

# Agenda

## Policy and Resources Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT\*

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chair), Monique Bonney, Lloyd Bowen, Derek Carnell, Tim Gibson (Chair), Angela Harrison, Mike Henderson, James Hunt, Mark Last, Rich Lehmann, Richard Palmer, Julien Speed, Mike Whiting, Ashley Wise and Dolley Wooster.

Quorum = 5

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Pages

### Information about this meeting

\*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website by 6 February 2024.

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- (a) The fire alarm is a continuous loud ringing. In the event that a fire drill is planned during the meeting, the Chair will advise of this.
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- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the meeting held on 29 November 2023 (Minute Nos. 442 – 460) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPis) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

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21.	Exclusion of Press and Public	
	To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following items:	
	That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3.	
	3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	
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**Issued on Tuesday, 30 January 2024**

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 [democraticservices@swale.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@swale.gov.uk). . To find out more about the work of this meeting, please visit [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Proposed Bollard Removal – James Street, Sheerness
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Donna Seager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. Members are asked to note the recommendation from the October 2023 Swale Joint Transportation Board Meeting, and recommend the removal of the bollards in James Street, Sheerness

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Following the recommendation from the October 2023 Swale Joint Transportation Board Meeting, Members are asked to note the contents of this report and recommend that the removal of the bollards in James Street, Sheerness, be progressed.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 A report was submitted to the Swale Joint Transportation Board at their meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. The report followed an informal consultation with residents of James Street, Sheerness, on the possible removal of the existing concrete bollards running up both sides of the road.
- 2.2 The proposals followed long-running issues with refuse freighters gaining access along this section of James Street due to the narrow width of remaining carriageway between the parked cars on both sides of the road.
- 2.3 At their meeting in October, the Swale Joint Transportation Board resolved :
- (1) That the results of the recent information consultation be noted.*
  - (2) That the bollards on either side of James Street, Sheerness be removed, subject to the emergency services and Kent County Council Highways and Transportation being consulted on the removal of the bollards.*

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 Kent County Council Highways and Transportation were originally consulted on the proposed removal of the bollards, and confirmed their support for the proposals to resolve issues around refuse freighter operations.
- 3.2 Following the Swale JTB meeting, the emergency services were contacted once again and invited to provide their feedback on the proposals. No concerns have been expressed from any of the emergency services in response to our communications.
- 3.3 Whilst not directly fed back during the informal consultation with residents, one resident verbally advised that there have been occasions where ambulances have had to park at the end of James Street due to access issues along the road.
- 3.4 Based on the support from KCC Highways, and the lack of objections from the emergency services, it is proposed to progress with the removal of the bollards along James Street, Sheerness.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 The introduction of a single yellow line on one side of James Street, Sheerness, was considered as an alternative option, but as detailed in the JTB report this was not deemed to be a practical option.

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

- 5.1 The informal consultation took place with residents of James Street, Sheerness, between 17<sup>th</sup> July and 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Of the 65 properties consulted, 5 responses were received, 4 supporting the proposals and 1 objecting.

### **6 Implications**

- 6.1 Should the proposals not go ahead, problems will continue with refuse collections, resulting in aborted visits or operatives having to carry refuse along the road down to the junction of Richmond Street.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	Build on the benefits of an improved street cleansing service and work with residents to ensure they can take pride in their local community.
Financial, Resource and Property	Cost of issuing works order to Kent County Council to undertake the removal of the bollards.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified
Crime and Disorder	None identified
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified
Health and Wellbeing	The removal of the bollards will improve access for refuse freighters to ensure that regular waste collections can take place, improving the wellbeing of residents in James Street.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified
Equality and Diversity	None identified
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified

## **7 Appendices**

None

## **8 Background Papers**

[Swale Joint Transportation Board](#) Reports and Minutes from October 2023.

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<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Corporate Equality Scheme
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
<b>Head of Service</b>	Philip Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. To approve the draft Corporate Equality Scheme 2024-2028 to undertake a public consultation

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the key elements of the general and specific equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and makes recommendations for consulting on a new Corporate Equality Scheme covering the period 2024 – 2028.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Public authorities in England and Wales, which were subject to the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010, had until 6 April 2012 to publish equality objectives. Swale BC went beyond these requirements by publishing a Corporate Equality Scheme, containing equality objectives, in 2011 – a year ahead of schedule.
- 2.2 It is expected that authorities which are subject to the duties of the Equality Act 2010 review and/or replace their equality objectives every four years. Due to departmental restructures and the temporary lack of a policy team resource, there was a delay in carrying out the four-yearly review. This has now taken place alongside the development of the Corporate Plan priorities for 2023-2027.
- 2.3 This report seeks The Policy & Resources Committee’s comments on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme, and approval to submit the draft for consultation.

## Proposals

- 3.1 The General Equality Duty is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In summary, those subject to the Act (including local authorities) must in the exercise of their functions, have regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;

- advance opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2 The duty covers nine protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership\*, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are also known as protected characteristics. \*The duty covers marriage and civil partnership but not for all aspects of the duty.
- 3.3 The specific duties require a public authority to publish specific items of information:
- evidence of analysis that they have undertaken to establish whether their policies or practices have (or would) further the aims of the general equality duty;
  - details of the information that they considered in carrying out this analysis;
  - details of engagement that they undertook with people who they considered to have an interest in furthering the aims of the general duty; and
  - prepare and publish equality objectives.
- 3.4 The Council has sought to meet these requirements by publishing a Corporate Equality Scheme which incorporates all of the elements of paragraph 3.3, and the draft Corporate Equality Scheme 2024 – 2028 continues this approach.
- 3.5 The draft Corporate Equality Scheme 2024 -2028 objectives and key actions focus on Swale’s communities rather than the Council’s internal processes.

## **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 Not to publish a new Corporate Equality Scheme, although this would run the risk of censure by the Equality and Human Rights Commission who have powers to serve public authorities with compliance notices in the event of breaches of the general duty.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 Workshops were held in August 2023 with representatives from a range of external organisations where they were asked to provide input into what sort of things people with any of the protected characteristics find difficult when dealing with organisations such as Swale Borough Council when accessing their services.



- 5.2 An 8-week public consultation on the draft Scheme, incorporating further engagement with voluntary organisations and representative groups, is proposed as the next step.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Equality Scheme will support all three objectives in the Corporate Plan, and numerous cross-references to the Corporate Plan have been included within the text.
Financial, Resource and Property	There will be minimal financial implications for publishing a new Corporate Equality Scheme.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	As a public authority, we are required by statute to publish equality objectives and associated information by the Equality Act 2010.
Crime and Disorder	None envisaged at this stage. Some of the key actions in the Scheme refer to existing activity being undertaken by the Swale Community Safety Partnership.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The entire draft Corporate Equality Scheme is concerned with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

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

*Appendix I – Draft corporate equalities scheme 2024-2028*

## **8 Background Papers**

SBC Corporate Equality Scheme 2016-2020 available at  
<https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Consultations/Corporate-Equality-Scheme-2016.pdf>



**Corporate Equality Scheme**  
2024 - 2028

**Policy**

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## Foreword



We view equality, human rights and good relations between people as something that affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds, and we are committed to working closely with all those who are interested in, or affected by, our work.

We see this as an ongoing process enabling individuals and organisations to influence and shape our work.

In developing the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme 2024-2028, we have carefully considered all of the evidence and data that is available to us. We have also held workshops with different groups of people in the community to seek their feedback on any barriers people with any of the protected characteristics may experience when accessing our services.

In March 2023 a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge took place at Swale Borough Council and an action plan was developed. Some of the actions supported eliminating discrimination and are further captured in our equality objectives. The LGA report and SBC action plan can be viewed [here](#).

This is the fourth scheme the Council has developed since 2007, and we have decided to publish comprehensive data on the key equality and diversity characteristics of the borough of Swale and of our residents.

The purpose of the scheme is to describe how Swale Borough Council will fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

Swale Borough Council's overarching vision is learning from the past, focusing on the future. We have put in place a three year Corporate Plan with five priorities (subject to adoption):

- **Community** – to enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience.
- **Economy** – working with our businesses and community organisations to work towards a sustainable economy which delivers for local people.
- **Environment** – to provide a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable and enjoyable environment, and to prepare our borough for the challenges ahead.
- **Health & Housing** – to aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing.
- **Running the Council** – working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way.

## The Corporate Plan and priorities are further underpinned by our core values:

- **Fairness** - being objective to balance the needs of all those in our community;
- **Integrity** - being open, honest and taking responsibility;
- **Respect** - embracing and valuing the diversity of others;
- **Service** - delivering high quality, cost effective public service; and
- **Trust** - delivering on our promises to each other, customers and our partners.

We have tried through this scheme to focus more on what is important to Swale's community than on internal Council processes, although these are still important as reflected in the scheme's objectives.

Our first equality objective – **Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities** – is designed to foster good relations between different groups.

The second equality objective – **Supporting our vulnerable residents** – is about supporting Swale's more vulnerable residents, particularly those with a disability.

The third equality objective – **Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services** – is about improving our customer care and working with our communities to make our services more responsive to the needs of Swale's residents.

The fourth equality objective – **Promoting equality as a local employer** – is about ensuring that those policies and practices that affect our staff are fair and promote equality of outcome.

Taken together, these objectives are designed to underpin the objectives of our Corporate Plan.

Looking ahead, this equality scheme sets out how we aim to make Swale a fairer place. The borough of Swale is becoming an increasingly diverse place, and as a Council we need to tailor our services to meet those changing needs whilst providing value for money for local residents.

We also need to take a leading role in making Swale a place where everyone has equal life chances – regardless of age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender, marital status, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity leave rights.

**Councillor Tim Gibson**  
Leader of the Council

## Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty which applies to all public bodies and any private and voluntary bodies carrying out public functions. The Duty places a legal requirement on Swale Borough Council in carrying out its functions to have regard for the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

### **The Duty covers people with the following protected characteristics:**

- age;
- race;
- disability;
- sexual orientation;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- gender reassignment; and
- pregnancy and maternity.

The eliminating discrimination aim also covers marriage and civil partnership.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and persons who do not, includes:

- removing or minimising disadvantage suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such a person is disproportionately low.

Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not includes tackling prejudice, promoting understanding, and may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

Our four year equality scheme sets out how we will meet these legal requirements.

Swale Borough Council views equality, human rights and good relations between people as something that affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds, and we are committed to working closely with all those who are interested in, or affected by, our work. We see this as an ongoing process enabling individuals and organisations to influence and shape our work.

## 4

## The Scheme

This four year equality scheme covers the period 2024 to 2028, is closely linked to our Corporate Plan and describes how Swale Borough Council will fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.



## Council Services

Swale Borough Council is one of 12 districts, which together with Kent County Council and Medway Unitary Authority comprise the local authorities within Kent. Local authorities are created by Acts of Parliament and their powers are determined by Parliament.

### Councils provide three types of service to their communities:

- **statutory services** – these are services that councils must provide as set out in legislation such as refuse collection;
- **regulatory services** – this is the name given to a group of services which exist to ensure public, consumer, environmental and worker protection and includes services such as development control and licensing; and
- **discretionary services** – these are services that councils may choose to provide such as leisure and tourism.

## Profile of Swale Borough Council

The Council is made up of 47 elected councillors, who represent 24 wards. The last local elections were held in May 2023. The all-out election resulted in a change to the coalition administration and as a result, the following three groups formed a coalition administration of the council: Labour; Swale Independents Alliance and Green Party.

The whole council comes together to decide on the most important issues, and in May 2022 the council changed from a Cabinet system to a Committee system form of governance. This means that decisions are made by Full Council or delegated to committees, subcommittees and officers.

With an annual net revenue budget of £22 million of public money, we need to be absolutely sure that the money we spend is going to achieve the maximum possible benefit for the borough. To help us do this, we have set ourselves five corporate priorities which were developed to ensure that we focused on what really matters to local people.

Following a thorough analysis of all the relevant evidence available, including what our residents told us was important to them, we set priority themes and objectives in our Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2027 which can be viewed via our website or through this link: (to be added when adopted)

## Profile of Swale

The Borough of Swale enjoys a great location on the North Kent coast, within easy reach of London but set in rolling Kentish countryside, less than 25 miles (40km) from the Channel Tunnel. With an area of 139 square miles (360 square kilometres), roughly one-tenth of Kent and a population of 152,200, Swale includes the towns of Sittingbourne and Faversham, the Isle of Sheppey, and an extensive rural landscape. The borough is proud of the quality of its natural environment, and contains a large number of protected sites of scientific interest and outstanding natural beauty.

Much of the borough's traditional employment has been low-skilled, which has left a legacy in some areas of low ambitions and relatively high deprivation. Swale has a growing population, with increasing demand for new homes, jobs and services, which needs to be managed in a fair and sustainable way. Along with many of our partners, this is a key role for the borough council.

## Our evidence base

In developing our equality scheme we have gathered evidence from a number of sources to determine the key characteristics of our equality and diversity of Swale's population. The key evidence has been drawn from the following sources:

- Kent County Council Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletins:
  - [2021 Mid-year population estimates: Total population in Kent](#)
  - [2021 Mid-year population estimates: Age and sex profile \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)
- Office for National Statistics:
  - Marital and Civil Partnership Status, local authorities in England and Wales – February 2023
- Department for Work and Pensions:
  - NOMIS – labour market statistics.

Unless otherwise stated, the data for Kent incorporates the twelve district councils of Kent but excludes Medway which is a unitary authority. Data for the South East and England does incorporate Medway.

The detailed data which has informed this strategy can be found in Appendix I.



## Our Equality Priorities

**We have identified the following four key priorities for our equality scheme:**

- Equality Objective One: Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities
- Equality Objective Two: Supporting our vulnerable residents
- Equality Objective Three: Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services
- Equality Objective Four: Promoting equality as a local employer

### Equality Objective 1: Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities

This objective is about fostering good relations between different groups.

#### Background

Swale has a growing population with more and more people coming to live here from other areas of the UK. The data also shows that people of other ethnic backgrounds are part of this population growth.

As a council, we need to ensure that all communities feel safe, have equal access to our services, and that our services are designed to avoid any discrimination on people with a protected characteristic. Furthermore, we want to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. This is best served by incorporating a specific equality objective aimed at tackling these issues.

#### Key actions

**We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:**

- fulfilling our community leadership role;
- consulting, involving and engaging representative networks covering all equality areas to help inform our future activities;
- continuing to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour through the Swale Community Safety Partnership including ongoing work to tackle the PREVENT agenda;
- to engage with schools to inform young people about democracy and the work of the council;
- continuing to encourage the number of people giving their time to help others in Swale by supporting the voluntary and community sector;
- continuing to work closely with Swale's parish and town councils;
- continuing to support and actively promote community-led initiatives (eg. Neighbourhood Planning) which encourage communities themselves to work together to solve issues locally;
- continuing to use the Local Health and Care Partnership to influence the local health and public health agendas; and
- continuing to enable healthier lifestyles and physical activity through the implementation of relevant strategies.

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix I for detailed information

## Equality Objective 2: Supporting our vulnerable residents

This objective is about supporting Swale's more vulnerable residents, particularly those with a disability.

### Background

A major area where Swale's equality and diversity profile is different is disability. There is no single measure of the number of people with a disability. The definitions of disability vary and often rely on an individual's perception of their own health; a condition that one person considers disabling is not necessarily considered in the same way by another with the same condition.

At the time of the 2021 Census, Swale was among the highest district in Kent where people live with a long term health problem or disability. Swale is above the average for all Kent districts in this respect, and higher than the average for the South East and England and Wales.

Variations in lifestyle choices and in access to opportunities to improve health mean that average life expectancy is up to ten years lower in the Borough's worst-off neighbourhoods than in its more affluent.

As a result of Swale having a higher percentage of residents either with a long term health problem or disability, and more claiming disability benefits than the average for Kent, South East and national averages, we have decided to set a specific equality objective to support this section of our population.

### Key actions

#### We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:

- continuing to support Swale's elderly and vulnerable residents through programmes such as the Staying Put service;
- supporting partners to improve health and reduce hospital admissions through effective home adaptations and by improving conditions in privately rented homes;
- supporting households with the greatest housing needs to access affordable housing;
- providing assistance to households where no one living at the property is able to physically move their refuse or recycling to the boundary for collection;
- championing views of people with protected characteristics, including learning disabilities and neurodivergence, with our key partners; and
- through the work of the Community Safety Partnership seek to identify and support vulnerable victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, focusing on those issues and vulnerable groups as identified in the annual Community Safety Strategic Assessment.

## Equality Objective 3: Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services

This objective is about improving our customer care and working with our communities to make our services more responsive to the needs of all of Swale’s residents.

### Background

The provision of excellent customer care is very important to Swale Borough Council and something that we are working to improve further. One of our priority themes, stated in our Corporate Plan, is “Running the Council” and this describes our aim to develop and implement our Customer Access Strategy, ensuring customers can access our services in the most efficient and effective way.

We will continue to provide a choice of access to our services through a balance of cost-effective and convenient options, and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost, including self-service options where appropriate. For many years we have offered to provide Council documents in alternative formats and, for example, our Staying Put Team provide leaflets in large print as a matter of course as the primary audience for the services they offer are generally elderly and vulnerable.

Although our equality and diversity profile is broadly similar to other local authorities in Kent and the South East, we recognise that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to service delivery is not the right approach. Therefore, when designing services we will focus on the diverse needs of Swale residents by consulting service users and through the use of tools such as Equality Impact Assessments.

### Key actions

#### We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:

- providing a choice of access to our services through a balance of cost-effective and convenient options, and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost (eg. face-to-face, electronic, phone or written letter depending on customer need);
- delivering high levels of customer satisfaction with our services;
- improve information gathering about our customers to ensure no groups or individuals with protected characteristics are disadvantaged when accessing our services;
- develop and implement effective engagement methods with a variety of groups so that we can monitor and measure our services;
- treating all of our customers with respect by being polite, welcoming and making reasonable adjustments when providing services to neurodiverse people;
- continuing to improve accessibility of our working practices and buildings;
- providing Council documents in alternatives formats, i.e. large print, audio, different language and printed on different coloured paper;
- continuing webcasting of Council meetings;
- promoting opportunities to bid for Council contracts among local voluntary/ community organisations, and using social value criteria when assessing tenders to ensure fair competition;
- maintain our procurement framework to continue to ensure that suppliers can demonstrate fairly their commitment to equality; and
- endeavour to have greater consideration of cultural diversity when commissioning new services.

## **Equality Objective 4: Promoting equality as a local employer**

This objective is about ensuring that those policies and practices that affect our staff are fair and promote equality of outcome.

### **Background**

Members of staff have rights in their capacity as employees. We want to enable all our staff to be fully involved in the Council's work, to protect them from unfair treatment, to uphold our obligations to provide job descriptions, work plans and related performance and monitoring systems, and to give the support, development opportunities and training.

To inform our key actions we have gathered evidence from our equality monitoring data, equality impact assessments, and consultation with staff, including our staff survey. The key equality and diversity characteristics for Swale Borough Council employees are at Appendix II.

### **Key actions**

**We will aim to achieve this objective over the next four years by:**

- promoting a workplace environment where all of our staff are treated with dignity and respect;
- provide training in neurodivergence to assist with everyone having a better understanding of individuals different ways of working, learning, communicating, and perceiving the environment;
- encouraging the diversity of our staff to reflect the communities we serve across all the equality characteristics, and will continue to monitor our workforce profile;
- adopting non-discriminatory practices; and
- continuing to provide our staff and councillors with relevant on-going training and development on equality and diversity issues.

## Equality Impact Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the Council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in decision-making.

The Council undertakes EIAs whenever it is changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function.

## Responsibility and Accountability

The Council is ultimately responsible for delivering the General and Specific Duties set out in the Equality Scheme.

Our Chief Executive has overall accountability for making sure that we carry out the actions in this scheme. However, actions have been allocated to the relevant Directors and Heads of Service across the council, and they are responsible for carrying these out and reporting on progress.

The scheme will be monitored, and regular progress reports will be made to the Executive Management Team.

## Publication

This 2024-2028 scheme will be available on our website. A summary of this document will be made available in alternative formats on request.

## How to give us feedback about the Scheme

We welcome feedback on any aspect of our Equality Scheme and more generally on our approach to equality and inclusion. You can contact us at [policyteam@swale.gov.uk](mailto:policyteam@swale.gov.uk)

At Swale Borough Council we value what our customers think about us. We would therefore be very grateful if you would provide us with feedback about our services and in fact anything relating to the Council be it good or bad.

Members of the public who feel that they have experienced unlawful discrimination in the way they have been treated by the council may make a complaint through the corporate complaints procedure. The Council promises to take all complaints seriously, and will not accept discrimination of any kind. The Council will also monitor complaints to see whether we are meeting our equality duties.

The Members' Code of Conduct deals with complaints about the conduct of elected Members. Members who experience unlawful discrimination can alert the council through the grievance procedure.

If you believe the Council has not delivered its services to your satisfaction and would like to complain, there is a four step complaints process which is free to use and details can be found on the website at: [www.swale.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints](http://www.swale.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints)

## Swale – Equality and diversity key characteristics

### Age and Gender<sup>2</sup>

#### Key observations

- The 55-59 age group is the highest proportion of Swale's population (7.1%)
- The 90+ age group is the smallest proportion of the population (0.8%)
- 50.4% of the population in Swale are female and 49.6% are male

The source of data for these observations is Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin: 2021 Mid-Year Population Estimates – Age and gender profile: January 2023. This is in turn based on information published by the Office for National Statistics compiled from the 2021 Census.

#### Total population<sup>3</sup>

Swale is the third most populous district in Kent. Swale's population has been growing for over 25 years as a result of migration (i.e. more people entering the borough than leaving it), coupled with an increase in natural change (i.e. increased life expectancy with less people dying and an increase in the number of births). Swale is no different from most other Kent districts in this respect.

	Swale		Kent districts	
Population	152,200		1,578,500	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Number	75,600	76,700	768,680	809,720
Percentage	49.6%	50.4%	48.7%	51.3%

#### Population growth

In the early 1990s, all areas of Kent including Swale experienced net outward migration (i.e. more people were leaving the county than entering it), and so all population growth was attributed to positive natural change (i.e. more births than deaths). From mid-1993 onwards, Swale and the other Kent districts began to experience net inward migration (more people entering the county than leaving), and the rate of this net migration has been the predominant factor in Swale's population growth ever since.

Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Swale increased by 11.7%, from around 135,800 in 2011 to around 152,200 in 2021.

<sup>2</sup>2021 mid-year population estimates – ONS, January 2023

<sup>3</sup>Kent County Council interactive populations estimates toolkit

The population here increased by a greater percentage than the overall population of the South East (7.5%), and by a greater percentage than the overall population of England (up 6.6% since the 2011 Census).

In 2021, Swale was home to around 2.9 people per football pitch-sized piece of land, compared with 2.6 in 2011. This area was among the lowest 40% for population density across English local authority areas at the last census.

Swale population growth since 1994	
1994	116,800
2004	125,900
2014	140,800
2021	152,200

Swale population forecasts 2021 – 2041 (KCC Housing led forecasts (2021) Kent Analytics)	
2021	152,200
2024	160,400
2034	173,300
2039	179,300

### Mean age

There are more females than males in Swale, but this pattern is seen across Kent. Swale has the least percentage difference between females and males in Kent. Similarly, the male/female ratio changes with age. On the whole, there are more males compared with females in the younger age groups, but as age increases there become more females to males.

Between the last two censuses, the average (median) age of Swale increased by one year, from 40 to 41 years of age.

This area had a similar average (median) age to the South East as a whole in 2021 (41 years) but a slightly higher average (median) age than England (40 years).

The median age is the age of the person in the middle of the group, meaning that one half of the group is younger than that person and the other half is older.

The number of people aged 50 to 64 years rose by just over 4,000 (an increase of 15.4%), while the number of residents between 16 and 19 years fell by just under 550 (7.7% decrease).

The share of residents aged between 50 and 64 years increased by 0.7 percentage points between 2011 and 2021

	Swale			Kent districts		
	Total persons	Males	Females	Total persons	Males	Females
Mean age	40.8	40.0	41.6	41.6	40.6	42.5

**Swale 2021 Mid-year Population Estimates by five-year Group and Sex**

	Total persons		Males		Females	
	No.	% of total population	No.	%	No.	%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>152,200</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,600</b>	<b>49.6%</b>	<b>76,700</b>	<b>50.4%</b>
<b>0-4</b>	8,800	5.8%	4,500	50.8%	4,400	49.2%
<b>5-9</b>	9,500	6.2%	4,900	51.7%	4,600	48.3%
<b>10-14</b>	9,600	6.3%	4,900	51.3%	4,700	48.7%
<b>15-19</b>	8,300	5.5%	4,300	51.9%	4,000	48.1%
<b>20-24</b>	7,900	5.2%	4,000	51.2%	3,900	48.8%
<b>25-29</b>	9,400	6.2%	4,800	50.7%	4,600	49.3%
<b>30-34</b>	10,500	6.9%	5,200	49.5%	5,300	50.5%
<b>35-39</b>	10,100	6.6%	5,000	49.7%	5,100	50.3%
<b>40-44</b>	9,300	6.1%	4,700	50.0%	4,700	50.0%
<b>45-49</b>	9,400	6.1%	4,600	49.5%	4,700	50.2%
<b>50-54</b>	10,500	6.9%	5,200	49.3%	5,300	50.7%
<b>55-59</b>	10,800	7.1%	5,400	49.8%	5,400	50.2%
<b>60-64</b>	9,000	5.9%	4,500	49.9%	4,500	50.1%
<b>65-69</b>	7,600	5.0%	3,800	49.5%	3,900	50.5%
<b>70-74</b>	8,300	5.5%	4,000	47.6%	4,400	52.4%
<b>75-79</b>	6,000	3.9%	2,800	47.6%	3,100	52.4%
<b>80-84</b>	3,900	2.5%	1,700	44.8%	2,100	55.2%
<b>85-89</b>	2,100	1.4%	900	41.1%	1,300	58.9%
<b>90+</b>	1,200	0.8%	400	30.6%	800	69.4%



**Kent districts 2021 Mid-year Population Estimates by five-year Group and Sex**

	Total persons		Males		Females	
	No.	% of total population	No.	%	No.	%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>1,578,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>769,500</b>	<b>48.7%</b>	<b>809,000</b>	<b>51.3%</b>
<b>0-4</b>	87,100	5.5%	44,800	51.5%	42,200	48.5%
<b>5-9</b>	94,900	6.0%	48,800	51.4%	46,100	48.6%
<b>10-14</b>	98,500	6.2%	50,500	51.2%	48,000	48.8%
<b>15-19</b>	89,100	5.6%	46,100	51.8%	43,000	48.2%
<b>20-24</b>	83,100	5.3%	41,800	50.4%	41,200	49.6%
<b>25-29</b>	90,100	5.7%	43,800	48.6%	46,300	51.4%
<b>30-34</b>	100,700	6.4%	47,900	47.6%	52,700	52.4%
<b>35-39</b>	99,700	6.3%	47,700	47.8%	52,000	52.2%
<b>40-44</b>	98,200	6.2%	47,800	48.6%	50,500	51.4%
<b>45-49</b>	100,300	6.4%	48,800	48.7%	50,500	51.3%
<b>50-54</b>	111,300	7.1%	54,400	48.8%	57,000	51.2%
<b>55-59</b>	110,300	7.0%	54,400	49.3%	55,900	50.7%
<b>60-64</b>	93,900	5.9%	46,000	49.0%	47,900	51.0%
<b>65-69</b>	81,500	5.2%	39,200	48.2%	42,300	51.8%
<b>70-74</b>	87,300	5.5%	41,300	47.4%	45,900	52.6%
<b>75-79</b>	65,900	4.2%	30,600	46.5%	35,300	53.5%
<b>80-84</b>	43,800	2.8%	19,400	44.3%	24,400	55.7%
<b>85-89</b>	27,000	1.7%	11,000	40.6%	16,000	59.4%
<b>90+</b>	15,800	1.0%	5,000	31.8%	10,800	68.2%

## Ethnicity

### Key observations

- The white ethnic group is the largest group within Swale (89%)
- Of these, 93.8% are White English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish; 0.6% are Irish, 0.6% are Gypsy or Irish Traveller; and 4% are from other white ethnic groups
- Residents from ethnic minority groups account for 11% of Swale residents, and the Borough has the second lowest number and proportion of residents from an ethnic minority group in Kent
- Ethnic minority groups in Swale consist of mixed/ multiple ethnic groups (1.8%), Asian/ British Asian (1.5%), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (2.3%); and other ethnic groups (0.5%)

The source for these observations is Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, Census 2021: Cultural Diversity in Kent – January 2023, and the Office for National Statistics 2021 Mid-Year Populations Estimates.

In 2021, 2.3% of Swale residents identified their ethnic group within the “Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African” category, up from 1.0% in 2011. The 1.3 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area.

Across the South East, the percentage of people from the “Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African” ethnic group increased from 1.6% to 2.4%, while across England the percentage increased from 3.5% to 4.2%.

In 2021, 89% of people in Swale identified their ethnic group within the “White” category (compared with 96.6% in 2011), while 1.8% identified their ethnic group within the “Mixed or Multiple” category (compared with 1.2% the previous decade).

The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the “Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh” category increased from 1.1% in 2011 to 1.5% in 2021.

There are many factors that may be contributing to the changing ethnic composition of England and Wales, such as differing patterns of ageing, fertility, mortality, and migration. Changes may also be caused by differences in the way individuals chose to self-identify between censuses.

Swale ethnic minority groups population 1991 to 2021 <sup>4</sup>	
1991	1,166
2001	2,285
2011	4,680
2021	17,289

With the exception of disabled people (see Objective 2), Swale has a similar equality and diversity profile to other Kent districts in respect of the other protected characteristics of age and sex, religion or belief, and marital status.

## Percentage of population by detailed ethnic category in Kent districts, the South East and England<sup>4</sup>

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England
<b>White</b>				
English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	89.0%	83.2%	78.8%	74.4%
Irish	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Other white	4.0%	5.0%	6.3%	6.2%
<b>Mixed/multiple ethnic groups</b>				
White and black Caribbean	0.5%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
White and black African	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
White and Asian	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%
Other mixed	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>				
Indian	0.5%	1.7%	2.6%	3.1%
Pakistani	0.1%	0.3%	1.6%	2.7%
Bangladeshi	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%
Chinese	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Other Asian	0.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British</b>				
African	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%	2.5%
Caribbean	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	1.0%
Other black	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
<b>Other ethnic group</b>				
Arab	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.6%
Any other ethnic group	0.4%	1.0%	1.1%	1.6%

<sup>4</sup>Kent County Council Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin – 2021 Census: Cultural diversity in Kent

### National identity in Swale

In 2021, 4.7% of Swale residents did not identify with any national identity associated with the UK. This figure increased from 3.4% in 2011.

In 2021, 1.0% of residents identified with a UK and non-UK national identity, compared with 0.5% in 2011. The percentage of residents in Swale that identified as “British only” increased from 13.5% to 55.8%.

The increase in the percentage of people who did not identify with any national identity associated with the UK in Swale (1.4 percentage points) was similar to the increase across the South East (1.6 percentage points, from 7.1% to 8.7%). Across England, the percentage increased by 1.7 percentage points, from 8.2% to 10.0%.

In Census 2021, “British” was moved to the top response option and this may have influenced how people described their national identity.

## DISABILITY

### Key observations

- 19.5% of residents in Swale have a limiting long term illness - this is above the Kent average (17.9%), the South East (16.1%), and England and Wales (17.5%) averages
- 6.4% of people claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) a benefit for people with a health condition or disability in Swale - this is above the Kent (5.1%), South East (3.9%), and England and Wales (5.5%) averages

The sources for these observations are Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, Disability in Kent – 2021, and the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Benefit Claimant data – April 2022.

There is no single measure of the number of people with a disability. The definitions of disability vary and often rely on an individual's perception of their own health. The data provided here relates to the number of people with a disability or a disabling condition.

In 2021, 8.5% of Swale residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 9.4% in 2011. These are age-standardised proportions.

Age-standardised proportions are used throughout this section. They enable comparisons between populations over time and across geographies, as they account for differences in the population size and age structure.

In 2021, just over one in nine people (11.3%) were identified as being disabled and limited a little, compared with 10.7% in 2011. The proportion of Swale residents who were not disabled increased from 79.9% to 80.1%.

The decrease in the proportion of residents who were identified as being disabled and limited a lot in Swale (0.9 percentage points) was similar to the decrease across the South East (1.0 percentage points, from 7.2% to 6.2%). Across England, the proportion fell by 1.6 percentage points, from 9.1% to 7.5%.

Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived their health status and activity limitations, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

Caution should be taken when making comparisons between 2011 and 2021 because of changes in question wording and response options.

At the time of the 2021 Census, Swale was the third highest district in Kent for having the most people with a long term health problem or disability. Swale is a percentage point about the average for all Kent districts in this respect, and higher than the average for the South East and England and Wales.

The percentage of people in Swale claiming a disability benefit (Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance) as at November 2022 equates to 16,737 claimants.

**People with a disability<sup>5</sup>**

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England and Wales
<b>Total</b>	151,677	1,576,069	9,278,065	56,490,048
<b>% of all people classified as disabled and limited a lot</b>	8.5%	7%	6%	7%
<b>% of all people classified as disabled and limited a little</b>	11.3%	10%	10%	10%
<b>% of all people classified without a disability</b>	80.1%	82%	84%	83%

**People aged 50+ with a long term health problem or disability – by ward<sup>6</sup>**

Ward	% of ward population with long term health problems or disability
Abbey	20.3%
Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow	14.3%
Borden and Grove Park	19.4%
Boughton and Courtenay	18.0%
Chalkwell	15.7%
East Downs	18.8%
Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch	17.4%
Homewood	18.5%
Kemsley	16.3%
Milton Regis	21.3%
Minster Cliffs	21.7%
Murston	17.0%
Priory	21.7%
Queenborough and Halfway	19.6%
Roman	20.5%
St Ann's	18.6%
Sheerness	24.9%
Sheppey Central	19.9%
Sheppey East	28.0%
Teynham and Lynsted	18.1%
The Meads	12.5%
Watling	19.9%
West Downs	14.6%
Woodstock	16.9%

<sup>5</sup>2021 Census, Office for National Statistics<sup>6</sup>KCC Ward Profiles - Swale

**Total disability benefits claimants, November 2022<sup>7</sup>**

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England and Wales
% of total population	11.0%	9.3%	7.6%	9.2%

<sup>7</sup>NOMIS – Department for Work and Pensions

**Religion or belief****Key observations**

- In Swale, the highest proportion of people (47.2%) state their religion as Christianity
- A slightly higher proportion of people in Swale say they are Christian than the average for Kent
- After no religion (45.3%), a greater proportion of people in Swale state they are Muslims (1.0%) than any other religion, although this figure is lower than the average for Kent (1.6%), the South East (3.3%), and England and Wales (6.5%)
- The number of people in Swale say they have no religion has increased from 28.3% in 2011 to 45.3% in 2021

The source for these observations is Kent County Council's Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin, Census 2021: Cultural Diversity in Kent.

In 2021, Christianity remains the largest religion in Swale, and this is a similar picture to the average for Kent, the South East, and England and Wales. There are significantly fewer people in Swale who stated their religion as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or other non-Christian religion than in the South East region or England and Wales.

**Religion in Swale, Kent districts, South East and England – Census 2021**

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England and Wales
<b>Christian</b>	47.2%	48.5%	46.6%	46.5%
<b>Buddhist</b>	0.2%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
<b>Hindu</b>	0.4%	1.2%	1.7%	1.8%
<b>Jewish</b>	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
<b>Muslim</b>	1.0%	1.6%	3.3%	6.8%
<b>Sikh</b>	0.1%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
<b>Other religion</b>	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
<b>No religion</b>	45.6%	41.0%	40.3%	36.7%
<b>Religion not stated</b>	5.0%	5.6%	5.8%	5.8%

<sup>7</sup>NOMIS datasets, Office for National Statistics

## Marriage and civil partnerships

### Key observations

- 38.6% of residents in Swale are single
- 44.3% of residents are married
- 6.6% of Swale residents are divorced
- 5.8% are widowed
- 2.0% are separated
- 0.3% are in a registered same sex partnership.

The source for these observations are the 2021 Census: Key Statistics for local authorities, published by the Office for National Statistics.

There is no data available on the number of people in Swale whose sexual orientation is to their own sex, to the opposite sex, or to both sexes. Similarly there is no data available on the number of people in Swale who are going through or have gone through gender reassignment.

Swale has a similar profile to Kent, the South East and nationally in terms of marital and civil partnership status.

### Marital and civil partnership status – Census 2021

	Swale	Kent districts	South East	England
<b>Single</b>	38.6%	39.0%	38.9%	42.2%
<b>Married</b>	44.3%	46.2%	47.0%	43.7%
<b>In a registered same sex partnership</b>	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
<b>Separated</b>	2.0%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%
<b>Divorced</b>	6.6%	6.8%	6.7%	6.6%
<b>Widowed</b>	5.8%	5.8%	5.6%	5.6%

## Appendix II

### Swale Borough Council workforce – Equality and diversity key characteristics

- 74% of the Swale Borough Council workforce are female. The proportion of economically active people in the Swale workforce as a whole is around 55.7%.
- 7.7% of our workforce describe themselves as having a disability, compared with 8.5% of the economically active Swale population who describe themselves as having a disability.
- 3.5% of our workforce are from black and minority ethnic groups compared with 6.1% of the economically active Swale population from black and minority ethnic groups.
- Just over 30% of staff are aged 50 to 59, with 0.7% aged 16 to 19, 9.8% aged 20 to 29, 17.5% aged 30 to 39, 24.5% aged 40 to 49 and 17.1% of staff are over 60.
- 21.3% of staff did not wish to give details of their sexual orientation, but 75.5% stated that they were heterosexual, 1.7% as gay or lesbian, and 1.0% as bisexual.
- 19.6% of staff did not wish to give details of their religion or belief. 44.1% of staff gave their religion as Christian, 33.2% stated they had no religion or belief, 0.7% stated they were Muslim, 0.3% stated they were Sikh, and 1.4% stated their religion or belief was not any of these, nor Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish.





## Contacting Swale Borough Council

The Customer Service Centre deals with all enquiries across the Council; it should be your first stop when contacting us.

Copies of this booklet are available on the council website [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk).

If you would like further hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request. Please contact the council at:

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

**Customer Service Centre** 📞 **01795 417850**

<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>		<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 February 2024	
<b>Report Title</b>	Pay Policy Statement	
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Larissa Reed, Chief Executive	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Service	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Service	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>That the proposed Pay Policy Statement be agreed for publication on the council's web site.</p> <p>That the information within the Pay Policy Statement is updated with actual year-end figures before final publication.</p>	

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report is required to enable the council to satisfy the requirements of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, which required that authorities must prepare a pay policy statement for the financial year 2012/13 and for each subsequent financial year; this statement must be agreed by full Council. The proposed statement is an update on the Council's current statement.
  
- 1.2. Terms and conditions of employment for employees is a non-executive function and the Policy and Resources Committee has delegated responsibility for this within the Council's constitution. Although there is no statutory template for the Pay Policy, it is recommended that it sets out as many of the relevant policies as possible so that they are transparent and in one place. The attached document refers to the policies currently in place.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 required English and Welsh local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13, and for each financial year after that. The Bill as initially drafted referred solely to chief officers (a term which includes both statutory and non-statutory chief officers, and their deputies); but amendments reflecting concerns over low pay and also, drawing on Will Hutton's 2011 Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector, introduced requirements to compare the policies on remunerating chief officers and other employees, and to set out policy on the lowest paid.
  
- 2.2 The matters that must be included in the statutory Pay Policy Statement are as follows:

- a local authority’s policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
- a local authority’s policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of “lowest-paid employees” and its reasons for adopting that definition);
- a local authority’s policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers and in particular the pay multiple between the two;
- a local authority’s policy on other specific aspects of chief officers’ remuneration, including: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency;
- an organisation chart or description of the number and grades of staff in the top three layers of the organisation, with information on the grades of all those with salaries in excess of £50,000; and
- details of facility time and the number of trade union representatives for each of the recognised trade unions.

2.3 With regard to the process for approval, the Pay Policy Statement:

- must be approved formally by the Council meeting;
- must be approved by the end of March each year;
- can be amended in-year;
- must be published on the authority’s website; and
- must be complied with when the authority sets the terms and conditions for a chief officer.

2.4 The Act specifically mentions that the Pay Policy Statement may set out the authority’s policies relating to other terms and conditions for chief officers, and in the interest of open government there are recommendations that the Statement sets out as much information relating to employee terms and conditions as is practical.

### **3 Proposal**

3.1 The proposed Pay Policy Statement (Appendix I) sets out the Council’s overarching Reward Strategy, including many of the associated terms and conditions, and is designed to satisfy the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

3.2 Once the agreed Pay Policy Statement is accepted by full Council it will be published on the Council’s website, along with the details that are already required under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency 2011 and the Equality Act 2010.

- 3.3 For ease of reference, the key changes in the document compared with that published in 2023 are set out below:
- (i) the figures for payments made in 2023/24 set out in the categories in section 3.6 of the Pay Policy Statement have been updated;
  - (ii) section 4 outlines the changes to the chief executive earnings
  - (iii) section 5 of the Pay Policy statement reflects the requirements of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 that came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. The figures to reflect the time spent on trade union duties have been updated in the tables;
  - (iv) details of remuneration for senior staff have been updated in appendix I (G)

## 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The Council could choose to publicise a reduced version of the Pay Policy Statement that satisfies the minimum requirements of the Act, but this is not recommended as it does not satisfy the need for transparency, and means that the data is not seen in the context of the good work already undertaken by the Council.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 As this is a statement of what is already in place and does not make any changes to the current position there has been no consultation to date; the report to the Policy and Resources Committee forms the basis of consultation to ensure that this format is acceptable before going to full council.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The policies summarised in the Pay Policy Statement assist the Council in achieving its priority of “renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future”.
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no additional resource implications as a result of the Pay Policy Statement as it is setting out what is already in place. The aim of Section 38 of the Localism Act is to ensure there is openness and transparency with regard to the allocation of public money to employee remuneration.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Localism Act 2011
Crime and Disorder	None specific to this report.
Environment and Climate/Ecological	None specific to this report.

Emergency	
Health and Wellbeing	None specific to this report.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None specific to this report.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>There are no risks associated with the publication of the Pay Policy Statement as all this information would be available if requested through the Freedom of Information Act, although the publication of the information may help to reduce some of the FOI requests received.</p> <p>There is a risk to the Council if it does not produce a Pay Policy Statement as this is a statutory requirement.</p>
Equality and Diversity	The Equality Act 2010 places requirements upon all public sector bodies to ensure that its policies and procedures are promoting equality. The measures summarised within the Pay Policy Statement support this requirement.
Privacy and Data Protection	There is no impact to Privacy and Data Protection.

## 7 Appendices

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

- **Appendix I: Pay Policy Statement - March 2024**

## 8 Background documents

None

# Swale Borough Council

## Pay Policy Statement – March 2024

### 1. Introduction

The Workforce Strategy sets out four key themes:

- Performance and Development;
- Reward and Recognition;
- Engagement and Wellbeing; and
- Workforce for the future

These strategic themes recognise the importance of pay and rewards in our role as an employer. Our work on pay and rewards began in 2010 with an equal pay audit resulting in significant changes to the Council's terms and conditions. The work continued through the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, and the development of a Total Rewards approach to remuneration for council staff.

Swale Borough Council has its own employment terms and conditions and undertakes local pay bargaining with UNISON.

### 2. Terms and Conditions – Decision Making

Terms and conditions for employees are a non-executive function, and the responsibility for decisions on these matters is delegated to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The responsibility for agreeing the appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Officers lies with a Member panel. Senior appointments are also the responsibility of a Member panel.

Where the decision of the Policy and Resources Committee has a budgetary implication beyond the agreed in-year budget, this will also require agreement from Full Council.

### 3. Reward Strategy

The Reward Strategy was developed in full consultation with trade unions, staff, and Members and was agreed by the General Purposes Committee in 2010. This was a very thorough piece of work that ensured the Council managed the terms of employees at all levels in the same way, and applied the principles of equal pay and performance management to the scheme that was developed.

The principles for the reward strategy are to:

- (i) support a **performance** orientated organisation;
- (ii) provide an **attractive** employment package at all levels;

- (iii) be relevant to a **modern** local government authority;
- (iv) have a pay structure that is **transparent** and straightforward;
- (v) reward people **fairly** and consistently;
- (vi) move toward a **Total Reward** approach; and
- (vii) be **affordable** within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The reward strategy takes a 'Total Reward' approach to the benefits package received by employees at the Council to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from all aspects of what is on offer to employees. The key elements of this package are set out below.

### 3.1 Pay Scale and Pay Progression

Our policy for pay grades within the organisation is to apply an objective assessment of the relative 'size and value' of all our roles using a formal job evaluation process. Posts are graded through the INBUCON Job Evaluation Scheme, and this process identifies the value or size of the role when all the duties are being performed and the employee is fully effective in the role. Job evaluators are drawn from different parts of the organisation and trained to use the INBUCON scheme; every panel has one trade union representative as part of the panel.

The pay scale has up to five increments per grade which recognise that with development in a role over time an employee is of more value to the organisation and therefore warrants a higher salary. There are fewer incremental points in the lower grades and more in the more complex roles. New appointments to post will normally be at the first point of the grade, unless there is evidence of a skill shortage in line with the criteria set out in the Market Supplement Policy. The pay scale is set out at Appendix I (A).

In July 2019, the council agreed to move to the real Living Wage which is independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. This gave a significant increase to our low paid staff. The Lowest Paid employees are defined as those whose posts have INBUCON points of 121 to 153, which place them into grade 2 of the pay scale. The real Living Wage has been applied every year since 2019 to ensure our lowest paid staff are rewarded appropriately to meet their living cost needs.

The Council has a process of local pay consultation with UNISON to determine whether there should be an annual pay award, taking into consideration both inflation and affordability.

Incremental progression is assessed against the agreed Competency Profile for the role and evidence of the necessary Performance Standards and agreed objectives. Assessment will be on an annual basis, but will be linked to the clear and continuous performance at the level required at each incremental step. The rules for pay progression are set out in Appendix I (B).

Incremental progression is assessed by an employee's line manager in consultation with the Head of Service and Director who has to approve the recommendations within their Directorate; this is monitored collectively by Senior Management Team.



The process and timetable for appraisals and incremental progression for the Chief Executive and Directors is set out at Appendix I (C).

### 3.2 Market Supplements

The pay principles recognise that the Council needs to be an attractive employer whilst also balancing this with the needs to manage the budget and protect the public purse. Within local government there are several skill areas that have been extremely difficult over the years in terms of both recruitment and retention - this is particularly in fields where there are private sector employers competing for the same skills, or in unattractive areas of work.

In order to be able to respond to recruitment difficulties the Council has a Market Supplement Policy which sets clear criteria for the agreement and retention of a market supplement. The Policy is at Appendix I (D). Currently, there are nineteen employees in receipt of Market Supplements that are either working in Planning or Legal teams.

### 3.3 Pension

The Council offers access to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is a significant benefit to employees and is one of the aspects of the Council's Total Rewards package.

The pension scheme is standard between all local government employers, and in broad terms offers a pension benefit equivalent to 1/49<sup>th</sup> of pensionable salary per year of service, where pensionable salary is calculated on a career average with benefits paid at state retirement age.

Although most of the rules associated with the scheme are set centrally, there are a few areas where local employers must define their own policy; the discretionary policy is attached at Appendix I (E). In broad terms it is not the policy of the Council to increase pension benefits to employees through any form of enhancement.

The LGPS is a defined benefits scheme which requires contribution rates from employees of between 5.5% and 12.5% depending on earnings, in accordance with the following table; in April 2014 there was an option to lower level contributions with the introduction of the 50/50 scheme.

Pensionable pay	Main Section	50/50 Section
Up to £16,500	5.50%	2.75%
£16,501 - £25,900	5.80%	2.90%
£25,901 - £42,100	6.50%	3.25%
£42,101 - £53,300	6.80%	3.40%
£53,301 - £74,700	8.50%	4.25%
£74,701 - £105,900	9.90%	4.95%
£105,901 - £124,800	10.50%	5.25%
£124,801 - £187,200	11.40%	5.70%
More than £187,201	12.50%	6.25%

The employer contribution rate, calculated as the future service rate excluding past service deficit for 2023/24 changed to 20.5%, although this does vary from year to year.

Kent County Council is the administering authority for the Swale Borough Council scheme.

### 3.4 Pay Protection and Redundancy Payments

The Council has a Redundancy Policy which sets out the approach that must be followed if posts are going to be affected because of organisational change. The procedure sets out the approval process and the consultation timetable; it also sets out the terms for redundancy and pay protection. The Pay Protection Policy is set out at Appendix I (F).

Any payments paid to an employee in relation to redundancy shall be in accordance with the statutory redundancy payments scheme and any other regulations applicable, except that the Council will calculate a week's pay on actual earnings where this is in excess of the statutory maximum figure (***Local Govt. (Early Termination of Employment)(Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000***).

The policy of the organisation regarding re-employment following redundancy follow the NJC terms and conditions, i.e. if a redundant employee commences local government employment within one month of the redundancy then the redundancy payment must be returned. Any other re-employment will only be considered where all other Council rules on recruitment or procurement have been followed.

### 3.5 Special Severance Payments

In exceptional circumstances the Council may make a payment to an individual under a formal agreement.

Where this is the case the following authorisation process will apply to all staff:

- payments of £100,000 and above must be approved by a vote of full council, as set out in the Localism Act 2011
- payments of £20,000 and above, but below £100,000, must be personally approved and signed off by the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader and that of any others who have signed off the payment
- payments below £20,000 must be approved according to the local authority's scheme of delegation.

Where the proposed payment is to the Head of Paid Service, to avoid a conflict of interest it is expected that the payment should be approved by a panel including at least two independent persons.

### 3.6 Other payments

**Honoraria:** the Council has a policy to recognise situations where an employee takes on more responsibility on a temporary basis; normally for an agreed period of up to 6 months. This is often as a cost saving measure when there is a vacancy, maternity leave etc. In 2023/24 there were sixteen people in receipt of honoraria.

**Flexibility Allowances:** certain members of staff (below management grades) are required to work outside of normal council working patterns. To compensate them for this flexibility they are paid a 10% supplement to their salary. As at March 2024 there were five people in receipt of this payment. This allowance has been reviewed and agreement reached with trade unions that the allowance would not be paid in the future to any employees that were aware of the requirement for working 'unsocial' hours at the time they applied for the position; this is the main cause of the reduction of the number of people still in receipt of the allowance.

**Stand-by payments:** a review of standby duties and payments was carried out in August 2019. This resulted in amending the Standby Allowance Policy to ensure that those employees who are required to take part in standby rotas and respond to call out duties are treated consistently across the Council and remunerated fairly for the duties. The standby payments are paid to a small number of employees (ten in 2023/24) who are on an out-of-hours on-call rota for specialist duties. The outcome of the review has also increased the level of remuneration to £125 each week for being on-call.

**Bonuses:** the Council does not have a bonus system for any grade of staff.

**Car Payments:** the Council removed lease cars and lease car allowances in 2010. However, a car allowance of up to £1,239 was given to those employees that are required to have a vehicle for their role and that drive a minimum of 2,000 miles annually. This changed in June 2016 with the allowance being reduced to £1000 per annum and pro-rata for part time staff as well as an increase to the mileage threshold to 2,500. At the end of March 2024 this allowance was allocated to forty eight members of staff. The majority of staff in receipt of this payment are within the statutory services which require external visits e.g. planning, housing. Mileage rates for those receiving this allowance is 37.8 pence per mile.

### 3.7 Special fees and arrangements

Special fees may be paid for certain additional duties; in general these are connected to election duties, and the funding for the allowance will not come from the Council's own budget. An additional fee is normally paid for the role of Returning Officer for the District elections however, this was previously incorporated into the Chief Executive's base salary where s/he is acting on behalf of the Council (eg borough and parish elections). This has now changed and the additional fees will be paid for undertaking the role of Returning Officer, Counting Officer or other similar role, on behalf of another authority or organisation.

### 3.8 Other employee benefits

The Council provides access to an **Employee Assistance Programme** which provides staff with both telephone and face-to-face counselling on a range of issues. The Council has access to an Occupational Health Service that helps to ensure that employees are properly supported to avoid taking sick leave and to return to work as soon as possible.

The Council supports employees in their role with a **development plan and training opportunities** to ensure they are fully qualified and trained to give excellent service.

On an annual basis the Council has an **Awards Ceremony** that recognises the best achievements of staff during the preceding year. In previous years the ceremony took place in the evening in the form of a dinner for nominees and partners and the cost of the occasion is off-set through sponsorship from businesses and partners. The awards ceremony now takes place during the day and all staff are invited to attend the event to recognise staff achievements during the year.

The Council offers a **salary sacrifice scheme** to employees for the purchase of bicycles. In December 2018, the Council introduced another salary sacrifice scheme for the purchase of cars. There is no cost to the Council of these schemes.

In 2014 the Council updated its **long service awards** scheme to include a wider range of employees. Small benefits (eg £25 shopping voucher) are given to those reaching ten years' service, and at five yearly intervals up to forty years' service. This form of recognition is in line with our Mid Kent Services (MKS) partners.

The Council introduced the opportunity for employees to **buy additional annual leave**, and twelve employees have used this benefit during 2023/24. This is at no cost to the Council.

## 4. Monitoring

Salary budgets are monitored through the normal budget management processes by line managers. Members and senior officers regularly examine the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and in particular consider ways to reduce costs to the Council.

As required by the Equality Act 2010 the Council undertakes an equal pay audit of salaries, which is published on the Council's web site. This helps to identify whether

there are significant differences in pay for employees that have one or more of the protected characteristics.

From April 2017 under the Equality Act 2010 employers with more than 250 employees are required to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations on an annual basis. The data must be a snapshot of salary data on 31 March and must be published on our own website and a government website.

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency 2011 required that salary data was published on the highest earning staff within the Council; this was actioned by March 2011 as required by the Code. There has been further qualification of the salary threshold for publication which has been set at £50,000 and above. This information, plus the inclusion of all additional fees, is at Appendix 1 (G).

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency September 2011 also requires that there is a process established to monitor the rate of growth of senior earnings compared to all other employees in the organisation. The formula required is to calculate the pay multiple of the Chief Executive’s salary compared to the median earnings of all other employees; where there is any significant change year-on-year this should be explained. It is the Council’s policy to use this pay multiple to monitor the relationship between remuneration of chief officers and other employees.

The recommendation in the ‘Hutton Review of Fair Pay’ 2011 has been followed:

“the pay multiple should be calculated on the basis of all taxable earnings for the given year, including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of any benefits in kind”

	<b>Chief Executive earnings</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Pay Multiple</b>
<b>2021/22*</b>	£110,932	£24,533	4.81
<b>2022/23*</b>	£116,385	£24,804	4.69
<b>2023/24*</b>	£117,377	£26,087	4.50
<b>% change from previous year*</b>	0.85%	5.17%	-4.05%

\*The Local Government Association guidance is that organisations should use taxable pay to calculate the pay multiple. In previous years the multiple has been calculated using the National Insurance pay level which includes the pension contribution paid by the individual and is a higher figure.

The main difference in the Chief Executives pay relates to receiving an increment that increased the earnings in 2023/24. In addition, the Chief Executive also acts as Returning Officer for all council elections for which an additional allowance is payable in relation to the overall supervision and ultimate responsibility for the conduct of council elections.

It is important to emphasise that the pay policy of the Council is to pay at the market median, and this is only reached at the top of the incremental pay points for each grade. This ensures that people are paid at a lower level than the Council policy until

they have fully matured into the role. In addition, although these are contractual payments, they are withheld if performance is not satisfactory at the expected level.

**5. Trade Union Facility time**

The Council recognises UNISON, and there is a history of co-operative employee relations. As a result of this cooperative approach, a range of fair employment policies are now in place. As a result, there is generally a low level of trade union activity.

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 which requires public sector employers to publish specified information relating to facility time provided by trade union officials. Under the regulations, the relevant information will need to be published on an annual basis for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The Council allows reasonable time for trade union duties (eg attending management meetings, pay negotiation, etc) but no time is given for trade union activities (canvassing for additional membership etc.)

The number of trade union representatives is as follows:

	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>
UNISON	4	4

Percentage of time spent by union officials on facility time is:

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	4
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Note: only 1% of facility time is spent by union officials.

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time:

Total cost of facility time	£1,323
Total pay bill	£12,401,865
Percentage of pay bill	0.01%

There has been no time spent on paid trade union activities.

**6. Contact for further information**

If you require any further information regarding the salary policy of the council you should contact Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Services, on 01622 602165, or by email on [baljinder.sandher@midkent.gov.uk](mailto:baljinder.sandher@midkent.gov.uk)

## Pay Scale 2023/24

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
1	<b>GRADE 1 IS NO LONGER IN USE</b>				
2	£21,041				
3	£21,335	£21,753	£22,625		
4	£23,451	£24,394	£25,371	£26,382	
5	£26,514	£27,521	£28,626	£29,766	
6	£29,974	£31,172	£32,416	£33,718	
7	£33,897	£35,113	£36,520	£37,986	
8	£38,089	£39,613	£41,194	£42,846	
9	£44,990	£46,787	£48,654	£50,603	
10	£53,355	£55,491	£57,707	£60,015	
11	£62,431	£64,927	£67,526	£70,227	£73,031
12	£74,468	£77,443	£80,543	£83,769	£87,120
13	£91,646	£95,316	£99,123	£103,090	£107,216
14	£118,599	£122,158	£125,822	£129,596	£133,484

## Pay Progression

### 1. Annual Inflation Award

Annual pay consultation will consider the cost of living and the position of SBC pay in comparison to the market, but affordability will be the foremost consideration. Consultation will commence annually in September with the aim to reach agreement within the budget cycle so that payment can be made in April salaries.

The Chief Executive and Head of HR are responsible for undertaking pay negotiation with trade unions, but the Cabinet takes ultimate responsibility for agreeing the budget.

### 2. Pay progression within grade

The pay scale has up to five increments which recognise that, with development in a role over time, an employee is of more value to the organisation and therefore warrants a higher salary. There are fewer incremental points in the lower grades and more in the more complex roles. New appointments to post will normally be at the first point of the grade unless there is evidence of a skill shortage in line with the criteria set out in the Market Supplement Policy.

Progress through the grade will be assessed annually. This will not be an automatic progression but will require an assessment against the agreed Competency Profile and Performance Standards for the position. Where the employee has progressed towards the full competency profile they will be awarded an increment. Assessment for incremental progression will take place by **October** each year. This will therefore not be linked to the annual appraisal but will take place mid-year. Increased increments will be paid with effect from 1 October.

Employees must have six months' service in their role by 1 October to be eligible for assessment. If they are more recently appointed they will receive a review after six months in the position; thereafter they will be reviewed annually for the October increment.

Individuals will need to consistently demonstrate the behaviours required by the Competency Profile and Performance Standards for their role in order to maintain their incremental position. One-off performance will not be sufficient to merit or maintain an increment.

Where individuals do not sustain the level of performance or where they have been assimilated to the top of the grade but are assessed as not having the full range of competencies, they will be given time to improve, but their pay will be frozen until they drop to the pay level that matches their performance. This includes any rise in annual pay as a result of pay inflation. This is outside the normal Pay Protection Policy as it does not represent an organisational change. Where the individual is assessed as not meeting the requirements of the grade their performance will be treated as a capability issue.



### **3. Career Grades and Incremental Progression**

A Career Grade offers the opportunity of a long path of progression to a particular professional position. As such the nature of the role and the requisite competencies are likely to vary considerably between the entry point and final destination. This means that through Job Evaluation the Career Grade is likely to span several grades and have many steps. To enable this clear stepped progression there may be some need to have interim points between the normal incremental points, e.g. in recognition of the achievement of some particular milestone. These half incremental steps will be allowed providing that there is prior agreement with the Head of HR, that they are applied equally to all those who meet the criteria and are set out as part of the agreed career grade structure.

Progress through the career grade will need to be evidence based, and the Head of HR will need to agree to the progression if it is between grades.

## Chief Executive and Director Appraisal Process

The appraisal panel for the Chief Executive will comprise of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Majority Opposition Party, supported by HR.

This panel will also take a ‘grandparent’ role to review and comment on the full annual appraisal and objectives for the Directors as set by the Chief Executive.

The timetable and process for the Chief Executive is set out below:

Month	Activity
January	The Chief Executive undertakes a self-review of achievements against the annual objectives, and suggests possible objectives for the coming year.
January	Feedback from the members of the working group on the Chief Executive’s performance is obtained.
Early February	The Chief Executive reviews Member feedback in relation to progress, development and future targets.
February	After the budget has been agreed by full Council, the working group and Chief Executive meet formally, supported by HR for the formal appraisal and objective setting.  The outcome of the agreed objectives will be reported at the next full Council by the Leader.  The meeting to be documented by HR as the Chief Executive’s formal appraisal.
September	The working group and Chief Executive, supported by HR meet to review mid-year progress, and agree whether performance is satisfactory.  If the Chief Executive is performing to a satisfactory level the annual increment will be awarded (up to the top of the grade). The summary of this meeting to be reported back to the General Purposes Committee.

The process for Directors is set out below:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
January	<p>The Director undertakes a self-review of achievements against the annual objectives and suggests possible objectives for the coming year.</p> <p>This self-review is submitted to the Chief Executive.</p>
Early February	<p>The Director and Chief Executive meet to discuss progress, development and future targets.</p>
Early February	<p>The Chief Executive prepares a draft appraisal document with assessment of performance in the previous year and against competencies.</p> <p>Draft forward objectives and a development plan are also documented and agreed between the Chief Executive and Director.</p>
February	<p>The appraisal panel, the Chief Executive and the Director meet formally for the 'grandparent review', and finalisation of the Director's objectives.</p> <p>The meeting to be documented by the Chief Executive as the Director's formal appraisal.</p>
September	<p>The Chief Executive and Director meet to review mid-year progress and agree whether performance is satisfactory.</p> <p>If the Director is performing to a satisfactory level the annual increment will be awarded (up to the top of the grade).</p>

## **Market Supplements for Pay**

### **1. Introduction**

The Council will utilise a Market Supplement to ensure that competitive salaries will attract and retain key workers in skill shortage areas without distorting the pay structures for all other employees. A Market Supplement for recruitment or retention purposes will only be used where there are clear business reasons that cannot be better addressed through the total benefits package, the work environment or department skill mix. It is recognised that pay is only one factor contributing to our attractiveness as an employer and other aspects of employment, particularly those relating to development, should be applied rather than using just a Market Supplement.

All jobs are graded using the Inbucon Job Evaluation system and the defined pay policy of the Council is to pay at Market Median where the market used is the Inbucon salary data. This is also checked against local Kent salary surveys to ensure that it is robust for the geographical region. This approach ensures that the employees of Swale Borough Council are paid at a fair level in comparison to other workers in similar employment groups.

However, there is recognition that in certain professions there are either national or regional skill shortages and Swale needs to be responsive to the competition for these skills. In the longer term our aim will be to train employees to move into these specialist areas and to ensure that the specialists' skills are utilised properly within the organisation. In the short term Market Supplements may be used.

### **2. Identification of the Skill Shortage**

#### **2.1 Recruitment Campaigns**

Where there is no anticipated shortage there will need to be a minimum of two appropriate external recruitment campaigns within a 12 month period to establish that it is not possible to fill a position before it is agreed there is a requirement for a market supplement.

#### **2.2 KPOG Salary Survey**

The salary survey is conducted on an annual basis and gives details of the comparative salaries for defined positions in the Kent Districts. This clearly identifies the median salaries and is particularly relevant for local government roles. This will enable the identification of positions which may be vulnerable and, where there is more than a 10% salary difference from the median, there should be consideration of the need for a market supplement. The existence of this difference alone is unlikely to be sufficient justification and further analysis will be required to identify whether this has had an adverse impact on the Council's ability to recruit and retain relevant staff.

## 2.3 National Information

Within local government there are certain identified skill shortage areas. These are identified through data collection from the Employers Organisation and the I&DeA. In 2015 these skills were listed as:

- (i) Children's social workers
- (ii) Planning officers \*
- (iii) Building control officers
- (iv) Environmental health officers \*
- (v) Educational psychologists
- (vi) School crossing patrol
- (vii) Adult social workers
- (viii) Trading standards officers
- (ix) Solicitors and lawyers \*
- (x) Mental Health Social Workers

\* category of worker employed by SBC

This national picture is the first indicator of a shortage. Where there is an identified shortage nationally the manager will still be required to demonstrate that this applies to the local area. This proof can be gained through the outcome of a relevant recruitment campaign during the previous 12 month period, or through information from agencies about the availability of particular skill sets.

## 3. Market Supplement for Recruitment Purposes

The level of supplement will be agreed between the Director and the Head of HR Shared Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. It will be paid as part of monthly salary and will be pensionable. The supplement will not be subject to the cost of living award and will not be taken into account for any salary-related enhancements, e.g. overtime, which will be paid at the normal salary rate. The Market Supplement will be given for a minimum two year period initially. This will be annually reviewed to confirm that the supplement is still necessary, and at the appropriate level. Where a reduction in level is the outcome of the review this will not take effect until the minimum two years has expired. Reductions will follow the process set out in Section 5.

The payment of a Market Supplement must be within the Director's agreed budget. Approval must be given by the relevant Director and the Head of HR Shared Services, who will ensure that all alternative options have been explored.

## 4. Market Supplement for Retention Purposes

Whilst the Market Supplement is principally to enable the Council to be able to compete in a highly competitive market to attract new employees, there may be exceptional cases where a supplement should be considered for existing employees. This may occur in situations where a new recruit is offered a supplement that would then cause equally mobile colleagues to leave and seek a similar salary elsewhere.

There may also be occasions where an employee with a specialist skill needs to be retained to ensure business continuity.

The level of supplement will be agreed between the Director and the Head of HR Shared Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. It will be paid as part of monthly salary and will be pensionable. The supplement will not be subject to the cost of living award and will not be taken into account for any salary-related enhancements, e.g. overtime, which will be paid at the normal salary rate.

The Market Supplement will be given for a minimum two year period initially. This will be annually reviewed to confirm that the supplement is still necessary, and at the appropriate level. Where a reduction in level is the outcome of the review this will not take effect until the minimum two years has expired. Reductions will follow the process set out in Section 5.

Payment of a Retention Supplement must only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and particular attention must be paid to the Equal Pay issues.

## **5. Removal of the Supplement**

The availability of skills varies over time. As professions are identified as skill shortage areas and salaries rise they can attract an increased number of trainees. Where this is the case the Council would not wish to incur unnecessary costs, i.e. paying more for a skill than the median rate, if this would be sufficient to attract high quality applicants. The economic situation may also change so that scarce skills become available from other sectors or organisations.

Senior Management Team will review the posts attracting a supplement annually; this will usually coincide with the annual KPOG salary survey at the beginning of each year, but the date may vary according to information availability. When it is clear that a particular profession or skill area no longer necessitates a market supplement this will be withdrawn over a phased period of two years – with the withdrawal of 25% of the supplement every six months until the employee returns to the normal rate for the job. The assessment of the on-going need will relate to the national skills assessment combined with local salary reviews and the response to recruitment campaigns. When a market supplement is to be withdrawn the employee will be notified and given a minimum of three months' notice that a phased reduction will commence.

## **Policy and Procedural Issues: Local Government Scheme Regulations - Employer Discretions**

This paper confirms the pension policy of Swale Borough Council as it relates to the exercise of discretions contained in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and amendments) Regulations 2014. Last updated June 2014.

The policy statement applies to all members of staff who are eligible to be members of the LGPS, as defined in the regulations i.e. employees with a contract of employment of over three month's duration and who are under 75 years of age and are contractually enrolled at the start of employment. Those with contracts of less than three months, including casuals, can join but need to elect to do so.

Employees who are members of the pension scheme are only entitled to receive pension benefits if they have two years or more service. Under LGPS 2014 Regulation 18, if an employee leaves within two years of the start of their employment their contributions can be repaid or transferred to another scheme, unless there is some fraudulent offence or misconduct in connection with the employment.

### **Principles**

The Authority will treat any individual retirement case and decisions on its merits.

Decisions relating to retirement will be made taking into account the business case and business implications, the financial implications, employment law consideration, the regulations and the legality of each case. It may also take into account long term savings, affordability, skills and skills retention and impact on service delivery.

The definition of business efficiency shall include, but not be limited to financial savings and/or quality improvements judged on a case-by-case basis.

Each decision will be made free from discrimination on the grounds of any protected characterising – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other personal criteria.

The Authority's decisions relating to retirement and the release of pension benefits will be in line with the current pension regulations. These regulations may be updated from time to time, and the Authority will default to the regulations if the policy is not explicit on any current or future regulation.

Decisions relating to the release of deferred benefits to former employees will refer to the relevant pension policies applicable at the time of their employment. In such cases, the decision as to the release of deferred benefits will be on a case-by-case basis and will take into account the criteria detailed in these principles. Guidance may be sought from the pension administrators as required.

Decisions taken under these discretions will be reported to the General Purposes Committee.

### **Regulation 9 (1) & (3) - Contributions**

Swale Borough Council will apply the nationally determined employee contribution rates and bands. These are subject to change and may be varied.

Swale Borough Council will pay the rate of contributions determined in the regulations for employees whose pay is reduced through ill health or during authorised unpaid leave, including child related leave.

The calculation of pensionable pay will include basic annual salary plus any other pensionable salary items including – Market Supplement/ Premium, Overtime, Bonus, Honorarium, Salary Supplements. The pensionable pay will be reviewed monthly and based on earnings for that month to identify the appropriate band and contribution percentage

Swale Borough Council will notify employees of their individual contribution rates in their payslips or by letter at least annually.

### **Regulation 16 (2)e and 16 (4)d – Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions (SCAPC)**

It is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to operate a SCAPC where a scheme member wishes to purchase extra annual pension (up to the limit defined in the regulations).

A scheme member who has a period of child related leave or authorised unpaid leave may elect, within 30 days of return to work, to pay a SCAPC to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during the period of absence. In these circumstances Swale Borough Council is required to contribute 2/3rds of the cost. If an election is made after the 30 day time limit the full costs will be met by the scheme member.

Employees who have the option to pay contributions in respect of a period of unpaid absence must elect to do so within 30 days of the date of the notice issued to them by the Human Resources Section stating the amount of contributions to be paid. This time limit may be extended by the Head of Human Resources if the employee can demonstrate exceptional circumstances so as to justify an extension of time.

### **TP Regulations 1(1)(c) of Schedule 2 – whether to allow the rule of 85 to be 'switched on' for members age 55-59.**

It is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to make use of the discretion to 'switch back on' the 85 year rule protections unless there are clear financial or operational advantages to the council. Each case will be considered on its merits by Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer, and the relevant Director.



### **Regulation 17 (1) – Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVC)**

Swale Borough Council operate a shared cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme for employees. This policy will be reviewed from time to time by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer.

### **Regulation 21 (5) – In determining Assumed Pensionable Pay whether a lump sum payment made in the previous 12 months is a ‘regular lump sum’.**

Swale Borough Council will maintain a list which details what Swale Borough Council considers being a regular lump sum payment made to our employees to be used in the calculation of the Assumed Pensionable Pay.

### **Regulation 22 (7)(b) & 22 (8)(b) - Aggregation of Benefits**

Employees who have previous LGPS pension benefits in England and Wales will automatically have these aggregated with their new LGPS employment, unless they elect within 12 months of commencing membership of the LGPS in the new employment to retain separate benefits. Swale Borough Council has the discretion to extend this period beyond 12 months and each case will be considered on its own merits by the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director.

### **Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement**

It is Swale Borough Council's policy to only provide consent for flexible retirement and the immediate payment of benefits where there are clear financial or operational benefits to the Council. Any such consent requires the agreement of the Head of Human Resources and the relevant Director and each case would be considered on its merits.

If consent has been given under Regulation 30 (6) it is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to waive any actuarial reduction unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### **Regulation 30(8) Waiving of Actuarial Reductions**

It is not the policy of the Borough Council to give consent to the immediate payment of benefits to employees under this regulation, unless there is a demonstrable benefit to the organisation which would take full account of any extra costs to be borne by the Authority. In circumstances where a request is made for an early payment of a deferred benefit this is unlikely to be granted except in the most extreme cases of hardship; circumstances must be exceptional and would not reasonably be expected to prevail i.e. the occurrence of a disaster or accident etc. Financial hardship alone would not normally be deemed sufficient. Any such consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case.

Where a scheme member has previously been awarded a preserved benefit, it is not generally the policy of Swale Borough Council to give consent under this regulation

to the early payment of benefits; however, each request will be considered and full account taken of any costs to be borne by the authority. Any consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case. It is not the Council's general policy to waive any actuarial reduction in these circumstances.

### **Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension**

Swale Borough Council has the discretion to award additional pension (up to the additional pension limit defined in the regulations) to an active member or within six months of leaving the scheme to a scheme member who was dismissed on grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.

Swale Borough Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances and where there is a proven total benefit to the organisation which includes any costs that might be borne by the authority. Any consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case.

### **Regulation 100 (6) – Aggregation of Benefits**

If a scheme member wishes to transfer any pension benefits they have built up in other schemes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, it is the policy of Swale Borough Council that the election must be made within 12 months of the Pension Section being notified that the employee has become an active member of the Kent Scheme.

If the 12 month period has elapsed then the member may make a case for any exceptional circumstances to be considered by the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director within Swale Borough Council, and by the Pension Scheme Administrator. Both organisations must agree to the late transfer.

## Protection of Earnings Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Council believes that an integral feature of any successful organisation is its ability to identify the need for change and to manage that change, taking into account management's aspirations as well as the aspirations and well being of its employees.

Whilst the Council is committed to providing security of employment and to minimising the personal impact of organisational change there will be occasions when it will be necessary to reorganise services and the way in which they are delivered. In these circumstances the provisions of this Policy will apply. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Organisational Change Policy.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to any employee who, as a consequence of organisational change, is required by management to change their grade or method of working or suffers a reduction in basic hours worked within the standard working week or suffers a reduction in basic pay and allowances.

The provisions of this policy **do not** apply as a result of:-

- a) action taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary or Capability procedures
- b) the need for re-deployment on health grounds
- c) unacceptable standards of work performance
- d) a request from the individual or by mutual agreement between the individual and Council
- e) a voluntary application to another position within the Council
- f) the removal of a Market Supplement following an annual review, any loss here would be dealt with in accordance with the Market Supplement Policy.

### 3. Protection Period

Protection of earnings will be given for a period of 24 months. The first twelve months will be protected at the full earnings of the role held by the employee prior to the change, the second period of 12 months will be at half the rate of the new earnings compared to the old earnings. After a period of 12 months the employee will move to the salary and earnings of the new post. The employee will be moved to the salary point of the pay scale for the grade of the new post that is closest to the salary of the previous post. In most cases this is likely to be the highest incremental point of the relevant grade.

In exceptional circumstances, and where there may be a cost advantage to the organisation there may be agreement with the Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Organisation Development to extend this period.

### 4. Calculation of Protection

Earnings protection will be calculated as an average of the earnings in the four months preceding the organisational change. This will include basic salary, essential car user allowance, lease car cash allowance, stand-by payments and an average of overtime and out of hour's payments.

Earnings in the new post will be off-set against protected earnings and if for any particular pay period the earnings in the new post exceed the protected earnings then the higher earnings will be paid for that pay period.

Where the period of protection spans the annual pay award the protected pay will be reduced by an amount equivalent to any increase in pay in the new substantive post.

#### 5. Conditions of Protection

Protection of earnings is conditional upon the employee undertaking any shift work, standby or other duties which may be required in the new post. Where there are increased earnings as a result of these additional duties this will result in an equivalent decrease in pay protection. In circumstance where the employee is required to drive and the post is designated as an Essential Car User or the level of mileage is such that the employee qualifies for the Essential Car User Allowance this will be paid but the level of pay protection will be reduced by the equivalent amount.

Protection of earnings is also conditional upon the employee accepting any subsequent offer of a suitable alternative post which attracts a salary in excess of that of the new post.

Overtime will be paid at the new rate (i.e. the real rate attached to the post) not at the protected rate.

#### 6. Pension Implication

It has been the Borough Council's policy to issue a certificate of protection of pension benefits to protect employees who suffer detriment by being required to take a cut in pay or who are prevented from having future pay increases by having their pay frozen. Any certificates issued may continue to apply to pension forecasts whilst they are still valid. Following the pension changes on 1 April 2008 there were no further certificates of protection issued but up to 31 March 2014 there are options for pension calculation to be based over a longer time period, affected employees should contact the pension administrator.

#### 7. Terms and Conditions other than Pay

Annual Leave entitlements and length of notice period required from the employee will not be protected and those applicable to the new post will be effective from the date of transfer.



## Appendix I (G)

Information published in accordance with the guidance associated with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, which requires the publication of senior salaries within a £5,000 range.

### Details of remuneration and job title of senior employees whose basic salary is between £50,000 and £150,000.

Position	Reporting Unit	Remuneration	No of staff	Budget responsibility	Other services/responsibilities
Chief Executive	Chief Executive	£130,000 - £134,999	287	£247,480	Returning Officer responsible for all elections and Head of Paid Service.
Director of Resources	Resources	£110,000 - £114,999	58	-£13,488,790	Section 151 Officer.
Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	£105,000 - £109,999	196	£13,241,310	
Head of Environment & Leisure	Environment & Leisure	£90,000 - £94,999	50	£7,365,170	
Head of Legal Partnership	Mid Kent Legal Services	£85,000 - £89,999	21	£515,360	Head of partnership with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Head of Housing & Community Services	Housing & Community Services	£85,000 - £89,999	96	£4,059,680	
Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Property and Interim Head of Planning Services	Regeneration, Economic Development & Property and Planning Services	£80,000 - £84,999	46	£586,650	
Head of Finance & Procurement	Finance & Procurement	£75,000 - £79,999	12	£949,150	
Strategic Programme & Assets Manager	Strategic Programme & Assets	£60,000 - £64,999	5	£210,740	
Capital Projects Manager	Capital Projects	£50,000 - £54,999	1		
Community Services Manager	Community Services	£60,000 - £64,999	21	£629,930	
Environmental Services Manager	Environmental Services	£60,000 - £64,999	17	£4,510,360	
Housing Options Manager	Housing Options	£60,000 - £64,999	35	£2,162,160	
Leisure & Technical Services Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£60,000 - £64,999	24	£3,477,040	
Team Leader Contentious & Corporate Governance	Mid Kent Legal Services	£65,000 - £69,999	5	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.

Private Sector Housing Manager	Private Sector Housing	£60,000 - £64,999	12	£362,340	
Revenues & Benefits Manager	Revenues and Benefits	£75,000 - £79,999	34	£1,199,630	Interim head of partnership for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Communications & Policy Manager	Communications & Policy	£55,000 - £59,999	5	£309,130	
Development Manager	Development	£60,000 - £64,999	17	-£13,240	
Democratic & Electoral Services Manager	Democratic & Electoral Services	£50,000 - £54,999	6		
Climate Change Officer	Climate Emergency	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£160,390	
Customer Services Manager	Customer Services	£50,000 - £54,999	23	£578,230	
Area Planning Officer	Development	£55,000 - £59,999	3	£0	
Environmental Contracts Manager	Environmental Services	£50,000 - £54,999	5	£3,961,180	
Principal Accountant	Financial Services	£50,000 - £54,999	5	£0	
Principal Accountant (Technical)	Financial Services	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£0	
Affordable Housing Enablement Manager	Housing & Community Services	£50,000 - £54,999	0	£67,470	
Information & Business Improvement Manager	Information & Business Improvement	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£0	
Green Spaces Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£50,000 - £54,999	7	£1,943,470	
Seafront & Engineering Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£50,000 - £54,999	8	£294,060	
Planning Team Leader	Mid Kent Legal Services	£60,000 - £64,999	3	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Design & Conservation Manager	Planning Policy	£50,000 - £54,999	1	£139,080	
Buildings Operations & Maintenance Manager	Property Services	£50,000 - £54,999	10	£674,030	

**Number of employees whose remuneration in 2023/24 is at least £50,000, in brackets of £5,000**

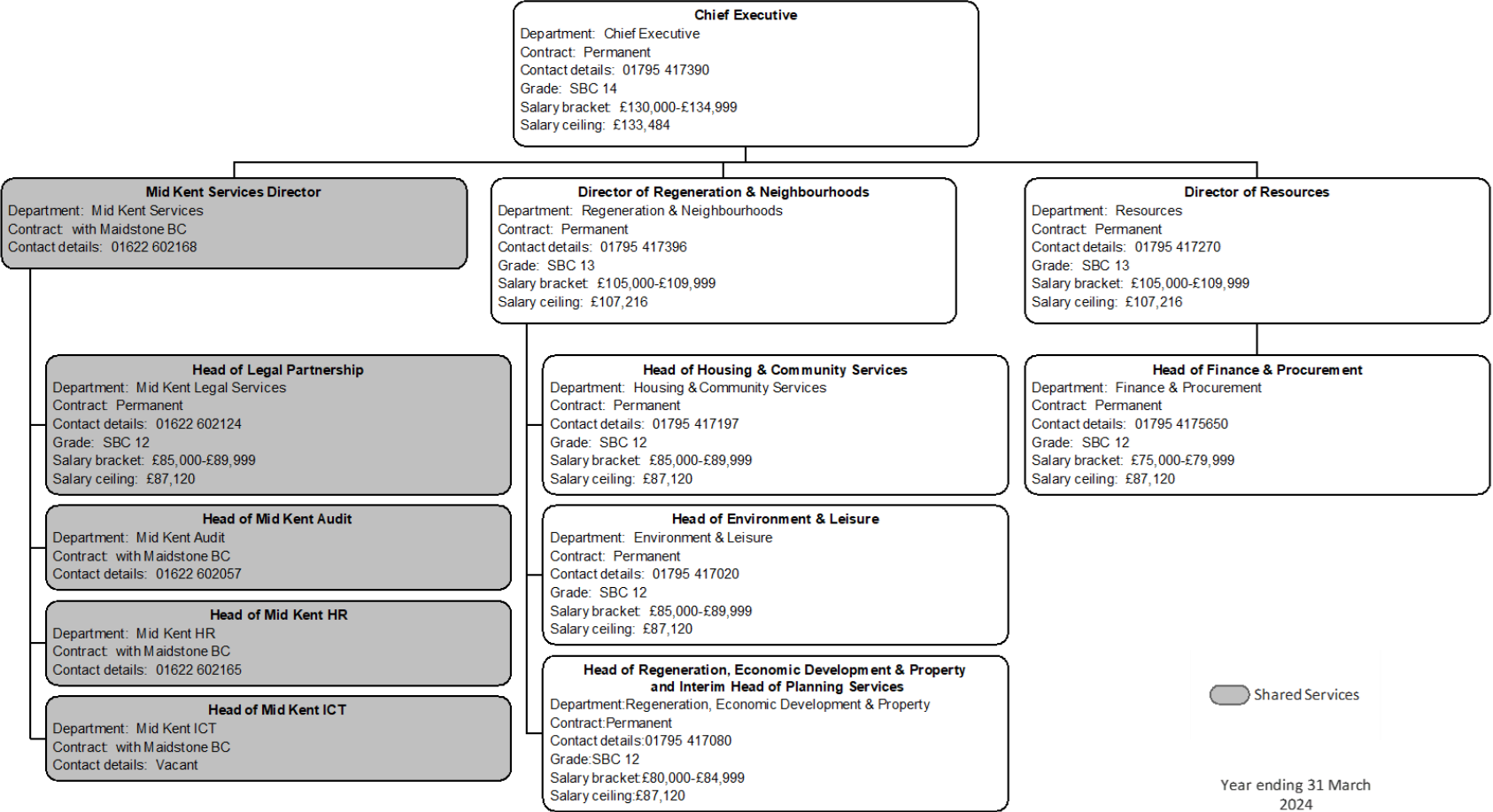
<b>Remuneration band</b>	<b>Number of employees in band</b>
£50,000 - £54,999	14
£55,000 - £59,999	3
£60,000 - £64,999	8
£65,000 - £69,999	1
£70,000 - £74,999	0
£75,000 - £79,999	2
£80,000 - £84,999	1
£85,000 - £89,999	2
£90,000 - £94,999	1
£95,000 - £99,999	0
£100,000 - £104,999	0
£105,000 - £109,999	1
£110,000 - £114,999	1
£115,000 - £119,999	0
£120,000 - £124,999	0
£125,000 - £129,999	0
£130,000 - £134,999	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

The Council has three shared services and a secondment arrangement that are managed by Heads of Service not directly employed by Swale Borough Council. The salary details for these post holders may be found in the transparency data of the relevant employing authority.

<b>Post</b>	<b>Employing Authority</b>
Head of Audit Partnership	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of HR Shared Services	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of ICT Partnership	Maidstone Borough Council



# Swale Borough Council Organisation Chart



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<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Procurement of minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences service.
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Alister Andrews / Kelly Mehmet
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That the Committee approves the appointment of Company X for the provision of minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024 for an initial period of 1 Year (plus an option of a 1 year extension).

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The current minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences contract expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The Contract and Resources team carried out a one stage tender process based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) which was evaluated on 60% price and 40% quality. The maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences contract will provide a service that opens and closes all of the public conveniences within the borough; cleans them to the appropriate standards; replenishes consumable items; and undertakes minor maintenance.
- 1.2 This report summarises the procurement process and its results and seeks Environment Committee approval for awarding the contract.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 In August 2021 Members approved a recommendation to extend the current 'Minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences' contract until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. There are no further options to extend this contract.
- 2.2 In June 2023 the Environment Committee agreed to re-tender for a 1 + 1 year contract to start from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to allow time for a full review of public conveniences to be completed. The current list of public conveniences consists of:
- The Forum, Sittingbourne (attended – shared attendant with Central Avenue)
  - Central Avenue, Sittingbourne (attended – shared attendant with The Forum).
  - Rose Street, Sheerness (attended)
  - Central car park, Faversham (attended)
  - Leysdown Beach Services (attended seasonally)
  - Minster Leas

- Park Road, Faversham
  - Milton Regis High Street
  - Queenborough Park, Queenborough
  - Bartons Point, Isle of Sheppey
  - The White House, Minster
  - Oare Gunpowder Works Visitors Centre, Faversham
  - The Spinney, Leysdown
  - King George V Playing Field, Sittingbourne
  - Milton Creek Country Park
  - Beachfields, Sheerness
- 2.3 The majority of public conveniences are open between 07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sun, but a full list of opening times is available in Appendix I as there are some variations to these opening times and some facilities have seasonal changes.
- 2.4 The contractors provide toilet roll, cleaning materials and undertake minor maintenance such as graffiti removal, cubicle lock repairs, replace toilet roll holders and toilet seats and unblock drains between the toilet and the nearest inspection chamber. Other more major repairs such as broken tiles, sinks, bowls or structural elements are reported to property services for repair via a separate property maintenance contract.
- 2.5 The contractor also undertakes routine deep cleans at each facility and toilets may be kept open later for special events.
- 2.6 Ad-hoc refurbishments have taken place as required to deliver improvements using one-off funding from the reserves, but the overall asset management and levels of public convenience provision will need a more detailed review and a subsequent report for consideration by Members. For example, are they in the right locations, what are the conditions of the buildings and what investment will they need. Will new technology allow a change in approach e.g. electronic opening and closing. It was agreed by members at Environment Committee in June 2023 that a procurement exercise will create the time for this work to be completed and debated fully.
- 2.7 Interested parties were invited to submit prices for different models. These included existing ‘attended’ facilities to remain as attended; a partially attended model based upon hourly rates – bidders were asked to state their recommended number of hours at each location but this was for information only and was not evaluated; and an ‘unattended’ model where no facilities had an attendant. Bidders were also invited to submit variant bids if they chose to.
- 2.8 The opportunity was advertised in accordance with current procurement policy requirements, with interested parties asked to complete an Invitation to Tender.
- 2.9 Two submissions were received, and scores were allocated according to the criteria explained in the tender document.

- 2.10 From the submitted prices it was evident that the current model of having some facilities fully attended was unaffordable with all exceeding the available budget for next year. In contrast, the model of having all facilities unattended priced in large sums for increased risk from issues such as vandalism and theft. The price for a fully unattended model from both bidders was higher than the partially attended model price.
- 2.11 The model that offered best value (but still exceeds the available budget) was for the facilities to be partially attended. Different bidders suggested different hours required at each facility to offer best value. Company X suggested a model where the hours spent at each of the currently attended facilities reduced from current levels to between 3 and 6.25 hours a day depending on the perceived risk at each location. Company Y suggested that more time was needed at each facility (at a greater price), but for the purposes of comparing bids, the evaluating officers used the hourly rate provided by both bidders to compare prices for the same amount of time at each establishment.
- 2.12 The scores for this option were as follows:

Company	Price Score	Quality Score	Total
X	60	33	93
Y	58.60	30	88.60

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to approve the proposal to enter into a contract with Company X for a one year minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences contract with the option to extend the contract for a further one year, totalling two years.

### 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Do not award a contract. This will prevent public conveniences from being opened, closed or maintained from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and it is effectively a decision to close all public conveniences in Swale as they could not be managed sufficiently without such measures in place. This option is therefore not recommended.
- 4.2 Award to Company Y rather than Company X. Company X provided the Most Economically Advantageous tender (MEAT), therefore awarding to a less favourable bidder would not comply with procurement policy and would very likely attract a challenge from the first placed bidder.
- 4.3 A variant bid from Company X offered a slightly better price if we considered a longer contract of three years. The price was still in excess of the budgets set in

the medium term financial strategy and it would significantly restrict any changes/ recommendations being implemented in a timely fashion after the full public conveniences review was completed. This option is not recommended.

- 4.4 Members could choose to close some facilities to reduce the price. This is not recommended until a full review is undertaken. A full review will involve gathering various data sets and analysing them to make informed recommendations. This will take time and resources to deliver in a period when such resources are busy delivering other corporate contractual objectives.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The opportunity was advertised on the appropriate business portal and businesses were asked if they could suggest a variant bid that may offer a better solution.
- 5.2 The award of this contract would allow time for a full review of public conveniences to be completed with recommendations being considered by Members.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Appointing a contractor that meets a good quality standard and provides good value for money contributes towards all the corporate priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Anticipated annual spend on the minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences contract is £654,145.62 over 2 years (£313,543.41 in year 1 and £340,602.21 in year 2) if awarded to Company X.</p> <p>The awarding of this contract to the most economically advantageous tender will result in an overspend against the budgets in the 2024/25 medium term financial strategy of approximately £69K (as the 23/24 budget will be reducing in 24/25 by £50K). The overspend if the contract is extended into year 2 will be even greater at around £196K as the current proposals in the MTFs will reduce this budget in 2025/26 by a further £100K.</p> <p>The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended (“TUPE”) do apply to this contract and the implications of this have been addressed in the procurement process.</p>

	<p>The full review of public conveniences will determine usage and provide recommendations on assets and funding options for the future.</p>
<p>Legal, Statutory and Procurement</p>	<p>The procurement of a service provider was advertised in line with the contract legislation requirements.</p> <p>The Public Health Act 1936 gives Local Authorities a power to provide public toilets, but it imposes no duty to do so.</p> <p>The contract will be drawn up using the Council's current standard Terms and Conditions.</p> <p>All bidders were made aware that TUPE legislation is relevant to this contract.</p> <p>Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 – All bidders provided evidence to demonstrate compliance.</p> <p>Evidence was presented by bidders that delivers some of the requirements of The National Procurement Policy Statement such as tackling climate change and reducing waste.</p>
<p>Crime and Disorder</p>	<p>Some toilets are currently attended to ensure that facilities are kept up to the necessary standard, but also to deter crime and disorder. The risk of damage and anti-social behaviour may increase in unattended facilities (this has been reflected in the prices submitted by bidders). The opening and closing times are structured to avoid times of the day when anti-social behaviour is more prevalent. These can be altered accordingly to site specific issues. The chosen model delivers a service where facilities are partially attended at the times of the day when the risks of vandalism/ damage/ theft are at their peak.</p>
<p>Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency</p>	<p>All bidders provided evidence of how they intend to reduce their impact on the environment through a variety of ways such as water usage reduction or by using more environmentally sensitive cleaning products.</p> <p>An unattended model will result in more travelling required between establishments. The partially attended model has less impact on travel.</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>The public convenience facilities operate in line with government guidance to ensure they remain safe. Such facilities are appreciated by members of the public and they have obvious health and well-being benefits. However, the contract costs are</p>

	significant and it is important that we keep reviewing these facilities to ensure we are providing the right resource in the right place.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The appropriate safeguarding requirements have been identified in the specification of the tender.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>There is an overspend risk that has been identified in the finance section.</p> <p>There are risks of vandalism/ damage from a reduced service.</p> <p>There is a risk that having less of a presence at these facilities may increase the chances of accidents from slips and trips due to hazards such as spillages/ leaks going un-resolved for longer.</p> <p>All three risks have been considered and in the officer's opinion, the 'partially attended' model provides a value for money option to the council without introducing excessive risk, or without closing facilities.</p> <p>Part of the procurement process ensures that contractors are fully competent, particularly in the area of health and safety. Company X's competence is evidenced through their membership of CHAS contractors Health &amp; Safety Assessment Scheme, and ROSPA (Royal society for the prevention of accidents) and ISO accreditations for ISO14001:2015 and ISO9001:2015</p> <p>This will be monitored throughout the contract.</p>
Equality and Diversity	All Swale Council public conveniences provide for a range of disabilities. Recent additional signage has supported the 'Not every disability is visible' campaign at all sites.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage

## 7 Appendices

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

Appendix I: A list of current public conveniences in Swale with opening times and current attendance levels.



## **8 Background Documents**

8.1 Previous Environment Committee consideration of the service can be found [here](#).

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<b>Sittingbourne</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Postcode</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>	<b>Radar key needed</b>
Central Avenue	Central Avenue	Sittingbourne	ME10 4BX	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
King George V Playing Fields	Park Avenue	Sittingbourne	ME10 1QX	Unisex	No	No
Milton Creek Country Park	Grovehurst Road	Milton	ME10 2DE	Female & Male	Yes	No
Milton Regis	High Street	Milton	ME10 2AN	Female & Male	No	No
The Forum	High Street	Sittingbourne	ME10 3DL	Female & Male	Yes	No

<b>Faversham</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Postcode</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>	<b>Radar key needed</b>
Central Car Park	Cross Lane	Faversham	ME13 8PN	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
Oare Gunpowder Works	Bysingwood Road	Oare	ME13 7UD	Female & Male	No	No
Park Road	Park Road	Faversham	ME13 8ES	Female & Male	Yes	No

<b>Isle of Sheppey</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Postcode</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>	<b>Radar key needed</b>
Bartons Point	Marine Parade	Minster	ME12 2BX	Female & Male	No	No
Leysdown Beach Services	Grove Avenue	Leysdown	ME12 4QE	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
Minster Leas	The Leas	Minster	ME12 2NL	Female & Male	Yes	No
Queenborough Park	High Street	Queenborough	ME11 5AG	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
Rose Street	Wood Street	Sheerness	ME12 1UA	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
The Spinney	Leysdown Road	Leysdown	ME12 4QX	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
The White House	The Broadway	Minster	ME12 2DE	Female & Male	Yes	Yes
Beachfields	Beach Street	Sheerness	ME12 1RE	Female & Male	Yes	Yes

Baby change	Opening times	Attended?
No	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Saturday and 09.00 – 18.00 on Sunday and Bank Hols	Yes - shared with Forum
No	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sunday	No
Yes	07.00 and 16:00 Mon - Sunday between October and 31st March 07.00 and 19.00 1 April - 30 September	No
No	07.00 and 18.00 Mon – Sunday	No
Yes	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Saturday - closed Sundays	Yes - shared with Central Avenue

Baby change	Opening times	Attended?
Yes	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Saturday and 09.00 – 18.00 on Sunday and Bank Hols	Yes
No	07.00 and 19.00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Hols	No
No	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sunday	No

Baby change	Opening times	Attended?
No	07.00 and 16:00 Mon - Sunday between October and 31st March 07.00 and 19.00 1 April - 30 September	No
Yes	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Saturday and and 09.00 – 18.00 on Sunday and Bank Hols (except for Leysdown beach services which is open from 09.00 to 18.00 from Good Friday until the last Sunday in September and Saturdays and Sundays throughout the remainder of September and October (the external toilet at	Yes - seasonal
Yes	07.00 and 16:30 Mon - Sunday between October and 31st March 07.00 and 19.00 1 April - 30 September	No
Yes	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sunday	No
Yes	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Saturday and 09.00 - 18.00 on Sunday and Bank Hols	Yes
No	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sunday	No
No	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sunday	No
No	07.00 and 19.00 Mon – Sunday	No

<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Planning Enforcement Strategy – draft for consultation
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Paul Casey Planning Enforcement Team Leader
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That members consider the draft Planning Enforcement Strategy for consultation and propose any relevant amendments.</li> <li>2. That members recommend the launch of a consultation period on the draft Plan.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 To seek input in the emerging Planning Enforcement Strategy and approve the launch of a consultation period.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The current Planning Enforcement Strategy was adopted in 2021. This paper sets out plans to replace the document with an updated version.
- 2.2 Plans are also in place to refresh the overarching Corporate Enforcement Strategy. Officers are ensuring there is dialogue between the two documents.

## 3 Proposals

- 3.1 That members consider the Planning Enforcement Strategy for consultation and propose any relevant amendments.
- 3.2. That members recommend the launch of a consultation period on the draft Plan.

## 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Members could consider not consulting on the proposed policy. This would not accord with good governance or give interested parties an opportunity to

comment on the policy, make representations about it and improve it. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

4.2 Members could consider not refreshing the strategy until a later point. This is not recommended given the time officers have been able to invest, and the opportunity currently presented to align the strategy with the Corporate Plan period.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The draft has been considered by the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group, and it was resolved to change the title of the document to Planning Enforcement Strategy from Enforcement Local Plan. The following changes were also recommended, and the draft has been updated accordingly;

- Gypsy and Travellers- Equality and Diversity rights recognised in this report
- Clarify same day site visit for protected trees and listed buildings
- Clarify 30 day activity diary and information needed
- Highway land, including footpaths – changes made to reflect that it may also mean land to which the public has a right to pass and repass, and not just highway maintainable at public expense.
- Visit response times changed to ‘working days’ from ‘days’

5.2 Proposed consultees will include Ward, Parish, Town Councillors and members of the public. Promotion of the consultation will be supported by the Council’s Communications team.

5.3 Intended dates for the consultation period are 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The service is an important function to preserve the integrity of, and public confidence in, the planning system by ensuring that development accords with the rules. The draft Corporate Plan is currently out for consultation and the Enforcement Strategy will reflect the corporate approach.
Financial, Resource and Property	The delivery and implementation of the enforcement strategy is within in the allocated revenue budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The framework basis for enforcement is set out within the consultation draft.
Crime and Disorder	The strategy will support the rectification of breaches, and on occasions dovetails with the work of other agencies, such as Kent Police.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No implications identified.
Health and Wellbeing	No implications identified.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications identified.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No implications identified.
Equality and Diversity	The strategy recognises the Public Sector Equality Duty as per sections 149 to 157 of the Equality Act 2010 and investigations undertaken will be mindful of and where appropriate reflect specific circumstances related to protected characteristics
Privacy and Data Protection	Data protection and privacy rules are set out in the consultation draft.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Draft Planning Enforcement Strategy

## 8 Background Papers

[Planning Enforcement Strategy 2021.](#)

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# Planning Enforcement Strategy

2024

Foreword by Cllr Tim Gibson, Leader of Swale Borough Council

## INTRODUCTION – SWALE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) says in Paragraph 59 that

*“Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. They should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where appropriate”*

This Planning Enforcement Strategy is the Local Enforcement Plan as recommended by the NPPF, and sets out how the Council will approach enforcement, how and when action will be taken, and the occasions when action will not be taken.

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Foreword by Cllr Tim Gibson, Leader of Swale  
Borough Council

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### Appendices

- 1 Terminology
- 2 Planning Enforcement Priorities (Initial Visit response times)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Importance of an Enforcement Local Plan (Planning Enforcement Strategy)

This Planning Enforcement Strategy is being produced in line with the recommendation in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to ensure that enforcement remains a clear and transparent process serving the local community and ensuring proper planning borough wide. The strategy will guide how Swale Borough Council will approach and handle planning enforcement issues. It will set out what can and cannot be investigated, priorities for enforcement action, what courses of action are available, and will also set out targets for responding to enquiries at key stages within the enforcement process. This strategy will be reviewed on a four yearly basis – or more frequently as required - to ensure that it remains consistent with any changes in national guidance, policy and legislation and any changes to key Council documents such as the Corporate Plan.

## 1.2 Principles of Planning Enforcement

Planning enforcement aims to investigate planning breaches where development has been carried out without the benefit of the necessary planning permissions. Swale Borough Council adheres to the principles of good enforcement which include:

- **Proportionality** – enforcement action will be proportionate to the risks and seriousness of any breach including any actual or potential harm caused by the breach and the economic impact of averting the breach. Priority will be given towards unauthorised development that is causing immediate, serious, and irreversible harm. Swale Borough Council will consider a full range of enforcement powers which includes negotiation and retrospective planning applications. Where appropriate, formal action will be taken.
- **Helpfulness** - where it should be possible for all breaches of control to be quickly remedied, officers will give developers or landowners the opportunity to quickly rectify matters. Correspondence will identify the officer dealing with the matter and will provide contact details. Abusive language or behaviour will not be tolerated.
- **Targeting of enforcement action** – we will focus enforcement action on the most serious cases with the greatest potential to cause harm and will recognise that it is not possible to prioritise all issues of non-compliance or take action against breaches that are considered to cause little or no harm.
- **Consistency** – consistency does not mean uniformity; however, a similar approach will be taken in similar circumstances with the appropriate exercise of professional judgement.
- **Transparency of how enforcement operates and what can be expected** – where non-compliance has been identified, officers will state what must be done to remedy the breach, clearly explaining the reasoning behind the decision, giving reasonable timescales for compliance, and providing clear guidance on the next steps if those in breach do not comply. To improve transparency and accountability, Swale Borough Council's website will be further developed to show formal enforcement actions being taken and the progress being made. A copy of the enforcement register and an enforcement notice search facility will be added to the planning applications website.
- **Accountability for actions** – enforcement officers will abide by the strategy at all times during their working practices.

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## 2.0 BREACHES OF PLANNING CONTROL

### 2.1 What is a breach of planning control?

**“The carrying out of development without the required planning permission or failing to comply with a condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted.”(s.171A)**

Development carried out without planning permission is not ordinarily a criminal offence. There are exceptions for Listed Buildings, trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and advertisements displayed without consent. All other development only becomes a criminal offence if there is non-compliance following formal enforcement action. The 1990 Act defines formal enforcement action as the issue of an enforcement notice or the service of a breach of condition notice.

### 2.2 Types of Development

All development as defined by reference to Section 55 of the 1990 Act requires planning permission. There are two main types.

#### **‘Deemed’ planning permission**

Some types of development can be carried out without having to apply for written planning permission, and this is referred to as ‘Permitted Development.’ In these circumstances legislation is deemed to have granted planning permission if certain criteria are met as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As amended). In addition the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (As amended) grants deemed consent for advertisements that satisfy the relevant criteria and conditions.

#### **‘Express’ planning permission**

All development that is not granted consent by deemed planning permission requires ‘express’ consent from the local planning authority. This requires a formal written planning application. Most planning applications are subject to public notification to nearby residents, relevant consultees and Parish or Town Councils, and are available for comment from any member of the public. More information about this process is available on the Swale Borough Council website.

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## 2.3 Immunity from enforcement

Section 171B of the 1990 Act restricts the Council's ability to take enforcement action after certain periods of time have lapsed. These time periods are dependent on the type of breach. After the specified period, development without planning permission becomes lawful and therefore enforcement action cannot be taken.

- For building, engineering, mining or other operations, action cannot be taken after **four** years beginning with the date on which operations were substantially completed.
- For a change of use of a building to a single dwelling house, action cannot be taken after **four** years beginning with the date of the breach.
- For any other breach, action cannot be taken after **ten** years beginning with the date of the breach, including a continuous breach of planning conditions.
- There is no time limit in respect of listed buildings and enforcement action can be taken at any time.

The landowner has the option of applying for a certificate of lawful development to regularise the development.

The serving of an enforcement notice in respect of a particular development 'stops the clock' in relation to the time limit.

These circumstances do not, however, apply if the development was deliberately concealed (see 2.4 below).

## 2.4 Concealment

The Localism Act 2011 introduced section 171BA into the 1990 Act. This power permits the Council to take enforcement action against deliberate concealment of breaches of planning control after the usual time limit for enforcement action has expired. The Council can, within six months of a breach coming to their attention, apply to the magistrate's court for a planning enforcement order. If such an order is granted by the magistrates, this allows the Council an additional twelve months in which to take enforcement action

## 2.5 Expediency

Once a breach of planning control has been identified, the extent of the breach must be assessed to establish what action should be taken to remedy the breach and whether it is considered expedient to do so. One of the options is to invite a retrospective planning application. This enables the development to be assessed on its merits taking into account local planning policies and any other material considerations. If an application is not submitted or submitted and refused it is then at the Council's discretion to use enforcement powers. In accordance with section 172 of the 1990 Act 'expediency' is a test of whether the unauthorised development is causing serious harm and is assessed with reference to national and local planning policies and to any other material considerations (eg, amenity, design) to justify formal action.

If it is likely that the unauthorised development would have been approved, had planning permission been initially applied for, taking formal enforcement action would be unlikely. Taking enforcement action must be in the public interest.

Enforcement action will not be taken simply because a breach has occurred or to punish those responsible for the breach regardless of whether the breach was carried out deliberately or in ignorance.

It will still be in the owner's best interest to regularise the breach. This can be a serious issue when it comes to selling or re-mortgaging a property, as evidence to show permission has been obtained for all extensions and alterations is often required by the purchaser's solicitor or the mortgage company.

Decisions to take enforcement action under the current scheme of delegation or not to take any further action will be relayed to local ward members, Planning Committee Chair and Vice Chair.

## 3.0 REPORTING ALLEGED BREACHES

### 3.1 Reporting a breach

Anyone concerned about a development or activity they believe may be unauthorised, is encouraged to report this directly to the Council. The easiest way to report a breach is through the online form at [www.swale.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning-breaches-and-enforcement/enforcement](http://www.swale.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning-breaches-and-enforcement/enforcement).

Before submitting a complaint, customers are advised to check whether the particular development or activity already benefits from planning permission. This information can be found on the Council's website at <https://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Planning Enforcement Priorities at Appendix 2. Anonymous complaints or complaints with limited or incorrect details will not normally be investigated, however, officers have full discretion in this regard and will make an informed choice whether to investigate based on the nature of the complaint. This is to ensure that public resources are not spent unnecessarily investigating hoax or malicious complaints and due to the importance of being able to fully assess the impact of the development on the complainant as part of the investigation.

The subject of a complaint will be public information; however, the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential. It is possible that the person who is the subject of the complaint may draw their own conclusions about the source. In some cases, a court may declare that personal information has to be made available; however, this is very unusual. If the case is referred to another department within the Council personal information will be passed on but would remain confidential.

Swale Borough Council cannot investigate a complaint based on speculation, information or suggestion regarding what may be planned and where no actual breach of planning control has taken place.

### 3.2 Types of development that will be investigated

There are a number of matters that do not fall within planning control and therefore no planning enforcement action can be taken. Often this is where other legislation covers and controls the matter, such as Highway, Environmental Health and Building Control or external organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive or Police

The following are examples of what the planning service can investigate:

- Carrying out development where no planning permission has been sought.
- Carrying out development which deviates from that which has been granted planning permission.
- Breach of conditions which were imposed under an existing planning permission.
- Unauthorised change of use
- Unauthorised display of advertisements
- Unauthorised works to a Listed Building
- Unauthorised works to a protected tree



- Unauthorised works in a conservation area or a protected area such as an Area of Outstanding Beauty
- Derelict buildings and untidy residential properties (condition adversely affects the amenity of the area)
- Unauthorised works to protected trees and hedgerows.

### 3.3 What we cannot investigate

- Internal works unless they relate to Listed Buildings
- Obstruction of highway, footpaths and parking of vehicles on the road or grass verges
- Matters controlled under building regulations such as dangerous structures
- Private issues between neighbours (that don't involve material planning considerations)
- Opposition to business competition
- Non-material planning considerations such as loss of property value or loss of view
- High hedges
- Noise, Smoke, dust or vibration unless it is in breach of a planning condition
- Land ownership or boundary issues
- Party wall disputes
- Blocking of designated rights of way
- Breaches of property deeds or covenants
- Damage to property
- Health and safety and site security
- Untidy land, for example an unkempt lawn where there is a minimal effect on amenity

Matters relating to the highway and public footpaths are dealt with by Kent County Council.

Reports about noise, smoke and dust should be reported to Environmental Health.

Boundary issues and party wall disputes are private matters.

Concerns about Health and Safety and site security should be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Dangerous structures are inspected by STG Building Control Partnership

On receipt of reports which relate to any of the above, advice on how to contact the correct department or agency will be given, but if the report suggests that there is an immediate threat to health and safety of the public we will endeavor to contact the relevant authority on behalf of the complainant.

Other works that are not classed as breaches of planning control:

- Clearing of land of vegetation unless it is the subject of a planning condition or protected under a Tree Preservation Order

- Fences or other means of enclosure adjacent to the highway 1m in height or 2m in all other cases unless permitted development rights have been removed, subject of an Article 4 Direction or a Listed Building. Highway may also include a private road so long as it is one over which the public has a right to pass and repass.
- Parking of a caravan within a residential property if it is used incidentally or ancillary to the main dwelling.
- Conversion of garages or outbuildings to residential if they are used incidentally or ancillary to the main dwelling.
- Operating of business from home where the residential use remains the main use and there is no serious harmful impact on neighbouring amenity.

If a sufficiently harmful breach of planning control is confirmed then officers will initially try to resolve the issue through negotiation and informal action, however, in some cases due to the level of harm it may be considered appropriate to take immediate formal enforcement action, without any initial contact with the contravener.

### **3.4 Information needed**

In order to investigate an alleged breach, it is important that the Council has as much information as possible. Breaches can be investigated more rapidly when sufficient information is provided up-front. To ensure that relevant information is included in a complaint, this list highlights the key pieces of information that should be submitted to aid the investigation:

- An accurate address of the site including the postcode; if the address is unclear or the site is particularly unusual, an annotated map of the site may be more appropriate or customers can provide an exact location using what3words at [www.what3words.com](http://www.what3words.com);
- The enforcement complaint; a detailed description of the development or activity.
- If available, approximate dimensions of the development.
- Any other information to assist the enquiry; a 30-day log of activities if it relates to a change of use complaint, photos of the development/ proof of use;
- If possible, name and address of person/company involved in suspected breach
- Approximate time when the suspected breach commenced and if necessary, the stage of building works.

# 4.0 ENFORCEMENT POWERS AND PROCESSES

## 4.1 Site visits and rights of entry

An officer will initially carry out desktop research to establish the fact of the complaint and determine whether a site visit is necessary. Not every site that is the subject of a complaint will need to be visited. A visit will only be made to establish facts and investigate the matter further. The officer will, wherever necessary, take measurements and photographs of the development and activity taking place.

There are situations where more than an initial site visit would be required to evidence a breach such as an alleged change of use. In most cases, if a visit is required an officer will visit the site under investigation within five working days of receiving the complaint, unless it relates to a Listed Building or Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which we will aim to visit on the same day. If the allegation relates to minor breaches such as A-Boards or advertisements an investigation will be started within 10 working days. Due to the nature of planning enforcement work, most site visits will be made without prior arrangement.

Planning Enforcement Officers will carry approved identification which will be produced for inspection on request. The Council's Planning Enforcement Officers have extensive powers of entry which allow them to investigate planning enforcement enquiries. It may also be necessary for the officer to bring third parties onto the land to assist or advise them in carrying out their duties. Where entry is refused, a warrant to enter the land may be obtained. Prosecution will also be considered where there is deliberate obstruction of the officer carrying out their duties. Abusive or threatening behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated and will be logged and reported to the Police.

## 4.2 What is considered?

Whilst establishing whether enforcement action should be taken, a number of elements are considered, including but not limited to:

- Whether the complaint relates to a non-planning matter.
- Whether the enquiry falls within the Council's planning boundaries
- Whether the alleged breach falls within the constraints and conditions of permitted development and is therefore lawful development.
- How long the development/change of use has been present.

After considering all these factors, if it is considered that there has been a breach of planning control officers will then establish whether it is expedient to act upon the breach. There may also be situations where another department within the Council is better placed to deal with the issue raised and in that case Planning Enforcement Officers will refer the complaint to the relevant department.

## 4.3 Formal Action

If a breach is deemed to be sufficiently harmful the Council will make every attempt to encourage those responsible for a breach to resolve the issue voluntarily. If informal negotiations have been unsuccessful, and the Council feels that the planning breach has significant harmful effects, formal enforcement action will usually be taken. There are numerous ways in which formal action can be taken, and this depends on the type, seriousness and harmfulness of the breach. In many circumstances dealing with planning enforcement can be a lengthy and complex process (see Appendix 1). Planning enforcement notices issued by the Council are kept on the Planning Register and are available to view by the public on request. They will shortly be available on the Council's website.

## 4.4 Appeals

Enforcement Notices can be appealed. Guidance on Enforcement Appeals can be found [here](#). Once an appeal has been submitted in respect of an Enforcement Appeal then any enforcement action must be suspended until such time as a decision is issued in relation to the appeal. If an appeal is not issued within the required time period (usually 28 days) the Enforcement Notice takes effect, and the subject of the Notice is required to comply with the requirements of the Notice.

Appeals on Enforcement Notices can be made on seven grounds as follows:

- Planning permission should be granted for the development
- There has been no breach of planning control
- The breach alleged in the Enforcement Notice has not occurred as a matter of fact
- It is too late for the Council to take action under the four- and ten- year rules
- The Notice was not properly served
- The requirements of the Notice are excessive

There is a role for people who are not one of the main appeal parties but are interested in the outcome. Neighbours and complainants are notified that an enforcement appeal is taking place but they will not be sent copies of representations made by the appellant, the Local Planning Authority and other interested parties. A letter is sent to these parties to inform them of the appeal, which contains information on where to inspect the appeal documents and how to make representations to the planning inspectorate.

## Prosecution

Prosecution is a potential outcome of the enforcement process, and the Council will pursue a prosecution where circumstances warrant such action. Before commencing legal proceedings, the Council will need to be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to offer a realistic prospect of conviction and that the legal proceedings are in the public interest. The Council will also seek to recover costs in connection with the enforcement action.

## **4.5 What happens if you are the subject of a complaint?**

It is understood that in some cases a breach of planning control is not intentional and can be the result of a misunderstanding or being unaware of the planning requirements. If you are contacted about an alleged breach of planning control, you will be informed of what the allegation is, but not who made it.

If a breach is established, you will be clearly advised of the details of the breach and how to put it right. You will be advised not to do any more work and that any further work that is done would be at your risk as you may have to undo the work. Most breaches are resolved through negotiation and discussion, and we encourage you to cooperate positively. Do not delay in responding to our advice as it is in the interests of all parties if an identified breach can be addressed at an early stage.

If no positive progress is made, then the matter will be reported for enforcement action and formal notices may be served if it is expedient to do so. If you are served with a formal notice, you will be given the details of the breach, the reasons for the action, steps required to resolve the issue and a time period for compliance.

# 5.0 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PRIORITIES

## 5.1 Priorities

The Council receives a large number of complaints of alleged breaches of planning control and therefore cases need to be prioritised based on level of harm. Resources need to be focused on the most serious breaches of planning control as these are likely to cause most harm to the public or the environment. Once a complaint has been received, the level of harm will be assessed by an officer.

In assessing the degree of harm officers will use a desk-based research approach; however, in some cases a site visit will be required to identify the breach if it cannot be established from desktop research, which will form the first stage of the investigation of the complaint.

Each complaint will be allocated a score to assess the level of harm and whether the harmful effects are escalating or stable, whether there is serious effect or harm to neighbours or residential amenity, where the development is located e.g., is it in an AONB, Conservation Area or flood risk area and so on.

This process will be subject to review and will:

- Determine whether a case can be closed without any further investigation. The complainant will be notified that the development causes insufficient harm to warrant any further action.
- Identify those cases that will score more highly, and which will need to be investigated further. Thus, ensuring that the most harmful cases are dealt with as soon as possible.

The score of an alleged breach may alter during an investigation and if circumstances change, or new information is obtained this will be reviewed. If the complaint relates to an activity or use, officers will visit the site at different times to build a picture of the activity or use. In some circumstances a 30 day activity diary will be requested which should include the date and time of occurrences and harm caused, with any supporting evidence. If the person reporting the breach is unwilling to do this, then this may result in the Council not being able to pursue the investigation further due to there not being enough evidence.

All retrospective refused planning applications; Listed Building and Tree Protection Order complaints and complaints from Ward Members / MPs will automatically receive a full investigation.

## 5.2 Contacting the complainant and our performance standards.

Swale Borough Council recognises the importance of keeping individuals up to date with our progress. Some investigations can take longer than others due to lengthy and complex negotiations and / or statutory time periods in serving notices, appeals and prosecutions. Enforcement Officers will:

- Acknowledge complaints that are a potential breach within five working days, which will include the investigating officer's contact details.
- Provide a detailed response to the complainant within 21 working days. However, if a detailed response cannot be given then an update will be provided which will include a date by when the full response will be given.

Complainants are asked to wait to be contacted by the Enforcement Officer about the progress of an enquiry. To effectively focus on investigations, it will not be possible for the Enforcement Team to respond to complainant requests for updates outside of these times.

The performance of the Planning Enforcement function is monitored corporately on the basis of responding to at least 95% of all reports with a 5-day deadline. Following the detailed response within 21 days each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis based on the target dates for each step of action to be completed.

Key performance indicators for the service include:

- Number of complaints received and response times
- Number of complaints received where:
  - No breach is determined
  - Breach is resolved without resorting to formal enforcement action
  - Formal enforcement action is taken
- Number of Enforcement Notices/Stop Notices, Planning Contravention Notices, Injunctions and prosecutions issued
- Number of successful and unsuccessful enforcement appeals
- Outstanding cases (six months plus)
- 5 and 21 day deadlines
- Percentage of cases closed or actioned within 90 days

### **5.3 Monitoring of Sites**

It is not possible to monitor all developments being carried out within Swale.

It is the responsibility of developers to comply with planning conditions and to determine when planning permission is required. The Council relies on public information, enquiries from Councillors, MPs and Parish Councils, and planning officers proactively monitoring sites to raise potential breaches of planning control. The Council informally monitors sites through site visits, and the planning enforcement team also relies on other Council departments to raise potential breaches.

Options available to tackle possible breaches of planning control	Brief explanation
No formal action	This is appropriate for when there is no breach of planning control or when the impact of the breach is not considered expedient for formal enforcement action.
Monitor site	This is appropriate for when further evidence or investigation is required to establish an alleged breach.
De-minimus	These are minor works that have been carried out, which are considered so minor that they would practically fall outside the scope of planning. Whether works are de-minimus is a decision made by the Council on a case-by-case basis.
Allow time to remedy	Time may be given to remedy the breach where there is no significant harm and it is not serious enough to warrant immediate action. Therefore the opportunity will be given to resolve the breach.
Retrospective planning application	A retrospective planning application allows for an application to be submitted after the development has been carried out. In some cases a retrospective planning application can be requested, when it is considered as an appropriate way forward to regularise the situation. A retrospective application is dealt with in the same way as any other planning application.
Lawful Development Certificate	A lawful development certificate application can be submitted to regularise the development/use after the expiry of time period for taking enforcement action.
Planning Contravention Notice (PCN)	A PCN is a discretionary procedure, and is a way for the Council to find out more information about an alleged planning breach to establish what, if any enforcement action should be taken. It usually involves a series of questions about operations being carried out, or about how the breach may be satisfactorily remedied. Failure to complete, or to provide false or misleading information is a criminal offence.
Section 330 Notice	Similar to a PCN, this notice is a way for the Council to find out more information about the occupier's interest in the land.



Planning Enforcement Order	A magistrates' court may only make this order. It can be made where a person has deliberately concealed an unauthorised development and enables the Council to take action withstanding the usual time limits that may have expired. This order is used to extend the amount of time the Council can take formal action, the 'enforcement year'. This gives the Council time to decide the most appropriate course of action.
Enforcement Notice	This is the most common type of notice and instructs the recipient to carry out steps to remedy the breach. The notice will specify what the alleged breach is, and prescriptive steps, with specific timescales, that must be taken to remedy it. Failure to comply with the requirements of an Enforcement notice within the time period given is a criminal offence.
Listed Building Enforcement Notice	This notice is similar to an enforcement notice, and will specify the unauthorised works to the relevant listed building. It can be served on its own, where listed building consent was required but not planning permission, and can also be served in conjunction with a Planning Enforcement notice.
Breach of Condition Notice (BCN)	A BCN may be served where there has been a breach of condition that is attached to an extant planning permission. It requires the recipient to comply with the specified planning conditions. Failure to comply with a BCN within the time period given is a criminal offence.
Stop Notice	A stop notice can only be served with an Enforcement notice and they aim to prohibit any or all of the activities which comprise the alleged breach. They are used when the Council feels that it is expedient that any relevant activity should cease before the deadline for compliance in the related notice.
Temporary Stop Notice	Temporary stop notices can prohibit a range of activities relating to a planning breach, if it is expedient to do so. Unlike a stop notice, a temporary stop notice can be issued immediately without having to wait for an enforcement notice to be issued. They expire after 28 days from issue.
Advertisements	The display of advertisements that do not meet the criteria set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 are illegal unless they have been granted express consent.
Discontinuance Notice	This notice can require that the display of a particular advertisement which has deemed consent is discontinued. This action may be taken if the Council feels that the advertisement causes substantial harm to the amenity of the locality or danger to members of the public.

Section 225 Notice	This notice enables the Council to require the removal of any placard or poster displayed illegally. The notice requires the owner or occupier to take specified measures to prevent or reduce the frequency of unauthorised advertisements in a specified time limit.
Section 215 (Untidy Land) Notice	This notice is served when land requires to be cleaned up because its condition adversely affects the amenity of the area. It can also require the demolition of derelict buildings. The notice sets out the steps needed to be taken and time limits in which they must be carried out.
Direct action	The Council has the option to take direct action to remedy a planning breach if an Enforcement notice or a section 215 notice has not been complied with. The Council may carry out works required in the notice and seek to recover those costs from the landowner.
Injunction	An injunction can be obtained if the Council need to restrain a breach of planning control, and it is considered expedient for any actual or apprehended breach of planning control to be restrained. This is done by applying to the High Court or County Court. An injunction is a last resort attempt, and will only be applied for if ordinary enforcement powers have been, or will be unlikely to stop unauthorised activities.
Enforced sale	An enforced sale is used when direct action has been taken and the Council is owed money for carrying out the work. If a charge has been placed on the property the Council has the ability to sell the property in order to recover its costs. This is a last resort and would only be used when other repayment methods have been exhausted.
Prosecution	The Council will consider commencing a prosecution in the Courts when there has been a failure to comply with any of the above notices and will recover costs.
Confiscation Orders under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA)	This is used when the defendant has benefitted financially from a breach of planning control and enforcement action has been taken. It allows the Council to bring an action to recover the money they have gained as a result of disregarding enforcement action.

## Appendix 2 – Planning Enforcement Priorities (Initial Visit response times)

Category	Harm	Description	Visit Response times
<b>Category 1</b>	Serious Harm	Unauthorised demolition of Listed Buildings, ancient monuments and demolition of Locally Listed Buildings	Same working day
		Felling or lopping of a preserved tree or tree in a Conservation Area	
		Development or breach of conditions likely to cause serious harm or danger to people or amenity	
		Unauthorised work in a Conservation Area likely to lead to permanent harm	
		Where development has started and is subject to planning conditions relating to either contamination, archaeology, nature conservation or trees which are required to be agreed before development commences	
		Development which is unsafe and hazardous	
<b>Category 2</b>	Significant and widespread harm to local amenity	Unauthorised development causing significant or widespread harm	3 working days
		Breaches of planning conditions causing serious nuisance to adjoining residents	
		Breaches of advertisement control causing a serious impact on amenity	
		Unauthorised pitching of caravans	
<b>Category 3</b>	Matters causing demonstrable harm or where timely		5 working days
		Breaches likely to be resolved quickly by negotiation and/or the submission of a retrospective application	

	action is expedient		
<b>Category 4</b>	Other – including Breaches of a technical nature and not in significant conflict with planning policy	Breaches which are temporary and unlikely to result in any long-term harm Advertisements not otherwise included above Breaches of other planning conditions Other changes of use High Hedges	10 working days

## Contacting Swale Borough Council

The customer Service Centre deals with all enquiries across the Council, it should be your first stop when contacting us.

Call 01795 417850.

Copies of this document are available on the council website.

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<b>Policy and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	Zoe Kent, Revenues and Benefits Manager
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Zoe Kent, Revenues and Benefits Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the backdating of discretionary rate relief for a maximum period of 12 months.</li> <li>2. To approve that a review of the current Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme is carried out in 2024/25.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government and Finance Act 1988 (LGFA 1988) and subsequent legislation requires Local Authorities to grant discretionary relief to premises occupied by charities or, to organisations that are non-profit making, that own or occupy a premise wholly or mainly for charitable purposes. Certain premises situated within a rural settlement area are also eligible for relief.
- 1.2 Powers have been granted under the Localism Act 2011, which allows for the granting of discretionary relief to any premises where the Council feels that the granting of such relief would be of benefit to the local community. Certain criteria must be satisfied before a rate payer can be considered for relief, which is made up of two parts, a mandatory and a discretionary scheme.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Under Section 47 of the LGFA 1998 rating authorities are given the discretion to award relief to businesses in the following circumstances:
  - Registered charities and community and amateur sports clubs (CASCs) are entitled to mandatory relief of 80%, the Council has the discretion to award a further discretionary relief up to 20%;
  - The Council has the discretion to award discretionary relief to rural properties which are not entitled to mandatory rural rate relief, providing the relevant criteria are met.
  - The Council has the discretion to award relief up to 100% to organisations which are established as not for profit and meet the relevant criteria. The

amount of discretionary relief awarded is entirely at the discretion of the Council.

- 2.2 The Localism Act 2011 gave rating authorities the power to decide locally to award relief in any circumstances if it would be reasonable to do so having regard to the interest of Council Tax payers in its area. Guidance issued by the Secretary of State must be followed when granting this relief. In 2017, as a result of the business rates revaluation exercise, more reliefs were introduced by the government. This has included the Supporting Small Businesses Scheme, Local Newspaper Relief, and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief which are awarded following government guidance.
- 2.3 In November 2023 the Non-Domestic Rating Act (Consequential and Other Amendments) Regulations 2023 were passed. These regulations revoked the previous rules concerning the application of discretionary relief by local authorities.
- 2.4 Currently discretionary relief should be backdated (if the business is entitled) to the April of the previous financial year, if the claim is made by the September of the current financial year. Claims made after September are backdated to the beginning of the current financial year.
- 2.5 From April 2024 local authorities are able to decide whether to award backdating of discretionary relief locally. This then becomes part of the Discretionary Rate Relief policy. The policy has been reviewed and updated, with changes made to paragraph 2.10 and Part 5. Table one gives the amount of discretionary relief awarded over the last 3 years and the cost to Swale.

Table 1

Year	Total	Central Government	Swale Borough Council	Kent County Council	Kent Fire Authority
	100%	50%	40%	9%	1%
2020/21	£371,482	£185,741	£148,593	£33,433	£3,715
2021/22	£383,310	£191,655	£153,324	£34,498	£3,833
2022/23	£417,815	£208,907	£167,260	£37,603	£4,178

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that backdating is awarded to those businesses considered eligible to receive discretionary relief for a maximum period of 12 months from the date they make their application. This should not increase the cost of the scheme by more than a minimal amount. Backdating relief helps charities and non-profit making businesses in the Borough to provide support to the local communities.



3.2 It is also proposed that the policy is reviewed in 2024/25. A year’s notice must be given to those businesses currently in receipt of discretionary relief.

#### 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 An alternative option would be to follow the current guidelines, backdating to the April of the previous financial year or if the application is made after September to April of the current financial year. This option is not recommended because the period of backdating is based on the date of the application, which can be confusing for businesses. It also means that businesses receive different periods of backdating which could be considered unfair.

4.2 The Council could decide to not backdate applications. This option is not recommended because it could cause difficulties for some businesses who may not be aware that they can apply for relief to reduce their business rate relief charge.

#### 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 A full review of the Discretionary Rate Relief policy will be carried out in 2024/25, businesses receiving Discretionary Rate Relief must be given a year’s notice that the relief may be withdrawn. This notice will be given when the annual bills are issued in March 2024.

5.2 A consultation will be carried out with businesses as part of the review.

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The objectives and priorities in the corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	The cost of Discretionary Rate Relief reduces the amount of Non-Domestic Rates collected from businesses. In considering the backdating of this relief, the effect on the Council Taxpayers and the budget should be considered.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council has the authority under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998 and the Localism Act 2011 to award discretionary relief to charities and non-profit making businesses. The Non-Domestic Rating Act (Consequential & Other Amendments) Regulations 2023 gives the Council the power to decide the maximum length of backdating of discretionary relief. This report recommends the period of backdating of this relief following these regulations.
Crime and Disorder	Not applicable

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Not applicable
Health and Wellbeing	Not applicable
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not applicable
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The cost of implementing this change is no higher than the current scheme. Any risks will be picked up as part of the overall business rate retention scheme.
Equality and Diversity	Not applicable
Privacy and Data Protection	Not applicable

## 7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Draft Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL- REVENUES AND  
BENEFITS SERVICE- POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES

DISCRETIONARY  
AND  
HARDSHIP RELIEF  
POLICY

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Version Control

Version	Date	Comments	Name
1.0	30.11.2012	First draft	ZDK
1.1	06.03.2013	Amended	ZDK
1.2	25.03.2014	Amended	ZDK
1.3	19.01.2015	Amended	ZDK
1.4	05.08.2015	Amended	ZDK
1.5	24.08.2015	Amended	ZDK
1.6	18.07.2019	Amended	ZDK
1.7	26.03.2020	Amended	ZDK
1.8	04.04.2020	Amended	ZDK
1.9	02.01.2024	Amended	ZDK



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- 8. Promotion of availability of relief**
- 9. Equalities statement**
- 10. Policy Review**

## **1. Introduction and purpose of policy document**

### **1.1 Powers**

1.1.1 The power to award discretionary relief for Business Rates and Council Tax is allowed under the following Regulations:

- Business Rates – Sections 44a, 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998

### **1.2 Purpose**

1.2.1 This policy has been written to.

- set guidelines for the factors that should be considered when making a decision to award or refuse relief.
- set out the delegated authority to award relief in appropriate circumstances.
- establish an appeals procedure for customers dissatisfied with Swale Borough Council's decision; and
- safeguard the interest of the local taxpayers by ensuring that funds that are allocated for the award of relief are used in the most effective and economic way.

## **2. Business Rates – Relief for Charities, Not for Profit Organisations, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC), Rural properties and under Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011**

### **2.1 Legal Requirements**

2.1.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (amended under Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011) provides the discretion to award relief in the following circumstances:

- the customer is a registered charity, or a charitable organisation and the property is used for charitable purposes;
- the organisation is not established or conducted for profit and the main objects are philanthropic, religious or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or fine arts.
- the property is used for recreational purposes and all or part is occupied for the purposes of a club, society or an organisation not established or conducted for profit.
- the property is within a Rural Settlement List for the chargeable financial year and the rateable value does not exceed the amount prescribed by the Secretary of State; and
- the property is used for the benefit of the community, and it would be reasonable for Swale Borough Council to make a decision having taken the considerations of persons liable to pay Council Tax.

2.1.2 Under Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 discretionary relief may also be used to encourage business which may help to regenerate the Borough. Discretionary relief will be considered for any request that may bring exceptional regeneration benefits.

2.1.3 Registered Charities and CASCs are entitled to Mandatory Relief of 80%. Swale Borough Council has the discretion to award further rate relief of up to 20%, which is commonly referred to as a 'top-up'.

2.1.5 Rural properties are entitled to Mandatory Relief of 50% providing the relevant qualifying criteria are met. Swale Borough Council has the discretion to award a further rate relief of up to 50%.

2.1.6 Swale Borough Council has the discretion to award relief of up to 100% to organisations which are not established for profit, and which meet the relevant criteria.

2.1.7 The amount of relief awarded is entirely at the discretion of Swale Borough Council.

### **2.2 Legal Requirements – The Cash Cap and Subsidy Control**

2.2.1 Under the cash cap, no ratepayer can in any circumstances exceed the £110,000 cash cap across all their hereditaments in England.



2.2.2 Rate relief for charities and non-profit making bodies is not normally considered under the cash cap because the recipients are not in market competition with other businesses. However, if they are engaged in commercial activities, compete with commercial bodies, or have a commercial partner, rate relief could constitute a government subsidy. In such cases it would be unlikely that the customer would be considered for rate relief.

## 2.3 Financial Impact

2.3.1 From April 2013 Discretionary Relief will be funded partly by the billing authority, the major preceptors (excluding the Police), and partly by the Government through the Non-Domestic Rates Pool.

2.3.2 The percentage of Discretionary Relief that must be funded by each Local Authority is as follows.

Type of Relief	% Cost to Central Government	% SBC (Billing authority)	Kent County Council	Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue
'Top Up' Discretionary Relief	50%	40%	9%	1%
Other Discretionary Relief (where Mandatory Relief is not applicable)	50%	40%	9%	1%

2.3.3 . To minimise the cost of discretionary relief, ratepayers that may be entitled to Mandatory Relief must endeavour to qualify for such relief before an application for Discretionary Relief can be considered.

## 2.4 Persons who can make application

2.4.1 Applications must be made by the ratepayer.

2.4.2 Where the ratepayer is an organisation, the application must be made by a person with the authority to act on behalf of the organisation. Swale Borough Council may ask for evidence that the person making the application is entitled to act in that capacity.

## 2.5 The Decision-Making Process

2.5.1 Although there is no statutory necessity to complete a formal application form, it is recommended that a form be completed, as it will act as a checklist of criteria to be met or questions to be answered. This will assist in speeding up the application process.

- 2.5.2 All applications will be considered on an individual basis. Consideration for awarding Discretionary Relief is based on the organisation's ability to meet its Business Rate liability. Therefore, copies of the last three years' audited accounts are to be submitted with the application form. Where audited accounts are not available, financial statements prepared by, or approved by, an appropriate representative shall be considered. For a new organisation 12 months' projected cash flow forecast are required. Any award will be based on the organisation's recent income/expenditure results.
- 2.5.3 Where an organisation has retained funds, or built-up reserves, for a purpose related to the aims and objectives of the organisation, provided that the works are completed within three years of the date of application, those funds/reserves may be disregarded for the purposes of the award of relief. It is accepted that funds may have to be accrued over many years to fund major projects e.g. replacing an ageing building, and consideration to this will be given on an individual basis.
- 2.5.4 Relief is likely to be awarded where it is clear that the activities of the applicant are of direct benefit to the local community.
- 2.5.5 Relief may be refused or capped if it is considered that the financial cost to Swale Borough Council or the local community outweighs the benefits generated through the award of relief.
- 2.5.6 Organisations with unallocated reserves or substantial assets (taken to mean 12 months or more of operating costs) will be excluded from qualification if it is determined that those reserves or assets could reasonably be used to provide financial support.
- 2.5.7 To ensure there is a fair and consistent approach to the award of Discretionary Relief, all applications will be considered within the guidelines of this Policy, and a written record will be kept on file of the decisions and factors considered in the process. The decision will be available free of charge to the applicant on request.
- 2.5.8 Swale Borough Council will consider applications within 15 working days of the application and all supporting information being received and will notify the customer should there be a delay in processing the application.
- 2.5.9 Swale Borough Council will notify the applicant of the decision in writing, and where less than the maximum amount of relief is granted or the relief is refused, an explanation of the reasons why will be given.
- 2.5.10 Swale Borough Council will not consider applications where the customer has failed to provide information within the timescales provided to them and will notify the customer in writing that the application has been refused.
- 2.5.11 Where an application has been refused either initially or through an appeal, further applications will not be considered within the same financial year unless:
- the use of the property changes; or

- the objectives of the organisation change; or
- there have been other changes that may affect Swale Borough Council's decision e.g. where an organisation has taken action to address an issue which had previously precluded an award of relief.

2.5.12 There is no time limit for an organisation to make application for Discretionary Relief. Swale Borough Council must determine applications within six months after the end of the financial year (between 1 April and 30 September) for which the application for relief is made. After this time applications are invalid.

## **2.6 Period of Rate Relief**

2.6.1 Discretionary Rate Relief will be awarded for one financial year (from 1 April to 31 March) except in circumstances where consideration is being given to awarding relief for a previous financial year within the qualifying timescales outlined in paragraph 2.5.12.

2.6.2 Customers receiving relief will be contacted and invited to reapply for relief on an annual basis, or as specified by Swale Borough Council.

## **2.7 Calculation of relief**

2.7.1 Relief will be calculated as a percentage of the Business Rates bill. Should the Business Rates bill reduce within the period Discretionary Rate Relief is granted, the relief will be reduced proportionately.

2.7.2 If the Business Rates bill increases within the period Discretionary Rate Relief is granted i.e. there is an increase in rateable value, the amount awarded will not automatically be increased. In such cases, Swale Borough Council, upon request of the customer, will reconsider the application and may award additional relief.

## **2.8 Authority to process applications and award Relief**

2.8.1 In the interests of efficiency, the authority to consider applications is delegated as set out in the table below.

<b>Thresholds – Annual Cost to Local Authority</b>	<b>Position of Authority</b>	<b>Counter Authority</b>
Up to £30,000	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Not required
Over £30,000	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Director of Resources

## **2.9 Special Provisions**

- 2.9.1 The full 20% 'top up', discretionary relief may be applied to charities and other premises (apart from charity shops) but will normally only be awarded if the charity is a local one, not a national one (a local charity is defined to be one who only operates in the particular Council area or who are part of a national charity but whose accounts and finances are specific to a local area). If the premises are operated by a national charity that does not exist to wholly or mainly benefit the residents of the local area, then discretionary relief will not normally be awarded to 'top up' the 80% mandatory award. If the charity can provide proof that part of their time is spent providing services to residents of Swale, the 20% 'top up' may be allocation in proportion to the amount of their work that is provided for Swale residents.
- 2.9.2 Swale Borough Council will consider the contribution and benefit that the charity has made to the local community.
- 2.9.3 Discretionary Relief for clubs will normally be granted at a lower rate if the organisation operates a licensed bar. Membership must be active rather than social membership, and wholly or mainly benefit the residents of the local area. Consideration to award relief will only be given if the club is able to fully demonstrate that the bar is not the primary or significant attraction for the majority of the members.
- 2.9.4 Schools with Academy status will not normally be awarded Discretionary Relief to top up the mandatory award.

## **2.10 Backdating Applications**

- 2.10.1 Previously legislation permitted discretionary relief only to be awarded back to the start of the previous financial year where the application is submitted and assessed prior to the end of September in a relevant year.
- 2.10.2 The Non-Domestic Rating Bill, which comes into effect 1 April 2024, means that local authorities can set their own rules for notifications of discretionary reliefs in their area. Within this Policy, the Borough Council will continue to determine the awards of backdated discretionary relief under the terms of 2.10.1 above. Applications will be considered for the backdating of discretionary relief from 1 April 2024 for a maximum period of 12 months from the date of the application.

## **2.11 Right of appeal**

- 2.11.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision regarding discretionary relief made by Swale Borough Council. However, Swale Borough Council recognises that customers should be entitled to have a decision objectively reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. For further information on how to appeal please refer to Section 6 of this Policy.



### **3. Business Rates - Relief for properties that are partially unoccupied for a temporary period (Section 44a)**

#### **3.1 Legal Requirements**

- 3.1.1 Under section 44a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 a Local Authority has the discretion to allow rate relief where a property is partly occupied for a short period. Each case will be decided on its own merits.
- 3.1.2 The definition of a 'short period' is not prescribed with the law, and therefore Swale Borough Council has discretion to decide the period relief should be awarded. In the guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2002 it is suggested that this could be a period of weeks or months.
- 3.1.3 Partially occupied rate relief (also referred to as Section 44a Relief) is not intended to be used where part of a property is temporarily not used. The intention is aimed at situations where there are practical difficulties in occupying or vacating part of the property.

#### **3.2 Financial Impact**

- 3.2.1 From April 2013 the cost to Swale Borough Council and major preceptors of such relief, is set out in the table below.

Organisation	Central Government	Swale Borough Council	Kent County Council	Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue
Share of the cost	50%	40%	9%	1%

- 3.2.2 Swale Borough Council recognises that awarding this relief is beneficial to local businesses. Therefore Section 44a Relief will be awarded in all cases that meet the statutory requirements. All other cases will be considered on their merits.

#### **3.3 Persons who can make application**

- 3.3.1 Applications must be made by the ratepayer.
- 3.3.2 Swale Borough Council will require a written application, and the ratepayer must supply a plan of the property, with the unoccupied portions clearly identified.

#### **3.4 The decision-making process**

- 3.4.1 There are no restrictions in the provisions of a Section 44a Relief regarding the type of property or circumstances in which relief can be awarded.
- 3.4.2 Once Swale Borough Council has received an application, providing the application meets the qualifying criteria, relief will be awarded.

- 3.4.3 Swale Borough Council will require accompanied access to the property during normal working hours in order to verify the application. Further access will be required on at least one occasion each month, during normal office hours, during the period for which relief is being awarded.
- 3.4.4 Relief will not be awarded under any circumstance where it is not possible to verify the application.
- 3.4.5 Swale Borough Council will consider applications within 15 working days of the application and all supporting information being received and will notify the customer should there be a delay in processing the application.
- 3.4.6 Swale Borough Council will notify the applicant of the decision in writing, and where the relief is refused, an explanation of the reasons why will be given.
- 3.4.7 Swale Borough Council will not consider applications where the customer has failed to provide information within the timescales provided to them and will notify the customer in writing that the application has been refused.
- 3.4.8 To ensure there is a fair and consistent approach to the award of Section 44a Relief, all applications will be considered within the guidelines of this Policy, and a written record will be kept on file of the decisions and factors considered in the process. The decision will be available free of charge to the applicant on request.

### **3.5 Period of Section 44a Relief**

- 3.5.1 Section 44a Relief will only be applied to a property that is partly occupied for a short period. The relief will normally only be awarded to properties that are being progressively occupied or progressively vacated.
- 3.5.2 Section 44a Relief will end under the following circumstances:
- at the end of a financial year, regardless of the date relief was applied;
  - where all or part of the unoccupied area becomes occupied; or
  - where the person liable for Business Rates changes.
- 3.5.3 A new application may be submitted immediately by the customer if relief ends for any of the reasons outlined in 3.5.1.

### **3.6 Calculation of Section 44a Relief**

- 3.6.1 Where Swale Borough Council agrees to award a Section 44a Relief, we will notify the Valuation Officer to seek a reduction in the rateable value.
- 3.6.2 The amount of relief is calculated on a statutory basis based on the rateable value of the empty portion of the property. The appropriate rateable value is provided to Swale Borough Council by the Valuation Office Agency.

### **3.7 Authority to Award Section 44a Relief**

- 3.7.1 In the interests of efficiency, the authority to consider applications is delegated to Swale Borough Council Business Rates Officers.

### **3.8 Backdating Section 44a Applications**

- 3.8.1 Where a backdated application is received, the customer will be required to produce evidence to prove the area was unoccupied for the period the relief relates to. Acceptance of such evidence is at the discretion of Swale Borough Council.

### **3.9 Right of appeal**

- 3.9.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a Section 44a decision made by Swale Borough Council because the award is discretionary. However, Swale Borough Council recognises that customers should be entitled to have a decision objectively reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. For further information on how to appeal please refer to Section 6 of this Policy.



## **4. Business Rates - Hardship Relief**

### **4.1 Legal Requirements**

- 4.1.1 Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides a Local Authority with the discretion to reduce or remit payment of rates under the grounds of hardship.
- 4.1.2 Swale Borough Council can reduce or remit the payment of rates where it is satisfied that the customer would sustain hardship if we did not do so, and that it is reasonable to award relief having taken into account the interests of the Council Taxpayers.
- 4.1.3 There is no statutory definition of 'hardship', and so it is for Swale Borough Council to decide on the facts of each case as to whether to exercise our discretion. Swale Borough Council may adopt rules for the consideration of hardship, but are unable to adopt a blanket policy, and so each case will be considered individually.
- 4.1.4 It is the Government's guidance that remission of business rates on the grounds of hardship is the exception rather than the rule.

### **4.2 Legal Requirements – Subsidy Control**

- 4.2.1 Competition rules restrict Government subsidies to businesses. Relief from taxes, including business rates, could be considered such subsidy.
- 4.2.2 Hardship Relief for customers engaged in commercial activities, which compete with commercial bodies or have a commercial partner, could constitute a subsidy. In such cases it would be unlikely that the customer would be considered for Hardship Relief.

### **4.3 Financial Impact**

- 4.3.1 Discretionary Hardship Relief is funded partly by the billing authority, major preceptors (excluding Kent Police), and partly by Central Government.
- 4.3.2 The percentage of Discretionary Hardship Relief that must be funded is as follows.

<b>Type of Relief</b>	<b>% Cost to Central Government</b>	<b>% Cost to Swale Borough Council</b>	<b>% Cost to Kent County Council</b>	<b>% Cost to Kent &amp; Medway Fire &amp; Rescue</b>
Hardship Relief	50%	40%	9%	1%

### **4.4 Persons who can make application**

- 4.4.1 Applications must be made in writing by the ratepayer or their agent.
- 4.4.2 Applications for hardship relief must be accompanied by the following:
- the most recent accounts and the last audited accounts.

- an up-to-date trading statement showing the current financial position of the business;
- details of the amount of relief being requested and the period of time it is being requested for; and
- an explanation of the benefits to the community arising from an award of hardship relief.

#### **4.5 The Decision-Making Process**

- 4.5.1 Although there is no statutory necessity to complete a formal application form, it is recommended that a form be completed, as it will act as a checklist of criteria to be met or questions to be answered. This will assist in speeding up the application process.
- 4.5.2 All applications will be considered on an individual basis, and decisions will be made in accordance with this Policy. The following examples indicate circumstances where it may be appropriate to award Hardship Relief. They are included in this Policy in the form of broad, general guidelines and are not intended to be prescriptive:
- the customer will suffer hardship if the relief is not granted.
  - there is a direct benefit to the ratepayer or the community or no adverse impact to other ratepayers or the community as a result of awarding relief.
  - the cost to local Council Taxpayers is proportional to the benefits to the community;
  - the ratepayer's business has been detrimentally affected by circumstances beyond the ratepayer's control and that do not constitute part of the normal risks in running a business e.g. a natural disaster or an unusual or uncontrollable event in the neighbourhood of the business.
  - by refusing to award the relief may result in the loss of the business. The impact on local amenities must be considered if the business is the sole provider of a service in the local area e.g. the only village shop; and
  - by refusing to award the relief may result in the loss of the business. The impact on employment prospects in the local area must be considered i.e. if the closure results in a large number of redundancies, the social aspect of increasing unemployment and the possible negative impact in attracting further investment in the area must be considered.
- 4.5.3 Swale Borough Council will only grant Hardship Relief for a period where there is clear evidence of hardship for the ratepayer concerned. This will ordinarily be for short period of time and not on an on-going basis.
- 4.5.4 Hardship Rate Relief may not be awarded if there are alternative facilities within the area or if the business is situated in an area with adequate public transport links to alternative businesses. Relief should be in the interests of the community as a whole. If the decision is that it is not in the interests of the community as a whole to grant Hardship Relief, then the decision will be final, with no rights to appeal.

- 4.5.5 Swale Borough Council will also consider applications from new businesses as well as established businesses. We recognise that a new business could also be the sole provider of a service in our local area which contributes to the health and quality of life of the Council Taxpayers generally.
- 4.5.6 Swale Borough Council recognises that there may be occasional circumstances in which the use of this power is beneficial to either an individual ratepayer or the community. However, in accordance with Government guidelines, it accepts that this power should be used sparingly and only in the most exceptional of circumstances.
- 4.5.7 Swale Borough Council will consider applications within 15 working days of the application and all supporting information being received and will notify the customer should there be a delay in processing the application.
- 4.5.8 Swale Borough Council will notify the applicant of the decision in writing, and where less than the maximum amount of relief is granted or the relief is refused, an explanation of the reasons why will be given.
- 4.5.9 Swale Borough Council will not consider applications on the grounds of hardship where the customer has failed to provide information within the timescales provided to them and will notify the customer in writing that the application has been refused.
- 4.5.10 To ensure there is a fair and consistent approach to the award of Hardship Relief, all applications will be considered within the guidelines of this Policy and a written record will be kept on file of the decisions and factors considered in the process. The decision will be available free of charge to the applicant on request.

#### **4.6 Period of Hardship Relief**

- 4.6.1 Swale Borough Council will normally only award Hardship Relief retrospectively. However, where the applicant can show that the circumstances will remain the same for a period up to the end of the current financial year, relief may be award for the remainder of the year.
- 4.6.2 In all cases Hardship Relief will end in the following circumstances:
- at the end of a financial year.
  - a change of liable person.
  - the property becomes empty or unoccupied.
  - the customer enters any form of Insolvency proceedings; and
  - the customer's financial circumstances change. The customer must inform Swale Borough Council if their circumstances change.

#### **4.7 Calculation of Hardship Relief**

4.7.1 Hardship Relief will be calculated as a percentage of the Business Rates bill. Should the Business Rates bill reduce within the period Hardship Rate Relief is granted, the relief will be reduced proportionately.

4.7.2 If the Business Rates bill increase within the period Hardship Relief is granted, i.e. an increase in rateable value, the amount awarded will not automatically be increased. In such cases, Swale Borough Council, upon request of the customer, will reconsider the application and may award additional relief.

#### **4.8 Authority to process applications and award relief**

4.8.1 In the interests of efficiency, the authority to consider applications is delegated as set out below.

<b>Thresholds – Annual Cost to Local Authority</b>	<b>Position of Authority</b>	<b>Counter Authority</b>
Up to £30,000	Revenues and Benefits Manager-	Head of Finance & Procurement
Over £30,000	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Director of Resources

#### **4.9 Backdating Applications**

4.9.1 Legislation allows claims received between 1 April and 30 September in any year to be backdated to 1 April of the previous year. Customers requesting hardship relief to be backdated i.e. for the previous year will be dealt with in the same way as applications for the current year.

4.9.2 Applications outside of the qualifying period in 4.9.1 will not be backdated beyond 1 April of the year in which it is awarded.

#### **4.10 Right of appeal**

4.10.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision to award hardship relief made by Swale Borough Council because the award is discretionary. However, Swale Borough Council recognises that customers should be entitled to have a decision objectively reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. For further information on how to appeal please refer to Section 6 of this Policy.

## **5. Retail Discount**

### **5.1 Introduction and Purpose**

5.1.1 The 2024-25 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rate Scheme will provide eligible, occupied, retail, hospitality, and leisure properties with a 75% relief, up to a cash cap limit of £110,000 per business.

5.1.2 This section provides guidance about the operation and delivery of that policy, including:

- factors that should be considered when making a decision to award or refuse relief.
- arrangements to delegate authority to award relief in appropriate circumstances; and
- appeals procedure for customers dissatisfied with the Council's decision.

### **5.2 How will the relief be provided?**

5.2.1 The Government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out in this guidance, reimburse the Council where it uses its discretionary relief powers, introduced by the Localism Act (under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended) to grant relief.

5.2.2 It is for Swale Borough Council to decide on the scheme which they chose to adopt and decide in each individual case when to grant relief under section 47.

### **5.3 Properties that may benefit from the relief**

5.3.1 Properties which benefit from the relief will be those which for a chargeable day in 2024-25:

- a) meet the eligibility criteria; and
- b) the ratepayer for that chargeable day has not refused the relief for the eligible hereditament. The ratepayer may refuse the relief for each eligible hereditament anytime up to 30 April 2024. The ratepayer cannot withdraw their refusal for either all or part of the financial year.

5.3.2 In line with the legal restrictions in section 47(8A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council may not grant the discount to themselves certain precepting authorities (e.g., a parish or county council) or a functional body, within the meaning of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

5.3.3 We consider shops, restaurants, cafes, and drinking establishments to mean the following.

<p><b>Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shops (such as: florist, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off licence, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc)</li> <li>▪ Charity shops</li> <li>▪ Opticians</li> <li>▪ Post offices</li> <li>▪ Furnishing shops/ display rooms (such as: carpet shops, double glazing, garage doors)</li> <li>▪ Car/ caravan show rooms</li> <li>▪ Second hand car lots</li> <li>▪ Markets</li> <li>▪ Petrol stations</li> <li>▪ Garden centres</li> <li>▪ Art galleries (where art is for sale/hire)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hair and beauty services (such as: hairdressers, nail bars, beauty salons, tanning shops, etc)</li> <li>▪ Shoe repairs/ key cutting</li> <li>▪ Travel agents</li> <li>▪ Ticket offices e.g. for theatre</li> <li>▪ Dry cleaners</li> <li>▪ Launderettes</li> <li>▪ PC/ TV/ domestic appliance repair</li> <li>▪ Funeral directors</li> <li>▪ Photo processing</li> <li>▪ DVD/ video rentals</li> <li>▪ Tool hire</li> <li>▪ Car hire</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and/ or drink to visiting members of the public:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restaurants</li> <li>▪ Takeaways</li> <li>▪ Sandwich shops</li> <li>▪ Coffee shops</li> <li>▪ Pubs</li> <li>▪ Bars</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hereditaments which are being used as cinemas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cinemas</li> </ul>

<b>Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including for the viewing of such activities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sports grounds and clubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Museums and art galleries</li> <li>▪ Nightclubs</li> <li>▪ Sport and leisure facilities</li> <li>▪ Stately homes and historic houses</li> <li>▪ Theatres</li> <li>▪ Tourist attractions</li> <li>▪ Gyms</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public halls</li> <li>▪ Clubhouses</li> <li>▪ Clubs and institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hotels</li> <li>▪ Guest and Boarding House</li> <li>▪ Holiday homes</li> <li>▪ Caravan parks and sites</li> </ul>

5.3.3 The list set out above is not intended to be exhaustive as it would be impossible to list the many and varied retail uses that exist. There will also be mixed uses. However, it is intended to be a guide as to the types of uses that Swale Borough Council considers for this purpose to be retail. Swale Borough Council will determine whether particular properties not listed are broadly similar in nature to those above and, if so, to consider them eligible for the relief. Conversely, properties that are not broadly similar in nature to those listed above should not be eligible for the relief.

#### 5.4 Properties that will NOT qualify for relief

5.4.1 The list below sets out the types of uses that Swale Borough Council does not consider to be retail use for the purpose of this relief. Again, the Borough will determine whether particular properties are broadly similar in nature to those below and, if so, to consider them not eligible for the relief under their local scheme.

<b>Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial services (e.g. banks, building societies, cash points, bureau de change, payday lenders, pawn brokers)</li> <li>▪ Medical services (e.g. vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)</li> <li>▪ Professional services (e.g. solicitors, accountants, insurance agents/ financial advisers, tutors, employment agencies, estate agents, letting agents)</li> <li>▪ Post office sorting office</li> </ul>
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## **5.5 How much relief will be available?**

- 5.5.1 Subject to the £110,000 cash cap per business, the total amount of government-funded relief available for each property for 2024-25 under this scheme is for chargeable days from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, 75% of the chargeable amount.
- 5.5.2 The relief will be applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by section 31 grants have been applied, but before those where the Council has used its wider discretionary relief powers introduced by the Localism Act 2011, which are not funded by section 31 grants.
- 5.5.3 Subject to the cash cap, the eligibility for the discount and the relief will be assessed and calculated on a daily basis. The formula that will be used to determine the amount of relief to be granted for a chargeable day for a particular hereditament in the financial year 2024-25 is  $V \times 0.75$ , where  $V$  is the daily charge for the hereditament for the chargeable day after the application of any mandatory relief and any certain other discretionary reliefs.
- 5.5.4 Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be entitled to relief for each of their eligible properties up to the maximum £110,000 cash cap, per business.

## **5.6 The cash cap and subsidy control**

- 5.6.1 Under the cash cap, no ratepayer can in any circumstances exceed the £110,000 cash cap across all of their hereditaments in England. Where a ratepayer has a qualifying connection with another ratepayer then those ratepayers will be considered as one ratepayer for the purposes of the cash caps. A ratepayer shall be treated as having a qualifying connection with another:
- a) where both ratepayers are companies, and
    - (i) one is a subsidiary of the other; or
    - (ii) both are subsidiaries of the same company; or
  - b) where only one ratepayer is a company, the other ratepayer (the “second ratepayer”) has such an interest in that company as would, if the second ratepayer were a company, result in its being the holding company of the other.
- 5.6.2 Furthermore, the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme is likely to amount to subsidy. Any relief provided by the Council under this scheme will need to comply with the UK’s domestic and international subsidy control obligations.
- 5.6.3 To the extent that the Council is seeking to provide relief that falls within the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance, Article 364 of the TCA allows an economic actor (e.g., a holding company and its subsidiaries) to receive up to £325,000 Special Drawing Rights (£343,000 as at 9 December 2021) in a three-year period (consisting of the 2024-25 year and the two previous financial years). Expanded Retail Discount granted from 2020-21 onwards does not count towards the



£343,000 allowance but BEIS business grants and any other subsidies claimed under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit should be counted.

- 5.6.4 In those cases where it is clear to the Council that the ratepayer is likely to breach the cash cap or the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit then the authority will automatically withhold the relief. The amount of relief awarded will be calculated in the event of a change of circumstances. This could include, for example, a backdated change to the rateable value or the hereditament. This change of circumstances could arise during the year in question or during a later year.

## **5.7 Period of Award and Backdating**

- 5.7.1 This is a measure for 2024/25 only. Where the Council has reason to believe (based on the information held) that the criteria for relief has been met, it will make an annual award at the start of 2024/25.
- 5.7.2 Where liability starts, ends, or changes part way through a year, entitlement to relief will be reviewed in line with the guidance set out above.
- 5.7.3 Swale Borough Council will not accept any backdated requests for relief beyond the end of financial year for which relief is being claimed.

## **5.8 Decision making**

- 5.8.1 Where Swale Borough Council has reason to believe (based on the information held) that the criteria for relief has been met, it will award relief without the need for an application.
- 5.8.2 In all other circumstances an application will be required in writing setting out how the criteria for relief have been met.
- 5.8.3 In the interests of efficiency, the authority to consider applications is delegated to the Business Rates Officer, who will ensure that a decision and notified in writing within 15 working days of receipt of application, or as soon as is reasonably practical thereafter.

## **5.9 Right of Appeal**

- 5.9.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision to award retail relief made by Swale Borough Council because the award is discretionary. However, Swale Borough Council recognises that customers should be entitled to have a decision objectively reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. For further information on how to appeal please refer to Section 6 of this Policy.

## **6. Business Rates Discretionary Relief - Right of Appeal**

### **6.1 Overview**

- 6.1.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision regarding discretionary relief made by Swale Borough Council. However, Swale Borough Council recognises that customers should be entitled to have a decision objectively reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.
- 6.1.2 Swale Borough Council will give consideration to all appeals in accordance with this Policy and agrees to abide by the following appeals process. Aggrieved customers should make an appeal in accordance with the process.
- 6.1.3 Customers will be notified of the appeals process by Swale Borough Council in writing at the time that they are notified of the outcome of their request for discretionary relief.
- 6.1.4 Appeals against decisions to award discretionary relief will not be considered by the same officers administering the application for relief and will instead normally be considered by an Appeals and Liaison Officer.
- 6.1.5 Decisions made after the appeals process has been followed will be final. Submitting an appeal does not affect the appellant's legal rights to challenge a decision made by the Council through the Judicial Review process.

### **6.2 Persons that can appeal**

- 6.2.1 Appeals may only be made by the original applicant. An appellant may appoint a third party to act on their behalf, and in such cases Swale Borough Council will require written authorisation from the appellant.
- 6.2.2 Customers may appeal against the decision to award or not award relief, or against the level of relief awarded. An appeal must be made within four weeks of the issue of the letter notifying them of Swale Borough Council decision.
- 6.2.3 Any appeals received outside of the four-week period will only be considered if Swale Borough Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances led to the delay in submitting the appeal.

### **6.3 Applications for appeal**

- 6.3.1 Appeals must be in writing and include the following:
- the reasons why it is believed the decision should be amended; and
  - any new or additional information relevant to the decision-making process.

- 6.3.2 The appellant does not have a right to appear in person but may make a request to present evidence in person. Such requests will be considered at the discretion of Swale Borough Council, as appropriate.
- 6.3.3 Swale Borough Council can request a meeting with the customer to hear evidence in person.

#### **6.4 Notification of the final decision following appeal**

- 6.4.1 Swale Borough Council will consider appeal applications within 15 working days of the application and all supporting information being received and will notify the customer should there be a delay in the consideration of the appeal.
- 6.4.2 Swale Borough Council will notify the applicant of the final decision in writing within the 15 working days period, and whether an appeal is refused or accepted a full explanation of the decision-making process will be given. A written record will be kept on file of the decisions and factors considered in the process.
- 6.4.3 For Business Rates, both Discretionary Relief and Hardship Relief is the subject of separate applications. Should a Swale Borough Council Officer decide to reject the appeal in respect of Discretionary Relief they cannot offer Hardship Relief as an alternative. However, the applicant can be invited to make a separate application.

#### **6.5 Discontinuation of Applications or Appeals**

- 6.5.1 If Swale Borough Council have requested further evidence from the customer and this has not been received within the specified time given, the appeal will not be considered.
- 6.5.2 Customers will be advised in writing the reason why their application has been discontinued.

#### **6.6 Cancellation of relief**

- 6.6.1 Relief will be cancelled if:
- the applicant ceases to be the ratepayer or taxpayer.
  - the property becomes empty or becomes occupied, or all or part of the unoccupied area becomes occupied.
  - the use of the property changes.
  - the aims or objectives of the ratepayer changes; or
  - the financial circumstances for a customer changes.
- 6.6.2 Where relief is cancelled for any of the reasons above, a new application may be made by customers straight away.

## **7. Action to recover unpaid Business Rates whilst a decision is pending**

- 7.1 Once an application for discretionary relief is received, action may still be taken to recover any unpaid Business Rates until after the decision has been notified to the customer.
- 7.2 In the case where the customer has been notified of a decision and they exercise their rights to appeal, payment cannot be withheld pending an appeal decision. In the event that an appeal is successful, any overpayment will be refunded.
- 7.3 For circumstances where an application is being discontinued, recovery action will commence after the ratepayer has been notified of the discontinuation in writing.

## **8. Promotion of the availability of relief**

- 8.1 Swale Borough Council will proactively promote the availability of discretionary relief, in the following ways:
- all Business Rates will have included accompanying information explaining the availability of relief;
  - Swale Borough Council employees who deal with enquiries from customers will be trained in all aspects of this Policy and will actively promote the availability of relief when responding to customer enquiries.
  - Swale Borough Council will work in partnership with other organisations to promote the availability of relief.
  - information regarding the availability of reliefs will be published on our web site; and
  - a copy of this Policy will be placed on our website, and printed copies will be made available to ratepayers and other stakeholders on request.

## **9. Equalities Statement**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to this Policy and has found that there is no negative impact arising.

## **10. Policy Review**

- 10.1 This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to ensure it remains valid, effective, and relevant.

<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25</b>
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement Olga Cole, Management Accountant
<b>Classification</b>	Open
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 and the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators be agreed.

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Treasury management is the management of the Council’s cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council’s prudent financial management.
- 1.2 Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council’s legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

## 2. External Context

- 2.1 **Economic background:** The impact on the UK from higher interest rates and inflation, a weakening economic outlook, an uncertain political climate due to an upcoming general election, together with war in Ukraine and the Middle East, will be major influences on the Council’s treasury management strategy for 2024/25.
- 2.2 The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023, before maintaining this level in September and then again in November. Members of the BoE’s Monetary Policy Committee voted 6-3 in favour of keeping Bank Rate at 5.25%. The three dissenters wanted to increase rates by another 0.25%.
- 2.3 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged period of weak Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with the potential for a mild contraction due to ongoing weak economic activity. The outlook for CPI inflation was deemed to be highly uncertain, with near-term risks to CPI falling to the 2% target coming from potential energy price increases, strong domestic wage growth and persistence in price-setting.

- 2.4 ONS figures showed CPI inflation was 3.9% in November 2023, down from a 4.6% rate in the previous month and, in line with the recent trend, lower than expected. The core CPI inflation rate declined to 5.1% from the previous month's 5.7%, again lower than predictions. Looking ahead, using the interest rate path implied by financial markets the BoE expects CPI inflation to continue falling slowly, but taking until early 2025 to reach the 2% target before dropping below target during the second half 2025 and into 2026.
- 2.5 ONS figures showed the UK economy contracted by 0.1% between July and September 2023. The BoE forecasts that higher interest rates will constrain GDP growth, which will remain weak over the entire forecast horizon.
- 2.6 **Credit outlook:** Moody's revised its outlook on the UK sovereign to stable from negative to reflect its view of restored political predictability following the volatility after the 2022 mini-budget. Moody's also affirmed the Aa3 rating in recognition of the UK's economic resilience and strong institutional framework.
- 2.7 Following its rating action on the UK sovereign, Moody's revised the outlook on five UK banks to stable from negative and then followed this by the same action on five rated local authorities. However, within the same update the long-term ratings of those five local authorities were downgraded.
- 2.8 There remain competing tensions in the banking sector, on one side from higher interest rates boosting net income and profitability against another of a weakening economic outlook and likely recessions that increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets. However, the institutions on our adviser Arlingclose's counterparty list remain well-capitalised and their counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

### 3. Background

#### Interest Rate Forecast and Market Outlook

- 3.1 **Interest rate forecast (December 2023):** Although UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated, the Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that Bank Rate has peaked at 5.25%. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will start reducing rates in 2024 to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. Arlingclose sees rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early-mid 2026.
- 3.2 Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to be broadly stable at current levels (amid continued volatility), following the decline in yields towards the end of 2023, which reflects the expected lower medium-term path for Bank Rate. Yields will remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

Official Bank Rate	Curr ent	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Upside Risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.75	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00
Downside Risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00

- 3.3 For the purpose of setting the 2024/25 budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 4.50%, and that new short-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 5.50%.
- 3.4 Where investment income exceeds budget, e.g. from higher risk investments including pooled funds, or debt interest paid falls below budget, e.g. from cheap short-term borrowing, then an assessment of savings will be made with a view to transferring an appropriate amount to a treasury management reserve to cover the risk of capital losses or higher interest rates payable in future years. Transfers to reserves will be brought before the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

### **Borrowing Strategy**

- 3.5 The Council's chief objective, when borrowing money, is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
- 3.6 The Council currently holds £5 million of loans, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The Council may borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £57.5 million.
- 3.7 Councils are required to balance their revenue budget annually and cannot borrow to achieve a balanced position. However, they have very far reaching powers to borrow to fund capital expenditure. Recently this has been funded from borrowing from other Local Authorities. There is also an option to borrow from Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), which is part of the Debt Management Office which is part of the Treasury. Borrowing from PWLB can be for up to 50 years at rates which are below commercial rates.
- 3.8 CIPFA has published its revised Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice and these are available for sale on the CIPFA publications website. The Revised Prudential Code took effect from December 2021, although authorities could defer introducing the revised reporting requirements until the 2023/24 financial year if they wish. It particularly highlights that the requirement that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return applies with immediate effect. In August 2021 HM Treasury significantly revised their PWLB guidance. This includes a statement highlighting that the government and CIPFA are clear that borrowing to invest for yield is not permitted under the prudential framework. This Council has had a clear policy of not borrowing for income purposes.

- 3.9 Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Short-term interest rates are currently at a 15-year high but are expected to fall in the coming years and it is therefore likely to be more cost effective over the medium-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.
- 3.10 By doing so, the Council is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal/short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Council with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2024/25 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.
- 3.11 The Council may also consider forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a "cost of carry" in the intervening period. In addition, the Council may borrow short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.
- 3.12 The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- HM Treasury's PWLB Lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
  - UK Infrastructure Bank Ltd
  - Any institution approved for investments
  - UK Local Authorities
  - Any other UK public sector body
  - Any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
  - UK public and private sector pension funds (except the Kent Pension Fund)
  - Capital market bond investors
  - Retail investors via a regulated peer-to-peer platform
  - UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues.
- 3.13 In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:
- Leasing
  - Hire Purchase
  - Private Finance Initiative
  - Sale and Leaseback



- Similar Asset Based Finance

3.14 The Council has the following loan outstanding:

<b>Lender</b>	<b>Amount (£ million)</b>	<b>Borrowing rate</b>	<b>Start Date of Loan</b>	<b>Maturity Date of loan</b>	<b>Duration</b>
North Northamptonshire Council	5	4.30 %	27/02/2023	26/02/2024	12 months
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>				

### **Capital Programme**

- 3.15 The capital program contains a number of projects that will need to be funded from borrowing. The anticipated breakdown of capital funding is detailed in Appendix I. The Director of Resources has delegation to make borrowing decision as and when required to ensure best value is obtained and risks are minimised.
- 3.16 Short-term and variable rate loans: These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below.
- 3.17 Debt rescheduling: The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. As we currently don't have any long-term loans, this would not be applicable to 2024-25.

### **Treasury Investment Strategy**

- 3.18 The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Council's investment balance has ranged between £7.5 and £46.1 million with an average investment balance of £25 million. Levels are expected to be slightly lower in the forthcoming year, as capital projects require payment, as well as a reduction in passported government grant schemes.
- 3.19 The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Council aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.
- 3.20 The Council largely uses Money Market Funds and the Debt Management office for short-term investments. The only long-term investment remains the £3 million in the Church, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Property Fund.

- 3.21 The CIPFA Code doesn't permit local authorities to both borrow and invest long-term for cash flow management. But the Council may make long-term investments for treasury risk management purposes, including to manage interest risk by investing sums borrowed in advance for the capital programme for up to three years; to manage inflation risk by investing usable reserves in instruments whose value raises with inflation; and to manage price risk by adding diversification to the strategic pooled fund portfolio.
- 3.22 **Environmental, Social and Governance Policy (ESG):** considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Council's ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Council will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.
- 3.23 **Business models:** Under the International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 9 the accounting for certain investments depends on the Council's "business model" for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.
- 3.24 The Council could make use of the following counterparties for both Treasury and Non Treasury investments:

<b>Treasury Investments</b>	
Government	Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.
Banks and Building Societies (unsecured)	Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.
Operational Bank Accounts	The Council may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £500,000 per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Council maintaining operational continuity.

Money Market Funds	Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Council will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.
Strategic Pooled Funds	Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.
Registered Providers (unsecured)	Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing and registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing in England. As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.
Secured investments	Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.
Other Investments	This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council's investment at risk.
<b>Non-Treasury Investments</b>	
Non-Treasury Investments	The Council invests in property in the borough and will, where there are opportunities, consider further investment, where this is primarily related to the functions of the Council such as service delivery and regeneration. However, the Council will not borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

3.25 The Council will retain the CCLA property fund and keep the remaining monies primarily in Money Market Funds and the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) (an investment facility operated by the UK Government) or other counterparties in table 4.1. The Head of Finance and Procurement does not believe that investing in equity or bond funds is advisable at the current time, given equity market valuations and the impact on bond investments. This will be reviewed as market conditions develop.

3.26 Currently the Council makes no direct investments in equities or corporate bonds. If this changed in the year the Head of Finance and Procurement will ensure that investments are consistent with the Council's health and climate change objectives.

3.27 Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council’s treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded, so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made;
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be; and,
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

3.28 Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as “rating watch negative” or “credit watch negative”) so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel, rather than an imminent change of rating.

3.29 The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will, therefore, be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Council’s treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria.

3.30 When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Council’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall, but will protect the principal sum invested.

3.31 The Council currently has the following Investments:

<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Average Rate %</b>	<b>Balance Invested at 30 November 2023 £'000</b>
Invesco Money Market Fund	5.33	3,000
DWS (Deutsche) Money Market Fund	5.24	2,470
Goldman Sachs Money Market Fund	5.27	3,000
Aberdeen Standard Money Market Fund	5.25	3,000
Black Rock Money Market Fund	5.27	3,000
Morgan Stanley Money Market Fund	5.32	3,000
SSGA Money Market Fund	5.29	3,000
CCLA Property Fund	5.04	3,000
<b>Total Investments</b>		<b>23,470</b>

- 3.32 The definition of investments in CIPFA’s revised Codes now covers all the financial assets of the Council, as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the 2018 Investment Guidance from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return. The Prudential and Treasury Management Codes now have detailed definitions of treasury, service and commercial investments.
- 3.33 The Council has not made, and will not make, any direct commercial investments outside of the Borough. Capital funds will be used for the benefit of local residents.
- 3.34 At 31 March 2023 the Council held £4.173 million of longstanding investments in 12 directly owned properties. These investments generated £0.2 million of investment income for the Council in 2022/23 after taking account of direct costs, representing a rate of return of 5.8%. No significant change in this Investment is anticipated in 2024/25.
- 3.35 Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments carry similar risks to the Council and are included here for completeness.
- 3.36 The loans made by the Council are shown below:

	<b>31 March 2023</b>
	<b>£’000</b>
Housing repair loans	1,748
Employee car loans	51
Other debtors	304
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,103</b>

- 3.37 The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, a loss allowance is calculated for each debt reflecting the statistical likelihood that the debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council, which for 2022/23 was £97,000. The loss allowance has been calculated by reference to the Council’s historic experience of default. In addition, to mitigate risk, all debts have to be managed in accordance with the Council’s Financial Regulations.
- 3.38 The most significant loans shown are the Housing Repair Loans which are loans for private sector housing home adaptations – landlords and owner-occupiers can apply for a loan for adaptations that will enable them to stay in their own homes. The risk relating to these loans is low as they are a charge of the property and are repayable when a property is sold.
- 3.39 An analysis of short-term debtors is reported to Policy and Resources committee as part of the quarterly Financial Management Report.

## 4. Proposal

- 4.1 **Approved counterparties:** The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in the table below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

Counterparty	Time Limit	Cash Limits
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited
Local Authorities and other government entities	25 years	£3m
Major UK banks / building societies unsecured deposits*	13 months	£3m
Leeds Building Society unsecured deposits*	As per credit advice	£1.5m
Close Brothers unsecured deposits*	As per credit advice	£1.5m
Money Market Funds*	n/a**	£3m each
Strategic Pooled Funds e.g., Absolute return, Equity income, Corporate Bond Funds, Multi Asset Funds	n/a**	£3m each
CCLA Property Fund	n/a**	£3m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£3m in aggregate
Secured Investments*	25 years	£3m in aggregate
Other Investments *	5 years	£3m in aggregate
Non treasury investments	As per credit advice	To be agreed on a case by case basis

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below.

\* **Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than [A-]. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

- 4.2 The Director of Resources in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources committee may consider longer duration depending on market conditions.
- 4.3 The Council may also purchase property for investment purposes, but the Council will not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. The Council may also make loans and investments for service purposes, for example in shared ownership housing, as loans to local businesses and landlords, or as equity investments and loans to the Council's owned companies, in line with existing policies and where there is a sound business case.

- 4.4 The Council does not directly invest in financial derivatives although these may be present in pooled funds and will be managed in line with the overall treasury strategy. The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to. In line with the CIPFA Code, the Council will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.
- 4.5 Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.
- 4.6 The Head of Finance and Procurement ensures that any commercial deals meet the regulatory requirements and the CIPFA prudential framework.

#### **Treasury Adviser**

- 4.7 The Council has appointed Arlingclose Limited as its treasury management adviser and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues. Officers meet with Arlingclose on a quarterly basis, receive information daily and attend relevant training courses.
- 4.8 The day-to-day treasury management activity is undertaken on the Council's behalf by Kent County Council's Treasury & Investments team to the criteria set out in this report. This has been particularly beneficial in using their relationships to obtain the low-cost loans from other Councils.

### **5. Alternative Options**

- 5.1 The Strategy is intended to give flexibility with regard to borrowing and investment options.
- 5.2 The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Director of Resources believes that the above Strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Impact on income and expenditure</b>	<b>Impact on risk management</b>
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Impact on income and expenditure</b>	<b>Impact on risk management</b>
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however, long-term interest costs may be less certain

## 6. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

6.1 Consultation has been taken with Arlingclose.

## 7. Implications

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	Good management of the Council's cash balances assists the overall financial position of the Council and this helps to meet the emerging Corporate Plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	The budget for net investment income in 2024/25 is £(121,000).
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Government and CIPFA requirements complied with.
Crime and Disorder	Not applicable
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Not applicable
Health and Wellbeing	Not applicable
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not applicable



<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Risk is controlled through adherence to specific guidance included in CIPFA's Treasury Management Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes. The principle of security of funds over-rides investment performance considerations.
Equality and Diversity	Not applicable
Privacy and Data Protection	Not applicable

## 8. Appendices

8.1 The following appendices are published with this report and form part of the report.

- Appendix I Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

## 9. Background Papers

None

### Acronyms Used:

BoE	The Bank of England
CCLA	Church, Charities and Local Authorities
CFR	Capital Financing Requirement
CIPFA	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DLUHC	Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
DMADF	Debt Management Account Deposit Facility
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
PWLB	Public Works Loan Board

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

### Background

There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators. The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. To demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the following indicators that must be set and monitored each year.

### Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

This is a key indicator of prudence. Statutory guidance states that external debt should not exceed the capital financing requirement in the previous year plus the estimates of any increase in the CFR at the end of the current year and the next two years. The table below demonstrates that the Council is complying with this aspect of the Prudential Code.

<b>Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimate</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Capital Financing Requirements	60,521	72,390	77,412	76,445
Gross External Debt (incl leases)	(10,000)	(30,500)	(40,500)	(50,500)
<b>Internal Borrowing</b>	<b>50,521</b>	<b>41,890</b>	<b>36,912</b>	<b>25,945</b>

### Estimates of Capital Expenditure

This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax. (See Capital Programme in 2024/25 Budget Report to Policy and Resources Committee.)

<b>Capital Expenditure and Financing</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimate</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>33,185</b>	<b>31,384</b>	<b>10,625</b>	<b>4,935</b>
Section 106 Contribution	110	0	0	0
Grants	14,015	16,469	2,725	2,725
Capital receipts	2,463	0	0	0
Reserves	1,910	871	350	460
Borrowing	14,687	14,044	7,550	1,750
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>33,185</b>	<b>31,384</b>	<b>10,625</b>	<b>4,935</b>

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

## Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This is an indicator of affordability, highlighting the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

<b>Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimate</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate</b>
<b>General Fund Total</b>	5.16%	6.85%	6.59%	6.36%

## Authorised Limit for External Debt

The Authorised Limit sets the maximum level of external borrowing on a gross basis (i.e., not net of investments) for the Council. It is measured on a daily basis against all external borrowing items on the Balance Sheet (i.e., long and short-term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long-term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long-term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with the Council's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing, and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

The Authorised Limit has been set on the estimate of the most likely, prudent but not worst-case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements.

The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).

<b>Authorised Limit for External Debt</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimate</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Borrowing	60,000	55,000	55,000	50,000
Other long-term liabilities	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,500</b>	<b>57,500</b>	<b>57,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

**Operational Boundary for External Debt**

The operational boundary is based on the Council's estimate of most likely (i.e., prudent but not worst case) scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements, and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring. Other long-term liabilities comprise finance leases and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

<b>Operational Boundary</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate £'000</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimate £'000</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate £'000</b>
Borrowing	40,000	45,000	45,000	40,000
Other long-term liabilities	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Operational Boundary</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>

**Interest Rate Exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

<b>Interest rate risk indicator</b>	<b>Limit</b>
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£(180,000)
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£180,000

**Maturity Structure of Borrowing**

This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing will be:

<b>Maturity Structure of Borrowing</b>	<b>Lower Limit for 2024/25 %</b>	<b>Upper Limit for 2024/25 %</b>
Under 12 months	0	100
12 months and within 24 months	0	100
24 months and within 5 years	0	100
5 years and within 10 years	0	100
10 years and above	0	100

Time period starts on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

### Long-term treasury management investments

The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management investments will be:

<b>Price Risk Indicator</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate £'000</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimate £'000</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimate £'000</b>	<b>No Fixed Date £'000</b>
Limit on principal invested longer than 1 year	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds and real estate investment trusts but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

**Liability benchmark:** To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

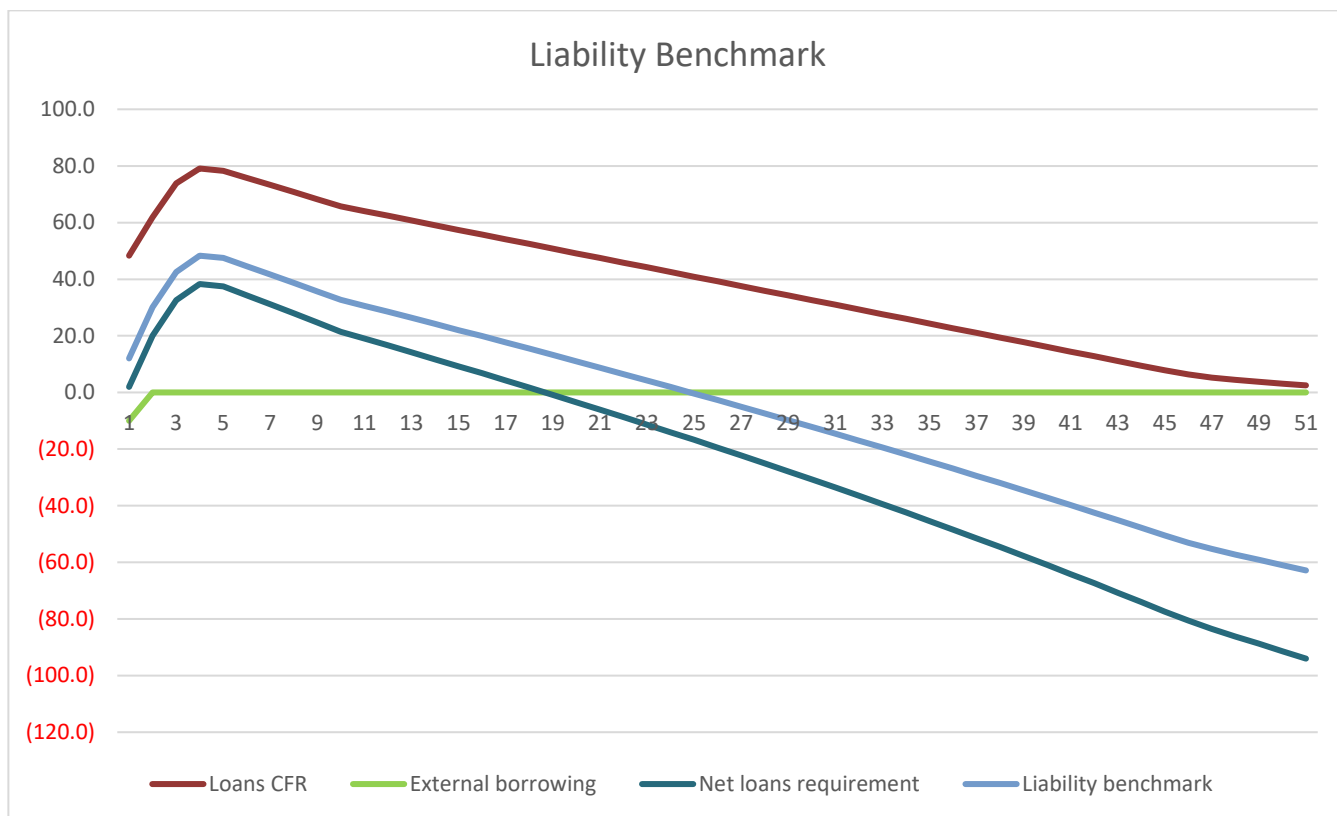
The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

### Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

	<b>31.3.23 Actual £m</b>	<b>31.3.24 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31.3.25 Forecast £m</b>	<b>31.3.26 Forecast £m</b>	<b>31.3.27 Forecast £m</b>
Loans CFR	48.3	61.9	73.9	79.1	78.3
Less: Balance sheet resources	(46.3)	(41.8)	(41.3)	(40.8)	(40.8)
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10	10	10	10	10
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>47.5</b>

The long-term liability benchmark above assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation and appropriate asset life values (8 years for waste vehicles, 50 years for all other assets).

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators



<b>Policy and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	2024/25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>That Policy &amp; Resources Recommends to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the Administration' s2024/25 revenue budget proposals.</li> <li>2. To approve the proposed Council Tax Band D increase for 2024/25 to £200.70, or to the maximum allowed should the cash limit be increased.</li> <li>3. To approve the levy of 100% Long Term Empty Premium for properties that had been empty for more than one year from 1 April 2024 and to levy a 100 per cent Second Home Premium for properties from 1 April 2025.</li> <li>4. To approve the Medium Term Financial Plan.</li> <li>5. To approve the Capital Strategy.</li> <li>6. To approve the capital programme proposals.</li> <li>7. To note the additional amount of Council Tax for Parish Precepts.</li> <li>8. To approve the minimum revenue provision statement.</li> <li>9. To delegate authority to the Director of Resources to adjust charge out rates within fees and charges as appropriate, where they are based on costs incurred and where legislation changes are made to centrally set charges in year.</li> <li>10. To approve the use of reserves statement as detailed in appendix VI as to ensure reserves are valid and support the assumptions in the MTFS.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's Revenue and Capital budget proposals for 2024/25, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Capital Strategy.
- 1.2 Policy and Resources committee received a budget report on 29 November 2023 prior to the provisional local authority grant settlement announced on 18 December 2023. This report reflects the implications of the settlement, along with any other changes identified since the committee meeting.
- 1.3 This report, if agreed by Policy and Resources committee, will then go forward to Council on 21 February.

## 2 Background

### Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24

- 2.1 Despite previous indications coming from central government, the settlement is once again for one year only for district councils such as Swale.
- 2.2 The draft settlement published on 18 December announced another rollover settlement. New Homes Bonus will continue to be paid, although this will be the final payment. Services Grant has been drastically cut, but the Funding Guaranteed Grant will be paid again in 2024/25, now providing a 3% increase in core spending power before any decisions on Council Tax levels.
- 2.3 The main changes to the draft budget, arising from the provisional settlement are shown in the table below:

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Amount £'000 ( ) = increase in grant</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Revenue Support Grant	(21)	Inflationary increase
New Homes Bonus	429	Reduction based on activity
Services Grant	147	Reduction in grant
Funding Guarantee	(603)	Increased due to reductions in other grants
<b>Total</b>	<b>(48)</b>	

- 2.4 There was an announcement on 24 January of further funding for local government, including increasing the Funding Guarantee Grant to ensure a 4% increase in core spending power. However, the details of this will not be known until the final settlement is released.
- 2.5 New Homes Bonus and the Funding Guarantee Grant are not guaranteed beyond 2024/25. Central government have made it clear that this will be the final round of New Homes Bonus payments, and the Funding Guarantee Grant was never intended to be long term. As yet, there has been no information in relation to



what funding may replace these significant funding streams, increasing risk in future years.

- 2.6 As part of the funding settlement for 2023/24 the government announced a new funding stream, subject to the successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) scheme. However, this has met with delays, so will not come into effect in the 2024/25 financial year, so we are reliant on existing income streams for waste collection being maintained.
- 2.7 When the funding comes online, government assume that local authorities can expect to receive additional income from the scheme whilst being asked to submit data relevant to their waste collection services. Alongside His Majesty's Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs DLUHC will be assessing the impact of additional pEPR income on the relative needs and resources of individual local authorities.

### **Staff Pay**

- 2.8 The budget assumes a 5% increase in staff pay as well as increments that are due and the increase in the real living wage.

### **Capital Strategy**

- 2.9 The Capital Strategy sets out the Council's approach and process to the deployment of capital resources in meeting the Council's overall aims and objectives. It also provides a strategic framework for the effective management and monitoring of the capital programme. It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services.
- 2.10 The proposed Treasury Management Strategy was reported to the Audit Committee on 24 January 2024 and is also reported separately to this meeting. The proposed Capital Programme and its funding are detailed in Appendix V to this report.
- 2.11 Councils are required to balance their revenue budget annually and cannot borrow to achieve a balanced position. However, they have very far reaching powers to borrow to fund capital expenditure. This has historically been funded from borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which is part of the Debt Management Office which is part of the Treasury. Borrowing can be for up to 50 years at rates which are below commercial rates. The decision to borrow externally is ultimately a treasury one, and is made closer to the time when expenditure is actually incurred, taking into account available cash balances, the opportunity cost of investments and the exposure to interest rate and credit risks.

2.12 Council in February 2020 agreed the following principles:

- Investing in sustainable, affordable and social housing to increase overall supply,
- Using the ability to borrow at lower rates of interest for the benefit of the physical and social infrastructure of the borough and for broader social value, and
- Ensuring that the costs of borrowing are manageable long term within the Revenue budget.

2.13 Council also agreed that in future specific capital projects will have a borrowing limit associated. This limit can be varied by Policy & Resources Committee.

2.14 The Council has not made and will not make any direct commercial investments outside of the Borough. Capital funds will be used for the benefit of local residents.

2.15 Looking ahead to 2024/25 there will be three major capital projects which are reflected in the draft Capital Budget:

2.15.1 Housing company - in October 2020 Cabinet agreed to establish Swale Rainbow Homes Ltd. The outline business case envisaged the Council providing up to £23m of funding through loans to support the delivery of new homes. The exact arrangements for the drawdown of this funding will follow the detailed planning and procurement phases. The cost of the borrowing will be wholly met by the company. The spend on this project has been profiled so that spend is spread across a number of years to more accurately represent the likely spend pattern.

2.15.2 Purchase of temporary accommodation – the Housing and Health Committee on 17 January 2023 agreed a budget of £11m to purchase up to 50 properties within the borough to accommodate households in need of housing. The purchase of properties will happen over time, as properties become available, so the spend has been profiled over two years, with 2024/25 being the second year. The funding for this project will be a reallocation of temporary accommodation spend to cover the capital financing costs.

2.15.3 Levelling Up Scheme – the council was successful in its bid for funding from the Levelling Up scheme. This project will use funding to improve health, education, leisure and employment opportunities in Sheerness through the Sheerness Revival project. This is expected to be a two-year capital project, with the spend profiled across 2023/24 and 2024/25. Due to delays in announcing the award of funding, there may be a need to reprofile the budget into early 2025/26, but it is currently too early to commit to that course of action.

2.16 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources

(revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The funding of the capital programme is also included in Appendix V.

- 2.17 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). MRP is a charge to the revenue budget which then accrues on the Balance Sheet; it is not an external payment. Alternatively, capital receipts may be used to replace debt finance. The Council's policy on MRP is set out in Appendix VII.
- 2.18 Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing. For most Councils their cash flow level is much larger than their reserves as they take in funds through sources such as Business Rates and Council Tax which they hold before making payments to other bodies such as Kent County Council (KCC). The Council's daily cash balances averaged £19.6m in the 6 months to 30 September 2023. Where a Council is investing in a capital project, it can fund this capital investment from cash flow and this is known as internal borrowing. Internal borrowing defers the financial commitment to external borrowing. MRP still has to be made. The Finance Department closely monitors cash flow to ensure that there is no adverse impact.
- 2.19 For any significant investment the Council will supplement the expertise of Members and Officers with appropriate external specialist advice to ensure that proposals are fully tested, and risks considered.
- 2.20 The Director of Resources believes that the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme proposed are sustainable.

### **3 Proposals**

#### **Medium Term Financial Plan**

- 3.1 The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy is attached in Appendix I, and the detailed revenue budget proposal is attached in Appendix II.

#### **Balanced Budget Proposals**

- 3.2 The 29 November Policy and Resources report showed a balanced position with £1.360m being used from reserves within 2024/25 to achieve that position.
- 3.3 Along with the changes from the local government settlement, there have been a number of other variations since the 29 November report. These changes have had a positive impact on the budget of £811k, the most significant change is the proposed use of the business rate growth to support the base budget. This growth is forecast to be available annually until the business rate reset is actioned by central government. The reset has been continually delayed and it is currently

not thought that this will occur before 2026/27. The budget remains balanced by using reserves to the extent of £549k.

- 3.4 The table below shows a summary of all changes to the revenue budget as reported to Policy and Resources committee on 29 November 2023:

<b>Budget heading</b>	<b>Amount £'000 ( ) = improved position</b>
Grant funding (per table in 2.3)	(48)
Drainage levy increase	1
Changes to the tax base	(40)
Growth in business rates	(1,000)
Changes to inflation assumptions	13
Public convenience contract extension	70
Temporary accommodation demand increase	165
Operational changes	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>(811)</b>

- 3.5 Detailed revenue budget proposals are attached in Appendix II.

- 3.6 An analysis of the budget risks is detailed in Appendix VIII.

### **Council Tax**

- 3.7 The proposals assume an increase of £5.76 (2.95%) in the Band D Council Tax to £200.70, or up to £204.93 should legislation allow districts to increase by £10.00.

- 3.8 The Collection Fund and Council Tax base are set out in Appendix III.

- 3.9 The Council Tax base was set at 50,367.85 by the Director of Resources.

- 3.10 Parish precepts are shown in Appendix IV.

- 3.11 The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent in October 2023, and is now the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act ('the Act'). In respect of Council Tax, the Act introduces, amongst other things, two important changes, as follows:

- A change in the application of a council tax premium on 'long term empty' properties. Currently, if a property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for 2 years but less than 5 years, then a 100% council tax premium can be applied to the property (Swale Borough Council currently applies this premium in line with the relevant regulations). The Act shortens that 2-year period to 1 year. 'Long term empty' premiums are applied to encourage

owners to bring properties back into use, so they are not left empty for extended periods.

- The implementation of a council tax premium on 'second homes'. 'Second homes' are properties which are unoccupied but furnished. For some years now local councils have been able to apply a full council tax charge to second homes. This charge is applied in Swale. The Act allows the councils to apply a 100% council tax premium on second homes (this would mean an owner of a second home in the borough would pay double the normal council tax charge).

3.12 The change to long term empty premiums can be implemented from 1 April 2024, however the change to second home premiums requires at least 12 months notice before the implementation date and were therefore it is proposed that this be applied from 1 April 2025.

### **Fees and Charges**

3.13 Proposed fees and charges were set out as part of the draft budget report on 29 November 2023, and these are set out in Appendix X.

3.14 Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Resources to adjust charge out rates to ensure full cost recovery.

### **Capital Programme**

3.15 The capital budget is attached in Appendix V.

3.16 There has been one amendment to the budget previously presented. This is the inclusion of necessary upgrades to finance and payment systems. The upgrades will be fully funded by a reserve set aside for this purpose, so will have nil effect on the revenue budget.

### **Reserves**

3.17 The estimated use of reserves is shown in Appendix VI which shows the budget forecast, but all in-year changes will be reflected in closedown and in the Council's financial accounts.

3.18 The key principles for the management of reserves moving forward are:

- Maintain reserves to support the Council's budget position and to deal with unexpected one-off events;
- Funding the Council's strategic priorities; and
- Fund one-off items of expenditure to support service delivery.

3.19 When the Council is considering its budget requirement, it is the Director of Resources' due under S25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to report on the

adequacy of reserves. These have been reviewed in line with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

- 3.20 The Council currently hold a balance of £3.1m as its General Fund balance. Whilst this is currently considered to be appropriate, this does need to increase over time to a target of £4m, representing two months spend. The Council holds earmarked reserves for specific purposes and the remaining unallocated funds form the General Reserve. The Director of Resources' view is that the level of reserves and balances held by the Council are at a reasonable level overall, and will remain so throughout 2024/25. However, a robust savings plan will need to be established to ensure that the council continues to be able to deliver a sustainable balanced budget from 2025/26 onwards. Earmarked reserves have been rationalised to transfer uncommitted balances to the budget contingency reserve to support a balanced budget position for future years, alongside a deliverable savings programme.
- 3.21 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) to report formally on the adequacy of proposed reserves when setting a budget. The Council's Section 151 Officer (Director of Resources), in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, has hereby confirmed her opinion that the 2024/25 budget is robust, and the reserves are reasonable for the coming financial year. However, the medium-term savings requirement will need to be addressed in future budget rounds, as based on the information included in the MTFP, the reserves will not be sufficient to support the council's financial position.
- 3.22 Reserve balances have been reviewed as part of this budget round with some earmarked reserves now rationalised and uncommitted balances transferred to the budget contingency reserve to support the assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Where 2023/24 expenditure is committed but remains unspent at the end of the financial year, the committed amounts will be allowed to slip into future years.

## **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 Do nothing – this is not recommended as the Council is legally required to set a balanced budget.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 The budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.
- 5.2 An online budget consultation exercise took place from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024, and the results are summarised in Appendix IX.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The budget proposals support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	The report sets out the Council's resourcing position.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council is required to set a Council Tax and a balanced budget.
Crime and Disorder	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The proposals support the Climate Change and Ecological motion previously agreed.
Health and Wellbeing	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Equality and Diversity	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Privacy and Data Protection	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Medium Term Financial Plan
- Appendix II: Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals
- Appendix III: Collection Fund and Council Tax Base
- Appendix IV: Parish Precepts
- Appendix V: Capital Programme and Funding
- Appendix VI: Estimated Use of Revenue Reserves 2024/25 – 2027/28
- Appendix VII: Minimum Revenue Provision Statement
- Appendix VIII: Budget Risks
- Appendix IX: Budget Consultation
- Appendix X: Fees and Charges
- Appendix XI: Proposed Changes Schedule

**8 Background Papers**

Policy and Resources papers 29 November 2023.



# Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28

Swale Borough Council

## Contents

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2. Corporate Plan
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5. Local Pressures
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7. Funding changes
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11. Closing the budget gap
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- Chart 2: New Homes Bonus (NHB) Payments
- Chart 3: Council Tax Shares
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- Table 1: Projected Council Tax Income Growth
- Table 2: Deficit Forecasts as per 2022/23 Budget
- Table 3: Updated Deficit Forecasts Based on Updated Settlement Assumptions

# 1. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

*The document that guides the Council's strategic financial planning and forecasting*

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a strategic document that supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes and helps ensure a focus on the Council's medium term budget position. The MTFS establishes how the Council's priorities will be achieved by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council in terms of future funding gaps. It is the method by which the Council plans translates its long-term goals into action by considering;
- Where the Council is now
  - Where the Council wants to be
  - What the Council's plans are to get there
- 1.2 The MTFS helps to ensure that the Council is 'doing the right thing' while taking account of internal strengths/weaknesses and external threats/opportunities. It also provides a link between the Council's long-term service objectives and its financial capacity, which effectively asks the question 'can the strategic objectives be achieved within the available financial envelope?' The aim should be to provide a framework to support and inform the medium-term planning considerations and the budget setting process. Essentially the MTFS should include consideration of a broad range of factors that influence the Council's long-term financial success.

## **The MTFS Aims to:**

- Provide a high-level assessment of the resources available to support the Corporate Plan outcomes, outlining the high-level funding projections for the following four financial years (beyond the current year);
  - Explore the financial context in which the Council operates, considering a number of local and national factors. These will include known spending pressures and commitments, along with forecast future funding reductions and the impact of the national economic outlook;
  - Explore the demands on the capital programme both in terms of ambition and resources along with the impact on the revenue account and reserve levels held by the Council;
  - Highlight how the Strategy links in with and supports other Council strategies and policies;
  - Assess the risks on which the Plan is based;
  - Provide preparatory work for the following year's budget;
  - Address the sustainability of the Council's financial position.
- 1.3 The MTFS is fundamentally linked to the Corporate Plan. A new corporate plan is currently being prepared and the draft version for consultation is being considered at tonight's committee meeting.
- 1.4 The Council is currently projecting a deficit position from 2023/24 onwards. Forecasting the deficit allows the Council time to plan mitigating actions more effectively, meaning we are more likely to be successful in delivering the required savings and enable us to reduce the reliance on reserves to plug any budget gaps which is not a sustainable position. This strategy will explore some of the Council's plans for addressing this deficit and consider some of the assumptions included. The future year projections can be found within Appendix 1.

## 2. Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027

*'Learning from the past, focusing on the future'*

2.1 The corporate is currently being redrafted to reflect the current priorities for this council. The draft plan that is proposed for consultation is on tonight's agenda and the details will be updated for future budget reports to reflect the revised Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

2.2 Our leadership qualities

In order to deliver our priorities and objectives the Council needs strong, positive leadership and this is embodied within our leadership qualities as follows;

- Leadership at all levels
- Performance
- Ambition
- Customer Care
- Teamwork

2.3 Our Values

Our values represent the beliefs and expected behaviour of everyone working for Swale. Our values, which aim to support quality services, are;

- **Fairness** - being objective to balance the needs of all those in our community
- **Integrity** - being open, honest and taking responsibility
- **Respect** - embracing and valuing the diversity of others
- **Service** - delivering high quality, cost effective public service
- **Trust** - delivering on our promises to each other, customers and our partners

2.4 'One Team' Team Approach

In order to deliver high quality services, we need to have excellent teams to deliver them. We recognise that our staff are our most important resource at the heart of the services we provide. We are committed to investing in staff and their development so that we have well trained and supported employees, providing professional services and who are happy and motivated in their work. The One Team approach also includes Members to ensure we work closely together to deliver our priority outcomes and that their training needs are also met as part of their ongoing development.

## 3. Context

*Demographic and landscape issues that set the scene for the budget and financial strategy*

3.1 For such a relatively small area, the borough is a remarkably diverse place, including the historic market town of Faversham, the traditional seaside resort of Sheerness and the more industrial market town of Sittingbourne. In recent years Sittingbourne has been the focus of major council-led redevelopment, with current schemes the Levelling Up Fund project, being focused on Sheerness. The Council's urban centres are connected both physically and culturally by the borough's extensive and important rural areas, accounting

for around a quarter of the population, which take in several protected wildlife habitats and part of the Kent Downs area of outstanding natural beauty.

- 3.2 Swale's demographic make-up is no less diverse than its geography, including a mix of affluent and less affluent communities, but in general the area is less well-off than is typical for the south-east, and there are some concentrated pockets of severe socioeconomic disadvantage to be found in locations across the borough. While the causes of this are deep-rooted and complex, the outcome is that a proportion of our residents suffer from entrenched inequality and a lack of opportunities which the council needs to do what it can to address.
- 3.3 The indices of multiple deprivation are calculated by government based on a range of measures of poverty and associated disadvantage and were last published in 2019. Compared to the previous time the figures were calculated in 2015, Swale's overall position on the indices deteriorated relative to other places, with the borough now the 69th most disadvantaged of 317 shire districts in England, and the second most disadvantaged in Kent.
- 3.4 Over recent decades, Swale has seen a successful diversification of its economy, which now has key strengths in manufacturing and distribution, as well as high-skilled activities including cutting-edge technology and life sciences. However, it remains the case that much of the borough's employment, including employment created in the last few years, is at the lower end of the skills spectrum.

## 4. Global and National Pressures

*Some financial pressures are driven nationally and indeed globally and are beyond the control of the Council. Some of these which impact Swale are shown below*

### Global issues

- 4.1 The Net Zero agenda represents a significant global issue, not just a national or local one and at the present time some of the emerging green technologies, which are undoubtedly the way to go for the future, can be significantly more expensive to deliver at the current time. Energy prices remain high, and this continues to impact on the higher levels of inflation that we are experiencing.

### Political

- 4.2 Despite there being a more stable political position than experienced this time last year, there has been little progress with the Fair Funding Review and business rates retention, so we have no more clarity in terms of local government funding than we did 5 or 6 years ago. The result of these changes will undoubtedly impact on Government spending priorities for future years but until these new policies are developed this is still an unknown.
- 4.3 Speculation continues as to when the next general election will be called, it will need to be before the end of next financial year as December 2024 will be the end of the 5-year maximum term of the current government. It is unlikely that any significant changes will be made to Local Government funding, however this does not provide any further certainty on our position for the future.

### Central Government Funding

- 4.4 We were hoping this year for a multi-year settlement, but this is unlikely to happen in the run up to a general election. While there has been no further update on the delivery of the Fair Funding review, it is unlikely that this will be delivered ahead of a general election.
- 4.5 The business rates reset is still to be implemented and the position on any possible future reset remains unclear. A rollover settlement for 2024-25 has now been confirmed, with the funding reforms expected to be taking place in 2026-27 or later.

### Inflation

- 4.6 Inflation has remained high over the last year, peaking at 11.1% in October 2022. Whilst rates have been falling, this reduction has been slow and at September 2023 inflation stood at 6.7%. Many of the Council's contracts are linked to inflation indices, so we are having to pay more just to stand still. Given that contracts costs are reviewed annually, it also means there is a lag before the increases are applied. This means that there is a lag in terms of cost increases, but also a lag in seeing the effects of falling inflation.
- 4.7 This Medium-Term Financial Plan assumes inflation increases at 5% for the coming financial year, reducing to 3.5% from 2025/26. Future year assumptions will be updated annually as part of the review of our plan over the medium term.

### Interest Rates

- 4.8 In order to manage the rate of inflation, the Bank of England have been increasing interest rates. This has had a positive impact on the interest that the council earns on its cash holdings but has also meant that assumptions on the cost of financial our capital programme have increased. The previous assumptions on cost of borrowing are under review as capital schemes progress. Any changes that impact on the budget framework will be reported to committee for further decisions to be taken on whether to continue with the current scheme.

### New Ways of Working

- 4.9 As the post covid world becomes our new normal, New Ways of Working can provide further opportunities in terms of efficiencies and working differently in the future, with more flexibility around remote and home working and less reliance on office space, travelling to meetings etc which also supports the Council's Net Zero ambitions.

## 5 Local Pressures

*These arise from local circumstances and demand for services. The financial effects of these must be dealt with by the Council, as there is often no external funding*

### Local Economic changes

- 5.1 Swale derives significant sums of income from fees and charges for services such as car parking and planning. These will be affected by factors outside the Council's control, such as consumer confidence, the general health of the economy and the cost-of-living crisis.

### Waste Management

- 5.2 As Members will be aware the waste contract was re-procured last year, and the decision was also taken to purchase the fleet vehicles ourselves, for use by the contractor. The

change in market conditions since the last contract was procured created a significant cost pressure on the budget for 2024/25. The annual inflationary increase also adds a significant increase to the cost of this contract.

- 5.3 The current assumptions for the contract cost have been reduced from the previous Medium Term Financial Plan as inflation levels have reduced since October 2022 and more certainty can be built into the financial model for implementation in March 2024.

#### **Temporary accommodation**

- 5.4 The council has a duty to provide emergency/temporary accommodation (TA) for homeless households whilst assessing their case and/or ahead of securing more permanent accommodation. A range of accommodation is currently used to cover this duty: some units owned by Swale, some units owned by housing associations, nightly let self-contained and shared accommodation and rooms in hotels/bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 5.5 Whilst some of the costs of this accommodation are covered by housing benefit this is only payable up to 90% of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which is the amount set by government that can be covered by housing benefit. The difference between the actual cost and housing benefit levels is borne by the council. This has been increasing over recent years, with growth having been built into the current budget assumptions. Officers are working hard to reduce the requirement for temporary accommodation with the number of households in TA as at the end of December 2023 being 303 compared to 356 at the same time last year. Despite the success of the team in reducing the number of households in TA the impact of higher interest rates is being seen in significant price increases from landlords.
- 5.6 As well as the costs to Swale, demand for TA in Kent is exceptionally high and often there are limited options, placements regularly occur outside the Borough. Many of the current TA options are not ideal for what are vulnerable households, accommodation that is not self-contained, not within Borough and is used for increasingly lengthy periods (we currently have 11 households that have been in TA for over 2 years).
- 5.7 Members agreed a project for the Council to purchase a number of properties that can be used to house those in need of TA. This will help to control the spiralling costs, although it is not a panacea for this problem. Progress is now being made, with more than a dozen property purchases currently being progressed.

#### **Local Council Tax Support Schemes (LCTS)**

- 5.8 The LCTS scheme was implemented in April 2013 as a replacement to Council Tax Benefit. This change was part of wider welfare reforms to reduce expenditure, giving responsibility of the replacement scheme to Local Councils. LCTS schemes should encourage people into work and be based on the ability to pay. Previously the Council Tax Benefit scheme was 100% funded through subsidy paid to the Council from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 5.9 From April 2013 each billing authority was given the discretion to set their own scheme, although at the outset the government did stipulate that the scheme would not change the 100% maximum support for low-income pensioners i.e. they would receive the same level of support as they did under the system of Council Tax Benefit. Funding for LCTS is no longer received as a separate subsidy grant but is now within the overall Local Government Funding system as non ring-fenced funding within the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and baseline funding level. The local scheme (for Swale) has changed several times since the introduction of LCTS in 2013/14.

- 5.10 In April 2023 the Council introduced a banded council tax reduction scheme which aimed to simplify the understanding and processing of the previous scheme. Full council approved the continuation of the scheme for 2024/25 with changes to be made to the income bands in line with changes made by the government to the benefits payable.

#### **Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board Precept**

- 5.11 The Internal Drainage Board Levy has been confirmed for 2024/25 with an increase of 5% taking the levy position to just over £1m, (the Council has no control over the setting of this levy). Following significant lobbying from local government colleagues, the impact on increases to internal drainage board levies was acknowledged by the Government in 2023/24 with the introduction of the Internal Drainage Board Levies grant. This grant was awarded to 15 local authorities to provide additional and exceptional one-off funding to councils most affected by increases in Internal Drainage Board Levies. Another one-year grant has now been announced, although allocation of the grant will not be known until the final settlement is released.
- 5.12 Government is now recognising that the pressure these levies apply to collection authorities is an ongoing issue and DLUHC will work with DEFRA and the local government sector to implement a long-term solution, although no plans have yet been released. The Leader and the Director of Resources are representing Swale on a LGA Special Interest Group that are hoping to change the way that the current drainage board levy precept process impacts on local government financial position.

#### **Workforce**

- 5.13 We recognise that our staff are our most important resource at the heart of the services we provide. We currently have around 260 full time equivalent posts and 300 actual members of staff. Our pay bill is our most significant area of direct spend and stands at £14.4m including pension contributions of £2.6m as per the 2024/25 budget. The pension fund is administered by Kent County Council (KCC), employee contribution rates are set by Government and range from 5.5% to 12.5%. The fund actuary Barnett Waddingham sets the employer contribution rate, currently 20.5%, plus an annual fixed sum.
- 5.14 The Fund is valued once every three years and the valuation as at 31 March 2022 disclosed a net deficit of £8.46m on Swale's share of the fund, a reduction of £7m from the 2019 valuation deficit of £15.5m due largely to increases in annual investment returns. The change in contribution rates because of the March 2022 valuation took effect from 1 April 2023. The contribution rate increased from 18.5% to 20.5% but the back funding element decreased, the combined impact of which is a budget saving of £200k.
- 5.15 The 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy did not make provision for a staff pay award, but it proposed a reduction in weekly working hours from 37 to 34 hour. Following consultation with staff, Members agreed a change to a 34-hour week, and an implementation phase commenced on 1 May. This implementation phase ran until 31 December 2023 and results are now being closely reviewed with a view for the change to be made permanent unless there is compelling evidence to return to a 37-hour week.

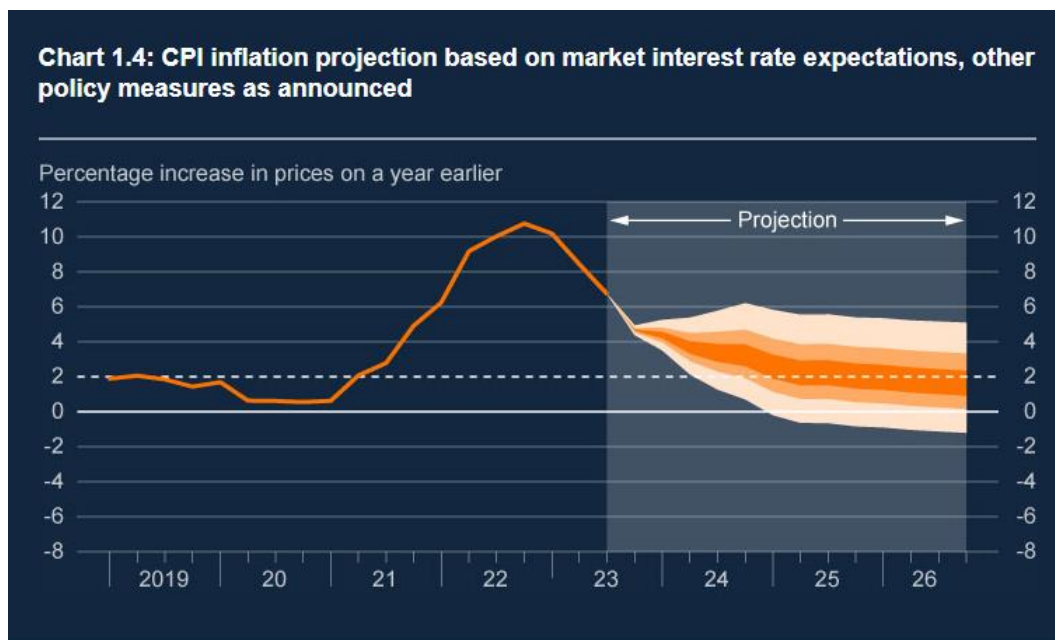


## 6. Inflation

*Inflation is the rate prices for goods and services that the Council buys are expected to rise.*

- 6.1 Inflation is significantly eroding the Council's spending power, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was at 6.7% at the end of September. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) met on 1 November and maintained the bank base at 5.25%. CPI inflation fell to 3.9% for November 2023, before creeping up to 4.0% at the end of December. CPI inflation is expected to continue to fall to meet the MPC target of 2% by the end of 2025. Higher energy and other import price inflation has led to a slower fall in inflation levels than previously expected.
- 6.2 The Council assumes in this financial strategy that inflation will broadly follow the pattern in the graph below as outlined by the Bank of England with general price increases being assumed at around 5% for 2024/25 but reducing significantly thereafter in line with these projections. There are also some areas and contracts, such as the waste contract, which use different indices to calculate annual increases, and these are taken account of where appropriate.

**Chart 1 – MPC Forecasts November 2023**



- 6.3 **Staff Pay** – The Council is not part of a National Joint Council (NJC) national pay agreement, so any increases are set and agreed locally in negotiation with the Union. The current financial plan makes provision for a pay award next financial year and pay negotiation discussions with the union commenced at the start of November 2023. As negotiations progressed the MTFP has been updated. The budget also includes provision for turnover savings (for staff leaving and temporarily vacant posts etc) of 2%. As a guide a 1% increase equates to approximately £132,000 annually.
- 6.4 **Income (fees and charges)** – As in the previous year, increases in the fees and charges for 2024/25 are being recommended for an increase in line with our inflationary and cost of living increases. As part of the Council's financial planning processes, and to address the pressures on future year's budgets, the finance team will continue to work with service

managers as part of the budget setting process to undertake a more fundamental review of fees and charges. This will involve more detailed work to ensure that we fully understand our cost base so that we can ensure our charges are covering this as a minimum.

## 7 Funding changes

*Local Government is currently going through a significant period of change in terms of the way it is funded and the way the funding elements are to be calculated for the future*

### **Local Government Funding Settlement Funding – last year’s forecasts**

- 7.1 The settlement is issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and for Swale comprises several elements including Revenue Support Grant (RSG), New Homes Bonus (NHB), Baseline Funding Level (via the Business Rates Retention Scheme) and Council Tax (through the setting of referendum principles) but has more recently also included the Services Grant and a Funding Guarantee Grant. The Settlement confirmed some additional one-off grant funding for 2023/24, an amalgamation of specific service grants into the RSG allocation and a further year’s allocation of New Homes Bonus. Unfortunately, the settlement was once again for one year only, despite some indications that there would be a return to multiyear settlement. RSG is an un ring-fenced grant which can be spent on services at Swale’s discretion. This has reduced drastically over past years and 2019/20 was expected to be the last year of receipt of this grant. The allocation for 2023/24 (before the amalgamation of the specific service grants was just £0.1m compared to £4.1m back in 2014/15 representing a reduction of 98%.

### **Settlement Funding – Spending Round 2023**

- 7.2 The Chancellor delivered his Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023. The Autumn Statement responds to the OBR forecasts and sets out the medium-term path for public finances. Last year a number of announcements were made in relation to taxation plans and social care funding but the key issues for Swale and district authorities in general centered around changes to business rate relief and the uplift to the business rate multiplier. This section will be updated when details are available.
- 7.3 The provisional 2024/25 settlement provided an inflationary uplift to Revenue Support Grant, but a significant reduction in Service Grant. The overall amount of New Homes Bonus paid to local government remains the same as 2023/24, but due to the allocation method, Swale is likely to see a significant reduction in this grant. Government have confirmed in the provisional settlement that this will be the final year for New Homes Bonus, but with no details as to what may replace it as a form of funding.
- 7.4 2023/24 saw the introduction of the Funding Guarantee Grant, and government have continued this for another year, but with very little certainty beyond 2024/25. This grant should ensure that councils have a 3% increase in core spending power before any increases in Council Tax. An announcement was made in January 2024 that this will be increased to a 4% increase, although grant amounts have yet to be confirmed, and there will be no certainty until the final settlement is released in February.

### *District Council Band D Increases*

- 7.3 The previous settlement saw the Chancellor use council tax increases to help manage the funding gap within local government which brought in changes to increase the core

Band D threshold from 1.99% to 2.99%. This applies to all classes of authority and has been extended for another year to 2024/25. Announcements made to date are that the £5 cash threshold will also still apply, although this is now lower than the 2.99% increase allowed for most authorities.

7.4 The forecasts within this MTFP assume council tax increase of 2.95% for modelling purposes and coupled with growth forecasts in the tax base resulted in income projections of around £10.109m for 2024/25, which is growth of £425k based on the 2023/24 position. This charge equates to an increase of just over 11p a week for Swale’s element of the council tax. It should be noted that, while this information would be used at this point for modelling purposes now, the council tax will not actually be agreed and set until the Full Council budget setting meeting in February 2024.

7.5 While the statement allowed the additional 1% increase the £5 cash limit looks unlikely to increase. Lower tier councils are highlighting the need to increase the cash limit, as the £5 increase is now lower than the percentage increase for almost all authorities, and as such is becoming irrelevant.

7.6 If the £5 cap was also increased, the following additional income could be generated;

<b>Band D increase</b>	<b>£ increase</b>	<b>Additional Council Tax Estimate</b>	<b>Increased Estimate</b>
2.95%	5.76	425,483	
3.83%	7.47	511,612	86,129
5.12%	9.99	638,539	126,927

7.7 Just for information a £10 increase would equate to 19p a week or 2.7p a day and it is recommended that the Council consult on potentially higher increases (up to £10) in case this turns out to be an option.

7.8 The provisional settlement was published on 18 December 2023. Until the Settlement figures are finally confirmed the figures are still provisional and subject to change, but this is the best information we have at the present time. Projections are still therefore based on estimates which have not yet been finalised and could potentially be impacted significantly by changes in Government spending plans and fiscal policy.

## 8 Income

*The Council derives a limited and reducing amount of funding from Central Government, the main sources of income are locally raised taxes, fees and charges and specific grants. This section focuses on how the Council is funded and how this will continue to change over the coming years*

### **Business Rates Retention**

8.1 Since the 2013/14 financial year, local government has been able to retain 50% of the growth in the local business rates income to support services. As part of a manifesto commitment, the Government pledged to allow Councils more control locally over their finances, and as part of this began to plan for an eventual system of 100% local retention of business rates growth. In exchange for this, Councils would have to forgo certain grants

received from Central Government. Following the snap General Election in 2017 and a period of uncertainty around the new Business Rates Retention Scheme, MHCLG (as was) had previously confirmed a local 75% share from April 2020, however these potential changes continue to slip, and we are still no closer to having a revised scheme.

- 8.2 The income from the current system is shared based on 50% being returned to Central Government, 40% being retained by Swale with 10% going to the County. However, while technically Swale's share is projected to be around £23.3m after the tariff and levy payments are made the net income to Swale reduces to around £10.1m for 2023/24 and just over £11.7m for 2024/25. Business Rates growth has now been built into the base budget, creating this increase, but this does create a greater risk when Business Rates reset finally takes place.
- 8.3 The draft budget position for 2024/25 includes the proposal to maximise the use of the Business Rates Growth Fund element of the business rates pool as the annual contributions from this element of the pool can be used to support existing council expenditure.
- 8.4 We still do not know the timing of the business rates reset, and while we anticipate this will have a negative impact for Swale, we would expect some form of transitional grant relief which again at the current stage is unknown, so this issue continues to be monitored until we have greater clarity.

#### **Kent Business Rates Pooling Arrangements**

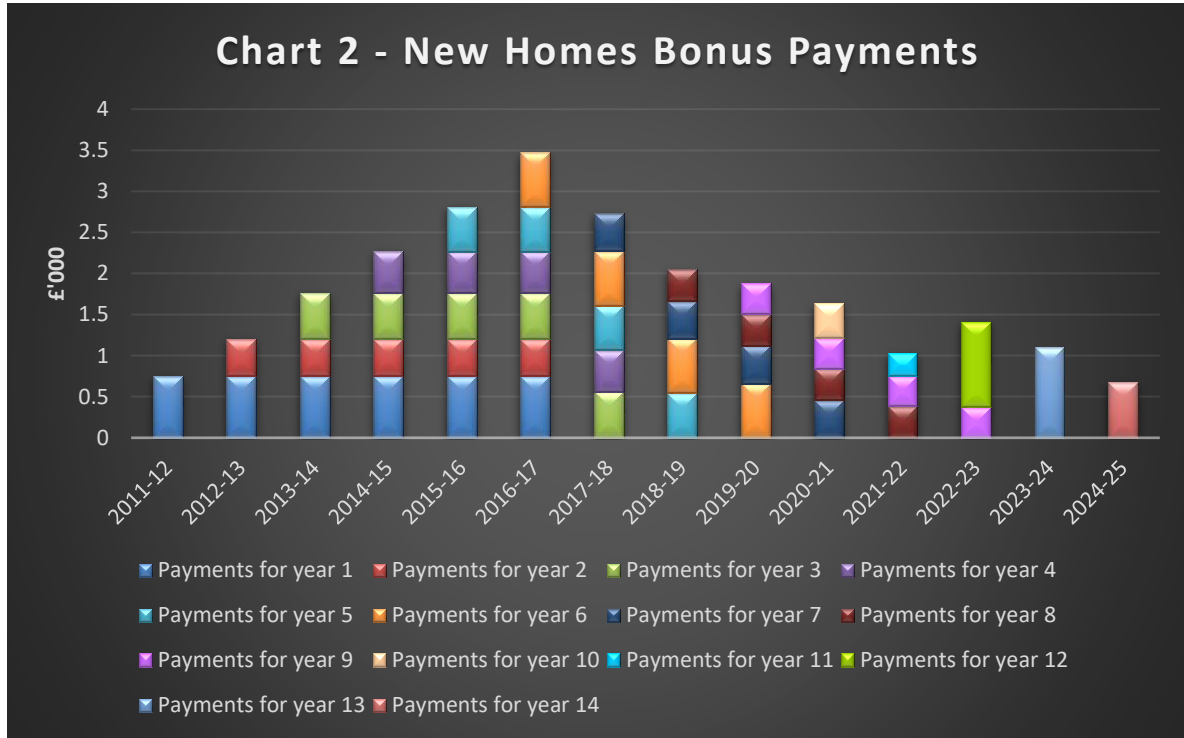
- 8.5 Local authorities can enter arrangements with other Councils to pool their business rates. Legislation allows councils to voluntarily enter a business rates retention pool. Councils within a pool are treated as a single entity with tariffs and top ups netted off and a single levy rate applied. In two tier areas this creates the potential for the levy paid by Borough Councils being reduced thus retaining more resources in the local area. Swale has been a member of the Kent Business Rates Pool since 2015/16, the pool must reapply to DLUHC each year for the arrangements to continue. There is still an option for the pool not to proceed up to 28 days after the Local Government Finance Settlement is received. At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 28 September 2022 delegation was given to the Leader and the Director of Resources in consultation with the opposition group leaders to continue membership of the pool unless there was a significant change in circumstances. On this basis Swale is continuing to remain in the Kent Pool.

#### **New Homes Bonus (NHB)**

- 8.6 The New Homes Bonus was introduced in 2011/12 to incentivise and reward Councils and Communities that build new homes in their area. The bonus was originally paid as an un-ringfenced grant for six years and was paid based on the net additional homes plus an additional supplement of £350 per affordable dwelling. The payment is then split between local authority tiers: 80% to lower tier (Swale) and 20% to upper tier (KCC).
- 8.7 Since its initial introduction the payment mechanism has undergone two fundamental changes which have significantly impacted on the income received by Swale. The first was the transition from payments rolled up over a 6-year period up to 2016/17 (for which the Council received £12.3m) to 5 years in 2017/18 to the new 'floor' of 4 years from 2018/19 onwards. The second was in 2017/18 when a national baseline of 0.4% (based on borough property numbers) was introduced which attracted no bonus funding. The allocation of New Homes Bonus Grant for 2024/25 according to the provisional settlement is £674k, which is a reduction of £429k compared to the previous year.

8.8 The provisional settlement confirmed this as an additional one-year agreement only for 2024/25, stating that this will be the final year of New Homes Bonus payments. The current budget therefore assumes that the grant will be removed from 2025/26 and as yet there is no information about any possible replacement funding. The chart below shows the current expectation, as per the provisional settlement.

8.9 Chart 2 – New Homes Bonus payments 2011/12 onwards

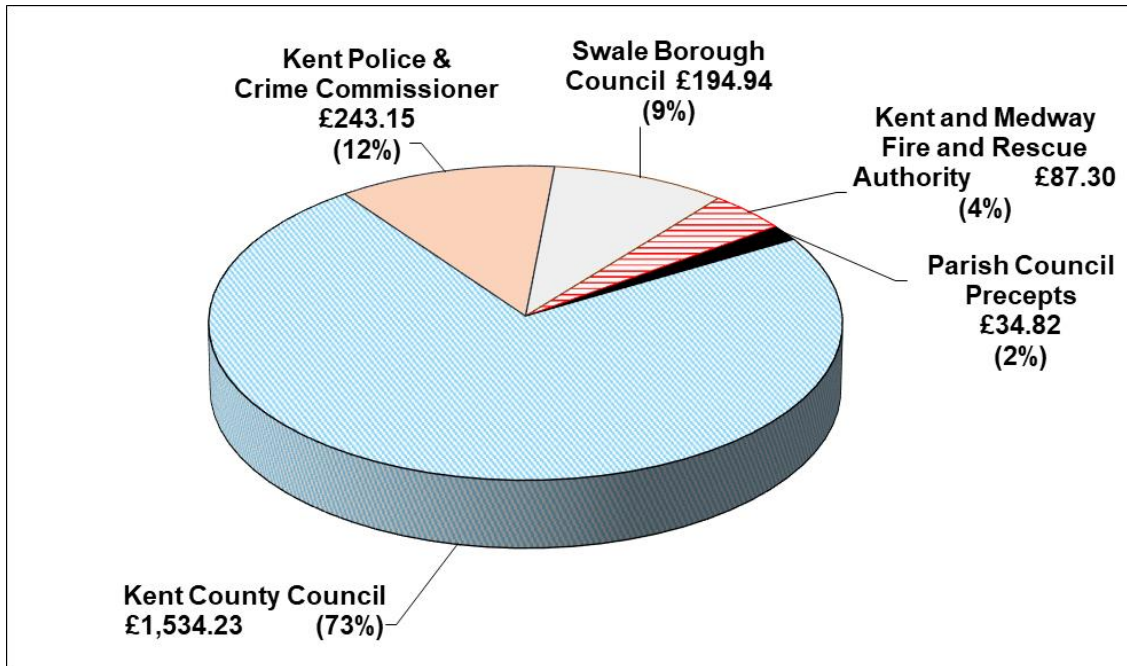


**Council Tax**

8.10 Swale is the billing authority for the borough, this means that Swale send out the Council Tax bills to residents and collect the Council Tax, but most of this is then distributed to the County Council and Kent Police Authority with a further element then going to town and parishes councils. The relative splits are shown within the chart below.

8.11 The charge on a Band D property which is retained by Swale is currently £194.94 (£189.27 2022/23) based on a tax base of 49,673.46 (48,939.46 2022/23). Any increases on this amount are restricted by a cap put in place by the Government, but as discussed above this amount is 3% or £5, whichever is the greater, without undertaking a referendum on the proposals. This generates an extra £425k (including tax base growth assumptions) over the 2023/24 income levels.

8.12 Chart 3 – Council Tax split 2023/24



8.13 Within the MTFs, it is assumed that Swale will increase its precept by 2.95% annually from next year. This table highlights the impact of the assumed increases within the charts below.

**Table 1 – Projected council tax income growth**

<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
Tax Base	50,367.85	50,871.53	51,380.25	51,894.05
Band D Council Tax £	£ 200.70	£ 206.64	£ 212.76	£ 219.06
<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>£10.109m</b>	<b>£10.512m</b>	<b>£10.931m</b>	<b>£11.368m</b>

**Fees and charges**

8.14 The Council has limited means to charge for some of the services it provides. Some of these charges are set by central government, but the Council has discretion over the levels of others. Of the c£9.6m gross income budgeted for 2023/24, the most significant areas include waste and recycling (£1.3m) which includes things such as garden bins and bulky waste collection, car parking income (£3.1m), commercial rents (£1.9m) and planning and building control income (£1.6m). It should however be noted that there are also significant costs associated with generating some of this income, such as the car park maintenance and enforcement, the waste contract etc.

8.15 As part of the Council’s drive to close the budget gap we will be undertaking a fundamental review of the fees and charges structure within our control as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process. This is to ensure that we are at least covering our costs in all areas while looking to develop and increase income streams wherever possible to help make the budget position more sustainable in the medium to long term and to protect frontline services.



## 9 Links to other strategies

The MTFS is fundamentally linked to and underpins several the Council's key strategy and policy documents

- 9.1 The most significant linkage with the MTFS is with the Council's Corporate Plan and this is discussed in detail above. There are however several other strategies and policies supported by the MTFS.

### Capital Strategy

- 9.2 The Capital Strategy sets out the Council's approach and process to the deployment of capital resources in meeting the Council's overall aims and objectives. It also provides a strategic framework for the effective management and monitoring of the capital programme, within which the Council will work in formulating the strategies for individual services. It is a primary document for all capital decision making, together with the Corporate Plan and other strategies.
- 9.3 The Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the Council including residents, businesses and places. The aim of the Strategy is to provide a framework within which the Council's capital investment plans will be prioritised and delivered. The Strategy is the foundation of proper long-term planning of capital investment and how it is to be delivered.
- 9.4 The Strategy's principal objective is to deliver an affordable programme that is consistent with the Council's priorities and objectives. This Strategy is intended to be used by all stakeholders to show how the Council prioritises and makes decisions on capital investment and how this investment supports the Council's priorities and ambitions.
- 9.5 The capital programme approved by Full Council in February 2023 included £13.0m investment in 2023/24 with £26.7m in 2023/24 and £30m 2024/25. This is funded through a mixture of capital receipts and reserves, internal/external borrowing and s106 contributions and other grants. The existing programme has been reprofiled in line with forecast spend, with a significant amount of the planned investment now expected to be spent in future years.
- 9.6 The capital programme for 2023/24 includes the provision to acquire the waste and street cleansing fleet vehicles in line with the procurement of the new contract. As referenced above the revenue implication of acquiring the fleet is included within the MTFS assumptions for 2024/25.

The key principles of the Strategy are;

- Investing in sustainable, affordable and social housing to increase overall supply,
- Using the ability to borrow at low rates of interest for the benefit of the physical and social infrastructure of the borough and for broader social value, and
- Ensuring that the costs of borrowing are manageable long term within the Revenue budget.

### Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24

- 9.7 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement is intrinsically linked with the Capital Strategy and the capital programme, the latest report can be accessed on the Council's website [here](#). The strategy manages the Council's investments, cash flows,

banking, money market and capital market transactions.

- 9.8 The treasury management budget supports the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations and understands the revenue implications of all capital decisions.
- 9.9 This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. When it is prudent and economic, any debt previously incurred may be restructured to meet the Council's risk or cost objectives.
- 9.10 The Council receives and approves three main reports each year;
- Before the start of the financial year, the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement which includes the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy statement; how investments and borrowings are to be organised (including prudential indicators); and an Investment Strategy;
    - A mid-year treasury management assurance report to update Council with the progress of the capital position; adherence to the treasury management strategy and whether any policies require revision and;
    - At the end of the financial year, a treasury management outturn report to provide details of actual indicators compared to the estimates within the strategy.

### **Property Asset Strategy**

- 9.11 The Property Asset Strategy is set within the wider context on the Council's strategic priorities and seeks to align and review the asset base with the Council's corporate goals and objectives. The current Strategy was approved by Regeneration and Property Committee on 14 November 2023. The strategy can be found [here \(agenda item 5 page 5\)](#).
- 9.12 The Strategy provides the framework that will guide the Council's future strategic property decisions and ensure there is a consistent way of managing the Council's land and assets. The Strategy is likely to make recommendations regarding the rationalisation of the property portfolio, and to secure additional investment income from the let estate and property investments, and future budgets will reflect this.

### **Commissioning and Procurement Policy**

- 9.13 The Commissioning and Procurement Policy establishes the Council's strategic approach to procurement. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Finance Code of Practice, Contract Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution. It emphasises the increasing importance of using procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long term benefit.
- 9.14 The Council recognises the importance of a strong and vibrant local economy and the role it can play in stimulating local markets. The website has been developed to provide potential suppliers with a host of information in relation to the Council's procurement processes, which includes a portal advertising all current tender opportunities. To deliver an agile service the Council uses an electronic tendering system.
- 9.15 The strategy provides a corporate focus for procurement, embracing the Council's



commitment to strategic procurement and its alignment with corporate objectives and values. The document is not intended to be a “user manual”, although the principles contained within the strategy should be applied to all facets of procurement activity. Additional detail regarding the Council’s procurement processes can be found within the Contract Procedure Rules and there are user guides available on the intranet.

- 9.16 Social value is the positive impact an organisation has further to the activities it carries out. These can be economic, social and environmental impacts. The Council recognises that Social Value can significantly help it in meeting its priorities and aspirations for the borough by supporting good jobs, better incomes and wellbeing, increased skill levels, higher value economy and higher productivity levels. The Commissioning and Procurement Policy is one of the underpinning strategies that supports the Council’s priorities.

## 10 Looking forward

*In the context of these pressures and reduced funding, the Council has produced a forecast for spend for Capital and Revenue purposes and anticipated use of Reserves*

- 10.1 The resources position has been updated with the best information currently available against the previous budget forecasts below. The business rates and Fair Funding reviews have been further delayed and the Council is experiencing significant spending pressures in future years which is further compounded with the uncertainty around central government funding.

**Table 2 – Deficit forecasts as per the 2023/24 budget**

<b>Funding forecasts Feb 2023</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Base budget & reserve contributions	23,941	25,415	26,024	26,997
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates	(10,122)	(10,736)	(10,897)	(11,060)
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	0
Council Tax	(9,683)	(10,074)	(10,475)	(10,894)
Uncertain government grants		(1,654)	(1,654)	(1,654)
Funding Guarantee	(497)	0	0	0
<b>Projected use of reserves/savings</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>2,635</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>3,073</b>

- 10.2 Following the updates to the current MTFP, the table below has been updated to show the revised funding position, with the future year’s deficit peaking at £3.1m in 2026/27. If the business rates reset takes place, this deficit could increase significantly.

**Table 3 – Updated deficit forecasts based on updated assumptions for 2024/25**

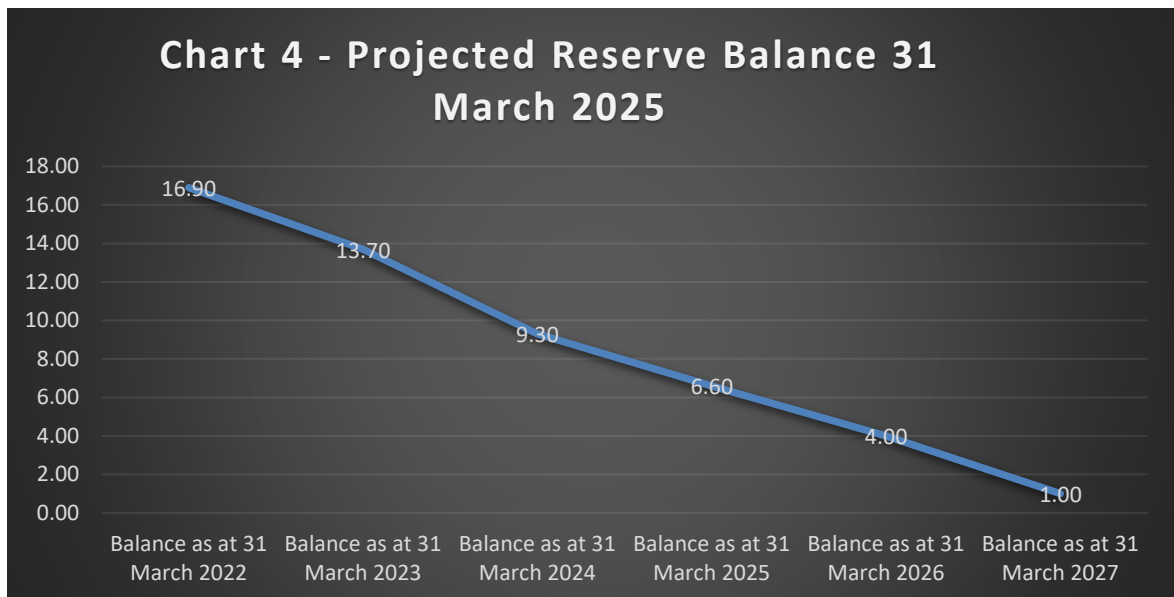
<b>Updated funding forecasts November 2023</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Internal Drainage Board Levy	951	1,000	1,049	1,101	1,101
Base budget & reserve contributions	22,991	24,388	24,830	26,391	26,766
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(317)	(338)	(345)	(352)	(359)
Business Rates	(10,122)	(11,736)	(12,004)	(12,279)	(12,279)
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	(674)	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	(27)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	(1100)	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	(27)	(27)	(27)
Kent Pool Growth Fund (Business Rates)	0	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Planned use of reserves	(2,045)	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(9,684)	(10,109)	(10,410)	(10,828)	(11,262)
<b>Forecast Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>3,151</b>	<b>3,085</b>

- 10.3 The additional cost pressures in 2024/25 relate mainly to the new waste contract costs and ongoing inflation costs of external contracts, shared services and our own workforce. This is partly offset through savings proposals, assumptions on the continuation of central government funding, use of reserves and the use of the Kent Growth Fund business rates to support the base budget. The savings breakdown can be found within Appendix XI.
- 10.4 It should be noted that the grant projections for 2024/25 are still subject to final agreement so there is still an element of risk around these, but it is the best information currently available.
- 10.5 Officers have previously undertaken high level analysis of the cost of the statutory and non-statutory functions which the Council undertakes. Statutory functions include things such as waste collection and the payment of benefits, non-statutory areas include things such as the provision of public conveniences and leisure facilities. Very roughly the statutory services cost around £20m and the Council's grants and income (from business rates, council tax etc) is around the same level.

### Reserves

- 10.6 The Council holds several 'usable' reserves both for revenue and capital purposes which fall within one of the following categories:
- General Reserve
  - Earmarked Reserves
  - Ringfenced Reserves
  - Capital Receipts Reserve
- 10.7 The *General Reserve* is held for two main purposes:
- to provide a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cashflows and avoid temporary borrowing and;
  - a contingency to help cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.

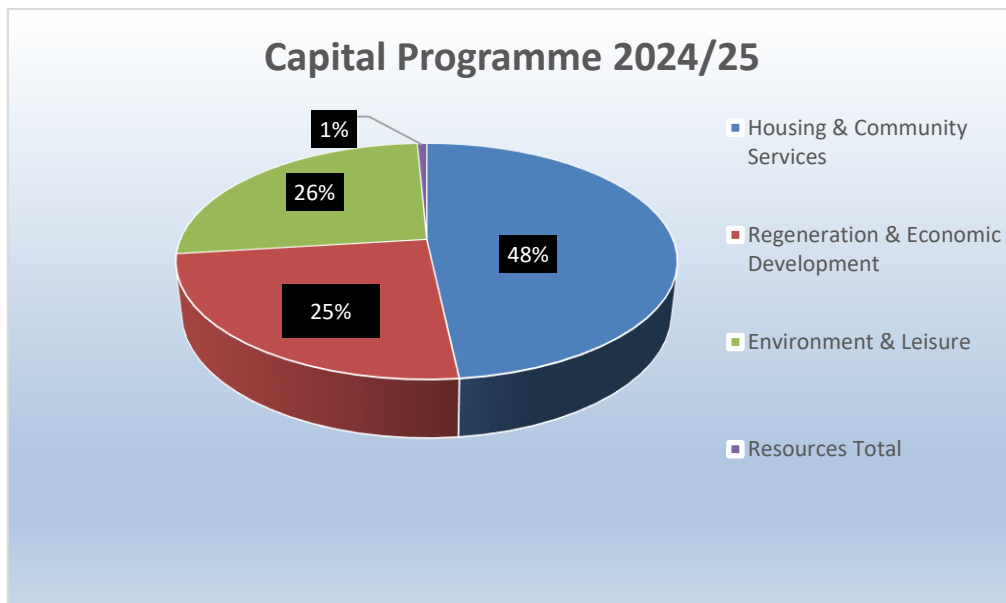
- 10.8 As part of setting the budget each year the adequacy of all reserves is assessed along with the optimum level of General Reserve that we should hold. The optimum level of the General Reserve considers a risk assessment of the budget and the context within which it has been prepared.
- 10.9 *Earmarked Reserves* provide a means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities and are typically used to set aside sums for major schemes, such as capital developments or asset purchases, or to fund restructuring. A number of contingency reserves are also held by the Council to reduce the impact on Council Tax payers of future uncertain events such as business rate appeals or claw back of benefit subsidy.
- 10.10 *Ringfenced Reserves* are reserves where funding is allocated for a specific or technical accounting purpose and can only be spent in line with the purpose of that funding and cannot be used to support wider council expenditure unlike our earmarked reserves.
- 10.11 All reserves, general and earmarked, were reviewed and rationalisation of balances agreed as part of setting the budget for 2023/24. The review of reserve balances is an ongoing process as reserve funded projects are progressed.
- 10.12 Use of reserves to balance a budget provides only a short-term solution as the funds can only be used once. They can however be used to smooth the impact of funding gaps over the short to medium term and to allow for planning and implementing projects and work streams that will deliver a longer-term financial benefit through reduced costs and/or additional income.
- 10.13 The available earmarked reserves balance as at 1 April 2023 stood at £13.4m, the planned use of reserves for the 2023/24 financial year is £4.4m which leaves a forecast balance as at 1 April 2024 of £9.0m. Based on the current medium term budget projections the Council will not have sufficient reserves to help address the budget gap after 2026/27.



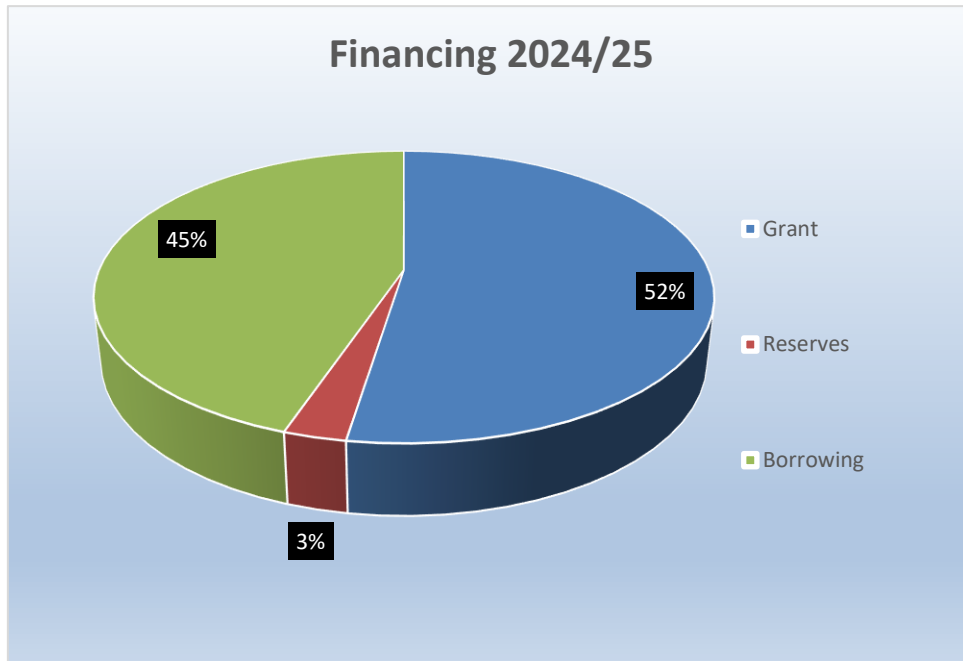
**Capital**

- 10.14 The capital programme (Appendix 3) shows what the Council intends to spend on purchasing new assets and improving its existing ones over the next four years. As capital expenditure is incurred, a source of finance must be identified through capital receipts, grants and other revenue resources or alternatively through borrowing.
- 10.15 Any expenditure that is financed through borrowing increases the Council’s ‘Capital Financing Requirement’ (CFR). Each year a revenue charge called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is made to reflect the funding of the CFR by the taxpayer, it is required to be set aside to cover the repayment of debt caused by the need to borrow for capital purposes. As the need to borrow increases, the CFR and MRP also increase. If the Council has sufficient cash resources to meet the expenditure, it will not be necessary to borrow externally, and cash balances can be used to cover the expenditure. This is referred to as ‘internal borrowing’ and attracts an MRP charge in the same way that external borrowing does.
- 10.16 New projects, which are included in the programme in the future, will need to be financed by MRP if no capital resources such as capital grants or capital receipts from future asset sales are available. Alternatively existing revenue reserves could be used to finance these projects through a revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) which would avoid the need to make an MRP charge.
- 10.17 Future external borrowing is assumed to finance a portion of the waste vehicle fleet purchase and also the funding for the Rainbow Homes housing provision. The cost of borrowing has increased significantly over the past year, although the position has stabilised recently, borrowing rates remain high. What this does mean is that any business cases which include borrowing will need to be fundamentally reviewed before any borrowing takes place to ensure the schemes remain affordable and still deliver the anticipated benefits. This includes schemes that have previously been assessed as affordable based on earlier costs of borrowing. Next year’s budget is shown below (£31.4m) along with the forecasts to 2027/28.

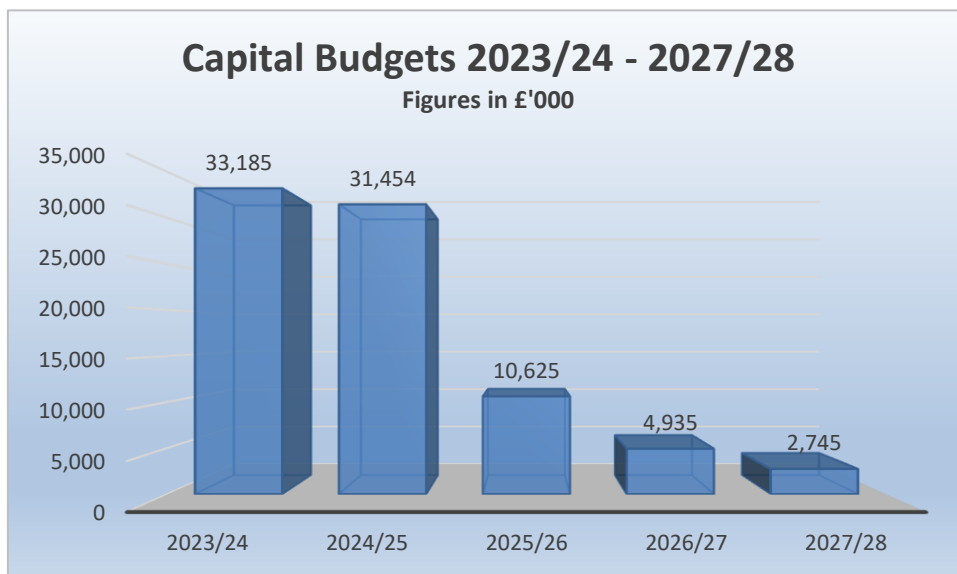
10.18 **Chart 5 – Capital Programme 2024/25**



10.19 Chart 6 – Capital Programme Funding 2024/25



10.20 Chart 7 – Capital Programme Forecast 2023/24 to 2027/28



## 11. Closing the Budget gap

*The Council’s strategy for reducing the budget gap covers several work streams as outlined below.*

11.1 Due to the budget pressures being experienced for not only the 2024/25 financial year but also the years following, the Council has had to fundamentally review what services it provides and how they are provided to try and identify savings to help achieve a balanced sustainable budget in future years. The main workstream areas are summarised below.

### **Efficiency Review**

- 11.2 As part of the production of these forecasts a detailed budget review has taken place over the summer and autumn to identify efficiencies and additional income to help support frontline services and to balance the Council's financial position. For next year these total around £5.4m (Appendix XI), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a total deficit of £549k which will need to be supported from reserves. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken on the proposals where relevant and the council will be consulted on the draft budget proposals throughout December 2023.
- 11.3 Once the budget position is approved, work will commence on delivering savings proposals at the earliest opportunity. The full year effect for some of the proposed savings have been built into the forecasts from 2025/26 but any opportunity to deliver ahead of this forecast will be actioned.
- 11.4 The efficiencies and savings identified have come from a number of areas and include the following;
- Additional income from increased annual demand – car parks, planning etc
  - Increased fees and charges
  - A freeze in Members allowances
  - Reductions in some 3<sup>rd</sup> party grants
  - Staff restructure savings across service areas
  - Proposed use of Kent Growth Fund to support base budget
  - Reduced cost of pension backfunding payments
  - Reduction in contract costs across services
  - Removal of discretionary council tax discounts for empty properties
  - Investment income
  - Shared services
  - Digital transformation
  - Various operational savings – minor budget lines

### **Fees & Charges Review**

- 11.5 A full review of the existing fees and charges was carried out as part of the budget build process for 2024/25. As detailed above this strategy is recommending an inflationary increase as a minimum in line with the increase in costs that the council is experiencing.
- 11.6 The increase in planning fees included in the government's planning reform proposals in May 2022 were originally due to be implemented from October 2023. This was delayed and was eventually implemented in December 2023. The changes increased major and minor application fees by 35% and 25% respectively.
- 11.7 During 2023/24 the council produced a Parking Policy. This has been out to public consultation, and a final decision will be taken by the Community Committee on 6 March 2024. The Policy aims to address the principles under which the parking service will operate with fees and charges continuing to be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process. Proposed changes to car parking fees include reviewing the evening charging policy and a 10p increase in the hourly rates.
- 11.8 Proposals for higher increases to some fees and charges have been included where the underlying cost to the council has significantly increased; where previous charges have been below the statutory maximum charge and where market conditions indicate a higher charge. The proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 can be found within Appendix X.

### **Financial sustainability**

- 11.9 Financial sustainability and reducing reliance on central government grants is one of the four key themes within the existing Corporate Plan (Priority 4) and is fundamental to this strategy and setting balanced budgets in future years. One of the initiatives will include a review of the way we currently budget for fees and charges structures to ensure we are fully covering our costs. The aspiration is to have a balanced medium-term budget which does not rely on reserves to balance the position.

### **Our investment approach**

- 11.10 There is an ever increasing need for Councils to take a more commercial and business-like approach to all elements of their business. A more commercial approach will directly support the Council's objective of becoming financially sustainable for the future. Part of the strategy development process will involve the identification and prioritisation of a number of internal and external projects which will consider income generation, efficiency and doing things differently. The focus will be on making every pound count for our residents, improving efficiency, investment and increasing social value.
- 11.11 The Local Government Association (LGA) are encouraging Councils to move towards a more commercial culture as a way of developing sustainable self-funding streams that reflect Council's individual priorities and place shaping aspirations. Consequently, the Council needs to think about how it can maximise revenue and efficiencies moving forwards. Swale can already evidence its commercial approach through the delivery of the Bourne Place development and will continue to develop these opportunities.

### **Property Investment and New Ways of Working**

- 11.12 Opportunities for investment in property, whether direct or indirect, continue to be considered to achieve either a direct income stream from the asset or improved returns on investment. A programme of asset valuations and condition surveys is in progress and the results will help us better understand the challenges faced in terms of maintaining and improving our asset base over the medium to long term to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, delivering income for the Council where appropriate.
- 11.13 Opportunities for the most efficient utilisation of the Council's assets and maximising returns where appropriate are vital. Indirect property investments via treasury instruments, such as the purchase of pooled property funds, can potentially provide a return in terms of a regular income and growth in the value of the investment. Under the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council has made the LAMIT Pooled Property Fund, which invests exclusively in various property assets with the aim of achieving a regular income and growth in the value of the investment.
- 11.14 The Council can choose to use its capital resources to finance a programme of asset investment which aims to deliver long-term revenue streams for the Council and work on an ongoing basis is required to identify the most appropriate projects. This strategy of direct property investment can ensure a secondary benefit to the district as it is possible to generate an economic growth benefit when the investment is located within the borough. This is, however, more resource intensive to manage than externalising these investments.
- 11.15 The Council continues to progress its New Ways of Working strategy off the back of the Covid pandemic and subsequent office refurbishment will bring for new operating models and how the Council conducts its business in the future. With the development of hybrid working, we have taken the opportunity to rationalise office space. Work is ongoing to rent out our surplus office space and work with other partner organisations and indeed

the private sector. There may also maybe opportunities to work with other partners under the government's [One Public Estate](#) agenda.

### **Digital Transformation**

- 11.16 The Council needs to consider how digital transformation can support the business in the future and deliver more for our residents, identifying changes to service delivery from the implementation of new technology and changes to business processes. It is anticipated that the overall programme will be delivered over a number of years and as projects are rolled out there will be changes to working practices which will help to deliver efficiencies.
- 11.17 The key to this work in the future should really focus on 'putting our customers at the heart of everything we do'. This will undoubtedly lead to efficiencies and potential cashable savings but the direction of travel should be to improve our services for our customers first and foremost because that's the right thing to do. It will also mean that staff can spend longer prioritising 'added value activities' rather than getting bogged down with inefficient paper-based processes.

### **Shared Services, collaboration and selling services**

- 11.18 Creating efficiencies through shared services continues to be a priority for central government. Identifying such opportunities must therefore continue at a local level, ensuring that realistic and deliverable benefits can be achieved. Again this is an avenue which Swale is already heavily involved in, including activities like the joint waste procurement but could involve a range of other joint procurement opportunities.
- 11.19 Identifying opportunities to work alongside other public sector partners and organisations to deliver services, such as through our successful Mid Kent Services shared service arrangements, will continue to form an important part of our efficiency strategy. Opportunities for further sharing arrangements continue to be developed with work ongoing on the transfer of the Revenues and Benefits Service to MKS.

### **Growing Business Rates and NHB**

- 11.20 Under the previous allocation method of New Homes Bonus (NHB) there was a direct financial benefit to the Council from growth in homes through the NHB funding and through increasing the council tax base and additional income generated from council tax. Whilst new housing growth has had an impact on the demand for local services, there will still be a net gain in terms of overall income for delivery while the NHB remains. We do however know that the NHB system is due to be replaced although at the present time it is not clear what with or when it will be introduced so the life of any ongoing funding from NHB remains unclear.
- 11.21 For similar reasons growing the business rates base will have a direct impact on the level of business rates income retained locally. Equally, maintaining existing business rates remains a priority in that decline in business rates will reduce the amount of income retained. However as with the NHB the reform and any localisation of business rates continues to be delayed along with the Fair Funding review.

### **Council Tax**

- 11.22 The increased flexibilities around council tax discounts and increases following the removal of the tax freeze grant in 2016/17 provides a further potential income stream. Further review of the current level of discounts can also provide additional income, recommendations on the level of council tax discounts will be reported for approval as part of the budget reports for 2024/25. The budget proposes that the discounts that are



currently awarded for uninhabitable, short term empty and unfurnished properties are removed with effect from 1 April 2024.

### **New opportunities**

- 11.23 Given the current uncertainties around the cost-of-living crisis, global events and the economy in general, as well as the current landscape of local councils reporting financial difficulties, Local Government funding and funding mechanisms are overdue for review and the outcome from this remains a significant risk for the Council's medium term financial assumptions. It will be essential to identify new opportunities to either increase income, increase efficiency through the redesign of services, explore new partnership models for service delivery etc and this will be one of the main challenges over the medium term.
- 11.24 While the Council's reserves do provide some level of comfort over the short term and could be used to address budget deficits this is not a sustainable financial strategy for the medium to long term. As mentioned earlier within the report the reserves are forecast to be fully depleted by 2026/27 so this would not even be an option.

### **Lobbying and consultation**

- 11.25 The Council will continue to lobby central government in terms of increased funding allocations and continued relaxation/increased flexibility in terms of the council tax referendum principles which will be one of the things required if income raising and decision making is ever to be truly local. We will also continue to respond to all relevant consultations and surveys, in particular in relation to the business rates and Fair Funding reviews.
- 11.26 Members will need to support the efficiency agenda in future years and support officers to deliver a balanced budget position over the medium term as use of one-off reserves to balance the budget deficit is not sustainable.

## **12. Conclusions**

*How will this help shape our future budget and financial projections?*

- 12.1 While the Council's reserves do provide some level of comfort over the short term and could be used to address budget deficits this is not a sustainable financial strategy for the medium to long term, and as mentioned earlier within the report the earmarked reserves will be fully depleted in 2026/27 if ongoing savings are not found for the base budget.
- 12.2 Previous budget forecasts made back in February 2023 were made at a time of significant uncertainty in terms of future Government finances due to the Fair Funding and Business Rates Review. This uncertainty remains and additional levels of complexity in terms of future inflation forecasts and potential impacts on the economy, suppliers, and contracts.
- 12.3 The updated high level funding forecasts within the strategy build on previous figures from the 2023/24 Budget setting exercise in February which were made within this context, at which time we were forecasting future year deficits which were increasing year on year to around £3.0m by 2026/27.
- 12.4 The MTFs and budget forecasts include the latest information available and it should however be noted that some of the assumptions that have currently been made will not be confirmed until the Final Settlement is announced, the date of which is currently anticipated in early February 2024.

- 12.5 The funding estimates for next year in terms of the central government grants are far from certain and this represents a potential income risk of around £1.7m if the grants are removed. We will not have any further clarity on these until the Final Settlement is announced in early February 2024.
- 12.6 As part of the production of these forecasts a detailed budget review has taken place over previous months to identify efficiencies and additional income to help support frontline services and to balance the Council's financial position. For next year these total around £5.3m (Appendix XI), and are supported by a number of increases to fees and charges (Appendix X), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £549k which will need to be supported from reserves.
- 12.7 The Council is still projecting a deficit position from 2023/24 onwards but due to the funding changes, forecasting the future years deficits does however allow the Council time to plan mitigating actions more effectively, meaning we are more likely to be successful.
- 12.8 A comprehensive financial risk assessment is undertaken for the revenue and capital budget setting process to ensure that all risks and uncertainties affecting the Council's financial position are identified as far as is reasonably practical. These are reviewed each year as part of the refresh of the MTFs and future year's budget forecasts and are included within Appendix VIII.
- 12.9 At the current time the key messages are as follows;
- Estimated budget gap of £549k for 2024/25 even with current savings and fee increases
  - We can deliver our statutory services with current income levels but nothing more
  - To fund non-statutory services we need to find more income/savings/reserves
  - Our reserves will help set a balanced budget for the next 3 years but not after 2026/27
  - Funding from reserves is not a sustainable way to manage our budget
  - We need to identify more efficiencies and income to make the budget sustainable
  - The current projections are based on a number of assumptions which can and do change
- 12.10 In conclusion, it is still not clear how the various reviews and the ongoing economic pressures will impact on local government funding, but officers will continue working on the forecasts between now and the point at which the council tax is set in February 2024, by which time the Settlement figures will have been finalised.

## Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals

Service	2023/24	Growth	Savings	Income Changes	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	568	0	0	0	568	568	568	568
Policy & Communications	332	0	0	0	332	332	332	332
Democratic Services & Information Governance	1,263	0	0	0	1,263	1,263	1,263	1,263
Housing & Community	4,806	205	(276)	11	4,746	4,546	4,346	4,346
Planning	680	201	0	(500)	381	311	251	191
Environment & Leisure	8,691	2,463	(570)	(511)	10,074	9,841	10,441	10,176
Regeneration & Economic Development	(318)	40	(25)	(221)	(524)	(674)	(725)	(725)
Finance & Procurement	986	6	(40)	0	953	953	953	953
Revenues & Benefits	580	103	(200)	0	483	483	483	483
MKS Environmental Health	551	26	0	0	577	599	622	622
MKS Information Technology	856	63	(8)	0	911	964	1,119	1,119
MKS Internal Audit	176	9	(27)	0	159	166	173	173
MKS Human Resources	729	24	0	0	753	773	794	794
MKS Legal	445	28	0	(4)	469	491	514	514
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	2,586	245	(417)	0	2,413	2,387	2,381	2,381
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	45	0	0	0	45	45	45	45
Pay & Inflation	0	837	0	0	837	1,834	2,842	3,542
Fees & Charges	0	0	0	(66)	(66)	(66)	(66)	(66)
<b>Sub Total Base Budget</b>	<b>22,976</b>	<b>4,250</b>	<b>(1,563)</b>	<b>(1,291)</b>	<b>24,373</b>	<b>24,815</b>	<b>26,335</b>	<b>26,710</b>
Drainage Board	951	49	0	0	1,000	1,049	1,101	1,101
Contribution to Reserves	15	0	0	0	15	15	56	56
Contribution from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	0	0	0	(27)	(27)	(27)
Special Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use of Business Rates Pool Reserve	0	0	(855)	0	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Cumulative Savings Required	(2,045)	(1,828)	1,433	1,891	(549)	(2,238)	(3,151)	(3,085)
<b>Grants</b>								
Revenue Support Grant	(317)	0	0	(21)	(338)	(345)	(352)	(359)
Business Rates - Gross	(10,122)	0	0	(1,614)	(11,736)	(12,004)	(12,279)	(12,279)
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	147	(27)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	429	(674)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	0	0	(603)	(1,100)	0	0	0
<b>Council Tax requirement</b>	<b>9,684</b>	<b>2,471</b>	<b>(984)</b>	<b>(1,062)</b>	<b>10,109</b>	<b>10,410</b>	<b>10,828</b>	<b>11,262</b>

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## COLLECTION FUND AND COUNCIL TAX BASE

### Tax Base

The tax base for 2024/25 is 50,367.85.

### Collection Fund

As the Billing Authority, Swale Borough Council had to make an estimate of the surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund for Council Tax and Business Rates in January 2023, notifying Kent County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent and the Kent & Medway Towns Fire & Rescue Authority of their proportions. The declared surplus of £60,000 is shared as follows:

	<b>£'000</b>
Central Government	172
Kent County Council	(177)
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent	(33)
Kent & Medway Towns Fire & Rescue Authority	(8)
Swale Borough Council	106
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

These amounts are not added to precepts or budgets but must be taken into account by each Authority when setting their basic Council Tax.

### Other Preceptors

Kent County Council, the Kent & Medway Fire Authority and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner will set their own precepting for all valuation bands. These tax levels will form part of the overall Council Tax to be set by full Council on 21 February 2024.

### Parish Council Precepts

Parish Council precept demands have been submitted during January 2024 as and when the Parish Councils met to set their precepts. These will be expressed as an additional precept.

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## Parish Precepts

Parish / Town Council	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2023/24 £	Tax Base 2024/25	Parish Precept 2024/25 £	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2024/25 £	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2024/25 % change
Bapchild	27.98	591.91	13,780	23.28	-16.80%
Bobbing	19.25	984.39	51,764	52.58	173.14%
Borden	63.59	1,103.97	75,687	68.56	7.82%
Boughton-under-Blean	99.34	703.27	90,000	127.97	28.82%
Bredgar	40.78	298.31	12,344	41.38	1.47%
Doddington	38.20	226.20	8,641	38.20	0.00%
Dunkirk	52.28	525.05	28,234	53.77	2.85%
Eastchurch	55.30	842.82	71,253	84.54	52.88%
Eastling	35.00	148.49	5,197	35.00	0.00%
Faversham Town Council	82.80	7,387.56	666,741	90.25	9.00%
Graveney & Goodnestone	73.55	185.39	13,065	70.47	-4.19%
Hartlip	21.69	369.35	20,000	54.15	149.65%
Hernhill	47.64	321.76	18,091	56.23	18.03%
Iwade	35.36	1,458.61	61,000	41.82	18.27%
Leysdown	25.97	1,235.56	38,606	31.25	20.33%
Lower Halstow	82.51	454.51	37,740	83.03	0.63%
Luddenham		43.35	0	0.00	0.00%
Lynsted	56.13	482.05	32,224	66.85	19.10%
Milstead	67.55	94.13	7,000	74.37	10.10%
Minster	35.00	5,714.24	199,998	35.00	0.00%
Newington	54.59	1,054.01	59,053	56.03	2.64%
Newnham	34.29	155.71	5,339	34.29	0.00%
Norton & Buckland	39.26	191.55	8,333	43.50	10.80%
Oare	63.40	173.24	14,700	84.85	33.83%
Ospringe	38.32	284.39	11,015	38.73	1.07%
Queenborough Town Council	76.81	906.78	71,500	78.85	2.66%
Rodmersham	48.02	239.42	13,000	54.30	13.08%
Selling	37.13	371.97	17,013	45.74	23.19%
Sheerness Town Council	49.49	2,834.23	139,962	49.38	-0.22%
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	28.30	352.69	10,275	29.13	2.93%
Stalisfield	29.14	101.84	3,087	30.31	4.02%
Teynham	60.56	1,003.36	66,000	65.78	8.62%
Throwley	25.60	144.87	4,123	28.46	11.17%
Tonge	14.40	467.39	8,000	17.12	18.89%
Tunstall	10.79	700.52	7,500	10.71	-0.74%
Upchurch	36.81	1,058.39	48,577	45.90	24.69%
Warden	29.82	506.27	16,500	32.59	9.29%
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,955,342</b>		

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Scheme	Funding Source	Scheme			Previous		2023/24 Budget		
		Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
CCTV Replacement	Reserves	60	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	Grant	Ongoing programme			0	0	6,103	(6,103)	0
Local Housing Company	Borrowing/reserves	23,250	(1,373)	21,877	187	(155)	5,263	(469)	4,794
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark	Reserves	104	(104)	0	52	(52)	52	(52)	0
Forstal Community Association	Reserves	65	(65)	0	0	0	65	(65)	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	Borrowing/grant	11,000	(437)	10,563	0	0	4,400	(131)	4,269
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	Grant	464	(464)	0	0	0	139	(139)	0
<b>Housing &amp; Community Services</b>		<b>34,943</b>	<b>(2,504)</b>	<b>32,440</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>(207)</b>	<b>16,022</b>	<b>(6,959)</b>	<b>9,063</b>
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	Capital receipts	200	(200)	0	0	0	200	(200)	0
High Streets	Reserves	584	(584)	0	468	(468)	116	(116)	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	s106/reserves	135	(135)	0	70	(70)	66	(66)	0
Swale House Refurbishment	Borrowing	2,100	0	2,100	1,818	0	282	0	282
Rural England Prosperity Projects	Grant	503	(503)	0	0	0	126	(126)	0
UKSPF	Grant	186	(186)	0	0	0	37	(37)	0
Levelling Up Scheme	Grant/reserves	20,509	(20,445)	64	64	0	7,349	(7,349)	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	Reserves	49	(49)	0	9	(9)	40	(40)	0
<b>Regeneration &amp; Economic Development</b>		<b>24,266</b>	<b>(22,102)</b>	<b>2,164</b>	<b>2,429</b>	<b>(547)</b>	<b>8,215</b>	<b>(7,933)</b>	<b>282</b>
Waste Vehicle Fleet	Borrowing/capital receipts	7,035	(2,000)	5,035	0	0	7,035	(2,000)	5,035
Beach Huts	Capital receipts	143	(143)	0	0	0	143	(143)	0
Coach Parking	Reserves	35	(35)	0	0	0	35	(35)	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	s106	30	(30)	0	0	0	30	(30)	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	Reserves	120	(120)	0	0	0	120	(120)	0
Barton's Point Drainage	Reserves	70	(70)	0	20	(20)	50	(50)	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	Borrowing	287	0	287	0	0	287	0	287
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	Capital receipts	120	(120)	0	0	0	120	(120)	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	s106/reserves	Ongoing programme			0	0	513	(513)	0
The Forum Public Toilets	Reserves	50	(50)	0	8	(8)	42	(42)	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	Reserves	180	(180)	0	0	0	180	(180)	0
Changing Places	Grant/borrowing	150	(130)	20	0	0	150	(130)	20
<b>Environment &amp; Leisure</b>		<b>8,220</b>	<b>(2,878)</b>	<b>5,342</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>(28)</b>	<b>8,705</b>	<b>(3,364)</b>	<b>5,342</b>
ICT Replacement	Reserves	Ongoing programme			0	0	192	(192)	0
Finance System Upgrades	Reserves	70	(70)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	Reserves	50	(50)	0	0	0	50	(50)	0
<b>Resources Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>(120)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>(242)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>67,549</b>	<b>(27,603)</b>	<b>39,946</b>	<b>2,696</b>	<b>(781)</b>	<b>33,185</b>	<b>(18,498)</b>	<b>14,687</b>

Scheme	2024/25 Budget			2025/26 Budget			2026/27 Budget			2027/28 Budget		
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
CCTV Replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	(60)	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0
Local Housing Company	8,000	(250)	7,750	7,800	(250)	7,550	2,000	(250)	1,750	0	0	0
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forstal Community Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	6,600	(306)	6,294	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	325	(325)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Housing &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>17,650</b>	<b>(3,606)</b>	<b>14,044</b>	<b>10,525</b>	<b>(2,975)</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>4,785</b>	<b>(3,035)</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>2,725</b>	<b>(2,725)</b>	<b>0</b>
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swale House Refurbishment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects	377	(377)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKSPF	149	(149)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme	13,096	(13,096)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Regeneration &amp; Economic Development</b>	<b>13,622</b>	<b>(13,622)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Waste Vehicle Fleet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beach Huts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coach Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Drainage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forum Public Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changing Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Environment &amp; Leisure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
ICT Replacement	112	(112)	0	100	(100)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0
Finance System Upgrades	70	(70)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Resources Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>(182)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>(150)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31,454</b>	<b>(17,410)</b>	<b>14,044</b>	<b>10,625</b>	<b>(3,075)</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>4,935</b>	<b>(3,185)</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>(2,745)</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Estimated Use of Reserves 2022/23 - 2027/28</b>											
	<b>Balance 2022/23</b>	<b>Est use 2023/24</b>	<b>Balance 2023/24</b>	<b>Est use 2024/25</b>	<b>Balance 2024/25</b>	<b>Est use 2025/26</b>	<b>Balance 2025/26</b>	<b>Est use 2026/27</b>	<b>Balance 2026/27</b>	<b>Est use 2027/28</b>	<b>Balance 2027/28</b>
<b>General Fund Balance</b>	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	840,000	(2,263,000)
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>											
Building Maintenance Fund	(740,174)	100,000	(640,174)	100,000	(540,174)	100,000	(440,174)	100,000	(340,174)	100,000	(240,174)
Repair & Replacement Reserves	(742,314)	82,625	(659,689)	97,000	(562,689)	110,000	(452,689)	275,000	(177,689)	115,000	(62,689)
Civil Parking Enforcement Reserve	(158,397)	15,000	(143,397)	15,000	(128,397)	100,000	(28,397)	28,397	(0)	0	(0)
General Reserve A/C	(586,354)	331,068	(255,286)	255,286	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performance Fund	(4,541)	0	(4,541)	4,541	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Plan Reserve	(212,819)	30,000	(182,819)	30,000	(152,819)	30,000	(122,819)	50,000	(72,819)	50,000	(22,819)
Stay Put Grants Reserve	(87,894)	0	(87,894)	87,894	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffing costs Reserve	(192,199)	150,000	(42,199)	0	(42,199)	42,199	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Homeless/Housing Reserve	(77,729)	0	(77,729)	0	(77,729)	25,000	(52,729)	25,000	(27,729)	0	(27,729)
Communities Fund	(6,100)	0	(6,100)	6,100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax/Housing Benefits Reserve	(730,778)	150,000	(580,778)	300,000	(280,778)	250,000	(30,778)	30,778	(0)	0	(0)
Refuse and Recycling Reserve	(108,318)	58,318	(50,000)	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	(1,003,928)	(600,000)	(1,603,928)	(656,197)	(2,260,125)	(110,000)	(2,370,125)	1,510,125	(860,000)	860,000	0
Electoral Registration Reserve	(101,021)	100,000	(1,021)	(25,000)	(26,021)	(25,000)	(51,021)	(25,000)	(76,021)	76,021	0
Preceptors CT Support Reserve	(225,520)	0	(225,520)	225,520	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Scheme Promotion Reserve	(97,634)	0	(97,634)	50,000	(47,634)	47,634	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Financial Services Reserve	(160,000)	50,000	(110,000)	70,000	(40,000)	40,000	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Surveys & Works in Churchyard Reserve	(63,000)	15,000	(48,000)	15,000	(33,000)	33,000	0	0	0	0	0
Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve	(1,887,354)	(629,000)	(2,516,354)	355,000	(2,161,354)	(145,000)	(2,306,354)	855,000	(1,451,354)	(145,000)	(1,596,354)
Milton Creek Access Road Reserve	(3,320)	3,320	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates Fund	(1,333,519)	250,000	(1,083,519)	250,000	(833,519)	833,519	0	0	0	0	0
Special Projects Reserve	(666,574)	666,574	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Initiatives Reserve	(156,165)	15,000	(141,165)	50,000	(91,165)	50,000	(41,165)	41,165	(0)	0	(0)
Heritage Strategy Reserve	(110,902)	110,902	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visitor Economy Strategy Reserve	(127,556)	50,000	(77,556)	77,556	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
High Street Funding Reserve	(221,510)	221,510	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improvement and Resilience Reserve	(327,603)	327,603	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Covid Recovery	(800,789)	800,789	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Budget Contingency Reserve	(2,118,734)	1,044,211	(1,074,523)	(371,287)	(1,445,810)	1,440,348	(5,462)	1,000	(4,462)	3,979	(483)
Other earmarked reserves	(394,730)	172,008	(222,722)	129,863	(92,859)	53,800	(39,059)	31,959	(7,100)	0	(7,100)
<b>Total Earmarked (Excl General Fund)</b>	<b>(13,447,475)</b>	<b>3,514,928</b>	<b>(9,932,546)</b>	<b>1,116,276</b>	<b>(8,816,271)</b>	<b>2,875,500</b>	<b>(5,940,771)</b>	<b>2,923,424</b>	<b>(3,017,347)</b>	<b>1,060,000</b>	<b>(1,957,347)</b>
Total earmarked plus general fund	(16,550,475)	3,514,928	(13,035,546)	1,116,276	(11,919,271)	2,875,500	(9,043,771)	2,923,424	(6,120,347)	1,900,000	(4,220,347)
<b>Ring Fenced/accounting/collection fund</b>											
Collection fund & grants in advance	(1,325,582)	1,325,582	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accounting adjustments & smoothing	(357,093)	131,324	(225,770)	165,118	(60,652)	58,652	(2,000)	0	(2,000)	0	(2,000)
	<b>(1,682,676)</b>	<b>1,456,906</b>	<b>(225,770)</b>	<b>165,118</b>	<b>(60,652)</b>	<b>58,652</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>

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## Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's "Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision" (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2018. Please note that this guidance is still referred to as MHCLG guidance despite the name change of the department to Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC).

The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Council to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance as well as locally determined prudent methods.

For 2024/25 it is recommended that:

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, and for supported capital expenditure incurred on or prior to 1 April 2008, MRP will, under delegated authority, be calculated using the Annuity Method over 50 years.
- MRP for all self-financed capital expenditure incurred from 1 April 2008 will, under delegated authority, be calculated by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational, or as the principal repayment on an annuity with an annual interest rate determined by the loan rate, whichever method is most appropriate.
- Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet due to the adoption of the IFRS 16 Leases accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or incentives, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the total charge to revenue each year remains unaffected by the new standard.
- For assets acquired by leases or the Private Finance Initiative, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability, and
- For capital expenditure loans to third parties, the Council will make nil MRP unless (a) the loan is an investment for commercial purposes and no repayment was received in year or (b) an expected credit loss was recognised or increased in-year, but will instead apply the capital receipts arising from principal repayments to reduce the capital financing requirement instead. In years where there is no principal repayment on loans that are investments for commercial purposes, MRP will be charged in accordance with the MRP policy for the assets funded by the loan, including where appropriate, delaying MRP until the year after the assets become operational. Sufficient MRP will be charged to ensure that the outstanding capital financing requirement (CFR) on the loan is no higher than the principal amount outstanding less the expected credit loss. This option

**Minimum Revenue Provision Statement**

was proposed by the government in its recent MRP consultation and in the Council's view is consistent with the current regulations.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2024/25 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2025/26 or later. MRP is not required until an asset is operational.

The budget implications of MRP are detailed elsewhere in this report and the estimated Capital Financing Requirement is detailed in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy.

# 1. Risk Assessment

*The Council takes a measured risk-based approach to the budget setting process*

- 1.1 A comprehensive financial risk assessment is undertaken for the revenue and capital budget setting process to ensure that all risks and uncertainties affecting the Council's financial position are identified as far as is reasonably practical. These are reviewed each year as part of the refresh of the MTFS and future year's budget forecasts. The key strategic financial risks to be considered in developing the MTFS are included within the table below.
- 1.2 Medium term financial planning, set against a backdrop of severe reductions in Government funding and unprecedented economic challenges, both nationally and globally, carries with it a significant element of risk. Many factors may impact on the figures presented here and themes have been highlighted where appropriate. Most significant are the spending pressures (waste/homelessness), the high inflation the country is currently experiencing, and the future funding position for local government following ongoing delays with things such as the Fair Funding Review. All of these issues are placing further pressure on the council in the delivery of a balanced budget, without impacting on frontline services.
- 1.3 There have been issues with some areas of the Council's business with regards the supply chain issues with the new waste fleet having to be ordered a year in advance of delivery, and we are continuing to see increased costs in terms of labour supply and for construction costs in respect of the Council's capital programme.
- 1.4 A recession would present further risk, in particular significant areas of income such as lettings income, planning fees and car park income that are linked directly to economic demand, and although a recession has so far been avoided, growth is still slow to recover and analysts still believe that a shallow recession may happen.
- 1.5 Uncertainty around current and future local government finance policy will undoubtedly affect our finances over the coming years but hopefully this will become more stable following the upcoming general election.
- 1.6 Despite these risks, we will continue to plan effectively to strengthen our culture of strong financial management so that the Council can continue to meet its Corporate Plan priorities and provide the best possible services to the borough.
- 1.7 As part of strengthening the financial management of the Council, we will be looking to deliver a medium term financial policy that details future savings beyond 2024-25 to show how the budget will remain balanced over the four year period.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Risk Management</b>
Future available resources less than assumed.	Possible	High	Annual review of reserves and reserves policy to identify future resources. Assumptions on funding for 2024/25 and beyond are based on best estimates at this time. A prudent approach has been adopted based on previous years' experience as well as using regional network contacts to inform modelling.

Efficiency/transformation initiatives not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting significant budget gaps, peaking at £3.1m in 2026/27. Use of one-off reserves to help plug these gaps is not sustainable.
Planned savings not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS contains budget changes resulting from agreed service changes. Ongoing monitoring of the achievement of these, through regular budget monitoring, will help identify any issues.
Uncertainty around government grant funding	Likely	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting government grant funding of £1.8m in 2024/25. However, 2024/25 is expected to be the final year for most of these grants, so this adds £1.8m to the annual future savings requirement. There may be transitional support available, but this is currently an unknown.
Uncertainty around county council funding	Likely	Medium	A number of council services are supported through funding from KCC. If the funding is removed, the burden will fall to Swale and increase the budget gap. Managers are working closely with KCC to manage the risk to finances and service delivery.
Deadline pressure on capital project funding	Possible	Medium	Delays in funding announcements, without extensions to project end dates creates risk that projects may not receive the full funding award. Project Managers are in constant contact with government to raise the awareness of this issue and to request extensions to the end date where possible.
Overreliance on reserve contributions supporting base budget deficits which is not a sustainable position.	Likely	High	Early preparation of 2024/25 MTFS to address the ongoing budget gap and deliver a sustainable base budget position.
Volatility of business rates funding given uncertainty around impact of appeals.	Likely	High	Volatility of funding stream outside of council control but impact mitigated by establishment of specific earmarked reserve and financial monitoring framework. Modelling of potential impacts is used to inform internal financial planning.



Pay Awards, fee increases and price inflation higher than assumed.	Possible	Medium	Impact of potential increases mitigated by central contingency budget for pay, price increases and fees. Where pay awards have been agreed these will be factored into the future estimates.
Future spending plans underestimated.	Possible	Medium	Service planning process identifies future budget pressures, and these will inform the indicative budget forecasts. An effective budget monitoring framework is in place to identify in year and potential future cost pressures.
Anticipated savings/ efficiencies not achieved.	Possible	High	Regular monitoring and reporting takes place but the size of the funding cuts increase the likelihood of this risk. Non-achievement of savings would require compensating reductions in planned spending within services.
Revenue implications of capital programmes not fully anticipated.	Unlikely	Low	Capital bid approval framework identifies revenue implications and links to Council priorities. Full analysis of revenue implications assessed and considered in scenario planning.
Income targets not achieved.	Possible	Medium	Current economic climate likely to impact. Regular monitoring and reporting takes place. Full review of fees and charges scheduled for 2024/25 along with an annual review process.
Budget monitoring not effective.	Unlikely	High	Regular monitoring and reporting in line with corporate framework. Action plans developed to address problem areas. Track record of delivering budget.
Exit strategies for external funding ceasing/tapering not met.	Possible	Medium	Regular monitoring and reporting, medium-term planning, review of fixed term funding and posts completed.
Loss of principal deposit.	Unlikely	Medium	Limited by the controls in the Treasury Management Strategy which balance security of deposit over returns. Impact limited due to the strategy of a diverse portfolio with top rated institutions.
Interest rates lower than expected.	Unlikely	Low	Regular review, monitoring and reporting on interest rates. Prudent assumptions on likely interest rates for 2024/25 will be incorporated into the budget.

Collection rates for retained business rates and council tax lower than anticipated.	Possible	High	Impact mitigated by the review of bad debt provisions and availability of reserves. Monitoring of Collection Fund is formally incorporated into the revenue monitoring process.
All MTFS risks not adequately identified.	Unlikely	Low	Council's Risk Management Framework ensures all operational and strategic risks are identified as part of the annual service planning process.

## Budget consultation survey results

### Background

Following the agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 November, a consultation was launched on draft proposals for the council's budget for the financial year 2024/25.

This consultation ran for 5 weeks, and responses were encouraged through news release, social media posts, and the council website.

There were:

- 453 views of the consultation page on the council's website
- Social media activity promoting the consultation reached 2,078 people

The consultation asked people to read key budget documents and then respond to 17 questions.

The consultation closed at 5pm on Tuesday 3 January, having received 12 responses, and a letter was also received from Citizens Advice Swale.

Comments were also received from the Parking Policy consultation, which are reported on here.

### Results – Summary

The results contained a lot of suggestions that are not within the control of Swale Borough Council, but instead fall to other agencies such as Kent County Council or the police. This sadly reduces the level of response further.

### Section 1 – Draft Budget

#### Q1

The council needs to prepare a balanced budget so that its costs are met by income. The council intends to increase its income. How would you suggest we might do that?

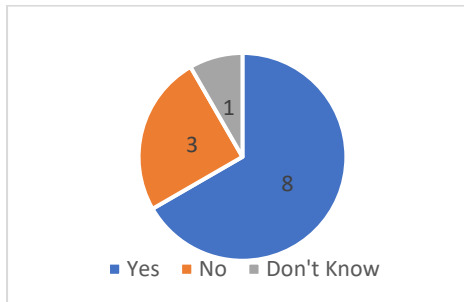
There were 10 responses to this question, with very little in the way of strong themes coming through:

- 4 respondents suggested increasing fines for FPNs and/or parking breaches.
- 2 respondents suggested that parking fees should be reduced.
- 2 respondents suggested increasing parking income through new fees for overnight parking of motorhomes, increasing EV charging prices, and increasing general traffic regulations and road markings.
- 2 respondents suggested increasing fees in relation to new housing developments.
- Other suggestions included:
  - Renting out Swale House
  - Filling empty commercial units, such as Bourne Place
  - Increasing leisure centre and swimming pool fees
  - Using own properties for temporary accommodation
  - Chargeable events/concerts
  - Increasing taxi and gambling licence fees

- Reducing toilet opening times and attendants
- Reducing fees and charges to increase demand
- Making further efficiencies
- Increasing Council Tax

**Q2**

Do you believe the council should reduce its spending?

**Q3**

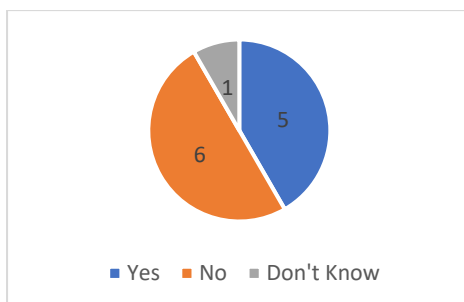
Which services would you reduce?

There were nine responses to this question:

- 4 made suggestions to reduce costs in temporary accommodation
- Other suggestions included:
  - Reducing verge maintenance
  - Freezing/reducing salaries of top earners
  - Reducing corporate costs and Member allowances
  - Reducing spend on climate and ecological emergency
  - Ensure assets are used to the end of their lives

**Q4**

Do you believe the council should reduce its spending on some services to be able to spend more on others?

**Q5**

Which services would you reduce spending on, and which services would you spend more on?

There were eight responses to this question:

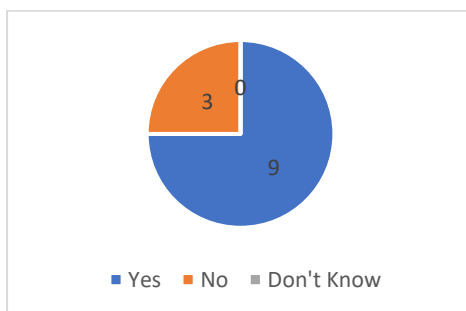
- Suggestions for increased spending included:

- Prevention of illegal dumping, building more council houses, supporting local third parties who provide essential support.
- Suggestions for reducing spending included:
  - Grounds maintenance, grants, cycle routes or any net zero/green agenda projects, council tax collection, and temporary accommodation.
- Other comments included:
  - Review of all services for efficiencies, consider mergers with other councils, not reducing hours of operation.

## Section 2 – Proposed Fees & Charges

### Q6

Do you agree that we should recover the costs of a service through the fees and charges for that service wherever possible?



### Q7

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the proposed increases to the fees and charges.

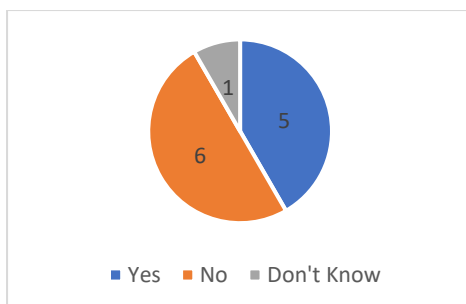
There were nine responses to this question, including:

- 4 disagreeing with the parking charge proposals
- 4 agreeing with increased fees for services where appropriate (discretionary services, FPNs, planning applications for 3+ homes, licence fees)

## Section 3 – Proposed Parking Fees & Charges

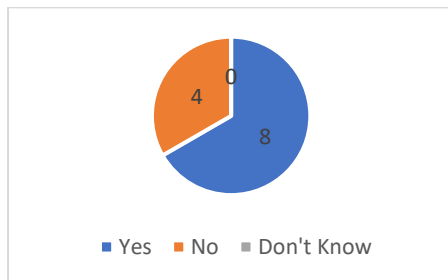
### Q8

Do you agree with the proposal to have hourly charging during the day and a set overnight fee?



**Q9**

Do you believe that a charge should be made for motorcycle parking?

**Q10**

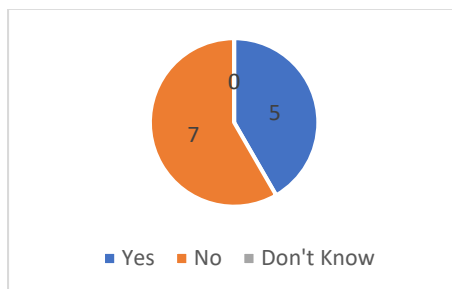
Please use the text box below to let us have any other views on the proposed increases to the parking fees and charges.

There were 10 responses to this question:

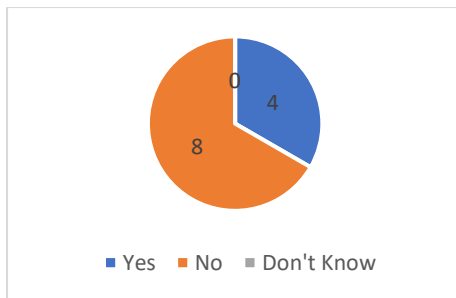
- 5 respondents were against night time parking charges, whilst 1 was in favour of, but felt this should start at 6pm
- 2 respondents were opposed to motorcycle charging
- 2 respondents felt that users should pay their fair share
- 2 respondents felt parking fees were proportionate, or could be increased.

**Section 4 – Proposed Council Tax Level****Q11**

The Band D Council Tax for Swale Council for this year is £194.94 and the suggested increase for 2024/25 is £5.76. In the current financial circumstances do you think that this is an appropriate amount to charge?

**Q12**

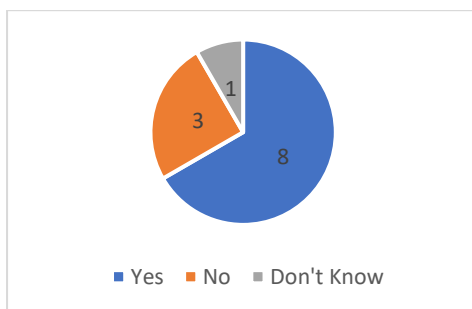
If the government gave us more flexibility to increase the charge beyond 2.99% to help support the council's budget would you be supportive?



## Section 5 – Council Tax Discounts

### Q13

Do you agree that these discounts (uninhabitable properties, and short term empty & unfurnished properties) should be removed?



### Q14

Please use the text box below to let us have any views on this proposal.

There were 11 responses to this question:

- 8 respondents agree to removing or reducing the discount for short term empty properties, with some exceptions such as probate delays
- 5 respondents agree to removing the discount for uninhabitable properties, or having a limit on how long such a discount would be applied
- 1 respondent felt both discounts should be kept, and another that the uninhabitable discount should remain
- 3 respondents felt that Council Tax should be increased on empty homes
- 2 respondents felt this could be an incentive to bring empty homes into use.

## Section 6 – Capital Spending Plans

### Q15

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the capital programme proposals.

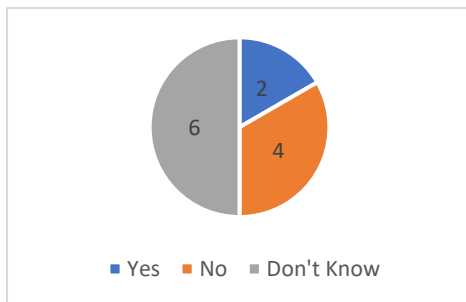
There were six responses to this question:

- 2 comments suggested only urgent projects should be considered whilst the funding generally is limited
- 2 respondents were supportive of the capital programme
- 1 respondent was happy for the council to borrow to build council housing
- 1 respondent felt there should be a longer term view, such as purchasing more properties for temporary accommodation beyond 2024/25.

## Section 7 – Future Savings Options

### Q16

Do you agree with the savings proposals outlined in the report?



### Q17

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the savings proposals.

There were nine responses to this question, with a range of views, including:

- Services should be unaffected by savings
- Concern about cuts to voluntary organisations
- Running down reserves is not sensible
- Reduce spend on environmental issues and regeneration
- Leverage the private sector
- Purchase houses to use for temporary accommodation
- Assist customers who lack digital skills to reduce admin costs in the long term.

## Results – Detailed

The responses from each free text question are set out below.

### Q1

The council needs to prepare a balanced budget so that its costs are met by income. The council intends to increase its income. How would you suggest we might do that?

There were 10 responses to this question.

Suggestions were:

- Encourage people into the town rather than driving them away. An increase in parking costs has a detrimental effect on footfall, not the desired one. Short term gain, long term loss springs to mind. Ensure people can actually get to the town, traffic has been appalling. All shopping this year has been done online.



- Increase fines for offences & offenders which cost the council time and money to clear up and look to reduce costs and overheads for buildings and transport. Fees and costs should also be raised for new developments / developers looking to build in the area and fines should be levied against contractors who fail to complete planned works on time / to the requisite standard that lasts.
- Increase charges for leisure centre and swimming pool use. Increase penalties for fly-tipping.
- Increase the cost of statutory services such as those relating to property improvement.
- Make further savings and efficiencies residents cannot afford to pay increasing council tax.
- Stop paying bonuses to those at the top. Stop paying travel expenses. Cut back on paying out for useless ideas like 20 zones now cycle routes.
- Rent out empty space in Swale House, fill the empty units at Bourne Place, reduce the opening time and attendance at public conveniences, advertise more opportunities for concessions, increase Council Tax and fees and charges.
- Review all council house rents to bring them more in line with commercial rents. Too much incentive to stay in a council house even when families earn significant money. (Just look at Union Leaders on £100k+ still occupying council houses)  
Create motorhome stopping areas in car parks charging an overnight fee.  
Increase EV charging prices so that a clear profit is made.  
The level of economically inactive people is shocking and more so those that have never had a job. Actively provide agency services for those people to work from home.  
Get commercial companies to help with recycling sites so that you make money from the materials particularly metal but also hardcore etc)  
Own your own accommodation for TA housing.  
Remove parking charges and enforcement in most areas. Overall it is normally only good for the contractors. For illegal parking push that back to the Police.  
Actively pursue illegal dumping of large quantities of overburden. Agree with Environment Agency that landfill tax payable is yours. Big money potentially.  
Learn to create interesting car and motorcycle routes like Scotlands NC500 bringing tourism in. Put on events like the Bromley Pageant on Council land where you get a share of the gate fees. These can be big events.
- Increasing fines for offences such as fly tipping, any other environmental FPN's and parking breaches could be one way. Housing development companies could pay an increased amount for each development that is created towards the costs of services that will be provided by the council and later via council tax to those residents once properties are built. General traffic regulation and road makings etc could be significantly be increased compared to current proposals, these figures seem lower increases compared to other areas where costs are looking to be increased .  
Wheeled bins for any new housing developments could be increased further as currently set to rise by 5.87% on average. Some increases to taxi licences and gambling licensing could be proposed as currently no increases planned ,when even a small 2 or 3 % could raise essential funds.
- External grants such as big lottery, potentially reduce some fees and charges to increase demand and thus increase income.

### Q3

Which services would you reduce?

- Top earners salary frozen. Reduce verge maintenance to help biodiversity. Stop paying 4 traffic wardens to act like vultures around the town.
- Chief executive does not need a salary more than 15x the average UK household (£32k pa average). This should be reduced for starters. The council also needs to look at reducing its spending in the temporary accommodation sector which has one of the largest outgoings compared to income.
- Housing, corporate services, councillor's allowances.
- Those stated above.
- Communications, Climate & Ecological Emergency, Economic Development, Community Development, Customer Services.
- Do not buy new refuse vehicles. Best environmental solution is to use existing to the end of their lives. If you must have electric convert them. If you do own the fleet then ensure contractor liable for damage/misuse.  
Cut all inclusion and diversity roles and operations. Reduce HR to one person per 100 employees. Reduce sickness absence and the game of ill health retirement. Move all new staff on money purchase pension schemes rather than final salary. Ensure all office based staff work in the office and certainly not remotely or overseas. Reduce air quality monitoring consultant costs by extending testing cycle. Only monitor where there is an alert and move other locations to 5 yearly. Cease the use of B&B but utilise ex military barracks as accommodation. Incentivises people to help themselves.  
Do not sell any council properties and if challenged on the right to buy then increase the valuations by the enterprise value of the property.  
Cease the use of taxis to take kids to school. Issue bicycles instead on cost and health grounds.  
Cease maintaining council houses and make it a condition of rental. After the stories in the news make sure all residents have an obligation to avoid mold. It is not difficult by airing the room, bleach and anti mold paint.  
Cease the use of consultants. They are expensive and normally only tell you what you already know.  
Introduce a roving pothole repair team which should reduce the cost of damage to vehicles.  
Reduced hours without reduced costs is disgraceful when services are poor.  
Have a rates scheme for charities. They often compete with other shops and drag down the image of high streets.  
Cut money to the police. They have become bloated and inefficient.
- Temporary accommodation, as there are many empty properties in the borough that could be purchased and used rather than outsourcing. Could street cleansing be done less often as a way to cut some costs?
- Members ICT allowance and expenses.
- Non statutory services, move the 11 TA cases older than 2 year into their own property.

## Q5

Which services would you reduce spending on, and which services would you spend more on?

- Reduction in ground maintenance to increase biodiversity. Increase in waste management to stop illegal dumping of rubbish that is having a huge negative impact on the streets.

- I think there needs to be a top to tail review of all services being provided to see what efficiencies and cuts can be made to balance the books before any talk of spending on other services is considered.
- I think you should build more council housing. Stop cutting your staff and stop reducing hours of operation for help to residents, for example in housing options. Do not cut your support of the voluntary sector locally.
- Statutory services should be ringfenced but further merge with other councils should be considered. All other services including grants should be reduced.
- Cycle routes and use the money to repair the already damaged roads.
- Any new projects associated with Net Zero and the green agenda. Note it is neither a climate crisis (read Unsettled by Steven N Koonan) nor ecological crisis but we do need to be mindful of both climate and ecology.  
All social services should be questioned to run at the minimum with exception of physically verifiably disabled and the elderly. Too many people are gaming the system now.  
Absolutely no new active travel schemes. They are costly, little used and drive business away from the area. Many are being removed elsewhere in the country. It is amazing how many zealots have polluting battery powered bicycles and do not get healthier as they are effectively electric motorcycles!
- Cut costs on council tax collection by more pro active education with residents of local support available and also of benefit schemes, acknowledging that many people can't or don't access the internet so need help with forms. Temporary housing could be less if bought properties in the borough to reduce costs of statutory provision. Maintain or increase expenditure to local 3<sup>rd</sup> parties who provide essential support to many people in the area which helps improve wellbeing and social/economic environment.
- Would need more detail to be able to answer.

## Q7

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the proposed increases to the fees and charges.

- No to parking, enough is enough, you have raised prices to justify wages of wardens and it is a revenue making scheme to punish residents (and customers!) in an already failing High Street. Don't aim at individual planning applications, House builders are making Huge profits, look at any planning applications with excess of 3 dwellings and increase fees with this.
- Any service which costs the council money but which is not a necessity should have its fees increased in line with inflation. For fixed penalties and fines these should be increased more than the rate of inflation, more aggressively pursued to not only cover the council costs but also to provide additional as compensation to help run other services which were previously cut.
- By increasing the cost of discretionary fees and charges it passes the cost to those who can afford to pay more.
- Dependent on cost benefit analysis and Quails.
- How long do you think the working class can continue to pay these increases. Manage our money wisely and listen to what the people want.

- You have become addicted to parking money. You need to do a complete review looking at doing away with the lot. Remove parking costs and enforcement people keeping a tiny team for enforcement of abuse. You will probably find overall you will make money. Many of the fees you levy have a negative effect on commerce and those living in Swale particularly if they are already economically vulnerable.
- Some increase do seem fairer than others, but is it possible to increase further some costs like taxi and gambling licences where currently no increases. Further increases for further environmental FPN's and fly tipping etc as these must reflect the costs involved to then collect rubbish dumped and impact on staffing costs involved to administer these areas.
- Evening and overnight charges for car parking should be cancelled and revert back to the daytime 8am-6pm core peak day time hours. The revenue already collected from car parking far exceeds the cost and maintenance charges to provide this service. The proposed overnight fixed charge should not be introduced. An example of disproportionate costs includes - to park for 1.5 hours from 6:00 to 7:30 would cost £4.30 (overnight £3 plus 1 hour from 6pm to 7pm). In addition - charging for all motorcycles and some car parks by cashless payment options only, actively discriminates against members of the community that cannot pay by electronic means. If you do not have a smart/mobile phone - you are excluded from using those facilities. To promote more use of local services and support businesses, I would also suggest making the first half hour of any stay, free of charge.
- Do not agree with night time parking fees. Have you considered reducing some fees to increase demand and bring in more income.

#### Q10

Please use the text box below to let us have any other views on the proposed increases to the parking fees and charges.

- I agree with the overnight proposals but should start from 6pm. No for charging for motorcycles, we should be encouraging light traffic no penalising.
- Parking charges even on the new fee structure are proportionate for now. When they start to become disproportionate is when there will be an issue.
- Do not give free parking to electric vehicles. Also no free electricity.
- Those using their cars should pay their fair share of the costs.
- Evening charges harms towns' economy, further increase in parking will see a reduction in income.
- By having night charges you are reducing footfall to towns, businesses close. Stop being so greedy.
- Are you insane?!! Motorcycles are the best solution for the environment and congestion rather than 2 tonne EVs. Introducing night charges for parking will kill evening visits to places like Faversham stone dead. As above, car park charges should be removed and all the machines and unhappiness that goes with them and their running costs. Instead perhaps test some of the new PV systems for roads to generate electricity income.
- The costs for travelodge stayers is very low compared to other areas where this service is provided and could be increased to match similar other charges by local authorities. Will any increase impact on people shopping in the towns ?
- Evening and overnight charges for car parking should be cancelled and revert back to the daytime 8am-6pm core peak day time hours. The revenue already collected from car parking far exceeds the cost and maintenance charges to provide this

service. The proposed overnight fixed charge should not be introduced. An example of disproportionate costs includes - to park for 1.5 hours from 6:00 to 7:30 would cost £4.30 (overnight £3 plus 1 hour from 6pm to 7pm). In addition - charging for all motorcycles and some car parks by cashless payment options only, actively discriminates against members of the community that cannot pay by electronic means. If you do not have a smart/mobile phone - you are excluded from using those facilities. To promote more use of local services and support businesses, I would also suggest making the first half hour of any stay, free of charge.

- I do not support charges after 6pm especially as cars are the only options a the busses stop at 7 or earlier in my case at 5pm.

#### Q14

Please use the text box below to let us have any views on this proposal.

- Both should be short term, up to a maximum of 4 months. Don't remove, just shorted the benefit.
- I think it's a good idea. I would also suggest additional council tax increases for those who have more than 1 property (especially if it's for rental / buy to let purposes).
- I agree with removing discount for short term empty properties but how an you charge council tax for a property which is uninhabitable? It's not logical.
- It will encourage landlords to make sure they provide property that will reduce the under capacity in the rental market.
- This proposal requires practical application to work.
- Just because they are empty doesn't mean they shouldn't pay.
- It depends if the property is empty due to a death that is going through probate / in the process of being sold - I think there should still be an exemption for this.
- It is a difficult one as some people again are playing the system allowing properties to fall into disrepair and then catch light to make money whereas some are genuine reasons. Will create a new enforcement game of when you get to know somewhere is empty. You might wish to double council taxes on properties that are commercial lets all year. Coastal properties are often empty most of the year.
- Offering incentives to those with empty properties to purchase them could be a possibility and reduce expenditure on temporary housing budget too.
- If properties are either uninhabitable, or are short term empty and unfurnished, they are not using any facilities provided by the Council. Why should they have to pay anything?
- you should charge double for every year these properties are kept empty and land banked

#### Q15

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the capital programme proposals.

- Each has its own merit and any that are required should go a head to reduce overspend in following years.
- Unless these are urgent for healthcare, policing or fire safety, everything else should be put on hold unless absolutely critical until the books are balanced and more urgent services prioritised for funding.
- I do not know the details but am happy for you to borrow in order to build council housing.
- I have no comment on the capital budget.

- A number of councils have undertaken this approach, interest rates may not further decrease, capital receipts are dependent on sales, reserves are finite and decreasing.
- If you do not have the money then all should stop without a clear business benefit case. The refuse truck purchase seems mad at a time of short funds so I do hope the case is sound. You should work assets for as long as possible which is also the most environmentally beneficial thing to do.
- you need more of a longer term view. ie more TA properties beyond 24/25 what new parks and sports ground to impact environmental schemes

## Q17

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the savings proposals.

- It is leadership's responsibility to ensure these are deliverable without affecting service. Swale has seen a huge increase in residential properties without an increase in infrastructure. Most of these new estates have management fees so where is all the money?!?!?
- There is no detail in the budget report about exactly which services will be cut and by how much. I am worried about cuts to voluntary agencies, who do a great job for the borough and save you a lot of money by providing public services.
- Reducing the contribution to some in the charitable sector will cost the council money in the long run. The contribution to Citizens Advice results in more value to Swale BC than the actual cost of the subsidy.
- These proposals are not sufficient.
- You seem to waste tax payers money for idiotic ideas that no one wants.
- Running reserves down is not sensible. Need to stop nearly all the environmental spends. Reduce the spend on regeneration but leverage the private sector.
- Savings could be made by purchasing own housing stock to reduce temp housing costs. Assisting more people with non digital skills to complete forms which would increase their income, reduce monies owed to SBC and subsequently reduce admin costs associated with chasing up monies owed.
- Please see previous comments around new car park charges introduced for 2023/24 and proposed for 2024/25.
- not enough detail to answer but generally in support.

## Response from Citizens Advice Swale

### Introduction

We are writing to SBC members to ask you to consider your critical contribution to our service and to look again at the impact your proposed cuts in funding will have on what we can deliver to Swale residents.

We are grateful to Swale Borough Council for its unwavering support over the years. We understand that setting the budget for 2024/5 has been an immense challenge and you

have not taken the decisions lightly.

Nonetheless, it is our public service duty to provide all members with a detailed explanation about how our work supports statutory services, and the potential domino effect should we be unable to sustain our core organisation and general services, from which the majority of our project work derives.

### **Citizens Advice delivers a return on SBCs investment**

It is fair to say that in recent years Citizens Advice Swale (CAS) has become akin to a fourth emergency service. The 'wrap around' support we offer is second to none. SBC' contribution is an investment from which we deliver demonstrable returns.. The social, health and financial burdens of the last few years have taken their toll on Swale's citizens: CAS provides them with the tools to help themselves and help them keep their heads above water. We keep people in their homes, we ensure basic needs are met, we encourage self help and educate people about how to better manage money and pay liabilities. We increase residents' incomes, we support people to stay in work. The combined impact of our advice services on health and wellbeing is palpable

In the last financial year we supported 3012 unique clients with 17505 Issues. Of these 9740 were related to debt and benefits and 1567 were related to housing. 61% of clients were disabled or registered as having a long term health condition. We produced a total income gain of £795,496.70 for residents. Per resident this equates to on average £264 per client.

As 2023 went on, demand grew, the issues clients faced became more complex and inter-related and we now find ourselves significantly under-resourced. Currently there is a four week wait for debt appointments and only 10% of calls are answered via our Adviceline. Despite this challenge the quality of our service remains gold standard. As a local citizens advice office we have external accreditations for both debt and welfare benefits, we have met all our quality requirements for generalist advice and recently passed our three year audit with a glowing report. This is testament to the dedication of staff who are dealing with more and more vulnerable, complex cases and working harder and harder to meet the needs of our clients. How SBC's contribution to CAS makes a difference

In 2023-24 we received a grant of £133,000 from Swale Borough Council. It is of course not our only source of funding but the contribution represents an essential support for our core costs which can be difficult to cover from project based funding.

A limited breakdown of these costs for a typical year shows: £58,000 towards rent, utilities, IT and other office overheads. The rest of the grant broadly covers a proportion of our overall salary cost. The £133,000 received also allowed us to generate over £300,000 in additional income. This income was majoritively project based. It gave us the ability to expand services on the island, work more closely with food banks and local authority and support a large number of residents in severe deprivation

## **What we can offer**

In terms of the value your money provides to local residents, the figures for 2022/23 are astounding. These figures are produced by our national body and are credible and conservative. The financial value is a minimum return on the value of Citizens Advice . Every £1 invested into our organisation is worth £21.62 in public value and £3.65 in fiscal value. Our services save the NHS £224,390 per year by reducing use. We've saved the DWP £672,429 by keeping people in work . The total value to the people we help is an astonishing £5,425,520 and the total public value is £9,744,500. Regarding the local authority's statutory duty Swale Citizens Advice has saved £188, 568 in preventing homelessness, housing eviction and in council tax repayments

## **The consequences of a cut in funding**

As noted above, SBC's contribution pays for our core overheads and salaries for key members of staff who are essential in our ability to generate further funds. It gives CAS the financial stability it needs in order to plan for the future, develop and fundraise. If we were unable to secure replacement funding within the next 3 months our service would have to shrink to minimal levels. Based on our current draft budget, and the proposed cut to our grant, we would need to reduce face to face services to a single location, with much reduced hours and make multiple redundancies. The majority of our project work would be at risk as would potentially 75% of our admin staff, 70% of supervision, and we would be unable to continue to provide welfare benefits support. The cuts in supervision would compromise our ability to provide multi channel access to our services. Our debt project would also need to be shut down: This service operates on referral from our general service which would no longer generate enough referrals for us to meet necessary targets or manage audit requirements. In addition, we would lose our capacity to develop, grow or look for future investment. It would be a skeleton ship offering the bare minimum in the face of increasing demand.

## **Handling the risks whilst developing services and staff**

Given this potentially bleak scenario, CAS has not been complacent. We have escalated our fundraising strategy, exploring all alternative streams of income that can sustain our services. Grant funding is a challenge. Aside from the fierce competition that all charities face, our specific difficulty is that because our service is open to everybody and not targeted at specific sections of the community, CAS is excluded from applying to many of the grant bodies that offer support for core costs. Nonetheless, we have invested in our staff, developing our fundraising skills, and fostered a culture of innovation and learning. introduced a more systematic process for tracking opportunities and submitted many more grants in 23/4 than in previous years. Application processes are, however, lengthy and we are unlikely to have confirmation from the more significant grants for at least 3 months, which adds to the urgency of our current situation. We have also placed a high emphasis on volunteer recruitment to try and bridge the gap between resource and demand. In short, we have done everything we can to mitigate the risks we face, short of making direct cuts to services.



We recently expanded our services back onto the Isle of Sheppey and now offer face to face debt and generalist advice on a weekly basis. Our newly secured energy project looks like it will enable us to enhance this presence further and we had hoped to offer sessions in both Minster and Leysdown from the Spring. We have been active participants at networking events and are regular contributors to the cost of living groups and One Swale roadshows in an attempt to access harder to reach groups and highlight how we can support marginalised groups further. The current year's funding has allowed us to respond to changing needs and work more closely with partner organisations. This has proved to be an extremely positive experience

We hope SBC will reconsider their grant funding proposals and maintain their contribution to our service at 23/24 levels. This would offer a lifeline and an opportunity for CAS to redouble efforts to secure longer term sustainability and make the necessary organisational changes that will secure our continuity. Crucially it would allow us to continue to provide our services to local residents through what has been a period of immense difficulty for many. It would alleviate the pressures faced by local councils and would support them in meeting their statutory duties. It would make the world of difference to some of Swale's most vulnerable households.

### **Some testimonies from local residents**

Recent feedback provided by clients helps demonstrate the difference we make to people's lives:

*I cannot thank you all enough, the Advice that I was given and the subsequent actions have actually been life changing for myself and my three sons Ten out of ten and gratitude to you ...my fragile mental health has improved as now I have hope and can look forward to a better life for my family. Cannot thank you enough.*

*I'll never be able to thank Citizens Advice enough, especially Tracy and her team in Faversham, as well as your Super Advisers at Head Office. I hate to think where my 2 kids and I would be, without their fantastic knowledge, advice and invaluable support*

*I cannot thank my advisor enough for all that he did for me in such difficult times. I feel at the lowest point of my life he saved me. Guided me through every step and advised me throughout each process of what to expect and how to keep going. He was absolutely sensational at his job... without him... we wouldn't be settled now and doing ok today. Professionalism at its best. Thank you so very very much.*

*I admire these people who volunteer their time to help people who are having problems. I particularly warmed to the lady who was training as she showed great empathy and seemed aware I wasn't someone just scrounging off the state. I worked til covid started but now at 73 my job no longer exists and in any case my mobility is becoming a problem. My savings have gone and I wanted help re housing benefit in relation to the room I rent*

*No complaints. Quite the opposite. I was impressed with the service. Great advice, brilliant help. Without which I wouldn't be where I am now.*

Fiona Spall & Jude Lee (Interim Chief  
Officers) Sarah Harvey (Chair of Trustees)

Citizens Advice Swale

## Parking Consultation – Comments Received

A consultation on the parking policy was undertaken alongside the budget consultation, and 23 comments were received relating to fees and charges, 5 comments regarding charging for motorcycles, and 1 comments regarding charging for motorhomes. The comments are detailed below.

- Reduced fee after 6pm (Bourne Place) for those using the cinema complex, etc on weekdays.
- The charges for evening parking, especially Faversham, are appalling. It heavily impacts on social and hospitality businesses who are already struggling.
- The waiting time at minor injuries is often in excess of an hour, putting a cost on families already struggling.
- Families are finding the cost prohibitive for the swimming pool, and is adding a horrific cost to members of the swimming club.
- I would be interest to know how much revenue has been generated, against how much will be lost in business rates if just 2 businesses close.
- Night Charging is killing local businesses - theatre, cinema, restaurants, bars. You can't just pop for a swim or yoga now without it costing you even more now. The carparks are empty - which is so sad as charging puts people off - the additional cost adds up in a cost of living crisis. Especially for regular visits such as the pool or yoga studio for weekly classes.
- You should be helping not hindering town centres.
- Such a bad decision by SWB. Bring back no charges from 6pm to 8am!!
- Consider a reduction in car parking fees on market and event days to encourage independent and smaller traders, and tourism.
- Do not substantially increase charges for, or decrease provision of, parking used by urban residents without their own provision or which provide access to country walks etc. The latter are needed for exercise and health where the overall cost of withdrawing provision would be greater than the cost of providing it.
- I believe your general parking policy is completely wrong if you want people to "use the high street". Why would I pay to park if I wanted to just "pop in" to buy a snack from the bakers in the high street? Maybe £1.50 for a pie, plus a half our parking charge, plus the aggro of finding a machine that works, queue with everyone else, find some change for the machine (and remember, I don't have a smart phone), eventually get a ticket, walk back to where you've parked, put your ticket in the window correctly (so as not to chance a fine by some overzealous parking bod), and then, and only then, can you go and buy your pie. No, I won't bother, I'll go to Sainsbury's where I can park for nothing, and I don't have to worry about traffic wardens.
- Instead of your short sighted policy of raising as much money NOW from carpark charges (I know this probably raises plenty of short term revenue but this is at the expense of the high street retailers (just look at Canterbury high street – there's

nothing there!)), I suggest you make all parking free for two hours to enable people to just pop in to their local shops and spend their money. Further, get rid of the evening charges which directly affects the hospitality sector including small businesses such as Faversham cinema.

- The car park in the evening usually has around 5 cars in it now so is hardly bringing in substantial cash. It would be far better and safer to return to the old system and allow vehicles to park there free from 6.30. It would also promote Faversham town centre (including the cinema) as an attractive place to come in the evenings and help to support local business. The new car park charging timings do not work and are causing problems for visitors to the town and residents alike.
- It's bad enough that we have higher prices in the day time without being stung to attend a show or event in the evening. It would be sensible to go back to the cheaper evening tariff whilst leaving the day time tariff where it is.
- Charging people to park after 6pm is simply madness in Faversham, you usually find that the people who make these rules are not affected by them.
- Central car park in Faversham was previously free of charge after 6pm. This is a short stay car park which previously accommodated the overflow of town centre resident permit holders who could not otherwise find a space when returning home from work. Notwithstanding the fees, this is no longer an option as a vehicle can be parked there for a maximum of 4 hours, taking you to only 10pm. The evening charges are also adversely impacting on the local theatre, swimming pool, cinema and restaurants. In particular the theatre is run by volunteers who now have to pay to park. It would make sense for:
  - An overnight fixed charge from 6pm to 7am – say £1
  - Resident permit holders to be allowed to park free of charges from 6pm to 7am.
- Parking should be free again after 6.30pm it is killing the local evening economy and causing more parking issues on local side streets.
- Your job is to provide the services the public want and to control the cost, value and quality of those services. You are tasked to manage public infrastructure and land in the interests of the community and not just the Council coffers or green agendas.
- As a minimum you should be providing the following financial information as you should be monitoring it and it would not be commercially sensitive. You are a geographic monopoly after all! It is:
  - the past 3 years total costs associated with running the Swale parking operation (separated between direct and contractor costs)
  - the income generated in total by Swale, then split by permits, parking charges and penalties
  - how much of the income goes outside Swale to contractors, consultants and advisors
  - how much of the income is retained by Swale and the profit you believe you are making
  - the forecast financial benefits of the changes you are proposing for Swale, plus the changes to contractors income. Then show the direct costs of the changes and charges to the community
- Parking charges should be withdrawn for all locations around the town centre and congestion seen as a sign of a healthy economy. We want towns to be popular!
- It is interesting that pricing of parking is totally omitted. Do you not want the public to have a say in that area? Again, if you want to change parking prices that should be a

consultation to the public or even a simple referendum. The Swiss seem to have a very good system.

- Charging for on street parking should be minimised wherever possible as it is too easy for Councils to get hooked on the income. A 3 yearly review should be carried out to see which streets would benefit from the removal of on street charges. Penalties for the public parking on public roads and spaces should be a last resort for flagrant violation and not seen as an opportunity to scalp the public for economic gain.
- In order to support economic growth, Swale should be looking to encourage travel to all our centres of commerce and remove parking charges wherever possible as they are killing our High Streets and small businesses. If charges are necessary at a very few select occasions then they should be removed when major events are on. Swale should be looking to its towns to be major congestion centres showing that people wish to visit them and spend money.
- I'd like to object to charging for motorcycle parking. My 16 year old daughter volunteers at the British Heart Foundation on a Saturday. She rides her Moped and parks it in one of the town centre car parks. If she needs to start paying for her parking, she won't be able to continue with her volunteering job. You can only park for 4 hours max and her shift is longer than that. She also sometimes parks in the town when she goes to her 6th form class, as her school don't allow their 16-18 year olds to park on the school site. The streets around Sittingbourne just aren't safe for her to leave her moped. It will get stolen. She parks it in the town centre car park as there is an element of safety involved too. Please reconsider charging for motorcycle parking. This will impact young people trying to get ahead in life. It's simply unfair.
- Motorcycle Parking. I have a motorcycle, I don't have a smartphone, or apps, on anything like it. You are being prejudiced and discriminating against people like me who don't own or use this type of equipment. It's not my fault that parking tickets are vulnerable to removal by unknown persons.  
For the very small amount of motorcycles, and the small area they take up in a carpark, surely waiving the fee would be the simplest solution, I mean you can't be losing much revenue by doing this, can you?
- Motor cycle charges to be introduced in car parks – are residents then able to apply for a residents parking permit? How will this permit be displayed on the vehicle? It is acknowledged that they can pay only by Ringo due to inability to display a ticket. Similarly, how would they display a resident's parking permit? Where will motor cycles be able to park? If the only available parking is in pay and display carparks this is going to be extremely inconvenient and costly, particularly if the motor cycle is not used daily.
- - It would appear that the anti car lobby has now moved on to powered two wheelers. These are probably the best form of transport. They take up virtually no more space than a bicycle; do not contribute to congestion; journey times are predictable and seldom affected by traffic jams; safer for other road users as they have less kinetic energy in collisions (unlike all the 2 tonne EVs appearing on the road and releasing more particulates); they are more fuel efficient and have lower emissions in real life due to almost never sitting in queues and jams; not limited in range; etc The only method of payment is the RingGo app because a ticket cannot be affixed to a bike?! Then don't do it for the above reasons or people will just use their cars.
- You only have 15 spaces spread across 46 car parks. Not only is this ridiculous but you now propose to charge for parking a motorcycle!!! You can generally get 2 bikes in a car space and often up to 4 so again congestion is reduced. This was proposed

in London and has now been dropped after action by the public. Can you name who put this forward?

- Swale should introduce and advertise overnight parking for Motorhomes and campervans near town centres and costal areas. Like the French, have simple byelaws that limit the number of days you can stay (normally 2 or 3 nights). Motorhomes tend to be expensive and the owners have disposable income and spend it in the communities they visit. We tend to holiday in France and Germany due to their Aires and Stellplatz respectively. Motorhomes being in car parks at night also tends to stop misuse of the car parks and vandalism. We should be making our towns and holiday locations a pleasure and easy to visit. Allow the parking for free or a token level.

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	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Housing Services</b>							
<b>(C Hudson)</b>							
<b>Home Inspection for Immigration Application Fee</b>							
Requests received to inspect and provide report on suitability of proposed home in connection with immigration applications	139.00	27.80	166.80	147.08	29.42	176.50	5.81%
<b>Staying Put Handyperson Rates</b>							
Hourly rate for a handyperson	13.50	2.70	16.20	14.29	2.86	17.15	5.85%
Subsidised hourly rate for a handyperson – client in receipt of benefits	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.29	1.06	6.35	5.80%
Private disabled works (household not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant)	150.00	0.00	150.00	158.70	0.00	158.70	5.80%
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) fee (statutory % charge)	12.50%			12.50%			
<b>Alleygate Key</b>							
Fee	18.33	3.67	22.00	19.42	3.88	23.30	5.95%
<b>Town Centre Licence</b>							
Licence for large events of 10,000 people or more	550.00	0.00	550.00	582.00	0.00	582.00	5.82%
<b>Planning</b>							
<b>(J Johnson)</b>							
<b>Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)</b>							
Central government encourages the use of planning performance agreements (PPA's) for large or complex planning proposals. These are voluntary agreements between us and the applicants which helps to:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•bring together the developer, the Local Planning Authority and key stakeholders to work in partnership throughout the planning process</li> <li>•ensure complex proposals progress through the process to mutually-agreed timescales</li> <li>•ensure appropriate resources and expertise are provided to advise on complex proposals</li> <li>•provide greater opportunity for dialogue through the planning process and help deliver high-quality development</li> </ul>							
The cost of the PPA will be calculated based on the complexity and size of the scheme using the relevant officer day rates. Please contact the Planning Department to discuss your requirements and obtain an estimate.							
<b>Pre Application Advice (new fee structure proposed from 2024/25)</b>							
Large major (50+ houses or flats, or commercial over 10,000sqm)	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,370.42	874.08	5,244.50	n/a
Major (10-49 houses or flats)	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,871.25	574.25	3,445.50	n/a
Minor	n/a	n/a	n/a	801.67	160.33	962.00	n/a
Householder	n/a	n/a	n/a	291.67	58.33	350.00	n/a
Heritage & urban design attendance at meeting per hour	n/a	n/a	n/a	208.33	41.67	250.00	n/a
Listed building (householder) - written advice only	n/a	n/a	n/a	100.00	20.00	120.00	n/a
Local not-for-profit charities	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a
Others not in categories above, charged at an hourly rate	Price on application			Price on application			n/a
* Parish Councils, voluntary organisations, national charities or charities that are not 'not-for-profit' will be charged based on development size.							
<b>Pre Application Advice - Meetings</b>							
Very large major	3250.00	650.00	3,900.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Major	2300.00	460.00	2,760.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minor	505.00	101.00	606.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other (excluding householders and listed buildings)	152.00	30.40	182.40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Charities, voluntary groups and parish councils	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Works/repairs to listed buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Pre Application Advice - Letters</b>							
Very large major	1010.00	202.00	1,212.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Major	505.00	101.00	606.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minor	253.00	50.60	303.60	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other (excluding householders and listed buildings)	76.00	15.20	91.20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Householder	51.00	10.20	61.20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Charities, voluntary groups and parish councils	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Works/repairs to listed buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Complaints made under the High Hedges Legislation</b>							
Standard fee	565.00	0.00	565.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	6.19%
<b>Planning Portal</b>							
The Planning Portal will be charging a £20 (£16.67 + VAT) service charge payable by applicants on any planning application that attracts a fee. Applications that do not attract a fee will not incur this service charge.							
<b>Local Land Charges</b>							
<b>Official Searches</b>							
LLC1 only	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
LLC1 only - additional parcel	4.80	0.00	4.80	4.80	0.00	4.80	0.00%
Con 29	136.67	27.33	164.00	143.50	28.70	172.20	5.00%
Con 29 - additional parcel	20.00	4.00	24.00	21.00	4.20	25.20	5.00%
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29)*	151.67	27.33*	179.00	158.50	28.70	187.20	4.58%
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29) - additional parcel*	24.80	4.00*	28.80	25.80	4.20	30.00	4.17%
Part II enquiry - Con29 questions 4-21	13.50	2.70	16.20	14.17	2.83	17.00	4.96%
Part II enquiry - Con29 question 22	25.00	5.00	30.00	26.25	5.25	31.50	5.00%
Additional questions	19.00	3.80	22.80	19.96	3.99	23.95	5.05%
*VAT applicable only to the Con29 part of the charge.							
<b>Personal Searches</b>							
Enhanced Personal Search	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
1.1 (a-l) (Planning)	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.33	1.47	8.80	4.71%
1.1 (J, K, L) (Building Regulations)	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.33	1.47	8.80	4.71%
2.1 (b-d)	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.1 Land for public purpose	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.3 Drainage matters	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.5 Railway schemes	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.7 Outstanding Notices	10.00	2.00	12.00	10.50	2.10	12.60	5.00%
3.8 Building Regulations Contravention	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.9 Enforcement	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.33	1.47	8.80	4.71%
3.10 CILs	4.75	0.95	5.70	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.26%
3.12 Compulsory purchase	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.13b Contaminated land	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.13c Contaminated land	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%



	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Environment and Leisure</b>							
<b>(M Cassell)</b>							
<b>Car Parks and Season Tickets (Subject to car park policy review)</b>							
A review of the parking policy is currently in progress. Chargeable times are under review as part of this. However, the proposed rates for charging are as follows.							
<b>Short Stay (maximum stay 4 hours). Chargeable hours subject to the parking policy.</b>							
<b>Fixed rate off-peak chargeable hours as per the parking policy.</b>							
Faversham: Central car park (season tickets for business only), Institute Road car park (no season tickets)							
Sittingbourne: Albany Road, Central Avenue, Crown Quay Lane, Milton High Street, The Forum, The Swallows, Swale House (weekends only), The Forum (season tickets business only), Station Street (up to 2 hours only)							
Sheerness (no season tickets): Rose Street (including land adjacent to Wood Street), Trinity Place, Beachfields							
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.58	0.12	0.70	16.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	2.33	0.47	2.80	7.37%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	4.67	0.93	5.60	7.85%
Off peak fixed rate (subject to decision on final parking policy)	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.50	0.50	3.00	n/a
Season per quarter (for business only Central car park, Faversham/ Forum, Sittingbourne)	220.00	44.00	264.00	241.67	48.33	290.00	9.85%
Electric vehicle parking/charging per kilowatt hour (kWh)	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	0.00%
Motorcycles (in motorcycle bays using cashless parking transactions only) - up to 4 hours (subject to decision on final parking policy)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.17	1.00	n/a
<b>Sittingbourne: East Street car park, Albany Service Road car park</b>							
Maximum stay 1 hour (cashless transactions only)	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
<b>Bourne Place Multi-Storey Car Park</b>							
The charge is for ALL parking bays including disabled and parent/child bays.							
Patrons of Light Cinema will have free parking all day on Sundays and after 6pm Mon-Sat. Ticket must be validated at the Light before payment at car park machine							
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.58	0.12	0.70	16.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	2.33	0.47	2.80	7.37%
Up to 3 hours	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	7.69%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	4.67	0.93	5.60	7.85%
Up to 5 hours	5.42	1.08	6.50	5.83	1.17	7.00	7.56%
Up to a maximum of 6 hours	6.50	1.30	7.80	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.69%
Over 6 hours (within 24 hour period)	7.58	1.52	9.10	8.17	1.63	9.80	7.78%
Lost ticket	7.58	1.52	9.10	8.17	1.63	9.80	7.78%
Season ticket per quarter (subject to a maximum capacity)	220.00	44.00	264.00	241.67	48.33	290.00	9.85%
Replacement for lost, stolen or destroyed season tickets	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.00	2.00	12.00	n/a
<b>Travelodge</b>	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00	0.00%
(Preferential rate for hotel guests (for 24 hours))							

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Long Stay Car Parks</b>							
<b>Chargeable and off-peak hours as per the parking policy.</b>							
Faversham: Partridge Lane, Queens Hall							
Sittingbourne: Spring Street, Bell Road, Cockleshell Walk							
Sheerness: Albion Place, Beach Street, Bridge Road, Cross Street, Trinity Road, Library and Park Road Queenborough.							
Ship on Shore (9am to 7pm only no evening fee).							
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.70</b>	16.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>1.40</b>	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	<b>2.33</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>2.80</b>	7.37%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	<b>4.67</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>5.60</b>	7.85%
Over 4 hours	5.50	1.10	6.60	<b>5.92</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>7.10</b>	7.64%
Off peak fixed rate (subject to decision on final parking policy)	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>2.50</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>3.00</b>	n/a
Season ticket per month (long stay car park)	82.50	16.50	99.00	<b>90.83</b>	<b>18.17</b>	<b>109.00</b>	10.10%
Season ticket per quarter (long stay car park)	220.00	44.00	264.00	<b>241.67</b>	<b>48.33</b>	<b>290.00</b>	9.85%
<b>Seasonal Car parks</b>							
Leysdown: Promenade, Little Oyster, (seasonal) (all day between 1 March and 31 October)							
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>1.40</b>	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	<b>2.33</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>2.80</b>	7.37%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	<b>4.67</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>5.60</b>	7.85%
All day	5.50	1.10	6.60	<b>5.92</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>7.10</b>	7.64%
Off peak fixed rate as per the parking policy	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>2.50</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>3.00</b>	n/a
Motorcycles (in motorcycle bays using cashless parking transactions only) - up to 4 hours (subject to decision on final parking policy)	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>1.00</b>	n/a
<b>Season tickets (to be used at any long stay car park throughout the Borough - excluding Bourne Place MSCP)</b>							
Season per quarter	234.17	46.83	281.00	<b>257.50</b>	<b>51.50</b>	<b>309.00</b>	9.96%
Replacement for lost, stolen or destroyed season tickets	9.17	1.83	11.00	<b>10.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>12.00</b>	9.05%
All pay and display car parks – closure of parking bays through events or other activities	Price on application dependent on car park location, type of event (commercial – enthusiast – voluntary/community) and local impact			Price on application dependent on car park location, type of event (commercial – enthusiast – voluntary/community) and local impact			n/a

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	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Residents Only Parking Permits (off street) (5pm-9am evenings, weekends and bank holidays)</b>							
Faversham: Central car park (residents of Cross Lane and Bank Street), Queens Hall (residents of Victoria Place and Dorset Place)							
Sheerness: Albion Place (residents of Harris Road, Portland Terrace and Albion Place), Cross Street (Sheerness town centre residents), Trinity Road (residents of Trinity Road only)							
Per quarter	18.75	3.75	22.50	20.63	4.13	24.75	10.02%
Sheerness: Delamark Road car park (residents only).							
Per quarter	14.17	2.83	17.00	15.58	3.12	18.70	9.95%
<b>Residents' Parking Permits (on street)</b>							
Per annum	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	0.00%
Visitors permit book (10 days) - for resident permit holders only	11.00	0.00	11.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	0.00%
Visitors parking permits (per day) - for resident permit holders only	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00%
Hourly scratchcards (per hour) - for all others	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00%
Hourly scratchcards (per book of 10 hours) - for all others	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Business per annum	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	0.00%
Nativity Close (exemption permit concession admin fee)	30.00	0.00	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	0.00%
Residents/Business/Exemption permit concessions. Replacement permit for lost, stolen or destroyed permits	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
<b>Dispensation / Waivers</b>							
Maximum 1 day	12.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	0.00%
Maximum 1 week	36.00	0.00	36.00	36.00	0.00	36.00	0.00%
Maximum 2 weeks	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	0.00%
Maximum 1 month	60.00	0.00	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	0.00%
Over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Suspension admin fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Sports Facilities</b>							
<b>Tennis Courts</b>							
Unlit court (hourly rate)	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.00	1.00	6.00	n/a
Court with floodlighting (hourly rate)	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.50	1.50	9.00	n/a
Season ticket (3 court bookings of up to 2 hours per session per week)	n/a	n/a	n/a	33.33	6.67	40.00	n/a
<b>With changing facilities and showers</b>							
- Senior	64.58	12.92	77.50	72.00	14.40	86.40	11.49%
- Under 18s	21.50	4.30	25.80	24.00	4.80	28.80	11.63%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	16.17	3.23	19.40	18.00	3.60	21.60	11.32%
<b>With changing facilities only</b>							
- Senior	53.75	10.75	64.50	60.00	12.00	72.00	11.63%
- Under 18s	17.92	3.58	21.50	20.00	4.00	24.00	11.61%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	15.08	3.02	18.10	16.75	3.35	20.10	11.07%
<b>With no facilities</b>							
- Senior	36.75	7.35	44.10	41.00	8.20	49.20	11.56%
- Under 18s	16.00	3.20	19.20	17.80	3.56	21.36	11.25%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	9.83	1.97	11.80	11.00	2.20	13.20	11.90%
If your booking meets all of the rules below, you can choose to save money and not pay VAT on the booking.							
<b>VAT exemption rules</b>							
The booking consists of 10 or more dates.							
Each booking is for the same sport.							
Each booking is in the same place. This condition is still met where a different pitch, court or lane is used (or a different number of pitches, courts or							
The gap between each session is at least 1 day but not more than 14 days (for a gap to be at least 1 day, 24 hours must elapse between the start of							
The booking is to be paid for as a whole and there is written evidence to the fact. This must include evidence that payment is to be made in full whether							
The facilities are booked out to a school, club, association or an organisation representing affiliated clubs or constituent associations, such as a local							
The person to whom the facilities are booked has exclusive use of them during the bookings.							
If you want your booking to be VAT exempt, you must make sure that it meets all of the rules above. Because the rules are given to us by the							
government, we cannot change them.							
All bookings must be paid for in full before the start of the booking. You cannot change VAT exempt bookings once they have been paid for, so you							
must make sure the dates and times are right for you.							
<b>Allotments</b>							
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata	65.00	0.00	65.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	7.69%
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata (OAPs/Disabled)	32.50	0.00	32.50	35.00	0.00	35.00	7.69%
Refundable keys deposit	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.00	0.00	5.00	n/a
<b>King George's Pavilion</b>							
Main hall/tea room (hourly rate) (minimum hire 1 hour)							
Mon-Sun (9am-midnight)	11.40	0.00	11.40	12.00	0.00	12.00	5.26%
Playgroups (per morning)	28.50	0.00	28.50	30.00	0.00	30.00	5.26%
Tea room – for children's parties only (per hour) minimum 1 hour hire	9.20	0.00	9.20	10.00	0.00	10.00	8.70%
Caretaking services – set up and clear away: standard tables and/or chairs	6.90	0.00	6.90	12.46	0.00	12.46	80.58%
Refundable deposits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Bank Holidays, New Year's Eve	Double the standard rate			Double the standard rate			n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Cemeteries Burial Fees</b>							
<i>Includes Exclusive Right of Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial &amp; Re-inscription Permits</i>							
1 <sup>st</sup> Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,700.00	0.00	2,700.00	8.00%
1 <sup>st</sup> Burial Sheppey and Iwade	2290.00	0.00	2,290.00	2,475.00	0.00	2,475.00	8.08%
1 <sup>st</sup> Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sittingbourne,	1240.00	0.00	1,240.00	1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00	8.87%
1 <sup>st</sup> Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sheppey	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,080.00	0.00	1,080.00	8.00%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,080.00	0.00	1,080.00	8.00%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Burial Sheppey and Iwade	825.00	0.00	825.00	900.00	0.00	900.00	9.09%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	825.00	0.00	825.00	900.00	0.00	900.00	9.09%
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	250.00	0.00	250.00	270.00	0.00	270.00	8.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	500.00	0.00	500.00	540.00	0.00	540.00	8.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	750.00	0.00	750.00	815.00	0.00	815.00	8.67%
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,080.00	0.00	1,080.00	8.00%
<b>Cremated Remains (all sites)</b>							
<i>(includes Exclusive Rights to Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial &amp; Re-inscription Permit)</i>							
1 <sup>st</sup> Burial	669.70	0.00	669.70	730.00	0.00	730.00	9.00%
1 <sup>st</sup> Burial (where no use has been made of previously purchased grave)	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Burial	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Burial	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
4 <sup>th</sup> Burial	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
Burial of loose ashes	125.00	0.00	125.00	135.00	0.00	135.00	8.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	86.00	0.00	86.00	95.00	0.00	95.00	10.47%
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	170.50	0.00	170.50	185.00	0.00	185.00	8.50%
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	256.00	0.00	256.00	280.00	0.00	280.00	9.38%
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	340.90	0.00	340.90	370.00	0.00	370.00	8.54%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Child Burial</b>							
Under 18 years of age	Covered by Children's Funeral Fund for England. Subject to criteria.		Covered by Children's Funeral Fund for England. Subject to criteria.				
<b>Ancillary Services</b>							
Issue of letter of confirmation where deed is lost	70.00	0.00	70.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	7.14%
Use of chapel in Sittingbourne	98.00	0.00	98.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	7.14%
Use of chapel in Faversham	133.00	0.00	133.00	145.00	0.00	145.00	9.02%
Turfed grave	At cost		At cost		n/a		
Transfer of deed ownership	69.80	0.00	69.80	75.00	0.00	75.00	7.45%
Record search & certificate (each grave)	34.90	0.00	35.00	38.00	0.00	38.00	8.57%
Extra cost of large coffin or casket (measuring 30 inches or more)	n/a	n/a	n/a	100.00	0.00	100.00	n/a
Exhumation of coffin	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,800.00	0.00	2,800.00	12.00%
Exhumation of cremated remains	335.00	0.00	335.00	375.00	0.00	375.00	11.94%
Other services (vatable)	At cost		At cost		n/a		
Non-residents of Swale (not living in Swale at time of death or have not been a resident of Swale for at least 15 consecutive years) required to pay double the costs set out above (except child burials)							
<b>Memorial Bench (Seafronts &amp; Green Space, Excludes Cemeteries)</b>							
Memorial bench with basic installation	900.00	180.00	1,080.00	975.00	195.00	1,170.00	8.33%
Memorial bench with concrete installation	1130.00	226.00	1,356.00	1,220.00	244.00	1,464.00	7.96%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Travelling Fairs</b>							
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day)	1023.00	0.00	1,023.00	1,100.00	0.00	1,100.00	7.53%
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day) Local Operator	341.00	0.00	341.00	365.00	0.00	365.00	7.04%
<b>Use of Council Land – Travelling Fairs</b>							
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	66.00	0.00	66.00	72.50	0.00	72.50	9.85%
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days) Local Operator	22.00	0.00	22.00	24.00	0.00	24.00	9.09%
Refundable deposit	676.50	0.00	676.50	735.00	0.00	735.00	8.65%
<b>Use of Council Land – Travelling Shows</b>							
On site fee for days open to the public	226.90	0.00	226.90	245.00	0.00	245.00	7.98%
On site fee payable when not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	65.30	0.00	65.30	70.00	0.00	70.00	7.20%
Refundable deposit	676.50	0.00	676.50	735.00	0.00	735.00	8.65%
<b>Use of Council Land – Events</b>							
On site fee for small commercial events – day usage of open space	231.00	0.00	231.00	250.00	0.00	250.00	8.23%
On site fee for large commercial events – day usage of open space	Price on Application			Price on application			n/a
On site fee for enthusiast event – day usage of open space	115.50	0.00	115.50	125.00	0.00	125.00	8.23%
On site fee for community/voluntary event – day usage of open space	0.00			0.00			0.00%
Refundable deposit	225.50	0.00	225.50	245.00	0.00	245.00	8.65%
<b>Beach Hut Charges</b>							
Locations now at Minster Leas and Leysdown							
Ground rental – beach hut owned	498.00	0.00	498.00	530.00	0.00	530.00	6.43%
Annual rental	1219.30	243.86	1,463.16	1,300.00	260.00	1,560.00	6.62%
Weekly rental	88.00	17.60	105.60	94.00	18.80	112.80	6.82%
Refundable keys deposit	25.00	0.00	25.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	20.00%
Transfer of an owned beach hut licence	A fee of three times the ground rent or 10% of the sale value whichever is greatest			A fee of three times the ground rent or 10% of the sale value whichever is greatest			n/a
Purchase of beach hut	Market price			Market price			n/a
<b>Access Over Open Space Licence</b>							
Used for residential properties requiring access over our land to undertake works/deliveries etc.							
Standard fee	73.70	0.00	73.70	85.00	0.00	85.00	15.33%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Traffic Regulation Order Applications</b>							
<i>On application (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	1210.00	0.00	1,210.00	1,310.00	0.00	1,310.00	8.26%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	1430.00	0.00	1,430.00	1,550.00	0.00	1,550.00	8.39%
Large (50+ consultations)	1760.00	0.00	1,760.00	1,910.00	0.00	1,910.00	8.52%
<i>On application (loading bays, single bays)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	575.00	0.00	575.00	620.00	0.00	620.00	7.83%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	860.00	0.00	860.00	940.00	0.00	940.00	9.30%
Large (50+ consultations)	1150.00	0.00	1,150.00	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	8.70%
<i>No objections received (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)</i>							
All size consultations	575.00	0.00	575.00	620.00	0.00	620.00	7.83%
<i>No objections received (loading bays, single bays)</i>							
All size consultations	286.00	0.00	286.00	310.00	0.00	310.00	8.39%
<i>Objections received (Joint Transportation Board report)</i>							
All size consultations	286.00	0.00	286.00	310.00	0.00	310.00	8.39%
<i>Progress/implement scheme (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	575.00	0.00	575.00	630.00	0.00	630.00	9.57%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	685.00	0.00	685.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	9.49%
Large (50+ consultations)	810.00	0.00	810.00	900.00	0.00	900.00	11.11%
<i>Progress/implement scheme (loading bays, single bays)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	122.00	0.00	122.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	6.56%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	122.00	0.00	122.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	6.56%
Large (50+ consultations)	122.00	0.00	122.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	6.56%
Inclusion of new or amended waiting restrictions into Traffic Regulation Order	1210.00	0.00	1,210.00	1,320.00	0.00	1,320.00	9.09%
<b>White Bar Markings</b>							
Installation of new white bar marking across vehicle crossing	141.00	28.20	169.20	154.17	30.83	185.00	9.34%
Re-painting existing white bar marking across vehicle crossing	118.00	23.60	141.60	129.17	25.83	155.00	9.47%
<b>Installation of Advisory Bays on Private Lane (e.g. Disabled Bay in Housing Association Car Park)</b>							
Installation of Advisory Parking Bay on Private Land	110.00	0.00	110.00	116.40	0.00	116.40	5.82%
<b>Street Naming &amp; Numbering</b>							
Changing or requesting new property	82.50	0.00	82.50	90.75	0.00	90.75	10.00%
New street name	165.00	0.00	165.00	181.50	0.00	181.50	10.00%
New street developments (4 or more properties/units) per property/unit with minimum charge of £180	55.00	0.00	55.00	60.50	0.00	60.50	10.00%
Provision of historical information relating to street naming & numbering	33.00	0.00	33.00	36.30	0.00	36.30	10.00%
Changing street name	770.00	0.00	770.00	847.00	0.00	847.00	10.00%



	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Harbour Mooring Fees</b>							
Faversham Town Quay per night	8.60	1.72	10.32	9.40	1.88	11.28	9.30%
<b>Garden Waste Subscription (brown bins – domestic)</b>							
Fortnightly collection of garden waste (excluding Christmas where service is suspended for 2 weeks). Fee includes hire of bin. Price is per annum	55.00	0.00	55.00	59.00	0.00	59.00	7.27%
<b>Bulky Waste Collections</b>							
Charge covers up to 4 bulky items. If white goods, charge covers only one item.	30.00	0.00	30.00	32.50	0.00	32.50	8.33%
<b>Clinical Waste Collection</b>							
Residents receive up to 2 free collections per annum then any subsequent collections will be charged at the following rates per collection	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.50	0.00	3.50	n/a
<b>Wheeled Bins for new developments</b>							
Wheeled bins 140 litre	45.20	0.00	45.20	47.90	0.00	47.90	5.97%
Wheeled bins 180 litre	51.20	0.00	51.20	54.20	0.00	54.20	5.86%
Wheeled bins 240 litre	51.20	0.00	51.20	54.20	0.00	54.20	5.86%
Wheeled bins 1,100 litre	497.00	0.00	497.00	525.90	0.00	525.90	5.81%
Food waste container 23 litre	11.90	0.00	11.90	12.60	0.00	12.60	5.88%
Kitchen caddy 5 litre	6.00	0.00	6.00	6.40	0.00	6.40	6.67%
Bin repairs	n/a	n/a	n/a	15.00	0.00	15.00	n/a
Replacement domestic 180 litre or 240 litre refuse or recycling bin if damaged, lost or stolen (unless damaged during emptying by contractor). This fee includes delivery of new bin and removal/ disposal of old bin.	30.00	0.00	30.00	32.00	0.00	32.00	6.67%
Note: Wheeled bins are non-vatable when supplied directly to a household for domestic/household waste							
<b>Additional Litter Bins (each)</b>							
145 litre galvanised (fee does not include emptying the bin)	495.00	99.00	594.00	530.00	106.00	636.00	7.07%
Annual emptying cost	n/a	n/a	n/a	130.00	0.00	130.00	n/a
<b>Bin Store Clearance</b>							
Per occasion	175.00	0.00	175.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	14.29%
<b>Wheeled Bins for Community Events</b>							
Provision of wheeled bins for events (cost per occasion) – delivery/ collection charge	113.50	0.00	113.50	122.00	0.00	122.00	7.49%
Wheeled bin hire (cost per bin)	14.30	0.00	14.30	15.50	0.00	15.50	8.39%
Servicing of bins during event	Price on application		Price on application		Price on application		0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Radar Key for Disabled Toilets</b>							
Fee	3.00	0.00	3.00	3.50	0.00	3.50	16.67%
<b>Environmental – Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)</b>							
Fly tipping (level 1)* - single item or black bag, no criteria from level 2 met	400.00	0.00	400.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	50.00%
Fly tipping (level 2) - multiple items, or multiple locations, or hazardous waste, or blocking access, or specialist equipment required to clear any item	400.00	0.00	400.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	150.00%
Littering (level 1)** - single item of litter eg cigarette butt, no criteria from level 2 met	150.00	0.00	150.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	33.33%
Littering (level 2) - repeated offence, multiple items, littering from vehicles, hazardous waste, littering into a watercourse	150.00	0.00	150.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	233.33%
Householders/Commercial duty of care – lack of care in disposal of waste*	400.00	0.00	400.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	50.00%
Refuse left out inappropriately	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	0.00%
Graffiti	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Fly posting	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Waste carrier offences	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Breach of any Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
*Reduced to £300 if paid in full within 10 days (23/24 charge), reduced to £450 if paid in full within 14 days (24/25 charge)							
**Reduced to £150 if paid in in full within 14 days (24/25 charge)							

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Animal Welfare Licensing</b>							
The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 came into force on 1 October 2018. Charges have been calculated using the Local Government Association guidance document on locally set licence fees ('Open for Business').							
<b>Part A</b> - Covers the application and authorisation process.							
<b>Part B</b> - Is the cost for administering and enforcing the legislative framework.							
<b>Boarding in Kennels for Dogs, Boarding for Cats, Day Care for Dogs, Home Boarding for Dogs, Breeding Dogs and Selling Animals as Pets</b>							
(This fee applies to both arranging the provision of accommodation for other people's dogs <b>and/or</b> host families where dogs are boarded within the Borough.)							
<b>Part A</b> <sup>1</sup>	239.40	0.00	239.40	263.50	0.00	263.50	10.07%
<b>Part B</b>							
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals (i.e fish, reptiles, cats, dogs etc).	192.00	0.00	192.00	212.00	0.00	212.00	10.42%
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches)	n/a	n/a	n/a	233.00	0.00	233.00	n/a
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals).	320.00	0.00	320.00	352.00	0.00	352.00	10.00%
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches).	n/a	n/a	n/a	387.00	0.00	387.00	n/a
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals).	449.00	0.00	449.00	494.00	0.00	494.00	10.02%
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches).	n/a	n/a	n/a	543.00	0.00	543.00	n/a
Charge for each additional 'group' of animals being sold as pets (i.e fish, reptiles, dogs, cats etc)	n/a	n/a	n/a	30.00	0.00	30.00	n/a
<b>Hiring of Horses</b>							
<b>Part A</b> <sup>1</sup>	239.40	0.00	239.40	263.50	0.00	263.50	10.07%
<b>Part B</b>							
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (1 - 10 horses) <sup>3</sup>	192.00	0.00	192.00	212.00	0.00	212.00	10.42%
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (11 or more horses) <sup>3</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	233.00	0.00	233.00	n/a
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (1 - 10 horses) <sup>2</sup>	320.00	0.00	320.00	352.00	0.00	352.00	10.00%
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (11 or more horses) <sup>2</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	387.00	0.00	387.00	n/a
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (1 - 10 horses) <sup>2</sup>	449.00	0.00	449.00	494.00	0.00	494.00	10.02%
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (11 or more horses) <sup>2</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	543.00	0.00	543.00	n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition</b>							
<b>Part A</b>							
For a 3 year licence <sup>1</sup>	240.00	0.00	240.00	264.00	0.00	264.00	10.00%
<b>Part B</b>							
For a 3 year licence <sup>3</sup>	449.00	0.00	449.00	494.00	0.00	494.00	10.02%
<b>Dangerous Wild Animal Licence</b>							
<b>Part A</b>							
For a 2 year licence <sup>1</sup>	239.50	0.00	239.50	263.50	0.00	263.50	10.02%
<b>Part B</b>							
For a 2 year licence <sup>3</sup>	320.00	0.00	320.00	352.00	0.00	352.00	10.00%
<b>Zoo Licence</b> (Please discuss your application with the Animal Control Officer prior to applying for a licence.)							
<b>Part A</b>							
For a 4 year licence <sup>2</sup>	1078.00	0.00	1,078.00	1,186.00	0.00	1,186.00	10.02%
<b>Part B</b>							
For a 4 year licence <sup>3</sup>	596.00	0.00	596.00	656.00	0.00	656.00	10.07%
<sup>1</sup> Plus vet fees based upon an hourly rate (including travel time)							
<sup>2</sup> Plus vet fees for an initial inspection based upon an hourly rate (including travel time)							
<sup>3</sup> Plus annual vet fees based upon an hourly rate (including travel time)							
<b>Other Charges</b>							
Licence renewals	charged as new applications			charged as new applications			n/a
Request for re-inspection (for all licences) (plus vet fees if applicable)	102.10	0.00	102.10	112.00	0.00	112.00	9.70%
<b>Requests for Variations</b>							
Administration amendment only	38.70	0.00	38.70	42.50	0.00	42.50	9.82%
Inspector visit (if required) (additional to administration charge)	63.50	0.00	63.50	70.00	0.00	70.00	10.24%
Vet fees	hourly rate plus travel time			hourly rate plus travel time			n/a
<b>Stray Dog Collection</b>							
Statutory charge as per legislation	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Additional fee for collecting/returning stray dogs	39.50	0.00	39.50	42.00	0.00	42.00	6.33%
Out of hours additional fee for collecting/ returning stray dogs	50.80	0.00	50.80	54.00	0.00	54.00	6.30%
Transport fee for returning dog to owner after a kennel stay	33.90	0.00	33.90	36.00	0.00	36.00	6.19%
Kennel stay fee per night	24.00	24.00	24.00	25.50	0.00	25.50	6.25%
*If we are unable to return a dog to the owner straight away and the dog is taken to the kennels, then the dog owner will be charged the cost of kennelling the dog.							
<b>Pest Control</b>							
A range of pest control services may be offered - see our website for up to date details	Price on application			Price on application			

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	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Environmental Health (T Beattie)</b>							
<b>Food Export Certificate</b>							
For businesses already in receipt of Export Health Certificate (EHC) issued by Swale BC	137.00	0.00	137.00	146.00	0.00	146.00	6.57%
For new businesses applying for export certificates	284.00	0.00	284.00	302.00	0.00	302.00	6.34%
Admin charge for changes to certificate	27.00	0.00	27.00	29.00	0.00	29.00	7.41%
Sampling associated with Export Health Certificates (per hour)	65.83	13.17	79.00	70.83	14.17	85.00	7.60%
EHC for transit to destination country	39.60	0.00	39.60	42.00	0.00	42.00	6.06%
<b>Voluntary Surrender of Food</b>							
Charge for food unfit for human consumption or unsuitable for sale	231.00	0.00	231.00	247.00	0.00	247.00	6.93%
<b>Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award Training in Food Safety in Catering</b>							
<b>Food Hygiene Rating Scheme</b>							
Fee to food businesses for re-inspection and re-scoring	185.00	0.00	185.00	205.00	0.00	205.00	10.81%
<b>Food Business Advice</b>							
Food hygiene advice (per hour)	65.83	13.17	79.00	70.83	14.17	85.00	7.60%
<b>Registration Fee under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act</b> (Relates to establishments offering cosmetic piercing, electrolysis, tattooing or acupuncture)							
Standard fee	338.00	0.00	338.00	354.00	0.00	354.00	4.73%
Supplementary treatment registration fee (for additional beauty treatment registration inspection either at or after initial registration)	61.70	0.00	61.70	64.00	0.00	64.00	3.73%
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Events (falling within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act)	226.00	0.00	226.00	222.00	0.00	222.00	-1.77%
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Event charge for Artists (new artist registrations)	27.50	0.00	27.50	35.00	0.00	35.00	27.27%
<b>Requests for Environmental Information (e.g. Contaminated land)</b>							
Charge per hour	23.00	4.60	27.60	23.00	4.60	27.60	0.00%
<b>Requests for Enhanced Environmental Information for Contaminated Land and Professional Opinion</b>							
Charge per hour	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Charges for photocopying apply at 10p per page plus postage							
<b>Pre-Application Consultation for Environmental Health Advice for Acoustics, Air Quality, Contaminated Land Assessments</b>							
Charge per hour	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
<b>Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016 &amp; 2018 Amendments</b>							
Risk assessment (hourly rate)	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Sampling (hourly rate)	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Investigation (hourly rate)	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Derogation request	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Analysis – Group A	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Analysis – Group B	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Analysis – audit monitoring	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Housing &amp; Community Services (S Curtis)</b>							
<b>Taxi Licensing</b>							
Vehicle licence for 1 year	290.00	0.00	290.00	290.00	0.00	290.00	0.00%
Private Hire operator licence valid for 5 years	430.00	0.00	430.00	430.00	0.00	430.00	0.00%
Licence and plate for temporary hire vehicle	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%
Knowledge test – initial	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Knowledge test – re-sit	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers Badge for 1 year (for medical or over 70 years of age)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Upgrade Private Hire Drivers Badge to a Dual Badge	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers Badge for 3 years	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Non-refundable plate fee (plate number only issued once)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Replacement plate	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Change of address	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Change of ownership licensed vehicle	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers badge replacement	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Replacement paper licence certificate	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Change of vehicle on an existing plate	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	0.00%
<b>Street Trading Licensing</b>							
Annual consents (not events)	143.00	0.00	143.00	151.30	0.00	151.30	5.80%
6 month consents (not events)	71.50	0.00	71.50	75.65	0.00	75.65	5.80%
One off consent	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.60	0.00	10.60	6.00%
Assistants Badge	16.50	0.00	16.50	17.45	0.00	17.45	5.76%
<b>Gambling Licensing</b>							
<b>New Applications/Applications for Provisional Statement</b>							
Small casino	8000.00	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	3500.00	0.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00	0.00%
Betting premises	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
Tracks	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
Temporary use notice	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
<b>Licence Applications (Provisional Statement Holders)</b>							
Small casino	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centre	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Annual Fee</b>							
Small casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Betting premises	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%
Tracks	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	750.00	0.00	750.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
<b>Application to Vary</b>							
Small casino	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1750.00	0.00	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00	1,750.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00%
Tracks	1250.00	0.00	1,250.00	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Copy licence	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Notification of change	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
<b>Application to Transfer a Licence</b>							
Small casino	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00%
Large casino	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
<b>Application for Re-instatement</b>							
Small casino	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00%
Large casino	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
<b>Sex Establishment Licensing (sex shop, sex cinema and sex encounter venue)</b>							
Application fee and 1 <sup>st</sup> licence	4974.00	0.00	4,974.00	5,262.50	0.00	5,262.50	5.80%
Annual licence renewal	772.00	0.00	772.00	817.00	0.00	817.00	5.83%
Application to vary	891.00	0.00	891.00	943.00	0.00	943.00	5.84%
Transfer of licence	34.10	0.00	34.10	36.00	0.00	36.00	5.57%
Duplicate licence	17.10	0.00	17.10	18.10	0.00	18.10	5.85%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Scrap Metal Dealers Licensing</b>							
Site licence	535.00	0.00	535.00	566.00	0.00	566.00	5.79%
Site licence renewal	511.00	0.00	511.00	540.65	0.00	540.65	5.80%
Collections licence, grant or renewal	250.00	0.00	250.00	264.50	0.00	264.50	5.80%
Variation – collector to site	86.00	0.00	86.00	91.00	0.00	91.00	5.81%
Variation – site to collector	63.00	0.00	63.00	66.65	0.00	66.65	5.79%
Variation (minor administration, such as change of address)	40.00	0.00	40.00	42.35	0.00	42.35	5.88%
Change of site manager	120.00	0.00	120.00	127.00	0.00	127.00	5.83%
<b>Pleasure Boat Licence</b>							
Licence	165.00	0.00	165.00	174.60	0.00	174.60	5.82%
<b>Pavement Licence</b>							
Application Fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
<b>CCTV Services (S Curtis)</b>							
<b>Swale Radio Link Annual Charge</b>							
Charities	150.00	30.00	180.00	150.00	30.00	180.00	0.00%
Independent Businesses	200.00	40.00	240.00	200.00	40.00	240.00	0.00%
Large Organisation	350.00	70.00	420.00	350.00	70.00	420.00	0.00%
<b>Third Party Service Charges</b>							
Insurance Company Footage Review	70.00	14.00	84.00	74.04	14.81	88.85	5.77%
CCTV Services which may include design, installation, monitoring, maintenance, upgrades and decommissioning	Price on application		Price on application		Price on application		n/a
<b>Legal (C Valmond)</b>							
<b>Legal Charges for Third Parties</b>							
Hourly rate (no VAT)	247.00	0.00	247.00	271.00	0.00	271.00	9.72%
Hourly rate (when VAT applicable)	247.00	49.40	296.40	271.00	54.20	325.20	9.72%
Note: VAT may be chargeable depending on the nature of the transaction. VAT is not payable in relation to most income (as most income is S106 related, which derives from a statutory function) but VAT is payable in certain circumstances, e.g. charging for provision of extra copies of documents.							
<b>Revenues &amp; Benefits (Z Kent)</b>							
Council Tax liability orders	60.00	0.00	60.00	66.00	0.00	66.00	10.00%
Council Tax summons	43.00	0.00	43.00	47.30	0.00	47.30	10.00%
Business rates liability order	103.00	0.00	103.00	66.00	0.00	66.00	-35.92%
Business rates summons	0.00	0.00	0.00	47.30	0.00	47.30	n/a



	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Property (J Johnson)</b>							
<b>Room Hire of Swale House</b>							
<b>Non-Commercial</b>							
Council chamber (half day)	82.50	16.50	99.00	87.29	17.46	104.75	5.81%
Council chamber (full day)	137.50	27.50	165.00	145.46	29.09	174.55	5.79%
Committee room (half day)	55.00	11.00	66.00	58.21	11.64	69.85	5.84%
Committee room (full day)	82.50	16.50	99.00	87.29	17.46	104.75	5.81%
Assembly room (half day)	41.25	8.25	49.50	43.63	8.73	52.36	5.77%
Assembly room (full day)	68.80	13.76	82.56	72.79	14.56	87.35	5.80%
<b>Commercial</b>							
Council chamber (half day)	165.00	33.00	198.00	174.58	34.92	209.50	5.81%
Council chamber (full day)	275.00	55.00	330.00	290.96	58.19	349.15	5.80%
Committee room (half day)	110.00	22.00	132.00	116.38	23.28	139.66	5.80%
Committee room (full day)	165.00	33.00	198.00	174.58	34.92	209.50	5.81%
Assembly room (half day)	82.50	16.50	99.00	87.29	17.46	104.75	5.81%
Assembly room (full day)	137.50	27.50	165.00	145.46	29.09	174.55	5.79%
<b>Landlord's Consent Fee</b>							
Assignments, subletting, charging *	400.00	80.00	480.00	423.21	84.64	507.85	5.80%
Alterations *	400.00	80.00	480.00	423.21	84.64	507.85	5.80%
Commercial wayleaves / easements*	875.00	175.00	1,050.00	925.75	185.15	1,110.90	5.80%
Parking space licences	n/a	n/a	n/a	200.00	40.00	240.00	n/a

\* VAT is only applicable if the rent is subject to VAT.

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>FEES AND CHARGES SET NATIONALLY BY THE GOVERNMENT</b>							
<b>Housing (C. Hudson)</b>							
<b>Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing</b>							
<b><i>New Application</i></b>							
Non-accredited landlord	792.40	0.00	792.40	838.35	0.00	838.35	5.80%
Accredited landlord	673.50	0.00	673.50	712.55	0.00	712.55	5.80%
<b><i>Renewal of Application</i></b>							
Non-accredited landlord	621.00	0.00	621.00	657.00	0.00	657.00	5.80%
Accredited landlord	528.00	0.00	528.00	558.60	0.00	558.60	5.80%
<b>Mobile Home Site Licence Fee</b>							
<b><i>New Mobile Home Site Licence Application Fee</i></b>							
1-5 mobile homes on site	171.60	0.00	171.60	181.55	0.00	181.55	5.80%
6-24 mobile homes on site	235.50	0.00	235.50	249.15	0.00	249.15	5.80%
25-99 mobile homes on site	299.50	0.00	299.50	316.85	0.00	316.85	5.79%
100+ mobile homes on site	344.30	0.00	344.30	364.25	0.00	364.25	5.79%
<b><i>Annual Mobile Home Site Inspection Fee</i></b>							
Relevant sites occupied solely by owners and family members	No charge		No charge				
1-5 mobile homes on site	No charge		No charge				
6-24 mobile homes on site	192.90	0.00	192.90	204.10	0.00	204.10	5.81%
25-99 mobile homes on site	231.00	0.00	231.00	244.40	0.00	244.40	5.80%
100+ mobile homes on site	278.90	0.00	278.90	295.10	0.00	295.10	5.81%
<b><i>Fee to Transfer or Amend Mobile Home Site Licence</i></b>							
Transfer or amend mobile home site licence	145.10	0.00	145.10	153.50	0.00	153.50	5.79%
<b><i>Fee for the Deposit of Mobile Home Site Rules</i></b>							
Deposit of mobile home site rules	204.50	0.00	204.50	216.35	0.00	216.35	5.79%
<b>Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015</b>							
Fine level progresses to maximum fine permitted (1st offence £1,500, 2nd £2,500, 3rd £5,000)							
Penalty charge for non-compliance of Smoke or CO Alarm Regulations	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,290.00	0.00	5,290.00	5.80%
<b>The Redress Scheme for Lettings Agency Work &amp; Management Work Order 2014</b>							
Fine level progresses to maximum fine permitted (1st offence £2,500, 2nd £5,000)							
Penalty charge for non-compliance of Redress Scheme for Letting Agents Order	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,290.00	0.00	5,290.00	5.80%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Non-Compliance with Minimum Energy Standards in Private Rented Properties</b>							
<b>Breaching the ban on letting a property with an F or G rating for less than 3 months</b> <i>(Statutory Maximum £2,000)</i>							
First offence £1,000 (or £750 if paid within 21 days)	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Breaching the ban on letting a property with an F or G rating for more than three months</b> <i>(Statutory Maximum £4,000)</i>							
First offence £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	0.00%
All other offences £4,000 (or £3,000 if paid within 21 days)	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>4,000.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Registering false or misleading information on the Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register</b> <i>(Statutory Maximum £1,000)</i>							
First offence £500 (or £375 if paid within 21 days)	500.00	0.00	500.00	<b>500.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>500.00</b>	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Failing to provide information to the council demanded by a Compliance Notice</b> <i>(Statutory Maximum £2,000)</i>							
First offence £1,000 (or £750 if paid within 21 days)	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Planning (J Johnson)</b>							
Planning Fees	<a href="https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf">The full details of current Planning fees can be found on https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf</a>						
<b>Environmental Health (T Beattie)</b>							
<b>Public Health Control of Diseases Act 1984</b>							
Various Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) issued under the Coronavirus legislation							
<b>Pollution Prevention Control (PPC)</b>							
<b>A2 Process Application Fees</b>							
A2 New application	3363.00	0.00	3,363.00	<b>3,363.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3,363.00</b>	0.00%
Additional fee for operating without a permit (A2 and Standard Part B)	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	<b>1,188.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,188.00</b>	0.00%
<b>A2 Process Subsistence Fees</b>							
A2 Low	1447.00	0.00	1,447.00	<b>1,447.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,447.00</b>	0.00%
A2 Medium	1610.00	0.00	1,610.00	<b>1,610.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,610.00</b>	0.00%
A2 High	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	<b>1,747.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,747.00</b>	0.00%
A2 Low (E-PRTR)	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	<b>1,551.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,551.00</b>	0.00%
A2 Medium (E-PRTR)	1715.00	0.00	1,715.00	<b>1,715.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,715.00</b>	0.00%
A3 High (E-PRTR)	2438.00	0.00	2,438.00	<b>2,438.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,438.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Part B Process Application Fees</b>							
Part B (Standard Process)	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	<b>1,650.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,650.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Part B Standard Process Subsistence Fees</b>							
Part B Subsistence low	772.00	0.00	772.00	<b>772.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>772.00</b>	0.00%
Part B Subsistence medium	1161.00	0.00	1,161.00	<b>1,161.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,161.00</b>	0.00%
Part B Subsistence high	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	<b>1,747.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,747.00</b>	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Part B Reduced Fee Application Fees (including car re-sprayers)</b>							
Reduced fee application fee	362.00	0.00	362.00	362.00	0.00	362.00	0.00%
<b>Part B Reduced Fee Subsistence Fees (including car re-sprayers)</b>							
Reduced fee subsistence low	228.00	0.00	228.00	228.00	0.00	228.00	0.00%
Reduced fee subsistence medium	365.00	0.00	365.00	365.00	0.00	365.00	0.00%
Reduced fee subsistence high	548.00	0.00	548.00	548.00	0.00	548.00	0.00%
<b>Petrol Vapour Recovery I and Dry Cleaners Application Fees</b>							
PVR I & DC New Application	155.00	0.00	155.00	155.00	0.00	155.00	0.00%
<b>Petrol Vapour Recovery I and Dry Cleaners Subsistence Fees</b>							
PVR I and DC subsistence fees low	79.00	0.00	79.00	79.00	0.00	79.00	0.00%
PVR I and DC subsistence fees medium	158.00	0.00	158.00	158.00	0.00	158.00	0.00%
PVR I and DC subsistence fees high	237.00	0.00	237.00	237.00	0.00	237.00	0.00%
<b>Petrol Vapour Recovery I &amp; II Combined Application Fees</b>							
PVR I & II Application Fees	257.00	0.00	257.00	257.00	0.00	257.00	0.00%
<b>Petrol Vapour Recovery I &amp; II Combined Subsistence Fees</b>							
PVR I & II Subsistence low	113.00	0.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	113.00	0.00%
PVR I & II Subsistence medium	226.00	0.00	226.00	226.00	0.00	226.00	0.00%
PVR I & II Subsistence high	341.00	0.00	341.00	341.00	0.00	341.00	0.00%
<b>Part B Mobile Concrete Crusher Plant – Application Fee per Number of Permits</b>							
1 – 2	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	0.00%
3 – 7	985.00	0.00	985.00	985.00	0.00	985.00	0.00%
8 or more	498.00	0.00	498.00	498.00	0.00	498.00	0.00%
<b>Part B Mobile Concrete Crusher Plant – Subsistence Fee per Number of Permits</b>							
1 – 2 Low	626.00	0.00	626.00	626.00	0.00	626.00	0.00%
1 – 2 Medium	1034.00	0.00	1,034.00	1,034.00	0.00	1,034.00	0.00%
1 – 2 High	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	0.00%
3 – 7 Low	385.00	0.00	385.00	385.00	0.00	385.00	0.00%
3 – 7 Medium	617.00	0.00	617.00	617.00	0.00	617.00	0.00%
3 – 7 High	924.00	0.00	924.00	924.00	0.00	924.00	0.00%
8 or over Low	198.00	0.00	198.00	198.00	0.00	198.00	0.00%
8 or over Medium	316.00	0.00	316.00	316.00	0.00	316.00	0.00%
8 or over High	473.00	0.00	473.00	473.00	0.00	473.00	0.00%
<b>Late Payment of Subsistence Fee</b>							
All Permits	52.00	0.00	52.00	52.00	0.00	52.00	0.00%
<b>Operating without a Permit Fee</b>							
Reduced Fee Activities	71.00	0.00	71.00	71.00	0.00	71.00	0.00%
Standard Part B and A2	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Electoral Services</b>							
<b>(J Millard)</b>							
<b>Purchase of Electoral Register</b>							
<b>Full Register and the Notices of Alteration</b>							
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (a) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
(a) charge for each 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (b) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
(b) charge for each 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00%
<b>List of Overseas Electors</b>							
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (c) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
(c) charge per 100 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (d) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
(d) charge per 100 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00%
<b>Open (Edited) Register</b>							
<i>(Available for purchase by anyone)</i>							
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (e) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
(e) charge per 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (f) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
(f) charge per 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00%
<b>Marked Polling Station and Absent Voter Registers</b>							
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (g) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
(g) charge per 1,000 entries	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (h) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
(h) charge per 1,000 entries	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00%
<b>Housing and Community Services</b>							
<b>(S Curtis)</b>							
<b>Liquor Licensing</b>							
<b>Main Application Fees for Premises and Personal Liquor Licensing</b>							
Rateable Value B and A	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and B	190.00	0.00	190.00	190.00	0.00	190.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and C	315.00	0.00	315.00	315.00	0.00	315.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and D	450.00	0.00	450.00	450.00	0.00	450.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and E	635.00	0.00	635.00	635.00	0.00	635.00	0.00%
<b>Main Annual Charge for Premises and Personal Liquor Licensing</b>							
Rateable Value B and A	70.00	0.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and B	180.00	0.00	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and C	295.00	0.00	295.00	295.00	0.00	295.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and D	320.00	0.00	320.00	320.00	0.00	320.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and E	350.00	0.00	350.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	0.00%
Personal licence for alcohol	37.00	0.00	37.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	0.00%
Personal licence change	10.50	0.00	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	0.00%
Premises licence change	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00%
Transfers	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00%
Temporary events	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00%
Register of interests	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit</b>							
Grant	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Existing operator grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Transfer	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Annual fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
<b>Licenses Premises Automatic Notification Process</b>							
On notification	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
<b>Club Gaming Permits</b>							
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
<b>Club Machine Permits</b>							
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
<b>Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permits</b>							
Application fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Renewal fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Transitional application fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
<b>Prize Gaming Permits</b>							
Grant	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Renewal	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
<b>Small Lottery Registration</b>							
Grant	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Environment &amp; Leisure (M Cassell)</b>							
<b>Civil Parking Enforcement - Penalty Charge Notices (rate depends on offence)</b>							
<b>Lower Penalty System</b>							
Up to 14 Days	25.00	0.00	25.00	<b>25.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	0.00%
14 days to 56 days	50.00	0.00	50.00	<b>50.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>	0.00%
57 days to 70 days	75.00	0.00	75.00	<b>75.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>75.00</b>	0.00%
After 70 days	82.00	0.00	82.00	<b>82.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>82.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Higher Penalty System</b>							
Up to 14 days	35.00	0.00	35.00	<b>35.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>35.00</b>	0.00%
14 days to 56 days	70.00	0.00	70.00	<b>70.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>70.00</b>	0.00%
57 days to 70 days	105.00	0.00	105.00	<b>105.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>105.00</b>	0.00%
After 70 days	112.00	0.00	112.00	<b>112.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>112.00</b>	0.00%
<b>Environmental Fixed Penalty Notices</b>							
Anti Idling (failure to turn off engine once requested to do so)	20.00	0.00	20.00	<b>20.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>20.00</b>	0.00%
Abandoning a vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	<b>200.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>200.00</b>	0.00%
Repairing vehicles on a road (or) exposing vehicles for sale on a road	100.00	0.00	100.00	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	0.00%
Smoking in a smoke free premises or vehicle	50.00	0.00	50.00	<b>50.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>	0.00%
Failure to display no smoking signs in smoke free premises or vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	<b>200.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>200.00</b>	0.00%
Smoking in an enclosed vehicle carrying a person under 18	50.00	0.00	50.00	<b>50.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>	0.00%
<sup>1</sup> Increases to £40 if not paid within 28 days <sup>2</sup> Reduced to £30.00 if paid within 15 days <sup>3</sup> Reduced to £150.00 if paid within 15 days							

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<b>Growth Summary</b>		<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	3,052,971	1,064,000	1,224,000	0
Housing & Community Planning	Increased Costs of Homelessness	205,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Service Reconfiguration	200,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Parking Contracts	49,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Leisure Contracts	89,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Lifeboat Contract	11,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Utility Increases	110,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Public Convenience Contract	70,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Waste Contract - Updated Assumptions	(250,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Climate Emergency	85,000	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	Commercial Property Maintenance	30,000	0	0	0
Revenues & Benefits	Grant reduction	2,560	0	0	0
Revenues & Benefits	Loss of Income	100,000	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Audit Fee Increase	26,000	0	0	0
Pay & Inflation	Increase in NNDR on SBC properties	5,000	0	0	0
Pay & Inflation	Pay Award	496,400	0	0	0
Drainage Board	Levy Increase	17,000	0	0	0
		<b>4,298,931</b>	<b>1,064,000</b>	<b>1,224,000</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Savings Summary</b>		<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	(964,500)	(345,000)	(200,000)	0
Housing & Community	Operational Efficiencies	(10,000)	0	0	0
Housing & Community	External Grant Review	(66,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Attended Toilets	(50,000)	(100,000)	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Contract Savings	0	(375,000)	0	(265,000)
Regeneration & Economic Development	Building Control Operational Efficiencies	(25,000)	0	0	0
Finance & Procurement	Service Reconfiguration	(40,000)	0	0	0
Revenues & Benefits	Additional Cost Recovery	(6,300)	0	0	0
MKS Information Technology	Software Savings	(8,300)	0	0	0
MKS Internal Audit	Efficiency and Service Review	(26,700)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Capital Financing Review	(36,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Insurance Contract Reversion	(125,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Pension Backfunding Revaluation	(200,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Small Budget Savings	(5,000)	0	0	0
Business Rates Pool Reserve	Business Rates Pool Reserve	(854,830)	0	0	0
		<b>(2,417,630)</b>	<b>(820,000)</b>	<b>(200,000)</b>	<b>(265,000)</b>

<b>Income Changes Summary</b>		<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	(1,137,864)	(272,500)	(214,000)	0
Housing & Community	Income Activity Changes	11,000	0	0	0
Planning	Planning Income	(300,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Car Park Income	(331,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Garden Waste	(71,000)	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	Property Rents	(6,000)	0	0	0
MKS Legal	Additional Income	(4,082)	0	0	0
Fees & Charges	Fees & Charges	(65,591)	0	0	0
Business Rates - Gross	Business Rates Growth	(1,000,000)	0	0	0
Business Rates - Gross	Inflationary Increase in Business Rates	0	(268,000)	(275,000)	0
Central Government Grants	Settlement Increases	(47,985)	1,767,240	(6,895)	(7,033)
Council Tax Increase	Changes to the Tax Base	(5,071)	0	0	0
		<b>(2,957,593)</b>	<b>1,226,740</b>	<b>(495,895)</b>	<b>(7,033)</b>

<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7th February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Sheerness - Marine Town Conservation Area review
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins - Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson – Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jhilmil Kishore - Senior Conservation & Design Officer (Projects)
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices.</li> <li>2. To agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make the Policy & Resources Committee aware of updated appraisal and some proposed boundary changes to the Sheerness-Marine Town Conservation Area and to recommend that the conservation area be formally re-designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The proposals include a detailed character appraisal and associated management strategy in line with current good practice for the management of conservation areas. Officers recommend that the Policy & Resources Committee supports and agrees the changes to the review document set out in **Appendix i** and as reflected in **Appendix ii**.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area was first designated in June 1976. It has not been systematically reviewed since its original designation and until now there has been no character appraisal or published management strategy. v There is a formal requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for Conservation Areas to be reviewed from ‘time to time’.

- 2.2 The Swale Heritage Strategy, adopted in March 2020, has resulted in a stronger commitment by the Council to ensure its conservation areas are reviewed more regularly and possible new conservation areas also given consideration. The review of Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area is part of the work programme of the initial 3-year action plan forming part of the adopted Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 – 2032. The focus on conservation areas in the initial action plan has given priority to those conservation areas in the Borough classified locally and nationally as ‘at risk’ – of which there are 8 – Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area is one of them.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The proposal is to re-designate and amend the boundary of the conservation area and to equip it with a detailed character appraisal and a complementary management strategy which will assist with development management and heritage conservation purposes over the next decade or more. It will be a matter for the Policy & Resources Committee to decide whether to formally adopt the Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (as recommended and set out in **Appendix ii**, following consultation feedback, or otherwise).
- 3.2 Part of the review process involved an assessment of whether the area should be extended or reduced in size. In this regard particular consideration was given to extending the conservation area west to include the three listed buildings in the vicinity of the current conservation Area, identified as Boundary Extension A and to include the entire section of Alma Street west of its junction with Richmond Street within the conservation Area, identified as Boundary Extension B.
- 3.4 The recommendation is:
- Members note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices; and
  - Support and agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 One option would be to not take this review work any further. This is not recommended because it would risk the justifiable continuation of the designation and/or the appropriately sensitive and positive management of the conservation area and its wider setting moving forward.
- 4.2 A second possible option would be to disregard some elements, or all of the feedback received, in terms of the suggested boundary change(s). However, whilst it is considered that the appraisal and management plan (to support the redesignation of the conservation area) is essentially sound, the feedback provided from the local community is valuable and to ignore any of this feedback without sound reasons would call the value of the consultation process into question and potentially deliver reputational damage to the Council.
- 4.3 A third possible option would be to suspend the work on this review until some point in the future. Whilst this option would not result in wasted officer time, it could still lead to (a) the designation being challenged, (b) reputational damage to the Council and/or (c) development and associated infrastructure provision decisions being made for the locality without an appropriate understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the Bredgar Conservation Area.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 A 6-week public consultation ran from Thursday 10th August 2023 upto and including Thursday 21st September 2023. Due to poor response to the consultation, it was further extended by 10 days and finally concluded on Friday 6th October 2023.
- 5.2 All those parties with property within or overlapping the current conservation area boundary were notified in writing of the review and were invited to comment on it, as were key relevant organisations including Kent County Council and Historic England.
- 5.3 Hard copies of the review document were made available at the Sheerness Library and was available to view/download on-line via the Council's website for the duration of the 6-week public consultation period.
- 5.4 A total of 5 consultation responses have been received. All from local residents. The officer's response to these responses (as summarised) is attached as appendix i.
- 5.5 Historic England has responded advising that it has no substantive comments to make.
- 5.6 Kent County Council in its function as the Highway Authority was consulted on the conservation area review but provided no feedback.

- 5.7 A written update was sent to Sheppey Area committee highlighting the main aspects of the Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area Review.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Priority 2 of the Plan is: 'Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges'. Objectives 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 of this priority are respectively to:</p> <p>(2.1) 'Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council's own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2020, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough'.</p> <p>(2.4) 'Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.'</p> <p>(2.5) 'Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible'.</p> <p>The character appraisal and management strategy document, once amended as appropriate and subsequently adopted would support all 3 of the above-stated objectives from the Corporate Plan.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Implementing some aspects of the proposed Management Plan may have financial and resource implications for the council, particularly if it is decided to proceed with an Article 4 Direction review or/and signage review. These costs are not yet budgeted for and may need to be considered within any future Heritage Strategy Action Plans.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to "<i>determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance</i>" and, from time to time, to review the functioning existing conservation areas.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>One of the three dimensions of sustainable development is its environmental role: contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.</p>

Health and Wellbeing	The health and wellbeing aspects of interaction with heritage assets and heritage related projects are referenced in the adopted Heritage Strategy which underpins this review work.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix i: Public consultation – table of representations (in summary form), and the council’s response to them.
- Appendix ii: Public consultation version of the 2023 draft Sheerness- Marine Town character appraisal and management plan document.

## 8 Background Papers

A Heritage Strategy for Swale 2020-2032 Adopted March 2020

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**APPENDIX i: TABLE OF REPRESENTATIONS, AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY CHANGES TO THE ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO THEM – FOR RE-DESIGNATING SHEERNESS- MARINE TOWN. C.A.**

<b>Rep. No(s).</b>	<b>Representation By</b>	<b>Summary of Representation</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Local resident	Although anything which helps keep our local heritage is a good thing , really it's a bit too late for marine town or sheerness as a whole, we have lost so much here due to council incompetence, example the old house at home pub in sheerness which should of been a listed building is now going to be pulled down probably set fire to before that , perhaps marine town should have money spent on cleaning it up before anything else now because it's an eyesore everywhere	Noted	No change to the assessment document needed.
2	Local Resident	I am a resident of the Marine town conservation area and have lived here for almost 44 years. My house was built in 1907 but I believe many of the houses in the street date back to around 1850 and the pub(s) Heights of Alma and the Hero of Crimea (no longer a pub) were named to commemorate the Crimean War. Indeed, Alma Street itself is named after the Battle of Alma. The area, once a community with shops etc has gradually gone downhill despite the efforts of some residents, schools, and the local council.... it is about time that the history was recognised, and money invested to spruce the area up. It has potential and with the close proximity of the beach should be protected.	Noted.	No change to the assessment document needed.
3	Local Resident	I'm not sure Marine Parade has anything left to save, have you seen the state of the beautiful houses turned into flats, it just looks awful. You need to focus on Barton Point Coastal Park, the cafe needs a serious revamp and opening up very soon I fear it won't be open for the summer now! Marine Parade also needs a major clean-up it looks very dirty, tired and unloved.	Noted	No change to the assessment document needed.
4	Neptune Terrace Residents Association	The majority of residents at Neptune Terrace ME12 2AW would welcome their inclusion within the Marine Town Conservation Area, particularly if it brings some much needed attention to the ongoing plights of residents to sympathetically improve the immediate vicinity. Residents who have spent	Noted	No change to the assessment document needed.

**PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MARINE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>the past 2 decades working alone, without the help or assistance of the local authority, to improve the situation here at this incredibly unique and historic seafront location.</p> <p>I say improve the situation at this location because there wasn't an issue with the ongoing maintenance of the area until the start of the 21st century. Prior to this time, and as far as senior residents can recall, the entire area was regularly serviced and maintained by the local authority of the time, throughout their lifetimes and the 20th century!</p> <p>Since around 2000, the local authority and KCC has progressively withdrawn services from Neptune Terrace and the surrounding area, the bijou car park, the beach approach slope and the land in and around 13 Neptune Terrace, being the former Bait and Tackle shop, and all council owned land!</p> <p>Examples of neglect despite the efforts of residents to reinstate services that were withdrawn without any consultation or notification are as follows...</p> <p>The Neptune Terrace approach, car park and No.13                      The Neptune Terrace Beach approach slope, car park area, in and around No.13 and Neptune Terrace footpath itself is inexplicably no longer swept by street cleaners, nor weeded by groundsmen. If it were they would have undoubtedly noticed a large oil spillage around No.13. Quite honestly, if it wasn't for the efforts of individual residents the area would be in an utter state being as long unruly weeds attract litter blown in the wind, and also the temptation for dogs to leave faeces!</p>		

PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MARINE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>The integrity of the surface in some areas of the Neptune Terrace car Park, and pedestrian areas in front of Cain’s Amusements, and No.13 is in a poor state of repair, trip hazards are present and require immediate attention. Additionally, this is all recorded as council land!</p> <p>Neptune Terrace Footpath                      The Neptune Terrace footpath itself is woefully compromised due to the local authority having not undertaken any maintenance work to this flag-stone footpath in well over two decades! Indeed prompted by a story in the local newspaper in January 2007 (attached pdf) regarding the dangerous and hazardous condition of the uneven paving stones along the terrace, there was an attempt by the Sheppey Local Engagement Forum in 2009 to address the situation. However, despite funds being raised they promptly run out during the period of works and only 2/3 of the flag-stones were lifted and re-laid leaving the rest to continue to deteriorate. Indeed, so poor was the quality of the workmanship, since the project was abandoned the flag-stones have loosened and moved revealing gaps of easily 4-5cm in places allowing substantial water ingress between the flags, and we believe saturating the ground below and currently showing signs of subsidence in a southerly direction against the retaining wall of Fountain Cottage, Redan Place, ME12 and sinking in other areas! The structural integrity of the Neptune Terrace footpath honestly needs attention as soon as possible, left unattended residents foresee a time when the footpath is permanently closed for safety reasons!</p> <p>In the past two decades virtually every enquiry made to the local authority regarding issues in the Neptune Terrace area have resulted in the eventual response that Neptune Terrace is private land, however this is well know to residents and had never been an issue to the local authority in the last</p>		

PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MARINE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>century. The entire area including the Neptune Terrace footpath were maintained and everything that remains was provided by the local authority of the time. We know from consultations with Natural England during the coastal pathway project, that Neptune Terrace has an absent landlord, although neither NE, nor residents, have any idea as to who that maybe, they have been absent for as long as anyone can recall and land registry searches reveal nothing. Theories are the land could be the property of the Catholic Church, or maybe the Royal Navy, being as both were very prominent in the area when Neptune Terrace was built in around 1835.</p> <p>It is now considered an Historic Public Right of Way.</p> <p>However, this fact did not deter the local authority of the past from recognising the significance and importance of the Neptune Terrace footpath being as it provides the ONLY DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE EAST &amp; WEST SHEERNESS PROMENADES and as such was appreciated for this fact and maintained at public expense, being as it is primarily the general public who rely upon its existence and is a vital thoroughfare.</p> <p>Unbelievably, Neptune Terrace FOOTPATH was included in the Sheerness cycle route without any consultation with the local residents whatsoever. This has resulted in cyclists regularly speeding along the terrace footpath at the expense of the safety of pedestrians, residents and customers leaving the businesses of Cains Amusements, The Neptune Snooker Club and the care home for vulnerable adults at 8, 9 &amp; 10 Neptune Terrace, alike. Customers and residents regularly and innocently step out onto the pathway from their various direct-to-path doorways, and often into the path of speeding cyclists, or more recently electric scooter riders. Additionally</p>		

PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MARINE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>pedestrians have needed to dodge motorcycles and quad-bikes, all seen using the footpath as a means of escaping the law, being as these vehicles are more often than not unlicensed and uninsured. To end this particular madness we would welcome the removal of the Neptune Terrace footpath from ANY cycle route, and the installation of safety and calming measures, e.g kissing gates, chicanes, etc. Basically anything that is appropriate being both practical and aesthetically ‘fitting’.</p> <p>Neptune Terrace Street lighting Obtaining the provision of sympathetic street lighting for this 200 year old terrace has been very problematic despite the simple request initially made by a resident in 2013 to Kent Highways for the provision of x2 Victorian Street lanterns to light the way of pedestrians along here, and to evoke a sense of the historic past. The resident approached Kent highways and was told that when she noticed future renewing and updating of local street lamps to immediately resend her request and the appropriate street lampposts would be provided given the unique location. This instruction was duly undertaken, however what followed became an absolute fiasco of misunderstood email exchanges between different council departments to the extent where we now have x3 inappropriate lampposts located in the original x2 lamppost locations, and unbelievably all three lampposts are all different designs, and all are completely inappropriate!</p> <p>As you will surmise Neptune Terrace is in need of some much needed urgent attention and much recognition of its unique character and significant importance to the fabric of the Sheerness Seafront Promenade. We hope the proposed future inclusion of Neptune Terrace in the revised Marine Town Conservation Area will begin to provide long overdue physical maintenance here, and the recommencement of those basic council</p>		

PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MARINE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>services the majority of Council Tax payers currently enjoy, e.g. street cleaning, weed control, highways maintenance, appropriate street-lighting, and the reintroduction of litter bins to this public beachfront location. To name but a few.</p> <p>Regarding the cherishing of our historic areas, we have seen the removal of Victorian hand rails in and around the Neptune Terrace area being partially replaced by plain scaffold tubes, litter bins removed, a Victorian drinking fountain at Redan Place removed, the destruction of King Neptune himself when he was blown from his niche during the hurricane of 1988. It would indeed be heartening to see some of this reinstated.</p> <p>Primarily residents would very much like to see some actually physical and observable enhancements being made in this unique historic and publicly important site, rather than empty words, unrealised ambitions, and tick-box exercises.</p>		
5	Local Resident	<p>As a long-term resident of Marine Town with an interest in the preservation of the area I would like to say how delighted I am that there is to be a full appraisal of the current situation with a view to indicate the way forward to preserve the unique heritage of the locality. It is my regret that that I have only just learnt of this consultation with the deadline of today so my response will be brief and parochial.</p> <p>I have lived for 32 years at Shrimp Terrace raising a family here. I notice that Shrimp Terrace features prominently in the photographs supporting the consultation plan which is, I assume, a recognition of Shrimp Terrace's value to Marine Town's heritage offer. Apart from the size of the terrace and the imposing nature of the seaward view, Shrimp Terrace stands out because so much of the frontage is original and intact. My concern is that</p>	Noted	No change to the assessment document needed.

**PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MARINE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>the distinctive terracotta facing has over the years degraded and in my experience this erosion of the terracotta has accelerated – any period of heavy rain reveals a fine film of terracotta particles on the floor – with the result that the porous, soft stone underneath is revealed. This results in damp penetrating the front of the house. This problem will only get worse. I fear that owners, such as myself, are caught in a dilemma. Do we seek to preserve our properties by attempting to waterproof the fronts in ways that may and probably will destroy the uniform and homogenous look of the terrace such as applying different tinted concrete facings or do nothing and so allow the damp to further penetrate and the housing stock to further decline?</p> <p>This kind of issue is, I’m sure, widespread. I wonder what have been the ways forward elsewhere?</p>		

Officer's Note:

Most of the comments received have highlighted the poor state of the current Conservation Area, although the public consultation responses do not require the document to be updated, but it is envisaged that once the proposed Management Plan is implemented, it will result in a much-improved Marine Town Conservation Area and, hopefully, could eventually be taken off the Heritage -at Risk register.

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# Sheerness- Marine Town

## **Conservation Area** **Character Appraisal & Management Plan** August 2023

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION





### **HMS Forte Figurehead, Sheerness**

A reproduction of the figurehead from HMS Forte decorates the sea defence walls at Marine Parade, Sheerness. The original is in Sheerness Dockyard. HMS Forte was dismantled and burnt at Sheerness in 1905, following service as a flagship in the previous century.

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# FOREWORD

“Historic buildings and places add to the quality of people’s lives and help to create a sense of place that we all identify with.

As a community and as a local authority, we have a responsibility to safeguard our historic assets for future generations and to make sure that they are not compromised by unsympathetic alterations or poor quality developments. Conservation area designation and subsequent management is one way in which this can be achieved.

Conservation areas are not intended to halt progress or to prevent change. Rather, they give the local community and the Borough Council the means to positively manage change and to protect what is special about the area from being harmed or lost altogether.

Swale Borough is fortunate in having such a rich and varied mix of built and natural heritage. The Borough Council wants to see it used positively as a catalyst to sustainable, sensitive regeneration and development, and to creating places where people want to live, work, and make the most of their leisure time. To that end, we have reviewed the Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area and the results of that review are set out in this document, which the Borough Council is now seeking constructive feedback on.

This is one of a series of conservation area reviews which the Borough Council is committed to undertaking, following the adoption of the Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 - 2032.”



Councillor Mike Baldock,  
Deputy Leader and Heritage Champion for  
Swale Borough Council





# Summary of Significance

The significance and special interest of Sheerness-Marine Town Conservation Area can be summarised as follows:

- Rectilinear street pattern of mid 19th Century
- Domestic architectural detailing



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Sheerness -Marine Town Conservation Area

Sheerness - Marine Town Conservation Area was first designated on 8th June 1976. It has not been systematically reviewed since its original designation and until now there has been no character appraisal or published management strategy.

## 1.2 The Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. A Conservation Area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (s.69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). It is the responsibility of individual Local Planning Authorities to designate and review Conservation Areas using local criteria to determine and assess their special qualities and local distinctiveness.

The aim of Conservation Area designation is to protect historic places and to assist in positively managing change, so that their significance is safeguarded and sustained. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic layout, use of characteristic or local materials, style, or landscaping. In accordance with the four types of heritage values set out in the core Historic England guidance document (Conservation Principles: Policies & Guidance. Communal values – which are those derived from the meaning of a place for people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory – will be of particular relevance to this Conservation Area

given the linkages between place names and remnants of bygone uses in the wider context of historical growth and development. Above all however, Conservation Areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are of special architectural or historic interest.

Conservation Areas provide for additional Controls over owners and landowners activities.

### Conservation Area status provides extra protection in the following ways:

- Local planning authorities have control over most demolition of buildings.
- Local authorities have extra control over householder development.
- Special provision is made to protect trees.
- When assessing planning applications, the Local Planning Authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting.
- Policies in the Local Development Plan positively encourage development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

## 1.3 The Purpose and Status of this Character Appraisal

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal is a written record and assessment of the special architectural or historic interest which gives rise to the character and appearance of a place. The appraisal is a factual and objective analysis which seeks to identify the distinctiveness of a place by defining the attributes that contribute to its special character. **It should be noted, however, that the appraisal cannot be all-inclusive, and that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.**

The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding both the significance of an area as a whole and the effect of any impacts which bear negatively on its significance. In some cases, significance may only be fully identified at such time as a feature or a building is subject to the rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

Additionally, an appraisal can include management proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of an area by means of policies, action points, design guidance and site-specific design statements where appropriate. The objective of this plan would be to reinforce the positive character of a historic area as well as avoiding, minimising, and mitigating negative impacts identified as affecting the area.



An appraisal serves as a basis for both the formulation and evaluation of Development Plan policies, as a material consideration in the making of development management decisions by the Local Planning Authority, and by the Planning Inspectorate in determining planning appeals. It can also heighten awareness of the special character of the place to help inform local Parish Councils in the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, and individuals in design choices.

This Character Appraisal is supplementary to the Swale Borough Local Plan. It has been prepared in the context of relevant national legislation and national and

local planning policy and guidance provided by central government, Historic England, and the Borough Council itself, all of which are set out in Appendix 3 of this document.

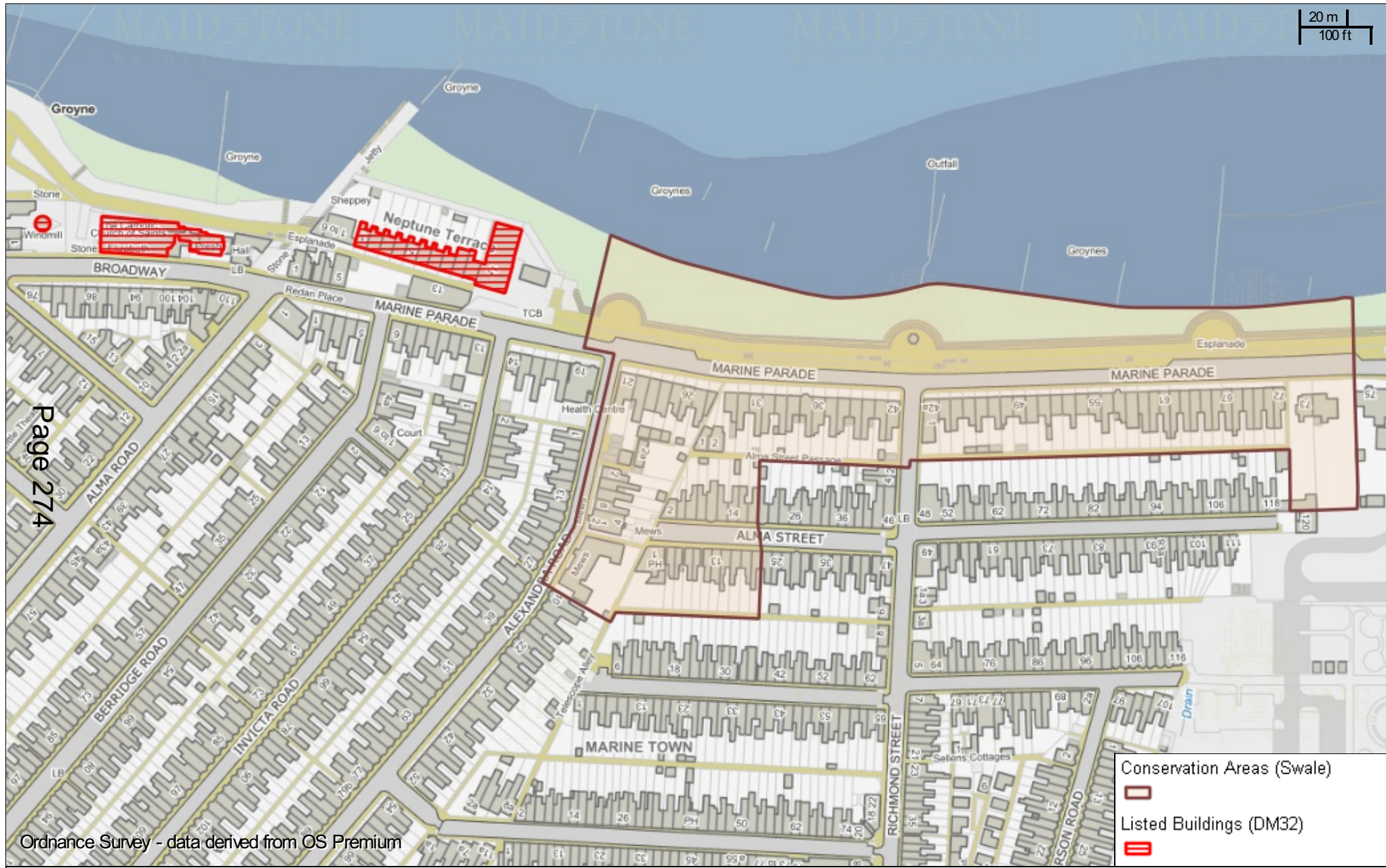
The statutory duty of local planning authorities with regards to conservation areas are to provide the necessary background to, and framework for, a review of the Conservation Area boundary in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area (Section 72).

In light of the way that the production of Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy documents (such as this one) are developed and prepared in the above stated context and are also subject to public scrutiny via a statutory public consultation period of a minimum of 21 days, following formal adoption by the Local Planning Authority, they then have sufficient weight or gravitas to form a significant material consideration in the development management process.





20 m  
100 ft



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Ordnance Survey - data derived from OS Premium

- Conservation Areas (Swale)
- Listed Buildings (DM32)

Marine Town Conservation Area  
Not to Scale

Current Adopted Marine Town Conservation Area Boundary

ASTUN TECHNOLOGY  
© Astun Technology Ltd



## 2.0 Planning Policy Context

### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

- **Section 66** General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions.
  - (1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- **Section 69** Designation of conservation areas.
  - (1) Every local planning authority—
    - (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and
    - (b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.
  - (2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.
  - (3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority's area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate

that part as a conservation area.(4)The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge.

- **Section 71** Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.
  - (1)It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.
  - (2)Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.
  - (3)The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.
- **Section 72** General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
  - (1)In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies, and how they are expected to be applied. This was last updated in July 2021.

The NPPF covers the historic environment primarily in paragraphs 189-208 (Chapter 16).

### National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

The NPPG includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Historic Environment.

### Guidance and Advice from Historic England

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/planning-system/>

- **Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs).**

These provide supporting information on good practice, particularly looking at the principles of how national policy and guidance can be applied.

- GPA1 - The Historic Environment in Local Plans
- GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- GPA3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets.

### Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs)

These include detailed, practical advice on how to implement national planning policy and guidance.

- Historic England Advice Note 1 (2nd. Ed.)- Conservation Areas—Appraisal, Designation and Management

- Historic England Advice Note 2 - Making Changes to Heritage Assets
- Historic England Advice Note 10 - Listed Buildings and Curtilage
- Historic England Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance

### Swale Borough Council Heritage Strategy 2020

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/swale-heritage-strategy/>

The Council has developed a borough-wide heritage strategy to help it, along with key stakeholders and other interested parties, to protect and manage the historic environment in Swale in a positive and sustainable way, on a suitably informed basis.

A key element of the strategy is the setting out of the Council's overall vision and set of priorities, which it is hoped will align with the vision and priorities of local communities and local amenity societies as far as possible, in order that the strategy can be widely supported.

The strategy sets out a series of proposals in the associated initial 3 year action plan which are aimed at enabling the positive and sustainable management of different elements of the borough's historic environment for the foreseeable future. Priority is given to those parts of the borough's historic environment which are already suffering from, and at risk from negative change, and/or which face significant development pressure, threatening their special character. The proposed set of actions will involve joint project working with amenity societies and/or volunteers from the community wherever this is possible.

### Adopted Local plan Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017)

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/media/files/localplan/adoptedlocalplanfinalwebversion.pdf>

Relevant objectives and policies within the local plan include:

#### Policy ST 1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale

To deliver sustainable development in Swale, all development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Achieve good design through reflecting the best of an area's defining characteristics;
2. Promote healthy communities through: e. maintaining the individual character, integrity, identities and settings of settlements;
12. Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment, and integration of development with the importance, form, and character of heritage assets (inc. historic landscapes).

#### Policy CP 4 Requiring good design

All development proposals will be of a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

2. Enrich the qualities of the existing environment by promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place;
5. Retain and enhance features which contribute to local character and distinctiveness;
8. Be appropriate to the context in respect of materials, scale, height and massing;

9. Make best use of texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials;
10. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area;
11. Ensure the long-term maintenance and management of buildings, spaces, features and social infrastructure;

#### Policy DM 32 Development involving listed buildings

Development proposals, including any change of use, affecting a listed building, and/or its setting, will be permitted provided that:

1. The building's special architectural or historic interest, and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, are preserved, paying special attention to the: a. design, including scale, materials, situation and detailing; b. appropriateness of the proposed use of the building; and c. desirability of removing unsightly or negative features or restoring or reinstating historic features.
2. The total or part demolition of a listed building is wholly exceptional, and will only be permitted provided convincing evidence has been submitted showing that: a. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or viable new uses and have failed; b. Preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and c. The cost of maintaining and repairing the building outweighs its importance and the value derived from its continued use.
3. If as a last resort, the Borough Council is

prepared to consider the grant of a listed building consent for demolition, it may, in appropriate circumstances, consider whether the building could be re-erected elsewhere to an appropriate location. When re-location is not possible and demolition is permitted, arrangements will be required to allow access to the building prior to demolition to make a record of it and to allow for the salvaging of materials and features.

- **Policy DM 33 Development affecting a conservation area**

Development (including changes of use and the demolition of unlisted buildings or other structures) within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's special character or appearance. The Borough Council expects development proposals to:

1. Respond positively to its conservation area appraisals where these have been prepared;
2. Retain the layout, form of streets, spaces, means of enclosure and buildings, and pay special attention to the use of detail and materials, surfaces, landform, vegetation and land use;

3. Remove features that detract from the character of the area and reinstate those that would enhance it; and
4. Retain unlisted buildings or other structures that make, or could make, a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

- **Policy DM 34 Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites**

1. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument, and/or its setting, as shown on the Proposals Map, or subsequently designated, or any other monument or archaeological site demonstrated as being of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Development that may affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset of less than national significance will require a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2. Whether they are currently known, or discovered during the Plan period, there will be a preference to preserve important archaeological sites in-situ and to protect

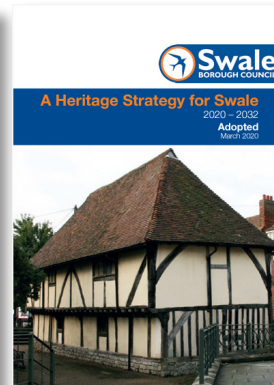
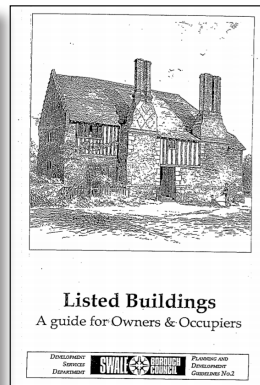
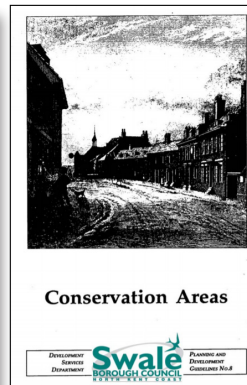
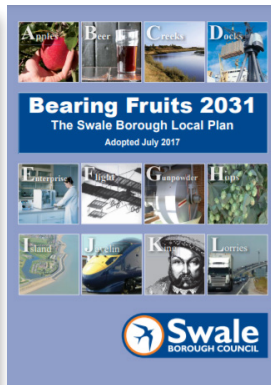
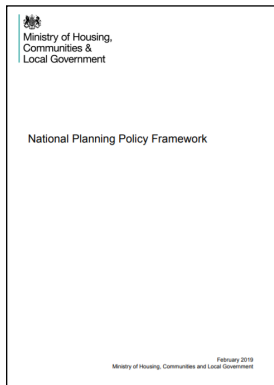
their settings. Development that does not achieve acceptable mitigation of adverse archaeological effects will not be permitted.

3. Where development is permitted and preservation in-situ is not justified, the applicant will be required to ensure that provision will be made for archaeological excavation and recording, in advance of and/or during development, including the necessary post-excavation study and assessment along with the appropriate deposition of any artefacts in an archaeological archive or museum to be approved by the Borough Council.

#### Swale Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/local-planning-guidance/>

- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 2: Listed Buildings – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers
- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 4: The Design of Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements
- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 8: Conservation Areas



## 3.0 Location & Setting

The town of Sheerness is situated in the north west corner of the Isle of Sheppey overlooking the Thames and Medway estuaries. The built-up area of Sheerness comprises the town's commercial centre, the Port of Sheerness, light and heavy industrial areas and residential areas. Only a very few parts of the Town are not developed and this is in stark contrast to the remainder of Sheppey which is generally rural. The main communications routes in and out of Sheerness are the road and rail links which run through the west of the project area and connect with the bridges over The Swale to the Kent mainland. The only other routes out of Sheerness are the minor roads which run eastwards to Minster and the inland core of Sheppey.

As with the rest of Sheppey's coastal fringes, the town is low-lying and ground level is relatively flat. The bedrock geology of the project area is formed of London Clay Formation clays and silts. The overlying drift geology varies across the town; at the coastal fringe lie undifferentiated beach and tidal flat deposits whilst over the remainder are alluvial deposits of clay, silt, peat and sand.

Sheerness Mile Town broadly equates with the town centre, whilst Beach Street is a small enclave of terraced housing on the north western edge of the town centre. The former Royal Naval Dockyard, now a commercial port, lies to the north west of the town centre along with a steelworks developed in the 1960s. In most other directions the town centre is surrounded by residential development, sections of which are comprised of a tight grid of streets with terraced houses dating from the late nineteenth century.

Historic mapping indicates that much of Sheerness was probably reclaimed from marsh and enclosed as grazing land at a relatively early date. Whilst the place name Sheerness is Old English in origin (derived from "clear headland"), permanent settlement in Sheerness is thought to have developed only following the establishment of an artillery fort at the tip of the headland in 1545.

Marine Town developed to the north-east of Mile Town circa 1862, when the dockyard fortifications were further expanded by building the Queenborough Lines, a massive bastion and ditch running from the coast east of Marine Town to the river Medway. Blue Town, Mile Town and Marine Town were all contained within the triangular area bordered by the Queenborough Lines, and they amalgamated to form the present Sheerness.

### Topography, geology, landscape and setting

The overall sequence of Sheerness's development is well-established and has been explored in several documents, such as the archaeological assessment of the town carried out as part of the Kent Historic Towns Survey (Kent County Council, 2004). Sheerness lies adjacent to the confluence of the River Medway with the River Thames and it is thought that the course of these two rivers became established following the end of the Anglian Glaciation. From this date onwards the project area has lain at the coast or in relatively close proximity to it. The coastline appears to have approached a position similar to that seen today by the Roman period. Low-lying land at the fringes of the island, are thought to have been marshy and unfit for permanent human occupation during many periods.

The OS first edition shows that housing growth had begun east of Mile Town, with the construction of terraced streets immediately beyond the Ordnance buffer, at what had become known as Marine Town by that date. In 1864, the housing covered only two small areas; one tightly focussed around the junction of Alma Road and the seafront, the other around Charles Street (the northern end of what is now Richmond Street) and Alma Street. In both cases, terraces of greater architectural refinement were constructed at the seafront, being larger and possessing architectural detailing (some including bay windows), whilst those inland were smaller and more basic. Much of both types of housing survives and is still in use. Perhaps the most architecturally sophisticated of this surviving early housing is Neptune Terrace.

The initial planned housing developments at Mile Town and Marine Town, despite apparently being developed by private individuals, could also be regarded as indicative military influence. The influence here is subtler and relates chiefly to the impetus behind the initial development of the settlements. Of these two areas, only Marine Town – core survives to any extent as that at Mile Town was largely removed as part of slum clearance in the 1950s. The core of the Marine Town is almost entirely comprised of small terraced housing designed for workers.

### Archaeology

The Characterisation study undertaken by Historic England in 2016 notes little of archaeological significance at Marine Town.



100 m  
500 ft



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Ordnance Survey - data derived from OS Premium

**Sheerness - Conservation Areas**  
Scale: 1:10000

  
© Astun Technology Ltd

# 4.0 Character Appraisal

## Marine Town

The conservation area comprises two spatially distinct, but highly similar, areas; one tightly focussed around the junction of Alma Road with the seafront and the other around the northern end of Richmond Street, originally known as Charles Street, and Alma Street.

It is defined by the seafront to the north and later housing development on all other sides. The core of the CA is almost entirely comprised of terraced housing of mid-19th century date. The area was originally developed into housing in the mid-19th century as expansion at Mile Town and Blue Town was not feasible due to restrictions imposed by military landownership.

Early plans of the area indicate that it was originally known as Ward's Town. There is little published work on Marine Town and it is not presently clear who Ward may have been or why the area changed its name so early but Marine Town appears to be the name used for the area by the time of the OS first edition (1864).

The housing along the seafront comprises terraces of greater architectural refinement whilst those inland were smaller and more basic. The terraces are constructed to a rectilinear street pattern typical of housing development of this date. Much of both types of housing survives and is still in use. The terraces to the rear of the seafront are much smaller and lack architectural sophistication. The Conservation Area remains a coherent area of early housing and distinct from the development that surrounds it. As such, it has some heritage significance.

The area appears to have been largely designed to

accommodate workers for the dockyard and the street naming and facilities provided appear characteristic for such an area.

Streets are named principally after patriotic themes, such as monarchs, generals and notable battles, and public houses were spaced regularly throughout the development as originally conceived. These were generally sited on street corners and the majority had names with military themes. As with the earlier and less formally planned settlement at Blue Town, the housing and provision of pubs is likely to be due to this settlement being created to cater for a military workforce. Some of these pubs remain in use, including The Napier and The Heights of Alma, but others, such as The Hero of the Crimea, are now disused and converted into residential accommodation.

Subsequent housing development focussed almost exclusively around Marine Town with development so extensive that it became linked to the earlier settlement at Mile Town by the time of the second edition OS (1896).

The housing built was very similar in character to preceding development at Marine Town, replicating the pattern of higher quality terraces at the seafront with smaller and less sophisticated terraces inland. Higher quality housing was also built along the roads linking the core of Mile Town to the seafront at Marine Town, such as Broadway, Strode Crescent and Trinity Road.

Some small scale housing construction, again of terraces, had begun on Halfway Road adjacent to the Queenborough Lines. During this time, a large Roman Catholic church, the Church of St Henry and St Elizabeth, was built adjacent to the seafront between Neptune Terrace and the windmill.

The church was designed by Pugin and still exists, acting as a major landmark on the seafront. It is Gothic in design and is a grade II listed building. The presbytery and hall to the church which though not listed are built in complimentary style and together form a coherent and impressive little architectural group.

By the time of the second edition OS, a formal Esplanade had been constructed at the seafront adjacent to Mile Town, terminating at the Church of St Henry and St Elizabeth. The remaining undeveloped land between the esplanade and edge of the settlement had also been formalised into a recreation area by this date. This area contained grassed areas and formal paths and facilities including a bandstand, outdoor swimming pool and urinals.

Much of this area is still in use for recreation and retains some of the layout of areas and paths shown on the second edition OS, however, none of these original facilities appear to survive. The presence of both seaside amenities and dense workers' housing in close proximity to each other by the end of the 19th century has been seen as conferring a somewhat discordant character to Sheerness and is a physical manifestation of the conflict between civic ambitions to turn the town into a seaside resort and the real need to house dockyard workers which was sustained over the 19th century and into the earlier 20th century. This remains evident in the current landscape in the manner in which the resort-like seafront abruptly gives way to densely packed terraces.





View of Alma Street



Sea Facing terraces on Marine Parade



Sea facing terrace- Shrimp terrace



Sea Facing terraces on Marine Parade



Close up of Shrimp Terrace



Various styles and architectural detailing on sea facing terraces on Marine Parade



Close up of white terraced house



## Sheerness Seawall

Much of Sheerness as well as Sheppey is below sea-level and so is prone to flooding. You can find references to this as far back as Samuel Pepys, when he was responsible for dockyards and was choosing sites to defend the Thames.

Blue Flag and Seaside Award 2023 winning Sheerness Beach looks out on to the Thames Estuary

Sheerness beach is a bathing beach located centrally in the town of Sheerness on the north coast of the Isle of Sheppey. This predominantly shingle beach has a steep high sea wall with flood gates and ramps/steps at regular intervals. Steps lead down from the flat, wide seaward promenade to the pebble beach.

The sea wall along Marine Parade was built in the 1930s following flooding in 1927. It was raised and strengthened after 1978.



It was about life in Sheerness in the 1860's. "The sea wall of this period consisted solely of a mud bank. On the seaward side of this bank at Marine Parade was a water pump for the purpose of pumping sea water to fill the water carts for street watering - a method used to conserve the towns water supply. Records show that the original esplanade was built at a cost of between £6000 and £7000. The money was raised by loan the last installment being paid in 1906." The wall was built to protect that part of Sheerness known as Mile Town which was being developed for the housing of dockyard mates families who under their terms of employment had to live within one mile of the yard, hence the name. "The Sheerness Times" dated 1931.



Sheerness High Street during the flooding of 1953





## Buildings

### Public Houses

The public house as we know it today was a development of the mid-nineteenth century, incorporating features from the alehouse, tavern and inn, building types which dated back to the medieval period. A huge surge in pub building followed the Beer Act of 1830, which saw a liberalisation of the regulations concerning the brewing and sale of beer and placed beerhouses outside of existing controls.<sup>25</sup> Later in the 1800s, a restriction in the number of available licenses caused increased competition, and this led to further, often elaborate pub projects.

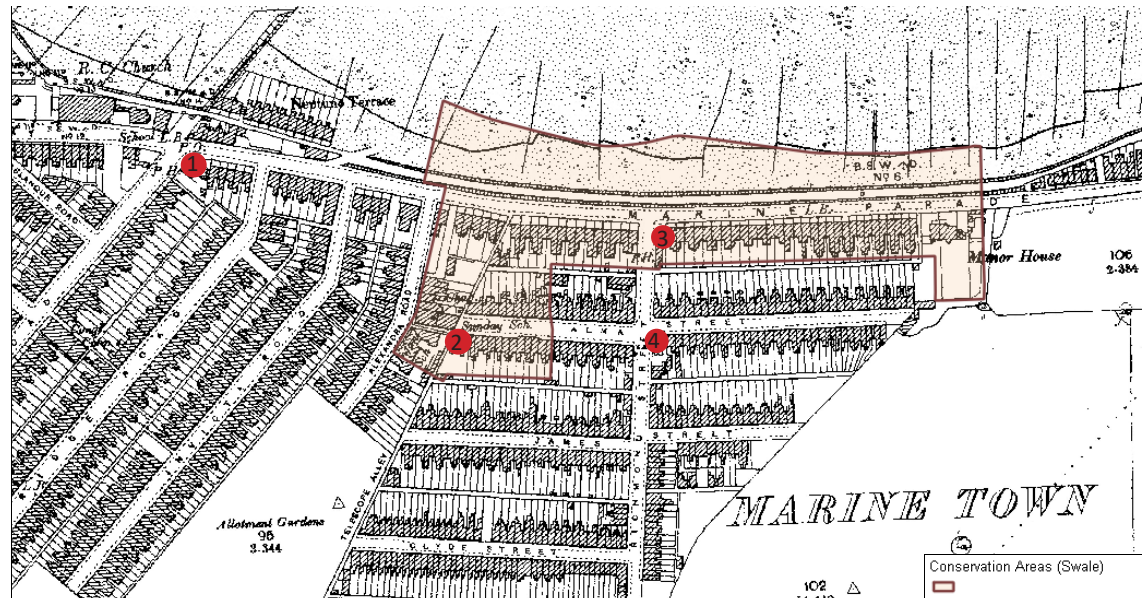
Marine Town - within its residential development of Victorian Terraces also had public houses spaced regularly throughout the development as originally conceived. These were generally sited on street corners and the majority had names with military themes. Some of these pubs remain in use, including The Napier and The Heights of Alma, but others, such as The Hero of the Crimea, and Victoria are now disused and converted into residential accommodation.



1. The Napier



2. The Heights of Alma





3. The Victoria circa late 1800s



3. The Victoria after residential conversion - 2023



4. The Hero of Crimea circa 1984



4. The Hero of Crimea after the pub was closed



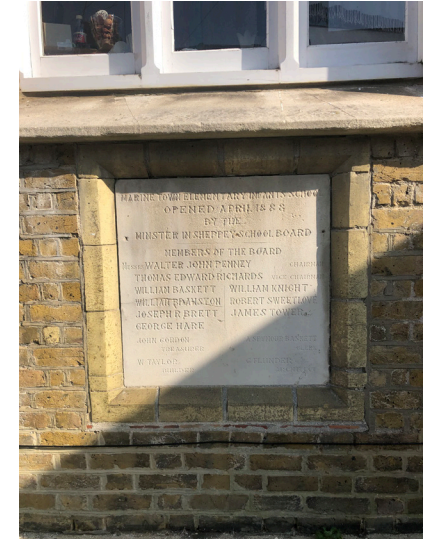
4. The Hero of Crimea after residential conversion



## Civic Buildings

Within the Marine Town Conservation Area, the Chapel and the School are two buildings worth a mention.

The former Bible Christian Chapel on Alexandra Road was built in 1861. It is shown on the 1862-75, 1897-1900, 1907-23, 1929-52 and current O/S maps. It has now been converted into a private residence.





Architectural details

A number of key architectural details typical of Victorian terraces as evident in Marine Town.



Geometric /Encaustic tiles



Decorative pediment



Decorative brackets under eaves



Chimney pots



Recessed entrance with tiles



Canted Bay windows



Decorative door frames



Example sketch of architectural details of a Victorian terrace



## Building Materials

A Victorian house was a house constructed during the Victorian era, approximately 1840 to 1900. During the Victorian era, industrialization brought new building materials and techniques. Architecture saw rapid changes. A variety of Victorian styles emerged, each with its own distinctive features.

The most popular Victorian styles spread quickly through widely published pattern books. Builders often borrowed characteristics from several different styles, creating unique, and sometimes quirky, mixes.

The distinct character of Marine Town owes much to the variety of architectural styles, materials and details displayed in its buildings. Building materials were used to express architectural aspirations as well as changing fashions. Until the transport revolution of the mid-19th century, virtually all building materials were locally sourced and manufactured. Consequently they are often a true expression of the locality and its natural resources. Even materials that were in common use at the time make a valuable contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Brick was used extensively for new buildings and to over-clad old buildings to give them a more fashionable appearance. Kent peg tiles were the preferred choice for roofing in the 17th and 18th centuries, but they gave way to slate during the early 19th century, particularly once the railway came to Sheerness in 1848. Modern concrete roof tiles and uPVC windows are less sympathetic materials introduced during the mid to late 20th century.

**Brick:** Brick earth was in plentiful supply in North Kent so, not surprisingly, brickwork is a familiar building material in Marine Town. There is a wide variety in the size, bond, colour and character of the bricks, depending on their age, style or function.

Yellow stock brickwork was commonly used from the Regency period onwards and the combination of yellow and red brick achieved the polychromatic effect that was associated with the High Victorian era and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

**Terracota:** The last decades of the 19th century saw a proliferation of terracotta construction characterised by big, sumptuously ornamented buildings. The term terracotta - literally meaning 'fired earth' - is generally used in architecture to describe a form of masonry made from moulded clay which is principally distinguished from brick by its larger size and finer quality. When terracotta is glazed it is more correctly described as 'faience'.

By the Victorian period, terracotta already had a long and illustrious history as a form of architectural ornament, By the 1860s a number of eminent English architects and intellectuals had recognised its value for mass-producing ornament and fine masonry by casting from an original, combining new technology with traditional craftsmanship. The material offered a new approach to style and decoration, founded on historic precedent, that suited the Victorians. It was strong in compression; that it was cheaper than stone particularly for the production of repeated decorative elements; and that its smooth, fired surface was more dirt resistant - an important consideration in the filthy urban environment of the period. Smaller buildings continued to be constructed with

solid terracotta and brick masonry, and examples are common in almost every town with late Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Terracotta was used for simple mouldings and string courses, as well as highly elaborate terracotta ornament.

**Slate:** Slate roofs rarely appear before the turn of the 19th century. However, they became very widely used in the area after rail transport made it more easily accessible. Slate was imported, mainly from Wales, and gave rise to shallower roof pitches of between 30 and 35 degrees.



Use of terracota in Shrimp Terrace



## Boundary fences, railings and walls

Railings and boundary walls can contribute significantly to the character of a conservation area. They add interest and variety of scale in the street scene and provide a sense of enclosure, separating spaces of differing character and often marking the boundaries between public and private spaces.

Metal railings are rarely seen in Marine Town Conservation Area. The most prevalent form of boundary treatment, especially to the properties facing Marine Parade is Balustrading.

A number of properties on Marine Parade have surviving decorative wrought iron/ cast iron window pot guards.





**Hierarchy of streets and spaces**

The historic street layout and the relationship of built form to open space defines the overall framework of an area. Within this framework, the grain of the townscape, including sizes of plots and building lines are important in establishing the pattern and density of development. This has a significant impact on the character of an area, dictating the scale of development and level of enclosure or openness.

A notable feature of the late 19th century development at Sheerness is the patriotic themes evident in the names of streets and public houses. Many streets are named after

current members of the royal family, and recent generals and battles. It is not clear whether this merely reflects general trends in naming over this period or is evidence of an attempt to cater to the envisaged population of the

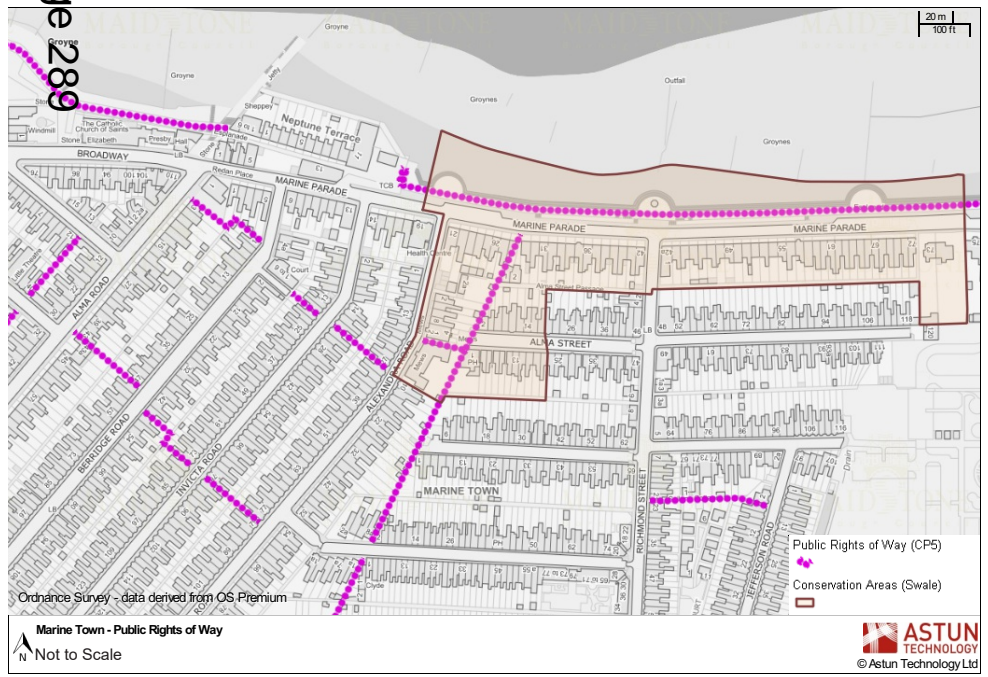
area, namely military workers or in allied trades and services.

For the purposes of understanding the residential townscape pattern, the three categories of routes or spaces can be defined according to a combined analysis of their scale, level of enclosure and the function they perform within the area. These are defined as Primary Routes and Spaces; Secondary Routes and Spaces; Intimate Routes and Spaces. The map overleaf shows the hierarchy of routes and spaces within the Marine Town Conservation Area.

Historic Map regression has identified a number of streets names that have changed over the years, some of these immediately relevant to the Conservation Area are as follows:

Historic Name	Current Name
Charles Street	Richmond Street
Green Street	Berridge Road

The principal route in the conservation area is Marine Parade itself.

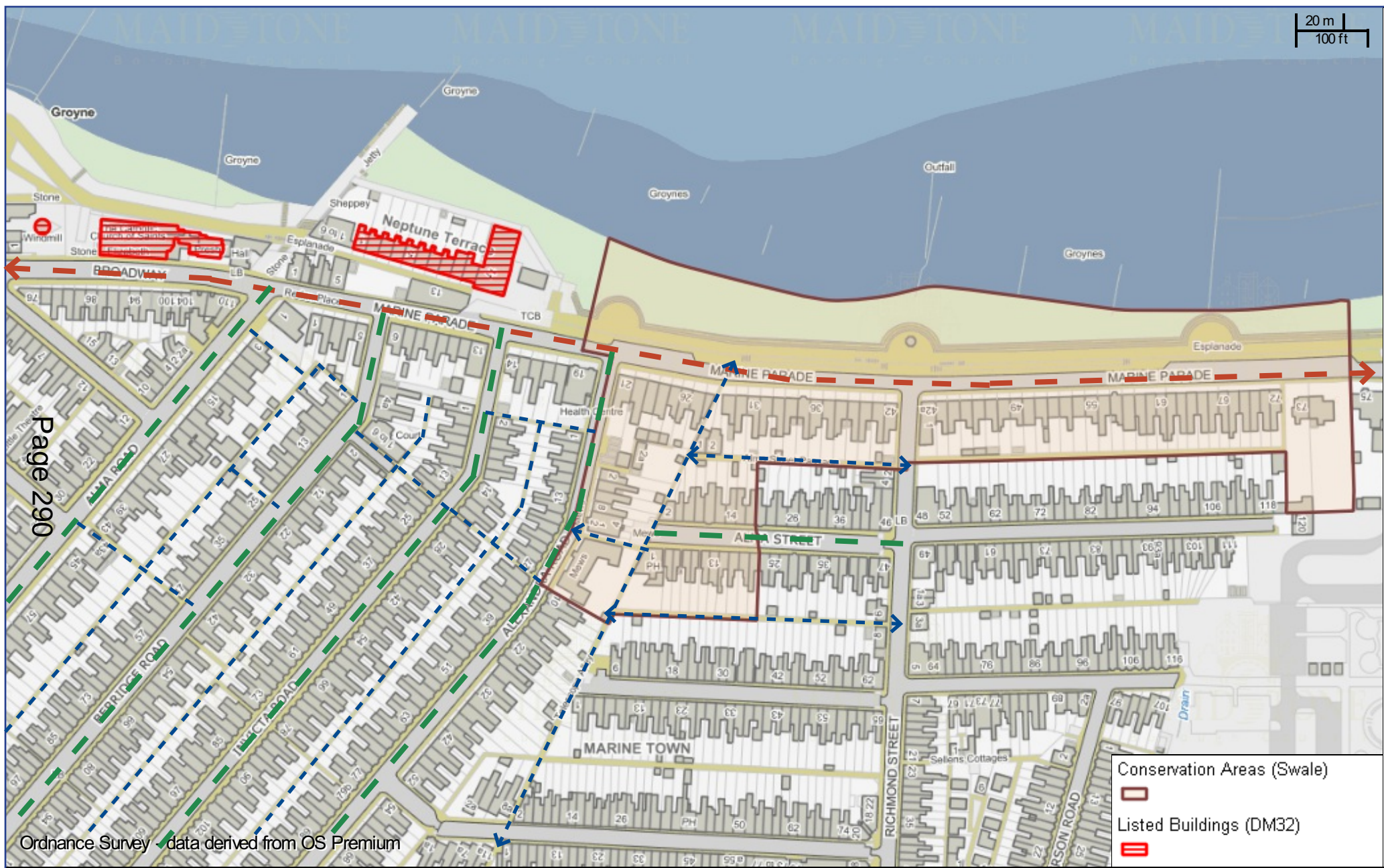


Intimate routes in the Conservation Area include the pedestrian routeway between Marine Parade and Clyde Street, known as Telescopic Alley. The rear of all the terraces within Marine town have an access alley, but these are not considered to form a public right of way.

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20 m  
100 ft



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Ordnance Survey data derived from OS Premium

- Conservation Areas (Swale)
- Listed Buildings (DM32)

**Marine Town Conservation Area**  
 Not to Scale

PRIMARY ROUTES    SECONDARY ROUTES    INTIMATE ROUTES

**ASTUN**  
 TECHNOLOGY  
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Key Views



Ordnance Survey - data derived from OS Premium

**Marine Town Conservation Area**

Scale: 1:2200

Printed on: 12/7/2023 at 10:19 AM by Jhilmilk

Key Views →

Glimpsed Views →



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Key Views



View east of Marine Parade



Glimpsed view from Alexandra Road to Alma Street



View down Alexandra Road



View west of Marine Parade



View east of Alma Street



View north of Richmond Road towards the Sea

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# 5.0 Summary & Conclusion

Sheerness is a historic naval town with a unique heritage. Whilst its military installations have been well-studied, the development of civilian settlement and civic facilities have received less attention leading to biases in understanding historic development and, potentially, protection of heritage assets. It is also a town where changes in economic fortunes since the latter part of the 20th century have had a serious effect on the use and survival of heritage assets and where current and foreseeable land use proposals threaten to continue this trend.

Marine Town is a place with a strong and distinctive identity and remains a coherent area of early housing and distinct from the development that surrounds it. As such, it has some heritage significance.

Architectural detailing and use of building materials associated with 19th century victorian terraces are strongly in evidence, and make a distinct contribution to the special character of the place.

The mix of buildings and spaces, intersected by footpaths and roads, continue to make Marine Town an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve.

The conservation area has served its purpose well over 4 decades since it was first designated. The key characteristics that gave rise to its designation in 1976 appear to have survived well, although in a poor state of preservation. Although there have been insensitive changes at micro level, however, at macro level the area has maintained its street pattern and a number of terraces from 19th century survive.

There is no doubt that Marine Town should continue to be designated as a conservation area.

This is the first time that a full review has been undertaken for the conservation area and some areas are identified where circumstances dictate that the boundary should be changed. Proposed changes are detailed in appendix 1 of this document.



# 6.0 Conservation Area Management Plan

## Introduction

6.1 Historic England’s Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas advises that following an appraisal of the Conservation Area, a strategy for its management in the mid to long term should be developed to address issues identified through the appraisal. This conservation area review identifies the key management issues for Marine Town Conservation Area based on the recent appraisal of its character and appearance.

6.2 The Character Appraisal and this associated Management Plan seeks to provide a clear basis for the assessment of proposals and identify an approach to addressing issues that have the potential to impact on the special interest of Marine Town Conservation Area and its environs.

6.3 The aims of the Management Plan are to:

- i) inform interested parties of how the Council intends to secure the preservation or enhancement of the Conservation Area;
- ii) set out an approach to consultation on the management of the Conservation Area;
- iii) confirm how issues identified through the character appraisal will be tackled;
- iv) identify specific policy or design guidance that is relevant to Conservation Area to support the development management function and those preparing applications for planning permission and listed building consent;

v) identify areas where the overview provided by the Conservation Area Appraisal suggests that site-specific Development Brief would assist the management of the conservation area and decision-making processes;

vi) identify areas that may benefit from specific enhancement proposals should funding become available; and,

vii) identify the management tools available to the Council through legislation.

## Monitoring and Review

### Monitoring

6.4 The Council will continue to monitor condition of the Conservation Area, to remove it from Heritage at Risk register and determine any further actions necessary to safeguard its historic significance.

### Review

6.5 The Council is required to undertake periodic review of the Conservation Area to ensure that the special interest is being maintained and protected, to re-evaluate boundaries and see whether there are areas which justify inclusion or whether there are areas which have deteriorated to such an extent that their special interest has been lost.

6.6 As part of the review process the Council will:

- undertake a visual appraisal;
- maintain a photographic record of listed buildings within

the area on the Council website, ensuring that this is updated as new buildings are added;

- record the character of streets and areas;
- maintain and update a record of other aspects of interest within the Conservation Area including shopfronts of merit and the historic fabric of the public realm; and,
- consider current issues impacting on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.7 The following has been reviewed: current issues, conservation area boundaries, positive contributors to the Conservation Area, negative elements, Victorian terraces of merit and elements of street-scape interest.

## Maintaining Character

### General Approach

6.8 The following approach to maintaining the special interest of Marine Town Conservation Area will be adopted as part of the strategy for its effective management:

- i. the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be periodically reviewed to ensure that this documents will remain sufficiently up-to-date to enable its effective management, and to help inform decision-making on new development within the area;

ii. the list of buildings and other features which, in addition to those already included on the statutory list, positively contribute to the character or appearance of Marine Town Conservation Area, will be kept under review to aid decision-making and the preparation of proposals;

iii. applications for development will be determined having regard to the special interest of the Conservation Area and the specialist advice of Conservation & Design Team;

iv. in accordance with the relevant legislation, most applications for development within the Conservation Area are required to include a Design and Access Statement supported with a Heritage Impact Assessment. Such statements will be required to explain the design approach and context of the proposals and be accompanied by sufficient, accurate drawings of the existing site and its wider context, as well as the proposed development;

v. where relevant and possible, supplementary planning documents including design guidance and planning briefs will be produced;

vi. in undertaking its development control function, the Council will ensure that the historic details which are an essential part of the special architectural character of Mile Town Conservation Area are preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate;

vii. the Council will seek to ensure that the organisations and relevant teams therein responsible for the environment (highways/landscape/planning/conservation and urban design) work in an effective, coordinated and consultative manner to ensure that historic interest within the public

realm is maintained and enhanced where appropriate; and,

viii. the Council will continue to consult the relevant Consultees and local amenity societies on applications which may impact on the character and appearances of the Mile Town Conservation Area and seek their inputs in relation to ongoing management issues.

### Policy and Legislation

6.9 The current Statutes and National Planning Policies are:

- **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Section 66 in relation to Listed Buildings**
- **National Planning Policy Framework and supporting guidance**

### HISTORIC ENGLAND GUIDANCE

Historic England publishes Good Practice Advice in Planning (its GPA series guidance) and Historic Environment Advice Notes (its HEAN series guidance). Of these, HEAN 1 (2nd. Ed.) on 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management' is especially relevant.

### SWALE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan (adopted July 2017)

**Core Objective 4.** Conserve and enhance our historic and

natural assets as the means to drive regeneration, tourism, and environmental quality and to reverse decline in their condition.

### Policy CP8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

*To support the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:*

- 1. Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;*
- 2. Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM 32-DM 36;*
- 3. Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;*
- 4. Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;*
- 5. Respond positively to the conservation area*



appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;

6. Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and

7. Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.

Other relevant policies include:

- ST1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale
- CP4: Requiring good design
- CP7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- DM14: General development criteria
- DM16: Alterations and extensions
- DM32: Development involving listed buildings
- DM33: Development affecting a Conservation Area
- DM34: Development affecting scheduled monuments and archaeological sites

Note the next Local Plan will cover the period 2022-2038

### Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

The following Planning Guidance has been adopted by Swale Borough Council supplementary to the Swale Borough Local Plan, 2008:

- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Design of Advertisements & Shopfronts
- Kent Design

### Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 -2032

This strategy provides a framework for the designation, conservation, management and physical and economic regeneration of Swale's Historic Buildings and Areas, including designated historic parks and gardens. From analysis of evidence on Swale's heritage and some early engagement with local stakeholders, a high level vision and set of five associated priorities have been identified.

### Boundary Changes Considered

6.10 The boundary of the Conservation Area has been reviewed as part of this study. Two aspects of the boundary have been reviewed: first whether the current boundaries are logical; and second, whether there are any areas that should be added into the Conservation Area.

#### Extension to Marine Town Conservation Area

- i) Inclusion of the three listed buildings in the vicinity along with historic terrace on Alma Road
- ii) Inclusion of full extent of Alma street

Images of these areas and a plan showing their location and extent are contained in Appendix 1.

As these areas have been reviewed as part of the

Conservation Area appraisal for Marine Town. Due to the exclusion of some areas of early development, many buildings which appear to have clear heritage significance lie outside of the conservation area. The majority of these are undesignated and many are otherwise unrecorded it is proposed that they should become part of this designation. These boundary changes will ensure that full historic extent of the early core of development in this area is designated.

### Management of Change

#### Current Issues

6.11 Marine Town Conservation Area is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

*The pressures that face conservation areas come from many different sources. Sometimes they reflect the general economic weakness of the neighbourhood, but in other situations it has been the demands of prosperity that have caused the problems. Across the country, the most significant threat to the character of conservation areas comes from the simple loss of historic building details such as traditional windows and doors, boundary walls and roof coverings. Commercial properties may have unattractive shopfronts and signs or the area may suffer from vacant and derelict buildings'*

Extract from Historic England's' Leaflet on Heritage At Risk- Conservation Areas

This includes proposals for new development, alterations and extensions to existing buildings and changes of use. Developments over the recent decades have influenced the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Other factors that have influenced the character and appearance of the area include the cumulative impact of insensitive alterations and poor maintenance of the terraces.

### New Development

Where new development has not been successful in terms of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, this has generally been due to one of the following:

- The use of inappropriate materials or detailing
- Inappropriate scale, bulk, height and massing
- Inappropriate relationship to the street and neighbouring properties

### Alterations to Existing Buildings

Alterations and extensions can have a detrimental impact either cumulatively or individually on the character and appearance of the area. Examples within the area include:

- Inappropriate external painting, cleaning and pointing of brickwork.
- The use of inappropriate materials/ inappropriately detailed doors and windows.
- Insensitively sited Satellite dishes and aerials

- Loss of original details such as timber framed sash windows, frontage railings and balconies, corncicing at parapet level, chimneys and chimney stacks.

6.12 Building frontages, roads, pavements and the squares are all important elements of the public realm and the cumulative impact of small scale additions can have an overall detrimental impact on the character of the area. Such additions can include:

- Loss of original/interesting street-scape elements
- Unsympathetic surfacing materials
- Poorly sited Refuse and recycling storage.

### Problems, pressures and capacity for change (negative factors)

6.13 The main issue within Marine Town Conservation Area is insensitive alterations and loss of original architectural features due to poor maintenance to the terraces.

### MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

6.14 Conservation and enhancement opportunities include:

#### Traffic management

6.15 Traffic on Marine Parade currently has a direct impact on the conservation area due to lack of adequate pelican crossing. Appropriate traffic calming measures would greatly benefit the conservation area

6.16 Positive heritage management and heritage enhancement should be key considerations and drivers in any regeneration schemes for the area. The Council will pursue opportunities for Area Enhancement Schemes where possible. This would complement other potential initiatives in relation to street-scape enhancements.

### 6.17 Householder alterations

Much of the housing at Sheerness is historic in origin, with large amounts dating to Victorian period.

As such, it will need periodic renewal to remain fit for modern standards and aspirations. The majority of housing appears to be in private ownership so any such renewals are likely to be on a piecemeal property-by-property basis. This has the potential to affect the composition and appearance of such housing. Although the effect of this will be controlled to an extent within the conservation areas, away from these a much greater range of alterations will be possible. This may have the effect of breaking-up what are at present relatively coherent streetscapes.

Where householder alterations are proposed which require planning permission the Council will typically seek to ensure that those alterations enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

Opportunities to reinstate missing architectural features (such as sash windows, panelled doors or original roof coverings) and traditional boundary treatments will be encouraged by the Council and may be requested in relation to planning applications for extensions and/or alterations, where appropriate.

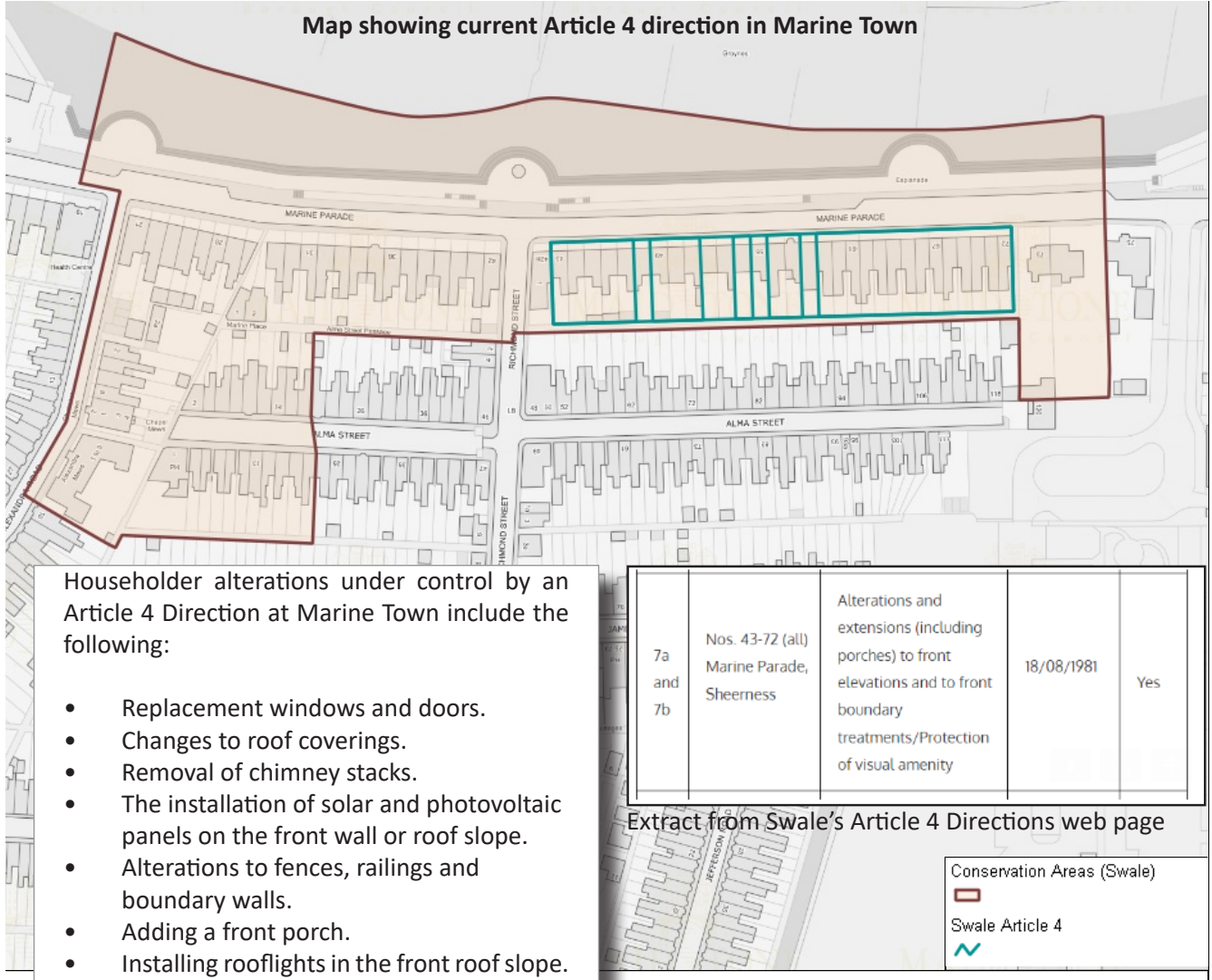
The Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified some householder alterations which have involved the removal of historic features such as period windows, doors, roof coverings and chimney stacks.

Even in conservation areas, some householder alterations to listed buildings can be undertaken without the need for planning permission. The cumulative impact of ill-considered alterations to traditional properties can have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of a conservation area. Such alterations have, and could continue to erode the character of Marine Town Conservation Area over time.

**6.18 Article 4 Direction**

In light of the above, Swale Borough Council may consider the use of an Article 4 Direction in order to bring some householder alterations (which are currently classed as permitted development) under planning control, to ensure that all alterations are positively managed through the planning system.

The Shrimp Terrace (Nos 42-73) Marine Parade is already subject of Article 4 direction.



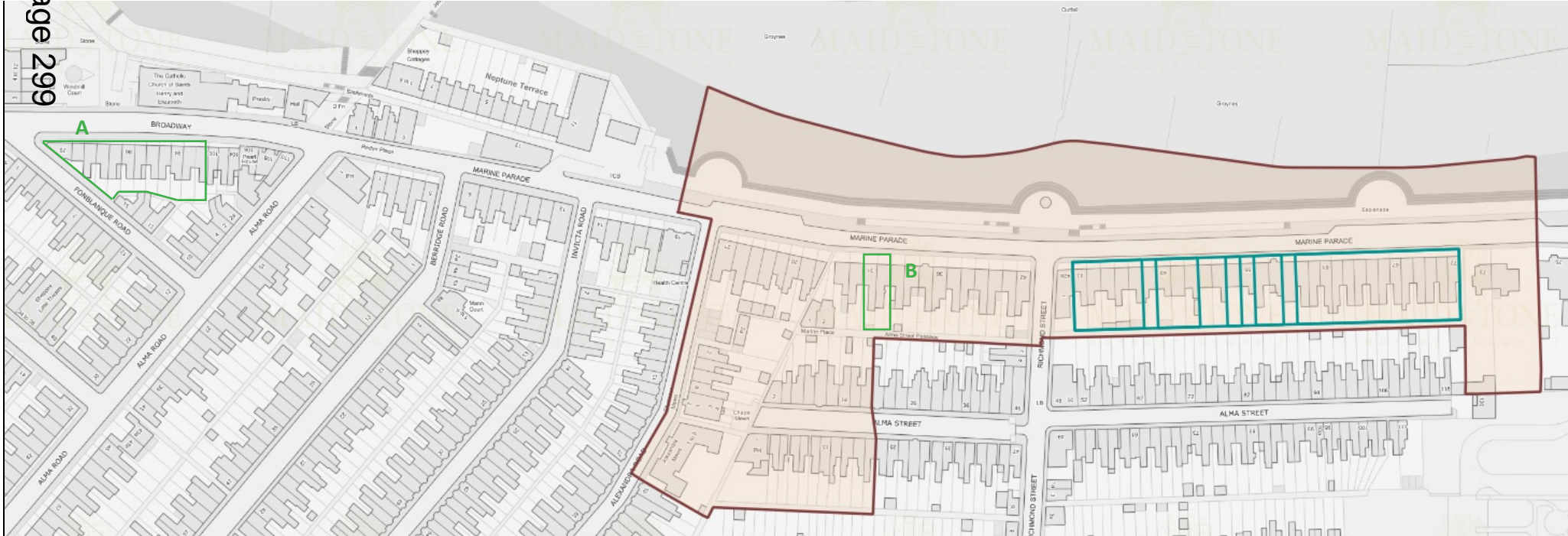
- Householder alterations under control by an Article 4 Direction at Marine Town include the following:
- Replacement windows and doors.
  - Changes to roof coverings.
  - Removal of chimney stacks.
  - The installation of solar and photovoltaic panels on the front wall or roof slope.
  - Alterations to fences, railings and boundary walls.
  - Adding a front porch.
  - Installing rooflights in the front roof slope.
  - Replacing a front garden with a hard surface.

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## Extension of existing Article 4 Direction

It is proposed that the following properties are brought under Article 4 direction. They are a good surviving example of their time and most features are retained. An Article 4 direction would ensure their long term maintenance.



### 6.19 Swale local heritage list

Arising from Swale's adopted Heritage Strategy 2020-2032, the Borough Council is compiling a Local Heritage List in order to identify heritage assets which are not formally designated.

The Local Heritage List:

- raises awareness of an area's local heritage assets and their importance to local distinctiveness;
- informs developers, owners, council officers and members about buildings within the local authority boundary that are desirable to retain and protect;
- provides guidance and specialist advice to owners to help protect the character and setting of those buildings, structures, sites and landscapes;
- helps the council in its decision making when discussing proposals and determining planning applications; and
- records the nature of the local historic environment more accurately.

The impact of any development on a building or site included within the Local Heritage List will be a material consideration when the council considers an application for planning permission.

Several unlisted buildings in Marine Town Conservation Area may be eligible for inclusion within the Swale Local Heritage List. These include:

- A. The four Public Houses -  
The Napier

Heights of Alma  
The Hero of Crimea &  
The Victoria

- B. The two Civic Buildings  
The Chapel &  
The School

### 6.20 Public realm

The public realm (that is those areas which fall between the buildings and are enjoyed by the public) makes a significant positive contribution to the special character of Marine Town Conservation Area.

Restrained use of highway signing and road markings is also critically important. Where signs, road markings, street furniture, salt bins or rubbish bins are necessary they should be located and designed carefully.

Future highway maintenance, improvements and alterations will be carried out in accordance with Streets for All, Historic England (2018) and Highway Works and Heritage Assets: the Kent Protocol for Highway Works in Relation to Designated Heritage Assets, KCC and KCOG (2011). Both provide advice on good practice for highway and public realm works in historic places. Early consultation with all stakeholders (including Swale Borough Council's Conservation & Design Team and Sheerness Parish Council) will be fundamental to achieving appropriate standards in future changes.

Opportunities for enhancement in the public realm:

- An audit of public signage (including highway signage) to establish whether all current signage and road markings are necessary, well designed and appropriately located.
- An audit of street furniture (bollards, benches, dog waste bins, salt bin etc.) to establish whether street furniture is necessary, well designed and appropriately located.
- An audit of overhead supply lines and poles with the statutory undertakers to establish whether there is scope to remove any overhead cables or poles or to underground services.

### 6.21 Trees and planting

Trees and hedgerows do not play a vital role in the special character of Marine Town.

Opportunities for new planting should be considered.

Six weeks' notice must be given to the Borough Council in writing before any works are undertaken to trees within conservation areas.

### 6.22 New development opportunities

Potential for new development within the Marine Town Conservation Area is extremely limited. If proposals for development come forward they will be considered against local and national planning policies which attach great weight to the

conservation of designated heritage assets and their settings.

Development within the setting of the conservation area may affect its heritage significance. The local planning authority is required to pay special attention to preserving the setting of the conservation area (or any listed buildings) in any plan making or decision taking.

### 6.23 Heritage at risk

Marine Town Conservation Area has been identified as 'Heritage At Risk' by Historic England.

Change in conservation areas can be negative either

through poor quality new development, neglect or even deliberate damage. Negative change can have a real effect upon the way the community feels about their area, affecting confidence, reducing investment, and leading to a cycle of decline. When conservation areas become at risk, this can signify or contribute to an area's social or economic decline.

Historic England provides assistance and encouragement to local authorities and communities to help assess the status of as many conservation areas as possible.

Gathering data on the condition of conservation areas, as well as the main threats they face, helps Historic England to gain a clearer picture of how these important places and

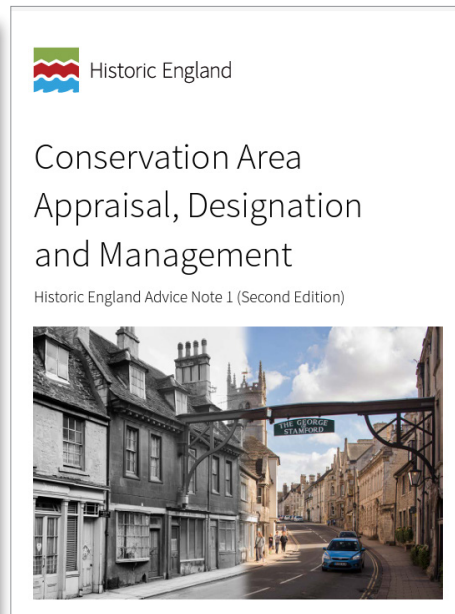
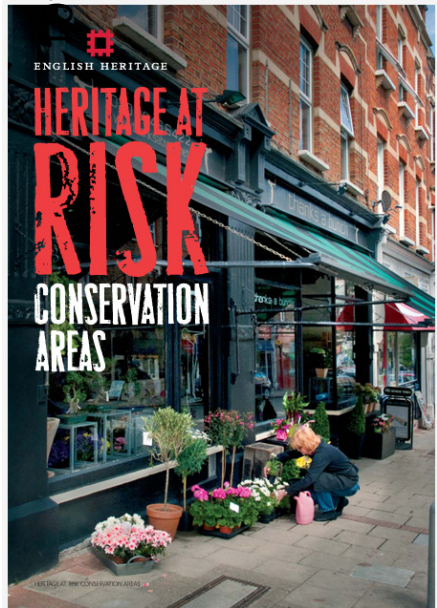
areas are sustaining themselves, and importantly how negative change might be halted and reversed. The reasons why conservation areas become at risk are complex and varied, depending on their situation.

Town and city centre conservation areas are often affected by prevailing trends in the retail economy, the effects of too much traffic or through poorly placed new development in sensitive areas. These factors can cause buildings and other structures to be vacated or neglected, and conservation areas to become at risk.

The work of addressing problems in conservation areas can take time.

A detailed appraisal of the area such as this one is the first step.

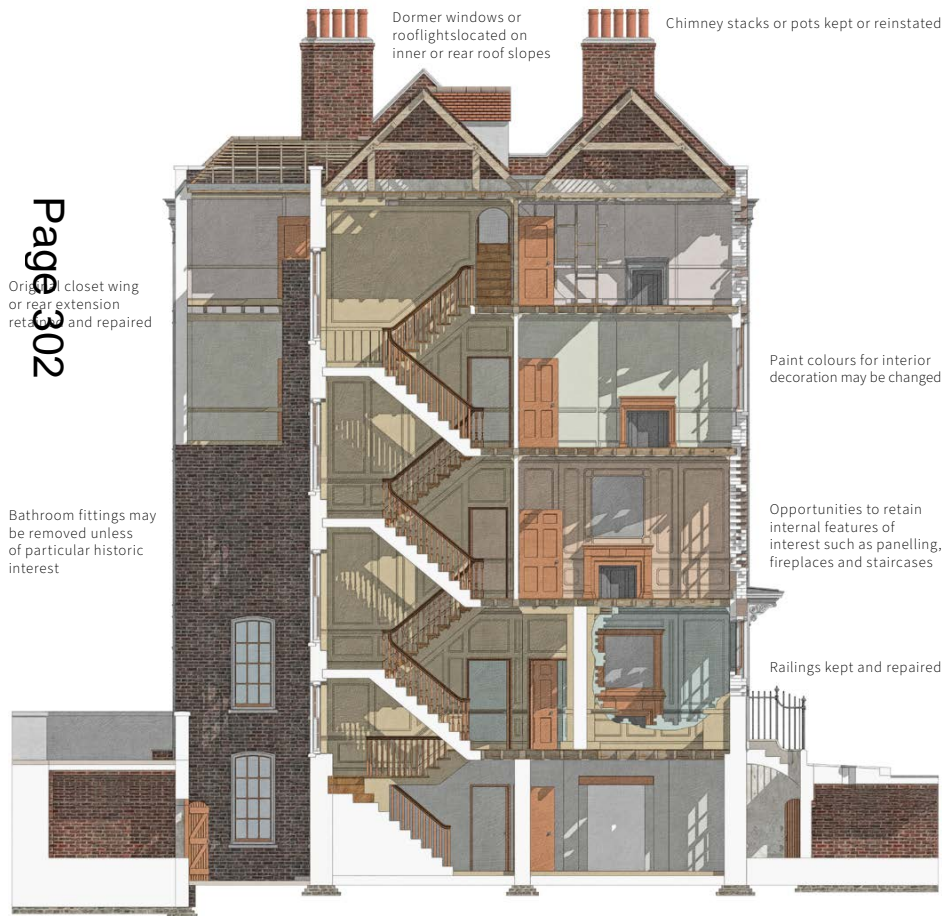
Other than the Conservation Area itself, there are no designated heritage assets within Marine Town on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register or on the Swale Borough Council's Heritage at Risk Register. Neither has this appraisal identified any heritage assets which are currently at risk.



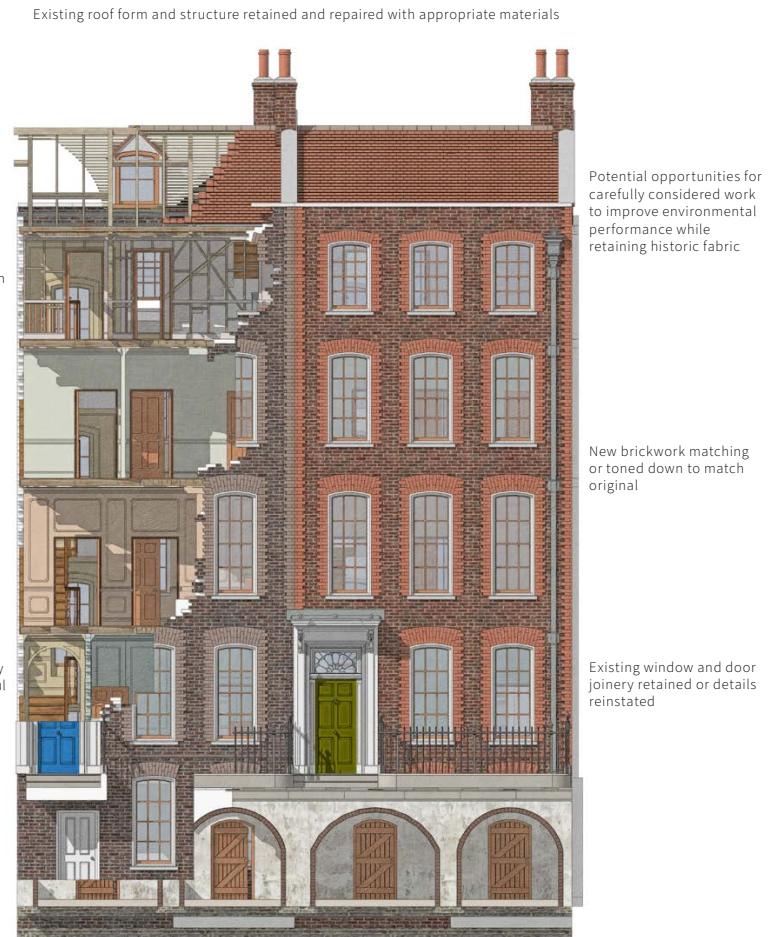


## Relevant Extract from Historic England's guidance on conserving Victorian Terraces

The example terraced house below shows some of the areas and features, found in many terrace types, to consider when planning changes to a property. It shows areas where it may be possible to retain, repair or reinstate original features and some areas where there may be opportunity for change. The relevant part of the guidance note then provides more detail about types of issue to consider when planning change.



Changes can increase capacity of vaults and basements while retaining historic fabric



Vaults, front basements, stone paving, pavement lights, coal hole covers and domestic features retained or repaired

## Relevant Extract from Historic England's guidance on conserving Victorian Terraces

### Some steps to follow when considering changes to Victorian terraced houses:

1. Establish as far as you can the historical and social context of the terrace.
2. Identify the features of the house that are original, with particular reference to plan form. This may include stairs, interior features, roof form, doors and windows and external decoration.
3. Identify opportunities for enhancing the architectural consistency of the terrace as a whole (ie for the different dwellings within the terrace to look similar).
4. Ensure any heritage statement or appraisal provides a clear assessment of what is important and why as well as describing the impact of the proposal.

### Issues to consider when considering changes which affect the relationship between the terrace and the street:

1. What is the impact of proposals on boundary walls/fences?
2. Are any of those boundaries party walls?
3. Will the proposal reinstate missing boundary features?
4. Will the proposal substantially infill the garden space?

### Issues to be considered when extending terrace houses:

1. Are existing extensions historically significant?
2. Is there an existing rhythm to the extensions?
3. Does the proposal enclose or infill the rear yard?
4. Does the service character of the extension survive ie small simple, unadorned rooms?
5. How does proposal affect the traditional service character of the extension?
6. What is the impact upon the balance between main house and rear extension?
7. What is the impact upon surviving interior features?

### Issues to be considered regarding elevations:

1. Will the proposal erode the consistency of the elevation treatment, such as the treatment of windows or colour?
2. Is the external colour treatment controlled by lease or covenant?
3. Will the proposal accurately restore lost features enhancing architectural consistency?
4. Will the proposal involve increasing the prominence of the roof on the front elevation?
5. Will the proposal respect and/or complement existing materials?

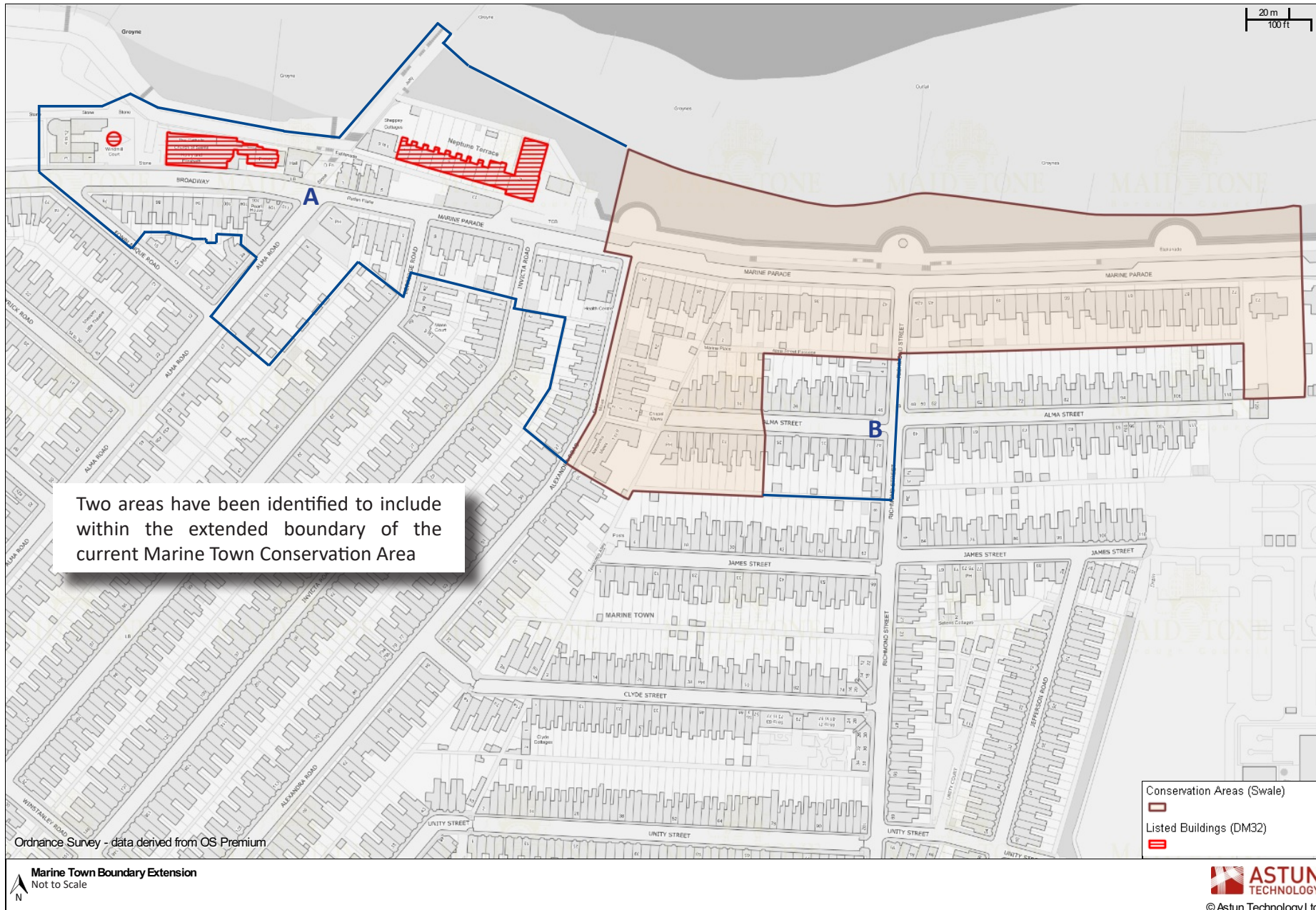
### If there are plans to change the plan form, issues to consider include, but are not exclusive to, the following:

1. Will the proposal involve the erosion of the original plan?
2. Will the proposal involve the loss of the last surviving element of the plan?
3. Are there opportunities to re-instate elements of the former plan?
4. Does the proposal involve loss of the stairs or part of the stair?
5. How will the proposal change the relationship between the house and the street?
6. Is the original hierarchy of rooms still present?
7. Are changes to the original hierarchy themselves important?
8. How does the proposal affect the ability to appreciate earlier change?
9. How will the proposal affect the relationship between the main rooms and service rooms of the house?
10. How will the proposal affect surviving interior fittings including fireplaces, cornices, skirting boards, panelling and shutters?
11. Are there opportunities to accurately re-instate missing interior features?

# Appendices



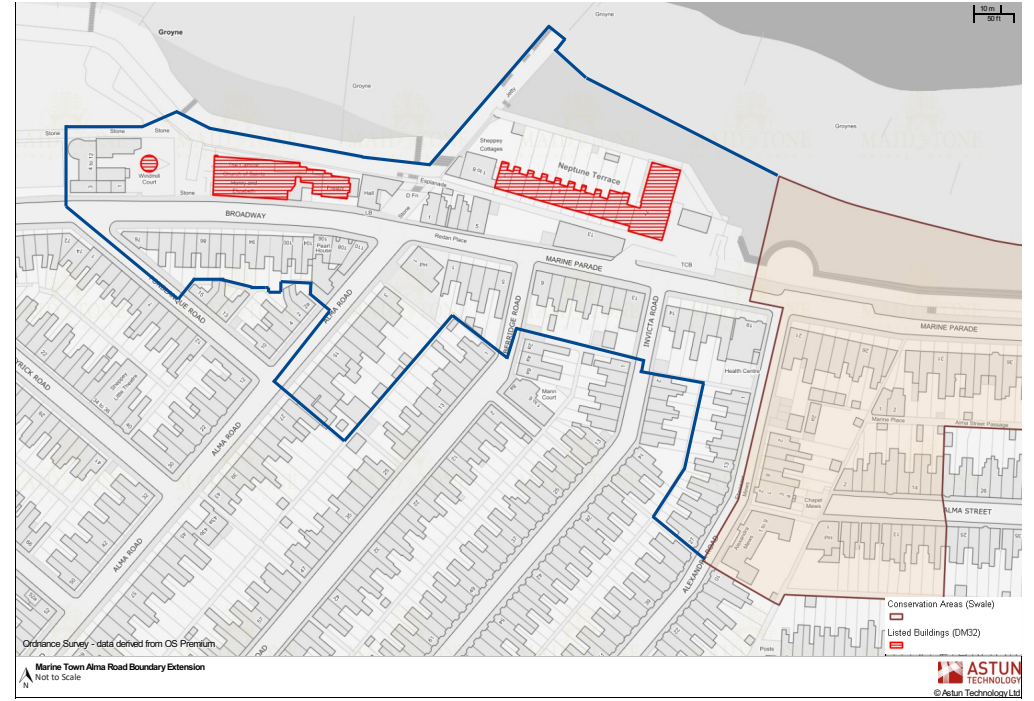
# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary Extension



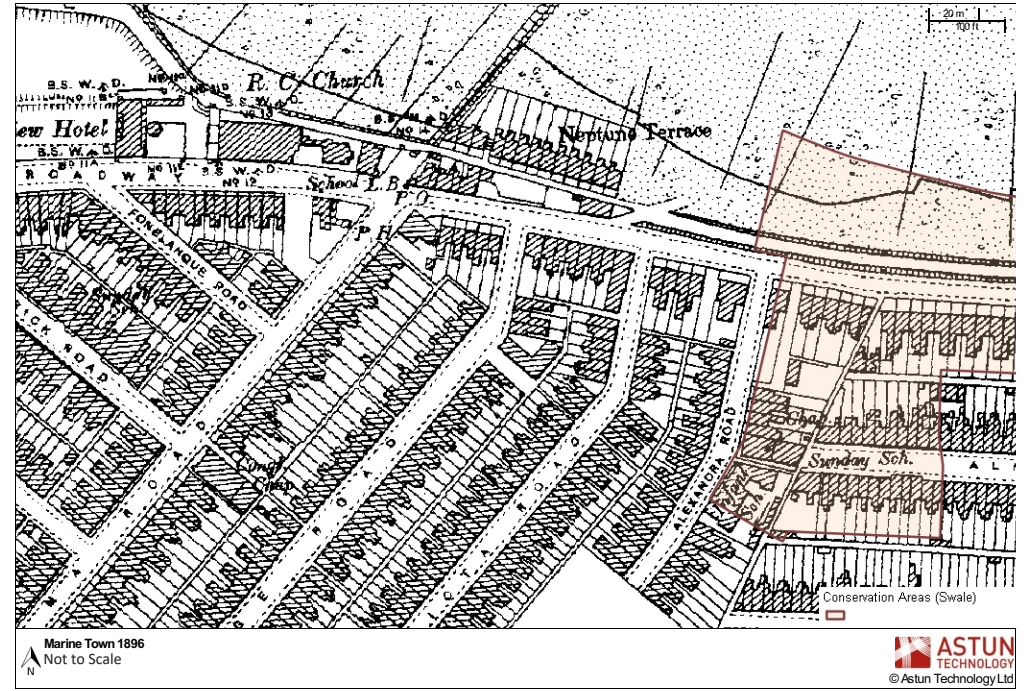
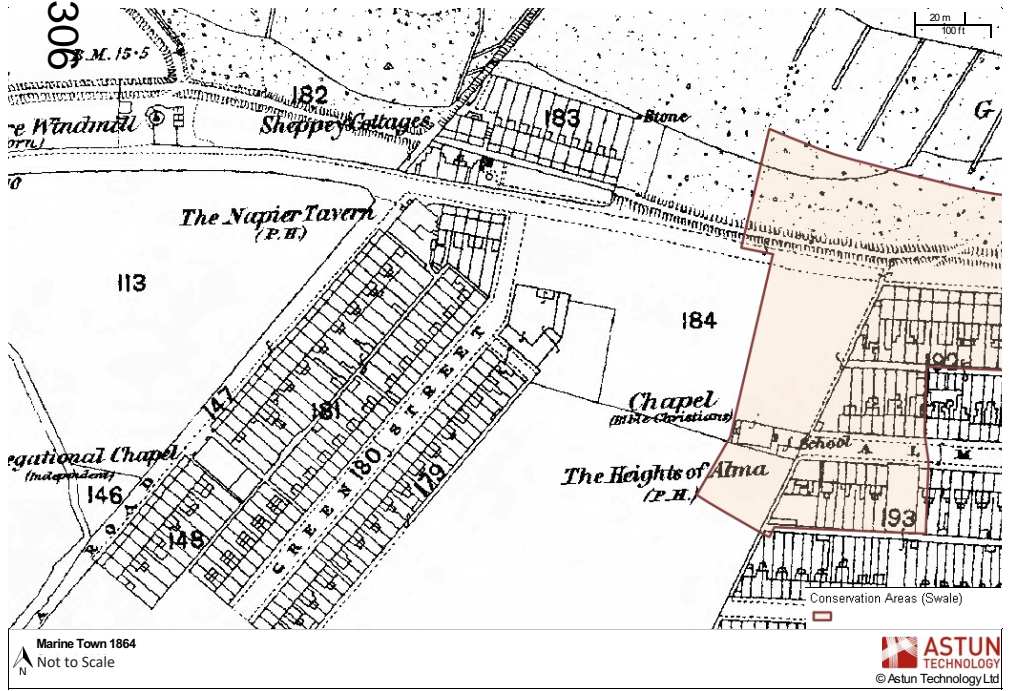


### BOUNDARY EXTENSION A

Three listed buildings within the vicinity of the current conservation area boundary are excluded from the conservation area. This proposed extension will ensure that these three significant historic assets are included along with the neighbouring terraces that form part of the earliest development (as evident from the 1844 & 1896 maps) of what is now known as Marine Town.



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Alma Road - Constantia Terrace 1854



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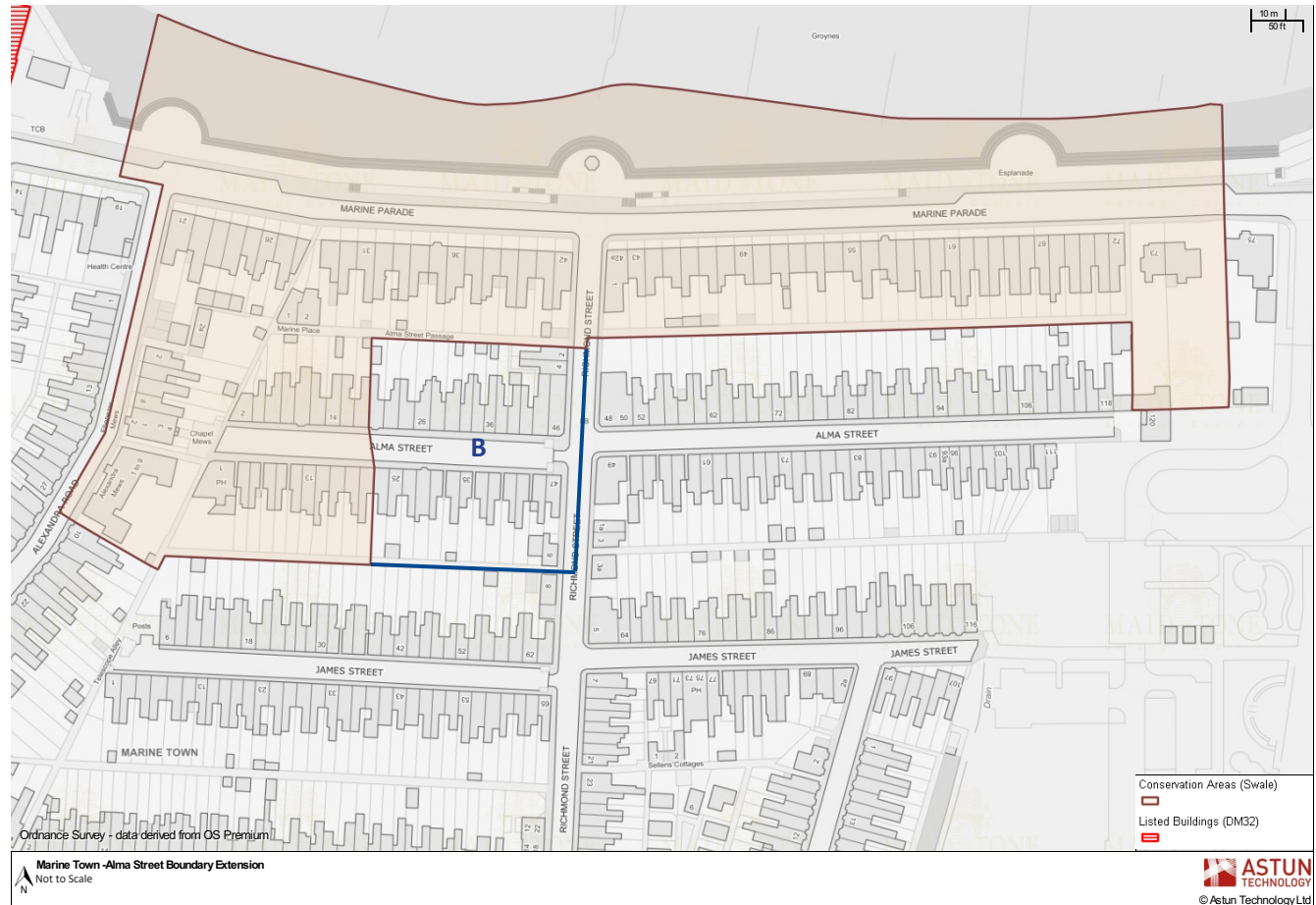
View of Neptune Terrace on right before the sea defence wall was built.



Historic view of Alma Road

**BOUNDARY EXTENSION B**

The second boundary extension is to include the entire section of Alma Street west of its junction with Richmond Street within the conservation Area. Although there have been a number of insensitive alterations to individual properties on this street, the scale and layout of the street is still retained and is considered a good representative example of street layout of smaller terraces throughout the area.

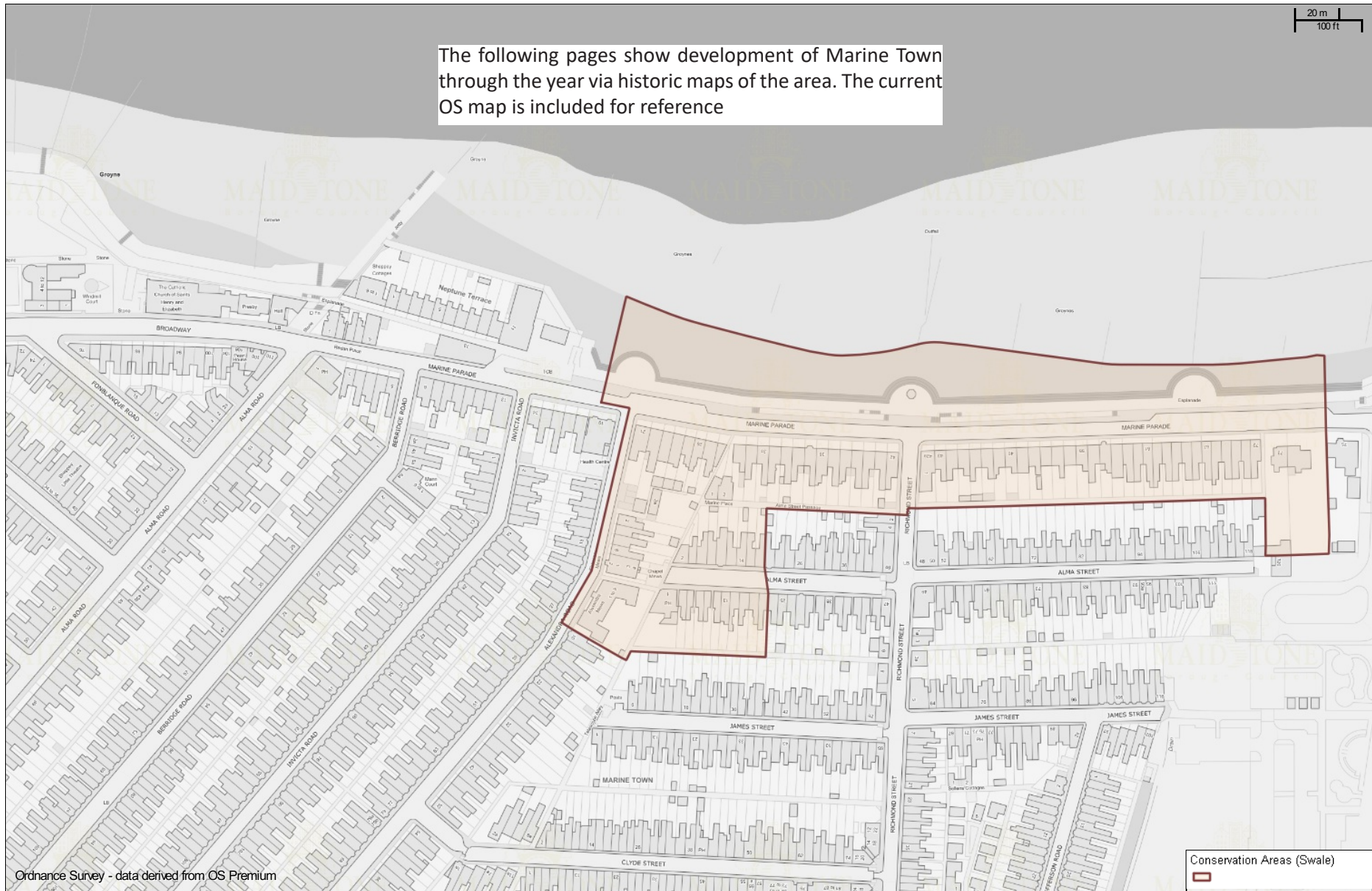




# APPENDIX 2: Historic Maps of Marine Town

The following pages show development of Marine Town through the year via historic maps of the area. The current OS map is included for reference

20 m  
100 ft

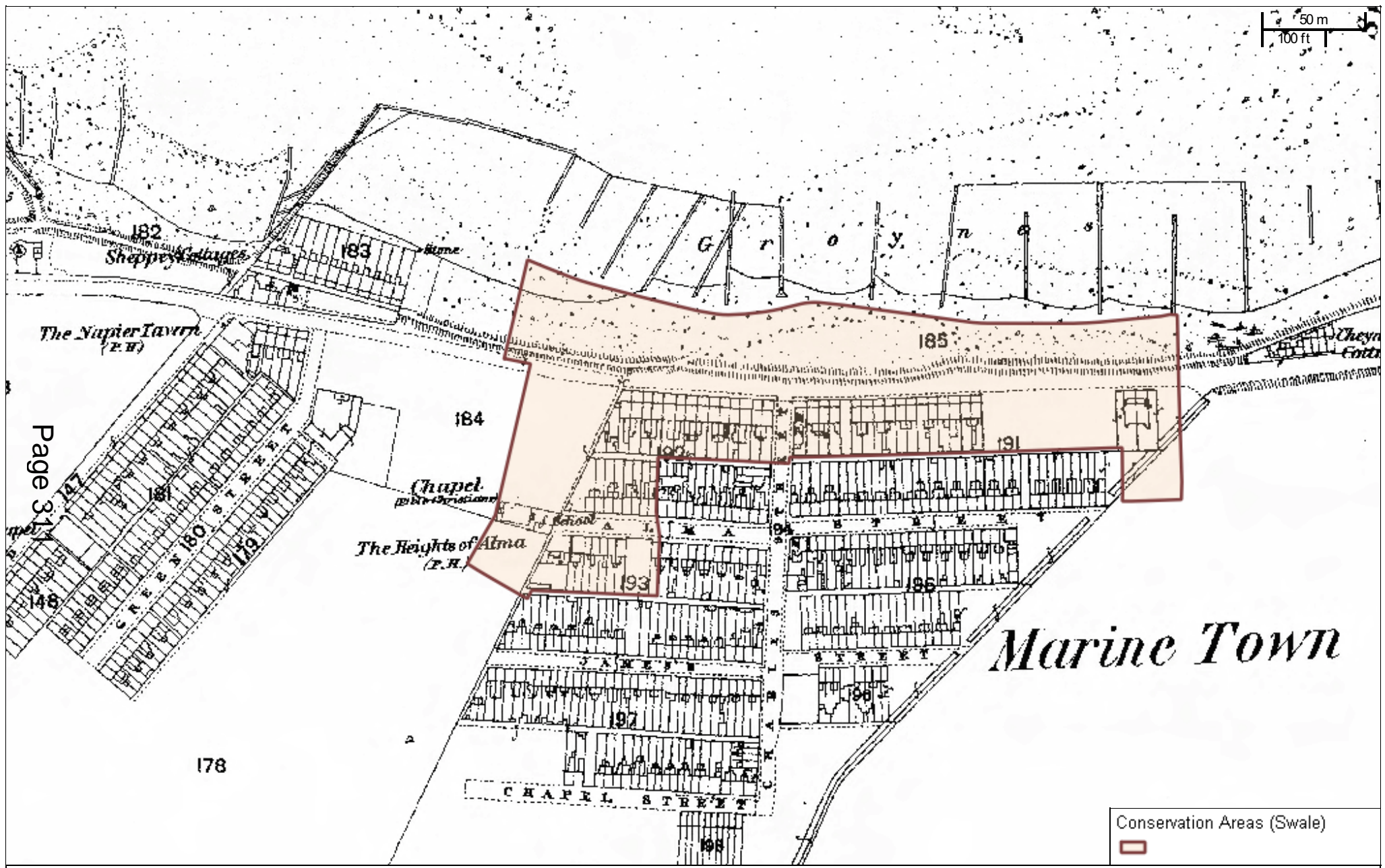


Ordnance Survey - data derived from OS Premium

Marine Town Conservation Area  
Not to Scale

ASTUN  
TECHNOLOGY


© Astun Technology Ltd



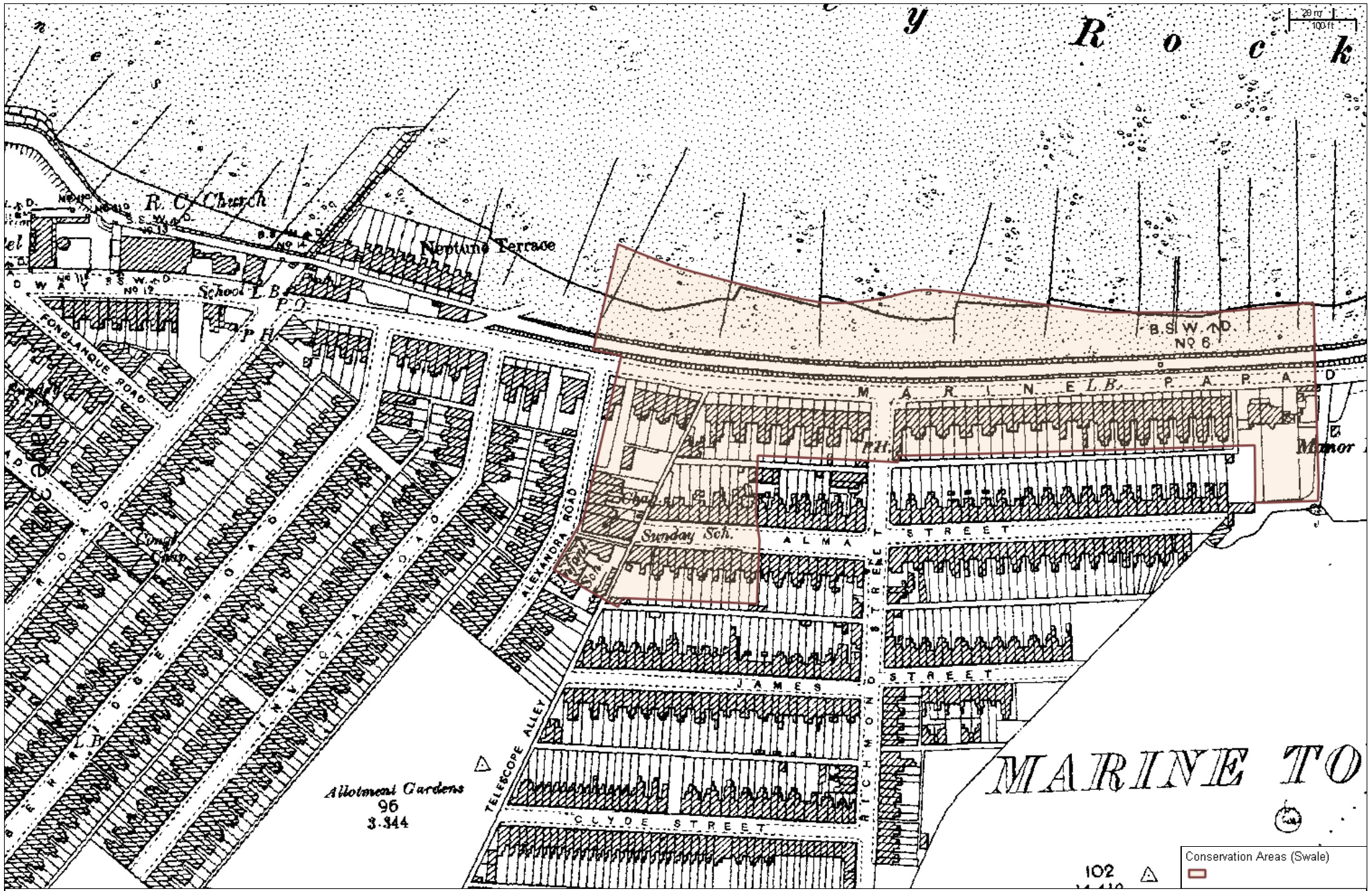
Page 3.1


**Marine Town - Historic Map 1840**  
 Not to Scale

Conservation Areas (Swale)





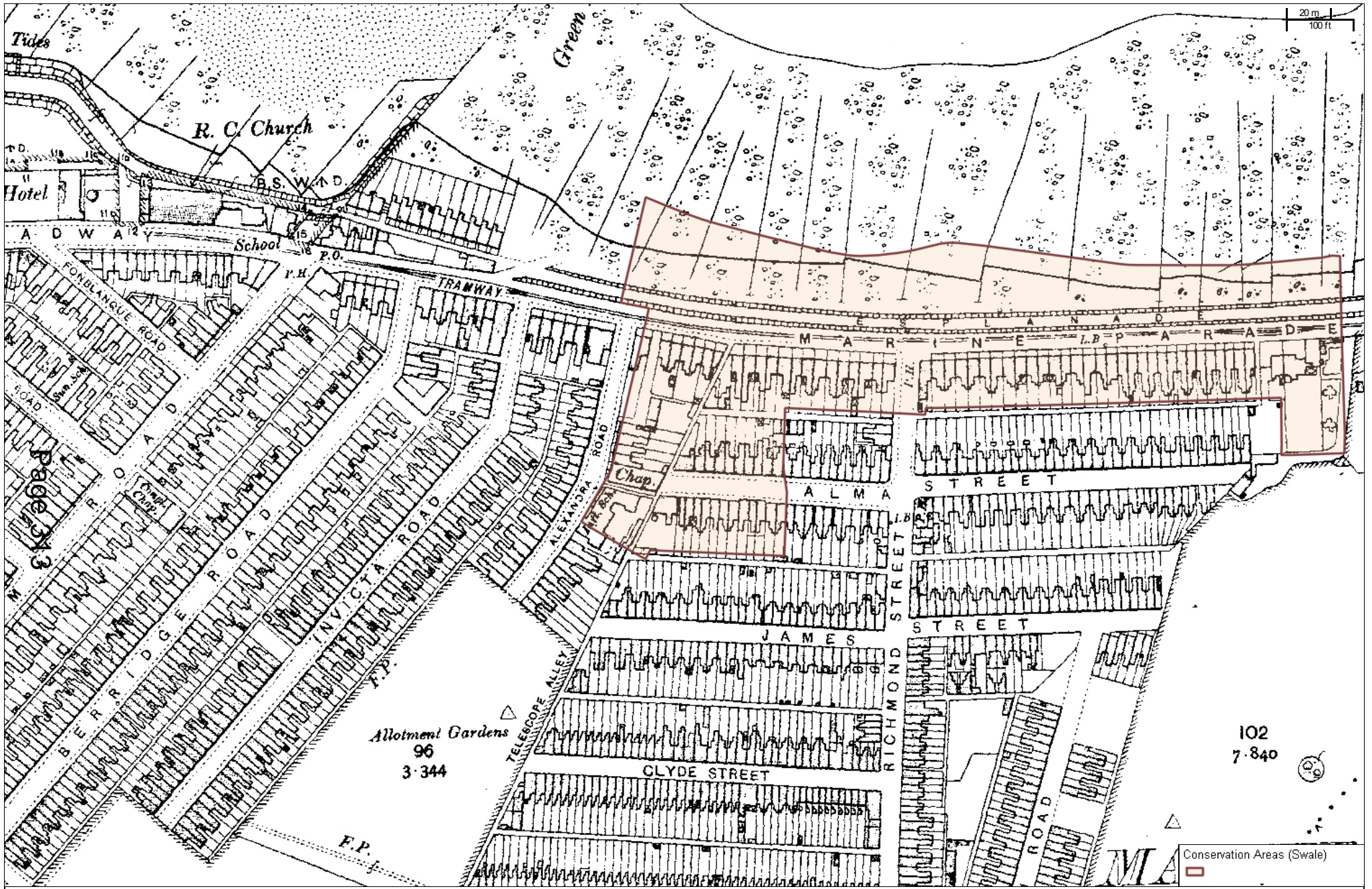


Marine Town- Historic Map 1896  
Not to Scale

Conservation Areas (Swale)

**ASTUN**  
TECHNOLOGY  
© Astun Technology Ltd





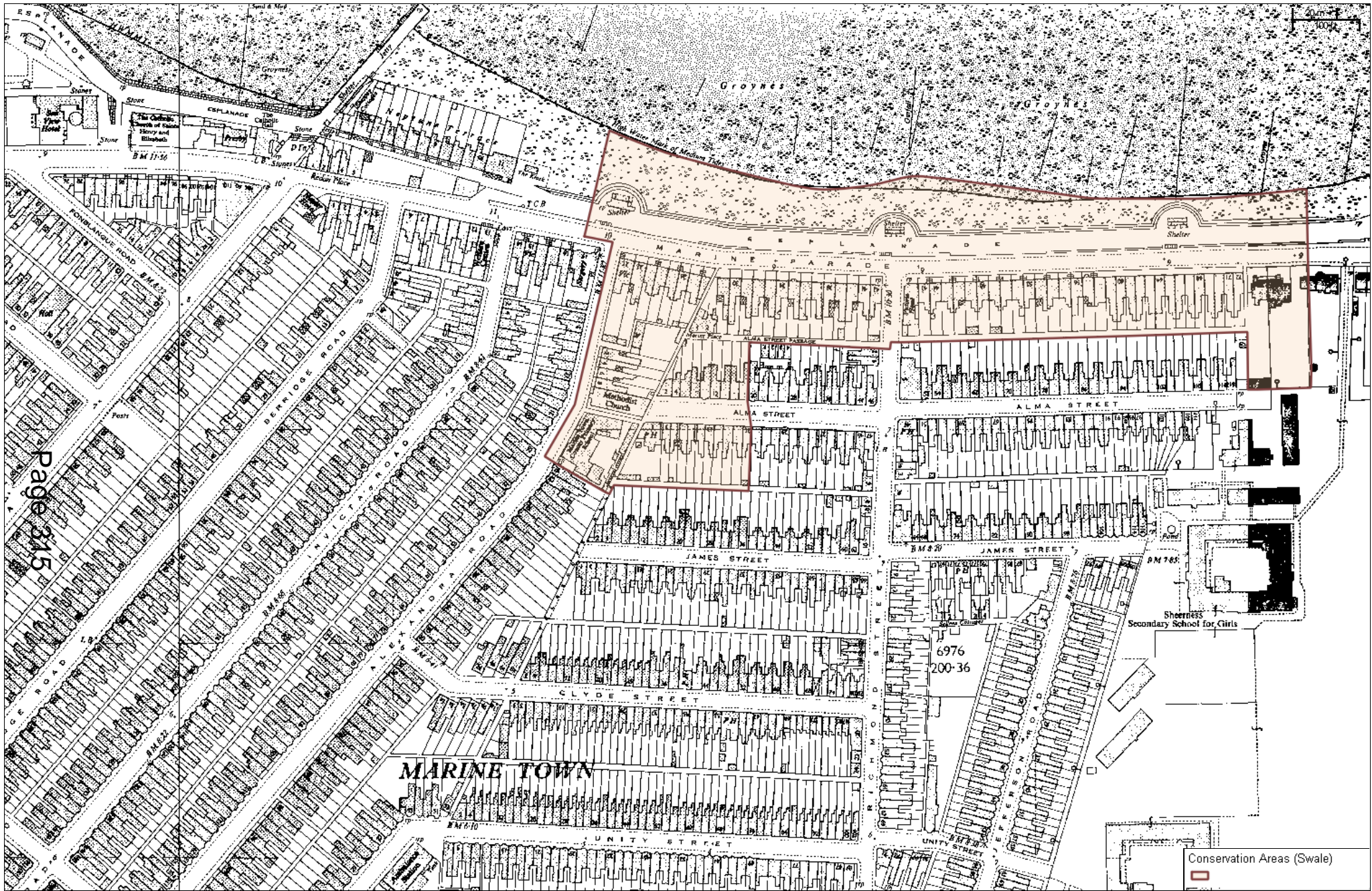
Marine Town - Historic Map 1907  
Not to Scale

ASTUN  
TECHNOLOGY  
© Astun Technology Ltd









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Marine Town - Historic Map 1957  
Not to Scale

Conservation Areas (Swale)





# APPENDIX 3:

Extracts from the National Heritage List for England (the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest)

The statutory list is compiled and published by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and is altered and amended from time to time. The Statutory list can be viewed at [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the\\_list](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the_list). The omission of a building from this list should not necessarily be taken to indicate that it is not listed.

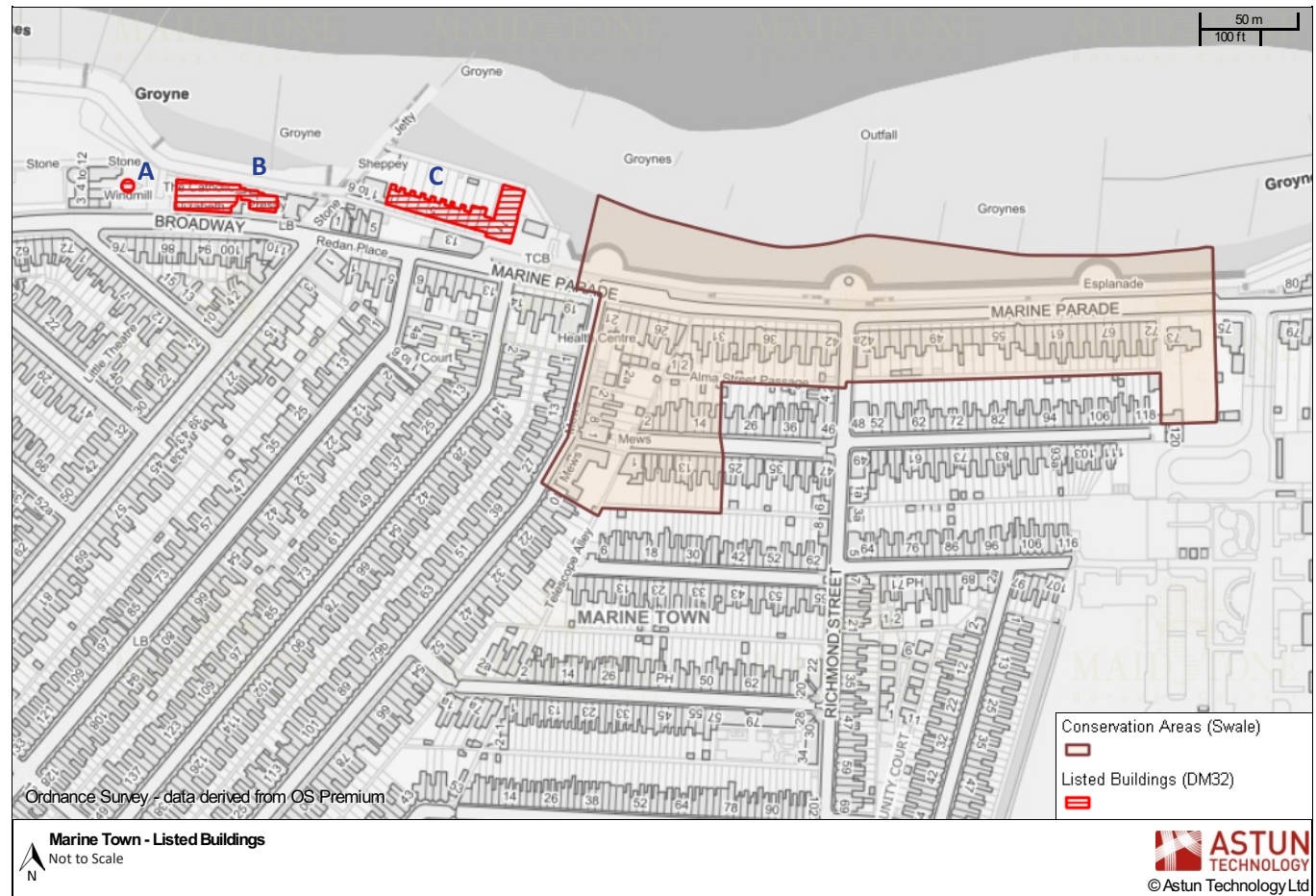
Features which are not specifically mentioned in the list description are not exempt from statutory protection which extends to the building, to any object or structure fixed to the building and to any structure within the curtilage of the building pre-dating the 1st July 1948.

The current Marine Town conservation Area does not have any statutory designated heritage assets within it's boundaries- however if the extended boundary is agreed and adopted then the following assets will be within the new revised Conservation Area boundary.

## STATUTORY LISTED BUILDINGS

Sheerness - Marine Town

- A Remains of Windmill in grounds Of Seaview Hotel
- B Roman Catholic Church of St Henry And St Elizabeth
- C Neptune Terrace



Marine Town - Listed Buildings  
Not to Scale

Conservation Areas (Swale)  
Listed Buildings (DM32)

**A REMAINS OF WINDMILL IN GROUNDS OF SEAVIEW HOTEL**

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1242981

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address : REMAINS OF WINDMILL IN GROUNDS OF SEAVIEW HOTEL, THE BROADWAY

National Grid Reference: TQ 92452 74945

## Details

THE BROADWAY 1. 5282 (North Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Remains of windmill in grounds of Seaview Hotel  
 II 2. C18. Stock brick partly stuccoed base of cylindrical shape tapering inwards towards the top. Slate roof.

**B ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST HENRY AND ST ELIZABETH**

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1242869

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST HENRY AND ST ELIZABETH, THE BROADWAY

National Grid Reference: TQ 92490 74940

## Details

THE BROADWAY 1. 5282 (North Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Roman Catholic Church of St Henry and St Elizabeth  
 II 2. Dated 1863-4 by Edward Welby Pugin. Built of stock brick with black brick bands. Slate roof. The west end has a bellcote. North and south aisles. 5 bay nave.





**C NEPTUNE TERRACE**

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258778

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

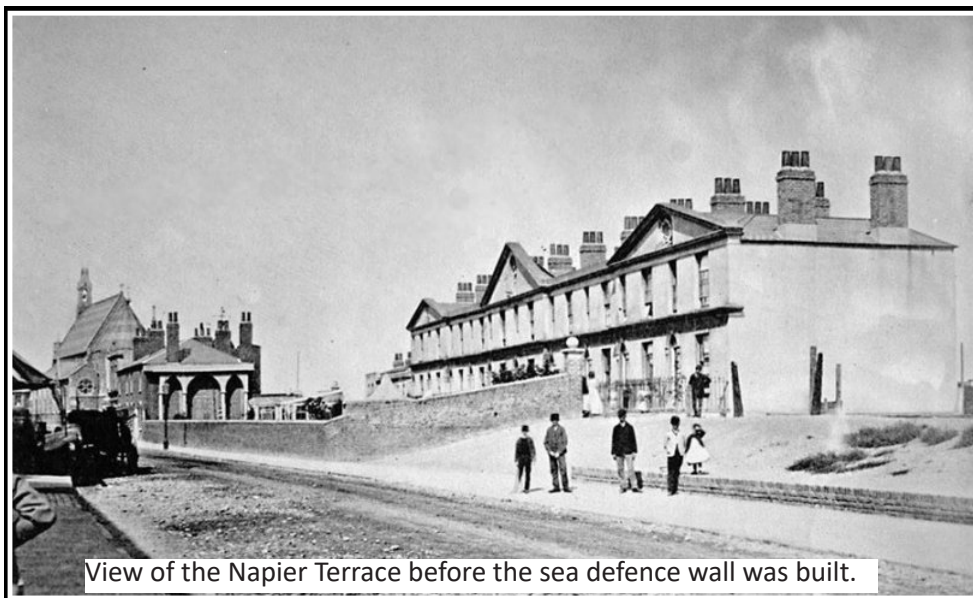
Statutory Address : NEPTUNE TERRACE, 1-10, MARINE PARADE

National Grid Reference: TQ 92592 74937

## Details

MARINE PARADE 1. 5282 (North Side) Marine Town, Sheerness Nos 1 to 10 (consec) (Neptune Terrace)

II GV 2. An early C19 terrace, 2 storeys, cement rendered. 3 pedimented projections, one centre, two ends. Central pediment has niche with Neptune standing upon the head of a sea monster. The side pediments have niches with cement shell and rock ornaments. 20 sashes in all. Stucco architraves and archivolt to entrance doors with enriched keystones which depict mermen with a cornucopia. Pilasters with capitals having mermaids riding sea horses. Slate roofs. Cast iron spear rails to areas. The rear elevation has a roof with a succession of hips.



View of the Napier Terrace before the sea defence wall was built.



## APPENDIX 4: Select Bibliography and Document Extracts

Historic England. (2016). **A Characterisation of Sheerness, Kent** Project Report

Augustus Daly (1975). **History of the Isle of Sheppey**

Kent County Council. (2004). **Kent Historic Towns Survey: Sheerness - Archaeological Assessment Document**. English Heritage and Kent County Council.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Swale Borough Council Planning Services – 01795 417850

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-and-landscape/>



Swale Borough Council: 2023  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT AUGUST 2023

Prepared by The Conservation & Design Team, Swale Borough Council





<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7th February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Sheerness - Mile Town Conservation Area review
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins - Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson – Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jhilmil Kishore - Senior Conservation & Design Officer (Projects)
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices.</li> <li>2. To agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make the Policy & Resources Committee aware of updated appraisal and some proposed boundary changes to the Sheerness- Mile Town Conservation Area and to recommend that the conservation area be formally re-designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The proposals include a detailed character appraisal and associated management strategy in line with current good practice for the management of conservation areas. Officers recommend that the Policy & Resources supports and agrees the changes to the review document set out in **Appendix i** and as reflected in **Appendix ii**.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Sheerness- Mile Town Conservation Area was first designated in June 1976. An appraisal document and minor boundary (judicious) changes were adopted in 2000. It has not been systematically reviewed since 2000 and until now there has been no published management strategy. There is a formal requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for Conservation Areas to be reviewed from ‘time to time’.
- 2.2 The Swale Heritage Strategy, adopted in March 2020, has resulted in a stronger commitment by the Council to ensure its conservation areas are reviewed more

regularly and possible new conservation areas also given consideration. The review of Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area is part of the work programme of the initial 3-year action plan forming part of the adopted Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 – 2032. The focus on conservation areas in the initial action plan has given priority to those conservation areas in the Borough classified locally and nationally as ‘at risk’ – of which there are 8 – Sheerness- Mile Town Conservation Area is one of them.

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposal is to re-designate and amend the boundary of the conservation area and to equip it with a detailed character appraisal and a complementary management strategy which will assist with development management and heritage conservation purposes over the next decade or more. It will be a matter for the Policy & Resources Committee to decide whether to formally adopt the Sheerness- Mile Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (as recommended and set out in **Appendix ii**, following consultation feedback, or otherwise).
- 3.2 Part of the review process involved an assessment of whether the area should be extended or reduced in size. In this regard particular consideration was given to extending the conservation area. Two specific areas are identified in the document as Boundary A, to include Old Jew's Burial Ground upto and including Invicta works along Hope Street and Boundary B to include the entire curtilage of the Water Works, current Conservation Area boundary cuts through the site of the Waterworks. In addition to these two extensions, Historic England has recommended that consideration be given to extending the boundary to include the former County Library, an attractive building with some historic and architectural value, and a 19th century former house marked as Towers Hall on historic OS maps. In addition, they have recommended that it would be beneficial to consider extending the boundary to include High Street buildings up until the junction with the A250. Though the historic buildings on the High Street are altered, they are of a similar quality to those directly to the west and within the conservation area.
- 3.4 The recommendation is:
- Members note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices; and
  - Support and agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation.



## **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 One option would be to not take this review work any further. This is not recommended because it would risk the justifiable continuation of the designation and/or the appropriately sensitive and positive management of the conservation area and its wider setting moving forward.
- 4.2 A second possible option would be to disregard some elements, or all of the feedback received, in terms of the suggested boundary change(s). However, whilst it is considered that the appraisal and management plan (to support the redesignation of the conservation area) is essentially sound, the feedback provided from the local community is valuable and to ignore any of this feedback without sound reasons would call the value of the consultation process into question and potentially deliver reputational damage to the Council.
- 4.3 A third possible option would be to suspend the work on this review until some point in the future. Whilst this option would not result in wasted officer time, it could still lead to (a) the designation being challenged, (b) reputational damage to the Council and/or (c) development and associated infrastructure provision decisions being made for the locality without an appropriate understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the Bredgar Conservation Area.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 A 6-week public consultation ran from Thursday 10th August 2023 upto and including Thursday 21st September 2023. Due to poor response to the consultation and on Historic England's request, it was further extended by 10 days and finally concluded on Friday 6th October 2023.
- 5.2 All those parties with property within or overlapping the current conservation area boundary were notified in writing of the review and were invited to comment on it, as were key relevant organisations including Kent County Council and Historic England.
- 5.3 Hard copies of the review document were made available at the Sheerness Library and was available to view/download on-line via the Council's website for the duration of the 6-week (including the extended) public consultation period.
- 5.4 A total of 3 consultation responses have been received. 2 from local residents and a very detailed response from Historic England. The officer's response to these responses (as summarised) is attached as appendix i.
- 5.5 Kent County Council in its function as the Highway Authority was consulted on the conservation area review but provided no feedback.

- 5.6 A written update was sent to Sheppey Area committee highlighting the main aspects of the Sheerness- Mile Town Conservation Area Review.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Priority 2 of the Plan is: 'Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges'. Objectives 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 of this priority are respectively to:</p> <p>(2.1) 'Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council's own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2020, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough'.</p> <p>(2.4) 'Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.'</p> <p>(2.5) 'Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible'.</p> <p>The character appraisal and management strategy document, once amended as appropriate and subsequently adopted would support all 3 of the above-stated objectives from the Corporate Plan.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Implementing some aspects of the proposed Management Plan may have financial and resource implications for the council, particularly if it is decided to proceed with an Area of Special Advertisement control review or/and signage review. These costs are not yet budgeted for and may need to be considered within any future Heritage Strategy Action Plans.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to "<i>determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance</i>" and, from time to time, to review the functioning existing conservation areas.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>One of the three dimensions of sustainable development is its environmental role: contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.</p>

Health and Wellbeing	The health and wellbeing aspects of interaction with heritage assets and heritage related projects are referenced in the adopted Heritage Strategy which underpins this review work.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix i: Public consultation – table of representations (in summary form), and the council’s response to them.
- Appendix ii: Public consultation version of the 2023 draft Sheerness- Mile Town character appraisal and management plan document.

## 8 Background Papers

A Heritage Strategy for Swale 2020-2032 Adopted March 2020

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**APPENDIX i: TABLE OF REPRESENTATIONS, AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY CHANGES TO THE ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO THEM – FOR RE-DESIGNATING SHEERNESS- MILE TOWN. C.A.**

<b>Rep. No(s).</b>	<b>Representation By</b>	<b>Summary of Representation</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Local resident	Thank you for giving me the opportunity to ask questions re-the High Street. Why is it that shops can rip out their shopfronts and replace with a modern entrance? This has happened on numerous occasions which is obviously against Conservation when all the foreign hairdressers completely modernise the shopfronts, obviously at great expense. I must admit they look great but again, against conservation rules, I would like to know what steps have been taken to stop this happening as it seems to me you have no powers to uphold conservation.	Noted	No change to the assessment document needed.
2	Local Resident	We have reviewed the conservation area document with a general opinion that it was well researched and thought through. Perhaps the plan was only intended as a rather general plan, and it seems to us that the plan only hints at firm proposals for improvements particularly to public spaces. Our suggestions are as follows: - 1. Considering identifying buildings especially listed buildings in the core retail area close to the Clock Tower in clear disrepair and write to occupiers/owners asking them to complete necessary building works. If ignored, consider exercising any relevant statutory local authority powers to make good/charge back the works. If only a few of the worst kept buildings can be brought up to a reasonable standard it seems to us it will lift the area. 2. Consider utilisation levels of public car parks. Consider turning the Rose Street fronting part of the Rose Street/Wood Street public car park with public conveniences within it into a park/recreational area. 3. Consider breaking up the larger Rose Street public car park bordered by Hare Street, Millennium Way/Garden passage with additional planting both on the edges and within the very wide-open space. 4. Upgrade Street lighting in Rose Street which is very poorly lit such lighting as there is in close proximity to trees.	Noted.	No change to the assessment document needed.

PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MILE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>5. Fully pedestrianise Rose Street between Hare Street and High Street which is now a dead end for traffic in any event. The road is in extremely poor condition with numerous serious trip hazards for pedestrians within the criteria of the statutory disrepair/public liability. The drain on the corner of Rose Street and High Street appears to be permanently blocked.</p> <p>6. Improve Street lighting in the Rose Street, High Street to Hare Street area because it is practically unlit, and it is extremely dark outside daylight hours.</p> <p>We think the practical suggestions above mainly effecting the immediate area that we are situated are in line with your general proposals but would be a way of putting them into practice.</p> <p>We note the review is completely silent on the environmental obligations of owners and occupiers of commercial premises within the conservation area. You will appreciate that no commercial building has been able to be leased since 1* April 2023 if it has an EPC below E and is likely that this requirement will be increased to a C requirement within the next few years. This requires a building owners/occupiers to make material changes to their buildings and in some cases some significant and expensive ones within a relatively short time scale.</p> <p>We as a business has already spent many thousands of pounds in EPC upgrade work and intend to spend thousands of pounds more in the next few years. Whilst it might be possible to get exclusions for listed buildings for the bulk of property owners/occupiers in the conservation area this may not be possible so some specific guidance would be useful. It seems implicit within your report though not expressly stated, a conservation of frontage to the conservation area are of paramount importance (a proposition with which we agree) that alterations to the rear of premises not facing the conservation area (High Street, Broadway, Rose Street, etc.) will be given more latitude. It seems to us to be a good policy to give any alterations/development not</p>		





PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MILE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>Or “surviving examples of traditional shopfronts” could be expanded to say, “good survival of traditionally designed shopfronts with notable examples from xx and xx.”</p> <p>Content Our guidance, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management sets out a good practice approach to the content of a conservation area appraisal. The draft appraisal covers some of the suggested headings, such as introduction, planning context and location and setting, but we think the later sections on the character appraisal would benefit from further work. For example, a more detailed section on spatial analysis, backed up by historic maps, would a helpful way of describing the area’s development. It may be helpful to include earlier maps alongside later 19th century maps, to illustrate the area’s earliest development from the later 18th century. This would help you draw out where the early road layout survives and formed the framework for later development.</p> <p>Sections on locally important buildings and streets, open spaces and views could also be usefully added to help articulate more clearly why and what about the character of the conservation area is of special architectural or historic interest. If the Council has a local list, it would be good to include it in this section, including a link to the current list.</p> <p>It would be useful to include a map of significant views and to explain the types of views (such as views out to the setting, views of street frontages and groups of buildings or views of key landmarks) that are distinctive of the area’s character and contribute to its historic or architectural interest. You may also consider identifying character zones within the conservation area. This is often a useful tool to use when describing a conservation area</p>	Noted	Document amended as appropriate.

PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MILE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>whose character varies across the entirety of the area and may be useful as a management tool for the area in the future.</p> <p>In terms of the structure of the document, we also think it would be sensible to put a section on shopfront design in the management plan as it interrupts of the flow of the character appraisal at present and is principally a matter related to future management.</p> <p>Management Plan The Management plan is a great opportunity to integrate to the fullest extent Historic England HEAN 1 (2nd edition) and the management proposals within it. There may be areas of guidance which would add additional value to the draft such as enforcement strategies, opportunities to address climate change and opportunities for increased community engagement and potential future co-production. We suggest you consider this.</p> <p>We also note that the management plan would benefit from more illustrative images to reinforce the proposals and guidance through-out. For example, close ups of significant vernacular materials and detailing. If you develop a section on important views, the management plan could set out how you propose to manage these. You could also use the management plan to set out how you propose to manage locally listed buildings within the conservation area. As a general point, we think greater use of weblinks to other areas of guidance would enhance the text. For example, a link to the Local Heritage @ Risk register, Local List of Adopted Heritage Assets, relevant design guidance, etc.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>Document amended as recommended.</p> <p>No change to the assessment document needed.</p>



**PROPOSED SHEERNESS-MILE TOWN. C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>boundary running through existing buildings etc. As part of that process, you may find it helpful to set out why you do not propose to extend the boundary to cover some areas, e.g. the exclusion of part of Strode Crescent. Having visited, I think I understand the rationale for the boundary, but it is not immediately apparently from the maps.</p>		

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# Sheerness- Mile Town

## Conservation Area

### Character Appraisal & Management Plan

August 2023

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION





Clocktower circa 1902 with original gas lanterns- Grade II listed



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# FOREWORD

“Historic buildings and places add to the quality of people’s lives and help to create a sense of place that we all identify with.

As a community and as a local authority, we have a responsibility to safeguard our historic assets for future generations and to make sure that they are not compromised by unsympathetic alterations or poor quality developments. Conservation area designation and subsequent management is one way in which this can be achieved.

Conservation areas are not intended to halt progress or to prevent change. Rather, they give the local community and the Borough Council the means to positively manage change and to protect what is special about the area from being harmed or lost altogether.

Swale Borough is fortunate in having such a rich and varied mix of built and natural heritage. The Borough Council wants to see it used positively as a catalyst to sustainable, sensitive regeneration and development, and to creating places where people want to live, work, and make the most of their leisure time. To that end, we have reviewed the Sheerness -Mile Town Conservation Area and the results of that review are set out in this document, which the Borough Council is now seeking constructive feedback on.

This is one of a series of conservation area reviews which the Borough Council is committed to undertaking, following the adoption of the Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 - 2032.”



Councillor Mike Baldock,  
Deputy Leader and Heritage Champion  
Swale Borough Council



# Summary of Significance

The significance and special interest of Sheerness-Mile Town Conservation Area can be summarised as follows:

- Historic Commercial Centre of Sheerness
- Unaltered Street patterns from the 19th Century
- Surviving examples of traditional shopfronts
- Surviving examples of use of traditional building materials



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Sheerness -Mile Town Conservation Area

**Sheerness - Mile Town Conservation Area** was first designated on 8th June 1976. An appraisal document and minor boundary (judicious) changes were adopted in 2000.

The town of Sheerness is situated in the north west corner of the Isle of Sheppey overlooking the Thames and Medway estuaries. Sheerness Mile Town broadly equates with the town centre, whilst Beach Street is a small enclave of terraced housing on the north western edge of the town centre. The former Royal Naval Dockyard (as a separate Conservation Area referred as Sheerness- Blue Town), now a commercial port, lies to the north west of the town centre along with a steelworks developed in the 1960s. In most other directions the town centre is surrounded by residential development ( including Sheerness- Marine Town Conservation Area), sections of which are comprised of a tight grid of streets with terraced houses dating from the late nineteenth century.

### 1.2 The Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. A Conservation Area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (s.69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). It is the responsibility of individual Local Planning Authorities to designate and review Conservation Areas using local criteria to determine and assess their special qualities

and local distinctiveness.

The aim of Conservation Area designation is to protect historic places and to assist in positively managing change, so that their significance is safeguarded and sustained. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic layout, use of characteristic or local materials, style, or landscaping. In accordance with the four types of heritage values set out in the core Historic England guidance document (Conservation Principles: Policies & Guidance. Communal values – which are those derived from the meaning of a

#### **Conservation Area status provides extra protection in the following ways:**

- Local planning authorities have control over most demolition of buildings.
- Local authorities have extra control over householder development.
- Special provision is made to protect trees.
- When assessing planning applications, the Local Planning Authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting.
- Policies in the Local Development Plan positively encourage development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

place for people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory – will be of particular relevance to this Conservation Area given the linkages between place names and remnants of bygone uses in the wider context of historical growth and development. Above all however, Conservation Areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are of special architectural or historic interest.

Conservation Areas provide for additional Controls over owners and landowners activities.

### 1.3 The Purpose and Status of this Character Appraisal

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal is a written record and assessment of the special architectural or historic interest which gives rise to the character and appearance of a place. The appraisal is a factual and objective analysis which seeks to identify the distinctiveness of a place by defining the attributes that contribute to its special character. **It should be noted, however, that the appraisal cannot be all-encompassing, and that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.**

The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding both the significance of an area as a whole and the effect of any impacts which bear negatively on its significance. In some cases, significance may only



be fully identified at such time as a feature or a building is subject to the rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

Additionally, an appraisal can include management proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of an area by means of policies, action points, design guidance and site-specific design statements where appropriate. The objective of this plan would be to reinforce the positive character of a historic area as well as avoiding, minimising, and mitigating negative impacts identified as affecting the area.

An appraisal serves as a basis for both the formulation and evaluation of Development Plan policies, as a material

consideration in the making of development management decisions by the Local Planning Authority, and by the Planning Inspectorate in determining planning appeals. It can also heighten awareness of the special character of the place to help inform local Parish Councils in the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, and individuals in design choices.

This Character Appraisal is supplementary to the Swale Borough Local Plan. It has been prepared in the context of the relevant national legislation and national and local planning policy and guidance provided by central government, Historic England, and the Borough Council itself, all of which are set out in section 2 of this document.

The statutory duty of local planning authorities with regards to conservation areas are to provide the necessary background to, and framework for, a review of the Conservation Area boundary in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area (Section 72).

In light of the way that the production of Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy documents (such as this one) are developed and prepared in the above stated context and are also subject to public scrutiny via a statutory public



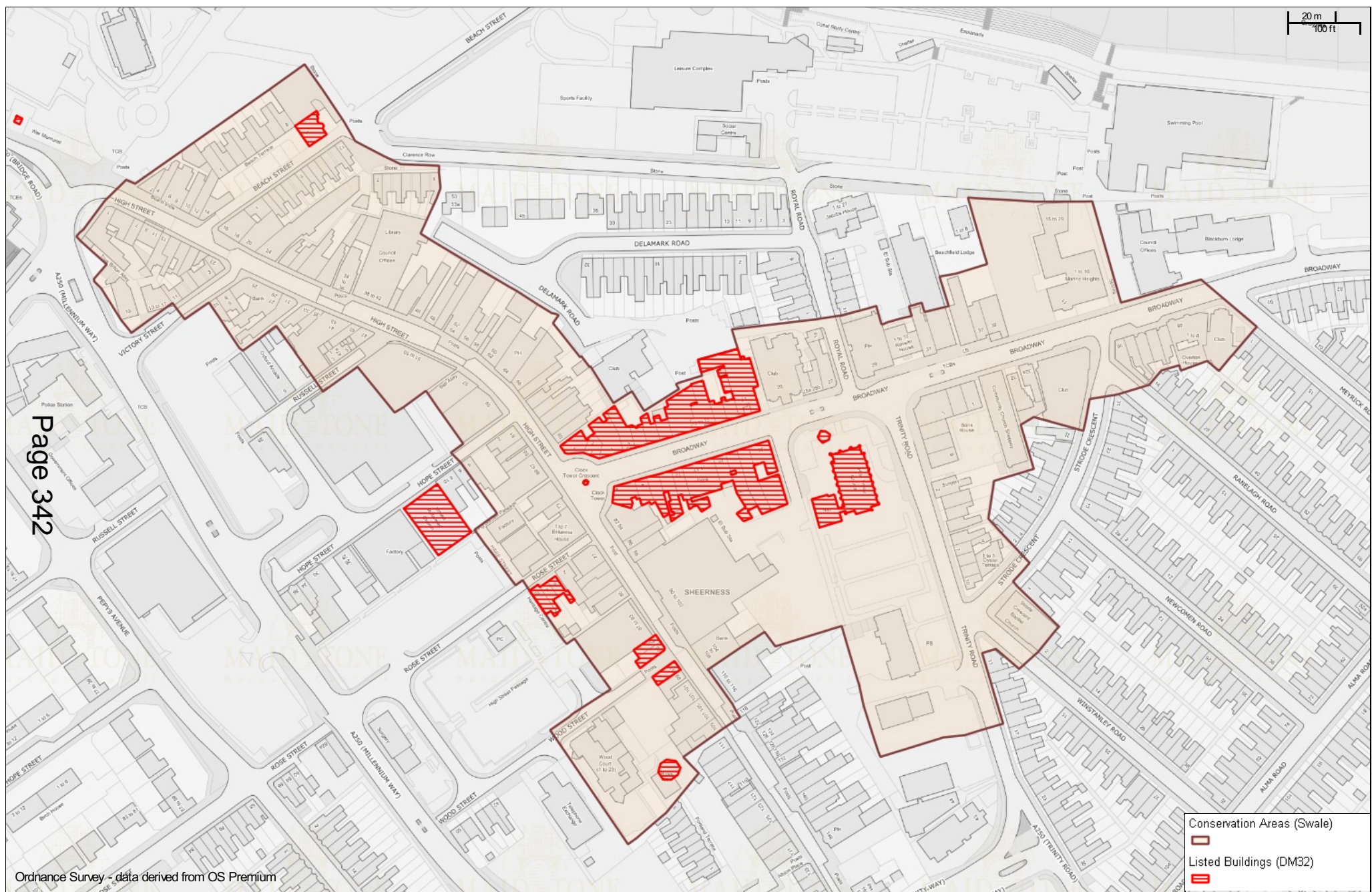
View along the Broadway towards the Crescent



View along the High Street towards the Crescent



20 m  
100 ft



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Ordnance Survey - data derived from OS Premium

- Conservation Areas (Swale)
- Listed Buildings (DM32)

Sheerness-Mile Town  
Scale: NTS

### Existing Sheerness- Mile Town Conservation Area Boundary



## 2.0 Planning Policy Context

### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

- **Section 66** General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions.

(1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- **Section 69** Designation of conservation areas.

(1) Every local planning authority—

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority's area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is

desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area. (4) The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge.

- **Section 71** Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

(1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.

(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

- **Section 72** General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.

(1) In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies, and how they are expected to be applied. This was last updated in July 2021.

The NPPF covers the historic environment primarily in paragraphs 189-208 (Chapter 16).

### National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

The NPPG includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Historic Environment.

### Guidance and Advice from Historic England

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/planning-system/>

- **Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs).**

These provide supporting information on good practice, particularly looking at the principles of how national policy and guidance can be applied.

- GPA1 - The Historic Environment in Local Plans
- GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- GPA3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets.

### Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs)

These include detailed, practical advice on how to implement national planning policy and guidance.

- Historic England Advice Note 1 (2nd. Ed.)- Conservation Areas—Appraisal, Designation and Management



- Historic England Advice Note 10 - Listed Buildings and Curtilage
- Historic England Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance

**Swale Borough Council Heritage Strategy 2020**

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/swale-heritage-strategy/>

The Council has developed a borough-wide heritage strategy to help it, along with key stakeholders and other interested parties, to protect and manage the historic environment in Swale in a positive and sustainable way, on a suitably informed basis.

A key element of the strategy is the setting out of the Council's overall vision and set of priorities, which it is hoped will align with the vision and priorities of local communities and local amenity societies as far as possible, in order that the strategy can be widely supported.

The strategy sets out a series of proposals in the associated initial 3 year action plan which are aimed at enabling the positive and sustainable management of different elements of the borough's historic environment for the foreseeable future. Priority is given to those parts of the borough's historic environment which are already suffering from, and at risk from negative change, and/or which face significant development pressure, threatening their special character.

Review of Sheerness - Mile Town Conservation Area is one of the 23 projects identified for the first Action Plan of the adopted Heritage Strategy.

**Adopted Local plan Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017)**

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/media/files/localplan/adoptedlocalplanfinalwebversion.pdf>

Relevant objectives and policies within the local plan include:

**Policy ST 1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale**

To deliver sustainable development in Swale, all development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Achieve good design through reflecting the best of an area's defining characteristics;
2. Promote healthy communities through: e. maintaining the individual character, integrity, identities and settings of settlements;
12. Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment, and integration of development with the importance, form, and character of heritage assets (inc. historic landscapes).

- **Policy CP 4 Requiring good design**

All development proposals will be of a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

2. Enrich the qualities of the existing environment by promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place;
5. Retain and enhance features which contribute to local character and distinctiveness;
8. Be appropriate to the context in respect of materials, scale, height and massing;

9. Make best use of texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials;
10. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area;
11. Ensure the long-term maintenance and management of buildings, spaces, features and social infrastructure;

- **Policy DM 32 Development involving listed buildings**

Development proposals, including any change of use, affecting a listed building, and/or its setting, will be permitted provided that:

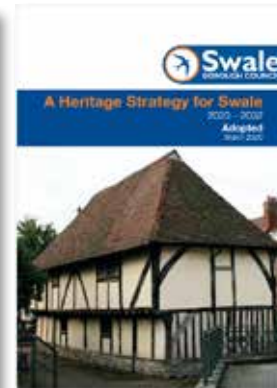
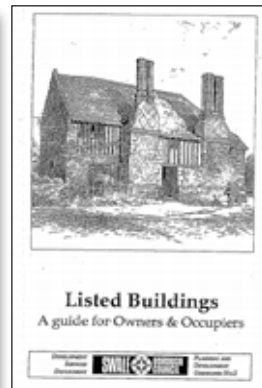
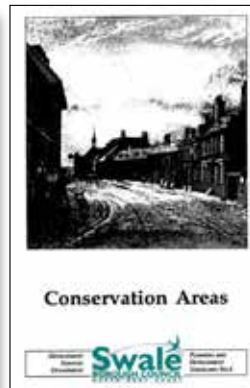
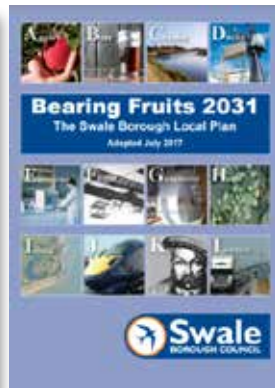
1. The building's special architectural or historic interest, and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, are preserved, paying special attention to the: a. design, including scale, materials, situation and detailing; b. appropriateness of the proposed use of the building; and c. desirability of removing unsightly or negative features or restoring or reinstating historic features.
2. The total or part demolition of a listed building is wholly exceptional, and will only be permitted provided convincing evidence has been submitted showing that: a. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or viable new uses and have failed; b. Preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and c. The cost of maintaining and repairing the building outweighs its importance and the value derived from its continued use.
3. If as a last resort, the Borough Council is

prepared to consider the grant of a listed building consent for demolition, it may, in appropriate circumstances, consider whether the building could be re-erected elsewhere to an appropriate location. When re-location is not possible and demolition is permitted, arrangements will be required to allow access to the building prior to demolition to make a record of it and to allow for the salvaging of materials and features.

• **Policy DM 33 Development affecting a conservation area**

Development (including changes of use and the demolition of unlisted buildings or other structures) within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's special character or appearance. The Borough Council expects development proposals to:

1. Respond positively to its conservation area appraisals where these have been prepared;
2. Retain the layout, form of streets, spaces, means of enclosure and buildings, and pay special attention to the use of detail and materials, surfaces, landform, vegetation and land use;



3. Remove features that detract from the character of the area and reinstate those that would enhance it; and
4. Retain unlisted buildings or other structures that make, or could make, a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

• **Policy DM 34 Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites**

1. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument, and/or its setting, as shown on the Proposals Map, or subsequently designated, or any other monument or archaeological site demonstrated as being of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Development that may affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset of less than national significance will require a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
2. Whether they are currently known, or discovered during the Plan period, there will be a preference to preserve important archaeological sites in-situ and to protect their settings. Development that does not achieve acceptable

mitigation of adverse archaeological effects will not be permitted.

3. Where development is permitted and preservation in-situ is not justified, the applicant will be required to ensure that provision will be made for archaeological excavation and recording, in advance of and/or during development, including the necessary post-excavation study and assessment along with the appropriate deposition of any artefacts in an archaeological archive or museum to be approved by the Borough Council.

**Swale Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance**

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/local-planning-guidance/>

- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 2: Listed Buildings – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers
- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 4: The Design of Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements
- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 8: Conservation Areas

# 3.0 Location & Setting

## Location

The town of Sheerness is situated in the north west corner of the Isle of Sheppey overlooking the Thames and Medway estuaries. Sheerness Mile Town broadly equates with the town centre, whilst Beach Street is a small enclave of terraced housing on the north western edge of the town centre. The former Royal Naval Dockyard, now a commercial port, lies to the north west of the town centre along with a steelworks developed in the 1960s. In most other directions the town centre is surrounded by residential development, sections of which are comprised of a tight grid of streets with terraced houses dating from the late nineteenth century.

The town is built on flat, low lying land, and in the past has been vulnerable to periodic sea flooding.

The A249 trunk road connects the Island with the national motorway network. A lifting bridge over The Swale at Kingsferry. A branch railway line, using the same bridge, connects Sheerness with the main North Kent Coast line at Sittingbourne.

## Historical notes

Sheerness town is a place of relatively recent origins having grown almost entirely in the nineteenth century. Initially this was in anticipation of the seaside resort potential of the area, but subsequently its growth was driven by the needs of the nearby

Sheerness Naval Dockyard which was then very active.

Mile Town began life as a separate entity, being one of three distinctly individual parts of Sheerness. Blue Town, adjoining the former Naval Dockyard site, was the oldest of these areas and in the nineteenth century was a place of pubs, lodging houses and cramped conditions. Mile Town was developed to provide new facilities in a separately laid out area of town at a distance from old Blue Town. The development of Marine Town then followed on. These areas, with their distinctly separate origins, have now merged into a single town.

Sir Edward Banks, a self-made man, saw potential at Mile Town, Sheerness for an elegant seaside and spa town of some distinction. He designed and built the Broadway in 1827 together with a large house set in parkland on the sea front. His ambitions were to be thwarted however, the final straw being in 1878 when a serious pleasure boat accident resulted in a slump in the numbers of trippers coming to Sheerness by boat from London. Meanwhile, a development company took over from Banks and built streets of small homes for working people who came to Sheerness as the Crimea War expanded the role of the town's naval depot. In place of holiday resort houses, therefore, basic terraces of dwellings were built for workers.

The Sittingbourne to Sheerness railway line was opened in 1860 which improved transport links with the Island

despite the line then terminating at Blue Town rather than Mile Town. It was extended to its present-day terminus at Sheerness-on-Sea in 1883.

During the 1930s the town took on a new role as a low cost holiday resort, when it became a popular destination for Londoners. This trade flourished for a time after the second world war, but in turn declined in the second half of the twentieth century.

Sheerness has a long association with the Co-operative movement. The Sheerness Economical and Industrial Co-operative Society was formed in 1816 and the Sheerness Co-operative Society in 1849. They amalgamated in 1919 and had a registered office at 100 High Street - a building which was demolished in 1998.

Sheerness Mile Town continues to function as the main commercial centre of the Isle of Sheppey despite its peripheral location and its position at a distance from Halfway and Minster.

Mile Town Conservation Area comprises the historic core of Mile Town and takes in those areas of the town which functioned as its commercial and civic backbone from the early 19th century onwards. It is defined by the modern commercial area to the west and Victorian housing to the east.

The Conservation Area focuses around the High Street and The Broadway. Despite recent commercial developments outside of this historic core, the High Street remains the commercial focus of the town and houses a bustling shopping area which includes some high-street chains but many more independent local retailers.

The earliest part of the settlement was at the northern end of the High Street, the section lying north of The Broadway. This appears to have been in existence by c.1800 and is thought to have developed as an alternative to Blue Town which, by this date, had become cramped and unhygienic. Further impetus to growth at Mile Town was provided by the extension of the naval dockyard in the 1820s, which required clearance of swathes of Blue Town, and by the initiatives of Sir Edward Banks who was, in the earlier 19th century, seeking to develop Sheerness as a seaside resort. Banks was so influential in the growth of the town during this period that it became referred to as Banks Town in the early part of the century. By the 1860s, however, this name appears to have dropped out of use and

the settlement was referred to as Mile Town once more.

The Conservation Area reflects the extent of the centre of Mile Town by the mid-19th-century. By this date the High Street was entirely built up, mostly with properties combining commercial space at the street frontage with domestic accommodation, and The Broadway and adjacent structures had been built. The High Street contained several inns and one of the earliest co-operative societies.

The majority of the High Street contains surviving historic buildings at the frontage but, owing to the continued importance of the street and the need for renewal, these buildings vary considerably in date and construction. The upper High Street contains a relatively coherent group of early 19th century buildings at the street frontage, which include some use of weatherboarding. Despite their early date, none of these are listed. Buildings over the remaining part of the High Street contain a more mixed range of buildings but the street still feels tangibly historic.

Two buildings on this section of the High Street are listed but the remaining historic structures are unlisted. Banks was also responsible for the development of The Broadway, originally known as Edward Street after his son. This remains one of the town's most coherent historic streetscapes and this is recognised by the listing of the entire street at grade II. Banks also was

behind construction of the Parish Church of Holy Trinity and the Royal Hotel. Holy Trinity remains in use and is also grade II listed. The surrounding churchyard is no longer in use as a graveyard and has been landscaped into a public garden. It retains some burial monuments, one of which is listed Grade II.

The Royal Hotel was originally built as a private house for Banks' son. The present Royal Hotel, which stands at the junction of Royal Road and The Broadway is a later 19th century addition to the original house. The original house appears to have been demolished in the later 20th century, being recently redeveloped into housing.

A cast-iron clock tower, installed to mark the coronation of Edward VII, stands at the junction of The Broadway and the High Street.



100 m  
500 ft

BLUE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA

MILE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA

MARINE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA

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Ordnance Survey - data derived from OS Premium

**Sheerness- Conservation Areas**  
Scale: 1:10000



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# 4.0 Character Appraisal

## Broadway and The Crescent

Architectural interest in Sheerness Mile Town is focused most obviously on the Broadway. The western part of the street was built in 1830 as a single development with matching three storey yellow brick terraces set along both sides of the street. These terminate at the western end in a half circus known as The Crescent, built around the junction with High Street. Originally built as houses, the ground floors have all since been converted to shops. The original fenestration and brickwork of the upper floors is still largely intact but piecemeal conversions to shops and other uses have caused the ground floor elevations to lose much of their visual continuity. A part of the southern arm of The Crescent was apparently rebuilt early in the twentieth century.

Overlooking the junction of Broadway with High Street the bulk of Britannia House provides an appropriate sense of scale to the town centre. It is supported by a number of other lesser, but pleasant, buildings. The space formed by the Crescent is marked by a commemorative cast iron town clock erected in 1902. The clock defines the centre of town in a distinctive and colourful way; a key Sheerness landmark it reflects rather well the nineteenth century origins of the town. This area is, however, dominated by traffic and its associated clutter so that the space functions primarily as a traffic junction rather than as an important public space.



Comemoration Plaque





## The Clocktower - Coronation Memorial Clock

The Sheerness Clock Tower structure was manufactured and installed in 1902 to designs of T.F Berry, surveyor to the Council at the time. The 36-foot tall tower was built out of cast iron to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII. It is hugely iconic and important structure of special historical interest. Pevsner describes the clocktower as 'showy but stunted'

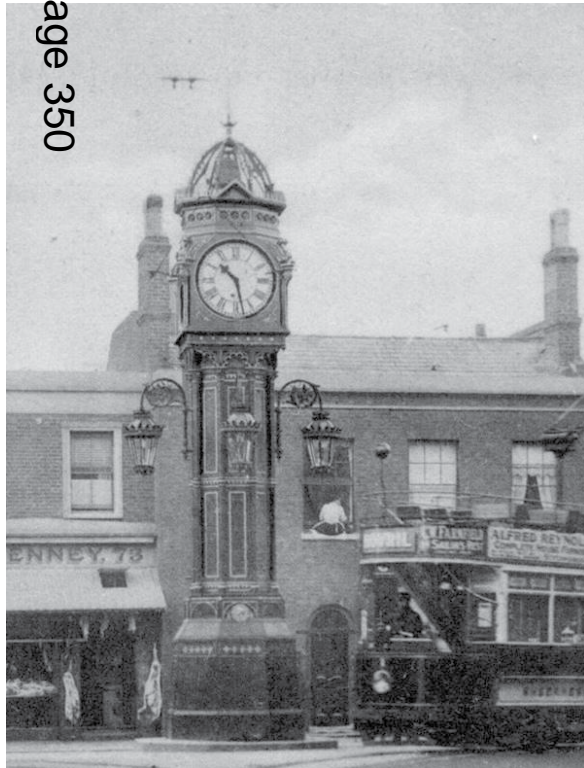
The clock drive movement was installed in the 1970's

whilst the bell toller was installed in the 1980's. Both these mechanisms are long overdue an upgrade.

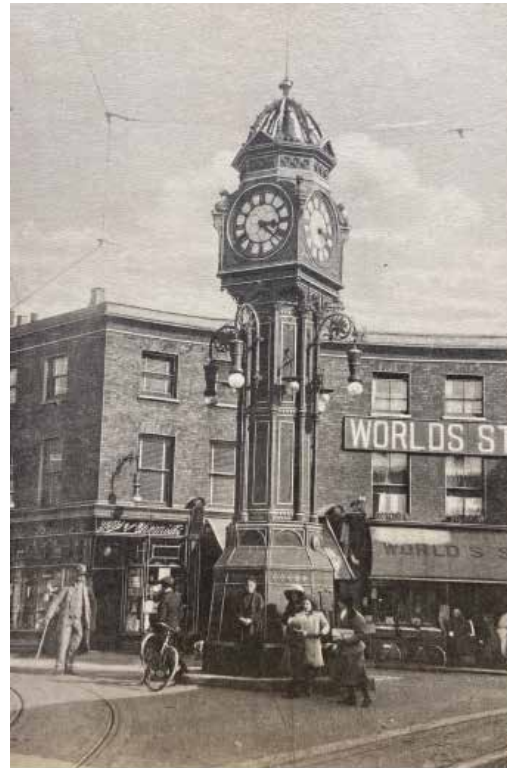
In 2002 improvement works were undertaken to Sheerness High Street, which culminated in the refurbishment of the town clock for its centenary. At the time, a competition was run by the Sheerness Town Centre Managers office and the Sheerness Times Guardian. Young people were asked to design a colour scheme for the clock, and the competition was won by a local school girl whose colour proposals were eventually researched and found to be in keeping with

the Edwardian time period. The current Blue and Red scheme was painted as part of 2012 Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The Clocktower is owned and maintained by Swale Borough Council and has recently been fully refurbished and repaired to its original colour scheme of Green and yellow by Smiths of Derby.



1902 – original gas lanterns



1925 – original gas lamps replaced with electric lights



Colour scheme after the competition

Recently repaired and refurbished Clock Tower with original colour scheme reinstated and enhanced hard landscaping and seating at The Crescent





The design theme of the Broadway is continued with Holy Trinity church, completed in 1836, which is also built with yellow brick and a slate roof. The green space around the building, which is partly a burial ground, provides an important public area of trees, shrubs and grass in the middle of the town centre and brings welcome contrast to the otherwise urban character of the place.

Beyond the junction of Broadway with Trinity Road the buildings are somewhat different in character with more variety in their type, size and design. The view to the east is nicely terminated by the distant west elevation of the Roman Catholic church.

The Banks Hotel is an attractively detailed corner property built in red brick. It contrasts with the rather plainer adjoining group of buildings to the east, which is predominantly built in yellow brick and dates from the early 1900s. The Working Men's Club and Institute lies further to the east again and completes the group; its large, somewhat austere, front elevation in yellow brick is set back from the road and is comprised of a large central doorway with tall sash windows set in recessed brick reveals on either side. The private space alongside, although somewhat hidden behind a high brick wall, brings an element of green into the street scene without opening up the street frontage. On the opposite side of the road the former cinema, now a bingo hall is a large, plain rendered building with a strong

presence in the street. Its bulk defines the corner with Strode Crescent in an especially positive way. The Methodist Church (image below) to the west has a well proportioned front elevation in red brick, with details such as window surrounds in faience work. Beyond Strode Crescent, the frontage is occupied by a row of four Edwardian buildings, with strikingly detailed front elevations; beyond is a building now used as a doctors surgery, and a nicely detailed hall lies beyond, which is now occupied by the Sheerness County Youth Club.



Roman Catholic Church



Grade II listed Holy Trinity Church



View of Broadway from junction of Trinity road



The Royal Hotel (originally known as Banks Hotel)



Sheerness Conservative Club built circa 1867 stands at the junction of Trinity Street and Broadway



View east of Broadway with Conservative club on left



View west of Broadway towards the Crescent (Clocktower)



The Royal Hotel



The Holy Trinity Church



The High Street is comprised of a variety of frontage buildings dating mainly from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most are sited on the back edge of the footway, although a block of properties in the southern section of the High Street has private forecourts where open air displays of goods bring colour and interest into the town centre.

The High Street has just a few examples of older vernacular buildings dating from the late eighteenth century; these are characterised by weatherboarding over timber framing. For the most part, however, buildings date from the late nineteenth century. Taken individually they are fairly unremarkable but together they achieve a pleasant, traditional town centre environment. The street is for the most part rather narrow and the mainly three storey buildings combine to create a fairly solid frontage. These features together create a strong sense of urban enclosure, with planting being almost entirely absent from the street.

Immediately north of the clocktower, the road has an attractive curving form (Image 1) comprised of a sequence of individually designed buildings, most of them three storeys high and relatively narrow in width. These rather vertical looking buildings give a pleasant 'rhythm' to the street scene. Buildings are characteristically turn-of-the-century in design and detailing although one or two older vernacular buildings are present, such as nos. 59-61 High Street

with weatherboarded upper floors sometimes finished to mimic masonry. Building materials, especially locally-produced yellow and red bricks and imported Welsh roofing slates, have been widely used so that a good sense of visual cohesion is achieved. The Tesco building, which dates from the 1970s, is an exception to this pattern; its bulk and rather horizontal-looking elevation contrasts with the otherwise fine grain of the frontage.

The building pattern established in the centre section of the High Street continues more or less without a break to the northern limits of the town centre. However, the buildings tend to be of a lesser quality the further they are from the heart of the town centre. The former Railway Hotel is an exception to this rule, and provides a good solid end to the west side of the High Street. Alterations to upper floor windows, shop windows and other details have occurred almost universally, which have nearly always have been to the detriment of the appearance of the buildings. Slate has disappeared from many roofs and been replaced by concrete tiles. The street nevertheless retains a strongly traditional scale and character, and a clear overall sense of visual cohesion, and is for the most part uninterrupted by modern development. At the northern end of the High Street there is an important visual link with the dockyard, with the Dockyard church tower being prominent in the view out. The area to the west of High Street

To the west of the High Street the development once comprised a rectilinear grid of small streets fronted by timber-framed cottages and later 19th century brick-built terraced houses. The entire area was largely demolished in the 1960s; three weatherboarded properties in Rose Street dating from the late eighteenth century survive as exceptions, although even here some of their character has been lost in the course of refurbishment. In the absence of redevelopment, areas of land here are devoted to surface car parking. Parts of the former street layout continue to provide some evidence of former development. Demolition has exposed to view the often unattractive rear elevations of High Street properties.



Surviving example of timber framed Weatherboarded upper floor with traditional timber shop front



Image 1 showing gentle curving of the High Street



Image 2 showing gentle curving of the High Street and individually designed buildings all along the High Street



The Britannia on High Street



Alleyway on High Street



Grade II listed Cornmill



## Beach Street

Beach Street, at the northern end of the High Street, is a small enclave of late nineteenth century terraced houses. The buildings are individually unremarkable, but their layout does create a small space with greenery which has some individuality. The majority of houses have been unsympathetically altered in some way. Beach House is a more substantial property and plays a crucial role in enclosing the space at the north eastern end.

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Beach House- Grade II listed

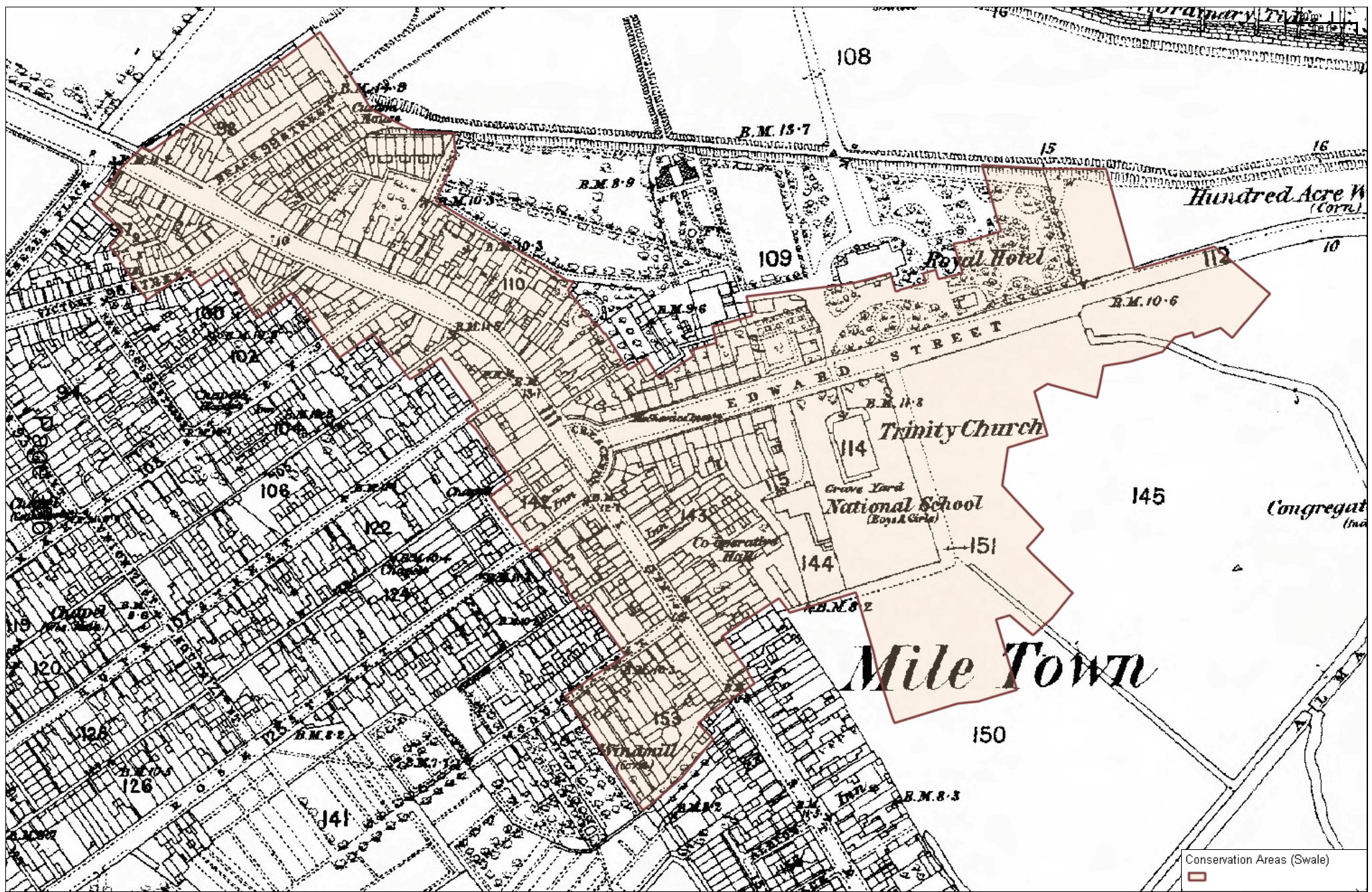


View of Beach Street Terrace from High Street



View of Beach Street Terrace towards High Street





Mile Town - 1864  
NOT TO SCALE

Conservation Areas (Swale)



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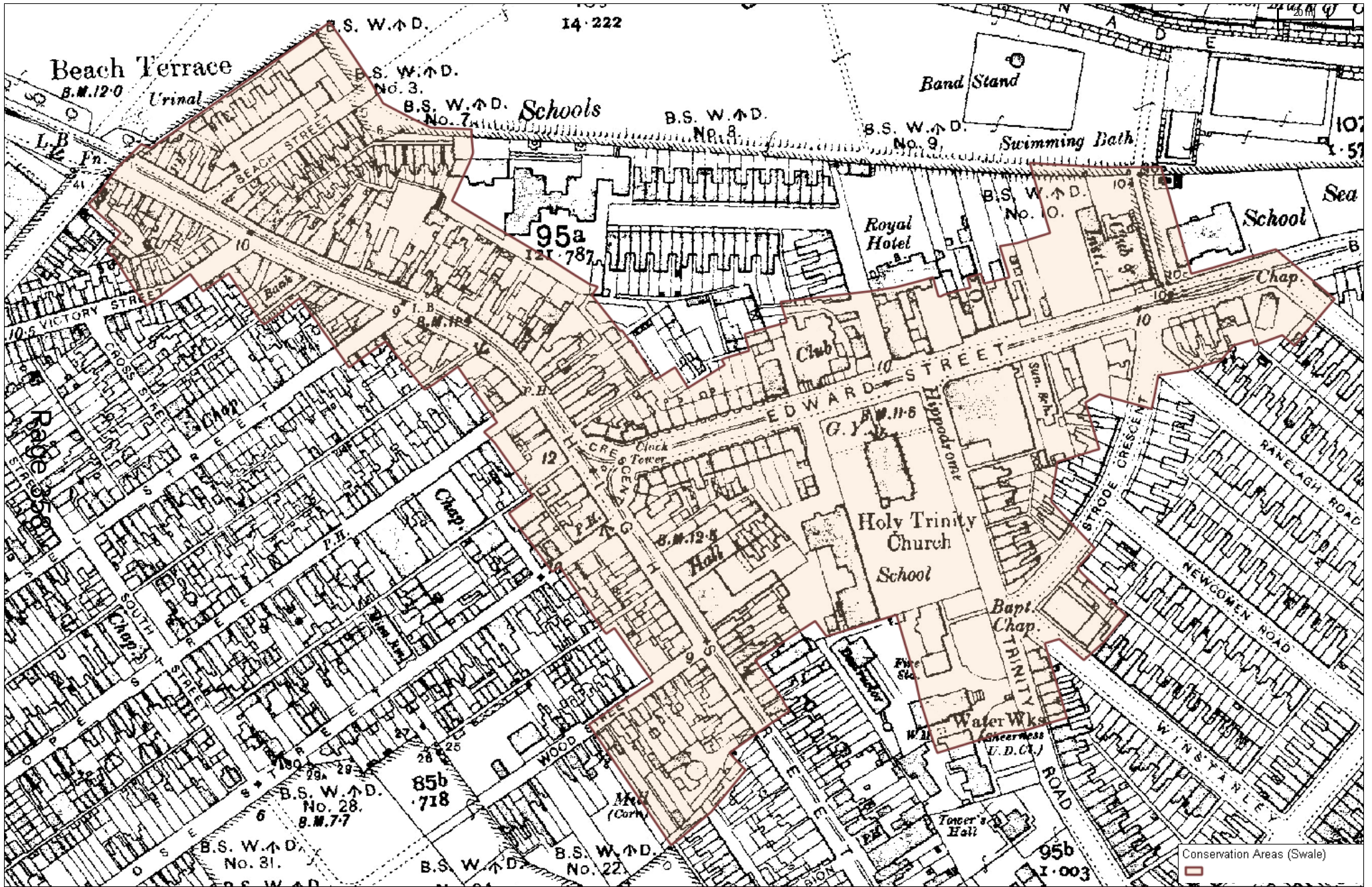




Mile Town - 1896  
NOT TO SCALE

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Mile Town-1907  
NOT TO SCALE

Conservation Areas (Swale)



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Mile Town - 1933  
NOT TO SCALE





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Mile Town-1957  
NOT TO SCALE

Conservation Areas (Swale)



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## Building Materials

The distinct character of Mile Town owes much to the variety of architectural styles, materials and details displayed in its buildings. Building materials were used to express architectural aspirations as well as changing fashions. Until the transport revolution of the mid-19th century, virtually all building materials were locally sourced and manufactured. Consequently they are often a true expression of the locality and its natural resources. Even materials that were in common use at the time make a valuable contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The earlier buildings of Mile Town were of timber-framed construction and are important survivals because of their age and type. As oak for building became harder to source, brick became universally fashionable during the 17th and 18th centuries. Brick was used extensively for new buildings and to over-clad old buildings to give them a more fashionable appearance. Kent peg tiles were the preferred choice for roofing in the 17th and 18th centuries, but they gave way to slate during the early 19th century, particularly once the railway came to Sheerness. Modern concrete roof tiles and uPVC windows are less sympathetic materials introduced during the mid to late 20th century.

**Timber frame:** Oak framing was commonly used in building construction during the medieval period when local woodlands offered an ample supply of good and durable building materials.

**Brick:** Brick earth was in plentiful supply in North Kent so, not surprisingly, brickwork is a familiar building material

in Mile Town. There is a wide variety in the size, bond, colour and character of the bricks, depending on their age, style or function.

Yellow stock brickwork was commonly used from the Regency period onwards and the combination of yellow and red brick achieved the polychromatic effect that was associated with the High Victorian era and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

**Roofing tiles:** Until the 19th century, hand-made clay peg tiles were the preferred roof covering for buildings throughout Kent. Tiles continued to be handmade from local clays well into the 20th century and there are still a handful of manufacturers today. They are a characteristic roofing material of the south-east of England and dominate the roofscapes of many towns, and villages including Sheerness.

**Slate:** Slate roofs rarely appear before the turn of the 19th century. However, they became very widely used in the area after rail transport made it more easily accessible. Slate was imported, mainly from Wales, and gave rise to shallower roof pitches of between 30 and 35 degrees. Slate appears on a most of the buildings within Mile Town Conservation Area.

**Weatherboarding:** Painted feather-edged weatherboarding is a traditional walling material in the south-east of England. There are several surviving examples within Mile Town.

**Modern building materials:** In recent decades mass produced concrete roof tiles and uPVC windows have been used within Mile Town Conservation Area but they do not generally sit comfortably within the context of the historic centre of Sheerness.



## Archaeology

Archaeological potential is identified by either the presence of either known features or heightened archaeological potential related to specific features thought to have existed at a location. These have not been graded with any values such as low, medium or high since there are significant issues with establishing the likely survival of deposits within the project area. This latter aspect is due to a lack of archaeological fieldwork and opportunities to understand the degree of truncation caused by subsequent land-use and development.

The Characterisation study undertaken by Historic England in 2016 notes Mile Town Historic Core identifies two Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP) at Mile Town.

Mile Town - historic core comprises the core of initial development at Mile Town which dates to c.1800 and Mile Town - initial planned expansion which relates to a planned expansion dating to the early 19th century. These areas have remained settled since their establishment and may contain archaeological deposits dating from their establishment to the present day.

The street frontages have remained built-up over the period of use of these areas and it is likely that archaeological deposits are more likely to survive within the backplots. In general, any such deposits are likely to relate to settlement and small-scale industrial activities. Any early deposits would be of some heritage significance since they would deepen understanding of the chronology, nature and growth of the initial

settlement at Mile Town. Some known features exist within the townscape which are likely to contain more specific archaeological deposits. These include the Jewish cemetery on Hope Street and the windmill which lies in the backplots on the western side of the High Street. As with the other burial areas discussed above, any surviving burials, grave markers and memorials are likely to be of a high heritage significance. This is particularly so given that the Jewish population was not resident at Sheerness over a long period of time.

Similarly, the origin of the windmill is not particularly well understood so any archaeological deposits related to it are likely to be of some heritage significance since they would advance understanding of this feature which would have been a key element in the early settlement.

With the exception of the Jewish burial ground, which appears to have been relatively undisturbed, the majority of this area has been subject to significant levels of subsequent piecemeal redevelopment since the early 19th century. As such, any deposits are likely to have experienced some degree of truncation. The degree of truncation is likely to be highly variable, probably even from plot to plot, over the AAP.

Any deposits associated with the Jewish burial ground will be of high heritage significance and are likely to be well preserved. Archaeological deposits within the AAP in general will be of variable heritage significance and survival. Until any intrusive archaeological fieldwork is undertaken in this area, this assessment of potential cannot be refined.



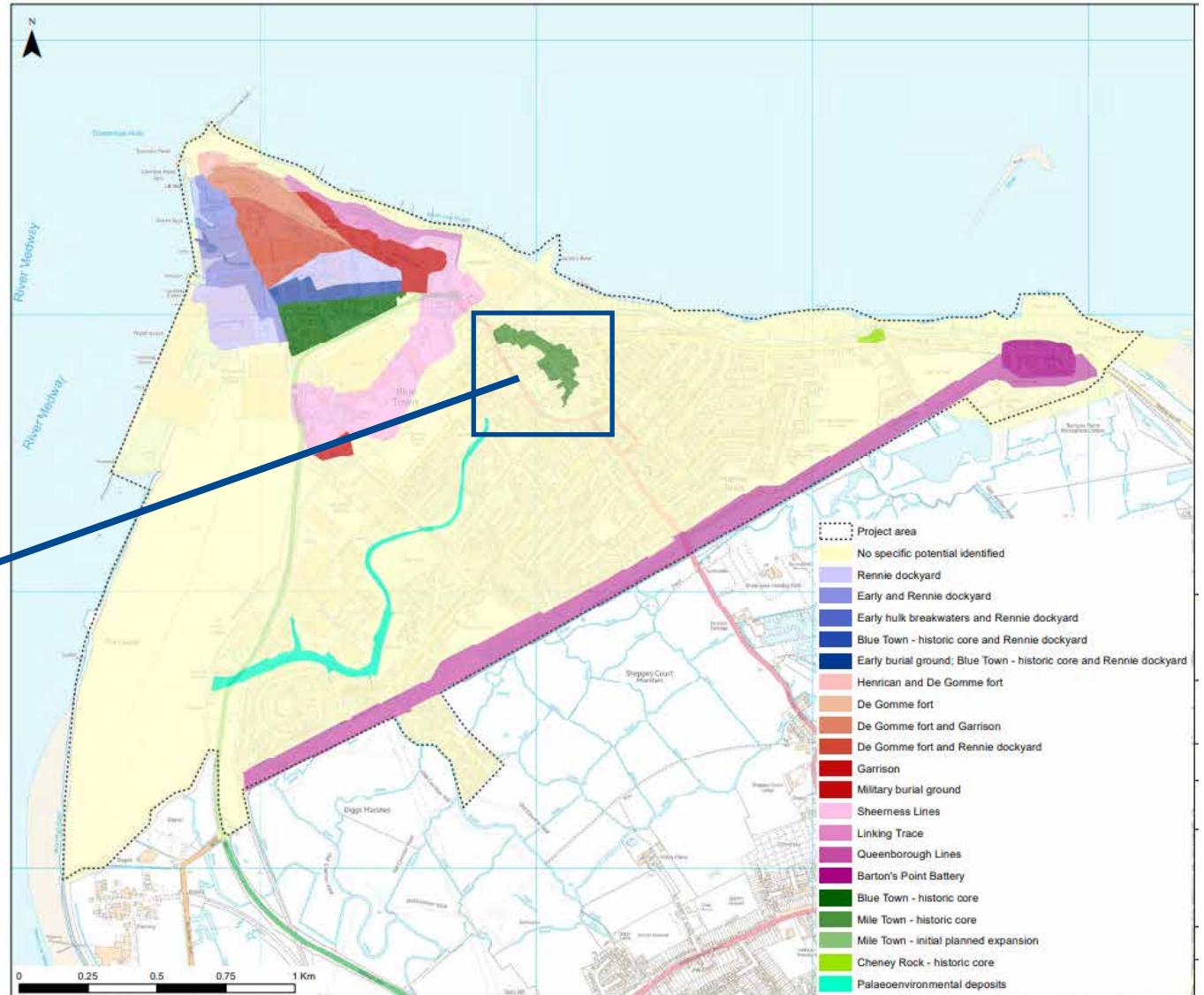
Sheerness Old Jews' Burial Ground, between 2 and 4 Hope Street, Sheerness ME12, sits behind a non-descript low wall accessed via a single timber door. Opened 1804 and last burial believed in 1855. Among the disused cemeteries administered by the Board of Deputies. There was a Jewish community in Sheerness from the late eighteenth century, which had declined by the latter part of the nineteenth century.



Extract of Archaeological Mapping of Sheerness from 'Characterisation of Sheerness' study published by Historic England in 2016.

The Green area represents Area of archaeological potential in and around Mile Town.

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## Hierarchy of streets and spaces

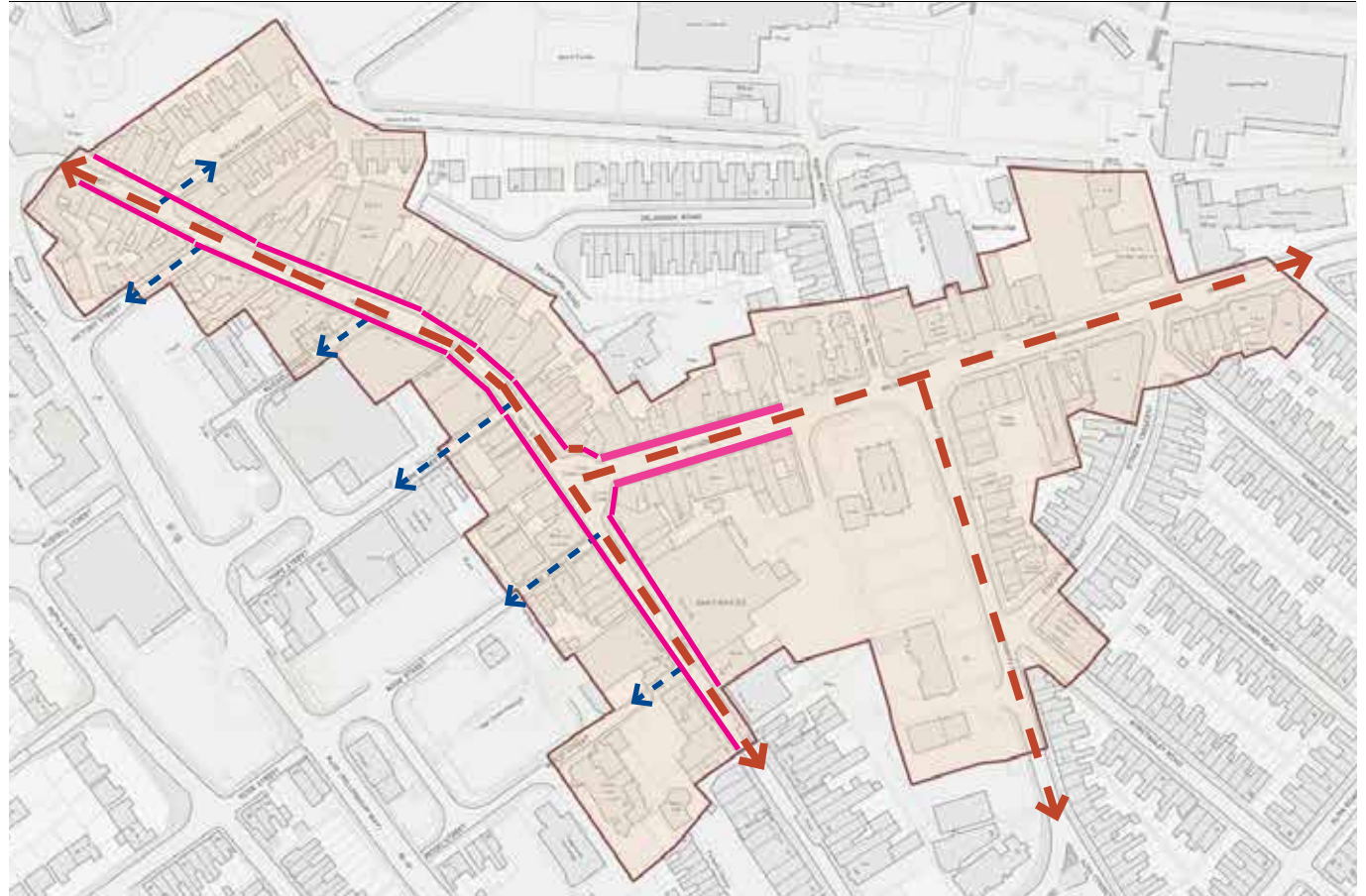
The historic street layout and the relationship of built form to open space defines the overall framework of an area. Within this framework, the grain of the townscape, including sizes of plots and building lines are important in establishing the pattern and density of development. This has a significant impact on the character of an area, dictating the scale of development and level of enclosure or openness.

For the purposes of understanding the Historic townscape pattern, the three categories of routes or spaces can be defined according to a combined analysis of their scale, level of enclosure and the function they perform within the area. These are defined as Primary Routes and Spaces; Secondary Routes and Spaces; Intimate Routes and Spaces. The map shows the hierarchy of routes and spaces within the Mile Town Conservation Area.

The principal routes within the Mile Town conservation area are Trinity Road, Broadway and High Street.

Main retail frontages are on both sides of the High Street and Broadway illustrated as pink solid lines.

Secondary routes are illustrated as blue dashed lines.





# 5.0 Summary & Conclusion

Sheerness is a historic naval town with a unique heritage. Whilst its military installations have been well-studied, the development of civilian settlement and civic facilities have received less attention leading to biases in understanding historic development and, potentially, protection of heritage assets. It is also a town where changes in economic fortunes since the latter part of the 20th century have had a serious effect on the use and survival of heritage assets and where current and foreseeable land use proposals threaten to continue this trend.

Mile Town Conservation Area comprises the historic core of Mile Town and takes in those areas of the town which functioned as its commercial and civic backbone from the early 19th century onwards. The Conservation Area focuses around the High Street and The Broadway. Despite recent commercial developments outside of this historic core, the High Street remains the commercial focus of the town and houses a bustling shopping area. The Conservation Area reflects the extent of the centre of Mile Town by the mid-19th-century - remaining legacy of Sir Edward Banks

This is the first time in over two decades that a full review has been undertaken for the conservation area.

The conservation area has served its purpose well over 4 decades since it was first designated. There is no doubt that Mile Town should continue to be designated as a conservation area.



Sir Edward Banks (1770-1835)



*Sheppey Court: an engraving of the house in 1828, published in the Epitome of the History of Kent.*

Grade II listed Sheppey Court in Sheerness recently repaired and refurbished, was home to Sir Edward Banks

# 6.0 Conservation Area Management Plan

## Introduction

6.1 Historic England's Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas advises that following an appraisal of the Conservation Area, a strategy for its management in the mid to long term should be developed to address issues identified through the appraisal. This conservation area review identifies the key management issues for Mile Town Conservation Area based on the recent appraisal of its character and appearance.

6.2 The Character Appraisal and this associated Management Plan seeks to provide a clear basis for the assessment of proposals and identify an approach to addressing issues that have the potential to impact on the special interest of Mile Town Conservation Area and its environs.

6.3 The aims of the Management Plan are to:

- i) inform interested parties of how the Council intends to secure the preservation or enhancement of the Conservation Area;
- ii) set out an approach to consultation on the management of the Conservation Area;
- iii) confirm how issues identified through the character appraisal will be tackled;
- iv) identify specific policy or design guidance that is relevant to Conservation Area to support the development management function and those preparing applications for planning permission and listed building consent;

v) identify areas where the overview provided by the Conservation Area Appraisal suggests that site-specific Development Brief would assist the management of the conservation area and decision-making processes;

vi) identify areas that may benefit from specific enhancement proposals should funding become available; and,

vii) identify the management tools available to the Council through legislation.

## Monitoring and Review

### Monitoring

6.4 The Council will continue to monitor condition of the Conservation Area, to remove it from Heritage at Risk register and determine any further actions necessary to safeguard its historic significance.

### Review

6.5 The Council is required to undertake periodic review of the Conservation Area to ensure that the special interest is being maintained and protected, to re-evaluate boundaries and see whether there are areas which justify inclusion or whether there are areas which have deteriorated to such an extent that their special interest has been lost.

6.6 As part of the review process the Council will:

- undertake a visual appraisal;
- maintain a photographic record of listed buildings within the area on the Council website, ensuring that this is updated as new buildings are added;

- record the character of streets and areas;
- maintain and update a record of other aspects of interest within the Conservation Area including shopfronts of merit and the historic fabric of the public realm; and,
- consider current issues impacting on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.7 Building upon the existing character area appraisal (2000), the following has been reviewed: current issues, conservation area boundaries, positive contributors to the Conservation Area, negative elements, shopfronts of merit and elements of street-scape interest.

## Maintaining Character

### General Approach

6.8 The following approach to maintaining the special interest of Mile Town Conservation Area will be adopted as part of the strategy for its effective management:

- i. the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be periodically reviewed to ensure that this documents will remain sufficiently up-to-date to enable its effective management, and to help inform decision-making on new development within the area;
- ii. the list of buildings and other features which, in addition to those already included on the statutory

list, positively contribute to the character or appearance of Mile Town Conservation Area, will be kept under review to aid decision-making and the preparation of proposals;

iii. applications for development will be determined having regard to the special interest of the Conservation Area and the specialist advice of Conservation & Design Team;

iv. in accordance with the relevant legislation, most applications for development within the Conservation Area are required to include a Design and Access Statement supported with a Heritage Impact Assessment. Such statements will be required to explain the design approach and context of the proposals and be accompanied by sufficient, accurate drawings of the existing site and its wider context, as well as the proposed development;

v. where relevant and possible, supplementary planning documents including design guidance and planning briefs will be produced;

vi. in undertaking its development control function, the Council will ensure that the historic details which are an essential part of the special architectural character of Mile Town Conservation Area are preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate;

vii. the Council will seek to ensure that the organisations and relevant teams therein responsible for the environment (highways/landscape/planning/conservation and urban design) work in an effective, coordinated and consultative manner to ensure that historic interest within the public

realm is maintained and enhanced where appropriate; and,

viii. the Council will continue to consult the relevant Consultees and local amenity societies on applications which may impact on the character and appearances of the Mile Town Conservation Area and seek their inputs in relation to ongoing management issues.

### Policy and Legislation

6.9 The current Statutes and National Planning Policies are:

- **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Section 66 in relation to Listed Buildings**
- **National Planning Policy Framework and supporting guidance**

### HISTORIC ENGLAND GUIDANCE

Historic England publishes Good Practice Advice in Planning (its GPA series guidance) and Historic Environment Advice Notes (its HEAN series guidance). Of these, HEAN 1 (2nd. Ed.) on 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management' is especially relevant.

### SWALE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan (adopted July 2017)

**Core Objective 4.** Conserve and enhance our historic and natural assets as the means to drive regeneration, tourism, and environmental quality and to reverse decline in their

condition.

### Policy CP8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

*To support the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:*

- 1. Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;*
- 2. Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM 32-DM 36;*
- 3. Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;*
- 4. Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;*
- 5. Respond positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared*

by the Council;

6. Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and

7. Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.

Other relevant policies include:

- ST1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale
- CP4: Requiring good design
- CP7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- DM14: General development criteria
- DM16: Alterations and extensions
- DM32: Development involving listed buildings
- DM33: Development affecting a Conservation Area
- DM34: Development affecting scheduled monuments and archaeological sites

Note the next Local Plan will cover the period 2022-2038

### Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

The following Planning Guidance has been adopted by Swale Borough Council supplementary to the Swale Borough Local Plan, 2008:

- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Design of Advertisements & Shopfronts
- Kent Design

### Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 -2032

This strategy provides a framework for the designation, conservation, management and physical and economic regeneration of Swale's Historic Buildings and Areas, including designated historic parks and gardens. From analysis of evidence on Swale's heritage and some early engagement with local stakeholders, a high level vision and set of five associated priorities have been identified.

### Boundary Changes Considered

6.10 The boundary of the Conservation Area has been reviewed as part of this study. Two aspects of the boundary have been reviewed: first whether the current boundaries are logical; and second, whether there are any areas that should be added into the Conservation Area.

#### Extension to Mile Town Conservation Area

- i) Inclusion of parts of south side of Hope Street
- ii) Inclusion of full site of Sheerness Water Works

Images of these areas and a plan showing their location and extent are contained in Appendix 1.

As these areas have been reviewed as part of the Conservation Area appraisal for Mile Town. Due to the exclusion of some

areas of early development, many buildings which appear to have clear heritage significance lie outside of the conservation area. The majority of these are undesignated and many are otherwise unrecorded it is proposed that they should become part of this designation. These boundary changes will ensure that full historic extent of the early core of development in this area is designated.

### Management of Change

#### Current Issues

6.11 Mile Town Conservation Area is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

*The pressures that face conservation areas come from many different sources. Sometimes they reflect the general economic weakness of the neighbourhood, but in other situations it has been the demands of prosperity that have caused the problems. Across the country, the most significant threat to the character of conservation areas comes from the simple loss of historic building details such as traditional windows and doors, boundary walls and roof coverings. Commercial properties may have unattractive shopfronts and signs or the area may suffer from vacant and derelict buildings'*

Extract from Historic England's Leaflet on Heritage At Risk- Conservation Areas

This includes proposals for new development, alterations and extensions to existing buildings

and changes of use. Developments over the recent decades have influenced the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Other factors that have influenced the character and appearance of the area include the cumulative impact of insensitive shopfronts, advertisements and signage.

### **New Development**

Where new development has not been successful in terms of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, this has generally been due to one of the following:

- The use of inappropriate materials or detailing
- Inappropriate scale, bulk, height and massing
- Inappropriate relationship to the street and neighbouring properties

### **Alterations to Existing Buildings**

Alterations and extensions can have a detrimental impact either cumulatively or individually on the character and appearance of the area. Examples within the area include:

- Inappropriate external painting, cleaning and pointing of brickwork.
- The use of inappropriate materials/ inappropriately detailed doors and windows.
- Insensitively sited Satellite dishes and aerials
- Inappropriately proportioned replacement shopfront

elements that are unsympathetic to the proportions and scale of the building or street into which they have been added.

- Loss of original details such as traditional shopfront elements, frontage railings and balconies, corncicing at parapet level, chimneys and chimney stacks.
- Inappropriate signage and excessive signage, including large scale hoardings and A boards
- Installation of externally mounted and solid roller shutters.

6.12 Building frontages, roads, pavements and the squares are all important elements of the public realm and the cumulative impact of small scale additions can have an overall detrimental impact on the character of the area. Such additions can include:

- Loss of original/interesting street-scape elements
- Unsympathetic surfacing materials
- Clutter of street furniture
- Visual clutter from excessive signage and flags
- Poorly sited Refuse and recycling storage.

### **Problems, pressures and capacity for change (negative factors)**

6.13 There are a number of areas or features within the conservation area that do not make a positive contribution to its overall significance and character or appearance:

6.14 Negative areas or features include:

- Poor quality signage and shopfronts to some properties - these are particularly incongruous where they have been added to listed and other historic buildings. Replacement fenestration to upper floors in non-traditional materials.
- Unsightly appearance of the rear of some properties - particularly at ground floor level with service areas, plant, typically scruffy areas of surface car parking, and poorly maintained.

### **MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

#### **Shopfronts and advertisements**

6.15 Within the conservation area there are a number of commercial frontages, including shopfronts and public houses, which make positive contributions to the significance of the conservation area. It is important that these historic features are retained and maintained.

- The Council encourages high quality design and use of traditional materials for new or replacement shopfronts to ensure that they are



appropriate to the character and appearance of the host building and the area as a whole. The Council discourages inappropriate siting, scale materials and clutter of advertisements within the conservation area. There are opportunities to enhance the appearance of shopfrontages and the Council will support such initiatives.

- There are opportunities within the conservation area to improve the quality and condition of floorscape materials, street furniture and signage. Only small elements of traditional Yorkstone paving and granite kerbstones exist on the High Street and in some of the other alleyways and lanes. For the most part there is a mixture of floorscape materials comprising brick paving, concrete and tarmac with a mix of street lighting, highway signage and other street furniture.

- Highway maintenance and improvements are expected to be carried out in accordance with Kent County Council's Highway Operational Reference Manual which contains specific provision for works in conservation-sensitive locations.

6.16 Conservation and enhancement opportunities include:

### Traffic management

6.17 Traffic currently has a limited direct impact on the conservation area due to traffic calming and one-way routing measures in the High Street.

6.18 Positive heritage management and heritage enhancement should be key considerations and drivers in

### Key Management Plan Objectives

- Potential to address shopfronts and associated signage considered to be negative features within the conservation area through establishing an Area of Advertisement Control.
- The potential to establish an area-based improvement scheme for shopfront replacement supported by design guidance, funded through Historic England/Heritage Lottery Fund, and local S.106 contributions.
- The preservation of surviving and traditional paving and kerbstones.
- Development of secondary street frontages

any regeneration schemes for the area. The Council will pursue opportunities for Area Enhancement Schemes where possible. This would complement other potential initiatives in relation to shopfront and street-scape enhancements.

### Existing Car Parks & Secondary Streets

The existing car parks on the western perimeter of the conservation area (shown with yellow dotted circles) detract from the setting of the conservation area. The High Street is a busy area, but lacks in appropriate congregational space and play area. The secondary streets (shown with red dashed



arrows) leading off the High Street are mostly 'dead' spaces with blank facades. A feasibility study could be undertaken to enliven these secondary routes; and rationalise the car parks to provide appropriate and adequate play areas and green space that would enhance the setting of the conservation area.

### 6.19 Swale local heritage list

Arising from Swale's adopted Heritage Strategy 2020-2032, the Borough Council is compiling a Local Heritage List in order to identify heritage assets which are not formally designated.

The Local Heritage List:

- raises awareness of an area's local heritage assets and their importance to local distinctiveness;
- informs developers, owners, council officers and members about buildings within the local authority boundary that are desirable to retain and protect;
- provides guidance and specialist advice to owners to help protect the character and setting of those buildings, structures, sites and landscapes;
- helps the council in its decision making when discussing proposals and determining planning applications; and
- records the nature of the local historic environment more accurately.

The impact of any development on a building or site included within the Local Heritage List will be a material consideration when the council considers an application for planning permission.

### 6.20 Public realm

The public realm (that is those areas which fall between the buildings and are enjoyed by the public) makes a significant positive contribution to the special character

of Mile Town Conservation Area.

Restrained use of highway signing and road markings is also critically important. Where signs, road markings, street furniture, salt bins or rubbish bins are necessary they should be located and designed carefully.

Future highway maintenance, improvements and alterations will be carried out in accordance with Streets for All, Historic England (2018) and Highway Works and Heritage Assets: the Kent Protocol for Highway Works in Relation to Designated Heritage Assets, KCC and KCOG (2011). Both provide advice on good practice for highway and public realm works in historic places. Early consultation with all stakeholders (including Swale Borough Council's Conservation & Design Team and Sheerness Town Council) will be fundamental to achieving appropriate standards in future changes.

Opportunities for enhancement in the public realm:

- An audit of public signage (including highway signage) to establish whether all current signage and road markings are necessary, well designed and appropriately located.
- An audit of street furniture (bollards, benches, dog waste bins, salt bin etc.) to establish whether street furniture is necessary, well designed and appropriately located.
- An audit of overhead supply lines and poles with the statutory undertakers to establish whether there is scope to remove any overhead cables or poles or to underground services.

### 6.21 Trees and planting

Trees and hedgerows do not in the main, currently play a vital role in the special character of Mile Town. However, there are a number of significant trees within the conservation area especially within the curtilage of the Holy Trinity.

Opportunities for new planting should be considered.

Six weeks' notice must be given to the Borough Council in writing before any works are undertaken to trees within conservation areas.

### 6.22 Heritage at risk

Mile Town Conservation Area has been identified as 'Heritage At Risk' by Historic England.

Change in conservation areas can be negative either through poor quality new development, neglect or even deliberate damage. Negative change can have a real effect upon the way the community feels about their area, affecting confidence, reducing investment, and leading to a cycle of decline. When conservation areas become at risk, this can signify or contribute to an area's social or economic decline.

The conservation area being on 'At Risk' register will be a material consideration in determination



of planning applications, with the focus being on enhancement over simple preservation to help reverse the factors that have led to 'At risk' status.

Historic England provides assistance and encouragement to local authorities and communities to help assess the status of as many conservation areas as possible.

Gathering data on the condition of conservation areas, as well as the main threats they face, helps Historic England to gain a clearer picture of how these important places and areas are sustaining themselves, and importantly how negative change might be halted and reversed.

The reasons why conservation areas become at risk are complex and varied, depending on their situation.

Town and city centre conservation areas are often affected by prevailing trends in the retail economy, the effects of too much traffic or through poorly placed new development in sensitive areas. These factors can cause buildings and other structures to be vacated or neglected, and conservation areas to become at risk.

The work of addressing problems in conservation areas can take time. A detailed appraisal of the area such as this one is the first step.

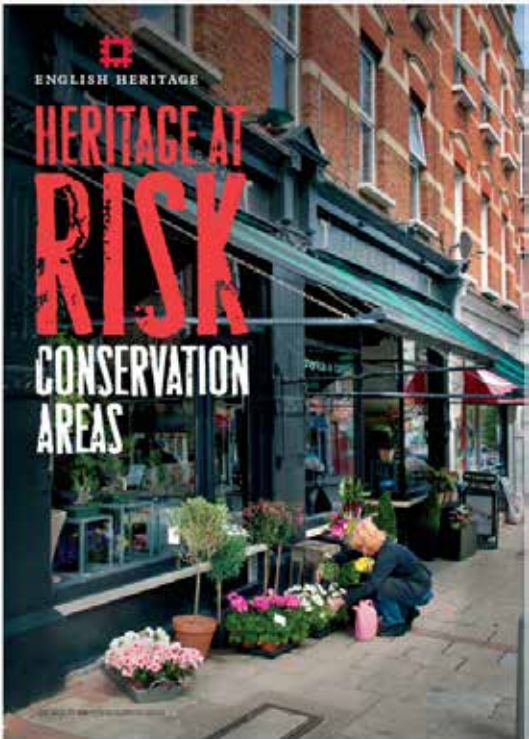
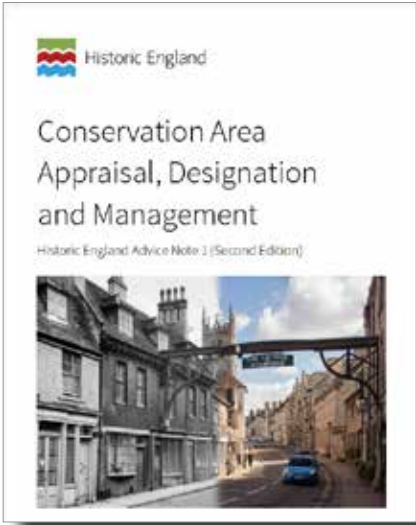
There are no designated heritage assets within Mile Town on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register or on the Swale Borough Council's Heritage at Risk Register.

### Heritage at Risk 2022 in brief

The Heritage at Risk Register 2022 reveals that in the South East of England:

- 154 Buildings or Structures (Grade I and II\* listed buildings and structural scheduled monuments)
- 78 places of worship
- 139 Archaeology entries (non-structural scheduled monuments)
- 25 parks and gardens
- 3 protected wreck sites
- and 65 conservation areas

...are at risk of neglect, decay or inappropriate change. In total, there are 464 entries across the South East on the 2022 Heritage at Risk Register.



### How conservation areas help councils meet their targets

Local authorities have a statutory duty to publish proposals for the enhancement of their conservation areas. This provides a real opportunity to involve the local community in developing a strategy for the management of their local area.

**Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements** present a shared vision for a neighbourhood. Conservation areas can help support this vision and achieve genuinely sustainable outcomes for local communities. They can positively influence a wide range of priorities for regeneration, housing, education, economic development and community engagement, and can help deliver the community's LAA targets. For example, communities value their conservation areas and the historic characteristics that make them special places. This contributes to their satisfaction with the local area and to the delivery of LAA target NI 5. (See our published guidance at [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk).)

**Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Strategies** are well-proven tools for managing the condition of designated conservation areas. They are based on a rigorous understanding of their character and significance and provide clear policies guidance for making decisions affecting conservation areas. Community involvement in developing Conservation Area Management Strategies can help to deliver LAA target NI 3 for civic participation. (See our published guidance at [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk).)

Guidance on conservation area appraisals

Local Area Agreements and the Historic Environment

Guidance on the management of conservation areas

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This plan is intended to provide a focused and structured approach for the future and management of Mile Town Conservation Area. The plan will build upon and develop the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities identified by the appraisal process and create a coordinated framework for maintenance and any future development. The Plan will rationalise the statutory and policy requirements with the aspirations of local residents. A thoroughly debated plan will provide a point of reference with agreed and consistent aims for all those concerned with the future of Mile Town Conservation Area.

Conservation Area designation is not an end in itself. It is a way of recognising the special architectural or historic interest of an area with a view to putting in place a framework to sustain its character for this and future generations.

Conservation is not about preventing change; the Mile Town Conservation Area is the historic core of a living community and change is needed to sustain and meet its future needs. It is about positively managing change so that what we cherish today can be properly looked after and passed on to future generations in good condition. Conservation Area designation brings with it certain statutory controls and restrictions which are described below. It also affords the opportunity for others, such as the local amenity groups, Kent County Council, individual householders and local businesses to take part in positively managing the area.

It also can help identify opportunities where conservation can help to deliver wider social, cultural, economic

and environmental benefits and where there may be opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

This strategy is intended to encourage active involvement in the future management of the Conservation Area, by the following means:

1. According with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with the heritage strategy adopted by the Council;
2. Sustaining and enhancing the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM 32 to DM 36;
3. Responding to the integrity, form and character of historic settlement;
4. Bringing heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;
5. Responding positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;
6. Respecting the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and
7. Promoting the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation, and improved access.

### 6.23 Management Objectives and Approach

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified some alterations which have involved the removal of historic features such as sash windows, doors, roof coverings and demolition of chimney stacks. These alterations are harmful to character but particularly so when they affect a symmetrical pair, or a terrace, where the impact of ill-considered alterations can be more obvious.

Many minor alterations to unlisted buildings can be undertaken without the need for planning permission but the cumulative impact of ill-considered change to historic and/or traditional properties can have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Opportunities to reinstate missing architectural features (such as sash windows, panelled doors or roof coverings) and traditional boundary treatments will be encouraged by the Council and may be requested in relation to planning applications for extensions and/or alterations, where appropriate.

The Council will seek to ensure that alterations which require planning permission positively enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## New Development Opportunities

- There is little Potential for new development within Mile Town Conservation Area as infilling within the boundary has used up most currently vacant plots. Therefore, any new buildings or renewal of existing sites need to consider the management priorities set out below. Development within the setting of the Conservation Area should conserve the historic grain of the High Street and Broadway. If proposals for development come forward they will be considered against local and national planning policies which attach great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets and their settings.
- Subject to meeting the requirements of flood risk assessment and related sequential testing, there is significant scope for new development within the immediate setting of the conservation area. Where development takes place in such areas, it should ideally conserve the historic street pattern which existed prior to the construction of the Millennium Way High Street bypass road.
- The numerous Car parks to the south- western perimeter of the conservation detract from the setting of the conservation area and should be reviewed to provide more green spaces and play areas as a way of enhancing the public realm

### 6.24 Conservation Area Objectives and Priorities for Management and Action

**Overarching Objectives:** The Council will seek to ensure that the significance of Mile Town Conservation Area is

sustained and enhanced through:

1. The preservation and enhancement of the area's special interest, character or appearance
2. The preservation or enhancement of the setting of the conservation area and other designated heritage assets.
3. The safeguarding and better revealing the significance of any archaeology.
4. Protection and enhancement of landmarks, views and vistas within and without the conservation area. for eg: views of Broadway and High street referenced earlier in the document.
5. Safeguarding non-designated heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the significance of the area.
6. Safeguarding the network of public rights of way.
7. Safeguarding significant spaces.
8. Promotion of high quality design in new development which responds positively to context and the distinct characteristics of the conservation area.

#### Maintaining Mile Town Conservation Area's Townscape and Built Character

To ensure that the character of the conservation area, and its setting, is both preserved and where possible enhanced, all new development should:

- a) Respect the existing layout and historic form of the townscape and street scene, especially its building lines

and heights, and not diminish the gap between buildings.

- b) Complement existing buildings in terms of bulk, design, siting, detailing, scale, materials and use. Any extensions will be encouraged to be at the property's rear and subservient in scale to the original property, as well as matching or complementing the building in terms of design and facing & roofing materials.

- c) Respect and harmonise with existing buildings in terms of design, siting, detailing, scale and materials.

- d) Retain original design features (as identified within the character appraisal, such as cornices, string-courses, timber windows, canopies, entablature, stall risers, transom lights, pediments, fanlights, doors, false timbering, dentil courses, and where replacement is necessary, the architectural detailing should closely match that of the original in traditional materials.

- e) Not involve the painting of unpainted brick, terracota or stone surfaces.

- f) Ensure material alterations to buildings protect the appearance of elevations that face onto a highway or public open spaces, including alterations to shopfronts and rooflines. Discourage additional new dormers and rooflights on visible roof slopes.

- g) Not entail the positioning of satellite dishes, aerials and solar/PV panels in prominent positions.



## Area of Special Advertisement Control

### The definition of an advertisement

An advertisement is “any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction” (ref. 3). The definition includes not just the sign but also any hoarding or similar structure used or designed or adapted for use for the display of advertisements. It does not, therefore, just cover commercial adverts.

### Listed building and scheduled monument consent for advertisements

The display of insensitively designed or sited adverts can harm the appearance of a listed building, or detract from its setting. The erection of a new sign or advert of any size on or attached to a listed building would almost always require listed building consent as it is very likely to be considered an alteration that affected its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

The replacement of one sign on a listed building with another of similar design would not usually require listed building consent as long as it does not affect the special interest of the building. If a sign or advert is not actually attached to a listed building it would not require listed building consent however much it might affect its setting.

The considerations in giving listed building consent for an advertisement are the same as they are for any listed building consent application. The statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting must be observed (ref. 4) and the policies in the NPPF should be adhered to (ref. 5).

### Obtaining advertisement consent

There are a number of classes of advertisements that have either deemed or express consent under the regulations (ref. 1) (for example, advertisements which are incorporated into the fabric of a building for which planning permission was obtained, or an advertisement relating to a local government election).

Any advertisements not falling within these classes will require advertisement consent.

When considering applications for advertisements that require consent, the local planning authority may only take into account two considerations: amenity and public safety. Amenity is generally considered to be visual appearance and the pleasance of the environment generally, including the general characteristics of the locality and any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest there (ref. 2).

If the advertisement is in a conservation area, a local planning authority must also pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of that area (ref. 6).

Applications for advertisement consent are processed in much same way as planning applications and can be granted subject to conditions or refused.

Where an area has an amenity value that requires stricter controls then it may be designated by the local planning authority as an area of special control. The control of advertisements in such areas is much stricter than elsewhere. This may be appropriate for areas of architectural or historic significance, such as conservation areas.

### Areas of special control

Every local planning authority is obliged to consider whether any part of their area should be an area of special control for advertisements because of the need to protect amenity, but not public safety (ref. 7). Areas of special control are likely also to be conservation areas, but one designation does not follow the other. Before formally proposing an area of special control the authority is expected to consult local trade and amenity organisations about the proposal (ref. 8).

### References

- (1) The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007
- (2) Planning Practice Guidance: Advertisements, 2014 (paragraph 18b-079-20140306)
- (3) s336 Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- (4) s16 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- (5) National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2021
- (6) s72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- (7) Regulation 20, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007
- (8) Planning Practice Guidance: Advertisements, 2014 (paragraph 18b-055-20140306)

## Shopfronts - Design guidelines

### SHOP FRONT DESIGN

Shops are a key part of the fabric of our lives and settlements, and represent a defining building type in cities, towns and villages. Whether standing alone or lining high streets, the contribution they make to the appearance, character and dynamics of places is profound. The public face of a shop – the shop front – is by its nature calculated to be a conspicuous presence in the street scene. Consequently, the visual impact of shop fronts, whether through good or bad design, can also be profound. A well-designed shop front has the potential not only to enhance the appearance and character of a building, street or settlement, but also to make a huge difference in terms of the success of that business. With increasing competition from out-of-town retail parks and supermarkets the onus on those involved in the design of shop fronts and the appearance of high streets has never been greater. A town centre or high street characterised by high quality shop fronts has the potential not only to enhance the appearance of that area, but to stimulate prosperity, civic pride and tourism. High quality design should therefore be the aspiration of all involved in the creation of shop fronts. When considering the design of a new shop front, the first judgment to be made (assuming there is a pre-existing shop front) is whether the current shop front merits retention and refurbishment.

### EXISTING OR HISTORIC SHOP FRONTS

Before an existing shop front is replaced, consideration should be given to its condition, quality and relevance, and why it may need replacing. Even if it has been altered,



it may still be worthy of repair and refurbishment; or original details may exist behind later cladding. Restoration may result in a shop front that is more appropriate to the building and its location. The craftsmanship found in older shop fronts is not always easily replicated today, and it is rare that a shop front needs to be entirely replaced for practical reasons. Where an historic shop front survives, this should be preserved or restored – particularly if it forms a part of a Listed Building. Where an historic shop front has been mutilated, or features have been lost, sufficient evidence (either physical or documentary) may exist to enable an accurate reconstruction. In replicating any lost features, it is important that details are correctly reproduced in appropriate materials. The application of 'stick-on' mouldings or fascias, the use of plywood, MDF or plastic, and the distortion of original proportions are all likely to result in harm to the original shop front.

## Shopfronts

### COMPOSITION OF A TRADITIONAL SHOP FRONT

A traditional shop front is composed of a number of distinctive, well established elements – most notably a stallriser (base), a fascia (top) and sometimes pilasters (to either side) – which together provide the basic frame for the shop front. These elements are equally relevant to traditional and modern shop front design; with the adaptability of these and other elements (including doorways, mullions and glazing bars), allowing for almost limitless compositional variety. Only through the careful resolution of all these elements, however, will a successful design result – one that responds sympathetically to the immediate context of the elevation of the building as a whole, and to the wider contexts of street and settlement.

### MODERN SHOP FRONTS

The same basic principles in relation to traditional shop fronts also apply to modern shop fronts. In terms of context, it is vital that the composition of a modern shop front responds meaningfully to the elevation of which it is a part. The basic horizontal components of the traditional shop front – the fascia-plus-cornice and stallriser – should be respected in order to create a strong and meaningful top and base for the shop front and the display glazing. The components themselves, however, might be handled quite differently. A common strategy is for the composition and the individual features to be simplified, in order to give a ‘cleaner’, pared-down aesthetic. This might involve the use of larger areas of glazing; less conspicuous framing of glazed areas; the omission or simplification of pilasters, consoles, capitals and mouldings; the use of untraditional colours, modern typography or internal lighting. Where pilasters are



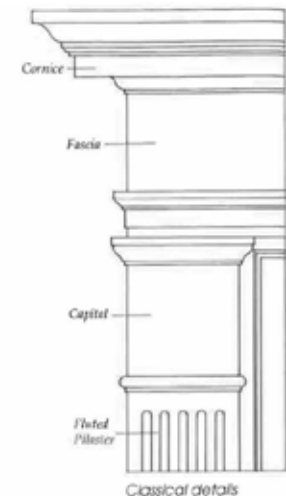
The components of a traditional shop front

not used, the sides of the display glazing, and the lateral extent of the shop front, should be clearly defined by the outermost vertical framing elements of the shop front, in order that the edges of the shop front, and the frame as a whole, remain clearly discernible. Whether a traditional or modern approach is taken, if the context is a traditional building the shop front should generally still be of timber. Common failings in modern shop fronts include missing, badly proportioned or badly designed components, such as too-deep fascias (top heavy), too-low stallrisers (weak or undermined base), too-thin or missing uprights (weak framing), ‘stuckon’ features, including fascias and mouldings; garish or cluttered signage, and inappropriate materials and lighting.

### PLANNING CONTROL

Shop fronts come under planning control, and may need any or all of the following consents: Planning Permission, Advertisement Consent and Listed Building Consent (if the building is Listed). As with all other forms of proposed development, it is strongly recommended that contact is

made with the Planning Department before an application is made, in order to determine both what consents may be required, and whether or not the proposals are likely to be supported in their current form.



Classical shop front details



Surviving traditional shopfronts on High Street



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Surviving traditional shopfronts on Broadway



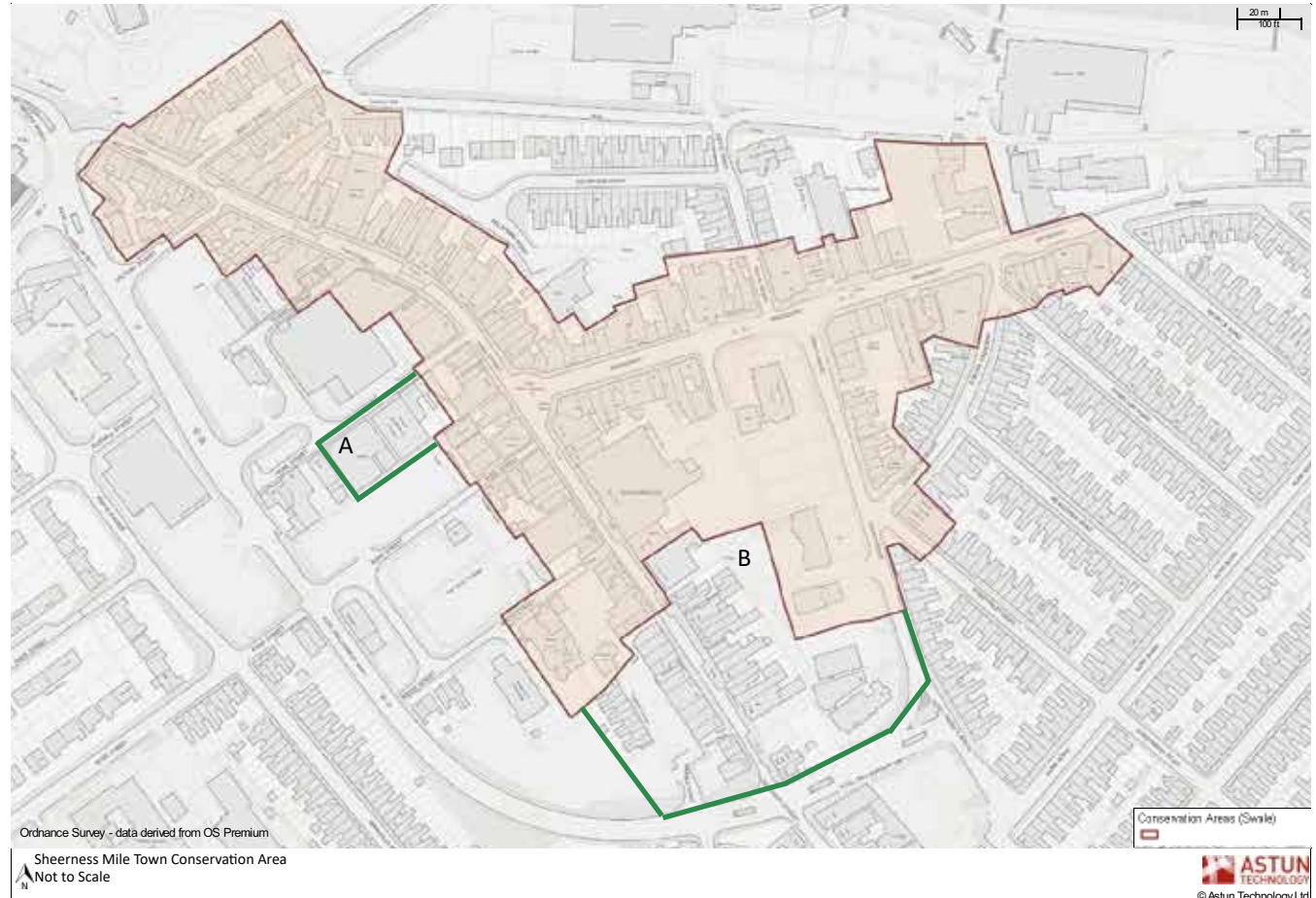
# Appendices

# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension

The current Mile Town Conservation Area does not include the full historic extent of the early core of development in this area. Its extent also does not tally well with the documented phases of expansion of the town or the surviving historic built environment. The rationale behind inclusion and exclusion of areas of the town from the conservation area is not clear since the conservation area appraisal is only a brief document which does not particularly cover this aspect.

Due to the exclusion of some areas of early development, many buildings which appear to have clear heritage significance lie outside of the conservation area. The majority of these are undesignated and many are otherwise unrecorded, appearing neither on the KCC HER nor the AMIE database.

Good examples of such buildings include a group on the south side of Hope Street, adjacent to the eastern side of conservation area. There are also buildings within the conservation area which appear to be of relatively high heritage significance but have received little research. The most obvious example of these is the buildings related to the former waterworks to the south of Holy Trinity, including the pumping house and office block.



Existing Conservation Area Boundary with proposed Extensions



# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension A

In the 19th century, the town also had the kind of facilities and institutions that would be expected of a settlement of this size and type. These included a windmill, pumping station and religious institutions.

These latter included non-conformist chapels and a Jewish burial ground. The windmill and a chapel survive in plots to the immediate west of the High Street and are designated as Grade II listed buildings.

The Jewish burial ground lies on Hope Street and appears to have many memorial stones and burial markers surviving above-ground. It is undesignated and not yet formally recorded in any registers of known heritage assets such as the KCC HER or the HE AMIE database.

The windmill and the Jewish burial ground fall within the current Conservation Area boundary. This amendment is proposed to include the listed chapel and surviving 'Invicta' works within the new proposed conservation area boundary.



'Invicta Works' now a service station



View of Hope Street towards High Street



Sheerness Old Jews' Burial Ground, between 2 and 4 Hope Street, Sheerness ME12, sits behind a non-descript low wall accessed via a single timber door. Opened 1804 and last burial believed in 1855. Among the disused cemeteries administered by the Board of Deputies. There was a Jewish community in Sheerness from the late eighteenth century, which had declined by the latter part of the nineteenth century.



Grade II listed Chapel

# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension B

The expanded settlement also had a number of civic facilities and institutions by this date, such as a water works and school adjacent to Holy Trinity church and a further School north of Mile Town's High Street. Whilst the school buildings no longer survive, much of the water works does. The water works was built in the Romanesque style and its main building, which formerly housed the pumping machinery and was topped by the water tank, lies derelict adjacent to the Trinity Road car park whilst its offices are now in use as a doctor's surgery. The

structures which formerly connected these two elements have been removed. Whilst subject to significant alteration, both structures remain good examples of Victorian utilities buildings, neither is listed.

Sections of the pumping station complex survive to the immediate south of Holy Trinity.

The proposed amendment to the existing Conservation Area boundary is to include the entire curtilage of the Pumping

station and the access road to its west.

The aerial map is included to illustrate the pumping stations curtilage.



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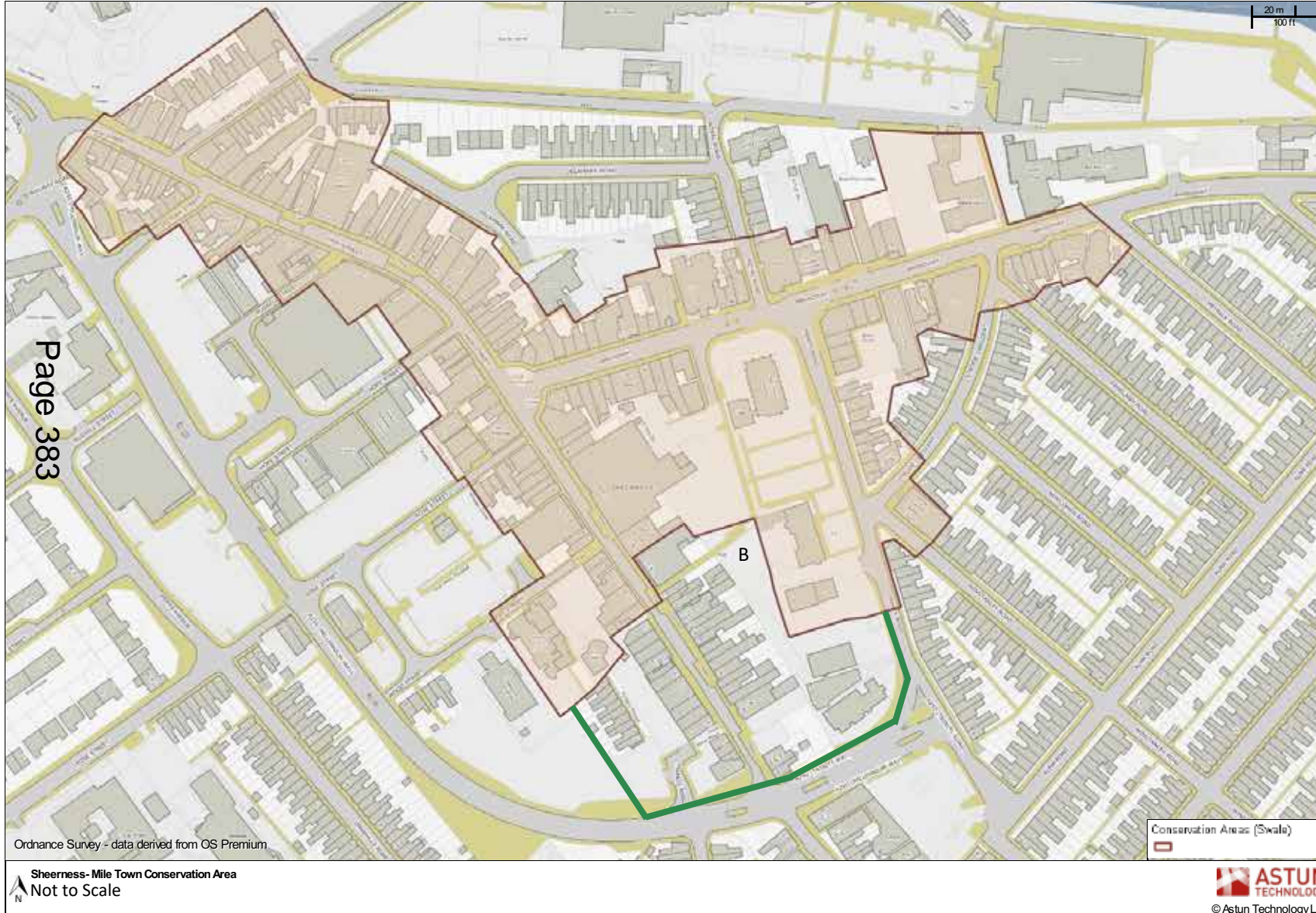
Unlisted pumping station and adjacent offices, fronting Trinity Road



Rear view of the pumping station



# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension B





# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension B





# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension B





# APPENDIX 1: Proposed Boundary extension B



The proposed boundary extension B, is proposed to include the former County Library, an attractive building with some historic and architectural value, and a 19th century former house marked as Towers Hall on historic OS maps. In addition, the extension includes the High Street buildings up until the junction with the A250. Though the historic buildings on the High Street are altered, they are of a similar quality to those directly to the west and within the conservation area. Although this section of the High Street has been much altered in the past but it's inclusion would hopefully ensure an improved management by virtue of its designation and perhaps achieve higher quality design of any sites identified as development opportunity.

The aerial map regression shows how this area (proposed to be included) has largely remained unchanged in its urban form over the years, contained within the A250.

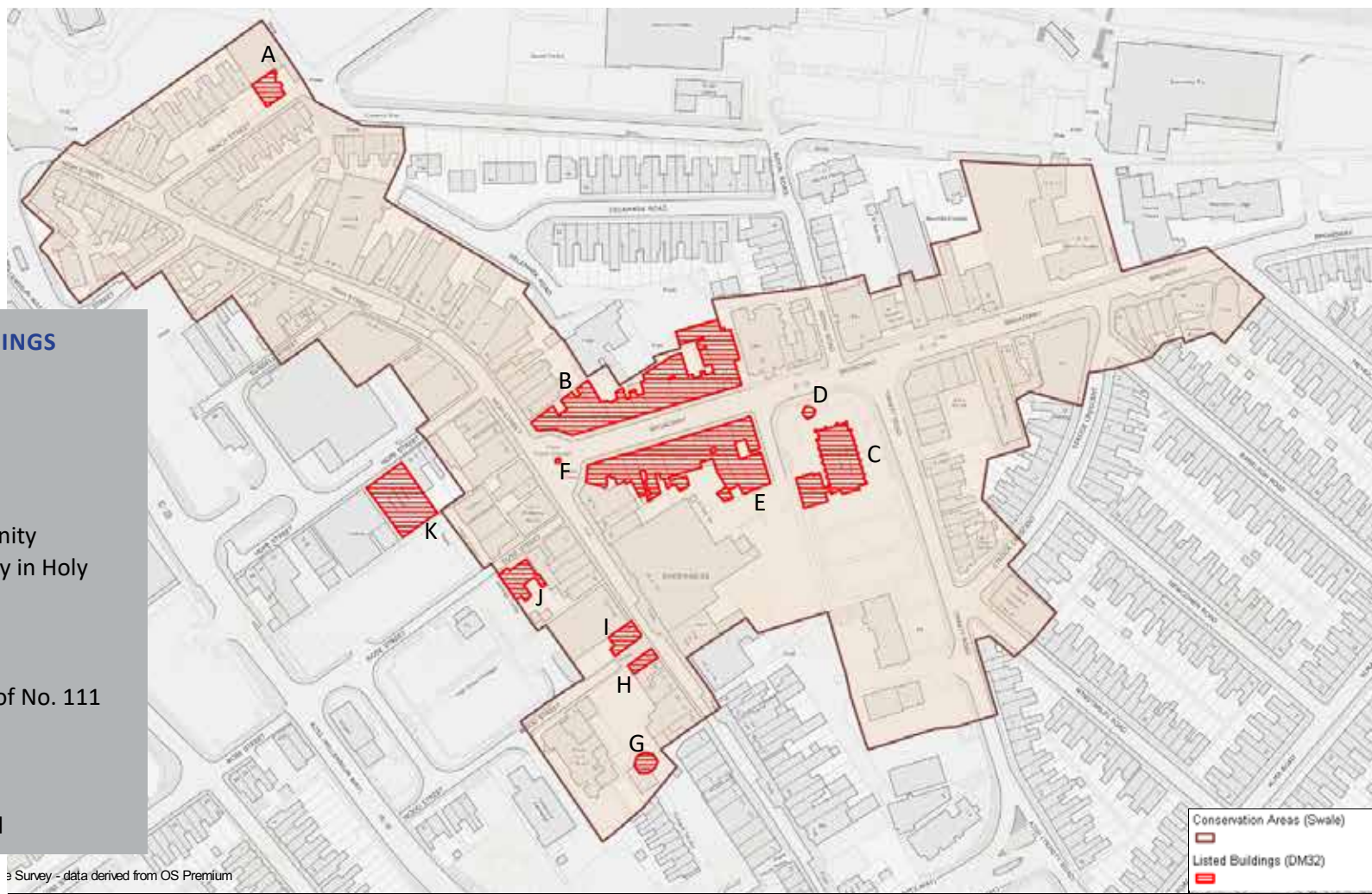


# APPENDIX 2:

Extracts from the National Heritage List for England (the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest)

The statutory list is compiled and published by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport and is altered and amended from time to time. The list descriptions below were current in March 2016 but for more up to date information please visit the National Heritage List for England at [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/thelist](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/thelist). The omission of a building from this list should not necessarily be taken to indicate that it is not listed.

Features which are not specifically mentioned in the list description are not exempt from statutory protection which extends to the building, to any object or structure fixed to the building and to any structure within the curtilage of the building pre-dating the 1st July 1948.



## STATUTORY LISTED BUILDINGS

Sheerness - Mile Town

- A Beach House
- B 1-23, The Broadway
- C Parish Church of the Holy Trinity
- D Memorial to Thomas Stuteley in Holy Trinity Churchyard
- E 4-22, The Broadway
- F Clocktower
- G Remains of Cornmill to rear of No. 111
- H 97, High Street
- I 95, High Street
- J 6-10, Rose Street
- K Bethel Chapel Sunday School

© Survey - data derived from OS Premium

Extracts from the National Heritage List for England (the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest)

### BEACH HOUSE

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1259822

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: BEACH HOUSE, BEACH STREET

National Grid Reference: TQ 91945 74982

#### Details

BEACH STREET 1. 5282 (North-West Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Beach House TQ 9174 NE 8/2

II 2. Early C19. 2 storeys stock brick. Hipped slate roof. 2 sashes and 1 blank with glazing bars intact and Venetian shutters. Central round-headed doorcase with keystone, pilasters, panelled reveals and semi-circular fanlight. The rear elevation has 2 later 3-light canted bays through all floors.



### CLOCK TOWER

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258071

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: CLOCK TOWER, CRESCENT

National Grid Reference: TQ 92065 74828

#### Details

CRESCENT 1. 5282 Mile Town, Sheerness Clock Tower TQ 9274 NW 9/10

II 2. Erected in 1902 to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII. Built of cast iron, painted. Octagonal column with plinth surmounted by clock faces and bell. Quatrefoil mouldings.





### 1-23, THE BROADWAY, 1 AND 3, CRESCENT

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1259823

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: 1-23, THE BROADWAY

National Grid Reference: TQ9210374851

#### Details

THE BROADWAY 1. 5282 (North-West Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Nos 1 to 23 (odd) TQ 9274 NW 9/3

II GV 1835-6. Includes Nos 1 and 3 Crescent, Mile Town, Sheerness. Circa 1830. Terrace. 3 storeys stock brick. Cement parapet and moulded eaves cornice. 2 to 3 sashes each with some glazing bars intact. Mainly modern shop-fronts, except to Nos 17 and 19 which have the original shopfronts with 2 pilasters and 2 segmental-headed doorcases, one of which, in the case of No 17, is blocked to form a shop window.

### PARISH CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1242870

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: PARISH CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, THE BROADWAY

National Grid Reference: TQ 92184 74827

#### Details

933/9/7 THE BROADWAY 30-JUN-78 MILE TOWN (Southeast side) PARISH CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

GV II 1835-6 by G L Taylor.





**MATERIALS:** Yellow brick with sandstone dressings. Welsh slate roofs.

**PLAN:** Nave, chancel, N and S aisles (expressed internally only), W tower with staircase vestibules to the N and S of it.

The church is oriented S so all directions given here are liturgical.

**EXTERIOR:** The church is built in a plain lancet style, typical of the 1830s. The W tower is of three stages, the lowest containing a plain arched doorway, the second an attractive and unusual rose window, and the third the belfry windows which are tall, paired lancets. The tower is crowned by a plain parapet with pinnacles at the corners. The rest of the church also has a plain parapet. The nave is of seven bays and has shallow buttresses demarcating the bays, each of which contains a tall lancet window. The chancel is short in the pre-Victorian tradition, has blank side walls and an E window consisting of three graded lancets. Either side of the tower are vestibules with N and S entrances and which were designed to house stairs to the galleries. On the W wall of the S vestibule is an interestingly designed bronze monument to J S Keddell (died 1870) and which bears masonic symbols.

**INTERIOR:** The walls are plastered and painted: white paint has also been applied, regrettably, to most other surfaces too. The interior character stems largely from the presence of the galleries on three sides (no galleries in the two E bays of the nave). Whereas most 1830s churches of this type had galleries round three sides of a rectangular, aisleless space (with the supporting columns and space beneath the N and S galleries forming their own aisles), here there are fully developed aisles with tall arcades behind which the galleries are set. The tall piers of this arcade have octagonal bases above which the main part of the pier has flat surfaces on the diagonals and small shafts in the cardinal directions. The piers merge seamlessly into the arches, which rise almost to roof level without the presence of capitals. The W part of the gallery also has four cast-iron columns to support it. The roof trusses consist of tie-beams with panel tracery above them. The underside of the ceiling consists of flat surfaces of plain plastering.

**PRINCIPAL FIXTURES:** The chancel has been cleared of its Georgian or Victorian fittings (presumably in the 1970s reordering which is probably the time of the painting over of all internal surfaces). The Victorian seating in the nave, with shaped ends, is largely intact however. The gallery fronts have trefoiled arcading. On the N and S sides the galleries have been boxed in to create storage space. The font is Victorian and is octagonal with a sturdy base with gable-like features



surrounding it. The stained glass in the E window is dated 1902.

**HISTORY:** The cost of the church was £4,128 of which the Church Building Commissioners contributed £2,595. The church had 1,085 seats, 738 of which were free. The land was donated by Sir Edward Banks and the foundation stone was laid on 1 September 1835. Consecration took place on 30 August 1836 by Archbishop Howley. It was initially a chapel of ease to Minster Abbey, only becoming parochial in 1873.

The architect, George Ledwell Taylor (1788-1873), was born in London and was articled in 1804 to J T Parkinson for whom he supervised the building of parts of the Portman Estate in London. In 1824 he was appointed Civil Architect to the Navy and carried out important works at Sheerness, Chatham, Gosport and Woolwich. He came into contact with William IV and claimed that it was his tact that led the King in 1830 to accept 'Trafalgar Square' instead of 'King William IV Square' as the name for the new open space on the site of the King's Mews. After he lost his post as a result of reorganisation in 1837 he was forced to take up general practice.

The church is relatively unusual in that it did not acquire a long chancel as was usual in Victorian times. Plans to have one were in existence in 1885, drawn up by the Tunbridge Wells architect Robert Wheeler. It seems likely that at this time reseating took place with the introduction of the present open seats with their shaped ends.

**SOURCES:** Incorporated Church Building Society papers, Lambeth Palace Library, files 1166, 8981. Howard Colvin, A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 3rd ed, 1995, p 960-1. Colin Johnson, Holy Trinity Sheerness, 2004 ed. (church guide). John Newman, The Buildings of England: North East and East Kent, 1983, p 456. Michael Port, Sic Hundred New Churches: the Church Building Commission 1818-1856, 2007, p 334.

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION:** Holy Trinity church is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* It is of special interest as a church built in the 1830s to accommodate the rising population of Sheerness and was constructed in the plain 13th-century style that was then current. It is a very good representative of urban church building at this time \* It has, unlike many such churches, retained its galleries which are a very important contributor to the character of the building.

### MEMORIAL TO THOMAS STUTELEY IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCHYARD

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258056

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: MEMORIAL TO THOMAS STUTELEY IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCHYARD, THE BROADWAY

National Grid Reference: TQ 92170 74848

#### Details

THE BROADWAY 1. 5282 (South-East Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Memorial to Thomas Stuteley in Holy Trinity Churchyard  
TQ 92174 NW 9/8

II GV 2. Dated 1879. Ashlar plinth. Stone square base with inscription and Greek key design and broken pillar above with garland.



### 4-22, THE BROADWAY

List Entry Number: 1258038

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: 4-22, THE BROADWAY

National Grid Reference: TQ 92116 74833

#### Details

THE BROADWAY 1. 5282 (South-East Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Nos 4 to 22 (even) TQ 9274 NW 9/6

II GV 2. Includes Nos 6 and 8 Crescent, Mile Town, Sheerness. Circa 1830. Terrace. 3 storeys stock brick. Cement parapet and moulded eaves cornice. 2 to 3 sashes each with some glazing bars intact but mainly modern shopfronts.



### REMAINS OF CORNMILL TO REAR OF NUMBER 111

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258330

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: REMAINS OF CORNMILL TO REAR OF NUMBER 111, HIGH STREET

National Grid Reference: TQ 92102 74702

#### Details

HIGH STREET 1. 5282 (West Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Remains of corn mill to rear of No 111 TQ 9274 NW 9/31

II 2. Early C19. An octagonal base of 2 storeys stock brick. Glazing now missing from windows.



### WOOD STREET, 97, HIGH STREET

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258227

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: 97, HIGH STREET

National Grid Reference: TQ 92100 74744

#### Details

HIGH STREET 1. 5282 (West Side) Mile Town, Sheerness No 97 TQ 9274 NW 9/29

II 2. Late C18 to early C19. Corner building. 2 storeys weatherboarded. Renewed tiled roof in 2 hips. 1 sash with glazing bars intact to ground floor window only on Wood Street elevation. Doorcase with wooden cornice and brackets and 4 flush panels.





## 95, HIGH STREET

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258226

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

National Grid Reference: TQ 92091 74751

### Details

HIGH STREET 1. 5282 (West Side) Mile Town, Sheerness No 95 TQ 9274 NW 9/28

II 2. C18. 2 storeys wood stuccoed and grooved in imitation of masonry. Hipped slate roof. Parapet. 2 sashes. Later shopfront. The Wood Street elevation has a slate roof with 1 hipped dormer. 2 sashes without glazing bars and 2 doorcases, 1 with wooden cornice and brackets.



## 6-10, ROSE STREET

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1258876

Date first listed: 27-Feb-1977

National Grid Reference: TQ 92048 74776

### Details

ROSE STREET 1. 5282 (South-East Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Nos 6 to 10 (even) TQ 9274 NW 9/84 25.2.77.

II GV 2. Late C18 to early C19. 2 storeys weatherboarded. Hipped slate roof. Parapet. 1 sash to each with glazing bars intact to Nos 6 and 8. These have doorcases with cornices, reeded pilasters and 6 fielded panelled doors. No 10 has a Victorian stock brick extension built on with a 6 panelled door incorporated and a shopfront with 6 cambered panels.



## BETHEL CHAPEL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1273419

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1978

Statutory Address: BETHEL CHAPEL SUNDAY SCHOOL, HOPE STREET

National Grid Reference: TQ 91996 74814

### Details

HOPE STREET 1. 5282 (South-East Side) Mile Town, Sheerness Bethel Chapel Sunday School TQ 9174 NE 8/73 TQ 9274 NW 8/73

II 2000. Dated 1832. 1 storey stock brick. Pediment with stone coping. 2 round-headed windows with architraves and glazing bars intact. Central round-headed doorcase with pilasters.





## APPENDIX 3: Select Bibliography and Document Extracts

Historic England. (2016). **A Characterisation of Sheerness, Kent** Project Report

Augustus Daly (1975). **History of the Isle of Sheppey**

Kent County Council. (2004). **Kent Historic Towns Survey: Sheerness - Archaeological Assessment Document**. English Heritage and Kent County Council.

Swale Borough Council. (2000). **Mile Town, Sheerness conservation area character appraisal (Extract from report to Development Committee 2 August 2000 Agenda item 5C(i) Annex B)**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Swale Borough Council Planning Services – 01795 417850

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-and-landscape/>

**Swale Borough Council: 2023**  
**Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT AUGUST 2023**

**Prepared by The Conservation & Design Team, Swale Borough Council**



Cornmill to rear of No.111 High Street- Grade II listed

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<b>Planning and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7th February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Milton Regis Conservation Area review
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins - Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson – Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jhilmil Kishore - Senior Conservation & Design Officer (Projects)
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices.</li> <li>2. To agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make the Policy & Resources Committee aware of updated appraisal to the Milton Regis Conservation Area and to recommend that the conservation area be formally re-designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The proposals include a detailed character appraisal and associated management strategy in line with current good practice for the management of conservation areas. Officers recommend that the Policy & Resources Committee supports and agrees the changes to the review document set out in **Appendix i** and as reflected in **Appendix ii**).

## 2 Background

2.1 Milton Regis Conservation Area was first designated in by Kent County Council on the 19th July 1977. This is the first review of the conservation area since the conservation area was designated. There is a formal requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for Conservation Areas to be reviewed from 'time to time'.

2.2 The Swale Heritage Strategy, adopted in March 2020, has resulted in a stronger commitment by the Council to ensure its conservation areas are reviewed more regularly and possible new conservation areas also given consideration. The review of Milton Regis Conservation Area is part of the work programme of the initial 3-year action plan forming part of the adopted Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 – 2032. The focus on conservation areas in the initial action plan has given priority to those conservation areas in the Borough classified locally and nationally as ‘at risk’ – of which there are 8 – Milton Regis Conservation Area is one of them. As the existing level of officer resource did not allow for this review work to be carried out in-house, an external consultant was appointed to carry out the work. The same consultant (Peter Bell) who carried out the review of Bredgar & Hartlip conservation areas in the Summer last year was re-appointed to undertake the review of Milton Regis Conservation Areas.

### **3 Proposals**

3.1 The proposal is to re-designate and amend the boundary of the conservation area and to equip it with a detailed character appraisal and a complementary management strategy which will assist with development management and heritage conservation purposes over the next decade or more. It will be a matter for the Policy & Resources Committee to decide whether to formally adopt the Milton Regis Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (as recommended and set out in **Appendix ii**, following consultation feedback, or otherwise).

3.2 Part of the review process involved an assessment of whether the area should be extended or reduced in size. In this regard particular consideration was given to extending the conservation area. There are 11 minor changes proposed to the boundary as follows:

#### **Proposed boundary change A, B1, B2, B3 and C**

Proposed boundary changes at A, B1, B2, B3 and C are simply to more accurately reflect existing property boundary lines which may have changed over time.

#### **Proposed boundary change D**

Proposed boundary change D is to extend the conservation area to include the workshop attached to the north of 117 High Street and its boundary wall which is constructed of burr brickwork. Whilst the building, which was originally a forge, has undergone changes over

the years it still retains its original shape and materials. It forms a strong group with 113. to 117 High Street which are listed buildings.

#### **Proposed boundary change E**

Proposed boundary change E, is to remove the access track which runs between the rear of 93 and 95 High Street and Walnut Court from the conservation area. The

boundary currently bisects the bungalow at 2 Walnut Court so it too should be removed from the conservation area.

#### **Proposed boundary change F**

Proposed boundary change F is to remove land at the rear of 71 to 87 High Street as well as a group of flat roofed garages and 3 and 4 Cortland Mews from the conservation area. The area appears to fall outside the original burgage plots and the modern buildings are of no architectural interest.

#### **Proposed boundary change G**

Proposed boundary change G, is to extend the conservation area marginally to include the retaining wall which fronts Crown Road between number 14 and its junction with Beechwood Avenue. The wall is constructed of local yellow stock brickwork and is a significant feature in the street.

#### **Proposed boundary change H**

Proposed boundary change H is to remove from the conservation area the car park in the backland triangle between Crown Road and St Pauls Street. The area has no intrinsic architectural or historic interest so does not fit well within the conservation area.

#### **Proposed boundary change I**

Proposed boundary change I, is to include all of the grass and the public footpath adjacent to the east of number 4 St Pauls Road within the conservation area. The boundary currently includes only part of the grass area to the rear of 16 to 26 Kings Mill Close and the proposal is to include all of it.

### 3.3 The recommendation is:

- Members note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices; and
- Support and agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation.

## **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

4.1 One option would be to not take this review work any further. This is not recommended because it would risk the justifiable continuation of the designation and/or the appropriately sensitive and positive management of the conservation area and its wider setting moving forward.



- 4.2 A second possible option would be to disregard some elements, or all of the feedback received, in terms of the suggested boundary change(s). However, whilst it is considered that the appraisal and management plan (to support the redesignation of the conservation area) is essentially sound, the feedback provided from the local community is valuable and to ignore any of this feedback without sound reasons would call the value of the consultation process into question and potentially deliver reputational damage to the Council.
- 4.3 A third possible option would be to suspend the work on this review until some point in the future. Whilst this option would not result in wasted officer time, it could still lead to (a) the designation being challenged, (b) reputational damage to the Council and/or (c) development and associated infrastructure provision decisions being made for the locality without an appropriate understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the Milton Regis Conservation Area.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 A 6-week public consultation ran from Friday 10th November 2023 until Friday 22nd December 2023.
- 5.2 All those parties with property within or overlapping the current conservation area boundary were notified in writing of the review and were invited to comment on it, as were key relevant organisations including Kent County Council and Historic England.
- 5.3 Hard copies of the review document were made available at the Sittingbourne Library and was also available to view/download on-line via the Council’s website for the duration of the 6-week (including the extended) public consultation period,
- 5.4 A total of 3 consultation responses have been received. All from Local residents. The officer’s response to these responses (as summarised) is attached as appendix i.
- 5.5 Historic England has responded advising that it has no substantive comments to make.
- 5.6 Kent County Council in its function as the Highway Authority was consulted on the conservation area review but provided no feedback.
- 5.7 A presentation was done to Sittingbourne Area Committee on 12th December 2023, highlighting the main aspects of the Milton Regis Conservation Area Review.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
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Corporate Plan	<p>Priority 2 of the Plan is: ‘Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges’. Objectives 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 of this priority are respectively to:</p> <p>(2.1) ‘Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council’s own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2020, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough’.</p> <p>(2.4) ‘Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.</p> <p>(2.5) ‘Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible’.</p> <p>The character appraisal and management strategy document, once amended as appropriate and subsequently adopted would support all 3 of the above-stated objectives from the Corporate Plan.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Implementing some aspects of the proposed Management Plan may have financial and resource implications for the council, particularly if it is decided to proceed with an Article 4 Direction review or/and signage review. These costs are not yet budgeted for and may need to be considered within any future Heritage Strategy Action Plans.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to “<i>determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance</i>” and, from time to time, to review the functioning existing conservation areas.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>One of the three dimensions of sustainable development is its environmental role: contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The health and wellbeing aspects of interaction with heritage assets and heritage related projects are referenced in the adopted Heritage Strategy which underpins this review work.</p>
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>

Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix i: Public consultation – table of representations (in summary form), and the council’s response to them.
- Appendix ii: Public consultation version of the 2023 draft Milton Regis character appraisal and management plan document.

## 8 Background Papers

A Heritage Strategy for Swale 2020-2032 Adopted March 2020

**APPENDIX i: TABLE OF REPRESENTATIONS, AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY CHANGES TO THE ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO THEM – FOR RE-DESIGNATING MILTON REGIS C.A.**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
1	Local resident	<p>I refer to your letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023, regarding the Public Consultation for the above. Although I no longer live in the High Street, I am fortunate enough to have purchased numerous properties in the area over the years.</p> <p>My first home was 102 High Street, behind the Court Hall, and I have always thought that Milton Regis had a great deal of potential. Since then, I have built up a portfolio of properties in the area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1A Crown Road (purchased in 1995)</li> <li>• 71 &amp; 71A High Street (purchased in 2006)</li> </ul> <p>And in 2023 acquired;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65A,B &amp; C High Street</li> <li>• 67 High Street</li> <li>• 69 High Street</li> <li>• And the freehold of 1A,1B, 1C Crown Road &amp; 61/63 High Street</li> </ul> <p>The ones that we purchased recently were in very poor condition and some your have even considered at risk on your review! Unfortunately, these properties have been significantly altered over the years, but we are trying to preserve as much of their original character in our restoration &amp; refurbishment works. Also, due to their neglect, water ingress has caused serious damp &amp; rot issues as well which we are trying to rectify. Hopefully, you will have seen some substantial improvements since the</p>	Noted & welcomed	No change to the assessment document needed.

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>review was written (especially 65 High Street) and further improvement in 2024.</p> <p>I have read through the review and agree with the majority of the points raised. However, there are some areas that I would like to comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree Management - From what I can see, the Council have not maintained the trees in public areas at all, especially the two outside 69 High Street. this has caused some significant issues to this property, as we found after purchasing it, as the leaves and branches had damaged leadwork &amp; blocked gutters causing significant water ingress, dampness and rot. These must be maintained.</li> <li>• Proposed boundary change F - I completely agree that this area should be removed from the conservation area but could I suggest that this area be extended to include the rear sections of the gardens to 67, 69 &amp; 71 High Street as well (plan attached showing the additional area in green). The reason for this is that we have found that in these gardens, numerous trees have either self-seeded or been poorly planted next to walls &amp; fences causing them to collapse. As they currently fall within the conservation area, permission needs to be granted to carry out remove them or just cut them back and, as such, they have just been left to get out of control.</li> </ul>		

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
2	Local Resident	<p>In response to the letter i recently received from yourself regarding the public consultation, Milton Regis Conservation area review.</p> <p>I agree with the purposed changes with regards to the boundaries but some of the comments regarding the bins/signs outside some houses i have some issues with, the houses, 48-50 High Street have no option but to have their bins outside their houses on the public highway.</p> <p>They cannot wheel their bins through their houses and as tenants they have no right of way across the back of the properties so I'm not sure what options are available to have them removed from sight.</p> <p>I thought the draft paper was well written and gave sound points.</p>	Noted and welcomed.	No change to the assessment document needed.
3	Local Resident	<p>I am writing to object to the proposed plans to insert my property on the Risk Register - and the substantial consequences this would have - as set out on the Consultation Area Review Report. This objection is on several grounds, as outlined below, in full. The overarching theme is that the Report is completely insufficient and lacking any explanation or basis for its findings in relation to Crown Road, as set out below.</p> <p>I further wish to object to the fact that I was never directly informed that a Consultation would take place and was only made aware of it in a letter addressed to the Owner on 9 November 2023, leaving little time to study the report and take advice, although some of the conclusions of the report may have very dire consequences for me as the owner and occupant of ...</p> <p><b><u>Defective Report</u></b></p>	<p>Noted and welcomed</p> <p>A number of issues raised in this consultation response are matters relation to law and order and traffic management.</p>	No change to the assessment document needed.



**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>The Report is badly written and wholly lacking in important information. It is an abuse of process to rely on the Report for the onerous action of listing Crown Road on the Risk Register.</p> <p>Bell states at the top of page 38 that four properties, including 5 Crown Road, are in “particularly poor condition”. He then immediately goes on to discuss solutions, with no explanation at all given as to how he came to this conclusion.</p> <p>Missing detail includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What scale is being used?</li> <li>- What criteria are being used? (i.e. what specific aspects of the architecture are an issue).</li> <li>- There is no reference to statute/policy/law on what constitutes “particularly poor condition”.</li> <li>- There is no detail on how this evidence was obtained (e.g. in person visit etc - only a certain level of inspection could have been achieved without trespassing illegally on the property).</li> <li>- There is no indication a second opinion has been sought or Bell’s work checked before publication.</li> <li>- On page 58, Bell listed desirable features of Crown Road. He could have used this section to dissect which features were falling into disrepair but failed to. There is no specific information on what is in “particularly poor condition” (e.g. brickwork etc).</li> <li>- There is no reference to Bell’s credentials - e.g. whether he has experience as a surveyor etc. There is no reference to the credentials needed to carry out the Report and whether these have been fulfilled.</li> </ul>		

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>It would be an abuse of process to rely on the above Report to list Crown Road on the Risk Register, when it is lacking any detail or basis for the conclusion to list Crown Road.</p> <p>Further, this lack of detail means it is impossible for me to defend myself. It is impossible to give a response defending my property against being put on the Risk Register when I do not know the grounds on which it is being put on the Risk Register. This also evidences a complete lack of willingness by the council to cooperate with or help private property owners. If specific details were set out in the report, then I could have attempted to find solutions to avoid my property being put on the Risk Register, or provided an explanation as to why this was not the case (e.g. bad photography may have portrayed aspects of the architecture as worse than they actually are, and I could have explained here if I knew what the problem was).</p> <p>Further, I note the following from Historic England: “an urgent works notice should generally be restricted to urgent repairs to keep a building wind and weather-proof and safe from collapse, or action to prevent vandalism or theft”. Bell’s wording of “particularly poor condition” seems disproportionate considering Crown Road does not fulfil any of these categories (and indeed, Bell could not have assessed these categories without trespassing, which I assume he did not do).</p> <p>Further, Bell has included some troublesome wording at page 37. He states “Historic England’s assessment of Milton’s condition as ‘poor’ and ‘deteriorating’ is not unreasonable. It accords with some of the findings in this</p>		

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>appraisal. The appraisal has identified specific buildings and some other aspects of the conservation area that are in poor condition or poorly managed”. Bell seems to be tying his findings to Historic England’s findings. However, Historic England never references 5 Crown Road in their assessment of Milton Regis, which he tentatively appears to be suggesting.</p> <p>Further, 5 Crown Road, which has been constantly occupied since 1996, is visually in obviously much better condition than 2 other buildings listed (46 High Street - substantially boarded up over the original window; 65 High Street - substantially boarded up over the original window with very old paint on the door). In contrast, 5 Crown Road has no externally boarded up windows (there is a board behind the original plating of one window for privacy/vandalism reasons). Fresh paint has been applied to the blue door for weather proofing and the door was insulated. This can be clearly seen.</p> <p>Further, Bell only seems to only express his own opinions about what would constitute a desirable conservation zone, expressing, for example, his liking for the new bright colours used at numbers 68-70 without saying whether these colours were in line with English heritage and had been approved by the Council. Indeed, the entire report just seems to be one man’s opinion and personal preferences, with little reference to sources.</p> <p>Overall, the Report is severely deficient and the findings on 5 Crown Road should be removed from the finalised version, as no reasoning has been given for this description of “particularly poor condition”.</p> <p><b><u>Proportionality: private owners</u></b></p>		

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>The Report makes no reference to the negative financial impact that Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices, Section 215 Notices and ultimately Compulsory Purchase would have on private owners. It makes no reference to whether the private owners could afford repairs, especially in the current recession.</p> <p>ME10 2AH is a deprived area and ranks 4/10 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile, IMD 2019. 5 Crown Road was bought relatively cheaply in 1996. The cost of anticipated repairs would be unduly onerous on the owner. It is the council's duty to consider the welfare of its constituency. The timing of this Consultation and proposed measures of repair orders is completely insensitive considering the current cost of living crisis. There is no consideration of this in the Report.</p> <p><b><u>Description of Milton Regis</u></b></p> <p>The description of Milton Regis throughout the Report is wholly inaccurate.</p> <p>Crown Road has always been a very busy road. There is heavy traffic - including lorries, coaches and double-decker buses - so much so that the house vibrates regularly. Crown Road is also used as a racing track by people who do not want to use Mill way or just want to have fun. At the moment, there are a lot of motorbikes racing up and down the road. In the last twenty years, two of the owners' cars were written off by racing drivers. Another one was damaged and another three were vandalised (smashed windows). All the cars were parked in the bay in front of 5 Crown Road. The latest incident, witnessed by neighbours and reported to the police, dates back to last week.</p>		

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>In addition, Crown Road is not cleaned regularly, and the road pollution is also dirtying the houses.</p> <p>There is a lot of anti-social behaviour, including from neighbours. 3 Crown Road has appropriated the public passageway between number 3 and number 5 and has been growing a very large sycamore tree whose roots are clearly damaging the foundations of number 5 outer building in the garden (also listed). The exterior wall adjacent to 3 Crown road cannot be inspected - despite the fact that 5 Crown road is a detached house - because the neighbour is not letting the owner in. I spent years asking help from the Council, police and English Heritage but had no support at all to protect my property although it is part of the conservation zone.</p> <p><b><u>Vandalism</u></b></p> <p>The rate of vandalism and crime in Milton Regis impacts the ability to carry out repairs to Crown Road. The door gets kicked regularly and the windows vandalised.</p> <p>The front windows to the house have been vandalised and smashed multiple times, posing a danger to anyone in the living room when the windows are vandalised. Due to this, the owner has placed a wooden board behind the window for protection (keeping the original window visible in front). Repeatedly replacing the windows is not viable due to the quick rate of vandalism.</p> <p>Further, the bricks running the bottom of the house are frequently kicked at and cannot be replaced at the rate they are vandalised.</p> <p>The vandalism means it feels obsolete for the owner to carry out constant repairs/replacements as soon as something is repaired/replaced, it is broken again.</p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p>		

**PROPOSED MILTON REGIS C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>In conclusion, the section on Crown Road should be omitted from the Report and not included in the Consultation. In the alternative, the Report needs to be re-done or Bell (the original author) needs to provide substantial further information to clarify his reasoning, because as it stands there is a complete lack of information, so much so that it amounts to an abuse of process.</p>		



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# Milton Regis Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT September 2023

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## FOREWORD

“Historic buildings and places add to the quality of people’s lives and help to create a sense of place that we all identify with.

As a community and as a local authority, we have a responsibility to safeguard our historic assets for future generations and to make sure that they are not compromised by unsympathetic alterations or poor-quality developments. Conservation area designation and subsequent management is one way in which this can be achieved.

Conservation areas are not intended to halt progress or to prevent change. Rather, they give the local community and the Borough Council the means to positively manage change and to protect what is special about the area from being harmed or lost altogether.

Swale Borough is fortunate in having such a rich and varied mix of built and natural heritage. The Borough Council wants to see it used positively as a catalyst for sustainable, sensitive regeneration and development, and for creating places where people want to live, work, and make the most of their leisure time. To that end, we have reviewed the Milton Regis Conservation Area and the results of that review are set out in this document, which the Borough Council is now seeking constructive feedback on.

This is one of a series of conservation area reviews which the Borough Council is committed to undertaking, following the adoption of the Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 - 2032.”



Councillor Mike Baldock, Cabinet Member for Planning and Swale Borough Council Deputy Leader and Heritage Champion

*Mike Baldock*



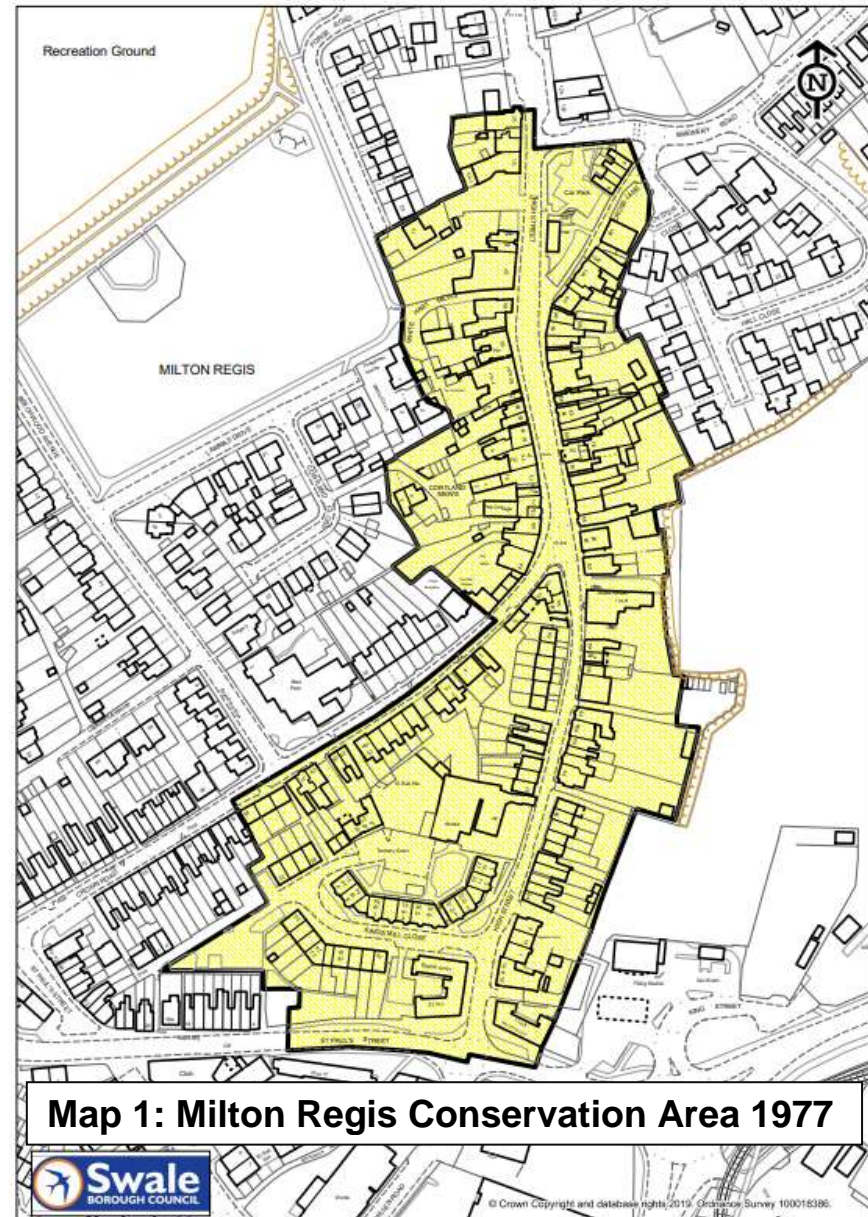
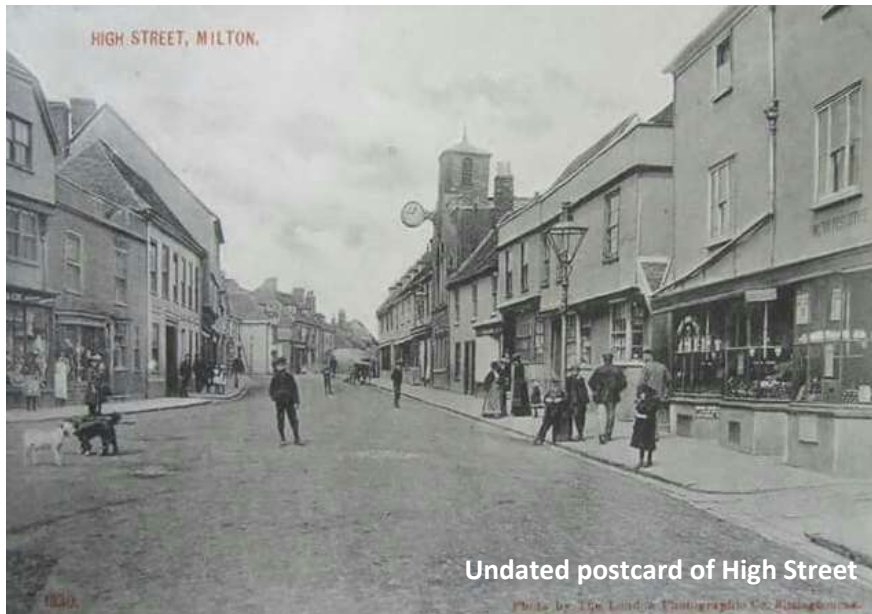
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Milton Regis Conservation Area

Milton Regis Conservation Area was originally designated by Kent County Council on the 19th July 1977. Map 1, opposite, shows the extent of the conservation area as it was designated in 1977. This is the first review of the conservation area since the conservation area was designated.

Milton Regis is one of Kent's ancient settlements, the history of which is reflected in the composition and layout of its High Street. It includes one of the highest concentrations of listed buildings in the borough.

The conservation area was included in Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register in 2016. Its condition was noted as 'poor', its vulnerability as 'medium' and its trend as 'deteriorating'.



## 1.2 The purpose of conservation areas

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”<sup>1</sup>.

It is the responsibility of individual local planning authorities to designate and review conservation areas from time to time using local criteria to determine and assess their special qualities and local distinctiveness<sup>2</sup>.

The origins and development of a place are recorded in its buildings and spaces. In these days of rapid change, it is desirable and in the public interest to conserve the tangible evidence of a town’s history, to serve as a record of the past and to provide a framework for new development and sustainable growth.

The aim of conservation area designation is to protect historic places and to assist in positively managing change, so that their special character is safeguarded and sustained for the next generation. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic layout and use of characteristic or local materials, style or landscaping. In practice, it is normally a combination of some or all of these special characteristics which merits designation.

Above all, conservation areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are of special architectural or historic interest.

Conservation area designation provides extra protection in the following ways:

- Local planning authorities have control over most demolition of buildings.
- Local planning authorities have extra control over householder development.
- All trees in conservation areas are protected.
- When assessing planning applications, the local planning authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area and its setting.
- Policies in the Local Development Plan and in the National Planning Policy Framework positively encourage development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 69 (1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990



### 1.3 The purpose and status of this Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

The purpose of this Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy is:

- To identify the significance of the heritage asset – i.e. the value that the conservation area has to this and future generations because of its heritage interest – which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest.
- To increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area.
- To guide positive change and regeneration.
- To review the conservation area boundary in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- To highlight particular issues and features which detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area which offer potential for enhancement or improvement through positive change.
- To identify any risks to the conservation area and provide management framework which will see it removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal is an assessment and a record of the special architectural or historic interest which gives rise to the character and appearance of a place. The appraisal is a factual and objective analysis, which seeks to identify the distinctiveness of a place by defining the attributes that contribute to its special character. It should be noted, however, that the appraisal cannot be all-inclusive, and that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest. In some cases, significance may only be fully identified at such time as a

feature, a building or site is subject to the more rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

An important aspect of this review of Milton Regis Conservation Area is to assess whether the area still possesses the special architectural and historic interest which merits its continued designation. It also affords an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the designation over the last 46 years and to consider whether the boundary of the conservation area should be either extended or reduced.

The appraisal includes a management strategy to help the Borough Council and other stakeholders positively manage the conservation area in the future. The management strategy includes positive steps that can be taken to preserve or enhance the conservation area. It identifies potential threats to the character of the area and can, where appropriate, identify buildings at risk or the potential for Article 4 Directions or local heritage listing. The recommendations in the management strategy will be the key to preserving or enhancing the character of Milton Regis Conservation Area and to having it removed from the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.

An appraisal may serve as the basis for the formulation and evaluation of policies in the Development Plan. It is a material consideration in development management decisions by the local planning authority and by the Planning Inspectorate in determining planning appeals. It can also heighten awareness of the special character of the place to help inform local interest groups in the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements and individuals in their design choices.

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been compiled in consultation with local organisations, elected representatives and council officials. It is to be the subject of public consultation and is prepared with a view to being formally adopted for development management purposes.

## 2.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

### 2.1 The history and development of Milton Regis

Today Milton Regis is a suburb of Sittingbourne but it was not always so. Sittingbourne as well as surrounding villages from Rainham in the west to Tonge in the east, Iwade and Milstead, as well as the Isle of Sheppey all fell under the control of the Manor of Milton which answered to the Crown.

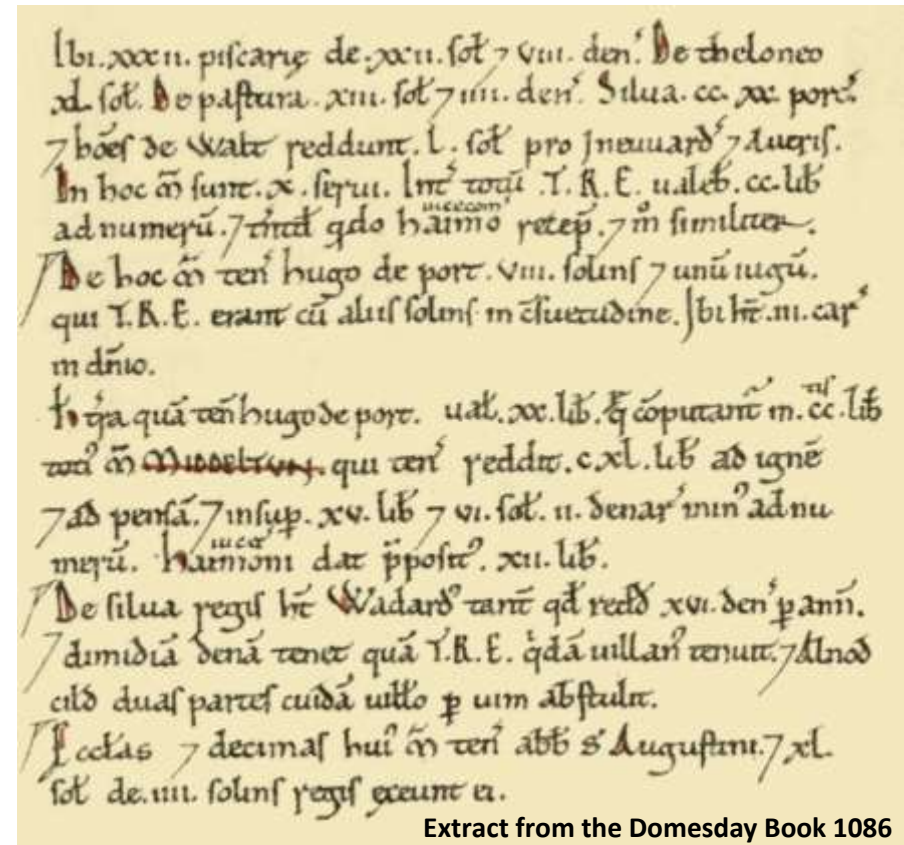
The earliest surviving building is the parish church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which lies to the north-east of the town. It is of Augustinian foundation but is believed to occupy what was originally a pagan site of worship. Much of the earlier fabric of the church dates from the Saxon and Norman periods but there is reused Roman brickwork throughout the building indicating Roman activity on the site or in the surrounding area.

In 680 Queen Seaxburh of Kent passed the Kingdom of Kent to her eldest son Egberht at his coming of age, crowning him King of Kent at a grand ceremony held at the doors of Holy Trinity Church, Milton. Thereafter she became a nun and founded two abbeys, one at Minster on the Isle of Sheppey and the other at Milton.

Saxon 'Middeltune' was located in the vicinity of the church but was subject to raids by the Danes. In 893 the Danish chieftain Haestan sailed up the creek with eighty longships and occupied the town. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records Godwin, Earl of Wessex, a powerful nobleman at the time, burning the town of Milton to the ground in 1052. Milton was one of several Royal towns belonging to King Edward the Confessor that were destroyed by Earl Godwin's army as part of his challenge and claim to the throne of England.

In 1086 The Domesday Book records the town as Middleton Terra Regis (Royal lands) the King's town of Kent. It is noted as a town and

a port of some wealth, which William the Conqueror took into his personal possession and then gave to his half-brother Odo for safe keeping, also appointing a portreeve, Hugh de Port, to preside over the town. At that time, the town is recorded as having 309 villagers and 10 slaves, six mills, 32 fisheries and 27 salthouses.



Extract from the Domesday Book 1086

Castle Rough, to the north-east of the current town, is perhaps the earliest surviving evidence for domestic settlement at Milton. Historic England describes it as the site of a high-status house dating from

between 1250 and 1350 with evidence of a moat and a gatehouse. The site would have been the residence of the Lords of the Manor of Milton. There is also evidence of early settlement in the area around the church.

However, during the medieval period, sometime after 1070 the early settlement migrated away from the lower lying marshy ground on the margins of Milton Creek to higher ground to the west, to its current location.

In 1320 King Edward II granted the town a weekly market and a three-day annual fair which were important aspects of Milton's life. The market took place along the wider section of the High Street which at that time would have been lined by timber-framed buildings. Buildings occupied burgage plots, a medieval form of land tenure in which houses and shops tenanted long thin plots paying rent to the Lord of the Manor or the king. A typical burgage plot was 4x 20 poles, each plot with a narrow frontage facing the street.

Much of the town's prosperity in the medieval period was derived from its proximity to the Milton Creek. The creek afforded easy access to London, the east coast and the continent for trade and commerce. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Milton was second only to Faversham in the hierarchy of Kent's ports. As well as sustaining the growth of the town it provided a livelihood for fishermen, boat builders and oyster dredgers. There was little industry recorded but craftsmen such as wheelwrights, weavers, tanners, blacksmiths, tailors and possibly glovers had premises in the town and records indicate that cloth making, weaving and dyeing also went on.

In 1798, Edward Hasted described Milton as having 230 houses and 1200 inhabitants. It had 5 corn mills and held a weekly market on Saturdays. He recorded that: "It has a very indifferent character for health, owing both to the badness of the water, and the gross unwholesome air to which it is subject from its watry situation; nor is it in any degree pleasant, the narrow streets, or rather lanes in it,

being badly paved, and for the most part inhabited by seafaring persons, fishermen, and oyster-dredgers."

Buildings which survive today are testament to Milton's prosperity in the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Shipping and fishing declined during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as brick making and paper milling took their place. Barge building and cement works occupied sites along the creek well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings are typically modest terraced houses serving the working population.

The railway arrived in Sittingbourne in 1858. The rapid expansion that followed engulfed Milton to the extent that today it exists as a suburb of Sittingbourne.





## 2.2 Location, setting and geology

Milton Regis is located 1km north of Sittingbourne and south of The Swale in North Kent. Historically its position was influenced by its proximity to Milton Creek which provided wharfage and valuable trading connections. Sittingbourne, on the other hand, was more influenced by pilgrim travelers and coaching traffic on Watling Street. Access to Milton Creek today is limited and navigation is non-existent. However, Milton Creek Country Park provides a route from the town to the surrounding countryside and to the coast.

The town is located on a small hill, approximately 14m above Ordnance Datum. Approach from any direction, but particularly from the south on Crown Road and High Street, involves a small ascent.

The town is surrounded by suburban residential and commercial development, beyond which the landscape is agricultural but for the marshes, which follow the line of Milton Creek. Agriculture in the surrounding areas consists of mixed cereal crops, hops, orchards, market gardens, pasture and woodland.



The town is effectively by-passed by the B2006 (St Paul's Way) to Bobbing and the B2005 (Mill Way) to Kemsley resulting in a High Street with pleasingly little through traffic.

Milton Regis lies within a belt of rich loamy soil (the Thanet beds) which runs from Rainham in the west to Thanet in the east. There are alluvial clay deposits in the marshes to the north and a belt of head brickearth to the south and west.

## 2.3 Urban grain and spatial analysis

Urban grain describes the relationship between the street pattern, the pattern of building and block sizes. In built up areas it is helpful in distilling the essential character of a place. Fine grained areas have a large number of different buildings and closely spaced streets.

The fine grain of Milton Regis arises directly from the system of land tenure when it was developed in the medieval period. The land was divided into long thin burgage plots, each having a narrow frontage onto the street. Plots were divided and combined resulting in narrower and wider frontages but the evidence for the original burgage plots survives throughout the town and is highly significant.

Buildings line the streets almost continuously with just a few narrow passageways providing access to the rear. It is the unbroken building frontages following the gentle curve of the road that is the essence of development in Milton Regis Conservation Area. It gives rise to inward looking linear spaces confined by two and three-storey buildings.

The slight widening in the High Street between the Court Hall and its junction with Crown Road is evidence for the location of the weekly market which took place from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

## 2.4 Buildings

Above all, it is the buildings that define the character of Milton Regis. and the town retains a good number of buildings constructed over the last 550 years. Below, they are described chronologically.

Most of these buildings are of high heritage significance because of their age and because of the evidence they provide of early building types, developments in methods of construction, architectural history and how people lived.

### Medieval and 16<sup>th</sup> Century

The earliest surviving building is the Court Hall, a two-storey timber-framed building of 15<sup>th</sup> century date. It was the place where the Court Leet as well as the Court Baron carried out their business. It also served as the administrative centre for the Hundred of Milton, the gaol cells and the school for 9 or 10 boys. Today it is prominently located having benefited from demolition of adjoining buildings to the south in the 1950s.

Facing the Court Hall is another significant timber-framed building at 100-102 High Street. It has projecting crosswings at first floor level, a characteristic of a Wealden hall house. The crosswings have been underbuilt and the original hall has been floored over as was often the case in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of the enclosed fireplace which replaced the open hearth.

Number 88 High Street has a jettied frontage (i.e., the first floor overhangs the ground floor) and is said to date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It has a particularly good moulded oak door surround with a four-centred arch and fanlight above and is unusual for its use of decorative pargetting in the first-floor infill panels.



Court Hall



100-102 High Street



88 High Street

Numbers 82-86 High Street do not look to be timber-framed at first glance but they are a continuation of number 88 High Street so are almost certainly of a similar date. The first-floor jetty is continuous with that of number 88 but it was rendered and given sash windows in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and new shopfronts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

72 High Street is a timber-framed building clad in render and with Victorian sash windows. Its date could be either 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Numbers 68 and 70 both have elaborately carved names and dates above the doors. The inscription above the door of number 70 reads 'Thomas Bradburi 1586', the one above 68 reads 'Rev John Lough 1601'. As both buildings appear to be of the same date of construction the dates are difficult to interpret and may simply refer to the owner at that particular date, rather than the original date of construction.

Like many buildings in Milton Regis, the original timber-framed construction was concealed in the Georgian period when more fashionable sash windows were installed. The arched doors, moulded door surrounds and the dated inscriptions are particularly noteworthy. The use of colour on the elevations is a pleasant relief from the ubiquitous black and white which is a relatively modern fashion. 52 and 52A (Backs House) High Street is said to be named after Humphrey Back who owned it in 1688. This late-medieval building is particularly significant for the survival of an original oak arched feature on the ground floor of 51A, a rare early survival of a shopfront.

44 and 46 High Street are timber-framed but re-fronted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with 12-pane sash windows and render. The elegant 18<sup>th</sup> century shopfront with central door and small-paned bow windows is particularly fine.



86-82 High Street



72, 70 and 68 High Street



52 and 52A High Street Backs House



46 and 44 High Street



**17<sup>th</sup> century**

The smaller number of 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings suggests that Milton was less prosperous and grew more slowly during the period.

By far the most decorative timber-framed elevation in Milton Regis is the early 17<sup>th</sup> century front elevation of 75 and 77 High Street. The 10 light mullion and transom window on the first floor is almost as eye-catching as the decorative timber panelling and the heavily carved brackets supporting the first-floor jetty and the oriel bay window on the second floor. Sadly, the left half of the elevation was re-faced by the Georgians in an attempt to modernise the elevation.

The brick and timber-framed building attached to 65 High Street and including the Olde Shoppe is a good example of post-medieval timber framing. The timbers are smaller, as good oak for building was becoming scarce, the panels are square (rather than vertical), and the infill panels are red brick nogging rather than plaster. The building originally provided stabling for the Crown Inn so there is a carriage opening towards the north of the elevation.

69 High Street is a late 17<sup>th</sup> century 3-storey timber-framed house. In this instance, the timber frame was never designed to be seen as it was concealed behind plaster from day one. The jettied top floor and twin half-hipped roofs are characteristic of the date.



69 High Street



75 and 77 High Street



65 High Street and the Olde Shoppe

**18<sup>th</sup> century**

The number of fine Georgian buildings is testament to the prosperity of Milton Regis during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many timber-framed buildings were simply refaced with more fashionable Georgian elevations whilst others were totally rebuilt, sweeping away any evidence of earlier buildings. New elevations were frequently added with such conviction that it is hard to discern whether there is an earlier building behind the Georgian frontage. Consequently, it is likely that some of the Georgian buildings described below conceal much earlier buildings behind their façade.

Georgian buildings are typically recognisable by the symmetry and proportion of their elevations, by the regular spacing of the windows and by their characteristic use of sash windows and classical architectural details, cornices and doorcases.

Earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century examples at 64-66 High Street and The Three Hats share some characteristics with 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings but the elevations are flat, doing away with the jetties and oriel windows of the previous century (such as 66 High Street above). However, the architectural symmetry, order and rhythm normally associated with Georgian architecture had yet to be achieved. The rooms in the roof and the use of paired half hips gave rise to a distinct and familiar building form.

By the second quarter of the century classical pattern books, by authors such as Batty Langley and James Gibbs, were becoming much more widespread so more classically derived elevations were beginning to appear in Milton Regis and across the country.

Brick, or painted brick, had taken over universally from timber framing or render. Elevations were typically of 3 or 5 bays with a central door approached by a couple of steps. 65 High Street, originally the Crown Inn, is one of many good examples in the conservation area. It consists of a central 6-panel door with a triangular pediment above. Vertically proportioned 4-pane sash windows (originally 12-pane) are





regularly spaced across the elevation. A peg tile roof sits behind a bold eaves cornice.

Early Georgian characteristics which are common to most of the examples illustrated on this page include sash windows which are fitted flush with, or close to the face of the building; steep peg tile roofs; deep eaves cornices with modillions or dentils; and centrally placed panelled doors with a triangular pediment supported on console brackets.

Flush box sash windows are often a good indication that a building pre-dates 1750 because after that date building byelaws generally required sash boxes to be set back and concealed behind the brickwork to reduce the spread of fire.

Two examples of particularly high quality brickwork deserve mention. Header bond brickwork can be seen at 65 and 99 High Street. In these examples grey headers (the header is the short face of the brick) make up the bulk of the elevation but window dressings, arches and first floor bands are executed in contrasting red brickwork. The effect is particularly refined and pleasing to the eye.



115 and 117 High Street



99 High Street



90 and 92 High Street



73 and 73A High Street



80 High Street



104 High Street

As the century progressed fashions changed. Houses still adhered to classical principles of proportion, symmetry and order with a central entrance approached by steps. However, steep roofs, which were not part of the classical tradition in Renaissance classical architecture, were hidden behind tall brick parapets so that they could no longer be seen from street level.

Sash windows were universally recessed behind the brickwork of the elevation and the ratio of window to wall was reduced.

Two late Georgian examples are of particular note. The tall three-storey elevation of Hinde House shows late Georgian restraint but with a fine Ionic doorcase and pediment with attached columns. The other is 5 Crown Road which has a particularly good Tuscan doorcase with attached columns and a pleasing cusped head to the central first floor window.

Number 71 High Street may be early 19<sup>th</sup> century rather than the 18<sup>th</sup> but architecturally it falls well within the Georgian/Regency tradition. It deserves mention not just because of its elegant doorcase and bow window but as an example of mathematical tiling. Mathematical tiling is described in more detail under the heading of building materials below.



Hinde House 60 High Street



67 High Street



5 Crown Road



71 High Street



54 High Street



**19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Milton grew rapidly during the Victorian period to the north on Union Road and to the south on Crown Road, High Street and St Pauls Street. Terraced housing surrounded the town to serve the local brickworks. There are only a small number of Victorian buildings within the conservation area, some of which are illustrated opposite.

Some of the Victorian buildings have suffered in the past from the removal of historic features such as sash windows, panelled doors, and chimney stacks. Others have had their original roof coverings removed and replaced by concrete tiles, or brickwork has been rendered or pebble-dashed. These changes have detracted from the special architectural interest of the conservation area.



48 and 50 High Street



3 Crown Rod



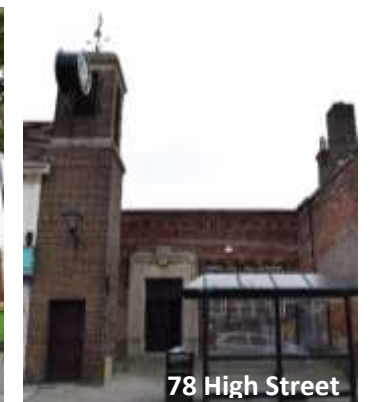
**20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

A number of buildings have been added to Milton Regis during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, some making a positive contribution to its special character and others less so.

The former public library punctuates the High Street with its bell tower, forged weather vane and public clock. Built in 1939 to replace the former town hall, it employs classical detailing but in an architectural composition that is unmistakably of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A plaque at the base of the tower commemorates the casting of the bell in 1631 and the demolition of Milton Town Hall on the site in 1938.1 Cross Street (also known as Court Mews or 106 High Street) is of a similar date but in a more conventional Georgian revival style.



106 High Street



78 High Street

More recent buildings include Tannery Court, Kings Mill Close and 9 to 19 (odd) Crown Road which replaced a petrol filling station. All are successful developments because of the way in which they positively respond to the local vernacular in their form, materials and design.

Where modern developments have used non-indigenous building forms and materials, like pebble dash, uPVC or concrete tiles, they have integrated less well into the character of the town. Developments that are set back from the historic building line at the back of the pavement also appear out of place.



Tannery Court, Kings Mill Close

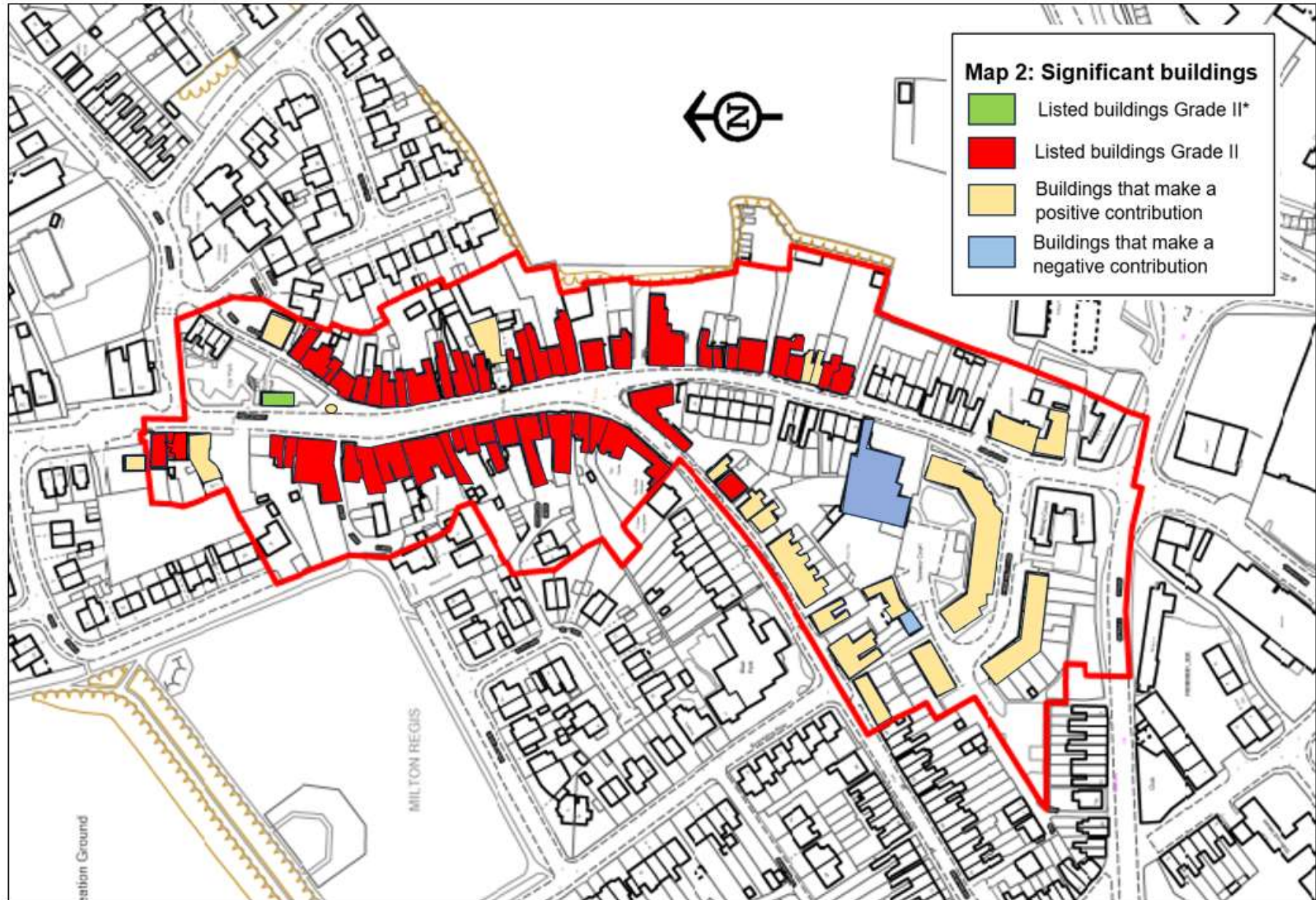


9 to 19 (odd) Crown Road



49 to 59 Crown Road





## 2.5 Shopfronts

Milton Regis has some particularly fine examples of period shopfronts, not all of which are currently used as such. They make a marked contribution to the special character of the town.

The earliest example is the rare survival of a medieval shopfront at 52A High Street (Backs House). The oak arcade with carved spandrels was used to display wares and serve directly onto the street.

Later examples of Georgian and Regency shopfronts have small-paned windows. The example at 42 High Street has small-pane bow windows either side of central doors with elegant pilasters and a decorative fanlight.

Victorian examples, such as that at 72 High Street have much larger panes of glass, framed by pilasters with a fascia and cornice with a recessed entrance and an 'ingo' entrance.

The Edwardian example, at 95 High Street, also has bold pilasters with fluted console brackets at either

end of the fascia sign. Its brown-glazed-tile stall riser, is a good period feature.

All Milton's period shopfronts, whether in use or not, provide an important record of the town's retail history. They are architecturally as well as historically significant.



52a High Street Backs House



42 High Street



72 High Street



95 High Street



## 2.6 Signage

There are some good examples of traditional signage in the conservation area such as the wrought iron pub sign at 91 High Street. However, there are also many poorly designed or executed signs using inappropriate materials or oversized fascia boards which detract from the buildings and the conservation area. Advertising boards placed on the footway and banner signs attached to pedestrian railings do not do the area justice.



## 2.7 Building Materials

The distinct character of Milton Regis owes much to its variety of architectural styles, often expressed through the choice of building materials and the way in which they are crafted. Typically, building materials were used because they were readily available from local sources. Until the transport revolution of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, virtually all building materials would have been locally sourced or made. Consequently, they are often a true expression of the locality and its natural resources. They were also used to express architectural aspirations and changing fashions. Even materials that were in common use at the time, make a valuable contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

In the medieval period, the north of Kent was well served by ancient woodland so it is no surprise that timber-framed construction was used for most of the earlier buildings in Milton Regis. It was only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that good oak for building became harder to source, so brick became the fashionable alternative. Milton Regis was surrounded by some of the best brick earth deposits in the south-east, so brick was used extensively for new buildings and to over-clad older buildings to give them a more up-to-date appearance.

Local clay deposits also provided the raw material for the manufacture of Kent peg tiles which were the preferred choice for roofing until Welsh slate became an option during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly after the railway came to Sittingbourne in 1858. Historically, thatch would almost certainly have appeared on roofs within Milton Regis, but no examples survive today.

With the exception of flint, good building stone had to be imported from afar so it was reserved for higher status buildings like Milton Church (which falls outside the conservation area).

Modern materials, such as concrete roof tiles, pebble dash, machine made bricks and uPVC windows, are less sympathetic materials introduced during the mid to late-20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Timber frame:** Oak, elm and chestnut framing were all commonly used in building construction during the medieval period and up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Many historic buildings in Milton Regis are constructed of timber framing and many others have had their timber frames concealed behind later facades or cladding such as brick, weatherboarding or mathematical tiling. The timber-framed tradition continued in softwood framing well into the Georgian period.



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**Brick:** Brick earth was in plentiful supply in North Kent. The 1897 Ordnance Survey map shows brickworks to the north, west and east of Milton Regis so, not surprisingly, brickwork is a familiar building

material in the town. There is a wide variety in the size, colour, bond and character of brickwork, depending on its age, style or function.

17<sup>th</sup> century bricks are relatively narrow and of irregular shape because of the inconsistency of the firing method. An example can be seen at The Stables on Crown Road.

In the centuries that followed, the shape, size and coursing of brickwork became more regularised and uniform. Yellow stock brickwork was commonly used from the Regency period onwards and the combination of yellow and red brick was sometimes used for polychromatic effect.

There are a couple of examples of burr brickwork (over-fired bricks which fused together in the kiln).





**Mathematical tile:** Mathematical tiles are flanged tiles made from fired clay. They are made so that when hung on a wall, their vertical face is almost indistinguishable from brickwork. They were used in parts of the south-east to provide fashionable elevations to timber-framed buildings during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The front elevation of 71 High Street is a good example.



**Kent peg tiles:** The name 'peg tile' refers to a plain clay tile that is suspended from the top edge of a tiling lath by a peg. Traditionally peg tiles were held in place by a small wooden peg or latterly an aluminium 'drop', wedged into, or passed through one of two holes in the head of the tile. Simple firing methods and local clays produced strong, durable and light peg tiles in warm orange/red terracotta colours. Imperfections in the raw clay, combined with the hand manufacturing process, resulted in a richness and variety in colour and shape. They are renowned for their warm, varied colours and rich texture which cannot be replicated in modern machine-made tiles.

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, locally produced hand-made clay peg tiles were the preferred roof covering for buildings throughout Kent. Tiles continued to be handmade from local clays well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and there are still a handful of manufacturers today. They are a characteristic roofing material in the south-east of England and prominent in the roofs of Milton Regis. Kent peg tile roofs are visually prominent because of their steep pitch (typically steeper than 35 degrees). Tiles are also used as 'tile hanging' on external walls, sometimes with decorative shapes, as seen on the front elevation of 62A High Street.



**Slate:** Slate roofs rarely appear before the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and there are few examples in Milton Regis Conservation Area. The historic examples of slate that survive tend to be on backland structures or rear extensions. They also appear on modern housing developments at Bishop Court and Giles Young Court.

**Weatherboarding:** Painted feather-edged weatherboarding is a traditional walling material in the south-east of England. When used on domestic buildings, weatherboarding tended to be painted white or off-white.



**Render and pargetting:** Painted rendering is a familiar feature of buildings in Milton Regis. Some are scribed with block marks to imitate the effect of ashlar stonework. Render was made from a mix of lime and aggregate. When used decoratively, such as the example at 88 High Street, it is referred to as pargetting.

**Modern building materials:** In recent decades mass-produced building materials such as concrete roof tiles, machine made bricks and uPVC windows have been used within Milton Regis. Almost without exception, the result has been to dilute the special character of the conservation area.

## 2.8 Boundary walls

Boundary walls are an important aspect of the character of Milton Regis Conservation Area. Party boundary walls between rear gardens provide evidence of medieval burgage plot lines. In other locations, such as to the right of Hinde House, garden walls are used to provide continuity to the street frontage as well as privacy to the garden. Some boundary walls are of architectural or historic significance in their own right and some are protected by listing.

## 2.9 Archaeology

Milton Regis has a rich archaeological heritage that extends back into prehistoric times, a heritage that has been influenced by its location at the head of Milton Creek. Early peoples would have been attracted to the Creek and its marshlands to exploit the natural resources available and the sheltered harbour that it provided. There have been a number of prehistoric discoveries around Milton Regis, mostly in the form of worked flints and metal artefacts, but also prehistoric occupation, such as a Mesolithic flint-working site at Hawthorne Road, that lay beneath a Neolithic or Bronze Age enclosure ditch, and an occupation site of the same period from the site of the former Sittingbourne Paper Mill.

As elsewhere on the north Swale coastline, the opportunities offered by a creek that extended towards the main Roman road provided for the transport of goods to, from and through the county and has resulted in a rich Roman landscape. A possible villa lies within the grounds of Holy Trinity Church on the edge of the marshlands. Modelling of sediments under Church Marshes suggests that a channel from the creek extended towards the villa and a possible wharf. Numerous Roman burial sites have been found on the land flanking both sides of the Creek and there is scattered evidence for Romano-British occupation around the town of Milton Regis. These include several small cremation cemeteries including at what is now Tribune Drive, behind the White Hart Inn and at Eurolink Way. Within



the Conservation Area, an Iron Age or Romano-British cremation and possible inhumation burials were found in 1957 at the north-east corner of the Court Hall.

By Saxon times a royal estate centre, *villa regalis*, was established at Milton probably focused around the villa at Holy Trinity Church. Anglo-Saxon burial is well evidenced around the town. Within the conservation area a 4<sup>th</sup> century glass bowl within an Anglo-Saxon grave was found behind The Three Hats in 1905. Several Anglo-Saxon burials have been found in the vicinity at Brickfields, along London Road, on Eurolink Way, at Cook's Lane and on the High Street. The Saxon town probably developed as an important trading harbour extending from the Creek at the southern end of the High Street towards Holy Trinity Church in the north. Although no evidence has yet been found of the Saxon town, the royal connections, the presence of a minster church, its probable market suggested by the Domesday Book and its harbour on the Creek through which continental objects found on archaeological sites in the town may have been imported suggest a settlement of importance. This was underlined with its sacking by the Danish Vikings in AD 893 and again by Earl Godwin in 1052, events recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles.

The town was an important trading centre throughout medieval times with its harbour on the Creek and a market developing within the town. The conservation area reflects the core of the historic town with tenement plots either side of the High Street. Medieval buildings survive within the conservation area and it is possible that archaeological remains relating to the development of the medieval town survive throughout the town both as buried deposits and as fabric within the historic buildings.

The town continued to flourish as a coastal trading port until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Exports of grain, fruit and timber were added to by the brick industry that grew around the towns and Sittingbourne and Milton Regis. The coming of the railway eventually resulted in the pre-

eminence of Sittingbourne with Milton Regis being subsumed into its suburbs. The present High Street includes many buildings of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century date including several that are listed. Some of these are significant in their own right but there is also potential for later structures to hide earlier cores, or for earlier archaeological remains to be present beneath the ground.

Very few archaeological investigations have so far been undertaken within Milton Regis and its immediate surroundings. Consequently, little is known about the extent of surviving archaeological sub-surface deposits. The rebuilding and growth of the town in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and its absorption by Sittingbourne, may well have led to widespread destruction of sub-surface archaeological deposits, but some may have survived under domestic buildings and in those areas that have not been cellared.

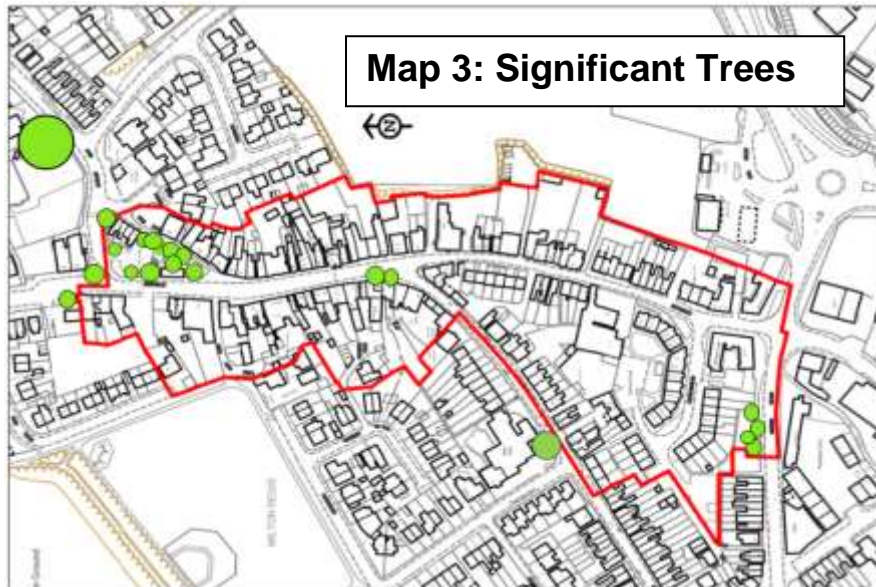
Should medieval stratigraphy survive, it may be comparatively thin and not far below present ground surface but if areas of intact medieval and earlier stratigraphy can be located they would help to establish the evolution and development of the town. Recording and analysis of the historic buildings within the town could also provide new understanding of the development and character of the early town. Many of the archaeological findings in the surroundings were made as chance discoveries in the extensive brickfield excavations though formal investigations are adding more detail to the early picture.

## 2.10 Trees and landscaping

Trees are not historic features in the Milton Regis townscape. However, those that exist today around the Court Hall and at the junction of Crown Road and High Street provide important visual amenity as well as obvious biodiversity benefits. They enhance views along the High Street and they soften the effect of the continuous built-up urban frontages.

Trees that have significant amenity value in Milton Regis Conservation Area are indicated on Map 3 below.

There are a number of public trees within the conservation area which are in need management and maintenance. Those outside 69 High Street, currently obscure the building and could damage it if not cut back. There are also empty tree pits and a dead tree stump in the vicinity of the Court Hall which give the impression of neglect. Grass landscaped areas around the Court Hall car park are poorly maintained.





## 2.11 The public realm and the highway

Crown Road, High Street and Cross Lane are important public spaces. They are where most people experience and enjoy the conservation area from.

The road layout was set out several hundred years ago so it is of historic significance in its own right. The footways and kerb-lines were not set out until the Victorian period but they too have historic significance, particularly where they provide evidence of pavement crossings or coaching accesses which are no longer in use.

Street furniture, including the post box, street lights, benches, bollards, cycle storage and railings are generally well designed and sensitively located. The floral hanging baskets also look good, they show a high level of pride in the town and are a credit to those who promote them. Where original boot-scrapers or coal hole covers survive on the footway, they are historic features which should be preserved.

However, commercial and domestic waste bins are an overly obtrusive feature in the conservation area, particularly when left on the footway.

Overhead telephone cables and poles are still present in parts of the conservation area but fortunately they are not overly obtrusive.

Repaving works carried out by Swale Borough Council in 1998 using York stone with granite kerbs and channels have stood the test of time well. They illustrate the value of using high quality traditional paving materials. At the same time, the cast iron water fountain was restored and returned to its original location outside the Court Hall. The soft landscaped areas around the Court Hall and the surfacing to the car park have fared less well and have been poorly maintained in recent years.



With some exceptions public spaces in Milton Regis have a durable and uncluttered appearance which contributes positively to the character of the place.

## 2.12 Significant views

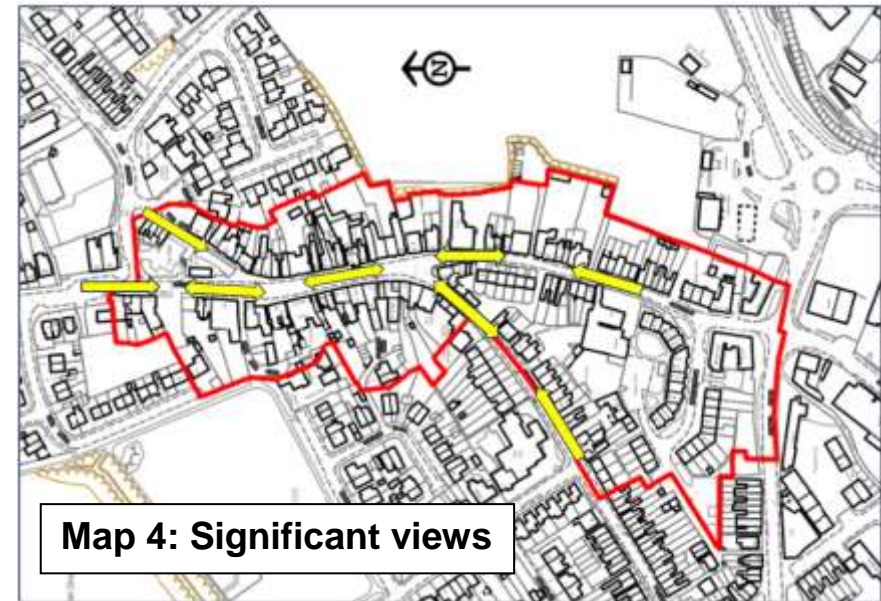
Views typically contribute to the way in which the character or appearance of a place is experienced and appreciated. Identifying significant views allows the contribution they make to be protected and enables the effective management of development in and around those views.

Significant views in Milton Regis are confined and channeled by building frontages so they are linear. Views up and down Crown Road and the lower part of the High Street (south of its junction with Crown Road) emphasise the elevated position of the town. Changes in inclination and the curve in the line of the roads, provide changing vistas as one progresses along the street and there is a sense of anticipation as one reaches the top of the hill.

Views along the upper part of High Street are also confined by buildings. Features such as the clock tower, the Court Hall and other landmark buildings provide punctuation whilst adding visual interest and variety.

The conservation area is typically inward looking, so there are no significant views looking out from the town. Neither are there any significant views of the town from the surrounding areas.

Significant views in Milton Regis Conservation Area are indicated on Map 4 opposite.



**Map 4: Significant views**



High Street looking north towards the clock tower

### 3.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Milton Regis is a place with a distinct identity derived from its long history and development over many centuries. The town shows positive signs of civic pride in many of the buildings that are well maintained, in the Court Hall Museum which is managed by the local community and in the floral displays.

Its early history, its royal connections, and its position of governance through the court leet and court baron are of particular historic interest. Less significant, but still of interest, is the town's prosperity during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries arising from the port of Milton Creek, with brick manufacturing, oyster dredging, milling and cement works.

The rich variety in architectural styles and the tight-knit urban frontages, are a defining feature of the town. Local building materials are strongly in evidence, including timber framing, brickwork, mathematical tiles, painted render/pargetting, feather-edged weatherboarding, Kent peg tiles and slate roofing. The variety and juxtaposition of these locally sourced and distinct building materials contribute significantly to the special character and appearance of the place.

The conservation area has served its purpose well since it was first designated 46 years ago. The key characteristics that gave rise to its designation in 1977 are still present. As such Milton Regis continues to be an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There is no doubt that it should continue to be a designated conservation area.

That is not to say that steps could not be taken to better manage the area and to encourage more pride in it. These are outlined in the management strategy below.

#### Key positive characteristics:

The special character of Milton Regis Conservation Area may be summarised as follows:

- Historically Milton Regis has royal connections being owned by the Crown. Consequently, it held a position of governance and authority in North Kent.
- It was a wealthy town as a result of trade on Milton Creek, and creek-related businesses such as milling, oyster dredging, fishing, as well as brick manufacturing and cement production. Its commercial prosperity contributed to the quality of many of its buildings.
- It has a strong visual identity arising from its distinct mix of buildings and its topography. Of particular note are the Court Hall, 75 to 77 High Street and several good quality Georgian houses.
- The eclectic mix of traditional building styles, forms and vernacular building materials, all express the history and development of the town. Period shopfronts make their distinct contribution.
- The town centre retains a good number of shops, pubs and restaurants which are valuable to the town and contribute to its character and vitality.
- Historic shopfronts, some of which are not used as such, provide evidence of historic commercial activity.
- Urban trees contribute to character and amenity.



All conservation areas have some negative as well as positive characteristics. Identifying negative characteristics allows those responsible for managing change to focus on improving the area and enhancing its special character.

**Key negative characteristics:**

- The occasional use of mass-produced non-indigenous building materials such as uPVC windows, fibre cement weatherboarding or concrete roof tiles, which tend to dilute local character and distinctiveness.
- There are a number of telegraph poles and overhead cables.
- The extensive use of concrete highway kerbs and concrete paving in those areas that have not been repaved.
- Domestic and commercial waste bins are often left on the footway causing physical and visual obstruction.
- Underuse of some buildings and poor building maintenance detracts from character and poses a threat to some buildings.
- Public landscaping and tree management has been neglected. Decoration and maintenance of public railings has been neglected.
- Poor and unauthorised shop signage.

Part of the review process involved an assessment of whether the conservation area boundaries are correctly drawn and whether the area should be extended or reduced in size. Generally, the line of the boundary was found to be relevant and appropriate. There are no

recommendations to significantly extend or reduce the size of the conservation area. However, there are several areas where minor changes are proposed so that the line more accurately reflects the position on the ground. These minor proposed changes are detailed in appendix 1.



The Court Hall (right) was surrounded by cottages and shops until they were demolished in the 1950s



## 4.0 MILTON REGIS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Conservation Area designation is not an end in itself. It is a way of recognising the special architectural or historic character of an area so that appropriate steps can be taken to preserve or enhance it.

Conservation is not about preventing change: Milton Regis Conservation Area is part of a living community and change is needed to sustain and meet its future needs. It is about positively managing change so that what the community cherishes today can be properly looked after and passed on to future generations in good condition.

This management strategy is intended to encourage active involvement in the future management of Milton Regis Conservation Area. It provides an opportunity for the Borough Council, local amenity groups, Kent Highways, Kent County Council, individual householders and local businesses to take part in positively managing the area.

In the case of Milton Regis, the management strategy is also intended to provide a framework to see the conservation area removed from the Heritage at Risk Register by suggesting positive steps which can be taken to address the risks and improve its condition.

### 4.1 Statutes, policies and guidance

When a conservation area is designated, there is a planning framework in place to positively control development proposals, alterations, signage and highway works. The framework includes statutes, planning policies, regulations and guidance which collectively govern which types of development require planning permission and the way that the local planning authority undertakes

plan making and decision taking. The statutes and policies that directly affect designated conservation areas are outlined in appendix 4.

The local planning authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising all of its planning functions.

A key element of planning policy is the Swale Borough Local Plan which includes policies specifically relating to conservation areas and heritage conservation.

The Swale Borough Local Plan aims to ensure that the significance of Milton Regis Conservation Area is sustained and enhanced through:

- Preserving or enhancing the area's special character or appearance.
- Preserving or enhancing the setting of the conservation area and of other designated heritage assets.
- Safeguarding and better revealing the significance of any archaeology.
- Protection and enhancement of landmarks and significant views or vistas within and without the conservation area.
- Safeguarding non-designated heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the significance of the area.
- Safeguarding significant spaces.
- Safeguarding significant trees.
- Promoting high quality design in new development which responds positively to context and to the distinct character of the conservation area.
- Continued sensitive management of the public realm.
- Requiring new development to respond positively to the Conservation Area Character Appraisal,

There is also a wealth of published guidance on positively managing change in conservation areas. Swale Borough Council has published adopted supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which are listed in appendix 4. Historic England has published a range of guidance and advice notes which are listed in the bibliography.

## 4.2 Householder alterations

Where householder alterations are proposed which require planning permission the Council is required to ensure that those alterations enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

However, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified some alterations which have involved the removal of historic features such as traditional sash windows, doors, roof coverings and demolition of chimney stacks. These alterations are harmful to character, particularly so when they affect a symmetrical pair or a terrace, where the impact of ill-considered alterations can be more obvious.

Many minor alterations to unlisted residential buildings can be undertaken without the need for planning permission but the cumulative impact to historic and/or traditional properties, can have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Opportunities to reinstate missing architectural features (such as sash windows, panelled doors or original roof coverings and traditional boundary treatments) will be encouraged by the Council and, where appropriate, may be requested in relation to planning applications for extensions and/or alterations.

In light of the above, Swale Borough Council may consider the use of an Article 4 Direction to bring some householder alterations which are

currently classed as permitted development under planning control, to ensure that alterations are positively managed through the planning system.

Householder alterations which could be brought under control by an Article 4 Direction in Milton Regis Conservation Area include the following:

- Replacement windows and doors.
- Changes to roof coverings.
- Removal of chimney stacks.
- The installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the front wall or roof slope of buildings.
- Installing rooflights in the front roof slope.
- Alterations to or demolition of fences, railings and boundary walls.
- Adding a front porch

## 4.3 Commercial signage

Swale Borough Council has adopted supplementary planning guidance on the Design of Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements. It provides good advice to those looking to advertise their shops or services. However, the appraisal has identified many examples of signs and advertisements which do not conform to the guidance, some appear to have been erected without the required advertisement consent or listed building consent.

More proactive development management of new or replacement signs and of planning enforcement requiring the removal of unauthorised signs and advertisements by the local planning authority and the highway authority is recommended. Such active steps could achieve a considerable improvement. However, if

additional controls are considered necessary then the council could consider the use of Areas of Special Advertisement control.



#### 4.4 Unauthorised alterations/enforcement

The conservation area review revealed that alterations to buildings carried out without planning permission (or listed building consent) pose a small but meaningful threat to the character of the conservation area.

An essential component of any conservation area management strategy, is an effective planning enforcement strategy which prioritises enforcement action relating to heritage conservation.

#### 4.4 Swale local heritage list

Arising from Swale's adopted Heritage Strategy 2020-2032, the Borough Council is compiling a Local Heritage List in order to identify heritage assets which are not formally designated.

The Local Heritage List:

- raises awareness of an area's local heritage assets and their importance to local distinctiveness;
- informs developers, owners, council officers and members about buildings within the local authority boundary that are desirable to retain and protect;
- provides guidance and specialist advice to owners to help protect the character and setting of those buildings, structures, sites and landscapes;
- helps the council in its decision making when discussing proposals and determining planning applications; and
- records the nature of the local historic environment more accurately.

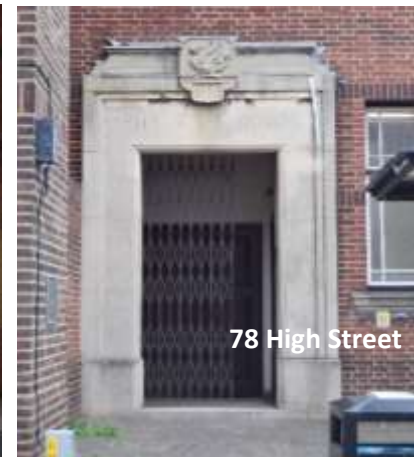


The impact of any development on a building or site included within the Local Heritage List will be a material consideration when the council considers an application for planning permission.

Several buildings in Milton Regis Conservation Area may be eligible for inclusion within the Swale Local Heritage List, including the following:

- 10-14 High Street
- 78 High Street (former public library)
- 1 Cross Lane (Court Mews) (also referred to as 106 High Street)
- The cast iron water fountain to the south of the Court Hall

Buildings that are already protected because they fall within the curtilage of a listed building, are excluded from the list.



## 4.5 The Public realm

The public realm includes all those areas that fall between the buildings and are accessible to and enjoyed by the public. In Milton Regis, the public realm makes a significant positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. The highway, the public footpaths and the area around the Court Hall all fall within the public realm.

**Highway improvements.** In conservation areas, it is especially necessary to guard against standard highway ‘improvements’ which do not necessarily respect the special character of the place. The injudicious use of concrete kerbs, street lighting, off-the-shelf road signs, bollards or traffic calming measures, frequently detract from the special character of an area. All future highway maintenance, improvements and alterations should be carried out in accordance with *Streets for All*, Historic England (2018) and *Highway Works and Heritage Assets: the Kent Protocol for Highway Works in Relation to Designated Heritage Assets*, KCC and KCOG (2011). Both provide advice on good practice for highway and public realm works in historic places. Early consultation with all stakeholders (including Swale Borough Council’s Conservation and Design Team) will be fundamental to achieving appropriate standards.

The KCC Highways Asset Management and Inspections Team has prepared a draft Highway Works and Heritage Assets Protocol which has yet to be finalised and go through consultation.

**Highway signs and street furniture.** Restrained use of highway signing and road markings is also critically important to the character of the conservation area. Where signs, road markings, street furniture, salt bins, rubbish bins or utility boxes are deemed necessary, they should be located and designed sensitively and in consultation with the local community.





The blue and white enameled street name sign 'The Cross' mounted on 104 High Street is an important survival from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It could be used as a pattern for the production of other street signs within the conservation area.



**Paving.** The proper maintenance and upkeep of Milton's York stone paving, granite kerbs and channels are fundamental to the future sensitive management of the town.

**Overhead cables and telegraph poles.** Where possible, opportunities should be taken to investigate the removal of redundant overhead cables and reducing the number of poles. Undergrounding of services is a long-term objective.

**Trees and landscaping.** There are several public trees within the conservation area which are in need proper management. There are also empty tree pits and a dead tree stump which give the impression that the area is being neglected. Grass areas around the Court Hall car park were poorly maintained at the time of the appraisal.



Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council should seek to ensure that the public realm is sensitively and actively managed.

Public realm: The following opportunities for enhancement have been identified as part of the appraisal process:

- An audit of public signage (including highway signage) could be undertaken to establish whether all current signage and road markings are necessary, well designed and appropriately located.
- An audit of street furniture (bollards, benches, bins, salt bins, bus stops etc.) could be undertaken to establish whether all street furniture is necessary, well designed and appropriately located. It could also identify maintenance and repairs that are required.
- An audit of overhead supply lines and poles could be undertaken with the statutory undertakers to establish whether there is any scope to remove overhead cables or poles or to relocate services underground.
- An audit of trees could be undertaken to establish a proper management regime and identify opportunities for planting new or replacement trees.
- Consideration could be given to the replacement of concrete highway kerbs with more traditional kerbs.
- An enforcement audit could be undertaken to ensure that commercial and waste bins and signboards are not left on footways.
- Railings around the Court Hall car park as well as the cast iron water fountain are in need of redecoration.

## 4.6 New development opportunities

Potential for new development within Milton Regis Conservation Area is extremely limited. If proposals for development come forward, they will be considered against local and national planning policies which attach great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area or other heritage asset may also affect their heritage significance. The local planning authority is required to pay special attention to preserving the setting of the conservation area (or the setting of any listed buildings) in any plan making or decision taking.

Two sites which have potential to enhance the character of the area if they came forward for redevelopment include the workshop at 35 High Street and the site located between 99 High Street and 111 High Street.



## 4.7 Heritage at risk

Currently there are no buildings in Milton Regis on Historic England's or Swale Borough Council's Heritage at Risk Register. However, Milton Regis Conservation Area has been on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register since 2016. Its condition is noted as 'poor', its vulnerability as 'medium' and its trend as 'deteriorating'.

The Heritage at Risk Register along with information about Historic England's role, the advice and funding available, and useful publications and guidance are available on their website. The following information is taken from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register:

"The Heritage at Risk Register includes historic buildings and sites that are at risk of loss through neglect, decay or development, or are vulnerable to becoming so. It includes all types of designated heritage assets, including Conservation Areas, which are designated by Local Planning Authorities.

"The aim of the Register is to focus attention on those places in greatest need. Historic England in partnership with others, is able to help tackle heritage at risk. We work with owners, friends' groups, developers and other stakeholders to find imaginative solutions for historic places and sites at risk across England.

"Once a year Historic England asks every local authority in England to consider the state of its conservation areas and fill in (and update as appropriate) risk assessment questionnaires for those that cause concern or are believed to no longer be at risk.

"Conservation areas that are deteriorating or are in very bad or poor condition and not expected to change significantly in the next three years are defined as being at risk. Categories for condition, vulnerability and trend are included for each conservation area on the Heritage at Risk Register.

"The approach taken to assess conservation areas at risk has been refined since the first survey in 2008/2009. Conservation areas identified as at risk in 2009 but not reassessed since using the revised methodology are included on the Register but with limited information. Conservation area entries are

removed from the Register once issues have been identified, plans put in place to address them, and positive progress is being made."

At Milton Regis, the first step of 'identifying the issues' has been addressed in this conservation area character appraisal. A key reason for carrying out the appraisal is to identify any issues or threats to the conservation area. The second step 'putting plans in place to address them' is the subject of the Management Strategy in section 4 above. The third step, which is fundamental to seeing Milton Regis removed from the Heritage at Risk Register, is making positive progress towards implementing the recommendations in the Management Strategy.

Historic England's assessment of Milton's condition as 'poor' and 'deteriorating' is not unreasonable. It accords with some of the





findings in this appraisal. The appraisal has identified specific buildings and some other aspects of the conservation area that are in poor condition or poorly managed. In particular the following buildings are in particularly poor condition:

- 46 High Street
- 65 High Street
- 95 High Street
- 5 Crown Road

Placing these buildings on the Swale Heritage at Risk Register would ensure that their condition can be monitored and that steps can be taken to remove any threat. In such circumstances the Council would notify respective owners and, where appropriate, work with them and other stakeholders to investigate opportunities for removing the risk and securing the buildings' future.

The 'at risk' buildings are typically in private ownership, requiring repair and investment to remove the real threat posed by under use, decay and deterioration. Swale Borough Council could consider approaching owners to discuss how issues of neglect and deterioration could be addressed. The next step would be to consider using statutory powers to achieve the repair of the buildings in the public interest. The statutory powers available to the Council include Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices, Section 215 Notices and ultimately Compulsory Purchase.

There are also public spaces which have been identified as requiring more active management, including the following:

- Tree management
- Landscape management
- Bins and commercial signage on footways

Tree and landscape management are areas for the appropriate authority (SBC or KCC) to address. The bin and commercial signage problem on the footway is an enforcement issue (SBC or KCC).



The challenge of dealing with the areas of risk and poor condition should not be underestimated. However, by actively implementing the recommendations in the Management Strategy in section 4 there is every prospect of having the conservation area removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register within the foreseeable future.

It should be noted that the buildings, trees and landscaping that require attention contrast vividly with the many buildings and areas of landscaping which are in good or excellent condition. They demonstrate that despite isolated problems there is still a high level of pride in the town.

#### 4.8 Monitoring and review

An important component of any conservation area management strategy is monitoring and review. The Council should periodically review progress on the proposals in the Management Strategy.

As part of the review process, it is recommended that:

- A baseline photographic record of the buildings and spaces be undertaken.
- A register of enforcement cases be maintained and monitored.
- Statutory list addresses be checked and, where necessary, updated.
- Conservation area boundaries should be checked periodically and, where appropriate updated, to ensure that they are still relevant.

Having completed this Character Appraisal and Management Strategy, future appraisal should be a routine process so long as monitoring takes place in the intervening period.



95 High Street



## APPENDIX 1

### Proposed changes to the boundary of Milton Regis Conservation Area

Part of the appraisal process involved an assessment of the current conservation area boundary and consideration of whether the boundary is still relevant or whether it should be extended or reduced. Minor changes to the boundary are proposed as follows and are shown and cross-referenced to Map 5 on page 42:

#### Proposed boundary change A, B1, B2, B3 and C

Proposed boundary changes at A, B1, B2, B3 and C are simply to more accurately reflect existing property boundary lines which may have changed over time.

#### Proposed boundary change D

Proposed boundary change D is to extend the conservation area to include the workshop attached to the north of 117 High Street and its boundary wall which is constructed of burr brickwork. Whilst the building, which was originally a forge, has undergone changes over the years it still retains its original shape and materials. It forms a strong group with 113 to 117 High Street which are listed buildings.



#### Proposed boundary change E

Proposed boundary change E, is to remove the access track which runs between the rear of 93 and 95 High Street and Walnut Court from the conservation area. The boundary currently bisects the bungalow at 2 Walnut Court so it too should be removed from the conservation area.



#### Proposed boundary change F

Proposed boundary change F is to remove land at the rear of 71 to 87 High Street as well as a group of flat roofed garages and 3 and 4 Cortland Mews from the conservation area. The area appears to fall outside the original burgage plots and the modern buildings are of no architectural interest.



**Proposed boundary change G**

Proposed boundary change G, is to extend the conservation area marginally to include the retaining wall which fronts Crown Road between number 14 and its junction with Beechwood Avenue. The wall is constructed of local yellow stock brickwork and is a significant feature in the street.



**Proposed boundary change H**

Proposed boundary change H is to remove from the conservation area the car park in the backland triangle between Crown Road and St Pauls Street. The area has no intrinsic architectural or historic interest so does not fit well within the conservation area.



**Proposed boundary change I**

Proposed boundary change I, is to include all of the grass and the public footpath adjacent to the east of number 4 St Pauls Road within the conservation area. The boundary currently includes only part of the grass area to the rear of 16 to 26 Kings Mill Close and the proposal is to include all of it.







## APPENDIX 2 Old maps



Saxton's map of Kent 1575





Page 458

Andrews, Dury and Herbert topographical map of the county of Kent  
1769





Captain William Mudge's map of Kent c.1801



Ordnance Surveyor's field drawing for 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map c.1800

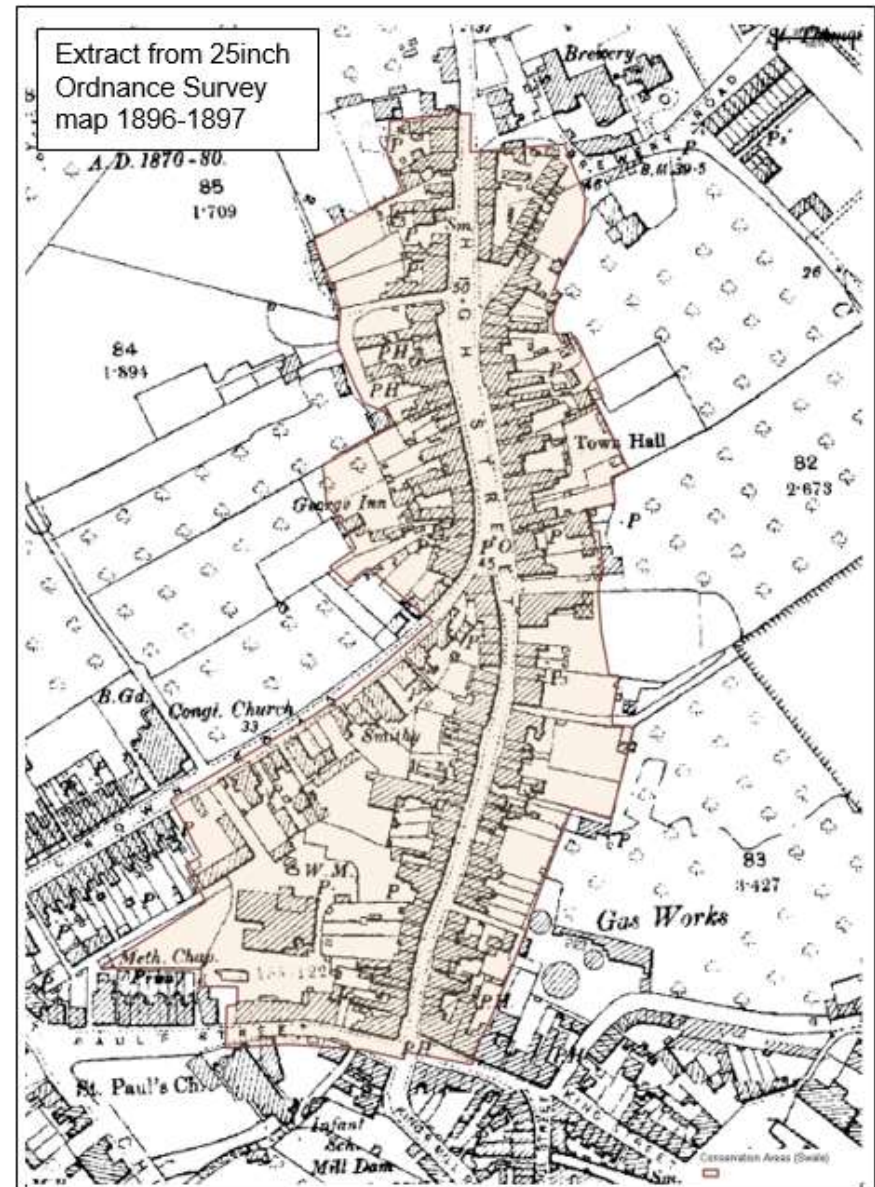




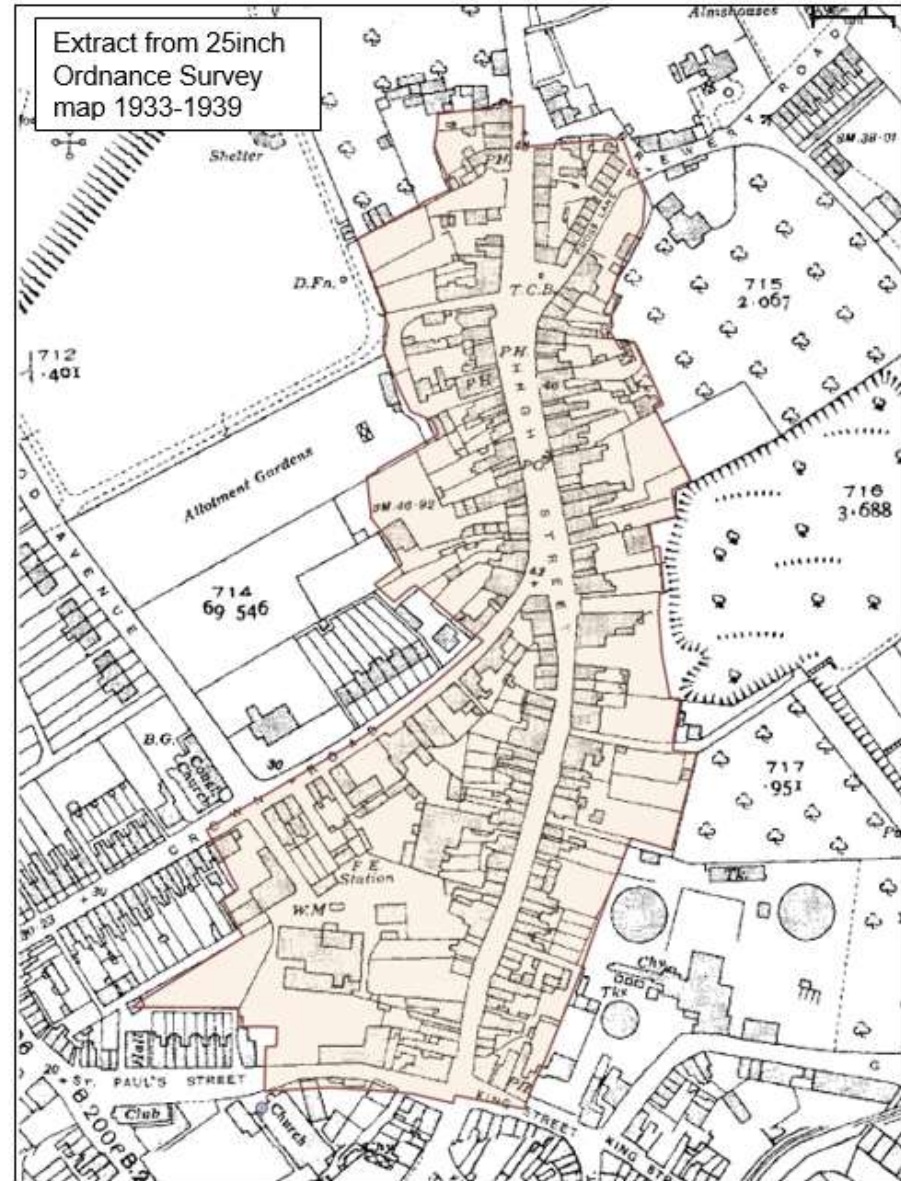
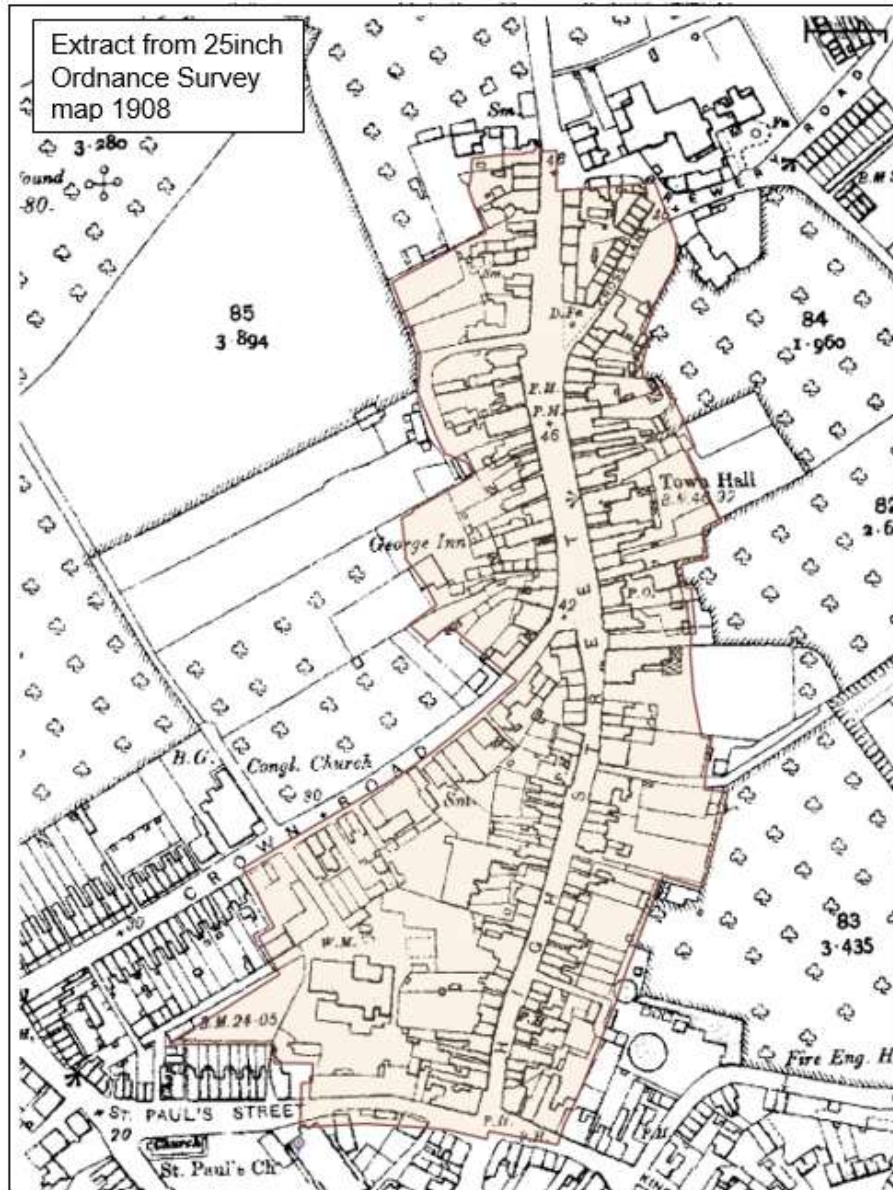
Extract from the Tythe Commissioners map 1841



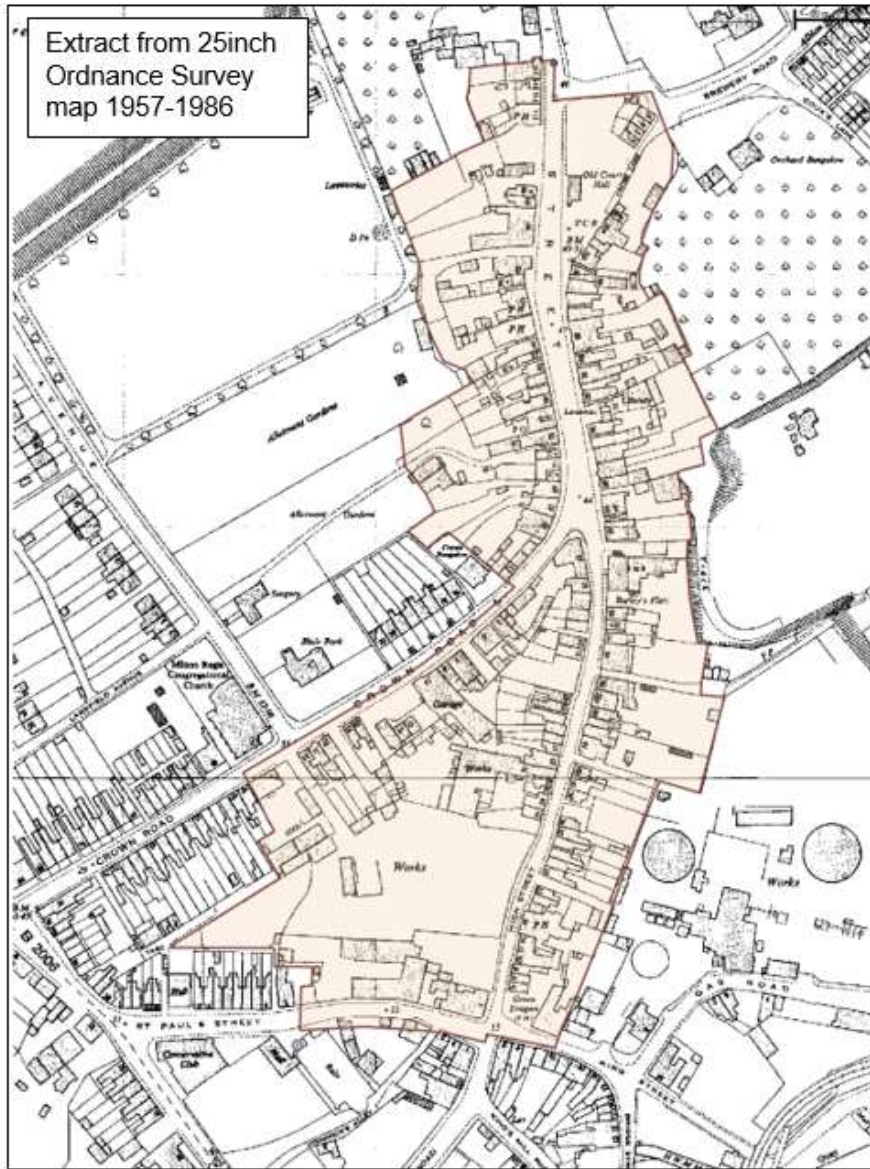












## APPENDIX 3

### Extracts from the National Heritage List for England (the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest)

The statutory list for Milton Regis is compiled by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and is altered and amended from time to time as buildings are added or removed from the list. The list descriptions below are taken from the statutory list and were current in September 2021. For more detailed and up to date information please refer to the National Heritage List for England at [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list).

Features and structures which are not specifically mentioned in the statutory list are not necessarily excluded from statutory protection which extends to the listed building as well as to any object or structure fixed to the building and to any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which predates July 1948.

The omission of a building from this list should not necessarily be taken to indicate that it is not listed without first referring to the National Heritage List.

#### **63, HIGH STREET** Grade II

A timber-framed house largely refronted in C18. 2 storeys. South portion all painted brick, the remainder painted brick on the ground floor only, above plastered with a moulded cornice between concealing a bressumer beneath. Tiled roof with dentilled eaves cornice. 4 sashes with glazing bars intact. The North and West fronts have overhanging gables with carved bargeboards and a carved bracket between them with 1 window in each.

#### **NO 65 INCLUDING THE BUILDING (FORMER STABLES) ADJOINING ON THE SOUTH WEST, HIGH STREET** Grade II

Formerly the Crown Inn. C18 front to a probable timber-framed building. 2 storeys grey headers with red brick window dressings, quoins, stringcourse and vertical strips. Tiled roof with parapet and wooden modillion eaves cornice. 5 sashes with glazing bars missing. Doorcase in moulded architrave surround with pediment over supported on brackets and door of 6 fielded panels, the top 2 panels cut away and glazed. Modern shop front to the right of this. Adjoining on the south-west is a building that was formerly the stables of the inn. This is a fine 2 storey timber-framed building with red brick infilling on the 1st floor which oversails on the protruding ends of the floor joists. The ground floor is red brick with 6 pilasters. 3 original but unglazed windows on the 1st floor with wooden mullions and one C18 bay, with glazing bars intact, at the north-east end. Carriage archway beneath this with curved braces and double doors. Small modern shop window at the other end of the building.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west Nos 67 to 71 (odd). 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A, 89 to 95 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.



**67 HIGH STREET** Grade II

3 storeys red brick. Cornice and parapet. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact above ground floor. Modern shop front. Grade II for group value.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd) 87A, 89 to 95 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**69, HIGH STREET** Grade II

A tall timber-framed house with plastered front, the 2nd floor oversailing on a moulded bressumer and brackets. 3 storeys. Tiled

roof. 2 half-hipped gables. 2 modern sashes on 2nd floor. 2 small bays on the 1st floor with glazing bars missing. Modern shop front.

65 including the building adjoining on the south-west Nos 67 to 71, odd 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd) 87A, 89 to 95 (odd) 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**71 AND 71A, HIGH STREET** Grade II

Early C19 building. 2 storeys white brick. Parapet and dentilled cornice. 2 sashes with glazing bars intact. Small 2-light curved window on ground floor with glazing bars intact. Doorcase in needed architrave surround with projecting cornice over and door of 6 moulded panels.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west. Nos 67 to 71. (odd). 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A, 89 to 95 (Odd). 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**73 AND 73A, HIGH STREET** Grade II

Formerly the George Inn. C18 front. 2 storeys painted brick. Tiled roof with wooden eaves cornice. 6 sashes without glazing bars but having architraves to ground floor windows. Modern shop front. To the south of the yard behind is an L-wing timber-framed but now fronted with weatherboarding. 2 storeys. Tiled roof. 3 gables with moulded bargeboards. 3 casement windows.

No 65 including the build adjoining on the south-west Nos 67 to 71 odd 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 odd 87A, 89 to 95 (odd) 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**75 HIGH STREET, THE HIGH HOUSE, 77 HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building. An unusual timber-framed building. 3 storeys. Steeply pitched tiled roof. The ground floor consists of a modern shop front and an early C19 doorcase with thin pilasters, projecting cornice and rectangular tympanum. The 1st floor oversails on a moulded bressumer and carved brackets with ornamental square timber-work between the latter. The right half formed by a continuous window of 2 tiers of 10 lights with wooden mullions and transom, the left half plastered with one sash window with glazing bars missing. Moulded cornice above the 1st floor. The left half of the 2nd floor is similar to the 1st floor with glazing bars missing in the window. The right half has ornamental squares of timber-work and an oriel window of 2 tiers of 5 lights with wooden mullions and transom projecting on 3 carved brackets. On each side of this oriel window is one small 2-light fixed window.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd) 87A, 89 to 95 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**79 and 81, HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building formerly the Red Lion Inn. A timber-framed building refaced in the early C19. Two storeys and attics stuccoed. Steep slate roof with one dormer. Two sashes with glazing bars intact on the first floor which also has a round panel in the centre. Modern shop fronts.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71(odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A, 89 to 95 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**83-87 AND 87A HIGH STREET** Grade II

Timber-framed houses, refronted with red brick in C18. 2 storeys painted brick. Tiled roofs. 4 sashes with glazing bars intact. Modern shop fronts, except to No 87.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A, 89 to 95 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.



**89, HIGH STREET (The White Hart Inn), and 91, HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building timber-framed rebuilt in early C19. Two storeys painted brick. Hipped tiled roof with wooden modillion eaves cornice. Five sashes with glazing bars intact. Modern shop window and public house front. Passage through the ground floor between these with the timber-framing visible in the south wall of this.



No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**THE THREE HATS INN, HIGH STREET Grade II**

A timber-framed building, refronted in C18. 3 storeys painted brick, the ground floor stuccoed. Tiled roof in 2 half-hips. 2 sashes with glazing bars intact above ground floor. Modern public house front to ground floor.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.



**95 AND 95A, HIGH STREET Grade II**

No 95A is the back portion of No 95 but part of the same building. The street frontage of No 95 is L-shaped and the projection is of later date than the remainder. The original portion is timber-framed refronted in the C18, the projection probably early C19. 2 storeys and attics painted brick. Tiled roof with 2 hipped dormers. Wooden eaves cornice. 4 sashes with glazing bars intact. The original portion has a stringcourse and a doorcase with pilasters, projecting cornice, semi-circular fanlight and door of 6 moulded panels. The projection has a modern shop front and a curved window on the 1st floor. No 95A is reached by a left side passageway.

No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A 89 to 95 (odd), 95A, 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**97 AND 97A, HIGH STREET Grade II**

C18. 2 parallel ranges. 2 storeys and attics formerly grey headers with red brick window dressings, stringcourse and vertical strips, now of painted brick. Tiled roof. Wooden eaves cornice. 3 double sashes with glazing bars missing. Altered doorcase and modern shop front. The rear elevation has 2 triple sashes.

Nos 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 71A, 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A, 89 to 95 (odd), 97, 97A, 99 and 99A form a group.

**99 AND 99A, HIGH STREET Grade II**

C18. 2 parallel ranges. 2 storeys and attics grey headers with red brick window dressings, quoins and architraves over the ground floor windows. Tiled roof with 2 hipped dormers 3 sashes with glazing bars intact. Doorcase in moulded architrave surround with pediment over supported by brackets and door of 6 fielded panels,



No 65 including the building adjoining on the south-west, Nos 67 to 71 (odd), 7]A. 73, 73A, 75 to 87 (odd), 87A. 89 to 95 (Odd), 95A, 97, 97A. 99 and 99A form a group.

**117 HIGH STREET** Grade II

A timber-framed house with the left half of its 1st floor Jettied, the right half now underbuilt. Ground floor painted brick, above plastered. Steeply- pitched hipped tiled roof. 2 sash windows with glazing bars intact.

Nos 113 to 117 (odd) form a group.



**113 AND 115 HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building, timber-framed, refronted in C18. 2 storeys. Ground floor painted brick, above plastered, with cornice between in place of a bressumer. Tiled roof with heavy modillion eaves cornice. 5 sashes

in wide architrave surrounds with glazing bars intact. Doorcase in moulded architrave surround with pediment over supported on brackets. Some trace of timbering visible in the North gable end,

Nos 113 to 117 (odd) form a group.

**52 HIGH STREET, BACKS HOUSE, 52A HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building, timber-framed, refronted in C18 but retaining the overhang of the 1st floor on a bressumer. 2 storeys stuccoed. Tiled roof. 4 sashes with glazing bars intact including a bay on the ground floor and 2 curved shop windows. Doorcase in a fluted architrave surround with 6 panel door.

**54 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18. 2 storeys grey headers with red brick window dressings and quoins. Hipped slate roof. Stringcourse of grey headers. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact. Doorcase with fluted pilasters and door of 6 moulded panels.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**56 and 58 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18, 2 storeys and attics red brick. Tiled roof with 1 hipped dormer. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to,104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**HINDS HOUSE, 60 HIGH STREET** Grade II

A large C18 house. 3 storeys and basement red brick. Parapet. Wooden modillion eaves cornice. 5 sashes with glazing bars intact. Doorcase up 4 steps with engaged Ionic columns, pediment, semi-circular tympanum and door of 6 moulded and fielded panels.

**68 and 70 HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building, timber-framed, refaced in C18 but retaining the overhang of its 1st floor on a bressumer. 2 storeys. Ground floor painted brick above plastered. Tiled roof with parapet and dentilled cornice. 2 sash windows, 1 small bay on the ground floor of No 70 and a modern shop front to No 68. Doorcases with 4-centred heads, that in No 70 with carved spandrel and "Thomas 1585 Bradburi" and "Rev John 1801. Laugh" over them respectively.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.



**72 HIGH STREET** Grade II

A probable timber-framed building refaced in C18. 2 storeys stuccoed. Steeply pitched tiled roof. Parapet. Dropped modillion cornice. 2 sashes with verticals only and modern shop front.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**74 and 76 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18 pair. 2 storeys stuccoed. Tiled roof. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact on the 1st floor only. No 74 has a modern shop front.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**80 HIGH STREET** Grade II

An C18 front to a probable timber-framed building. 2 storeys and attics painted brick. Tiled roof with modillion eaves cornice. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact on the 1st floor and in one curved bay on the ground floor. Doorcase with rectangular tympanum. Modern shop front to the south of this.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**82-86 HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building, timber-framed, refaced in C18 but retaining the overhang of its 1st floor. 2 storeys and attics plastered. Old tiled roof with 3 hipped dormers. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact on 1st floor. Modern shop fronts below.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**88 HIGH STREET** Grade II

A timber-framed house, the ground floor stuccoed, the 1st floor overhanging on a bressumer, the timbering exposed with plaster infilling and rough pargetting. 2 storeys and attics. Tiled roof with 3 hipped dormers, Wooden modillion eaves cornice. 3 casement windows on the 1st floor, 2 bays below with glazing bars missing, 4-centred doorway with low rectangular fanlight over door lintel.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**90 and 92 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18. 2 storeys brown brick, Renewed tiled roof with 2 brick chimney stacks. 4 sashes in all with glazing bars intact, No 90 has a slightly curved shopfront on the right hand side. Dentilled band between the ground and st floors of No 92 and 2 simple doorcases with rectangular fanlights.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.



**94 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18. 2 storeys painted brick, Old tiled roof with 1 hipped dormer, 2 sashes with verticals only. Later shopfront.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**96 and 98 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18. 2 storeys painted brick. Modern pantiled roof with 1 hipped dormer. 2 sashes with verticals only and modern shopfronts.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**100 and 102 HIGH STREET** Grade II

One building, timber-framed with plaster infilling. This consists of a centre portion and 2 wings probably jettied on the 1st floor originally but now underbuilt. Tiled roof. Coved eaves on the centre portion supported on a bracket and curved braces, 2 tiers of 5 lights and metal framed mullions on 1st floor. One horizontally sliding sash window on the ground floor with glazing bars intact.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.





**JAY'S HOUSE, 104 HIGH STREET** Grade II

C18 exterior to possibly older house. 2 storeys and attics painted brick. Tiled roof with 2 hipped dormers. Modillion eaves cornice. 5 sashes with glazing bars intact. Two 2-light curved windows on the ground floor with cornices over. Doorcase with pilasters, pediment, low rectangular fanlight and door of 5 fielded panels.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**104A HIGH STREET** Grade II

A continuation of 'Jay's House' to the north east. C18. 2 storeys colourwashed Half-hipped tiled roof with 1 hipped dormer, 1 bow window on ground floor and simple doorcase with rectangular fanlight. 3 light casement on side elevation.

Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**THE COURT HOUSE, 110 HIGH STREET** Grade II\*

A timber-framed building Circa 1450, This was the Mediaeval Court Hall of Milton with 2 prison cells beneath. It was also used as a school when there were no courts. It has been restored and is now in use as a museum. 2 storeys timber-framed with plaster infill. The 1st floor is close-studded and has diagonal braces. Steeply pitched tiled roof. 3 casements with diamond panes on the street elevation and 1 original double lancet window on the right side elevation removed from a demolished house in Mill Street. The rear elevation has an overhang. Curved braces. 4 restored casements on 1st floor and 2 restored wooden mullioned windows on the ground floor. AM. Nos 52 to 76 (even), 80 to 104 (even), 104A and 110 form a group.

**5 CROWN ROAD** Grade II

C18. 2 storeys red brick. Brick parapet. Long and short painted quoins and cornice. 3 sashes with glazing bars intact on the 1st floor and ogee-headed window in the centre. Doorcase with engaged columns, pediment, rectangular fanlight and door of 6 moulded and fielded panels.



## APPENDIX 4 Legislation, national policy and local policy

### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66 General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions:

(1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 69 Designation of conservation areas:

(1) Every local planning authority— (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and (b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority's area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area.

(4) The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge.

Section 71 Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

(1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.

(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

Section 72 General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions:

(1) In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection

(2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies and how they should be applied. It provides the national framework for conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including conservation areas.



### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

The NPPG sets out government's guidance on how the act and national planning policy should be applied.

### **Adopted Local Plan- Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan (2017)**

Relevant objectives and policies within the local plan include:

Policy ST 1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale.

To deliver sustainable development in Swale, all development proposals will, as appropriate:..... 8. Achieve good design through reflecting the best of an area's defining characteristics; 9. Promote healthy communities through:..... maintaining the individual character, integrity, identities and settings of settlements; 12. Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment and integration of development with the importance, form and character of heritage assets (including historic landscape

Policy CP 4 Requiring good design.

All development proposals will be of a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings. Development proposals will, as appropriate:... 2. Enrich the qualities of the existing environment by promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place; 5. Retain and enhance features which contribute to local character and distinctiveness;... 8. Be appropriate to the context in respect of materials, scale, height and massing; 9. Make best use of texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials; 10. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area; 11. Ensure the long-term maintenance and management of buildings, spaces, features and social infrastructure.

Policy DM 32 Development involving listed buildings.

Development proposals, including any change of use, affecting a listed building, and/ or its setting, will be permitted provided that:

1. The building's special architectural or historic interest, and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, are preserved, paying special attention to the: a. design, including scale, materials, situation and detailing; b. appropriateness of the proposed use of the building; and c. desirability of removing unsightly or negative features or restoring or reinstating historic features.

2. The total or part demolition of a listed building is wholly exceptional, and will only be permitted provided convincing evidence has been submitted showing that: a. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or viable new uses and have failed; b. Preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and c. The cost of maintaining and repairing the building outweighs its importance and the value derived from its continued use.

3. If as a last resort, the Borough Council is prepared to consider the grant of a listed building consent for demolition, it may, in appropriate circumstances, consider whether the building could be re-erected elsewhere to an appropriate location. When re-location is not possible and demolition is permitted, arrangements will be required to allow access to the building prior to demolition to make a record of it and to allow for the salvaging of materials and features.

Policy DM 33 Development affecting a conservation area.

Development (including changes of use and the demolition of unlisted buildings or other structures) within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area, will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's special character or appearance. The Borough Council expects development proposals to:

1. Respond positively to its conservation area appraisals where these have been prepared;

2. Retain the layout, form of streets, spaces, means of enclosure and buildings, and pay special attention to the use of detail and materials, surfaces, landform, vegetation and land use;
3. Remove features that detract from the character of the area and reinstate those that would enhance it; and
4. Retain unlisted buildings or other structures that make, or could make, a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

#### Policy DM 34 Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites

1. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument, and/or its setting, as shown on the Proposals Map, or subsequently designated, or any other monument or archaeological site demonstrated as being of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Development that may affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset of less than national significance will require a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
2. Whether they are currently known, or discovered during the Plan period, there will be a preference to preserve important archaeological sites in-situ and to protect their settings. Development that does not achieve acceptable mitigation of adverse archaeological effects will not be permitted.
3. Where development is permitted and preservation in-situ is not justified, the applicant will be required to ensure that provision will be made for archaeological excavation and recording, in advance of and/or during development, including the necessary post-excavation study and assessment along with the appropriate deposition of any artefacts in an archaeological archive or museum to be approved by the Borough Council.

#### Swale Borough Council Key Supplementary Planning Guidance

Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 2: Listed Buildings – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers.

Swale Borough Council No 3: The Conservation of Traditional Farm Buildings.

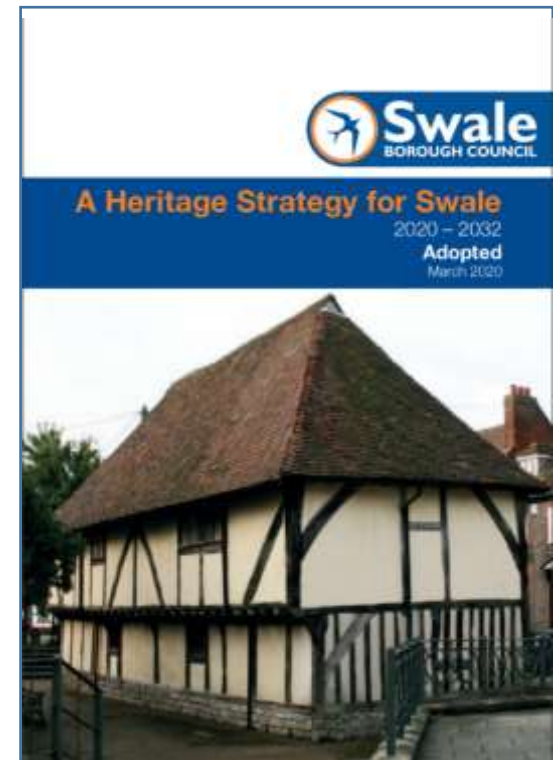
Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines No 8: Conservation Areas.

#### Swale Borough Council Heritage Strategy 2020-2032

The Council has developed a borough-wide heritage strategy to help it, along with key stakeholders and other interested parties, to protect and manage the historic environment in Swale in a positive and sustainable way, on a suitably informed basis.

A key element of the strategy is setting out the Council's overall vision and priorities, which it is hoped will align with the vision and priorities of local communities and local amenity societies as far as possible, in order that the strategy can be widely supported.

The strategy sets out a series of proposals in the associated initial 3-year action plan which are aimed at enabling the positive and sustainable management of different elements of the borough's historic environment for the foreseeable future. Priority is given to those



parts of the borough's historic environment which are already suffering from, and at risk from negative change, and/or which face significant development pressure, threatening their special character. The proposed set of actions will involve joint project working with amenity societies and/or volunteers from the community wherever this is possible.

## Bibliography

John Clancy, *Sittingbourne & Milton Regis Past and Present*

Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent VI* (1798).

Jacobs *Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal* (2011)

Kent County Council *South east Archaeological Research Framework* [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

Kent County Council *Historic Environment Record* [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

Kent County Council *Historic Towns Survey, Milton Regis* 2004  
[https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent\\_eus\\_2006/downloads.cfm](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_eus_2006/downloads.cfm)

Kent County Council *Sittingbourne and Milton Regis Conservation Study* 1974

Kent County Council and Kent Conservation Officers Group, *Highway Works and Heritage Assets: the Kent Protocol for Highway Works in Relation to Designated Heritage Assets* (2011)

LUC *Swale Local Landscape Designation* (October 2018)

Newman, J. *Buildings of England: North-East and East Kent* (1983)

## Historic England Publications

Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes (GPAs) provide advice on good practice and how national policy and guidance should be applied.

GPA1: *The Historic Environment in Local Plan Making* (March 2015)

GPA2 - *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (March 2015)

GPA3 – *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (December 2017)

Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs) include detailed, practical advice on how to implement national planning policy and guidance.

HEAN 1: *Conservation Areas: Designation, Appraisal and Management* (Feb 2019)

HEAN 2: *Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (February 2016)

HEAN 9: *The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings* (October 2017)

HEAN 10: *Listed Buildings and Curtilage* (February 2018)

HEAN 12: *Statements of Heritage Significance* (October 2019)

HEAN 16: *Listed Building Consent* (June 2021)

*Streets For All* (May 2018)

[www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list)

For further information contact:  
Swale Borough Council Planning Services 01795 417850  
[www.Swale.gov.uk](http://www.Swale.gov.uk)

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This Conservation Area Character Appraisal was prepared by:  
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<b>Planning and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7th February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Faversham -Preston Next Conservation Area review
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins - Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson – Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jhilmil Kishore - Senior Conservation & Design Officer (Projects)
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices.</li> <li>2. To agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make the Policy & Resources Committee aware of updated appraisal to the Faversham- Preston Next Conservation Area and to recommend that the conservation area be formally re-designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The proposals include a detailed character appraisal and associated management strategy in line with current good practice for the management of conservation areas. Officers recommend that the Policy & Resources Committee supports and agrees the changes to the review document set out in **Appendix i** and as reflected in **Appendix ii**).

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Faversham- Preston Next Conservation Area was originally designated by Kent County Council on 9th March 1976. It was reviewed by Swale Borough Council in 2004 when it was formally re-designated in 2004. A brief character appraisal accompanied the re-designation in 2004. There is a formal requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for Conservation Areas to be reviewed from ‘time to time’.

- 2.2 The Swale Heritage Strategy, adopted in March 2020, has resulted in a stronger commitment by the Council to ensure its conservation areas are reviewed more regularly and possible new conservation areas also given consideration. The review of Faversham -Preston Next Conservation Area is part of the work programme of the initial 3-year action plan forming part of the adopted Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 – 2032. As the existing level of officer resource did not allow for this review work to be carried out in-house, Urban Vision were appointed to carry out the work.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The proposal is to re-designate and amend the boundary of the conservation area and to equip it with a detailed character appraisal and a complementary management strategy which will assist with development management and heritage conservation purposes over the next decade or more. It will be a matter for the Policy & Resources Committee to decide whether to formally adopt the Faversham-Preston Next Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (as recommended and set out in **Appendix ii**, following consultation feedback, or otherwise).
- 3.2 Part of the review process involved an assessment of whether the area should be extended or reduced in size. In this regard particular consideration was given to extending the conservation area to include housing on south of Canterbury Road. The terraced properties to the south of Canterbury Road are much altered, but have a strong terraced form, completing the grouping of buildings to the north of Canterbury Road. The terraces have features in common with the buildings opposite, including the curved recess above doorways. and joining the north and south parts of the Conservation Area.
- 3.3 The recommendation is:
- Members note the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document produced for the review, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices; and
  - Support and agree the changes to the review document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 One option would be to not take this review work any further. This is not recommended because it would risk the justifiable continuation of the designation

and/or the appropriately sensitive and positive management of the conservation area and its wider setting moving forward.

- 4.2 A second possible option would be to disregard some elements, or all of the feedback received, in terms of the suggested boundary change(s). However, whilst it is considered that the appraisal and management plan (to support the redesignation of the conservation area) is essentially sound, the feedback provided from the local community is valuable and to ignore any of this feedback without sound reasons would call the value of the consultation process into question and potentially deliver reputational damage to the Council.
- 4.3 A third possible option would be to suspend the work on this review until some point in the future. Whilst this option would not result in wasted officer time, it could still lead to (a) the designation being challenged, (b) reputational damage to the Council and/or (c) development and associated infrastructure provision decisions being made for the locality without an appropriate understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the Faversham- Preston Next Conservation Area.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 A 6-week public consultation for both the documents commenced on 23rd October 2023 and was due to be concluded on 4th December 2023, however, on request of Historic England it was extended to conclude on Friday 15th December 2023.
- 5.2 All those parties with property within or overlapping the current conservation area boundary were notified in writing of the review and were invited to comment on it, as were key relevant organisations including Kent County Council and Historic England.
- 5.3 Hard copies of the review document were made available at the Faversham Library and was also available to view/download on-line via the Council's website for the duration of the 6-week (including the extended) public consultation period,
- 5.4 A total of 7 consultation responses have been received. 6 from Local residents and 1 from Faversham Society. The officer's response to these responses (as summarised) is attached as appendix i.
- 5.5 Historic England has responded advising that it has no substantive comments to make.
- 5.6 Kent County Council in its function as the Highway Authority was consulted on the conservation area review but provided no feedback.
- 5.7 A written update was sent to Eastern Area Committee on 20th December 2023, highlighting the main aspects of the Faversham -Preston Next Conservation Area Review process.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Priority 2 of the Plan is: 'Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges'. Objectives 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 of this priority are respectively to:</p> <p>(2.1) 'Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council's own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2020, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough'.</p> <p>(2.4) 'Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry.'</p> <p>(2.5) 'Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible'.</p> <p>The character appraisal and management strategy document, once amended as appropriate and subsequently adopted would support all 3 of the above-stated objectives from the Corporate Plan.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Implementing some aspects of the proposed Management Plan may have financial and resource implications for the council, particularly if it is decided to proceed with an Article 4 Direction review or/and signage review. These costs are not yet budgeted for and may need to be considered within any future Heritage Strategy Action Plans.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to "<i>determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance</i>" and, from time to time, to review the functioning existing conservation areas.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>One of the three dimensions of sustainable development is its environmental role: contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The health and wellbeing aspects of interaction with heritage assets and heritage related projects are referenced in the adopted Heritage Strategy which underpins this review work.</p>
Safeguarding of Children, Young	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>

People and Vulnerable Adults	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix i: Public consultation – table of representations (in summary form), and the council’s response to them.
- Appendix ii: Public consultation version of the 2023 draft Faversham- Preston Next character appraisal and management plan document.

## 8 Background Papers

A Heritage Strategy for Swale 2020-2032 Adopted March 2020



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**APPENDIX i: TABLE OF REPRESENTATIONS, AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY CHANGES TO THE ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO THEM – FOR RE-DESIGNATING FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A.**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
1	Local resident	<p>1. P17. 'Creative and Green Design' - I wish in a public consultation document you would not allow the literature produced to phrase ideas in gobbledygook - what do you/the consultants mean exactly by creative green design? Also, "21st Century vernacular"? These are loose, woolly, lazy ways of writing, which give no concrete substance to innovative, fuel-saving, carbon-zero nearing, less polluting ways of building.</p> <p>2. No mention of deterioration in the "Unauthorised Works &amp; Deterioration" Action 8 paragraph on p.17. Swale have allowed The Garden Hotel in Boughton under Blean to deteriorate extremely badly and will not enforce the owners doing it up, as it's currently undergoing a planning application. Another example, this time in Faversham, of letting the 1400's TS Hazard building roof tiles fall into the building? Faversham Town Council had to write to remind you of your responsibility to that historic building.</p> <p>3. The rejigging of the Conservation Area boundary: You propose to remove the green space at the top of Finch Close from Conservation Area status, where it abuts the Canterbury Road (p.22), for no reason. This, if enacted, will affect the protection given to both the green space and to the mature trees currently growing on this area. The 2004 report says that, prior to the building of houses in the former chalk pit, the area's shrub and trees had naturally regenerated.</p>	Noted and the proposed corrections can be largely accommodated without fundamentally altering the shape of the document.	To make changes to the assessment document as per the schedule of corrections.

PROPOSED FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>This area affords a significant green visual relief and the trees provide a natural CO2 absorption resource which helps to offset poor air quality produced by the incessant vehicles on the A2.</p> <p>The attractive fencing, lawn and trees here help to place Preston Next Faversham to its historic heritage setting of agricultural land, (as it would originally have been - trees in orchards). Plus they are very much needed to offset the dingy and unattractive frontage of the historic buildings made so much worse by traffic fumes and dirt arising from vehicle particulates. I hate to think what resident's lungs are like when/if they have windows open or venture into back gardens.</p> <p>Page 25 point 15 is pretty damning, where it says in 2004, the created green space and new minor swerve in the road is detrimental to the historic road layout! I think that is a major thing that saves the area!</p> <p>4. Parking on the busy A2 is a huge problem for residents and road users. I hope the proposed devaluation of the green space is not so that a car-park for residents can be created?</p> <p>5. There's the eye-sore of the old antiques shop that's mostly fallen in now. It has been fenced off. Is that in the Conservation area or not? I couldn't quite tell from the map. Perhaps Swale Borough Council could acquire the building and associated land as car parking for residents. Parking permits would allow the Town or Borough Council to recoup their investment.</p>		

PROPOSED FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		6. I propose: i) that all the green space abutting the A2 and Finch Close is included in the new conservation area and ii) that the woodland strip up Salter’s Lane is included in the new redrawn conservation area too.		
2	Local Resident	I can see no valid reason for the removal of the conservation area status of the area to the north of Canterbury Road (pg 21/22 of the report). If these trees are unprotected, it is quite possible for the trees to be removed. We need all the green spaces possible, especially near this busy road. They are also beautiful. Please keep the protection.	Noted.	To retain the said area within the conservation area.
3	Local Resident	Page 5 states “The boundary of the currently designated Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area is shown on Plan 1”. However, there is no “plan 1” in the document.  Page 6 – typo “policies” – not “policies”  Page 7 – section 2.1 is poorly drafted ie “It was reviewed by Swale Borough Council in 2004 when it was formally re-designated in 2004. A brief character appraisal accompanied the re-designation in 2004.”  Page 4 map – the area boundary far from clear on this map  Page 12 The Windmill and Cherry Tree are both <i>former</i> public houses now converted into dwellings. However, this reads as though the Windmill is still a public house.	Noted and the proposed corrections can be largely accommodated without fundamentally altering the shape of the document.	To make changes to the assessment document as per the schedule of corrections.

PROPOSED FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>Page 14 – Mill House closed as a Residential Care Home in 2016</p> <p>Page 15 – there is no "residential institutional use"</p> <p>Page 16 – typo - “breathe” NOT “breath”</p> <p>Page 16 section 4.4 I don’t understand this poorly drafted list. What relevance are the words “and following” under some (but not all) of the bullet points? Also – as every item in the list relates to the same Act, surely that Act need be mentioned only once, within the introductory sentence.</p> <p>Page 17 Action 7: Guidance: should read “Action 7 - Guidance:” to be consistent with the other Actions listed</p> <p>Page 21 Regarding the Proposed removal – I see no point in removing this section of green space from the conservation area. It is adjacent to the listed buildings and, if removed, would create a very odd, staggered shape. The protection over the trees located on this valuable green space will also be lost if the status is removed.</p>		
4	Local Resident	<p>P23 why not update this appraisal, it is 20 years old, and the CAPS will last another 20 years?</p> <p>Para 5 <b>former</b> Windmill public house the former public house building continues.....</p> <p>para 6 <b>former</b> Windmill public house</p> <p>para 7 <b>former</b> Windmill Public house</p> <p>para 8 <b>has</b> now brought about substantial change.</p> <p>p9 Westwood Place retains the character of Pile Cottages (to justify the change to the Cons Area boundary.</p>	Noted and the proposed corrections can be largely accommodated without fundamentally altering the shape of the document.	To make changes to the assessment document as per the schedule of corrections.



**PROPOSED FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
5	Local Resident	In response to the consultation I support the extension of the conservation area, but object to the removal of the proposed area. Instead this too should be extended slightly to enclose the full length of this area of trees and green space at the top of Finch Close. This will better preserve the character of the road.		To retain the said area within the conservation area.
6	Local Resident	<p>I noticed you have said that both Ivy Cottages and Pile Cottages were built in the second half of the eighteen hundreds but in fact Ivy Cottages were built in 1811 and Pile Cottages were built around the same time and definitely by 1824. Pile Cottages were originally one up one down but had a double story built on the back sometime in the eighteen hundreds making them have two bedrooms plus a kitchen and lounge. This is why they now have a shallow Cat-slide roof at the back. There were seven Pile Cottages up until the 1950's, half being replaced by garages and half being made part of the Preston Park Estate. The narrow unmade-up road directly in-front of the 3 cottages was a Bridleway leading down to the railway line and Church going through/past a pig farm and orchards all of which was lost/blocked off for the Preston Park estate.</p> <p>The unmade up strip of road must obviously belong to someone but nobody seems to know who, which is I guess why it is in such poor condition leading from the A2. Pile Cottages addresses are 'Canterbury Road' yet when it was resurfaced a few years ago didn't come down to the cottages which would have made such a difference especially as when it rains heavily water runs fast off the A2 all the way down to Pile Cottages. Bringing with it all</p>	Noted	No Change to the assessment document.

PROPOSED FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
		<p>the dirt/etc which silts up our drains that go into our shared septic tank. Another annoying thing is Pile Cottages doesn't have any form of street/direction sign and because the cottages are tucked away yet part of the main road it often causes problems.</p> <p>The Thatched Cottage was once three cottages which then became two and then one which is when the name changed from 1,2&amp;3 Chalk Pit Cottages.</p> <p>The Flint wall in Preston Lane at the front of the nicer of the two Ivy Cottages is what's left of the Church wall.</p>		
7.	Faversham Society	<p>The Faversham Society has been concerned for several years that the Conservation Area Appraisals need to be reviewed and are pleased that this has now been addressed. The 2004 Appraisal, which was never formally completed, contains a significant number of errors that need correcting.</p> <p>In our view, the 2004 work currently presented as an appendix should be revised and updated to clearly identify and define the historical and architectural significance of each part of the Conservation Area and Conservation Area as a whole. In addition, it needs to identify individual character elements that contribute to the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Society objects to the proposed removal of the open land opposite Salters Lane (p.22) from the Conservation Area, We strongly support retaining protection of this space, which, as Faversham increases in size in the future, will become an increasingly important reminder that Preston was originally an entirely separate community.</p>	Noted & Welcomed	To retain the said area within the conservation area.

**PROPOSED FAVERSHAM-PRESTON NEXT C.A. – REPRESENTATIONS, RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE (Continued)**

Rep. No(s).	Representation By	Summary of Representation	Officer Response	Recommendation
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**Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area  
Character Appraisal & Management Plan  
Public Consultation Draft  
August 2023 V1.4**





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## Forward

Historic buildings and places add to the quality of people's lives and help to create a sense of place that we all identify with.

As a community and as a local authority, we have a responsibility to safeguard our historic assets for future generations and to make sure that they are not compromised by unsympathetic alterations or poor-quality developments. Conservation area designation and subsequent management is one way in which this can be achieved.



Conservation areas are not intended to halt progress or to prevent change. Rather, they give the local community and the Borough Council the means to positively manage change and to protect what is special about the area from being harmed or lost altogether.

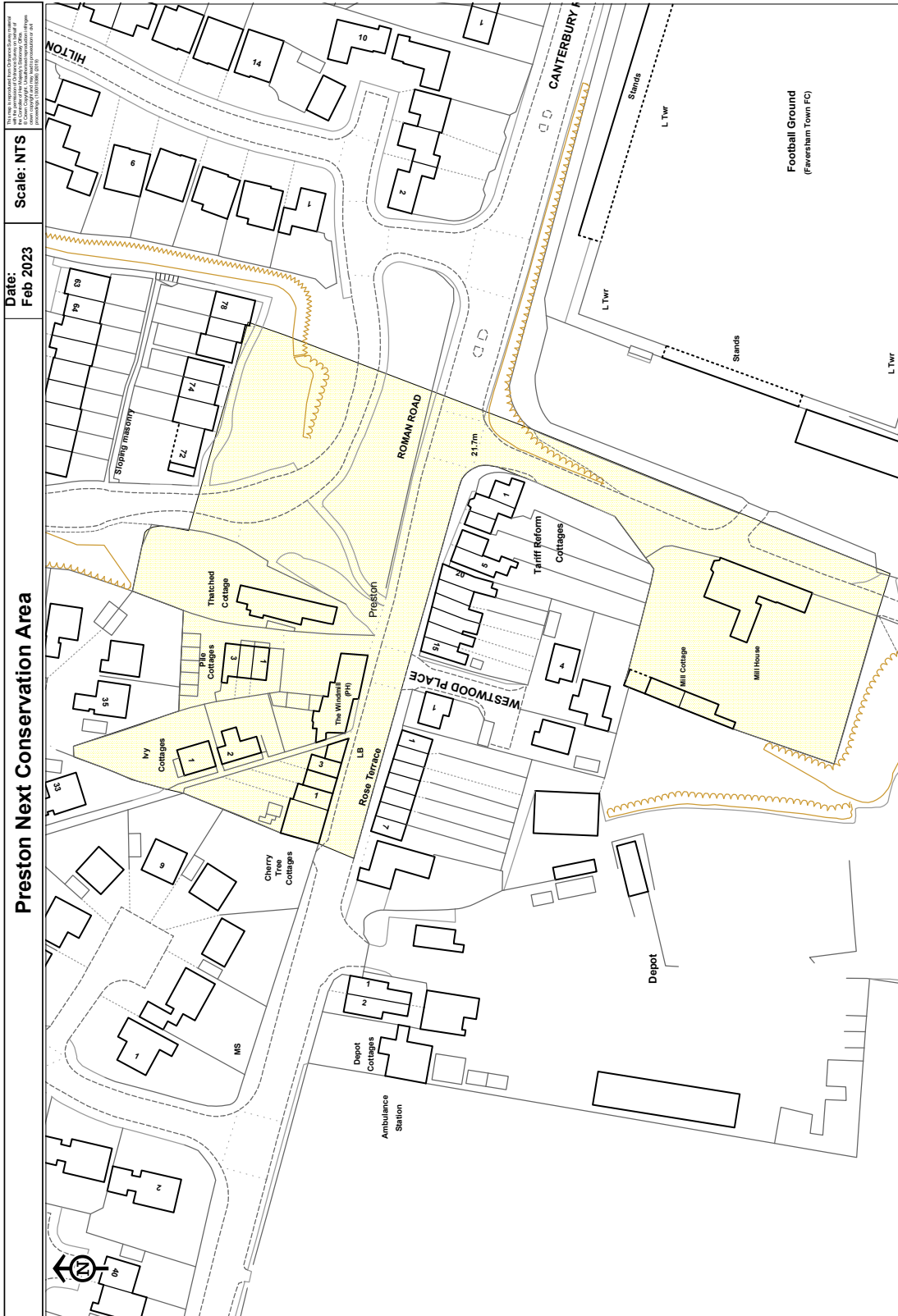
Swale Borough is fortunate in having such a rich and varied mix of built and natural heritage. The Borough Council wants to see it used positively as a catalyst to sustainable, sensitive regeneration and development, and to creating places where people want to live, work, and make the most of their leisure time. To that end, we have reviewed the Faversham Town Conservation Area and the results of that review are set out in this document, which the Borough Council is now seeking constructive feedback on.

This is one of a series of conservation area reviews which the Borough Council is committed to undertaking, following the adoption of the Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 – 2032.

*Mike Baldock*

Councillor Mike Baldock  
Swale Borough Council Deputy Leader and Heritage Champion

# Faversham Conservation Area Appraisal



Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area boundary, as redesignated in 2004.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Document

This document is a Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area in Swale. The document may be used to inform planning decisions, planning policy-making and proposals to enhance or regenerate the conservation area.

The Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area is a small area south of the main Faversham Conservation Area, on the Canterbury Road (A2). The boundary of the currently designated Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area is shown on [page 4Plan 1](#).

## 1.2 How to Use the Document

Chapter 2 provides background information and the statutory and policy context for the character appraisal and management plan.

Chapter 3 seeks to describe the special architectural or historic interest and character of the Conservation Area. This is of key importance in informing planning decisions, planning policy-making and proposals to enhance or regenerate the conservation area.

Chapter 4 contains a concise management plan.

## 1.3 Statutory and Policy Context

The statutory definition of a conservation area is given in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

*'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.*

This document helps to describe the special architectural or historic interest and character of the Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area.

Conservation Area status provides protection, including the following:

- Control over the demolition of buildings;
- Protection of trees.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes provision for the 'Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas'.

Section 72 comprises a special duty in planning decision making:

*'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.*

This document should assist in the application of Section 72 by helping to define character.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 refers to significance. Some confusion can arise from Historic England's guidance (Conservation Principles 2008) which defines significance in a different way to the legislation. For clarity, this document interprets significance in accordance with the wording in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, so relating to the 'special architectural or historic interest' of the area.

The Swale Borough Local Plan Bearing Fruits 2031 (adopted 2017) contains policies on a range of issues, including policy specific to the historic environment. Statement 7 is a Strategic overview of Swale's heritage assets, including Faversham.

Policy CP 8: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets very general requirements for heritage.

More detailed development management policies specifically dealing with the historic environment are:

Policy DM 32: Development involving listed buildings

Policy DM 33: Development affecting a conservation area

Policy DM 33 deals specifically with conservation areas, largely reflecting national policy and guidance.

A Neighbourhood Plan for the whole parish is being prepared by Faversham Town Council.



## 2. Heritage Assets

### 2.1 The Conservation Area

The Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area was originally designated ~~by was originally designated~~ by Kent County Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1976. It was reviewed by Swale Borough Council in 2004 when it was formally re-designated in 2004. A brief character appraisal accompanied the re-designation in 2004. [\(Attached as Appendix 2\)](#)

There is no Article 4 Direction relating to the Conservation Area.

### 2.2 Listed Buildings

There are three listings, as follows:

Name/Address	Grade
Thatched Cottage, Canterbury Road	II
The Windmill, Canterbury Road	II
Cherry Tree Cottages, Canterbury Road	II

Listing descriptions are contained in Chapter 5.



**Listed Buildings:**  
Extract from the Swale Borough Council interactive map (June 2023) showing the current conservation area boundary in yellow and listed buildings in orange.







## 3. Special Interest and Character

### 3.1. Significance

This Chapter describes the 'significance' or 'special architectural or historic interest' and also 'character or appearance' of the Preston Next Faversham Town Conservation Area.

The surviving clusters of vernacular buildings on the northern side of Canterbury Road together with Mill House and Cottage on the south side create a place of special historical and architectural interest and local distinctiveness.

In considering the heritage special statutory duties, including Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this Chapter will help in assessing whether development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

### 3.2 History

Preston Next Faversham is a small settlement flanking both sides of the London-Canterbury Road (A2), on the southern edge of Faversham town. The road formed part of the old Roman Watling Street. Historically, this is the reason for the presence of Preston Next Faversham.

The settlement was originally separated from the main urban mass of Faversham by fields and orchards. Following the opening of the railway line and Faversham Railway Station in 1858, large-scale housing expansion occurred and this continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, eventually filling the gap between the main Faversham settlement and Preston Next Faversham.

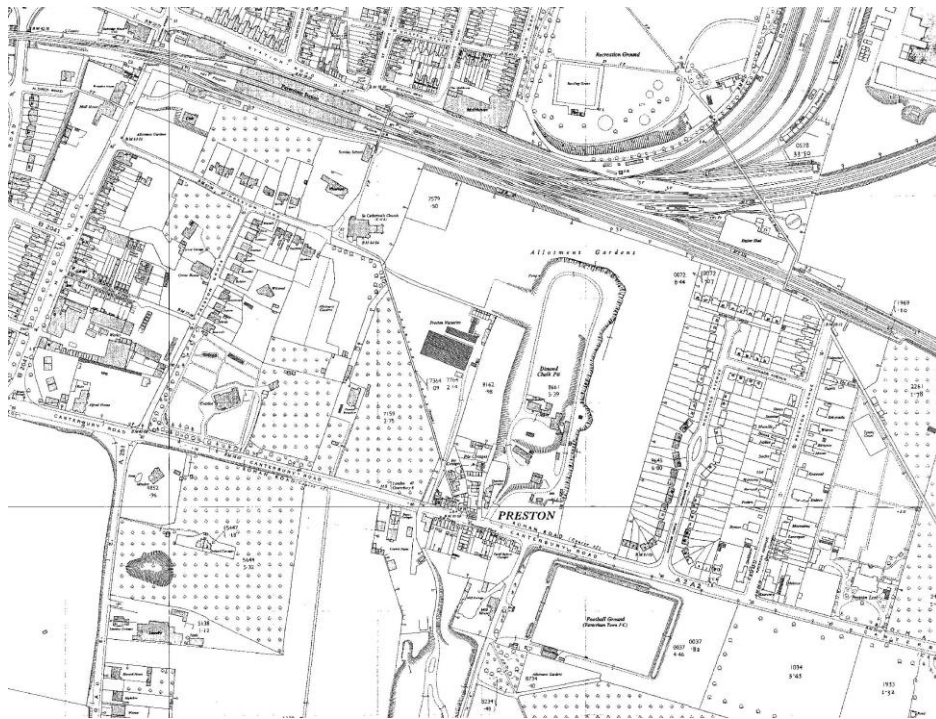
Until 1979 the hamlet contained two public houses, reflecting the role that this small roadside settlement played in providing hospitality for passing travellers.

A smock mill (now demolished) stood on the elevated ground around Mill House and Mill Cottage and was still present in 1933, although derelict. Its one-time presence explains the names of the two surviving properties.

## Faversham Conservation Area Appraisal



**Map extract 1864-95:** showing Preston Next Faversham as a separate settlement



**Map extract of 1957-86:** shows the gradual expansion of Faversham. This may be compared to the plan on Page 4, where Preston Next Faversham is directly flanked by recent development, effectively becoming part of the wider Faversham urban area.

### 3.3 Townscape and Landscape Character

The Conservation Area is characterised by short two-storey terraces of housing, with a few larger two-storey properties.

The properties facing Canterbury Road mainly have rear of pavement frontages. Properties behind these have a more informal layout, with access via an unmade road.

Preston Lane is a narrow route (now a footpath) enclosed by brick walls and building elevations.

The short length of Salters Lane between Canterbury Road and Mill House is relatively narrow and has no footway, so is more rural in character. There is a narrow strip of woodland on the east roadside bank.

In terms of wider context, the north-eastern edge of the hamlet is bounded by an old chalk pit (outside of the Conservation Area) where lime kilns were active until the early 1920s. To the south side of Canterbury Road are traditional housing terraces.



**Preston Lane:** a narrow path, flanked by brick walls and building elevations.



### 3.4 Architecture and Buildings

The oldest buildings are situated on the north side of Canterbury Road in the form of a continuous conjoined terrace, dating from the late 17th century through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These buildings demonstrate different aspects of a Kentish vernacular, based on use of red brick, timber boarding, plain clay roofing tiles, and timber doors and windows.

The row includes The Windmill - former public house, with smooth-rendered elevations, signboards and window boxes. The small row of red brick cottages to the west of the public house cottages dates from around 1845. The cottages and Windmill public house have Kent peg tiled roofs. The irregular-shaped outhouse building is of similar age and has distinctive cladding of tarred weatherboarding. The western end of this building group is terminated by the former Cherry Tree public house, now converted to a dwelling, of C18 origin with later extension.



**Properties fronting Canterbury Road:** These include cottages and the Windmill Public House.

Ivy Cottages are situated a short distance down Preston Lane. They comprise red brick houses of C19 origin. These have a cottage-like character, but have been harmed by replacement windows and the northernmost one has concrete interlocking roof tiles (see full page image on page 8).

Behind The Windmill public house are the more modest Pile Cottages dating from the second half of the C19. These are likely to have been labourers' cottages.



**Pile Cottages:** The character of the Conservation Area includes short domestic terraces.

A pair of single storey brick-built thatched cottages dating from the late C17 or early C18 (and later extended) complete the grouping. This thatch roof covering is unusual in an area where clay tiles have been almost universally preferred.



**Thatch:** A rare local example of a thatched roof.



Off Salters Lane are Mill House and Mill Cottage. Mill House is a mid-C19 stuccoed house, positioned side-on to the road. It is much extended and used as a residential home. Mill Cottage is set well back from the road and is early Victorian with later extensions.



**Mill House:** The property is side-on to the road.

Just outside of the Conservation Area, to the south side of the A2 are mainly late C19 housing terraces, the appearance of which has been compromised by piecemeal alterations.

### 3.5 Harm

Some properties, including Ivy cottages, have lost original windows and roofing and could be enhanced by reinstatement of these features.

The Canterbury Road (A2) is a busy strategic route, which creates a noisy and at times congested environment. Recent highway works have been to the detriment of the traditional simplicity of the road form.

## 4. Management Plan

### 4.1 Social, Economic and Environmental Values

The Conservation Area, in common with the wider historic environment of Faversham, various economic, community, cultural and environmental values:

- The buildings are mainly in productive use, including housing, commercial/leisure and residential institutional uses.
- The buildings have proved to be durable over a few centuries and conservation preserves the embodied energy invested in their materials and construction.
- Terraced building forms provide natural insulation from adjoining properties.

**Action 1 – Awareness of economic value:** Awareness of the economic and other values of Faversham’s heritage should be promoted to multiple organisations, to inform their strategies and plans and to ensure that heritage forms an integral part of wider social, economic and environmental planning (see 6.1.1).

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council, Visit Swale/Visit Kent, Faversham Town Council.

### 4.2 Supporting owners

Conservation of heritage assets depends on responsible and enlightened owners. There are various ways of supporting owners.

**Action 2 - Building repair and enhancement:** Advice, information, possible national grants and enforcement should be used constructively to prevent and secure reversal of harmful alterations.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council, Faversham Town Council, Faversham Society.

**Action 3 - Training and Information for Owners:** Training and information should be provided to help owners to understand heritage assets and protection and to signpost to further advice and useful resources. This could include signposting to guidance and resources produced by national amenity societies.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council, Faversham Society.

**Action 4 - Retrofitting:** Support should be given to enhancing building performance and efficiency, whilst maintaining the special interest of the building. This can include improved internal insulation and draft proofing (whilst allowing the building to breathe).

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council, Faversham Society.

## 4.3 Protection

The terraced properties fronting onto the south side of Canterbury Road are much altered, but do have a strong terraced form, completing the grouping of buildings and joining the north and south parts of the Conservation Area.

**Action 5 – Conservation Area Boundary:** The boundary of the Conservation Area should be reviewed from time-to-time, as required in planning legislation. A proposed amendment is included at Appendix 1.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council in consultation with other groups and the local community.

**Action 6 – List enhancement:** There is an opportunity to enhance listings with pictures and other information, through the listed building web site. This could form the basis of a community project. Historic England has run pilot projects on list enhancement in other parts of the country.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council, Historic England, Faversham Society and other community groups.

## 4.4 Positive Planning

There are numerous statutory duties for local planning authorities, relating to heritage. These include:

- Planning duties with regard to listed buildings - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 66 (1) and following;
- Duties with regard to listed building consent applications - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 16;
- Control of works to listed buildings - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, sections 8 and following;
- Duties regarding designation of conservation areas - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 69;
- Duties regarding appraisal of conservation areas - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 71 and following;
- Duties regarding development and conservation areas - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72.

In addition, there are heritage dimensions in undertaking Sustainability Analysis, Strategic Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Assessments.

Compliance with these duties requires specialist skills and capacity to support decision-making. This can include specialist knowledge of conservation practice,



architectural theory and history, design, legislation and policy, building finance and economics, and building construction technical matters.

To ensure positive planning, with a focus on design and placemaking, the following is recommended.

**Action 7: Guidance:** Clear planning guidance should be prepared to address current pressures, including guidance on addition of photo-voltaic panels to historic properties.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council.

**Action 8 - Design skills and capacity:** Regular design training is recommended for decision makers, including officers and elected members. This can raise design awareness and skills and also challenge misconceptions about building in context in the Faversham Conservation Area (and other conservation areas and historically sensitive locations). Independent design review can help with assessment of significant development proposals.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council, Faversham Town Council, Faversham Society.

**Action 8 - Unauthorised works and deterioration:** Effective heritage protection depends on enforcement where unauthorised work take place. Where possible, unauthorised works should be addressed through negotiation with owners. But formal enforcement should be considered where negotiation fails to achieve results. Regular updating and distribution of guidance on heritage protection can be useful in avoiding unauthorised works.

**Partners:** Swale Borough Council (local planning authority), Faversham Society (monitoring and bringing to the attention of Swale Borough Council).

## 4.5 Design Principles

For development in or around Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area the following design and development principles should be followed:

**Creative and green design:** Conservation area status should encourage innovation and creativity, rather than being a barrier. Innovative green design helps to address climate change ~~and may be a trigger for a 21<sup>st</sup> century vernacular.~~

**Townscape character:** Development should complement the townscape character of the surrounding context in terms of scale (domestic), height (predominantly two storey), massing, and enclosure of streets and spaces.

**Materials:** Development should use durable materials with a high standard of finish to complement the historic environment. This includes local vernacular materials, recycled materials and green materials from sustainable sources.

**Landscape and green infrastructure:** Planting should be based on local native species or other species with high environmental value and which complement the character of the area.

**Alterations and extensions:** Reinstatement of historic features should be supported. Alterations and extensions should avoid the obliteration of historic and architectural features. Alterations should be reversible, as far as possible.

**Photovoltaics:** Against the context of climate change, roof mounted photovoltaic panels should be supported for unlisted houses in the Conservation Area, providing they are inset from the roof edges and ridge, avoiding obliteration of decorative tiles and features and mounted in a way to cause minimal damage to historic fabric. This helps to make the works reversible, so that they can be removed when no longer required. Proposals for photovoltaics on the listed buildings would need to be considered on their merits.

## 5. Background Information

### 5.1 Sources of Information

Engagement was undertaken with various local stakeholders in the preparation of this document, including Faversham Town Council, the Faversham Society and Kent County Council.

Key evidence includes:

- Photographic survey undertaken in February 2023.
- Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area Character Assessment 2004.
- Swale Heritage Asset Review, June 2015.
- The Buildings of England Kent: Northeast and East, Pevsner et.al.
- The National Heritage List for England.
- National and Local Planning Policies and Guidance.
- Various local publications.
- Various online sources.

### 5.2 Listed Building Entries

The following three listed building entries apply to properties in the Conservation Area.

**Name/Address:** THATCHED COTTAGE, CANTERBURY ROAD, FAVERSHAM, ME13 8LX

**Grade:** II

**Date of Listing:** 1989/09/27

**Historic England Reference:**1240462

Cottage pair, now house. C18 and extended C19/C20. Painted brick and thatched roof. Single storey with hipped roof and main central stack with additional stacks to left and to right. Three light C20 wooden casement to left and four 2 light metal C18 or C19 casements to centre and 3 light metal casement to right. Boarded door to centre left with flat hood on brackets.

**Name/Address:** THE WINDMILL, CANTERBURY ROAD, FAVERSHAM, ME13 8LT

**Grade:** II

**Date of Listing:** 1989/09/27

**Historic England Reference:**1240461

Public house, including former house/cottage row. C18 or earlier, extended early C19 and part fenestrated mid C19. Rendered with plain tiled roofs. Two separate buildings in origin and character. The right-hand section, the earliest phase, of two storeys with hipped roof and stacks to centre left and to end right.

Sash to left and two glazing bar sashes on first floor and two sashes to left on ground floor with central glazing bar sash and multi-pane window to right. Door of 6 panels to centre right with semi-circular headed surround. Catslide outshot to rear. Large scantling ceiling beams reported to interior. A single house originally and on 1841 Tithe Map, by C20 3 cottages and then incorporated into the public house mid-late C20. The left-hand building probably a purpose built alehouse, early C19, of 2 storeys with double span roof and stacks to centre and to end left. Two sashes on first floor and three on ground floor with half-glazed door to centre left. Property sale recorded 1824. See Faversham Papers no.19, Inns and taverns of Faversham.

**Name/Address:** CHERRY TREE COTTAGES, CANTERBURY ROAD, FAVERSHAM, ME13 8LR

**Grade:** II

**Date of Listing:** 1989/09/27

**Historic England Reference:**1261090

Cottage row. Circa 1845. Red brick and plain tiled roof. Two storeys and attic with boxed eaves to roof with stacks to centre left and to centre right and with central gabled dormer. Three glazing bar sashes on each floor and three half-glazed and panelled doors on ground floor with semi-circular headed surrounds. All ground floor openings with gauged heads. The garret windows and all but one (reset) of the rear windows preserve metal casements with three pointed arched lights each. A similar window is on the rear of the outhouse attached (see following item). These buildings must date to soon after 1841, since they are not shown on the 1841 Tithe Map.

## Appendix 1 – Boundary Changes

The following amendments to the Preston Next Faversham Conservation Area boundary are proposed, described below and shown on the following plan.

### **Addition of housing south of Canterbury Road**

The terraced properties to the south of Canterbury Road are much altered, but have a strong terraced form, completing the grouping of buildings to the north of Canterbury Road. The terraces have features in common with the buildings opposite, including the curved recess above doorways. and joining the north and south parts of the Conservation Area. The terraces are part of the character of the area and would enhance the special architectural or historic interest. The grouping also includes a former blacksmith.

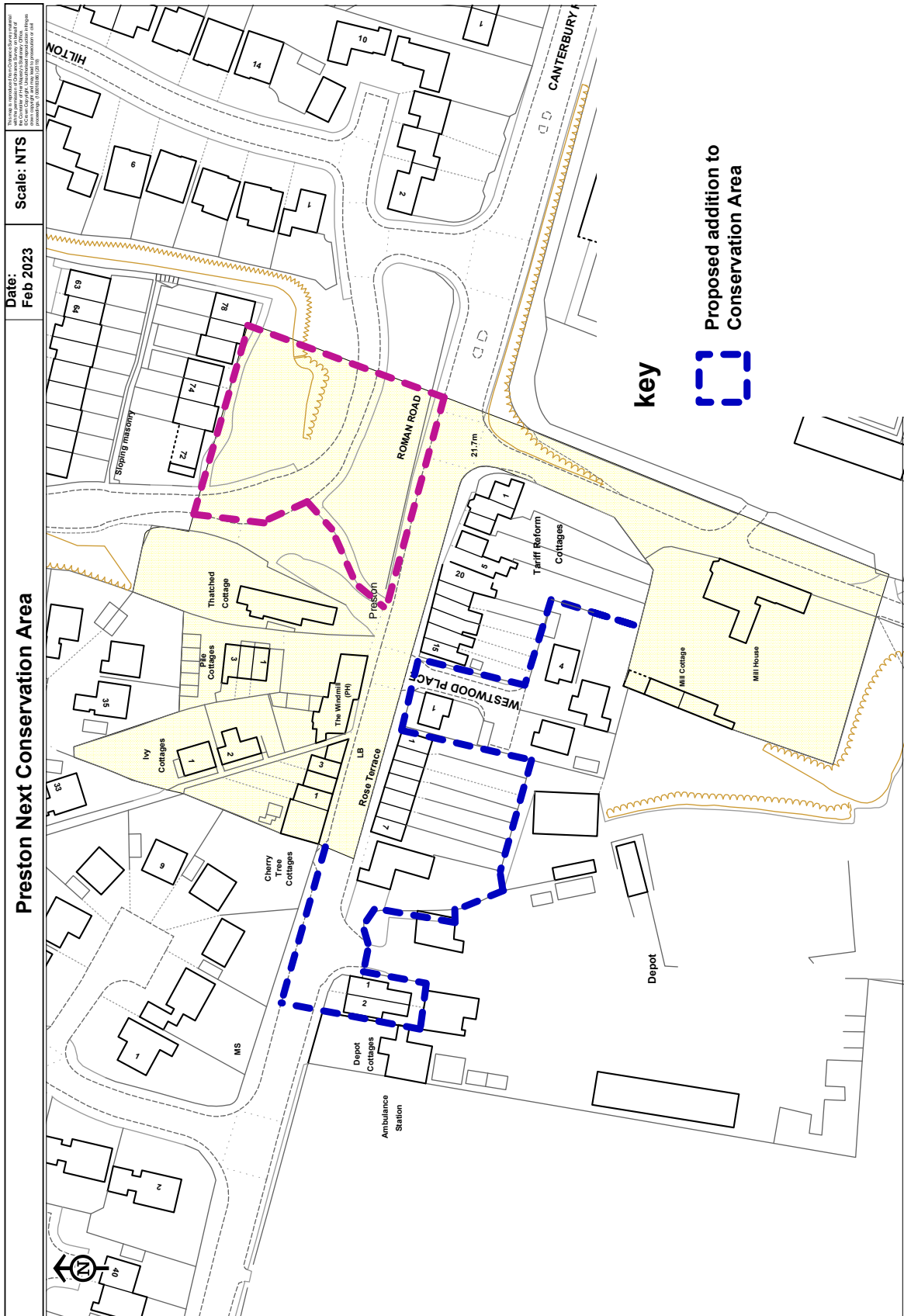


**Terraced properties to the south of Canterbury Road.**

### **~~Removal of land to the north of Canterbury Road.~~**

~~Development to the north of Canterbury Road has created an illogical boundary to the Conservation Area, so removal of a section of land is proposed.~~





## Appendix 2 - 2004 Character Appraisal

Preston Next Faversham conservation area character appraisal

(Extract from report to Planning Committee 09.09.04 – Agenda item no. 6, 1.2 Annex B.)

Introduction and historical background

1. Preston Next Faversham is a small settlement lying astride the London- Canterbury Road, on the southern edge of Faversham town. The original thoroughfare formed part of the old Roman Watling Street, but the oldest buildings now present at Preston, which are situated on the north side of Canterbury Road, variously date from the late C17 to the C19. It is possible, of course, that they were preceded by others that have long since been demolished.
2. This little settlement originally stood some distance apart from Faversham town, separated from it by a patchwork of fields and orchards. In the last quarter of the C20, however, new housing developments have been completed around the southern edge of Faversham which now reach up to the northern and western edges of Preston Next Faversham. Consequently, the smaller settlement is steadily, but inexorably, being absorbed into the urban fabric of its very much larger neighbour, and it is now well on the way to becoming part of an almost continuously built-up frontage stretching along the north side of the London-Canterbury Road from Ospringe to Macknade. The surviving cluster of old buildings at Preston continues, however, to record both the historical origins of the place and to illustrate its once- separate physical identity.
3. The settlement's historic relationship with other parts of old Preston parish, most especially the church to the north-west, is still given physical expression by the Preston Lane footpath that runs diagonally to the north-west. Once crossing open fields the footpath is now hard-surfaced and threads its way, still quite attractively, through an estate of bungalows and houses built in the 1980s.

The built environment

4. The historic focus of Preston Next Faversham is an attractive little group of buildings dating from the late C17, C18 and C19, positioned on the north side of Canterbury Road and built in the Kentish vernacular. The properties fronting the main road are, for the most part, set directly onto the edge of the footway.
5. Most prominent amongst them is The Windmill public house; its smartly-painted, smooth-rendered elevations, its flurry of signboards and colourful window boxes are the attractive visual focus for the group of traditional buildings around. Until 1979 the hamlet in fact contained two public houses; their presence confirmed the important role that this small roadside settlement has traditionally played in providing refuge and hospitality for passing travellers (who here at Preston were making their way along the busy London-Canterbury road). The surviving public house continues to give the hamlet an important sense of special place and historical identity; its presence also firmly 'anchors' the associated cluster of development in its rightful place on the Canterbury Road.

6. Adjoining the public house to the west (on the other side of Preston Lane) the row of little red brick cottages dates from around 1845; the cottage roofs are all attractively covered, like The Windmill public house, with Kent peg tiles. Included here is a little odd-shaped outhouse building of similar age, the working origins of which are neatly recorded by the distinctive cladding of tarred weatherboarding. The western end of this building group is terminated by the former Cherry Tree public

house, now converted to a dwelling; also C18 in origin, this building has been extended on the ground floor across the full width of the front in somewhat contrasting fashion.

7. Ivy Cottages are situated a few steps down Preston Lane. Both these red brick houses were built in the second half of the C19. Although both now have replacement windows and the northernmost one has concrete interlocking roof tiles they are nevertheless notable for their rather pleasant, cottage-like character. They are all the more distinctive for being tucked away along the narrow little footpath where their presence comes as something of a pleasant surprise. Close by, and set just behind The Windmill public house, are the more modest-looking Pile Cottages; also dating from the second half of the C19 and perhaps originally labourers' cottages, they are striking now for their prominent two storeys high, yellow-brick rear extension, topped off by a mono-pitched roof covered with roofing felt.

8. The north-eastern edge of the hamlet is bounded by one end of an old chalk pit, where lime kilns were active until the early 1920s. The natural regeneration of trees and shrubs, mostly sycamore, has until recently substantially disguised the presence of this excavation, at least from Canterbury Road, but the development of the site for housing is now bringing about a substantial change. Alongside the access track which drops down into the pit lies a pair of thatched, single storey, brick-built cottages dating from the late C17 or early C18 but later extended; the presence of this isolated thatch roof covering is unusual in an area where clay tiles have been almost universally preferred.

9. Development on the south side of the A2 is generally later in date and rather different in appearance. The development fronting directly onto Canterbury Road consists mainly of late C19 houses in the form of relatively commonplace terraces, the appearance of which has been substantially compromised by later piecemeal alterations.

10. However, just behind the easternmost terrace and accessed from Salters Lane are Mill House and Mill Cottage. The former is a mid-C19 stuccoed house of classical appearance positioned side-on to the road, now much extended and used as a residential home; the latter is early Victorian, set well back from the road, with extensions that have recently been rebuilt. A smock mill once stood here on this elevated ground; it was still present in 1933 although by then derelict. Its one-time presence therefore now lives on in the names of the two surviving properties on the site.

11. The short length of Salters Lane between Canterbury Road and Mill House is relatively narrow but essentially rural in character despite the presence of back gardens along a part of its western side. The narrow strip of woodland on the roadside bank along the eastern edge of the lane, comprised of mixed species, is an important local feature as it screens the football

ground behind. The absence of footways along the lane also helps to confirm its rural character.

12. The cluster of buildings on the northern side of Canterbury Road, together with Mill House and Cottage on the south side of the road, is therefore the important historic record of earlier times in Preston Next Faversham when it was a small, free- standing settlement. The surviving vernacular architecture continues to be of sufficient strength to constitute a place both of special historical interest and local distinctiveness.

The Canterbury Road highway environment

13. Canterbury Road (A2) approximates to the alignment of old Roman Watling Street; it is, historically, the reason for the presence here of Preston Next Faversham.

14. The A2 is, however, now a heavily trafficked route of strategic importance. In consequence the main road environment through Preston Next Faversham is daily burdened with the intrusive effects of this traffic, which are further aggravated by the relatively close proximity of the modest-sized frontage properties to the carriageway. The frontage buildings on the south side of the road, where the sunshine struggles to reach the front elevations, on occasions look distinctly traffic-worn.

15. The traditional shape of the Canterbury Road highway on the eastern edge of the settlement has, in recent times, been re-engineered to provide a right turn into Salters Lane and a turning into Hilton Close (a new housing development to the north-east). A newly formed highway edge therefore now extends back into Preston Next Faversham and across the front of the chalk pit site, with the consequence that the natural shape of this section of old road alignment out of the hamlet has been substantially lost. Coupled with the insertion of pedestrian refuges into the carriageway these modern adaptations to the old highway environment have inevitably been to the detriment of the traditional simplicity of the road form.

## Contact



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**Policy and Resources Committee Forward Decisions Plan – February 2024**

<b>Report title, background information and recommendation(s)</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Open or exempt?</b>	<b>Lead Officer and report author</b>
Faversham Town Conservation Area Review	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Jhilmil Kishore
Faversham Neighbourhood Plan	20 March 2024 / April 2024	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Natalie Earl
Enforcement Local Plan – draft for consultation	20 March 2024		Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Paul Casey
Q3 Budget Monitoring	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Claire Stanbury
Annual RIPA Policy update	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Claudette Valmond Report author: Gary Rowland
Corporate Plan	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Larissa Reed Report author: Janet Dart
Street Trading Policy	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson Report Author: Chris Hills
Performance Monitoring – 2023/24 Quarter 4 / Year End	May 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Tony Potter
Parking Policy	May 2024	Open	Head of Service: Emma Wiggins Report author: Janet Dart



## Recommendations for approval

Swale Joint Transportation Board – 4 December 2023

Minute No. 478 - Formal Objections to Traffic Regulation Order – Swale  
Amendment 48 2023

*(1) That the report be noted and the proposed loading bay in Victoria Street, Sheerness, be abandoned.*



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<b>Policy and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 February 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Open Spaces and Play Strategy – Strategic Land
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure Ceri Williams, Planning Development Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree for officers to commission the full open spaces audit, allocating £35,000 in the budget for the work to be undertaken and then refresh/draft a new Strategy.</li> <li>2. Agree the new interim governance arrangements and criteria (2.9 and 2.11) for determining strategic land.</li> <li>3. Discuss if land detailed in the exempt appendix would meet the new strategic criteria in order to guide officer's next steps.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out some interim positions whilst the overall refresh of the Open Spaces and Play Strategy is undertaken.
- 1.2 It seeks to define what is meant by Strategic Land and sets out governance processes and criteria for agreeing it.
- 1.3 The exempt appendix details a particular piece of land in terms of its strategic value and asks for a position to guide officer next steps.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Open Spaces and Play Area Strategy is a key document used not only for the strategic direction of the service, but also an evidence base for the Local Plan. The current version was developed in 2017 and requires updating with an initial technical assessment/audit which will provide detailed evidence of quantity, quality, accessibility and need. This is a long piece of work and will require 12 months plus the support of external consultants at an approximate cost of £35,000. Members are asked to consider allocating this in the budget for 2024-25.
- 2.2 In the interim period we need to consider a few matters. The existing strategy was created when the Council was in the Cabinet system, allowing different

methods of decision making. Now we are the committee system, with no individual Councillor decisions, governance arrangements need to be made whilst the full review is undertaken and before the new Strategy is adopted.

2.3 The existing strategy set out a number of principles;

- Protect the Council's existing open space network.
- Provide spaces to encourage a healthy community.
- Focus on enhancing/improving the quality of key open spaces.
- Promote the benefits open space has for people living and visiting Swale and enriching the biodiversity for wildlife.
- Support the development of facilities in open spaces to recognise the needs of users with disabilities and the benefits of emotional and holistic approaches that open spaces can bring.
- Maximise the benefits of the open space and play facilities that comes with the increased housing development required under the Local Plan.

2.4 The strategy also set out a number of recommendations. One such recommendation was to no longer take on open spaces within new housing developments.

*'The Council will no longer adopt future open spaces from developers and organisations unless there is an overwhelming case to provide a strategic new open space or the protection of important natural habitat and biodiversity'.*

2.5 The key reason for this approach was the fact that new sites increase the Council's liability (both financially and health and safety wise) for management and maintenance of the spaces. Whilst there was short term commuted sums payable by developers, the alternative approach over the preceding years meant the Council had inherited large numbers of open spaces/playgrounds and with commuted sums eventually expiring, the Council had to bear the increased costs in its base revenue budget.

2.6 In terms of when the Council would take on land, unfortunately the Strategy did not define the word 'strategic', nor set out the governance route for deciding it. Officers have therefore interpreted this over the course of the strategy term and where necessary liaised with Cabinet Members or Committee Chairs.

2.7 The words 'overwhelming case' have however meant we have rarely used this clause. The only example since the policy was set, was Stones Farm. The land there was also already allocated as local countryside gap in the Local Plan and therefore easy to define as strategic.

2.8 There needs to be the opportunity for both officers and Members to raise a request to consider a piece of land as strategic. Officers will look to do this at the

point at which they are asked to comment on the application as a consultee and will raise informally with Members. Members will be able to do this at any point up to the consideration of the application at planning committee.

- 2.9 Consideration has been given to the most effective governance route for debating and then agreeing individual pieces of land that meet the strategic requirement for the Council to take on from developers. This could be via Environment committee or by giving officers a delegation in consultation with the committee chair. However, as there are likely to always be financial implications outside of the agreed budget, the constitution is clear that the final decision must be made by Policy and Resources committee so that is proposed. Members are therefore asked to consider if it is a matter that goes direct to Policy and Resources or via Environment committee first.
- 2.10 Reports detailing each individual case should clearly show how it meets the 'strategic' criteria and what risk and financial implications it would carry.
- 2.11 In deciding whether a piece of land is strategic the following criteria could be used;
- It is already allocated in the Local Plan for a particular strategic use.
  - It is considered to be the last countryside gap between the edge of a town settlement and the start of a rural/village boundary.
  - The land could be utilised to provide a council service e.g. burial provision
  - It helps to secure open space types that the audit suggest Swale has a deficit in.
- 2.12 An example of a relevant piece of land is included in the exempt appendix I.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 Agree for officers to commission the full open spaces audit and refresh/draft a new Strategy. A budget allocation is made accordingly.
- 3.2 Agree the new interim governance arrangements and criteria (2.9 and 2.11) for determining strategic land.
- 3.3 Discuss if land detailed in the exempt appendix would meet the new strategic criteria in order to guide officer's next steps.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 Members could decide to continue operating under the existing Open Spaces and Play Strategy and not undertake the full audit/review. This is not recommended as it may impact the validity of the Local Plan and would leave the Council without the ability to make key decisions on open space and play.

- 4.2 It could be possible to simply amend the Strategy without undertaking the full open spaces audit. This is not recommended as the Strategy will not be based on robust, up to date evidence and may be challenged during the Local Plan basis rendering both documents vulnerable.
- 4.3 Members may look to amend the criteria to help define what 'strategic' land is under the terms of the policy.
- 4.4 Members may wish to amend the proposed interim governance process.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Public consultation will be included in the audit and Strategy development process.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Open Spaces and Play Strategy helps to deliver key corporate plan objectives such as providing leisure and biodiversity.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Interim arrangements made in this report do not directly impact financial matters, however it must be clear to Members that taking on additional land as part of the Strategy will add pressure to staffing and grounds maintenance costs.</p> <p>Funding for the full open spaces audit would be required from the general reserve as this is not within the base revenue budget and there are no earmarked reserves.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>Commissioning for the open spaces audit would be conducted in line with our current Commissioning and Procurement Strategy and Contract Standing Orders.</p> <p>Providing a sound evidence base is a key statutory element of the Local Plan process.</p>
Crime and Disorder	The Strategy itself details how open spaces will be managed, but the elements within this report do not directly create any implications for crime and disorder.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Taking on new pieces of land will allow the Council to create a range of habitats to improve biodiversity and deliver against our Climate and Ecological Emergency action plan.
Health and Wellbeing	The Strategy itself details how open spaces are beneficial to health and wellbeing, but the elements within this report do not directly create any implications HWB.
Safeguarding of Children, Young	None at this stage



People and Vulnerable Adults	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	As detailed, taking on new areas of land increases the health safety requirements of the Council as land needs to be maintained and monitored.
Equality and Diversity	None at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None at this stage.

## **7 Appendices**

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

- Appendix I: Exempt appendix - strategic land

## **8 Background Papers**

N/a.

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