

Agenda

Community and Leisure Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 4 September 2024

Time 7.00 pm

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

Membership:

Councillors Shelley Cheesman, Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Mark Last, Peter Macdonald, Charlie Miller, Lee-Anne Moore, Pete Neal, Tara Noe, Tom Nundy, Richard Palmer (Chair), Hannah Perkin, Ashley Shiel, Terry Thompson, Karen Watson and Tony Winckless.

Quorum = 5

Pages

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4. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 6 March 2024 (Minute Nos. 735 – 745) and the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 15 May 2024 (Minute Nos. 17 – 18) as correct records.

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Issued on Tuesday, 27 August 2024

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

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Community and Leisure Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	4 th September 2024
Report Title	Member appointments to Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbours
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Stephanie Curtis, Community Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	The committee is recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree whether to appoint Members to the Community Safety Partnership for a year, or their term of office.2. Nominate which two members should be appointed to the Swale Community Safety Partnership3. Appoint the member(s) to the Swale Community Safety Partnership

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Communities committee to agree the council's member representation for the municipal year 2024/25 on Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

2 Background

- 2.1 Swale CSP is a statutory body bringing together a number of public sector agencies to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and reduce re-offending. These agencies include Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Probation services, and Health services, working closely with the local housing associations such as Southern Housing, voluntary and community sector organisations and HM Prison Service.
- 2.2 As the Council is a statutory partner of the CSP, Members and Officers have sat on the CSP Executive Board. The CSP is a strategic group and the Member appointed will be able to relay concerns of this nature affecting Swale residents. It is not a forum where operational ward-based concerns can be discussed.
- 2.3 In 2009, councils were given powers to scrutinise CSPs through provision made in the Police and Justice Act 2006. Within the Cabinet system this function sat with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This function now sits with the

Community and Leisure Committee. Therefore, when appointing the member, it should be noted that this will form part of the representatives being scrutinised rather than being part of the committee for this function.

- 2.4 For 2023/24, the two Members appointed to the committee were Cllr Hannah Perkin and Cllr Tom Nundy. Cllr Nundy has also become the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership.
- 2.5 Historically, Members have been appointed to the Community Safety Partnership on an annual basis from the Community and Leisure Committee. This was due to the transition from Cabinet to Committee system in 2022, then following the Borough Election in 2023. However, as the Community Safety Partnership is a statutory partnership body and this Committee has the Scrutiny function, the Committee may feel that making the Member appointments for a longer term would be beneficial for consistency and increased understanding of the role and work of the Partnership.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Agree whether to appoint Members to the Community Safety Partnership for a year, or for their term of office.
- 3.2 Nominate which two members should be appointed to the Swale Community Safety Partnership
- 3.3 Appoint the member(s) to the Swale Community Safety Partnership

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not appoint any members to the CSP and for the Committee to just be involved in the Overview and Scrutiny function. Officers sit on the CSP as well and therefore the statutory duties would be covered

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 These are routine appointments to existing arrangements, so no consultation has been undertaken or is proposed beyond asking committee for their nominations and what length term the appointments should be for.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This supports the community objective - To work as part of the Community Safety Partnership to delivery priorities to address domestic abuse, crime, and disorder, ASB and support vulnerable people.

Financial, Resource and Property	No implications identified at this stage
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	No implications identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	The CSP is a strategic body which sets priorities for tackling crime and disorder within the borough.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No implications identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	The CSP links with health and wellbeing activities
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The CSP focuses and delivers services and projects that support vulnerable individuals.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No implications identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	No implications identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications identified at this stage

7 Appendices

None.

8 Background Papers

Swale Community Safety Plan 2023/24 can be found at <https://swale.gov.uk/news-and-your-council/strategies-and-policies/community-safety-plan>

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Community Committee	
Meeting Date	4 September 2024
Report Title	Play Area Improvement Plan 2024-2027
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Rob Lucas, Greenspace Technical Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. Members are asked to approve the proposed Play Area Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2027 detailed in appendix 1

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Members to agree with the proposed Play Area Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2027 which identifies the use of externally sourced funds only and does not impact on the Council's capital reserves.

2 Background

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council (SBC) has 78 active play areas across the Borough offering a wide range of activities to all ages from toddlers to adults. Each of the play areas differ in accordance to their intended use and user group; for example, large 'destination' venues such as Beachfieds, Sheerness and Faversham Recreation Ground have a large spectrum of equipment often spreading over more than one 'play area' which caters for the high footfall of those travelling specifically to the site whereas the small 'door step' sites such as Diligent Drive and Abbey Rise cater more for local residents within walking distance and offer a smaller range of equipment.
- 2.2 All play areas are managed by SBC's Greenspace Team to the agreed standards set out in BS EN1176 and BS EN1177 which include weekly 'visual' inspections carried out by Greenspace Maintenance & Inspection Officers (GM&IOs), quarterly 'operational' inspections and annual 'main' inspections carried out by an external ROSPA qualified Inspector. All inspection findings are formally recorded with any remedial actions or maintenance requirements carried out by either GM&IO's or a suitably qualified and experienced sub-contractor.
- 2.3 An annual 'RAG' assessment is carried out by all those directly involved in the operational activities on all play areas which covers a wide range of information including age, type, availability (geographical), defects, maintenance costs, risk assessment, service requests/complaints and a visual assessment. All this

information is collated and used to help potential development refurbishment, maintenance schedules etc.

- 2.4 In 2021 and 2022 a programme of refurbishment works was carried out to 26 play areas which included repainting/repairs to all metal parts (including removal of corrosions and other defects), upgrading of key parts (seats, hand grips, play panels, wooden beams etc) to enhance quality of the play value and upgrading/provision of additional benches/bins etc to improve the experience of the parent/adult supervisor. This work was funded via the special project fund (around £60,000 in total) and greatly improved the visual appearance, play value and general visitor experience as well prolonging the economic life on many multi activity units and individual pieces of play equipment.
- 2.5 SBC has had an extensive improvement programme over many years – from 2018 to 2023, £1.2 million has been spent on 22 sites on both replacement of existing and significant redevelopment of play areas across the Borough. The funding has come from a variety of sources including capital projects, Parish Councils, special project fund, S106, HLF bids, member grants, area committee funds and COMFF.
- 2.6 Due to the current financial situation being experienced by all local authorities and the constraints these have put on SBC, the proposed Play Area Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2027 does not include any SBC capital or reserve funding but instead focuses on fully utilising available S106 funds. The use of only S106 funds does limit where the development work can be undertaken, which is evidenced by the programme for 2024-2027 being more 'Faversham' focused. The programme for 2018 – 2023 was more focused on the 'Sittingbourne' and 'Isle of Sheppey' areas.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to approve the proposed Play Area Improvement Plan for 2024-2027.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Using capital or reserve funds to further enhance the Play Area Improvement Plan was considered, especially around play areas with higher scores on the RAG assessment. This was rejected due to the current financial position and the associated constraints.
- 4.2 Applying for further external funding options around play development was considered, however, there is currently minimal funding available and with Officer time limited it did not appear to be either a cost effective or efficient use of resource time.

4.3 Option to engage a consultant to review and potentially apply for additional funding was considered, however, the cost of engagement appeared disproportionate to the potential funding likely to be achieved.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Consultation for the plan was limited to Officers involved within the Greenspace and Leisure teams.

5.2 Given playgrounds are such a key community facility, public consultation will be undertaken for projects which involve major redevelopment of sites which potentially will change their play value and user demographic. We will also engage with ward councillors, Town & Parish Councils and may run online public consultations as required.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The new Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 has been developed. The Play Area Improvement Plan sits within the ‘Community’ priority. Enabling our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Funding for the plan is from S106 funding and will not impact on Council capital or reserve funds.</p> <p>Following a meeting on 20 May 2024, IAM agreed that the remaining £14.5k in the park’s infrastructure bid would be allocated to the playground improvement programme. On review of the RAG assessment document the allocation of funds would best benefit the play area at Batteries Close which currently sits with a ‘red’ rating and has required significant levels of investment from the revenue budget over the past 3 years.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance of redeveloped sites will sit within the Council’s existing revenue budgets.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>SBC’s Legal Team will need to provide the necessary support to complete awarded contracts using SBC’s current standard Terms & Conditions.</p> <p>The advertising, tendering, and awarding of all projects will follow the SBCI’s current Commissioning and Procurement Policies and Contract Standing Orders.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None identified for the development of the plan.

	As is the nature of all open space it does provide opportunity for vandalism/anti-social behaviour however the provision of appropriate facilities for children and young adults will hopefully assist in achieving the targets for the reduction of vandalism and other crime and disorder.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	All evaluation of project tenders will consider the carbon footprint of the delivery and will also consider other related environmental impacts such as the chain management of the steel to be used.
Health and Wellbeing	The provision of improved outdoor facilities for toddlers, juniors, and young adults of all abilities with a range of equipment will encourage healthy activity, social interaction, and mental wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified within the development of the plan. During project installations the areas will be closed off with 2m temporary fencing. Play areas will be enclosed with 1.2m fencing and equipped with self-closing gate mechanisms. Equipment for toddlers, juniors and teens will be set within their own zones with areas for appropriate adults to attend included.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified within the development of the plan. During project installations CDM 2015 regulations will apply to the removal of old equipment and the installation of the new play area design. This will be monitored by Council staff throughout the build process and hand over period. Once installed the equipment will fall under the current play area inspection regime which follows BS EN1176 guidance. Any identified faults will be repaired, initially through the warranty process and subsequently through existing revenue budgets.
Equality and Diversity	Project specifications will be designed and scored to best benefit the widest selection of children and young adults as well as meeting disability and access requirements.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix I – Play Area Improvement Plan 2024 -2027.

2023/24

Site	Area	Ward	Detail	Estimated Cost
Iwade Recreation Ground	Sittingbourne	Bobbing, Iwade & Lower Halstow	Additional play area equipment	£12,000.00
Barton's Point	Isle Of Sheppey	Minster Cliffs	Additional play area equipment	£20,000.00
TOTAL				£32,000.00

2024/25

Site	Area	Ward	Detail	Estimated Cost
Grove Park	Sittingbourne	Borden & Grove Park	Additional play area equipment	£4,000.00
The Glen	Isle Of Sheppey	Minster Cliffs	Additional play area equipment	£10,000.00
Lower Road	Faversham	St Anne's	Installation of new play area	£100,000.00
West Faversham Community Centre	Faversham	St Anne's	Additional play area equipment	£28,000.00
Batteries Close	Sittingbourne	Teynham & Lynstead	Replace existing play area equipment	£14,500.00
TOTAL				£156,500.00

2025/26

Site	Area	Ward	Detail	Estimated Cost
Abbey Rise	Isle Of Sheppey	Queenborough & Halfway	Additional play area equipment	£4,000.00
Sumpter Way	Faversham	Watling	Installation of new play area	£120,000.00
KGV Faversham	Faversham	Watling	Additional play area equipment	£57,000.00
Total				£181,000.00

2026/27

Site	Area		Detail	Estimated Cost
KGV Queenborough	Isle Of Sheppey	Queenborough & Halfway	Additional play area equipment	£35,000.00
Reedland Crescent	Faversham	Priory	Additional play area equipment	£30,000.00
Total				£65,000.00

8 Background Papers

None

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Community and Leisure Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	4 September 2024
Report Title	Empowering You in Swale
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Community Services
Lead Officer	Sarah-Jane Radley, Community & Partnerships Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The committee is asked to recommend the approval of the Empowering You in Swale overview document for an 8 week public consultation.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Empowering You in Swale strategy document is being developed to provide Swale with a Community Development Strategy to outline how the council intends to support the community over the next 3 years in line with the Corporate Plan. We ask the committee to recommend the approval of the overview document for a public 8 week consultation to capture feedback and comments that will help shape the final strategy.

2 Background

- 2.1 In March 2024 the Health & Housing Committee agreed to the closedown of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy due to the restructure of the community team and the deletion of the Health & Wellbeing post. The committee proposal included the development of a new strategy that encompasses key delivery for community services in line with the existing Corporate Plan and Service Plan.

A cross party member working group took place to discuss ideas and suggestions for the key priorities of the strategy and how members would like the strategy to be set out. The name Empowering You in Swale was agreed as the title for the document and an outline of items that should be included.

In addition to the members working group, the Cost of Living Partnership Group were engaged in a workshop to discuss the key themes and priorities within the strategy and valuable input from our statutory and VCS partners has helped to start to shape the document.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 We propose to carry out a consultation for Empowering You in Swale Overview document for a period of 8 weeks.

Consultees

3.2 Below is a list of some of the individuals and groups who we hope to consult with:

- Residents:
 - Area Committees
 - Website
 - Social media
- Town and Parish Councils
- NHS partners (Health & Care Partnerships)
- DWP
- Swale Voluntary Alliance
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Schools and education partners
- Community Safety Partnership

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 The alternative option of continuing to deliver the Health & Wellbeing Plan was dismissed by the Health & Housing Committee due to a lack of resources. The work of the Community & Partnerships Team has evolved since the development of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy to encompass a wider area of delivery and so this is reflected within the new strategy.

We do not feel that the option to ‘do nothing’ is the best option as although we have a commitment to community within the Corporate Plan, this strategy enables us to provide a level of detail for how we intend to improve the lives of Swale residents through community development.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 For full details of the external consultation, see point 3 Proposals.

We have conducted a member workshop and a workshop within the Cost of Living Partnership Group and we will share the consultation with the appropriate internal teams for feedback and comments.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Empowering You in Swale links to the four key objectives of the Corporate Plan through the delivery activities being proposed within the strategy.

Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Development of the strategy is through a commitment of officer time and internal resources to deliver the consultation this means that there are little to no financial implications.</p> <p>Delivery of the work associated to the Empowering You in Swale Strategy will be committed to from the existing delivery resources of the Community & Partnerships Team and wider team input where there is a cross over of service delivery, no additional funding for projects outside of this area of work has been agreed.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities and links to the delivery plan for the Community Safety Executive.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities through community development, and this includes tackling fuel and water poverty in the borough.
Health and Wellbeing	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities through community development, and this includes tackling health inequalities in the borough.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities through community development, and we ensure that all partners we work with comply with safeguarding policies and we are delivering according to our own policies.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	The external consultation will inform the detail of the EQIA
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: Empowering You in Swale DRAFT doc

8 Background Papers

Health & Housing Committee paper – agreement to close Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Empowering You in Swale 2024-27

The Empowering You in Swale Strategy aims to contribute towards Swale's Corporate Plan by bringing together a partnership response through community development projects, ensuring the needs of our communities are weaved into all that we do across the council.

In partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Enterprise Sector along with other key agencies it is intended to focus on bringing about social change and long-term sustainability for our communities.

We know what the statistical data and evidence tells us about our communities, however it is important for us to capture feedback from across a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the strategy reflects a true picture and allows opportunity to promote innovative solutions.

What do we mean by Community Development?

Community development enables people to work collectively to bring about positive social change. It is our aim to work collectively to promote positive social change within the borough, connecting with communities and our partners to understand what the key issues that are being faced and how we can come together to improve lives.

What are our priorities?

We want to make sure that we have identified the correct priorities within the strategy that will deliver for our communities and for the council over the next 3 years.

Through an initial consultation with our members, partner agencies, and looking at what the data tells us, we have developed the following four priorities:

Priority 1: Creating skilled, educated and working communities

Supporting improved access to education and training through continued development of engagement pathways that encourage increased confidence and promotion of activities through a partnership approach.

Suggested key areas of work:

- *Supporting the development of good skills, training and apprenticeships in the borough*
- *Improved access to education and training, including transport*
- *Post pandemic school attendance and related issues*
- *Supporting young people Not in Education, Employment or Training 'NEET'*

Priority 2: Growing healthy communities

Working collectively to reduce health inequalities in the borough by supporting place based solutions that fit outside of the statutory health profession and making the most of our voluntary, community and enterprise sector to deliver localised projects.

Suggested key areas of work:

- *Working collaboratively to reduce health inequalities in the borough and reduce loneliness*
- *Improved access to health care, including transport to appointments*
- *Promoting access to leisure facilities, as well as parks and open spaces within the borough*
- *Promoting better living conditions in the borough with an aim of reducing damp and mould in people's homes*

Priority 3: Empowering stronger, more sustainable communities

We will continue to develop innovative solutions to the difficulties faced by our communities, including the aftereffects of the COVID 19 pandemic, Cost of Living and Fuel Crisis' and day to day hardship. We will continue to work with the voluntary, community and enterprise sector to improve resilience and enable organisations to grow and thrive in the borough.

Suggested key areas of work:

- *Delivering a collective response to Cost of Living, fuel and other crisis'*
- *Data led targeted interventions such as benefit uptake campaigns and direct mailings to promote opportunities*
- *Improved awareness and information sharing of available services*
- *Development of a more resilient and sustainable voluntary, community and enterprise sector in Swale*

Priority 4: Developing strong partnerships that deliver for our communities

Strong relationships, not only with our communities but with our partners, are powerful in driving forward change and helping to initiate sustainable, long-lasting transformation. We are committed to continuing to build upon the footings we have made through existing partnerships and look to make meaningful new ones that will support our vision to tackle health inequalities, promote community safety, reduce poverty and create sustainable communities.

Suggested key areas of work:

- *Continued development of the relationship with Swale's voluntary, community, and enterprise Sector*
- *Delivery of the Community Safety Partnership and associated projects*
- *Develop relationships with Swales Business community to promote corporate social responsibility*
- *Building of strong partnerships with health partners including Medway & Swale Health & Care Partnership, East Kent Health & Care Partnership and the Kent Integrated Care Board*

What next?

We are in the process of developing a full strategy document that will encompass a more detailed plan of how we intend to deliver the priorities listed. However, we want to hear your views and capture your input to ensure that the strategy is truly developed in collaboration using the voices of our residents and partners to create a meaningful document.

We have created a feedback form where you can give us your ideas and thoughts about what is important to you, and we welcome ideas and suggestions of how we can link into all the great work that we know is already happening in the borough.

<https://forms.office.com/e/JinK1uSurp>

This survey will close on X and all the information collected will be used to inform the final strategy.

For more information contact communitydevelopment@swale.gov.uk

Communities and Leisure Committee	
Meeting Date	4 th September 2024
Report Title	Household Support Fund and Swale VCSE Funding Overview
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Sarah-Jane Radley, Community & Partnerships Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The committee is asked to note the contents of the report. 2. The committee is asked to provide a steer for minimising impact and next steps post September 2024 and March 2025.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Provide an update on the outcomes of Household Support Fund delivery to date, the implications of the fund ending on 30th September 2024 and an overview of the current funding situation across Swale.

2 Background

- 2.1 Household Support Fund has provided vital Government funding to deliver critical services to the residents of Swale who are impacted by the current Cost of Living Crisis and energy prices. Over the five rounds (Oct 2021 – Sep 2024), we have developed support packages by working with local voluntary, community, and enterprise sector organisations (VCSE) and have delivered support through a network of frontline delivery.

2.2 Funding Allocations

Household Support Fund is a Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) provision which is funded to Kent County Council and then we receive local allocations dependant on a variety of measures including poverty levels.

- Round 1 (6th October 2021-31st March 2022) – £244,416.22
- Round 2 (1st April 2022-30th September 2022) – £558,940.00 (In-house voucher scheme delivered & pensioner payments)
- Round 3 (1st October 2022-31st March 2023) – £279,923.87
- Round 4 (1st April 2023-31st March 2024) – £505,445.00
- Round 5 (1st April 2024-30th September 2024) £252,722.45

2.3 Current funding position

The current round of funding will end on 30th September 2024, and we have not received any updates from Government or Kent County Council that there will be a further round of funding, and this will have a significant impact on Swale residents, Swale Borough Council and Swales VCSE.

2.4 Delivery model

In rounds 1 & 2 (Oct 2021-Sep22) we developed a service offer that consisted of a combination of funding VCSE partners and delivery of a voucher scheme by officers in-house. This formed the basis of the service offer that we have been delivering ever since by using the evidence from the first rounds to show resident need and how we could respond with the staff resources and funds available to us.

As the scheme developed, we stopped delivering in-house and moved to funding all services through Swale's VCSE to bolster existing service provision and creating a new voucher scheme working in collaboration with Children & Families.

The VCSE organisations delivering the scheme were able to increase their volumes of support and develop their existing service offers to respond to the immediate crisis. New and innovative support offers were developed through working with the VCSE, of which as a Local Authority we were unable to deliver due to a lack of resources and delivery mechanisms.

The current delivery model consists of the following service offers being delivered Swales VCSE:

Organisation	Service offer
Age UK (Faversham & Sittingbourne)	Hot meals & food shopping
Age UK (Sheppey)	Hot meals & food shopping
Children & Families	Emergency food parcels
Children & Families	£100 Mastercard (Billed fuel support)
Children & Families	School uniform voucher scheme (Professional referral only)
Citizens Advice Swale	Fuel advice (and other advice services)
Diversity House	Emergency food parcels (Multicultural)
Fuel & Water Advice Service (Children & Families)	Fuel and energy advice (inc. fuel vouchers)
Swale Foodbank	Emergency food parcels
Swale Foodbank	White goods
West Faversham Community Association	Hot meals (children)

2.5 Partnerships

The Fuel and Water Advisor service was created in 2019 through SBC Special Projects Fund after we declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency. The development of this contract included providing support to residents to tackle fuel and water poverty in the borough.

Children & Families delivered this successful project over a period of 3 years, and we were able to fund the extension of this much needed service through HSF until the end of September 2024. The District Councils Network are promoting this as a stand out service model and we are proud of the work this project has done to support many residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and access to emergency fuel support and advice. Due to the proven track record of this project and the continued need for a service of this kind, Children & Families have been successful in gaining a further year's funding through local energy provider schemes.

In addition, development of HSF in conjunction with the local VCSE has allowed us to strengthen the relationship we have as an authority with the VCSE and wider statutory partners. There is a collaborative voice through the Cost of Living Partnership Group and working closely with frontline partners helps us to get a true picture of the issues and experiences our residents are facing at this time as well as engaging local MPs with the group.

2.6 **One Swale Roadshows**

Through the collaboration of our external Cost of Living Partnership Group we have been successfully delivering pop-up sessions around the borough in each of the three main geographical areas, Sheppey, Sittingbourne and Faversham.

The sessions have been a really successful way of bringing a variety of services into the community to give residents access to face to face support on key issues. Through this work, not only have residents been able to access services such as fuel advice, debt and benefit advice, children's services, clothes and food, the organisations themselves have used the opportunity to network and form relationships in the borough to enable a more cohesive approach to service delivery.

We have funded Swale CVS and Faversham Networking Group to deliver the sessions on our behalf until the end of March 2025. We would like to continue to deliver the sessions post March as they have become a valued support mechanism for residents and partners, however we are currently looking to source the funding for delivery.

The following information provides an overview of the session attendance from when we started delivering the sessions in December 2023 to date.

Note – we were delivering in 4 locations across the borough in the same month until the end of March 24, when we had to reduce resources to deliver the sessions due to funding restrictions.

Date	Location	Number of partners in attendance	Number of resident interactions
December 2023	Sheerness and Leysdown	17	74
January 2024	4 locations covered	23	187

February 2024	4 locations covered	25	241
March 2024	4 locations covered	22	122
April 2024	Sheerness	13	84
May 2024	Sittingbourne	15	35
June 2024	Faversham	11	60
July 2024	Sheerness (Seashells)	15	201
August 2024	Leysdown	12	62

The next roadshows are planned for Faversham in September and October in Sittingbourne.

2.7 **Data**

The following data has been collected over the lifespan of HSF and shows the numbers of households that the scheme has assisted.

Although the service delivery differs the data collection has remained the same for reporting. The number of households differs from the volume of support provided as we have provided multiple support to the same household in some instances.

Final data for Round 5 (Apr24-Sep24) is still being collated.

Total Value of Awards Split by Category							
Round 1							
	Food Support <i>(Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)</i>	Energy and Water <i>(fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie. warm packs, hygro meters)</i>	Wider Essentials <i>(white goods)</i>	Advice Services	Housing Costs <i>(rent arrears)</i>	Total Volume	Total Households
TOTAL FOR 6 MONTHS							
06/10/21-31/03/22	443	155	258	0	0	856	683
Round 2							
	Food Support <i>(Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)</i>	Energy and Water <i>(fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie. warm packs, hygro meters)</i>	Wider Essentials <i>(white goods)</i>	Advice Services	Housing Costs <i>(rent arrears)</i>	Total Volume	Total Households
TOTAL FOR 6 MONTHS							
01/04/22-30/09/22	1753	3982	0	0	0	5735	1773
Round 3							
	Food Support <i>(Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)</i>	Energy and Water <i>(fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie. warm packs, hygro meters)</i>	Wider Essentials <i>(white goods)</i>	Advice Services	Housing Costs <i>(rent arrears)</i>	Total Volume	Total Households
TOTAL FOR 6 MONTHS							
01/10/22-30/03/23	6380	2313	33		4	8730	5861
Round 4							
	Food Support <i>(Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)</i>	Energy and Water <i>(fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie. warm packs, hygro meters)</i>	Wider Essentials <i>(white goods)</i>	Advice Services	Housing Costs <i>(rent arrears)</i>	Total Volume	Total Households
TOTAL FOR 1 YEAR							
01/04/23-31/03/2024	20937	2415	76	615	6	24049	22818
Round 5							
	Food Support <i>(Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)</i>	Energy and Water <i>(fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie. warm packs, hygro meters)</i>	Wider Essentials <i>(white goods)</i>	Advice Services	Housing Costs <i>(rent arrears)</i>	Total Volume	Total Households
TOTAL TO DATE							
01/04/2024-30/09/2024	4223	312	20	148	0	4703	3997
Totals	33736	9177	387	763	10	44073	35132

2.8 Case studies

we have collected a sample of case studies provided to us by our HSF delivery partners who are dealing with a variety of sensitive and complex cases on a daily basis, of which without HSF and other funding streams this work would be difficult to continue.

Case 1

Our client contacted us following his move to a very rural and isolated location. He has carpet and curtains in just one room and the Community Support worker has been helping him. Our client described his day to day life as full of pain and despair, he is very lonely and isolated.

He was provided with food from the foodbank but this is mostly canned and he can't use a can opener due to dexterity problems with his hands so it's still sitting in his cupboards. He doesn't have the basic utensils required for serving food.

Our client has no family support and multiple health conditions which makes it very difficult for him to get out and about. He's unable to read or write and has no digital

awareness, having just a basic phone for making calls. On top of this he has a basic income from Universal Credit and can't afford bus fares to get into town.

He suffers from depression and has recently had some suicidal thoughts due to his living conditions and ability to see a way forward. He's been turned down three times for Personal Independence Payments, but we're now helping him with an appeal.

After several phone calls we've been able to make progress in trying to secure a better quality of life for him through the HSF scheme and referrals to other organisations who can provide appropriate support.

Case 2

One family we have supported over the last year is a single mum of 4 children. As the Cost of Living crisis hit, her landlord had no choice but to increase her rent by £300. Housing Benefit agreed to cover this for her, but then Universal Credit decreased her payments by £300, meaning she is now minus £300 per month. This incredible woman is attending college to learn new skills in the hope that she will be able to work a full-time job in the future and come off of benefits completely. If, in addition, we now have to remove food support from this family as a result of losing funding, we don't know how she will cope. It is almost certain that she would need to leave her college course to try and get lower paid work, in order that her family can continue to eat.

Case 3

I don't get paid until next Friday and I am nearly out of electric every spear penny I have had I have put on the meter, but it doesn't seem to be lasting. I can't do any washing for me or my children trying to save electricity so I don't come off grid, but I am close to that now. I am on my emergency now and only have 7 pound left.

2.9 Funding outlook

Across Swale there are a variety of services that are reliant on contracts and funding that are due to end either before or on the 31st March 2025. Many of the contract holders are voluntary sector organisations who do not have the capacity to deliver services without the guarantee of future funding. This will have a significant impact to communities if these services must close their doors.

We have carried out a survey through the Cost of Living Partnership Group and been advised of the following:

Organisation	Service & Impact	Funder	End date
Children and Families	Family services – Seashells. A vast number of services will be impacted including family support, parenting programs and delivering	Kent County Council	31 st March 2025

	specialist services to families on the Island		
Citizens Advice Swale	Reduction in core grant for delivery of core advice services. National Citizens Advice fund Energy Advice Program, due to end in 2025. End of funding from Collyer Fergusson in March 25 for core service.	Various including Swale Borough Council, Collyer Fergusson and National Citizen Advice	31 st March 2025
SATEDA	Domestic abuse support services – including the main core delivery of services	Police Crime and Commissioner	31 st March 2025
Swale Community Care	Community Café	Lottery	31 st March 2025
Age UK Kent Rivers	A vast number of services delivered by Age UK Kent Rivers including health activities, befriending, post diagnostic dementia services, and HSF hot food and shopping	Universal Well-Being fund	31 st March 2025
Brogdale CIC Group including Vibe community	Youth activities	Faversham Town Council	31 st August 2024
KCC Community Wardens	Service is proposed to be halved in numbers and will therefore impact the numbers of clients and level of service able to be provided to communities in Swale	Kent County Council	Under consultation

This is just a snapshot of what we know is coming over the next 7 months as we know there will be others. Most of the clients accessing the services listed are categorised as being the most vulnerable and are living in areas of high health inequalities and deprivation. Communities rely on these services to deliver life changing support and advice, and everyone is working hard to try to find alternative funding solutions, but this is proving difficult within the current climate.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Request member input on options for next steps and suggestions on how to minimise impact and suggested lobbying tactics.

3.2 The Community & Partnerships Team will continue to link in with the VCSE and support any opportunities to develop ideas suggested by the Cost of Living Partnership Group some of which are as follows:

- Develop a communications strategy that includes promoting key ‘triggers’ as a preventative measure to stop people from entering crisis, including things like not paying bills, or choosing between fuel and food – this is to be developed through a working group.
- Set up a working group that will specifically look at funding opportunities for the VCSE and to map where the gaps are across the sector – this will be linked to Swale Voluntary Alliance.
- Set up a working group that links directly to the preventative work already being carried by Officers, including benefit uptake campaigns and housing prevention to look at the prospect of including the VCSE to develop further opportunities.
- Develop ideas to work with local businesses in Swale to see how the Cost of Living Group can tap into corporate and social responsibility and how employees of organisations in the borough can be supported better.

Existing and new projects

3.3 We will continue to promote Swale Voluntary Alliance and utilise the available resources to link any new project ideas and develop all new projects in a collaborative way to ensure that statutory and non-statutory sectors are linked. In addition, the creation of the new Community Lottery Scheme will also be linked to any potential availability of resources once it is launched.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 We have consulted with other funders such as Medway & Swale Health & Care Partnership, National Lottery, and other smaller funds, however none of these are suitable for delivery of HSF due to the criteria of the funding, they are either specifically targeted to a project theme and/or they are not funds that cannot be used to directly support residents in the way that HSF does.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The Cost of Living External Partnership Group which has a varied and high number of members from across multiple sectors and geographical representation across the borough continues to provide a vital platform for us to understand the issues facing communities in Swale. We held a workshop at the July meeting where we discussed the impact of HSF ending, not only for

residents but for organisations and services across the borough. The outcomes of this workshop have been included within this paper and we will continue to use this group to monitor impact as we progress into winter and post HSF funding.

- 5.2 In addition to the external Cost of Living Group an internal Officers group meets regularly to discuss issues that are impacting on Swale Borough Council frontline teams and others, and we will also continue to monitor impacts through this group.
- 5.3 We conducted a survey through the External Cost of Living Group to try and gain an understanding of what organisations are facing regarding contracts and funding cuts. We have included the results of this survey within this paper.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Household Support Fund aligns to Community within the Corporate Plan – enabling community resilience through access to food, fuel and other emergency support.</p> <p>The VCSE in Swale deliver many key services to residents not provided through statutory organisations, the reduction in funding to the sector will impact not only residents but Swale Borough Council delivery and frontline services as well as other statutory organisations such as the NHS.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>HSF currently provides funding to multiple partner agencies to assist them in supporting the most vulnerable households in the borough through a variety of functions that SBC does not deliver. The funding currently helps to reduce the pressure on SBC frontline services by providing residents with access to emergency support, without this service residents will look to SBC for support, of which is limited. We could see an increase in demand in several areas including, Safeguarding, contacts to Housing services, increase in non payment of Council Tax and other community facing services.</p> <p>Reduction in funding into the VCSE will increase pressures to the Local Authority as residents will not be able to access services and a decrease in prevention activities delivered by VCSE will mean longer term financial responsibility falling back onto the Local Authority.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	There is the potential to see an increase in crime in the borough due to the difficulties families will face with the potential reduction in access to emergency support such as food and fuel.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	There are multiple health implications for Swale residents should HSF and other key funding streams no longer be available, these include an increase in mental health issues, increase in hunger, families unable to heat their homes or cook hot meals due to lack of fuel. Waiting lists for access to services may become longer which will increase stress and worry for families.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Potential increase in Safeguarding cases due to lack of services and increased pressures on families to feed and heat their homes. Potential increase suicide rates and increase in mental health issues.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Potential risks to the VCSE include closure of services due to lack of funding and a reduction in donations as well as a reduction in volunteers to support delivery of services. There is a potential that the VCSE will be unable to meet the demand put upon them and therefore having to turn people away or refer them back to SBC. The VCSE consists of smaller organisations and charities, mostly made up from volunteers, the increase in pressure to provide services and deal with ever increasingly frustrated residents could cause mental health issues and the potential to lose more volunteers.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage

7 Appendices

- None

8 Background Papers

Website link to Household Support Fund: www.swale.gov.uk/hsf

Community Committee	
Meeting Date	4 September 2024
Report Title	Swale Leisure Service - Future Options
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Jay Jenkins, Leisure & Technical Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To appoint a Leisure Consultant via approved Framework agreement. 2. To proceed with Option 4. 3. To continue with the Members Leisure Working Group.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to update the Community Committee on the Future Swale Leisure Contract Options.
- 1.2 It makes recommendations for the next stage of finalising the long term leisure service provision.

2 Background

- 2.1 The existing leisure contract (covering Swallows & Sheppey sites) is due to expire on 31 March 2027, having recently been extended for 2 years. Faversham Pools Trust has a long-term lease which is linked to an annual grant agreement.
- 2.2 The next stage is to confirm the direction of travel for the delivery of the leisure service beyond March 2027. Members need to discuss the options on how the process will be resourced, which will enable the project plan and business cases to be worked up to inform the final decision on operating model and investment requirements.
- 2.3 We have recently worked with the leisure consultants Strategic Leisure and the Members working group as part of the contract extension discussions. Strategic Leisure were also selected by Sport England to support us during the Covid reviews, so they are a natural selection for reviewing the future leisure options. However, contract standing orders dictate that the work needs to be procured separately.

- 2.4 Colleagues in procurement have advised that there are framework options for the project, which would be used to directly appoint the consultant to undertake the process.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 We have requested a costed proposal from Strategic Leisure (with no obligation and may differ slightly from framework rates) to inform our conversations which is attached at Appendix 1. This is focussed on procuring the services of an external leisure provider and would need to be amended if a different operating model was decided. There are 4 potential options to consider which are attached at Appendix 2.

Options:

1. SBC does everything. (All in house resources?)
2. SBC leads and manages procurement process with identified support from consultants. (Circa £20k plus inhouse resources?)
3. Consultants lead process but SBC undertakes specific tasks/elements of work, agreed upfront. (Circa £25k to £30k plus inhouse resources?)
4. Consultants do everything (Circa £35k)

Estimated Costs:

Option	Consultancy Fee	SBC costs*	Total Costs
1	£0.00	£75k	£75k
2	£20k	£45k	£65k
3	£25 – 30k	£30K	£55 – 60k
4	£35k	£10K	£45k

**SBC Costs have been estimated on Lead Officer costs (Direct & Oncosts) plus additional staff costs for covering Lead Officer workload.*

As you will see, the costs of managing the project in-house outweigh the cost of bringing in consultant support and furthermore will take the Leisure and Technical Services Manager away from day-to-day operation of the team and focus on other key corporate plan/service plan projects such as review of grounds maintenance.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To not appoint a consultant to undertake the project. This is not recommended as the contract procurement will require a significant amount of time and resources, none of which are currently available in-house.
- 4.2 To not continue with a Leisure Options working group. This is not recommended as it is a key service for the community and there needs to be time to work

through the options before the contract expiry date. Failure to do so would leave us without a leisure centre service.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with a range of key leisure stakeholders, including Swale Community Leisure, Serco Leisure Ltd & Faversham Pools Trust.
- 5.2 In addition, Strategic Leisure has undertaken a soft market testing consultation with the main operators in the industry to help inform current thinking about any future opportunities in Swale.
- 5.3 Once Members confirm the options that we will look at, public consultation will be required to help understand what residents want provided within the leisure service.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Community, to enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The leisure service is a considerable cost to overall Council budget (circa £580,000 in 2023-24). The working group need to consider which options can contribute to reducing the cost of the service. The estimated cost for the current financial year is £630,672.</p> <p>Ongoing lifecycle costs have been estimated as follows:</p> <p>Sheppey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £150k - Mechanical & Electrical <p>Swallows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £702k total • £12k Energy saving initiatives (Projected ROI of £10k over 15 months) • £430k Mechanical & Electrical • £260k Building Fabric <p>Some of the ‘big-ticket’ investment items that need more feasibility work doing include:</p> <p>Swallows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air handling (Circa £60k) • New boilers (Circa £140k) • Boiler control panel (Circa £60k)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool plant (Circa £100k) • Ventilation in health & Fitness areas (Circa £97k) • Wet side changing village (Circa £80k) • Wyvern hall lift (Circa £30k) <p>Sheppey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A replacement Sheppey pool (Circa £12m) • Existing Pool requires replacement filters on both pools (Circa £64k) <p>As well as annual running costs, the future investment requirements are a key consideration as the buildings are all circa 30 years old. Initial discussions have been held with Active Kent and Medway and Sport England on potential funding routes.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The route to deliver the Leisure Service is dependent upon the decisions of the Committee but will require procurement/legal intervention throughout 2024.
Crime and Disorder	None identified.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Any investment in the buildings need to consider reducing the carbon footprint of the service, due to their high energy usage.
Health and Wellbeing	Healthy & Wellbeing is a key output of any Leisure contract. Social impact outcomes are directly linked to the Borough's ability to offer a suitable and easily assessable leisure offering
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are several risks associated with the three facilities, namely condition of plant and fabric of all 4 buildings.
Equality and Diversity	Links with disability and mental health provision in the borough and a community impact assessment
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix I - Proposal Letter – Swale Leisure Options Procurement

7.2 Appendix II – Procurement Resourcing Options.

8 Background Papers

8.1 [March 24\Final\Printed minutes 06032024 1900 Community and Leisure Committee.pdf](#)

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Appendix 1

Martyn Cassell
Head of Environment and Leisure

Jay Jenkins
Leisure & Technical Services Manager

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

8th May 2024

Email: martyncassell@swale.gov.uk
jayjenkins@swale.gov.uk

Dear Martyn and Jay

Procurement of the Operational Management of Swale Borough Council Leisure Facilities

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide you with a quotation for the re-procurement of a leisure operator for Swale Borough Council (SBC) and potentially other facilities. I have set out below the approach we suggest is followed to procure a leisure operator.

Background Context

SBC's existing leisure facilities in Sheerness and Sittingbourne are currently operated under a long-term contract through a partnership between Swale Leisure Trust (SLT) and Serco.

Faversham Pools is currently operated by a separate trust which receives an annual grant from SBC, albeit this is reducing.

In February 2024 SBC decided to extend this contract for 2 years to allow time for the re-procurement process to be developed, explore the opportunity to incorporate Faversham Pools in the contract and be in a position to give some certainty of the future investment at Sheerness (dryside re-modelling funded by LUF, and potentially investment in swimming pool provision, if a place-based approach can be taken in partnership with Sport England).

Given the contract extension the re-procurement will need to be undertaken during 2025/26, with a new contract commencing on 1 April 2027. To allow time for operator mobilisation, the re-procurement appointment should be no later than 1 January 2027. Based on these timescales the re-procurement process should go live no later than late autumn 2025.

The Sport England specification and contract will be used (preferred by the majority of operators), whilst recognising that the existing templates need to be updated (all consultants who undertake procurements have already developed up to date documents with revised pandemic and benchmarking clauses).

The Council would like to achieve the following outcomes from an outsourced contract:



- Leisure/health outcomes e.g., inclusion of sports development/health and wellbeing work and increased outreach working through the contract.
- A reduction in risk
- Finances- nil revenue cost as a minimum,
- Potential opportunity for surplus share

Key decisions impacting a potential procurement are:

- the procurement scope and specifically the nature and timing of any investment
- risk allocation i.e., what sits with SBC, what is transferred to an operator and what is shared

Table 1: Risk Allocation Options

Areas of Risk	Shared Risk	SBC Risk	Operator Risk
Utilities	Y	Utility tariff	Utility consumption
Pensions		Pension increase and deficit	
National Insurance (NI)			NI increase
Payroll			
Repair and Maintenance	Y	Existing buildings- structural, lifecycle and latent defects.	New buildings - lifecycle
Pandemic	Y	Waive management fee	Waive profit

- the level of prescription in a specification – operators prefer flexibility over programming and pricing
- whether a profiled fee is acceptable (preferred by operators)
- contract length
- inclusion of utility benchmarking and fixed tariffs
- whether shared services are included
- the focus on health and wellbeing and what an operator is actually being asked to resource and deliver

Our Approach

The SLL project team's approach to project management is professional and committed. We pride ourselves on our ability to plan, undertake and complete projects to an agreed time scale. We believe every project is important, and we aim to deliver above and beyond client expectations. We operate a formal project management system based on best practice. This ensures that our clients can have confidence in the on-time, on-budget delivery of the project and that they are kept up to date on progress formally and informally.

Our approach is always to be objective and independent in supporting and undertaking procurement projects. We bring no pre-conceived ideas, nor do we have any vested interest in the outcome other than to follow relevant procurement legislation and achieve the optimum long-term partnership for our clients, based on delivering a sustainable operation meeting local participation, health and well-being needs, reducing revenue costs to the Council, and better sharing operational risk.

Our proposal is based on SBC requiring support for this procurement approach, which we suggest should follow a Restricted Process with negotiation/dialogue. We would, however, wish to discuss and agree this with the Council.



Methodology

We propose to commence the project with a detailed Briefing Meeting. We will prepare and agree the agenda with you and provide a list of information requirements prior to the meeting. The meeting will provide an opportunity to:

- Introduce Client officers and Project Team members
- Confirm terms of reference and scope of the project
- Enable information collation and sharing
- Agree approach and timescales
- Provide the opportunity for agreement on, and collection of, consultee contacts and other background information
- Agree key milestones and future meeting dates.
- Cover contractual arrangements. e.g., reporting, invoicing

Following the Briefing Meeting, our initial focus will be to identify and develop the approach to be followed for the procurement, and then develop the required documentation. We will follow the latest procurement guidance and legislation (2023 regulations), working alongside the Council's internal legal team.

Pre-Tender Stage for Leisure Operator

- **Advise and recommend to the Council the procurement approach**
Following the Briefing Meeting we would advise the Council on the procurement approach to be taken for the operational management of the leisure centres. To provide this advice, we will also need to understand any proposals for investment, their nature and timing, as well as issues around construction, the contract length envisaged by SBC etc.
Equally, the level of risk assigned to a future operator will be important to consider as this impacts on concession contracts and how they are procured (light-touch, or through a full procurement approach).
- **Consult with the Council and identify the key requirements for the contract – outcomes and KPI's it would like to see**
Our approach to this element of work, irrespective of when it is undertaken would be to undertake a series of consultation workshops with Members and officers (2). We would set out a programme for this process, covering the key elements of the specification, so that requirements can be discussed and agreed, and then the resultant KPIs developed.

We would anticipate at this stage that this would cover as a minimum:

- **Programming** i.e., does the Council want the same clubs/groups at the same times in the existing and new facilities or is this an opportunity to re-look at this so that programmes are better aligned to key outcomes for increased physical activity and improved health?
- **Pricing** – does the council want the same subsidies or should they be reviewed and re-targeted to better reflect corporate priorities and outcomes to be achieved? Would the council consider controlling core prices then giving the operator maximum flexibility over all others?
- **Marketing** – is the best use being made of digital data and social media to encourage participation and use? How can this be better linked to membership?
- **Risk** – how much does the Council wish to offload?
- **Catering** – does the Council want to specify requirements for health eating through the contract in terms of vending products and overall catering?
- **Memberships** – what membership categories does the council wish to offer? Do subsidies apply?
- **What are the specific outcomes to be achieved from this contract?** How, and how often does the council want these to be measured?
- **What financial arrangements does the Council wish to achieve?** I.e., cost neutral/return to SBC to off-set any borrowing etc



We would take the feedback from this consultation and develop the specification to reflect the agreed way forward. This would also need to be reflected in the contract.

- **Work closely with Faversham Pools Trust (FPT) to explore the potential for bringing management of this facility into the contract. We understand from a recent meeting that the FPT is keen to be a part of the wider leisure management contract but need to understand in detail:**
- **What this would mean for FPT and its role**
- **Impact on pricing**
- **Impact on programming**
- **Opportunity for investment**
- **Impact of existing staff**
- **Prepare the tender documentation pack, including the draft Service Contract and service specifications in liaison with Council officers**

We would then develop the tender documentation pack and all elements of that. We would like to discuss this with the Council but would suggest that identification of the key contract requirements i.e., outcomes and KPIs is better discussed prior to developing the contract documentation. As an outcome-based specification, it is important to be clear from the outset what the Council wishes to achieve, so that this thinking and ethos can be fully integrated in all documentation, and tenderers can be clear as to the Client expectations.

Developing the tender documentation pack requires the preparation of a number of documents; these would be completed in close consultation with the in-house legal team.

The documents required are:

- Find a Tender Notice/PIN/tender advert (see below) *
- Selection questionnaire and evaluation criteria (see below) *
- Intention to Tender (ITT)*
- Tender documents (format will depend on the procurement route being followed) *
- Evaluation criteria and weightings*
- Services Specification & KPIs*
- Payment and Performance Monitoring System*
- Contract risk matrix*
- Legal contract and associated schedules

SLL would develop the contract documentation (shown by *) in parallel with the contract itself, working closely with the in-house legal team/external legal support, whichever is used. The legal input would develop the contract.

The ITT will set out the process to be followed, timescales, information to be provided and the media for this, any word count limits, supporting documentation required, headline contract requirements/expectations etc.

We will then develop the service specification; this will set out the council's requirements for operational elements e.g., opening hours, programming, maintenance, cleaning etc. However, it should also address issues such as pricing, subsidies, accessibility, sport development, physical activity outcomes, marketing, use of IT, etc –KPIs.

The service specification will be supported by a number of appendices, providing information on the existing facilities, operating procedure, throughput, utility costs, TUPE etc. SLL would collate all information and produce these.

The actual contract will need to reflect and reference the specification and vice versa. This will entail close working and discussion with the legal team to ensure both documents 'talk' to each other effectively.



The evaluation model will also be developed so that it can be published with the other documentation on issue of the Find a Tender Notice.

This is critical as it will set out for the tenderers the focus of the tender process i.e., is it all about finance, or is it a balance between finance and social return/outcomes? The evaluation framework will identify the criteria to be assessed and assign each a weighting to reflect the council's priorities (identified through earlier discussion and the workshops).

As part of the evaluation framework, we will also develop the financial submission template, to reflect the financial weightings, plus the information to be provided, and any 'set' figures applicable to all tenderers. This will also pre-set the format for the tender sum to be provided as either a profiled amount, or a flatline sum, plus the return to be achieved for the Council.

This latter document will relate to the payment monitoring and performance document, which will translate the tendered amount into the contract period, link to any capital investment and any other financial considerations. This will also link to the contract surplus/surplus share, and the agreed return for the Council.

We would also construct the contract risk matrix, setting out responsibilities, the risks associated with these and how they can be mitigated.

- **Work with the Council to develop the Find a Tender notice for the contract**

We would work with the Council to develop the **Find a Tender** notice; this needs to clearly set out the opportunity being advertised, and must reflect exactly what is required; the subsequent tender document and specification must then reflect this Notice in terms of e.g., contract scope, timescale etc. The **Find a Tender** Notice can be issued once all other documentation is ready. (If SBC already has a template notice we can adapt this for the leisure management re-procurement).

- **Develop a Selection Questionnaire (SQ) and issue to organisations interested in the contract opportunity**

The Selection Questionnaire should secure selection of the most appropriate organisations to tender for the leisure management opportunity. It should focus on the experience, suitability, financial standing, legal and policy profile of organisations, as opposed to how they would deliver the contract. The Selection Questionnaire would be designed to ask a series of questions and request relevant evidence therefore on financial security and sustainability, health and safety records and approach, HR policies, environmental policies and accreditation, as well as specific leisure questions to ensure the short-listed Tenderers are appropriately experienced and qualified etc.

The Selection Questionnaire can be issued following publication of the **Find a Tender** Notice. A minimum of 30 days is required to receive responses, unless they are received electronically, which means the time period for responses could be reduced. (If SBC already has an SQ we can instead adapt this for the leisure management re-procurement).

- **Evaluate the Selection Questionnaire and agree a select list of organisations to progress to the tender stage**

We would evaluate the Selection Questionnaire responses and identify a maximum of 5 tenderers to progress to the tender stage. To achieve this, we would also develop and agree an evaluation framework for this element of the overall process, to provide parameters for the evaluation, and a means of scoring the responses to avoid challenge.

We would prepare a short evaluation report for the Council setting out our analysis and recommendations for the short-listed tenderers. This would be discussed and agreed with the in-house legal team.



- **Issue contract documentation and any additional information required (i.e., appendices, instructions to bidders, etc)**

Following acceptance of the Selection Questionnaire evaluation report, we would issue the tender documentation to all short-listed tenderers. This would include advice and guidance on the subsequent clarification process, how data to inform the tendering process can be accessed, timescales and media for return, etc.

Tender Stage For Leisure Operator

- **Develop an initial evaluation framework and Lead workshops (2) to challenge and approve the evaluation framework with key officers and members**

We would develop an initial evaluation framework to reflect the Council's agreed priorities and KPIs, and weight the criteria appropriately. The evaluation framework will cover, as a minimum:

- Financial offer
- Approach to pricing
- Membership
- Developing participation
- Approach to maintenance, health and safety
- Personnel, training and development
- Staffing structure
- Programming
- Environmental considerations and approach etc

The evaluation framework will need to reflect and deliver, the agreed balance between investment, operational costs, meeting local need, increased participation, implementation of agreed subsidies etc, to achieve the optimum partnership for both the council long term, but also in terms of the quality of service to be delivered for the local community.

We would talk through how the evaluation process should be undertaken, and what it should achieve, to realise SBC's objectives for the procurement project. We would also ensure all involved in the evaluation are clear on the scoring, evaluation timescales etc.

It will be critical to be very clear about what is being evaluated at each stage of the process, if either the Competitive Dialogue or Negotiation procedures are followed.

- **Arrange any site visits to existing sites operated by bidders**

Based on the procurement approach and agreed outcomes to be achieved, we would identify suitable sites for visits, currently operated by the short-listed tenderers. We would contact the sites, arrange visits and if required, attend these.

- **Assist with the evaluation of the tender responses**

When tender submissions are received, we would assist the SBC with the evaluation process. We would obviously wish to discuss and agree the extent of this with the client but would be happy to assist on all aspects. We would develop evaluation templates to facilitate the overall process,

- **Attend and support the Council in clarification meetings**

We would assist the Council to prepare for and organise any clarification meetings. We would identify the clarifications, facilitate collation of the responses and take notes of the meetings, to record discussion and agreement on the way forward. A clarification register would be set up to record all clarifications received, the date and extent of the response. The extent of the meetings will depend on the procurement process followed. Our fee allows for the Restricted Negotiation/Dialogue procedure to be followed, if this is decided as the way forward.



Similarly, we would set up a risk register for the actual study and keep this updated.

- **Work with the Council to identify its preferred bidder and support any internal briefings or presentation to Members**

Following evaluation of the tenders received, we would prepare an evaluation response with SBC officers, setting out the analysis, scores attributed and the recommendation on the preferred tenderer. This would also include the tender offer and its basis, both financial and social.

In terms of overall communication on the overall procurement process, the SLL Project Director and Project Manager will take day to day responsibility for this with the Client.

Timescale

We advise a timescale of 12-14 months needs to be allowed for an operator procurement. We would be in a position to commence this work from June 24 onwards and would work with the Council to develop a detailed timescale for all tasks as a priority at the start of the work.

Requirements of the Client

If appointed to this study, our requirements of the Client would be:

- Provision of all relevant background information; we would prepare a list of information required to inform the procurement process and develop relevant appendices. Information required will be a **combination** of existing usage and performance data, prices, membership structures, existing programmes, TUPE details, records of utility costs and consumption, key user clubs, opening times, existing maintenance regimes, responsibilities and planned expenditure, existing KPIs, etc
- Attendance at Project Meetings – as appropriate (Project Group roles and responsibilities noted)
- Provision of stakeholder contacts (those we do not already hold)
- Timely feedback on queries/reports/written information

It is important to clarify that when SLL undertake a procurement process, we consider ourselves ‘on-call’ at all times to support the Client, by phone and email, and including attending additional meetings than originally envisaged. If this will benefit the process, it is important to undertake these. Our fee quotation includes the ability to respond on this basis.

Fees

The fees and resources reflecting the above tasks is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Tasks, Timescale and Resources

Tasks	Days	Cost based on averaged out day rate of £650
Undertake Member Workshops to inform process, contract outcomes and approach (2/3 Workshops)	3	1,950.00
Agree process/PID, contract scope, contract length, affordability, contract philosophy etc.	2	1,300.00
Work with FPT to understand how best to bring them into the contract	4	2,600.00



Tasks	Days	Cost based on averaged out day rate of £650
Prepare initial documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a Tender Notice Input to Selection - Qualification Questionnaire (SQQ) Selection criteria Outcome Specification Evaluation Framework Method Statements PayMech document (default procedures) Financial submission template Investment commitments Liaise with legal advice on contract and cross-referencing it to the delivery specification Appendices including Final asset register, Final condition survey, Final maintenance programme 	10	6,500.00
Evaluate SQQ's including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant experience Compliance checks SQQ submission SBC would need to undertake financial checks.	3	1,950.00
Prepare final tender documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final specification Contract documentation* (partnering/service agreement) Leases and agreements* Final TUPE list etc. N.B We assume that the legal elements* here will be completed by lawyers	3	1950
Select shortlist for invitation to participate	1	650.00
Issue invitation to participate	0.5	325.00
Evaluation of tenders and evaluation report	10	6,500.00
Undertake negotiation/dialogue	6	3,900.00
Evaluate final tender submissions based on outcomes of negotiation/ dialogue	4	2,600.00
Appoint contractor, including approval process and reporting	3	1,950.00
Serve Standstill notices/observe Council call-in period	0.5	325.00
Mobilisation support	2	1,300.00
Contract commencement	0.5	325.00
Contract Award Notice	0.5	325.00
Expenses (based on mileage at 47p per mile) if needed (capped sum)		500
TOTAL		£34,950 plus VAT and expenses if needed (this excludes any legal resources)



Consultant Team and relevant Experience

The consultant team for this procurement will be:

- Rachel Fowler, Managing Director
- Liz Taylor, Associate Principal Consultant
- George Sutcliffe, Principal Consultant

N.B If external legal support is required, SLL is happy to suggest companies with whom we have worked on successful procurements.

Client Expectations

We know that you will expect the highest standards to be maintained by the consultant team. All of our consultants work within a code of conduct and will deliver above your expectations, to give you a level of service that is second to none.

We are able to bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table for this project, including information on what other clients are doing, what other procurement processes have achieved, and how, and how tenderers have responded.

We are able to bring innovation to the process, wherever possible, to benefit the Client, and the community long term, in terms of the delivery of high quality and sustainable leisure facilities.

Experience Overview

- All the consultant team have significant experience of advising clients on procurement – the available route options and their implications, planning for procurement, resourcing the process, what is involved and why, and how to ensure the best outcome is achieved for each local situation.
- We understand the changes in procurement legislation introduced since Brexit and those to come into force from October 2024
- SLL is experienced at developing procurement strategies with officers, Members and other stakeholders to ensure the procurement process selected is appropriate and critically, that key stakeholders understand the process and what is involved and are engaged.
- All the consultant team understand the risks and benefits of procurement, what needs to be balanced and how important this is to achieve in each specific instance, in relation to local priorities.
- All the consultant team have extensive experience of working with the wider market in relation to procurement options, including NGBs, CSPs, operators etc, as well as local authorities
- SLL consultants on this project team have advised on, developed documentation for, undertaken and delivered every procurement route available. i.e., Restricted, Open, Negotiation/Dialogue, and have also worked on establishing LAACs/TECKALs, DBOM, Trusts, retention of in-house services, transfer to an existing Trust (See Appendix 4 Case Studies). We therefore understand the key characteristics of each procurement and delivery option, and what this looks like on implementation
- SLL has at one time or another, appointed, and worked with, every operator in the market.
- SLL consultants understand the relationship between investment, procurement and sustainability



- We recognise and understand the changes in the market vis-s-vis procurement and what a modern partnership should look like and deliver in terms of reduced risk over utilities and maintenance, surplus or profit share, operator incentives etc.

Our Added Value and Innovation

In preparing this tender, the consultant team has identified the following key differentiators that will enable us to deliver a focused and fit-for purpose project for the client team:

- We have a through and practical knowledge and understanding of current procurement legislation and how best to follow this in relation to leisure procurements
- We have successfully delivered many similar projects on behalf of clients, resulting in financial return to the Council, reduced revenues, risk transfer, and improved quality services, better meeting local needs
- We have an objective and professional relationship with all the operators, who like working with us and respond well to both soft market testing and procurements managed by SLL
- We understand the position of all major operators in relation to risk, capital investment, pension deficit, utilities, TUPE, KPIs, surplus share etc
- Our procurement documents are developed as bespoke specifications for each client, but are based on the Sport England Leisure Services Delivery Guidance documentation

I hope provides you with the information you need. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything more.

We hope to have the opportunity to work with you on this important project.

Thankyou

Yours faithfully
For **Strategic Leisure**

Rachel Fowler
Managing Director

Appendix 2

Swale Borough Council

These options are based on SBC undertaking all procurement and legal work for the procurement, with consultant support in these areas where needed.

Procurement – Resourcing Options – these are based on the tasks set out in the SLL proposal of 08.05.24.

Option	How Deliver	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost
SBC does everything	SBC leads and manages procurement process; no external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC-managed process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on officers' time – all already have other roles. • Longer timescale as a result of the above • May not have all up to date market knowledge. • No independent check and challenge 	In-house resources
SBC leads and manages procurement process with identified support from consultants (would need to be agreed and specified)	<p>SBC reviews an exemplar specification document and identifies where it needs redrafting/info adding e.g.</p> <p>Consultants redraft specification, liaise with Faversham Pools Trust and produce all other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC-managed process • Reduced cost • Access to consultants' knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on officers' time – all already have other roles. • Longer timescale as a result of the above • If additional consultant time is required, potential to increase cost given a fixed fee 	<p>In-house resources</p> <p>Cost of consultants – circa £20k*</p>

Option	How Deliver	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost
	<p>procurement documents.</p> <p>SBC leads procurement process and use is made of all existing SBC template documents</p>		will have been quoted.	
Consultants lead process but SBC undertakes specific tasks/elements of work, agreed upfront	<p>Consultants meet with SBC to agree areas of spec to update, run Member workshops, and draft procurement documentation as agreed.</p> <p>SBC manage SQ and ITT process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC internal resources required on a planned basis for specific elements. • Shorter timescale • Access to experienced consultants with up-to-date market knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on officers' time, but this will be planned in advance– all already have other roles. • Longer timescale as a result of the above • If additional consultant time is required, potential to increase cost given a fixed fee will have been quoted. 	<p>Some in-house resources</p> <p>Cost of consultants – circa £25k - £30k</p>
Consultants do everything	<p>Consultants manage process to an agreed project plan, including Member workshops and drafting all procurement documentation,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC internal resources required on a planned basis for specific elements. • Shorter timescale • Access to experienced consultants with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost 	<p>£34,950 plus VAT</p> <p>Limited SBC input</p> <p>Excludes legal and procurement support</p>

Option	How Deliver	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost
	<p>which reflects SBC decision-making process.</p> <p>Use would be made of SBC procurement templates but consultants draft info to go in the documents.</p>	<p>up-to-date market knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May get more market interest. • Independent advice and guidance • Knowledge of how operators are currently approaching risk, utility benchmarking etc. 		

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Community Committee	
Meeting Date	4 September 2024
Report Title	Member appointment – Council Leisure Services
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director and Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment & Leisure
Lead Officer	Jay Jenkins, Leisure & Technical Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<p>The committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine which one member should be appointed to attend Swale Community Leisure Board meetings. 2. Determine which one member should be appointed to attend Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee meetings.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Community committee to agree the council’s member representation for the municipal year 2024/25 at the Swale Community Leisure Board and Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee.

2 Background

- 2.1 A joint arrangement is one in which the council collaborates with other local authorities or agencies to provide services in partnership. Member appointments to the boards or committees exercising control over such arrangements are distinct from nominations to outside bodies, in which members are asked to take on the role of directors or trustees of separate organisations, generally with a fiduciary duty to those organisations and not as representatives of the council.
- 2.2 In respect of joint arrangements, members are appointed to boards or committees with the express intention that they will represent Swale’s interests on those boards or committees. Under the executive model, member appointments to boards, committees or steering groups covering these arrangements were made by cabinet or by the executive leader.
- 2.3 This was logical in as much as joint arrangements generally cover services which were previously executive matters. Now we are in the committee system, it is appropriate that these appointments are made by the service committee within whose remit the service in question falls.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Council’s leisure centre operations in Sittingbourne (Swallows) and Sheppey (Sheppey Leisure Complex) are currently contracted out to Swale Community Leisure (SCL). They hold the leases to the buildings and have a Leisure Management agreement in place that runs until 31 March 2027.
- 3.2 SCL is an independent Trust with Trustees forming the Board. The nominated Member will be a representative for the Council but will not become a Trustee. The role is there to attend Board meetings and provide oversight of the board’s operations and communicate matters relating to SBC’s service. The committee is now **recommended** to determine who should be appointed for the municipal year 2024/25.
- 3.3 Faversham Swimming Pools has a Board of volunteer trustees/directors who provide strategic oversight and support of the Pools. There is an annual grant agreement in place.
- 3.4 The nominated Member will be a representative for the Council but will not become a Trustee. The role is there to attend Faversham Swimming Pools Board meetings and provide oversight of the board’s operations and communicate matters relating to SBC’s service. The committee is now **recommended** to determine who should be appointed for the municipal year 2024/25.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The governance mechanisms for the joint arrangements require members to be appointed to these roles, so there are no alternative options.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 These are routine appointments to existing arrangements, so no consultation has been undertaken or is proposed beyond asking group leaders for their nominations.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The joint arrangements contribute to a number of corporate plan objectives, primarily but not exclusively under the Running the Council priority”.
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no specific financial implications in the appointment of members to the governance bodies.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	No implications identified at this stage.

Crime and Disorder	No implications identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No implications identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	No implications identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No implications identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	No implications identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 Not used

8 Background Papers

8.1 Not used

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Community Committee Forward Decisions Plan

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt?	Lead Officer and report author
Public Space CCTV Policy – Oversight Review	21 January 2025	Open	Lead Officer: Charlotte Hudson Report Author: Steph Curtis
Parking Annual Delivery Plan	21 January 2025	Open	Lead Officer: Emma Wiggins Report Author: Martyn Cassell

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