, enabling the community and Members to become aware of the legalities related to parking, and also the work completed by SBC's Civil Enforcement Officers.
- Pete Raine, Director of Regeneration, gave an update and answered questions from residents and Members on progress with the planned regeneration of Sittingbourne.

**Issues to follow up:**

- Following the discussion led by Kent Fire and Rescue Service, liaison will take place between the residents group, Swale Borough Council, and Kent Fire and Rescue Service to identify a solution.
- Further to the conversation relating to breastfeeding, SBC suggested communication between Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health, and PS Breastfeeding to examine how SBC can assist with communication about the service.

3.2 Members are also invited to suggest topics as agenda items for future Local Engagement Forums.

## 4. Alternative Options

4.1 Not applicable as this is an update report for noting and consideration.

## 5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 LEFs are a consultative forum for the public to have the opportunity to question and challenge public sector representatives about the issues discussed at the meeting.

## 6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The LEFs contribute towards the SBC corporate priority of Embracing Localism as they are one of the key projects for empowering local residents. In particular they contribute to the aims of enabling members to champion communities and improving local consultation and engagement.
Financial, Resource and Property	None identified.
Legal and Statutory	None identified.
Crime and Disorder	Residents can engage directly with senior police officers at the meetings.
Sustainability	The Sustainable Sheppey 'Green Doctor' project was discussed at the Sheppey LEF.
Health & Wellbeing	The importance of breastfeeding and the availability of the PS Breastfeeding CIC service was discussed at all the LEFs.
Risk Management and Health and	None identified.

Safety	
Equality and Diversity	One of the aims of the You Said We Did is to report the issues raised and questions asked at the meeting as accurately as possible, so as not to discriminate against anyone who raises an issue at the meeting. The reports remain live and residents can challenge it they are incorrect. If the amendment is approved, they are then updated on the online version of the report.

## 7. Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: [Faversham LEF, 1 July 2014 – You Said We Did](#)
- Appendix II: [Sheppey LEF, 10 June 2014 – You Said We Did](#)
- Appendix III: [Sittingbourne LEF, 17 June 2014 – You Said We Did](#)

## 8. Background Papers

8.1 [LEF Terms of Reference](#)

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## Faversham Local Engagement Forum – 1 July 2014

You Said	We Did
<b>Kent Fire and Rescue</b>	
Peter Campbell from Kent Fire and Rescue attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Campbell discussed that there was nothing significant to report in Faversham. Continuing support with the community, working with partners to focus on helping vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Kent Fire and Rescue are supporting the Nautical Festival in Faversham, 12<sup>th</sup> July- 13<sup>th</sup> July.</li> <li>• Continuing to target hot spot areas for crime, specifically fires. Targeting on the main causes and offenders.</li> </ul>
Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, was pleased with the support towards the Creek Weekend from KFRS. Cllr Mike Cosgrove asked whether Kent Fire and Rescue has specific water units to serve events such as the weekend in Faversham?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There aren't units which are solely focused and trained in water activities. In terms of water risks, all full time firefighters are trained in water units.</li> </ul>
Peter Campbell, KFRS, asked for an update on the new junction - A251.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brian Planner stated that the plans went to the Transportation Board and a roundabout at the junction was the recommended option which is to go to Kent Highways, KCC. BP to liaise with an engineer for full update.</li> <li>• Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of the Council, discussed that the decision made from the Joint Transportation Board Meeting is finalised by Cllr David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Transport.</li> </ul>
Chris Oswald-Jones, resident, asked if the recommendation was made, what the time period would be before any action was taken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of the Council, said that he hasn't spoken to Cabinet Member and so no update on timescales has been received.</li> </ul>
Cllr Cindy Davis, Faversham Town Council, said that the roundabout was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Andrew Bowles stated that the first 2 recommendations were not approved and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, a roundabout, was the approved option.</li> </ul>

<p>a strange choice as many wished for traffic lights.</p> <p>A resident suggested that a traffic light system would be more appropriate as a roundabout means cars have to give way to the right, resulting in a large volume of traffic travelling from Sittingbourne to be continuously passing through the roundabout, potentially causing long delays.</p>	
<b>Parking Enforcement</b>	
<p>Jeff Kitson and Brian Planner provided a presentation on parking enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Kitson explained that Parking is an emotive issue.</li> <li>• Civil parking enforcement is necessary as it encourages the free flow of traffic on the highway, ensuring that all drivers have equal opportunity to park on and off street, to protect the Councils P&amp;D income (£1.5m), to ensure that access to property is maintained and to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians.</li> <li>• There was an explanation of when a penalty notice would be given and at what severity the contravention is.</li> <li>• Jeff Kitson discussed that introducing a 'pay as you leave' procedure is not an effective option as it is too expensive and tariffs would have to increase to cover the costs which is not appropriate. He informed residents of alternative solutions, such as the introduction of a system that enables the purchase of parking tickets on a mobile phone. This will not mean parking ticket machines will be removed, it is just an additional way of reducing the number of people receiving penalty notices.</li> <li>• Civil Enforcement Officer error levels are less than ½%.</li> <li>• Brian informed the group that more bioelectric cars are due to be produced and charging points will be installed in many car parks. 2 have already been installed in Sittingbourne car parks and people will continue paying for parking, and electric will be free. Government funding has been received for the 2 that have been installed in Sittingbourne. Promotion will occur when these points are live.</li> </ul>



<p>Chris Oswald-Jones, resident, stated that there are many occasions, especially at larger events, where emergency vehicles are unable to get through due to parking obstructions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Kitson stated that there are civil enforcement officers working at large events. If yellow lines are present, a penalty notice will be given. Due to not having the power to deal with cars where there aren't yellow lines, it was suggested that a leaflet produced by KFRS relating to the issue could be placed on the car to make them think about their actions and the consequences it could cause.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Mike Cosgrove said that Civil Enforcement Officers work extremely hard as it isn't an easy job. Is anybody allowed to stop their vehicle and unload or is it specifically only contractors that are allowed?</p> <p>In Faversham, in terms of car parking signs, can interpretation be provided?</p> <p>Parking bays at Faversham Train Station are virtually all for taxis and on the other side of the road, it is for personal use only. There isn't a specified drop off point for disabled access etc.?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is a public car unloading, 5 minutes will be allowed on double yellow lines. If it is a commercial vehicle on double yellow lines, 10 minutes is allowed. However, civil enforcement officers have to physically see unloading occurring, not just the doors left open.</li> <li>• Signs on the street can not be put in different languages. However, in car parks this is an option.</li> <li>• There is pressure on the small space outside the train station which has been previously notified. A drop off/pick up point is a possibility that will be looked into.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Mike Henderson asked if it is against regulations for cars to be stationary in the town centre with their engines running? Are enforcement officers able to act?</p> <p>Are enforcement officers able to assist in enforcing no vehicles from 10:00am-4:00pm on a Friday and Saturday?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfortunately, civil enforcement officers aren't able to issue a fine. It is a Police matter.</li> <li>• Brian responded stating that cars are currently restricted 6:00am-6:00pm Monday to Saturday. This restriction is now changing to 10:00am-4:00pm Monday to Saturday with no access on a Friday and Saturday. Our enforcement officers have now powers to be able to control this and the police are responsible for ensuring the restriction is effective.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Lloyd Bowen asked if the tracking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some areas, it is much safer for two officers to be working together for safety</li> </ul>

<p>system compares to where other officers are at that point. There are often 2 officers together in one place?</p> <p>More presence from civil enforcement officers in rural areas?</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Bowles followed on from lack of enforcement in rural areas and identified that there are major parking issues along A2 Teynham, Lynsted Lane, Oare and Boughton.</p>	<p>reasons. Also, on a Sunday/evening there is no back up support so officers can only work in pairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff asked Cllr Bowen to inform him of these areas in order to make sure they are resourced.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Richard Barnicott identified that a lot of pollution will be caused by car engines left running. If the law is being broken in our own car parks, are SBC officers able to act?</p> <p>What evidence would be needed to report taxis not obliging to the set legislations?</p> <p>Cllr Richard Barnicott asked if there was a suggestion to reduce hold up in the layby at Teynham?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a set of national legislation contraventions and unfortunately there are no contraventions for this so SBC are unable to enforce. In relation to taxis, officers to have more power as we set local conditions.</li> <li>• No further enforcement can be taken. Specific drivers would have to be reported.</li> <li>• No solution has been resolved. Convenient stores (Co-op by the layby) have had an impact on the hold up and all areas that have a road-side convenient store are hard to enforce.</li> </ul>
<b>Grass Cutting</b>	
<p>A resident said that the grass in green areas is cut 8/9 times a year by people on community payback. Why not use their time in other community benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for grass cutting is formal. They are involved in clear-up operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Breastfeeding</b>	

<p>Hannah Perkin attended the meeting to provide an update.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PS Breastfeeding CIC has a contract with KCC for public health. In Swale, there is a culture change to instigate. There is an aim to have one specialist clinic children centre in each district across Kent.</li><li>• Peer supporters, who are all volunteers, have come together to provide support and advice for those looking to breastfeed.</li><li>• Hannah Perkin spoke about the legalities with breastfeeding in public and informed all that it is against equality legislation to ask a woman to stop breastfeeding in a public area.</li><li>• Swale owns 4 of the 10 lowest wards in the Country for breastfeeding rates.</li></ul>
<p>Cllr Mike Cosgrove suggested passing on the information to Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This point was taken on board and it was also identified that KCC work with Health Boards in relation to breastfeeding.</li></ul>

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## Sheppey Local Engagement Forum – 10 June 2014

You Said	We Did
<b>Kent Police</b>	
<p>Tony Henley, District Commander, attended the meeting to provide an update.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Henley informed all that some communication around Kent Police/Swale Police has been misunderstood and a full briefing will be provided at the next Sheppey LEF.</li> <li>• There was a review of public sector spending in 2010 and there was a £50,000,000 nationally cut. This cut led to 2 directorates being formed; 1 to deal with the 999 service and 1 as a neighbourhood team, resulting in a 1300 staff cut. After another review took place, the Police have been looking at how to do things more effectively with less resource and have provided additional, proactive police dedicated to Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey town centres. This has freed up resource to introduce Sargeant-constables. Tony Henley introduced Darren, community Sargeant, who is part of a team of 4. Proactive policing has enabled 25 arrests to take place, seizing £1500 worth of stolen goods.</li> <li>• Tony Henley confirmed that PCSO numbers have not been reduced in Swale.</li> <li>• Further to the concerns of Island residents regarding response times, shift patterns have been introduced which include overlaps which will speed up response times at an incident.</li> </ul>
<p>A resident requested a more detailed explanation on the 'Lights Out' situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Henley advised that the decision for the lights to be turned off is out of his control and statistics are being coordinated. A rise in crime will necessitate a response.</li> <li>• Bill Ronan suggested that there would be an update in September when more statistics have been collated.</li> <li>• Cllr Pat Sandle stated that it is a trial period only.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Steve Worrall asked, according to statistics, what crime has the highest incidence rate on the Isle of Sheppey.</p> <p>Cllr Worrall also asked for the Police's advice on burglaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shop Theft is the highest crime occurring on the Island. However, figures are down dramatically due to the 25 arrests made in response to proactive policing mentioned earlier.</li> <li>• Tony Henley suggested visiting the Kent Police website for suggestions, such as 'Smart-water', which can be used to mark your personal property.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Pat Sandle asked where to go to find</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Henley suggested contacting Kent Police by email, emailing in the same way as</li> </ul>

out figures.	previous ( <a href="http://www.kent.police.uk/WebFeedback/contactus.do">www.kent.police.uk/WebFeedback/contactus.do</a> )
Mick Galvin, a resident, asked where to go for basic information around police issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Henley advised residents to go to the internet to find out information needed. He also agreed to provide a response to Mr Galvin regarding a question at the last LEF.</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Fire and Rescue</b>	
A representative from Kent Fire and Rescue attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A trail has been conducted for the past 10 weeks on a new staffing system. A new shift system has also been put in place to enable a better, more efficient service with someone on duty throughout a twenty-four hour period.</li> <li>• Kent Fire and Rescue was heavily involved in the flooding over Christmas which was successfully dealt with through emergency planning.</li> <li>• All departments are contributing towards improving systems to provide a service which is more efficient and beneficial to the community.</li> <li>• Kent Fire and Rescue are currently delivering fire prevention campaigns which relating to themed months, for instance May – BBQ Fires.</li> </ul>
<b>AmicusHorizon</b>	
Kerry Newbury, AmicusHorizon, attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Georges Court is set to be completed in November 2014.</li> <li>• Rushenden Shops provision: currently working with Swale Borough Council on the legalities. A survey of all Rushenden residents has been completed to find out that what is being proposed is the outcome the community want.</li> <li>• Financially, there is now a dedicated department who are out in the Community with the aim to reduce loan sharks etc.</li> <li>• CAB is currently located at the Prison (the Swale Advice Partnership).</li> <li>• The housing association are helping with housing payments for residents.</li> <li>• Local Improvement Fund: one application was Briton Court in Sheerness which is currently being refurbished.</li> <li>• AmicusHorizon are planning 3 summer events, dates of which will be circulated shortly.</li> </ul>
Cllr Pat Sandle stated that the prison isn't a very accessible location for the CAB to take place at. Is the session for residents or prisoners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerry Newbury agreed to pass on the suggestion of developing a mobile CAB service, which would move around instead of staying solely in one location. To her knowledge, it is an open service for all.</li> </ul>

<b>Parking Enforcement</b>	
Jeff Kitson and Brian Planner provided a presentation on parking enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Kitson explained that Parking is an emotive issue.</li> <li>• Civil parking enforcement is necessary as it encourages the free flow of traffic on the highway, ensuring that all drivers have equal opportunity to park on and off street, to protect the Councils P&amp;D income (£1.5m), to ensure that access to property is maintained and to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians.</li> <li>• There was an explanation of when a penalty notice would be given and at what severity the contravention is.</li> </ul>
A resident suggested that it would be a good idea for Swale Borough Council (SBC) to adapt in the same way hospital systems work regarding parking (pay as you leave).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Kitson welcomed the suggestion but explained that it is extremely expensive to purchase and maintain.</li> <li>• He informed residents of alternative solutions, such as the introduction of a system that enables the purchase of parking tickets on a mobile phone. This will not mean parking ticket machines will be removed, it is just an additional way of reducing the number of people receiving penalty notices.</li> </ul>
Cllr Ken Pugh asked for clarification on whether it was illegal to park on grass verges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Kitson confirmed that if a grass verge is signed with notices to ask people not to park on the grass, it is illegal. However, it is not as easy as giving a fixed penalty as it has to go through the magistrates court.</li> </ul>
A resident suggested that a campaign be created to make people aware of free car parking over night in many SBC car parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Kitson confirmed that parking is free at night and that he would take the suggestion back to team.</li> </ul>
A resident asked about commuters parking in Halfway car park and travelling to London all day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Kitson stated that he had been to look at this situation and has noted the situation.</li> <li>• He outlined that there is potential for high parking at this particular car park and putting a limit on the parking may be an effective solution. However, it is currently going through a consultation as this decision could have an effect on local business.</li> <li>• The maximum of a 4 hour stay and a no return policy will be also be reviewed in the future, which will include a community consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>PS Breastfeeding CIC</b>	
Phil Parrett attended the meeting to provide an update on services available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS Breastfeeding CIC has a contract with KCC for public health. In Sheppey, there is a culture change to instigate. There has been a specialist clinic children centre in Queenborough and the aim is to have one in each district across Kent.</li> <li>• Peer supporters, who are all volunteers, have come together to provide support and</li> </ul>

	<p>advice for those looking to breastfeed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phil Parrett spoke about the legalities with breastfeeding in public and informed all that it is against equality legislation to ask a woman to stop breastfeeding in a public area.</li> <li>• She informed all of a 'baby shower' at Castle Connections on 26<sup>th</sup> June from 11:00-2:00.</li> </ul>
Cllr Pat Sandle asked if the peer supporters will go to various other children centres on the island.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phil Parrett stated that the intention is to get as much of the community involved as possible.</li> </ul>
Abdool Kara asked if breastfeeding rates are dramatically low in Swale compared to the rest of Kent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phil Parrett stated that cafes and restaurants are much more supportive since the campaign and an improvement is being made to breastfeeding rates.</li> </ul>
<b>Green Doctor (Sustainable Sheppey)</b>	
Danny Lenain attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 projects are currently being carried out: sustainable homes and sustainable schools. 1900 homes will be given the opportunity to receive impartial advice on savings and detailed prescriptions of savings.</li> <li>• The project offers various 'freebees' to residents' properties, such as those which provide Heating Savings. These include radiator panels, lighting solutions, replacement LED bulbs, power down plugs and OWL monitors which show how much energy is being used.</li> </ul>
Abdool Kara asked if they are targeting particular areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danny Lenain noted that all areas are being targeted.</li> </ul>
A resident asked if there was a criterion in which a house can receive this service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danny Lenain stated that there is no criterion and any house can benefit from the service provided.</li> </ul>
Cllr Pat Sandle asked if he would be interested in sharing this information with the 'Over 50's/60's club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danny Lenain said that he had been to one of the club sessions and is planning to attend many more.</li> </ul>
<b>Minster Broadway</b>	
A resident asked if there were any updates that could be provided on the Minster Broadway road surfacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdool Kara and Cllr Ken Pugh replied that the item is on the agenda for August. More money however will be required for resurfacing.</li> </ul>



## Sittingbourne Local Engagement Forum – 17 June 2014

You Said	We Did
<b>Kent Police</b>	
<p>A representative from Kent Police attended the meeting to provide an update.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a review of public sector spending in 2010 and there was a £50,000,000 nationally cut. This cut led to 2 directorates being formed; 1 to deal with the 999 service and 1 as a neighbourhood team, resulting in a 1300 staff cut. After another review took place, the Police have been looking at how to do things more effectively with less resource and have provided additional, proactive police dedicated to Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey town centres. This has freed up resource to introduce Sargeant-constables. Community Sergeants', who are part of a team of 4, have now started working as of June. Proactive policing has enabled 25 arrests to take place, seizing £1500 worth of stolen goods.</li> <li>• It was confirmed that PCSO numbers have not been reduced in Swale.</li> <li>• Further to the concerns of Island residents regarding response times, shift patterns have been introduced which include overlaps which will speed up response times at an incident.</li> <li>• Crime in the last 10-14 days has subsided in Sittingbourne. Recently, the football has been taken into account with the risk of increased problems. However, there have been no incidents of disorder.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Mike Whiting asked if all local pubs stay open for the football?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all pubs have the facilities, such as big screens. A lot of pubs can not self manage big events.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Baldock asked if the general trouble, leading to arrests, in Sittingbourne High Street is frequent?</p> <p>What is the likelihood to encounter a problem?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is only a small amount of trouble in Sittingbourne high street due to it not having a thriving night time economy. In Swale, the Island has the highest number of night time economy issues, especially throughout the Summer due to tourist numbers being higher. Due to the recent work restructure, an inspector is available to be on duty all night and inspectors have the authority to shut pubs/clubs down in 48 hours.</li> <li>• There is a low chance of a problem occurring due to regular license visits. Preloading of drink means that trouble is probably more likely to occur out of town.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Roger Truelove asked if the KCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darkness can put people off committing a crime. Statistics are being gathered</li> </ul>

lights out system will have an impact upon community safety?	throughout the trial period to see if an increase/decrease in crime has occurred in relation to the lights out.
Pete Flynn, Residents Association, asked if PCSO's will remain in the high street?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, the bid was won.</li> </ul>
Cllr Ben Stokes asked if there could be more knowledge of PCSOs in villages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to PCSOs, have to service demands elsewhere. 2 or 3 PCSOs with more visible contact will be present in areas were the trouble is. There will always be an officer nearby to deal with any trouble in Wards.</li> </ul>
A resident raised the issue of signage being on pavements and causing obstruction problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was stated that permission from KCC for signage to be placed on pathways is essential.</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Fire and Rescue</b>	
Mark Innes from Kent Fire and Rescue attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark discussed that there is a large problem with fly tipping but liaison is occurring with the community safety unity at SBC.</li> <li>• Mark reported on 2 incidents in the last month, both being house fires. 2 appliances attended the scene, both taking different routes. Neither of the fire engines could turn the corner due to cars being parked inconsiderately.</li> <li>• If absolutely necessary, parked cars can be moved by the appliances in order to reach the destination. However, this is not a solution due to the economic value attached.</li> </ul>
Cllr Mike Whiting asked how much of a fire hazard fly tipping was causing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a large fire hazard and also has a big impact on the environment, costs of running the fire service etc.</li> </ul>
Is the issue due to people parking on double-yellow lines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but in some cases, it is people not taking into consideration that emergency appliances may require access.</li> </ul>
A member of the residents group stated that they would like to work with Council/Kent Fire and rescue to add yellow lines where necessary and reduce pathway width. Will engines be getting smaller?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison will occur between residents group, Swale Borough Council and Kent Fire and Rescue. Engines will not be getting any smaller as the pumps in the appliances are now designed to do everything and so there will be fewer fire stations with a more varied range of pumps.</li> </ul>
Is there a solution to reduce car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no finalised solution but there are many options that could be taken such as</li> </ul>

vandalism figures so that people aren't as worried about not parking directly outside their property.	introducing restricted parking. A lot of roads are not designed to have more than one car parked per household.
Cllr Mike Baldwin suggested that there needs to be more enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Kitson stated that there are civil enforcement officers working in the evening. If yellow lines are present, a penalty notice will be given. Due to not having the power to deal with cars where there aren't yellow lines, it was suggested that a leaflet produced by KFRS relating to the issue could be placed on the car to make them think about their actions and the consequences it could cause.</li> </ul>
<b>Spirit of Sittingbourne</b>	
Pete Raine, Director of Regeneration, attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Station Square which will transform the arrival at Sittingbourne, creating a welcoming, shared space for pedestrians, cyclists, taxi drop off, kiss-and-ride and bus and rail interchange.</li> <li>• A completely new Cultural Quarter with an 8-screen multiplex cinema and flexible performance venue. The square in the Cultural Quarter will be able to be cleared for weekends and special events such as markets, performances and sporting occasions.</li> <li>• A brand new Civic Quarter made up of three components: a civic building, a health centre and retail space.</li> <li>• A pedestrian-friendly spine of activity connecting the land to the north of the railway line with the town centre under the railway arch. High quality public realm, way finding, lighting and art works will increase footfall into the town centre.</li> <li>• Other phases of the development that will include residential and large format retail developments at other locations in the town centre.</li> <li>• The Legal make up has slightly changed and now consists of Cathedral, Essential Land, Quinn Estates and Architect Guy Hollaway.</li> <li>• Charlotte Street – 150 new houses which will go to Committee in July.</li> <li>• Bell Centre – Owners went to bankruptcy and the demolition has now been finished. The centre is now on the market in the hope of interest from developers.</li> <li>• Tesco Site – the Tesco site is a large unused area and a meeting has been scheduled with Tesco to discuss opportunities.</li> <li>• As part of the planning application, there will be a 6 week consultation period. Before submitting, a presentation will be available. This informal consultation is due to start</li> </ul>

	<p>mid July and the formal consultation will be after Summer. It was suggested that a representative could be invited to provide the presentation at the next LEFs.</p>
<p>Andy Hudson asked about Phoenix House and why no community space provision had been included in the new civic building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KCC own Phoenix House and lease to developers. He was unable to reassure that a community space would be included in the new civic centre as it is not part of Phase 1. It is down to KCC to keep the remaining land they currently have and lease again as a community centre.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parking Enforcement</b></p>	
<p>Jeff Kitson and Brian Planner provided a presentation on parking enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Kitson explained that Parking is an emotive issue.</li> <li>• Civil parking enforcement is necessary as it encourages the free flow of traffic on the highway, ensuring that all drivers have equal opportunity to park on and off street, to protect the Councils P&amp;D income (£1.5m), to ensure that access to property is maintained and to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians.</li> <li>• There was an explanation of when a penalty notice would be given and at what severity the contravention is.</li> <li>• Jeff Kitson discussed that introducing a 'pay as you leave' procedure is not an effective option as it is too expensive and tariffs would have to increase to cover the costs which is not appropriate. He informed residents of alternative solutions, such as the introduction of a system that enables the purchase of parking tickets on a mobile phone. This will not mean parking ticket machines will be removed, it is just an additional way of reducing the number of people receiving penalty notices.</li> </ul>
<p>Andy Hudson asked what to do if the machine is broken?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't write a note. All machines are linked to a central computer and so all times/dates are recorded from when the machine stopped working to when it began working again.</li> </ul>
<p>Why do the machines breakdown so often?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vandalism is a large issue which is trying to be reduced. Also, a few of the machines are solar powered and therefore are dependent on the weather. These machines are being identified and looking to be upgraded.</li> </ul>
<p>Pete Flynn asked if there would be an additional charge for the mobile phone app.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be a small charge which has been negotiated to a much lower price than other areas. If a customer was buying a SBC tariff for £1.00 on their mobile phone, the price would be £1.08. However, for one year, it has been secured with the supplier to be free of charge. More details are to be obtained to identify whether it will</li> </ul>

<p>How much has been put on top of the £1.5 million since improved enforcement has been in place?</p> <p>Legislation dictates you need to use any money you get with regards to highways, does this mean SBC maintain the highways?</p> <p>Could it not be used to improve machines that are very expensive, use additional money this way?</p> <p>Has no additional revenue been obtained by SBC since improving parking enforcement in Sittingbourne?</p> <p>Where has the additional money gone?</p> <p>Observed 2 officers giving a parking fine in 30 seconds. Why do two officers have to go together?</p>	<p>be free for Swale Borough Council or free for the customer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a considerable cost in running car parks and the operating surplus from car parks is around 800,000. Income is made from penalty charges but that income covers its costs of enforcement so is effectively cost neutral.</li> <li>• No, if there is a surplus generated, it can only be used for certain things</li> <li>• No you can't, there isn't a surplus. If there was a surplus, the money can only be used on highways or provision of new car parks, not maintaining old ones.</li> <li>• Without enforcement, Council wouldn't achieve that budget. This applies to on-street and car park enforcement.</li> <li>• More parking fines have been issued so there has been less of a loss in budget.</li> <li>• In some areas, it is much safer for two officers to be working together for safety reasons.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Ben Stokes asked if double red lines would be more effective?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can only be used in London.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Gareth Randall asked that, if the machine is down does the car park type (long/short stay) affect the procedure?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a machine breaks down in a long stay car park, the car park will be out of enforcement all day. If a machine breaks down in a short stay car park, the car park will be out of enforcement for 4 hours.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ownership of pavements/street lights</b></p>	
<p>Jean Spain tried to report sand being left on the pavement in Central Avenue and there was a lot of confusion over ownership?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill Ronan to provide a response over ownership of pavements. It was stated that there is a website where you can find out who owns what pieces of land etc.</li> </ul>

<b>Breastfeeding</b>	
Hannah Perkin attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS Breastfeeding CIC has a contract with KCC for public health. In Swale, there is a culture change to instigate. There is an aim to have one specialist clinic children centre in each district across Kent.</li> <li>• Peer supporters, who are all volunteers, have come together to provide support and advice for those looking to breastfeed.</li> <li>• Hannah Perkin spoke about the legalities with breastfeeding in public and informed all that it is against equality legislation to ask a woman to stop breastfeeding in a public area.</li> <li>• Recently piloted “bond with baby” sessions which provide breastfeeding information as well as other information on parenting etc.</li> </ul>
Pete Raine suggested putting in contact with CCG and Health and Wellbeing Board and asked why rates are so low?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hannah reported that the rates are low due to cultural differences, teenage pregnancies, educational issues, lack of training is provided for midwives and it is a deprived area.</li> <li>• She also identified that it is extremely easy to access formula milk for free and so there is no financial benefit from breastfeeding.</li> </ul>

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