

Agenda

Economy and Property Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 8 October 2025

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Monique Bonney (Chair), Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Shelley Cheesman, Simon Clark, Alex Eyre, Peter Marchington, Kieran Mishchuk, Lee-Anne Moore, Richard Palmer, Carrie Pollard, Sarah Stephen, Terry Thompson, Mark Tucker and Ashley Wise (Vice-Chair).

Quorum = 5

Pages

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- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 8 July 2025 (Minute Nos. 153 – 163) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

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

Items for Noting

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|-------|
| 5. | Forward Decisions Plan | 5 - 6 |
|----|------------------------|-------|

Items for Decision by the Committee

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 6. | Transfer of Council Car Parks - Response to Council Motion | 7 - 14 |
| 7. | Bartons Point Coastal Park - Update | 15 - 20 |
| 8. | Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings policy - update | 21 - 32 |
| 9. | Levelling-Up Fund Programme Update | 33 - 50 |
| 10. | Exclusion of the Press and Public | |

To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following item:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the

press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3.

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

11. Exempt Appendix II - Levelling-Up Fund Update

51 - 52

Issued on Monday, 29 September 2025

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact democraticservices@swale.gov.uk. To find out more about the work of this meeting, please visit www.swale.gov.uk.

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

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Economy and Property Committee Forward Decisions Plan – October 2025

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt	Lead Officer and report author
Queenborough and Rushenden (Housing Infrastructure Fund) – update and interim evaluation	29 January 2026	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings Policy Refresh – Consultation Outcomes	29 January 2026	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Sheppey Growth Board – referred item from Sheppey Area Committee	29 January 2026	Open	Head of Service: Emma Wiggins Report Author: Emma Wiggins
Bourne Place / Princes Street – contract award	TBC	Part Exempt	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Great East Hall – future of land	TBC (not before January 2026)	Part Exempt	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Old Library – review of disposal decision (was previously named as 44 Trinity Road – future of property)	TBC (not before August 2026)	Part Exempt	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Kieren Mansfield
Shared Prosperity Funds – 2026/27	January/March 2026	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author:

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Economy and Property Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	8 October 2025
Report Title	Transfer of Council Car Parks – response to Council Motion
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director and Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This committee resolves that individual decisions on asset transfers are made on each car park that is suitable for transfer, at the relevant committee. 2. Committee instructs Officers to continue to discuss possible transfers with Town and Parish Councils as part of the overall asset transfer process. 3. Refer the matter on charging at free car parks to the Environmental Services and Climate Change committee, to ensure best value principles are followed.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a response to the motion submitted at Full Council on 2 April 2025, about transferring free car parks in Sheppey to the relevant town and parish councils. After amendment (as set out in 2.4), the matter was to be referred to the relevant committee(s).
- 1.2 There are a range of car parks across the Borough providing off-street parking opportunities for residents. Some are in key town centre locations, others are in rural and lower footfall areas.
- 1.3 The Council Parking Policy sets out the Council's principles for the management of on and off-street parking across the Borough. This report recommends that any asset transfers are considered on a case-by-case basis for each car park that is suitable for transfer.
- 1.4 The Council's Property Asset Strategy also sets out a number of elements in relation to this motion.

2 Background

2.1 The Council operates 57 car parks across the Borough. 29 are free to use (six in Sittingbourne, 6 in Faversham and 17 in Sheppey). 28 are pay and display car parks where fees are charged. 40 are managed by parking services and 17 are operated by the greenspaces team, based at recreation grounds, open spaces and country parks.

2.2 The pay and display car parks are forecasted to bring in over £2.7m in revenue for the Council in 2025-26 financial year, which helps to cover the costs of operating them and provides funding for other crucial council services.

2.3 A motion was presented to Full Council on 2 April 2025 which stated;

It is proposed that Swale Borough Council offer the Little Oysters car park at the Leas Minster and Queenborough Library Car Park (Castle Connections) in Queenborough to the relevant Parish and Town Councils through the appropriate committee and council procedures. Parish and Town councils are best placed to decide what is in the best interests of the people of Sheppey for these car parks going forward. If this approach is successful for these car parks, then the Council should offer other free car parks to Parish or Town Councils or to local not for profit organisations. Council refers this issue to the relevant service committee for exploration and ultimately, decision. Following devolution, it is likely fewer councillors will be representing Sheppey, and a repeat of the proposal for charging at these two car parks will raise its head again and the outcome may not align with the wishes of the people of Sheppey. It is hoped that all members can support this motion

2.4 The Council debated the motion, and the final amended wording was;

Resolved:

(1) That Swale Borough Council offer its free car parks across the borough to the relevant Parish and Town Councils through the appropriate committee and council procedures and Council refers this issue to the relevant service committee for exploration and ultimately, decision.

2.5 Appendix I sets out the car parks across the Borough that are currently free to use.

2.6 Car parks have remained free over the years for a host of reasons - low usage, encouragement for residents to use off-street parking to free up crowded streets, and political preference/policy.

- 2.7 The Council's Parking Policy states that parking charges are set annually by Councillors as part of the fees and charges process of budget setting (Policy and Resources and Full Council).

'When considering the charges to levy each year, the Council will consider usage data, compare with other local authority pricing and nearby competition and balance against the increasing costs of operating and maintaining the car parks and of course the nearby areas e.g. street cleansing of the high streets.'

- 2.8 But it also states that;

'Time periods for the tariffs to be charged will be debated and agreed by the committee responsible for parking with any budget implications referred to Policy & Resources Committee.'

On that basis, it is assumed that where tariffs are not in place e.g. free car parks, the Environmental and Climate Change committee which has the responsibility for off-street parking, will need to debate any implementation of charges.

- 2.9 On free car parks, the policy identifies;

We provide a number of free car parks which generally are in more remote locations and serve local residents and visitors where there may be a shortage of other on or off-street parking. These are consistently reviewed as user habits change. We may also consider using seasonal charges where a car park is well used at certain times and not at other times of the year

- 2.10 The Parking Policy discusses disposal of assets;

There may be occasions where we look to cease use of an area for car parking. Car Park usage is monitored and any that are poorly used, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. There may also be other occasions where the land can be used for a better purpose. In both situations the principles and policy set out in the Property Asset Strategy would inform the next steps regarding disposal options for the land.

- 2.11 As the motion focussed on the transfer of the assets, this motion has been sent initially to Economy and Property Committee for consideration.

- 2.12 The Council's Property Asset Strategy makes it a priority that the Council retains land and property where it makes strategic or financial sense to do so. This should be:

- to deliver services in line with corporate priorities,
- to generate income,
- to provide a return on investment,
- to enable regeneration, or
- to provide social value.

- 2.13 Whilst the motion states that it is better for local organisations to make decisions on the car parks, this Council is required to consider best value for its assets. When disposing of assets (as would be the case in a transfer to a town or parish), the Council is subject to statutory requirements, in particular to the overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained for a disposal. This duty is subject to certain exceptions that are set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003. Within financial limits, this gives Councils wider powers to dispose of land and property at less than market value, where it could be demonstrated that they promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.
- 2.14 The Council's medium term financial plan still predicts a funding gap for future years. Where a car park could generate an annual revenue income, the Council must consider that option. The Disposals Policy sets out criteria for determining the potential disposal of an asset, which include financial viability, and specifically within that, the potential for income generation.
- 2.15 Officers have been tasked with identifying additional income streams to help address the council's budget position and the introduction of charges for free car parks would help to meet that initiative.
- 2.16 Furthermore, the Property team are already meeting with Town and Parish Councils to discuss a range of assets that could be transferred. The transfer of any car parks should form part of these overall discussions and not simply be offered without interest on both sides.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 This committee resolves that individual decisions on asset transfers are made on each car park that is suitable for transfer, at the relevant committee.
- 3.2 Committee instructs Officers to continue to discuss possible transfers with Town and Parish Councils as part of the overall asset transfer process.
- 3.3 Refer the matter on charging at free car parks to the Environmental Services and Climate Change committee, to ensure best value principles are followed.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 A blanket transfer of all free car parks across the Borough. This is not recommended as not all locations have a relevant Town or Parish Council to transfer to. Furthermore, some car parks have covenants and others offer potential opportunity for this Council or future unitary councils to generate income to help fund other council services.
- 4.2 Do nothing and keep them all as Council owned and operated assets. This is not proposed given some car parks may be suitable for transfer.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Not applicable to this report. Given the report is simply discussing the principles and not taking individual decisions.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Community – Complete the Parking Policy Review Running the Council – maximising income
Financial, Resource and Property	Maintaining free car parks is a cost to the council that could be mitigated by transferring to town or parish councils or by the introduction of charges where possible. Introducing charges where appropriate would meet the member requirement to increase income opportunities to support the budget position. Property implications are included in the body of the report.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The title deeds and specific restrictions against each asset (car park) would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. This would usually be considered at the point at which the possibility of a transfer is to be considered, as this would need to be resourced through the property and legal teams, with the potential for some legal costs, depending on the complexity. When disposing of assets, the Council is subject to statutory requirements, in particular to the overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained for a disposal. This duty is subject to certain exceptions that are set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.
Crime and Disorder	Free car parks have fewer restrictions on them and vehicles can therefore be left abandoned. This costs the council through enforcement and removal.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	There is an argument that in order to encourage fewer private journeys, favouring active travel and support the climate emergency, that no car parks should be free. However as discussed above, some car parks are there to support other functions such as on-street vehicle management.

Health and Wellbeing	Not applicable to this report
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not applicable to this report
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The Council needs income to enable the required repairs and maintenance to be made to our car parks. Free car parks are currently subsidised by pay and display car parks, however, receive less investment than them, with the minimum spent in order to meet basic health and safety standards.
Equality and Diversity	Free car parks have the potential to benefit those residents impacted by income deprivation, but as the parking is uncontrolled such benefits may not be realised. Undefined, free car parks may reduce access for disabled users.
Privacy and Data Protection	Not applicable to this report

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: List of free car parks across the Borough.

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 [Full Council 2 April 2025](#)
- 8.2 A link to the [Council's Parking Policy](#).
- 8.3 A link to Property Asset Strategy

	SPACES	DISABLED	TOTAL	Term stay	Town or Parish Council
Sittingbourne Free Car Parks					
Grafton Road	10	4	14	Long stay	n/a
Shortlands Road	35	0	35	Long stay	n/a
Milton Rec	42	0	42	Long stay	n/a
Milton Creek Country Park	55	0	55	Long stay	n/a
King Georges Playing Field	35	0	35	Long stay	n/a
Grove Park, Borden	28	0	28	Long stay	n/a
Total:	205	4	209		
Faversham Free Car Parks					
Front Brents	14	0	14	Long Stay	Faversham Town Council
Ospringe	30	0	30	Long Stay	Faversham Town Council
Park Road (Faversham rec x 2)	20	0	20	Short Stay	Faversham Town Council
Oare Gunpowder Works	18	0	18	Long Stay	Faversham Town Council
Perry Wood x 2	29	0	29	Long Stay	Selling Parish Council
King George's Playing Field (The Mount)	18	0	18	Long Stay	Faversham Town Council
Total:	129	0	129		
Sheppey Free Car Parks					
Shellness Coastal car park	250	0	250	Long Stay	Leysdown Parish Council
Halfway	41	0	41	Long Stay	n/a
Library, Queenborough	44	0	44	Long Stay	Queenborough Town Council

Guildhall, Queenborough	10	0	10	Long Stay	Queenborough Town Council
Park Road, Queenborough	25	0	25	Long Stay	Queenborough Town Council
Old House at Home, Queenborough	8	0	8	Long Stay	Queenborough Town Council
Little Oyster	30	2	32	Long Stay	Minster Parish Council
Seathorpe Avenue	20	0	20	Long Stay	Minster Parish Council
Abbey	17	0	17	Long Stay	Minster Parish Council
Cliff Drive, Warden	20	0	20	Long Stay	Warden Parish Council
Jetty Neptune Terrace	6	0	6	Long Stay	Sheerness Town Council
Leysdown Coastal car park	100	0	100	Long Stay	Leysdown Parish Council
Barton's Point Coastal Park	42	0	42	Long Stay	Minster Parish Council
Dicksons Field, Eastchurch	6	0	6	Long Stay	Eastchurch Parish Council
Thistle Hill community woodland	16	0	16	Long Stay	Minster Parish Council
Scrapsgate Road Field	12	0	12	Long Stay	Minster Parish Council
Kingsborough Manor Woodland, Plough Road	13	0	13	Long Stay	Eastchurch Parish Council
Total:	660	2	662		
Grand Total:	994	6	1000		

Economy and Property Committee	
Meeting Date	8 th October 2025
Report Title	Bartons Point Coastal Park - Update
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
Lead Officer	Kieren Mansfield, Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendation	That Members agree that this Committee's approach to the future occupation and use of Bartons Point Coastal Park (as agreed on 19 th January 2023) is rescinded until further consideration of its potential by Environment and Climate Change Committee.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Further to a report to the then Regeneration and Property Committee on 19th January 2023, this paper provides an update in respect of the proposed future use and leasing of Bartons Point Coastal Park.
- 1.2 In light of the update provided, the report recommends that that this Committee's approach to the future occupation and use of Bartons Point Coastal Park (as agreed on 19th January 2023) is rescinded until further consideration of its potential by Environment and Climate Change Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following Members' ambitions to explore opportunities to improve the offering at the Council owned Barton's Point Coastal Park, Expressions of Interest (EOI) were sought in May 2022 to manage the various elements of the site including the Boathouse, Toilet and Shower Block, Boating Lake, Former Pitch and Putt Course, seasonal Camping Ground and Car Park to combine to make an overall extended and enhanced leisure offer.
- 2.2 The EOI process generated considerable interest. Whilst officers reviewed the submissions to identify a preferred bidder, a report came to the then Regeneration and Property Committee on 19th January 2023 requesting Member approval of the principle of the leasehold disposal of the site to a user or occupier who could invest in and improve the leisure facilities, whilst maintaining public use and access, with delegated authority to officers to negotiate and agree the leasehold contracts.
- 2.3 The committee resolved:

- 1) That in principle the leasehold disposal of the site to a user or occupier who could invest in and improve the leisure facilities at the site be agreed.**
- (2) That any lease would be granted on the basis that continued use and access of the open spaces by the public would be maintained.**
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property, in consultation with the Chair and group spokespersons from the Regeneration and Property Committee and to include the Head of Mid-Kent Legal Partnership to complete the necessary legal formalities, negotiate, and agree leasehold contracts as applicable and undertake any additional work required to achieve a leasehold disposal**

- 2.4 Having undertaken commercial negotiations and following engagement with the nominated Group spokespersons a preferred operator was identified, with ambitious plans for the site, including use of the lake for an inflatable adventure course, and accommodation pods. Given the nature of these plans, involving considerable capital investment, any lease agreement would be subject to securing planning permission. A key risk in securing such was the ecology and biodiversity on the site and the ability to mitigate any concerns that might be raised, in the event of a changing and more intensive use of Bartons Point for leisure.
- 2.5 Consequently, a specialist company, Bakewell, were instructed to undertake a year-long suite of ecological surveys to fully understand the ecological value of the Park, the potential to mitigate against harm and ultimately to secure a planning permission for more intensive use. These surveys were completed in April 2025, with the final report received in the late spring.

Survey Findings

- 2.6 Bakewell's surveys revealed the park's exceptional biodiversity, emphasizing the complex and fragile relationships among species, particularly invertebrates and nesting birds, around the brackish lake and adjacent grasslands. The lake's brackish nature—resulting from a mix of freshwater and saline influences from its proximity to the Thames and Medway estuaries—creates a rare habitat supporting specialized species. Key findings include:
- **High Species Diversity:** The surveys identified a rich array of invertebrates and nesting birds, with the lake and grasslands forming a delicate ecosystem reliant on stable environmental conditions.
 - **Fragile Ecosystem:** The interdependent relationships between species are highly sensitive to disturbances, such as increased human activity or habitat alteration.
 - **Brackish Lake Significance:** The lake's unique salinity supports rare aquatic and semi-aquatic species, making it a critical ecological feature.

Planning Legislation and Considerations

- 2.7 Under UK planning law, developments impacting ecologically sensitive areas must comply with the relevant chapters of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasize biodiversity protection and the need for a

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% for new developments (effective since February 2024 under the Environment Act 2021).

2.8 The surveys indicate that intensified site usage in line with the preferred operator's proposals had significant potential to disrupt the fragile ecosystem. Key legislative and regulatory considerations include:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): Protects species identified in the surveys, such as nesting birds and potentially great crested newts, requiring mitigation measures for any development.
- Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust: As statutory consultees, both organizations are likely to object to the waterpark proposal due to its potential to harm protected species and habitats. Kent Wildlife Trust, managing over 9,500 acres across 90+ sites, prioritizes conservation and has significant influence in planning decisions.
- Local Planning Policy: Swale Borough Council's Local Plan emphasizes sustainable development and habitat protection, aligning with objections to developments that threaten biodiversity.
- Environment Act 2021: Mandates BNG, requiring developers to enhance biodiversity through measurable improvements.

Bakewell's Recommendations

2.9 Bakewell's conclusions highlighted the challenges of securing planning consent for the waterpark or any other intensification of use, due to the site's ecological importance. They noted the following:

- Statutory Objections: Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust are likely to oppose the application, citing impacts on protected species and the brackish lake's ecosystem.
- Alternative Uses: The park's unique biodiversity supports educational and environmental initiatives, such as interpretive trails or research programs.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Opportunities: Enhancing grassland species diversity could generate BNG credits, providing an economic incentive for conservation-focused management while meeting legislative requirements.

2.10 The ecological surveys underscore Barton's Point Coastal Park as a critical biodiversity hotspot, particularly due to its brackish lake and diverse species. Due to the park's ecological significance, the Council has been advised that planning consent for future uses on the park will need to carefully consider the park's sensitive and unique ecosystem and may not be achievable. Any planning application for intensification of use faces significant hurdles in obtaining planning consent due to potential ecological impacts and likely objections from Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust.

2.11 This presents a very substantial challenge for any efforts to diversify and intensify use of the site for commercial operators and has led the Council's preferred bidder to reconsider its position. The relevant Council service committee will be presented with options for the long-term future of the site, which will now need to be considered in light of the ecological survey's findings. The park's unique characteristics may present opportunities for conservation-focused initiatives,

such as educational programs or BNG credit generation through grassland enhancement. Delivery mechanisms will need to be explored and understood.

- 2.12 During this period, the on-site Boathouse café has been let to an operator to provide a food and beverage offer at the site and this will continue for the remainder of the 2025 season, with the current or a new operator to continue beyond this to allow for the next decisions to be made.
- 2.13 Given the above, the original ambitions for the site will now not be deliverable and the previous uses of the site may themselves also need to be the subject of review. It is therefore not possible to proceed as had been anticipated in January 2023.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Therefore, it is recommended that Members agree that this Committee's approach to the future occupation and use of Bartons Point Coastal Park (as agreed on 19th January 2023) is rescinded until further consideration of its potential by Environment and Climate Change Committee.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To proceed with securing a third-party organisation to take on the lease and operation of the site, on the terms set by the Regeneration and Property Committee in January 2023. This is not recommended as the ecological value of the site is such that the type of occupier and use should be considered, both to protect this value and to establish what, if any use will be economically viable.

5. Consultation Undertaken

- 5.1 The outcome of the ecological survey work has been discussed with the preferred potential commercial operator, which has led to it re-considering its position.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Environment priority within the Corporate Plan identifies the need to make sure that there is a balanced approach to keeping Council owned public spaces for people to enjoy sports and leisure time but also provide areas that could promote ecological improvements. The recommendation supports this in light of the ecological surveys.
Financial, Resource and Property	The changed appreciation of the site's ecological value is such that it is unlikely to make the scale of income contribution than was originally envisaged by its letting for commercial use. This income is not currently built into the Council budget and the prospect of any future financial contribution will be informed by any review of the site's future use and occupation.

	As matters stand the income from the licence to occupy the on-site café will be maintained and costs associated the management of the site and its facilities will be ongoing.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage. The review of the future occupation and use of the site will need to take account of the likely planning and other regulatory issues which will impact on any proposed occupation and use of the site.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage. Facilities at the site do currently experience vandalism and lower intensity use may increase the risk of this.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Bakewell's surveys revealed the park's exceptional biodiversity and this is to be a core consideration in any review of the site's future.
Health and Wellbeing	The site provides an important green space for residents and visitors to enjoy, which contributes to the overall health and wellbeing of the community. Any future use would ideally maintain public access but this may need to be managed in a way more in keeping with the ecological value and hotspots on site.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The current buildings and amenities will need to be maintained and these present some risks, given the condition in the case of the Boathouse café and the possibility of vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Some investment has been made through the use of external funding in the case of the former, which has improved the building.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage

7 Appendices

7.1 None

8 Background Papers

8.1 Bartons Point Coastal Park, report to the Regeneration and Property Committee, January 19th 2023

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Economy and Property Committee	
Meeting Date	8th October 2025
Report Title	Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings policy - update
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
Lead Officer	Kieren Mansfield, Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	That the draft Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings Policy (as at Appendix I) is consulted upon for period of 8 weeks, after which a further report will be brought to the Economy and Property Committee.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council adopted a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Lettings Policy in September 2013. Its aim was to provide transparency and consistency when providing accommodation to a VCS organisation and in which circumstances the organisation could apply for a concession in its rent.
- 1.2 Given the policy has been in place for some time and the Council has recently updated a number of related policies, including the Property Asset Strategy, Disposals Policy and Community Asset Transfer Policy, it was felt that a refresh would be beneficial, to ensure consistency with the wider policy framework.
- 1.3 This report presents an updated draft of the VCS Lettings Policy, with a view to undertaking an 8-week consultation on its content. A further report to the Economy and Property Committee would then follow, to present a final draft policy, in light of consultation responses received.

2. Background

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council consulted upon and adopted a VCS lettings Policy in 2013. The policy was intended to allow the Council to demonstrate transparency and consistency when providing accommodation to a VCS organisation. It set out the circumstances where an organisation could apply for a concession against its rent and the basis on which an assessment would be made to determine the level of discount that should be applied.
- 2.2 Whilst the Council owns a number of community property assets (the Property Asset Strategy identifies 53) and is landlord to a number of VCS organisations, the application of the policy has been limited. Many of the existing occupational

agreements pre-date the policy and a number of assets used by VCS organisations have nominal market rent value and are occupied on a peppercorn rent.

- 2.3 This policy sat alongside the Council's overall Property Asset Strategy, the Community Asset Transfer Policy and the Disposals Policy. Given the length of time since the adoption of the existing VCS Lettings Policy and that the three accompanying policy documents have all been recently updated, there is an opportunity to refresh the VCS Lettings Policy.
- 2.4 A draft of a revised VCS Lettings Policy is presented at Appendix I. Much of its content remains similar to the existing policy, with modifications intended to simplify its content and provide the Council further discretion to protect its wider financial position as set out in the Property Asset Strategy. Changes also reflect the recent revisions to the Scheme of Delegation in respect of the letting of property assets.
- 2.5 The proposed process which determines the level of discount which should be applied (if any) to a prospective tenant has also been reviewed and will be moved to an online format.
- 2.6 In addition to some additional information requested regarding a VCS organisation's approach to safeguarding and Prevent strategies, there is a proposed adjustment in scoring thresholds to determine the level of discount applied.
- 2.7 The previous policy did not necessarily require significant community benefit to be demonstrated to secure some level of concession on rent. Whilst it was never the case, the policy did allow those not scoring in the assessment to secure a lower level of concession. The thresholds against which discount is applied have therefore been reviewed, with proposed increases to require clearer demonstration of positive impact to support the award of rent concessions.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 That the draft Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings Policy (as at Appendix I) is consulted upon for period of 8 weeks, after which a further report will be brought to the Economy and Property Committee.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Do not approve the updated the policy for consultation. This is not recommended as the existing policies are relatively dated and the context has changed. As a consultative draft, there will be opportunities for further change to the policy in light of comments received from stakeholders.

5. Consultation Undertaken

- 5.1 The draft policy has been developed in collaboration with the Community and Partnerships Team. With the approval of the Economy and Property Committee, an

8 week consultation on the draft policy will be undertaken, with a view to circulating the new policy to relevant organisations for comment.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027 identifies a priority under the Community section to "work in partnership with the local towns and parishes and voluntary sector on our community assets." A refreshed VCS Lettings Policy will support this as part of the wider suite of relevant policies which have been recently updated.</p> <p>The policy also supports the priority of Running the Council, working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Aside from updating the policy, the amendments to the draft document seek to provide the Council with a level of discretion that allows its application to be considered against the need to protect the Council's wider financial position, both in respect of foregone income and opportunity cost. It also increases the thresholds for the application of concessions, which would provide indirect financial support to those VCS organisations making the biggest positive impact locally and against the Councils priorities.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>None are identified at this stage. A concession can be requested and considered within the terms of the policy and the lease agreement will need to reflect this and requirement for review every two years or at lease renewal or rent review, whichever is sooner. This can apply to existing leaseholders and may require amendments to an existing lease.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Draft Voluntary and Community Lettings Policy

8 Background Papers

8.1 4th November 2023, Property Asset Strategy Report to Regeneration and Property Committee.

8.2 24th July 2024, Disposals and Community Asset Transfer Policies, Report to Economy and Property Committee.

8.3 11th September 2013, Voluntary and Community Lettings policy, Report to Swale Cabinet

Appendix I. Draft Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Lettings Policy

1. Objective

- 1.1 To demonstrate consistency and transparency in the relationship between the Council and a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation where the Council is leasing property to a VCS organisation and a concessionary rent is requested.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation - A voluntary and community sector organisation is a charitable body or voluntary organisation including not for profit companies.
- 2.2 Commercial accommodation - is office, retail, industrial or other premises which would normally be occupied and used by commercial occupiers.
- 2.3 Community accommodation – are Council assets where community activities are its primary purpose, e.g., Community Halls and Allotments
- 2.4 Indicative rent without concession (or market rent for purpose of this policy) – an estimate of likely rent achievable assuming a demand for the premises from a commercial operator. As demand can be limited this is at times a theoretical value only.
- 2.5 Community Asset Transfer' is where the Council transfers land or buildings into the ownership or management of a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation.

3. Purpose and Scope of Policy

- 3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Property Asset Strategy, Disposals Policy and Community Asset Transfer Policy.
- 3.2 It covers Council owned premises where a lease to a VCS organisation of no more than 25 years is being considered and a concession has been requested. Where a lease has been granted or is requested for a period of 25 years or more, this shall be managed as part of the Community Asset Transfer Policy.
- 3.3 This policy does not apply to those premises that are deemed community assets and where a VCS organisation exists solely to manage that asset.
- 3.4 Neither does this policy apply to VCS organisations wishing to lease space in Swale House. This remains the operational base for Swale Borough Council and letting of parts of the building involve investment from the Council and an increase in Council costs relating to utilities and the management of the building. Given this, it is

important that space is let on commercial terms, so as not be to the detriment of the Council's financial position.

4. Lettings (general principles)

- 4.1 The Council is subject to statutory requirements in the letting and disposal of property, in particular an overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained. Therefore, the general principle for all lettings is that a tenancy/lease of premises will be based on current market value.
- 4.2 This duty is subject to certain exceptions that are set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003. Within financial limits, this gives Councils wider powers to dispose of land and property at less than market value where it could be demonstrated that they promoted the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.
- 4.3 Where a VCS organisation is unable to support occupying at the full market rent the Council will consider granting a concession where it is considered that the cost, or opportunity cost, to the Council is not detrimental. VCS organisation must provide quantifiable benefits to the community and support the Council in delivering its Corporate Priorities.
- 4.3 All new leases will be granted outside the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.
- 4.4 This policy can also apply to all organisations that have existing leases with the Council, as these come up for renewal or expire. Any lease being renewed will be subject to review, regardless of historical agreements.

5. Concessions

5.1 Principles

- 5.1.1 The award of any concession is discretionary. The principles set out below are to guide decisions.
- 5.1.2 A concession may be granted if there is a demonstrable benefit to the community and/or Council by the VCS organisation, supported by the Corporate Plan. An inability to pay full market rent (a funding gap), must also be demonstrated by the organisation.
- 5.1.3 A concession may be refused or limited if it is considered that the financial or opportunity cost to the Council or the local community outweighs the benefits generated through the concession.
- 5.1.3 A concession may be considered if a VCS organisation is already in receipt of funding from the Council but not where that funding already supports the occupation of premises.

5.2 Concession Application Process

- 5.2.1 The Council will adopt an open book approach to establish ability to pay for all VCS organisations seeking a concession on rent. Therefore, copies of the last 3 years of audited/certified accounts would be requested. Where these are not available, financial statements from an appropriate representative will be required. For a new organisation 12 months projected cash flow forecast is required.
- 5.2.2 In order for any concession to be considered it will be necessary for the body concerned to submit a business plan along with financial details as per above. This will be supported by an online form.
- 5.2.3 An appraisal will then be carried out by officers of the financial and non-financial benefits accruing to the Council and Community to determine the level of concession, if any. This will include any impact on equality and diversity issues.
- 5.2.4 If a VCS organisation wishes to appeal a decision made regarding a lease or a concession, this should be submitted in writing to the Council. It is expected that any appeal will present additional information or clarification that has a material impact on that decision.
- 5.2.5 The content of an appeal will initially be considered by the Head of Place. How confirmation (or otherwise) of the decision as to whether to award a concession will depend on the route through which the original decision on the concession has been made (see section 10).

5.3. Value of concessions

- 5.3.1 The market rent/indicative rent without concession shall be assessed so that the value of the concession will be explicit.
- 5.3.2 Where a concession is granted, the concession will be reviewed by Property Services in consultation with the Community and Partnership Team every two years or at the next rent review or lease renewal, whichever is sooner.
- 5.3.3 Where the lease is to a new organisation a review against its business plan and the projected cash flow forecast submitted will be carried out after the first 12 months.
- 5.3.4 The level of concession will be tiered, based upon the benefits of that VCS organisation leasing the property and its ability to pay. The maximum concession level to be granted will be 90% of the current market rent value of the property.
- 5.3.5 For the avoidance of doubt, for existing tenants benefiting from a concession, it is possible that when reviewed the level of concession granted may result in increased rent payments.

6. Repair & Maintenance

- 6.1 It will be a condition of lettings that the tenant takes full responsibility for repairs and decorations to the premises throughout the term of occupation.

7. Service Charges and Insurances

- 7.1 Where a VCS organisation is leasing a whole property, it will be responsible for paying for the entirety of the running costs of the accommodation.
- 7.2 All lessees (tenants) will be responsible to pay all costs relating to service recharges, including utilities and insurances that are associated with their demise.
- 7.3 Concessions on service charges or recharges are not included within the scope of this policy. i.e. must be paid in full by all tenants for all premises where they are applicable.

8. Business Rates

- 8.1 All relevant business rates are payable by the occupier of the premises and will be charged directly to the occupier. Where the premises are occupied by a VCS organisation they may be entitled to claim rates relief. Registered charities and charitable organisations will be entitled to any applicable Mandatory Rate Relief and may be entitled to further 'top-up relief'. Please see the Council Tax and Business Rate Discretionary and Hardship Relief Policy for more details.
- 8.2 Tenants should make their own enquiries to establish if such any business rate relief applies to them.

9. Financial arrangements

- 9.1 Rent for premises will be payable as agreed as part of the conditions of the lease or license, depending on the value.
- 9.2 Each party will bear their own costs entailed in the setting up of any lease or license and associated concession application.

10. Authority Delegation

- 10.1 New leases of less than 7 years or of a value less than £30,000 (market rent) per annum, will be approved under the delegated authority by the Head of Place.
- 10.2 For lettings of between 7 and 25 years or where the market rent is greater than £30,000 per annum it will be necessary to seek Committee approval.
- 10.3 The value thresholds for decisions set out above reflect the Council's current constitution and may be subject to change. This should be checked in the Scheme of Delegation prior to determining how a decision to let can be confirmed.

Appendix I – Rent Concession Application (for completion with organisation)

Application Information		
Premises Address:		
Market Rent at latest valuation and date:		
Organisation Name:		
VCS Registered Charity Number: (if applicable)		
Principal services to be offered:		
Proposed length of occupation:		
Supporting documents submitted: (applications cannot be progressed without these documents)	Viable Business Plan	
	copies of the last 3 years of audited accounts/ financial statements from an appropriate representative/ 12 months projected cash flow forecast are required (new organisation only)	
	Equalities and Diversity Policy	
	Safeguarding Policy	
	Prevent Policy	
Qualifying Criteria for Concession		
Criteria	Detail	Mark
Does the organisation have sufficient core funding to cover its premise's market rent?	<p>Yes, sufficient core funds in place – PASS/FAIL</p> <p>Core funding is in place, but not sustainable or needed for growth of organisation to meet needs - PASS/FAIL</p> <p>Awaiting confirmation of sufficient core funds – PASS/FAIL</p> <p>Sufficient core funds not in place - PASS/FAIL</p>	
Further Comments		
Does organisation qualify for a concession? (cannot fail any of qualifying criteria)	YES/NO	

If the organisation qualifies for a concession, use the scoring matrix to calculate the level of concession.

Appendix II: Level of Concession Scoring Matrix

To be completed separately by at least two individual officers from Community and Partnerships Team and then moderated.

Item	Scoring Criteria	Justification	Score
How does the organisation support the Council in meeting its corporate priorities, objectives and projects?	Strong evidence of support –20 Business plan or other documentation provided shows clear and demonstrable evidence on how this organisation helps the Council to meet many of its priorities, objectives and projects.		
	High evidence of support –15 Business plan or other documentation provided shows clear and demonstrable evidence on how this organisation helps the Council to meet at least one of its priorities, objectives and projects.		
	Some evidence of support –10 Business plan or other documentation provided shows to some extent how this organisation helps or could the Council to meet at least one of its priorities, objectives and projects, but demonstrable evidence is limited.		
	Little evidence of support – 5 Business plan or other documentation provided shows limited information on how this organisation helps or could help the Council to meet at least one of its priorities, objectives and projects.		
	No evidence – 0 No evidence provided within business plan or other documentation supports Council in meeting any of its priorities.		
How does the organisation benefit the Community in Swale?	Strong evidence of benefit – 20 Business plan or other documentation provided clearly evidences the benefits to the community by this organisation in Swale.		
	High evidence of benefit –15 Business plan or other documentation provided shows the benefits to the community by this organisation in Swale, but could be better evidenced.		
	Some evidence of benefit–10 Business plan or other documentation provided shows to some extent the benefits to the community by this organisation in Swale, but could be better evidenced.		
	Little evidence of benefit –5 Business plan or other documentation provided shows limited benefits to the community by this organisation in Swale.		
	No evidence of benefit – 0 Business plan or other documentation provided shows no benefits to the community by this organisation in Swale.		

What would the detrimental impact be on the Council if this organisation or some of its services was lost (including equality and diversity issues)?	Very significant impact –20 Business plan or other documentation provided clearly shows that there would be a high negative impact on the Council and community of Swale should this organisation/some of its services be lost.		
	Notable impact –15 Business plan or other documentation provided clearly shows that there would be a notable to high negative impact on the Council and community of Swale should this organisation/some of its services be lost.		
	Some impact –10 Business plan or other documentation provided shows that there would be some negative impact on the Council and community of Swale should this organisation/some of its services be lost.		
	Little impact –5 Business plan or other documentation provided does not shows that there would be a much of an impact on the Council and community of Swale should this organisation/some of its services be lost.		
	No impact – 0 Business plan or other documentation provided does not provide any evidence of detrimental impact on Swale.		
Does the organisation currently receive core funding from the Council?	Please provide further details		
		TOTAL	

Level of Concession Rates

Concession Rate	Score
90%	<input type="checkbox"/> Score of 55-60
75%	<input type="checkbox"/> Score of 45-50
50%	<input type="checkbox"/> Score of 25-40
25%	<input type="checkbox"/> Score of 15-20

Conclusion

Level of Concession granted to organisation:	<input type="checkbox"/> 90% <input type="checkbox"/> 75% <input type="checkbox"/> 50% <input type="checkbox"/> 25% <input type="checkbox"/> None (not suitable for concession)
Comments/further information needed:	
Concession details (if applicable)	
Total annual rent agreed:	
Length of term concession will apply:	
Source of subsidy:	
Review Date:	
Authorised Names: Must be approved by Head of Housing and Community Services	
Authorised Signatures:	

Economy and Property Committee	
Meeting Date	8 th October 2025
Report Title	LUF Programme Update
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
Lead Officer	Inger Lorraine, Capital Programme Manager
Classification	Part Exempt
Recommendations	1. That Committee note the update and provide comment as appropriate.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the continued progress of the Levelling Up Funded Sheerness Revival programme, highlighting milestones and achievements to date and outlining the benefits of the social value contributions.

2 Background

- 2.1 On 8th March 2023, Regeneration and Property Committee (as was) agreed “to utilise the UK Leisure Framework to identify and recommend a delivery contractor for the [Sheerness Revival] Beachfields and public realm projects, to be appointed following Committee approval”.
- 2.2 This was followed by Committee approval on 17th December 2024 to appoint Etec to deliver the Beachfields and Public Realm project, subject to the final contract value being within the available budget and with financial due diligence being undertaken to the satisfaction of Committee Chair and Director of Resources prior to contract award.
- 2.3 Additionally on 17th December Committee approved the appointment of Building Associates Limited for the alteration and refurbishment of obsolete garages at Masters House.

Contractual undertaking

- 2.4 At the end of 2024, East Kent College (EKC) appointed Jenner Group to undertake the expansion works at Sheppey College, which will offer an additional 900 square metres of educational space for learners to explore a wider range of courses that have been informed by local skills needs. This is principally related to further education provision, but will also enable the creation of junior college facilities and the introduction of adult education opportunities.
- 2.5 In May 2025 the council entered into a Delivery Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure to instruct Etec Group to progress the stage 5-7 construction

works at Beachfields, following receipt and approval of the final stage 4 costs report.

- 2.6 The JCT contract to undertake refurbishment works on the garages at Masters House was also signed in May 2025 between the council and Building Associates Ltd, with agreed start on site in July to complete the workshops at the end of November.

Progress to date

- 2.7 Planning consent was granted for Beachfields and the Public Realm in January 2025 which enabled the start of early works to prepare the site for stage 5-7 construction.
- 2.8 Similarly main works began at Sheppey College following the legal progression of the land transfer from the Council and a value engineering exercise to ensure the project remained within budget and to scope. A spade in the ground event was held in February 2025 to mark this milestone moment.
- 2.9 Progress on site has seen the full steel structure and brickwork installed. A 'blue roof' will support with rainwater drainage by collecting excess water which is then utilised to water vegetation. Works to install the windows and internal fitout began in September, while further works continue at pace.
- 2.10 Full refurbishment is underway at Masters House where the old roof has been removed in preparation for the new roof to be installed and the garages will start to take form, with the impressive steel and glass frontage showcasing the full industrial and modern design.

Temporary Relocation of Beachfield Occupants

- 2.11 The occupiers of the Healthy Living Centre which includes the charity, Sheppey Matters, the GP surgery, Minster Medical Practice and the leisure provision decanted the building and relocated to alternative temporary locations in January to continue their services and operations whilst the works are ongoing.
- 2.12 The leisure operators are continuing administrative operations from temporary porta cabins onsite, and the gym and studio are operating from the sports hall maintaining as much of the leisure offer as feasible during construction. The pool remains fully operational and accessible.
- 2.13 Minster Medical Practice took up occupation at their sister site at Minster Community Hospital to continue to provide GP service to the local community.
- 2.14 Meanwhile, Sheppey Matters are conducting their community support from a prime position on the high street with administrative operations carried out at Sheppey Gateway.

School / Public Engagement

- 2.15 Earlier this year officers engaged local school students in the design of the Adventure Golf course where their feedback and suggestions resulted in an historically themed course that celebrates the Island.
- 2.16 The design was completed in early Spring followed by a survey to establish an appropriate name for what would be the first commercial activity to come forward at Beachfields.
- 2.17 Following suggestions from the public, 'Sheerness Shipwreck Adventure Golf' was chosen from a short list of names. Installation of the intricate and challenging course began in April and 'Sheerness Shipwreck Adventure Golf' was unveiled at the highly successful formal opening of the course in July to coincide with the school summer holidays and capitalise on peak commercial trading. Visitor numbers over the summer months exceeded 1,000 a week.

Project Programme

- 2.18 All three projects have been granted planning permission with Sheppey College and Masters House receiving their planning outcome in September 2024 and Beachfields in January 2025
- 2.19 The current programme details key milestones on the critical path with the current overall programme completion shown as July 2026. Officers have been advised that spending of the government investment can be up to March 2027.
- 2.20 The Sheppey College project, although delayed by several months, is expected to complete in December and open its doors to students in January 2026. This is due to the time spent value engineering with the appointed contractor to keep costs within budget, and challenges with constructing on an operational site. EKC have ensured the scope remains in accordance with the expected LUF outcomes and outputs.
- 2.21 Despite the Masters House project running behind schedule, owing to contractor delay in signing the contract and lengthy material lead times, works commenced in July and are on track to complete at the end of November.

The overall project programme key milestones are as follows:-

Project	Works	Key Dates
Beachfields	Adventure Golf Complete / Open	July 2025
Masters House	Completion / Handover	November 2025
Sheppey College	Completion / Handover	December 2025
Beachfields	Completion / Handover	July 2026

Governance process

- 2.22 Following Committee members agreeing the detail of the governance arrangements as introduced in the Levelling-Up Fund business case, the Economy and Property Committee is shown as one of the three pre-existing bodies that provide strategic oversight and accountability for programme delivery (with the others being the internal Executive Management Team and the External Steering Group, consisting of stakeholder representatives).
- 2.23 A Member Working Group was established to take on this function, comprised of one representative from each group and chaired by the Chair of the Committee with the principle advantage that it can be agile, convened quickly when required and meeting schedules adapted to be in line with LUF reporting timescales and other requirements.
- 2.24 The Member Working Group carries out the following functions: -
- support the delivery team in monitoring progress against agreed output and outcome indicators (as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding with central government), spend against profile and progress against schedule
 - review progress against the agreed Communications and Engagement Plan (which the Working Group would also initially approve)
 - approve project adjustment requests which are considered to constitute a material change, and for which central government approval is required

The Member Working Group continues to play an important role in the progress and achievements across the projects.

Social Value

- 2.25 As part of our procurement activity contractors across the programme are required to contribute to social value in meaningful ways to support the local area socially, economically, and environmentally.
- 2.26 Officers have collaborated with contractors and delivery partners to realise their strong commitment to social value in real terms, which creates positive soft outcomes for the projects, additional to those committed to in the LUF business case.

Contributions realised so far include:

- Provided cost free logistical support for the temporary relocation of Beachfields' partners
- Supporting public engagement for planned activities across the projects
- Prioritising the use of local supply chain contractors with locally sourced goods and services at Beachfields and Masters House

- Five local labourers working at Beachfields and Masters House
- Supported engagement of primary and secondary school students, through a series of site visits
- Charitable donation to Launch It for use of space at Masters House
- Student participation in bricklaying work at Sheppey College to gain knowledge and experience

Further contributions expected as projects progress include:

- Construction workshops and careers advice at EKC Secondary
- Work experience opportunities at Beachfields and Sheppey College
- Contractor to install anti climb paint and defence guard as part of project works to support with ASB at Masters House and install noticeboard for Launch It charity.
- Officer / contractor collaboration to engage 'hard to reach' young people through targeted activities
- A commitments community events that will benefit a broader demographic including the prison population and elderly residents

Programme officers will support a forthcoming multi-agency meeting to explore methods of engagement and wider approaches to help reduce ASB across the project areas.

Security

- 2.27 Anti-social behaviour and crime has been an issue across all three projects. Sheppey College has seen one incident since works commenced, while there are persistent activities of varying degree at Beachfields and Masters House.
- 2.28 It is recognised that ASB is an issue being experienced across the island. However, the Beachfields site in particular has seen unprecedented activities where incidents escalated in nature and frequency over the summer months.
- 2.29 Security provision has been in place since the early works which consisted of a security guard and dog detail to provide surveillance and act as deterrent for low level ASB. However, as incidents increased and changed in nature, an additional security guard was introduced in particular to support with the security of the adventure golf course during installation through to opening and operation where monitored security cameras are now place.
- 2.30 The main building design has 'designing out crime' features and the Adventure Golf was installed with vandalism and ASB mitigation measures in place including increased fencing height around the golf area and CCTV installed and linked to the Council surveillance team.

- 2.31 Officers are adopting a multi-agency approach to security and the protection of assets by working with the contractor, internal community safety and CCTV teams and the police.
- 2.32 It is the intention of officers to engage with young people and the wider community to instil a sense of ownership and responsibility in the care of the newly improved facilities and encourage participation from 'hard to reach' young people to help deter ASB and vandalism to support a more sustainable approach to security and maintenance once the project is complete.

Achievements / Highlights / Lessons Learned

- 2.33 Across the projects we have seen much progress and acknowledge the opportunity to pause and celebrate the achievements so far, as well as recognise key learning points.

Activity	Area	Achievement / Highlight / Learning
Successful launch of Adventure Golf	Beachfields	<p>High quality commercial asset for the council</p> <p>Community in the main happy and expressing pride in place.</p> <p>Visitor number far exceeding expectation, with over a thousand visitors to the course per week over summer</p> <p>Attracting visitors from surrounding areas and from the mainland bringing much needed eyes to the island and seen as "putting Sheppey on the map"</p> <p>Accelerated pace to achieve opening prior to the summer school holidays was well managed.</p> <p>Set the benchmark for standard and encourages similar success with TAG and soft play leisure activities still to come</p> <p>The introduction of a brand new asset has made some public realm elements which sit outside of the programme's scope of works appear dated and poorly maintained. These detract from the newly enhanced offers and activities coming forward</p>
Successful relocation of Beachfield occupants	Beachfields	<p>Sheppey Matters shop front on the high street has afforded them more visibility and enabled additional support services to be introduced.</p> <p>Minster Medical continues to provide GP services and maintain patient care.</p> <p>Leisure operations continue onsite with gym facility with classes still being conducted</p>

'Sledgehammer' Event to mark milestone for Beachfields	Beachfields	Significant project progress following an extended pause and change of contractor to complete stage 3 design and progress to finalising stage 4 costs and transition to construction Changing contractor enabled the project to remain within budget.
Construction works continued at pace during summer exam period	Sheppey College	Exams were undertaken over the summer with no impact from ongoing works due to the experienced management of the contractor
Milestone Event to mark start on site	Masters House	Event took place to mark the works commencing on the garages with Masters House being the first of the three projects expected to complete.
Communications and Engagement	Full Programme	Overall increase in social media activity across a variety of platforms with improved engagement from residents.
Governance	Full Programme	Membership of working group was expanded part way through to include more Island reps.
Pausing at stage 3 design to refocus and switch contractor	Beachfields	An agile approach to switching contractor when it appeared financially prudent was the right thing to do from a budget perspective. Although this led to additional work and delay, it was on balance the right approach to take to progress the project and remain within budget.
Delays in signing contractor after committee approval to appoint	Masters House	Following delays by the contractor in contract for Masters House, it was recognised that having an approved process by which to appoint the second highest tenderer would be useful to support programme timescales and budget constraints. This has now been introduced Council-wide.

Next Steps:

- 2.34 The work continues at pace with Masters House coming forward in November, Sheppey College in January and Beachfields in May 2026 to complete the programme.
- 2.35 To enable further progress of the projects, the following next steps are planned:
1. A series of engagement activities over the coming months and into 2026 that includes: -
 - Information stalls at careers fairs to promote work in the construction and engineering industry
 - Assemblies within secondary schools to help promote women and girls within STEM

- Activities to engage 'hard to reach' young people to support efforts to combat ASB and vandalism in Sheerness
 - Local business forums to engage the High street and independent business owners to showcase the Sheerness Revival programme and highlight its potential to contribute positively to the local economy
2. Design of TAG Active and soft play will begin to take shape, with contributions from young people.
 3. Procurement of contractor to install the outdoor gym which will be accompanied by the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with contributions from wider youth groups. These outdoor activities will be accompanied by a revamped tennis court and paddling pool area.
 4. Landscaping works to enhance the public realm at Beachfields to commence with collaboration from local businesses to further improve the look and feel of the area.
 5. Multi-agency work to look at immediate and long term solution to combat ASB in the area around Beachfields and Masters House and .
 6. Potential Renaming of Sheppey Healthy Living Centre (Beachfields).
 7. Conclude new lease agreement for returning occupants of Beachfields.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 That Committee note the update and provide comment as appropriate.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 As this is a 'to note' report, there are no alternative options.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 As this is a 'to note' report, there is no consultation undertaken or proposed.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Effective governance arrangements support Priority 5 – Running the Council - of the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027. This in turn will promote effective LUF delivery and respond to Priority 3 – Economy, Using the Levelling Up Fund as a catalyst for further regeneration on the Isle of Sheppey.
Financial, Resource and Property	The £20m LUF investment is complimented by over £2m match funding (in kind and cash) from Swale Borough Council and £400k from EKC Group. Effective management and oversight arrangements (as set out in the project business case) are key to securing maximum impact from this investment. Two full time staff members are supporting delivery (to be reduced from April 2026), including servicing governance arrangements and leading procurement. Specialist support from other Council departments (e.g. Legal) is being covered from existing resource.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The current governance arrangements form part of the project business case and by consequence part of the Memorandum of Understanding with government.
Crime and Disorder	This site / area is known to attract anti-social behaviour and this project aims to help improve this via physical improvements and new stewardship of a vacant site and through the social value contributions from the contractor.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The LUF business case demonstrates how the programme aligns to and supports net zero ambitions.
Health and Wellbeing	The LUF business case demonstrates the accessibility improvements that the project will make to the GP Surgery within the Healthy Living Centre and the improved leisure and community facilities will support health & wellbeing
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified
Risk Management and Health and Safety	A Sheerness Revival risk register exists and is regularly reviewed and reported to government. Each project also has a project specific risk register with the highest priority risks feeding into the Sheerness Revival risk register.
Equality and Diversity	None identified
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified

7 Appendices

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

Appendix I: Images of ongoing progress

Appendix II: Budget position (Exempt)

8 Background Documents

- Sheerness Revival Business Case - [here](#) (appendixes available upon request from ingerlorraine@swale.gov.uk)
- 8th March 2023 Committee paper (link) [Public reports pack 08032023 1900 Regeneration and Property Committee.pdf](#)
- 17th December 2024 Committee paper (link)
[Sheerness Revival - Beachfields and the Public Realm Contract Award](#)
[Sheerness Revival - Masters House Contract Award](#)



Beachfields Regeneration



Beachfields and Public Realm – artist impression



Sheerness Shipwreck Adventure Golf Opening



Funded by
UK Government

Sheerness Shipwreck Adventure Golf



SHEERNESS
REVIVAL



Masters House Workshop Refurbishment



Masters House



SHEERNESS
REVIVAL

Masters House Workshop Refurbishment



Sheppey College Extension



Sheppey College



Sheppey College Extension – artist impression



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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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