

Agenda

Western Area Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 2 July 2025

Time 7.00 pm,

Venue: Bobbing Village Hall, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Sittingbourne ME9 8PL *

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Roger Clark, James Hunt, Chris Palmer, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen (Chair) and Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair).

Quorum = 3

Pages

Information about this meeting

*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website 1 July 2025.

Recording and Privacy Notice

Swale Borough Council is committed to protecting the security of your personal information. As data controller we process data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

This meeting may be recorded. The recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy and may be published on the Council's website. By entering the chamber and by speaking at a meeting, whether in person or online, you are consenting to being recorded and to the recording being published.

When joining a meeting online, your username will be visible to others in attendance. In joining the meeting you are consenting to us processing your username. You may use a pseudonym as your username but the use of an inappropriate name may lead to removal from the meeting.

If you have any questions about how we look after your personal information or your rights under the legislation, please email dataprotectionofficer@swale.gov.uk.

1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

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

- 1) There is no scheduled test of the fire alarm during this meeting. If the alarm does sound, please leave the building quickly without collecting any of your possessions, using the doors signed as fire

escapes.

- 2) Assemble outside where directed. Await instructions before re-entering the building.
- 3) Anyone who requires assistance in evacuating the building, should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. 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.

4. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2025 (Minute Nos. 647 – 655) and the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2025 (Minute Nos. 32 - 33) as correct records.

5. Customer Access Strategy

6. Review of Area Committees

7. Public Forum

8. Local Government Reorganisation update 5 - 6

9. Local Bus Forum Minutes for noting 7 - 10

10. Matters arising from previous meetings 11 - 12

11. Local issues to be raised

12. Matters referred to Service Committee Chairs for consideration

Issued on Tuesday, 24 June 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 committees, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Swale Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update for Area Committees

June 2025

Kent and Medway Councils jointly responded to the Government's invitation to develop a local government reorganisation proposal for the area, with an initial business case being submitted in March 2025. This initial business case included the consideration of a number of different geographic model options, all of which would require further work up based upon a series of questions to be resolved and further evidence gathering. Initial feedback has been provided by the Government, which is a check-in point, rather than a decision in terms of which model Kent adopts. The comments from Government included the key information that will need to be included in the final submission. It also recognised that Kent, as a major entry point to the UK, brings its own unique challenges which will need to be considered, along with the impact of any model on key services such as adult and children social care; children with special education needs and disabilities; homelessness and public safety.

The final submission needs to be made to Government by the 28th November, detailing the proposed unitary models, along with the evidence and justification for that proposal. Swale BC will be able to submit its preferred option, which may be different to other Councils' views. Councillors will be asked to agree this at a Full Council meeting in November.

There is a lot of work to do before November, and the councils across Kent and Medway are working to appoint a strategic partner to help prepare the final submission. They will help by collecting data, insights and consultation feedback from all authorities in Kent, and help to form the final business case. Swale BC will be heavily involved with this process and will be working with internal teams and our key external partners to ensure that our local context and risks are effectively captured.

In addition to working with internal teams and external partners, Swale BC are also working closely with town and parish councils, with the first workshops taking place in June to shape how this work will progress.

Alongside this, a countywide communications campaign will be launched at the end of June, focusing on ensuring residents are aware of changes taking place for local council services. This will be ahead of further campaigns at a later stage that would focus on impact on services once a final model is confirmed.

Swale Borough Council will also be undertaking engagement work from late Summer to capture our residents' views on priority services for the new Council. There will be an opportunity to take part in the process at the next round of Area Committees.

This page is intentionally left blank

MINUTES

LOCAL BUS FORUM

Meeting held on Thursday 30 January 2025 from 2.00pm, via Teams

Present:

- Alastair Gould (AG)
- Dan Bruce (DB)
- Dolley Wooster (DW)
- Emma Wiggins (EW)
- Ian Harrison (IH)
- Karen Watson (KW)
- Mike Baldock (MB)
- Roland Eglinton (RE)
- Tim Lambkin (TL)
- Tony Winckless (TW)
- Remy Laporte (RL)
- Daniel Millis (DM), *for Matthew Arnold*
- Steve Benjamin (SB)
- Andy Bates (AB)

In Attendance: Lorraine Burke (LB) Minutes

Apologies: Matthew Arnold (MA)

NO	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies	
1.1	Apologies received from Matthew Arnold (MA)	
2.	Minutes of Local Bus Forum – 19 September 2024	
2.1	No comments further to the last meeting and updates can be discussed within today's agenda.	
3.	KCC General Updates	
3.1	Dan Bruce discussed the ongoing delivery of the existing programme for 23/24 & 24/25. Revenue funding is vital for keeping network running and currently supporting approx. 51 services. Has also funded pricing initiatives for the Kent Travel Saver for both 23/24 and 24/25 Three bus priority schemes for out of Borough are almost complete (Pencester Road Dover, Rennie Drive Dartford and A256 Thanet), Whilst not in Swale this demonstrates to Government that Kent can delivery priority.	DB
3.2	Communications schemes: Considered screen/s for Sittingbourne Bus hub and the next tranche for Sheppey. Prioritisation of stops has been implemented. Interactive bus tool will be launched shortly before the end financial year, hosted under the enhanced partnership banner. QR codes to access live information. These would not be a replacement of current paper timetables. DB provide detail/emails. Highway schemes progressing across the County. Ticket machine grant has been implemented to improve standards.	
3.3	25/26 funding allocation: Funding known as Bus Grant, announced for Kent just before Christmas and anticipated 11.9mil capital, 10mil revenue. High Level Delivery plan on categories of spend to be submitted to Government by end of March 2025. Input requested from Focus group.	

MINUTES

3.4	Proposed a meeting end of February (WB 24 Feb) to ensure group opportunity to review and comment. DB to lead of timings to arrange a suitable date when the draft delivery plan is available to view.	EW/LB/ DB
3.5	Consideration to be given to a way forward for Boroughs to move/relocate island bus stop and encouraged to work collectively with districts.	
3.6	DB noted that from a revenue point of view, the majority of funding will need to be allocated to sustaining the current network and effectively standing still. This is due to contract cost increases, operational pressures such a NI increases and commercial changes /withdrawals. This is despite KCC increasing its core funding by £450k. There are options for capital funding with bus shelter improvements a potential areas of focus., option to review and upgrade of shelters via capital stream, but does not affect the Borough maintenance contracts.	
3.7	Further details or history background of any projects and initiatives can be received via email.	EW / DB
3.8	Support from rural parishes who could contribute funding and a dialogue to be had on support for bus services. Consider how initiate and facilitate.	
3.9	Bell Road: A lot of history around the location for buses to queue for school collection and requested for more provision for bus parking in the area. A plan for bus stands has been created to support schools. Remy Laporte (LM) shared the plans. There is not a formal consultation required, however can take comments and feedback. Propose that ward members are briefed and involved. Propose to include ward Cllrs of areas of residents that use the bus service. Consider inclusion of proper crossings and impact / safety of children. School are required to consider implications and proposed plans.	
3.10	Reference around residents for Wiggles and bus transfer ref Mill Mead: Cllr Wooster to email Dan Bruce directly and provide details to consider.	DW / DB
3.11	Any plans for Kent to retain £3 cap will depend on Government Legislation.	
3.12	Thanks to DB and wider team for obtaining funding and positive outcomes.	
4.	Area Committee Feedback	
4.1	Opportunities for Area Committee Members to feedback anything to attendees or request input.	
4.2	Western: School Parking	
4.3	It was questioned whether there are any plans to increase services after 6pm on a weekday and on Sundays. DB updated that it would depend on remaining budget for enhancements and level of step change beyond the 25/26 funding stream.	
4.4	Sheppey: how replacement bus services work once Network Rail go down. Train companies plan and arrange so therefore would require Southeastern response.	
5.	Bus Companies Updates	
5.1	Tim Lambkin: Bell Road affects Travelmasters and is encouraged that proposals are being considered for way forward.	

MINUTES

5.2	Concerned regarding available bus shelters to ensure assessable and safe for residents to encourage use.	
5.3	Access roads on new developments, are not always have accessible to bus services ad considered in the planning process. Support from KCC Highways is required and engaging in problem when replying to planning application consultations. Points have been raised and a process and flow of information can be implemented. Unsure if this has occurred. EW to chase. Propose to invite Alan Miller to attend and discuss at a future meeting..	EW
5.4	Encouraged by Town and Parish Council consultation for bus service/stops improvements.	
5.5	Emergency roadworks on island, ensure that bus companies are affected and communicated. Requested reassurance and support from KCC that emergency or general/planned roadworks are communicated to relevant parties in a timely manner. RL updated on process and procedures that KCC follows and assured that they have a process in place to try to notify as soon as possible. A training session has been scheduled for Travelmasters and Stagecoach have had the training on the system.	
5.6	Roland Eglinton: Concerns for buses receiving parking tickets in the bus hub in Sittingbourne. Requested common sense approach whilst drivers are on break. Cllrs required to discuss and review outside of the meeting.	
5.7	Danny Millis: Reduced off peak X3 Service from half hourly to hourly due to passenger reduction.	
6.	SBC Updates	
6.1	Raise any potential planning developments that require SBC to alert attendees of this forum for input and consultation. As discussed in 5.3.	EW
7.	AOB	
7.1	Propose a longer meeting moving forward to ensure all updates can be considered and timely.	
Next meeting:		
Around Week Commencing 20 February for focus on the High-Level Delivery plan on categories of spend to be submitted to Government by end of March 2025.		

This page is intentionally left blank

Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters Arising – July 2025

No.	Item	Background	Actions/updates
1.	Bexon (Bredgar) Conservation Area Review.	<p>A new Conservation Area for Bexon (Bredgar) is proposed to be designated.</p> <p>The review work is programmed to be completed by mid-May 2025, to be followed by public consultation soon after.</p>	The next update on the Bexon (Bredgar) Conservation Area Review will be given at the September 2025 Western Area Committee meeting.
2.	Local Heritage List	Updates have been given at previous meetings on the Swale Local Heritage List.	The next update on the Local Heritage List will be given at the September 2025 Western Area Committee meeting.
3.	Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA)	<p>Swale Borough Council currently does not have an ASCA. Since the adoption of the Heritage Strategy in 2020 and subsequent Action Plans wherein a number of Conservation Areas have been reviewed, it has been proposed that in order to better manage and maintain Swale's historic environment and heritage, a borough wide ASCA can prove beneficial.</p> <p>Following an all members briefing in May 2024, it was agreed that a draft consultation document be prepared for approval by the Planning Committee, before undertaking public consultation. The draft consultation document is estimated to be ready by spring of 2025.</p>	The next update on the Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA) will be given at the September 2025 Western Area Committee meeting.
4.	Inside Swale	A discussion took place about returning to 4 Inside Swale editions a year. The Committee felt that if things like Area Committees were advertised in Inside Swale, there would be	This matter was considered as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process and members agreed not to increase the number of Inside Swale editions per year.

		better attendance/engagement with people who did not have access to the website or social media. Also, they believed it would ensure more people received information on a range of issues.	
5.	Archiving of information on the SBC website	It was agreed at the September 2024 meeting to see if more funding could be allocated for the checking and removal of archived information on the website so that when searches took place, out of date information did not appear, i.e. the promotion of events from previous years. This would make the website more user-friendly and people could find current information more easily.	This matter was considered as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process and members concluded there was no additional funding available to prioritise this work.
6.	Loneliness Project	Members agreed that an update on roll-out of the Loneliness Project come to the next Western Area Committee meeting.	The Communities & Partnerships Manager advised that the project has now commenced, and SBC are working with Swale Voluntary Alliance (SVA) to deliver a community led project. Swale CVS are in the process of recruiting a project role who will embed themselves in the community to enable the project deliverables, some of which include raising awareness about the effects of loneliness, carrying out a gap analysis, delivering information and awareness, expanding existing service directories, supporting the activation of volunteers to increase opportunities, and seeking funding for new and legacy projects. Progress reporting will be via the relevant service committee.