

Agenda

Eastern Area Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 20 December 2023
Time 7.00 pm,
Venue: Committee Room - Swale House*

Membership:

Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Mike Henderson, Carole Jackson, Rich Lehmann, Claire Martin, Ben J Martin, Hannah Perkin (Chair), Julien Speed, Terry Thompson and one vacancy.

Quorum = 3

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 19 December 2023.

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1. Election of Vice-Chair
2. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Visitors and members of the public who are unfamiliar with the building and procedures are advised that:

- (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.

- (b) Exit routes from the Committee Room are located on each side of the room, leading to the lift area.
- (c) In the event of the alarm sounding, leave the building via the nearest safe exit and gather at the assembly point on the far side of the car park. Do not leave the assembly point or re-enter the building until advised to do so. Do not use the lifts.
- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

3. Apologies for Absence

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.

5. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 (Minute Nos. 318 – 330) as correct records.

6. Community Safety priorities

7. Cellar Hill & Greenstreet Conservation Area

8. Enhanced Bus Partnership - Swale Local Focus Group 5 - 8

9. Flooding in the Eastern Area 9 - 10

10. Public Forum

11. Matters arising from previous meetings 11 - 16

12. Local issues to be raised

13. Matters referred to Service Committee Chairs for consideration

Issued on Tuesday, 12 December 2023

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

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Eastern Area Committee	
Meeting Date	20 December 2023
Report Title	Kent County Council's Enhanced Bus Partnership, Local Focus Group
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the content of the report 2. Nominate a representation from the Eastern Area Committee to sit on the Swale Local Focus Group 3. Feedback any bus related issues that can be raised at the first Local Focus Group end January/ beginning February 2024

1 Background

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) used to manage and run Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) in each district. These consisted of KCC and Swale Borough Council (SBC) members, KCC and SBC officer reps, and the commercial bus operators in Swale. They were used to raise local issues, discuss planning applications that may have impact and any highway and / or parking related items. Whilst it was not a statutory requirement, it was resourced and administered by KCC. These meetings ceased to exist when Government started development of its National Bus Strategy.
- 1.2 In March 2021, Government launched its National Bus Strategy which was the blueprint nationally to help improve infrastructure, bus travel, air quality and so forth. £3 billion of funding was allocated and each area had to respond very quickly by developing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). KCC sought input from districts (Swale did respond) and submitted its plan to Government with an ask of £230 million across the county for various scheme improvements.
- 1.3 In April 2022, KCC received an indicative allocation of £35 million from the Department of Transport (DfT). This was very prescriptive and mainly for capital schemes. There was no revenue funding allowed to keep existing projects going. The influence that districts can have over the BSIP and any spend of the funding is limited. Projects have already been identified by KCC in the BSIP.
- 1.4 KCC received £19m at the end of March 2023 to deliver a reduced set of initiatives within its BSIP. This included £100k of fare initiatives that were delivered over the summer county-wide (e.g. Big Kent Weekend) and also £2.5m of network improvements.

- 1.5 In July 2023, KCC were told they had received a further £16m to deliver BSIP initiatives for 2024/25.
- 1.6 As part of the funding, Government requires that each area (KCC) set up an Enhanced Partnership (EP). This is a statutory Board, without which KCC will not receive their funding. KCC have established their EP Board which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure at KCC. It is an officer-led meeting, high level and strategic. There are no representatives from districts. The bus operators do have representatives (including Chalkwell).
- 1.7 There are also EP Scheme Monitoring Groups set up for East Kent, West Kent and Kent Thameside. Swale is part of East Kent and has one place at that meeting. They are still developing and haven't met consistently as yet. KCC run and manage these meetings and it is anticipated these will run twice a year. They will be the group that monitors the schemes in that area linked to the BSIP.
- 1.8 EP Scheme Monitoring Groups will be high level and as such will not cover any local district issues. KCC feel that this will leave a gap. To fill that gap, KCC are suggesting EP Local Focus Group (EP LFGs) meetings be set up in each district. They are happy to send representatives but cannot resource it like they used to for the QBP and so are asking districts to set up and resource them. These are not a statutory requirement of the hierarchy.
- 1.9 KCC envisage that the EP LFGs are a replacement for the previous QBP meetings in that they are a way of local issues from the bus companies being raised. The idea would be that they are held every six months and be informal. A standard agenda would include local bus network issues and aspirations, planning and development updates, parking enforcement issues and any other items for Swale such as active travel and air quality. Representatives at these meetings will be district councils (leading and chairing the meetings), KCC Public Transport, KCC Planning and Transport Development, Primary Bus Operators, and district council officers from planning, parking, active travel, environmental health. They would be operational, and officer-led.
- 1.10 It has been agreed by Policy and Resources Committee to set up a Local Focus Group. That this is kept high level, meets twice a year and is managed by the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods chairing and coordinating the group. KCC would lead on the updates on the BSIP at the forum. SBC would be a conduit, or enabler bringing partners together as opposed to leading or delivering any work directly. Then the resource pressure it is believed would be manageable. All attendees would be actively made aware, and reminded, of SBC's restricted role.
- 1.11 Given the interest locally in bus infrastructure, it is proposed that issues to be raised are requested from each Area Committee prior to the LFG, with feedback at each Area Committee after the LFG has met (twice-yearly).
- 1.12 It is anticipated that the first LFG meeting will be held end Jan/ beginning February 2024.

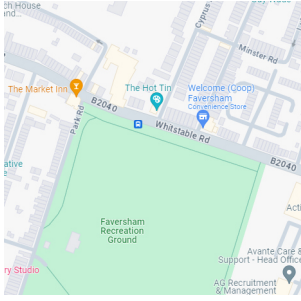
- 1.13 Given the focus on infrastructure in the BSIP, it is proposed that the Planning and Transportation Working Group is the conduit for any feedback into the council. Two members of PTWG will attend the LFG as member representation, as well as representatives from each Area Committee who can provide local voice.

2 Proposal

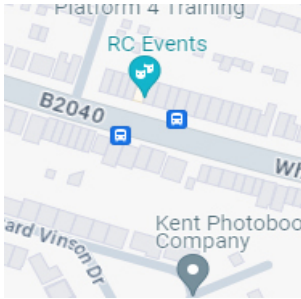
- 2.1 Note the content of the report.
- 2.2 Nominate a representation from the Eastern Area Committee to sit on the Swale Local Focus Group.
- 2.3 Feedback any bus related issues that can be raised at the first Local Focus Group end January/ beginning February 2024.

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Reported surface water flooding risks November 2023



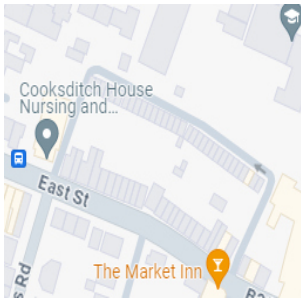
Whitstable Road in front of the recreation ground. Run off from the recreation Ground is a contributing factor. Recent works have improved the situation but it is not solved.



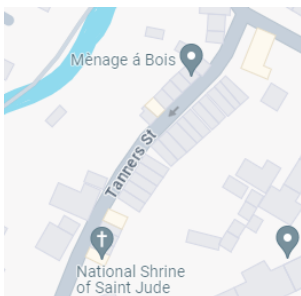
Whitstable Road by the bus tops on both sides there are blocked drains that are completely impacted with earth. This contributes to the surface water flooding at the bottom of the road and also localised flooding near the bus stops. Kent County Council have added them to their remedial works schedule for clearance.



Church Road, this is largely due to heavy leaf shedding blocking the drains along the pavement. Needs more regular clearance with road sweeper in the autumn and more regular attention to the clearance of the drains.

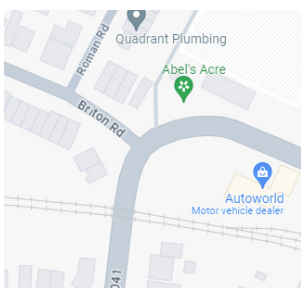


Surface flooding occurs in Orchard place when there is surface flooding on Whitstable road. Run off from the Recreation ground and Park road contribute to this issues.

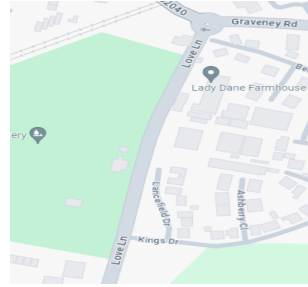


Tanners street toward South road continues to face surface water flooding due to inadequate drainage, this has been reported many times with little movement so far.

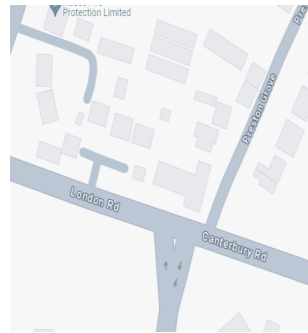
Drainage enquiry 737456



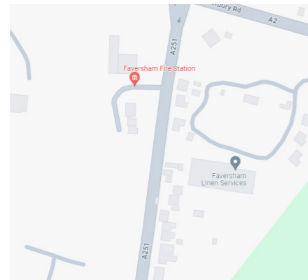
Forbes Road floods badly in heavy rain in the dip under the bridge. There is clearly inadequate drainage in this area.



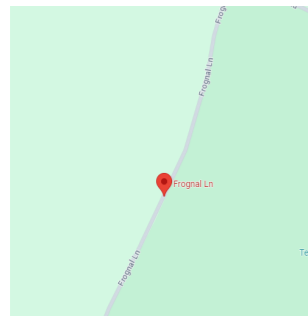
Love Lane opposite the entrance to the cemetery often floods in heavy rain and takes some time to drain in the following days pushing cars out onto the opposite side of the road.



London Road opposite the Ashford Road junction outside the entrance to the small group of houses that are offset from the road floods regularly in even light rain.



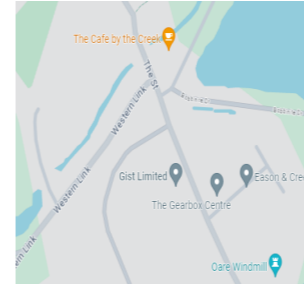
The whole of the Ashford Road from the new roundabout on the pavement site only has one drain which is inadequate drainage for the area.



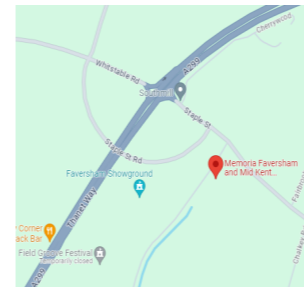
The residents at No: 42 reported their toilet again unusable for two days due to a "back up". No: 36 reports the manhole in his back garden overflowing and a disgusting smell in his ground floor bathroom. No: 37 reports an overflowing manhole. Contractors have been out on numerous occasions but are unable to provide a permanent fix. No: 43 reports sewage flowing into their rear garden from the manhole cover approximately every six months.

It is reported that raw sewage runs down Frogmal Lane approx twice a year and thence down the drives of the residents' houses. In heavy rain, there is always a flood in the adjacent orchard. Residents report wastewater coming out of the verge.

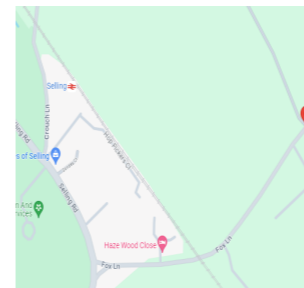
The sewage works would appear to already be full and running at full capacity. Contractors on site have advised there is no ability to upgrade it. Not only does the plant itself need upgrading, but the underground pipework also appears to be failing. Tankers are having to be brought in to remove excess sewerage every two weeks.



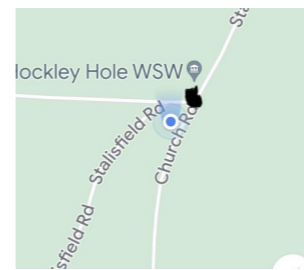
Flooding regularly occurs on the junction of Oare Road and the Western Link



Continuing issues are occurring on Staple Street near the new Crematorium site.



Fox Lane near the Railway in Selling is regularly flooded due to surface rain water and inadequate drainage.



ME130HL. Water runs down kettle hill road and Stalisfield road and floods the corner. Doesn't even have to be heavy rain. The drain is blocked solid with sludge from the banks etc. makes the corner quite treacherous especially at night



Every time it rains, the drains at the Tonge end of Hempstead Lane are unable to cope with the water run-off - and the roadway floods. This floodwater then has nowhere to go apart from down the driveway at The Old Mill, Church Road ME9 9AW. This in turn floods the entrance pathway to The Old Mill and waterlogs the embankment over the stream tunnel from Tonge Pond.

Despite remedial works by KCC Highways, the drains continue to struggle - and the road is still flooded whenever it rains.

Eastern Area Committee Meeting December 2023 – Matters arising

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
1.	Flooding in the Eastern Area	<p>At the September 2023 meeting the Chair said that flooding in the Eastern area had often been discussed and actions agreed to find solutions to the problem. Going forward she said it would be helpful for the Area Committee to agree a way forward on the wider issue of flooding in the area. It was agreed that the Vice-Chair, Cllr Chris Williams, will lead on this matter and liaise with the Member of Parliament, KCC, Southern Water (SW) and the Environment Agency. It was agreed that Area Committee Members, town and parish councillors and members of the public would feed their comments and specific issues to Councillor Williams and he would collate all the information and prepare a document to bring to the December 2023 Eastern Area Committee meeting so that further actions could be considered.</p> <p>Faversham Recreation Ground/Whitstable Road - KCC have carried out some additional works (installation of drain gulleys) in August 2023, they will be monitoring the effectiveness of the works over the next few months.</p>	<p>Following the resignation of Councillor Williams, a new lead on flooding issues will need to be agreed at the December 2023 meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Area Committee Chair, on behalf of the Eastern Area Committee, would lobby the Parliamentary Members for Sittingbourne & Sheppey and Faversham & Mid Kent, on the impact national planning policy had on flooding issues.</p> <p>The list of specific flooding issues has been collated and will be discussed under a separate agenda item.</p> <p>Swale Borough Council have installed some measures under the gates of Faversham Recreation Ground to try to reduce the amount of leaves and debris getting out onto Whitstable Road and blocking drainage gullies. In addition, SBC have starting to undertake their normal seasonal leaf clearance operations within the Recreation Ground.</p>

2.	Active Travel update	<p>At the June 2023 meeting, the Active Travel Co-ordinator gave an update on the Faversham Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 project. The project was being funded by the £995k secured from Active Travel England, it was hoped that work would begin by March 2024.</p>	<p>The Active Travel Coordinator proved the following updates:</p> <p>Faversham East-West Cross Town Path Exhibition held at Faversham Town Hall from 18 November to 8 December. Lots of comments from the public captured on forms and online. These have been collated and are being reviewed.</p> <p>Work on the scheme will start in February and should finish in August.</p> <p>Faversham North-South Cross Town Path A Feasibility Study of the next stage of the Faversham LCWIP Walking Network, funded by KCC and Faversham Town Council, has been briefed and should be starting before the end of the year.</p> <p>Sustrans Faversham-Teynham Quietway Design Feasibility Study Report completed containing a series of recommendations to make walking, wheeling & cycling safer, more comfortable and attractive.</p> <p>Additional funding is being sought to continue this work.</p> <p>Solar Cycle Way Discussions with the developer are ongoing.</p>
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			<p>KCWIP Contains 15 priority county level strategic routes including Faversham-Sittingbourne.</p> <p>Public Consultation is open until 10 January 2024.</p>
3.	Whiting Crescent, Faversham	<p>Cllr Carole Jackson spoke about the piece of land at the end of Whiting Crescent, Faversham and asked if a reconditioned slide or swing could be installed.</p> <p>Cllr Jackson asked if the request could be re-submitted to officers as she was not happy with the response.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed the position is unchanged and as there are two other playgrounds within 10-15 minutes' walk from Whiting Crescent, the Council cannot provide any more playgrounds in that location.</p>
4.	Conservation Area Reviews	<p>The Conservation & Design Team report progress on Conservation Area Reviews to the Area Committees.</p>	<p>Faversham Town & Faversham - Preston Next Conservation Area Review</p> <p>The appraisal documents have been prepared by Urban Vision with input from the Faversham Society. Six-week public consultations for both the documents commenced on 23 October 2023 and was due to be concluded on 4 December 2023, however, on request of Historic England it has now been extended to conclude on Friday 15 December 2023.</p> <p>So far, as of 5 December, the officers have received 19 responses to Faversham Town conservation Area and 6 responses for Faversham- Preston Next Conservation Area.</p>

			<p>Consultation responses and any further amendments to the appraisal documents is estimated to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2024. It is envisaged that the adopted versions of both the Conservation Areas will be published on Swale Borough Council website by summer 2024.</p> <p>Cellar Hill & Greenstreet Conservation Area Review</p> <p>The appraisal document has been prepared by Peter Bell Heritage Consultancy. The six--week consultation period commenced on Friday 10 November 2023 and is scheduled to conclude on 22nd December 2023. So far, as of 5 December, the officers have received only one response to the ongoing consultation.</p> <p>Consultation responses and any further amendments to the appraisal documents is estimated to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2024. It is envisaged that the adopted version of the Conservation Areas will be published on Swale Borough Council website by summer 2024.</p>
5.	Consultation on the Closure of Faversham Household Recycling Centre	Since the September 2023 meeting, KCC have advised the launch date has been further delayed. A new date will be advised in due course.	The Area Committee will be updated once a launch date is announced.

6.	Graffiti	A question was asked about the SBC policy to only remove graffiti if it was offensive. He asked for clarification of the definition of offensive.	<p>The Environmental Services team advised there was no policy on graffiti but all cases are assessed as they come in. If a piece of graffiti is 'offensive' and clearly visible on public land then it will either be covered up or removed asap. The SBC in-house Environment Wardens may deliver this, or they may use their contractor to do so.</p> <p>If the graffiti is on private land, then this becomes a task for the property owner. Officers will assess all other graffiti and respond accordingly depending upon location, size, type etc. SBC do not have the resources to remove all graffiti but will assess and prioritise graffiti for removal if appropriate to do so. There is not a Swale specific definition for offensive graffiti but generally it includes swear words, racist comments, lewd pictures etc.</p>
7.	Permanency of the Town Centre Pedestrian Scheme	A Member asked what the current position was on the consultation for the Permanency of the Town Centre Pedestrian Scheme and if an update could be provided at the December 2023 Eastern Area Committee meeting.	<p>The Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning advised that KCC's county-wide tender process for Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to enforce traffic regulations is due to conclude this month.</p> <p>We are also awaiting the KCC launch of public engagement on the potential use of cameras for the pedestrianisation scheme.</p>

			<p>This is the precursor to the Traffic Regulation Order process (TRO), which would follow once engagement responses have been reviewed.</p> <p>This likely means the recommendation will be taken to a Joint Transport Board (JTB) meeting in spring 2024 at the earliest.</p>
8.	Empty property	Councillor Carole Jackson raised the issue of an empty property on South Road, Faversham.	An update has been obtained and passed to Councillor Jackson.
9.	Homelessness	Due to an increase in case work that councillors are experiencing regarding people who were about to be made homeless, the Chair asked if it was possible for the SBC Communications Team to liaise with Housing to put out some signposting messages on social media.	This request has been passed to the Housing Options and Communications Teams.