

Agenda

Sheppey Area Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 22 July 2025

Time 7.00 pm,

Venue: Leysdown Village Hall, James Court, Wing Road, Leysdown-on-Sea, Sheerness
ME12 4RS*

Membership:

Councillors Andy Booth, Hayden Brawn, Angela Harrison, Elliott Jayes (Chair), Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Lee-Anne Moore, Pete Neal, Tara Noe, Tom Nundy, Ashley Shiel, Mark Tucker, Mike Whiting and Dolley Wooster (Vice-Chair).

Quorum = 3

Pages

Information about this meeting

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- 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 4 February 2025 (Minute Nos. 603 – 612) and the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2025 (Minute Nos 28 - 29) as correct records.

5.	Sheerness Revival Project update	5 - 6
6.	Customer Access Strategy	
7.	Secondary school places	
8.	Review of Area Committees	
9.	Blue Flag and Seaside Awards update	
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14. Public Forum
15. Local issues to be raised
16. Matters referred to Service Committee Chairs for consideration

Issued on Monday, 14 July 2025

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

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Sheppey Area Committee Meeting

22nd July 2025

Sheerness Revival Project Update

Project 1: Beachfields:

- RIBA Stage 4 (detailed/technical design) was finalised in April and the Delivery Management Agreement (DMA) was signed shortly afterwards with the contractor, allowing the council to formally enter into contract for the main construction works to begin on site.
- Since then, demolition and strip out work has progressed at pace in preparation for the reconfiguration of the internal space.
- Minster GP and Sheppey Matters are currently operating from alternative locations while the leisure operations have decanted into temporary facilities on site with activities continuing alongside the programme of works.
- The team are working to keep as much of the leisure offer available around the work programme as possible and keep disruptions to a minimum.
- There have been several incidents of ASB, attempted theft and break in onsite. As a result, additional security has been put in place. Officers are working with the contractors and local community partners to engage young people by sharing information on the project to encourage more positive involvement and highlight the benefits of the project to their specific demographic in an effort to instil a sense of pride of place.
- Officers continue to work with NHS/ICB consultants and Minster Practice around the fit out of the GP provisions to ensure compliance and to install a fully functional and equipped surgery to deliver improved health facility for the community.
- Work is planned to install a new outdoor gym and multi-use games area as well as a refresh to the tennis court and paddling pool area.
- Adventure Golf soft opening on 18th July and formal opening on 23rd July, just in time for the school summer holiday. This activity has been designed and built to a high standard and sets the benchmark for the variety of new leisure offers coming forward, such as TAG Active and Soft Play and will hopefully become a valuable asset that the local community in Sheerness can be proud of.
- The wider Beachfields project remains on track to complete in May 2026.

Project 2: Sheppey College:

- The steel frames to the extension are in place as the building begins to take shape.
- The site currently has several college students on work experience and participating in construction of the brick work.
- Work to the internals is expected to commence in the next 6 weeks.
- The programme of works is expected to complete in December and will be open to students from January 2026.

Project 3: Masters House:

- The refurbishment contract was signed in May followed by mobilisation in June and set up and start in site in July.
- A milestone event to mark the start of the refurbishment work will take place in August.
- Works begin onsite in July with expected completion by end of October.

Communications and Engagement:

- 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.
- A survey was also conducted to engage residents on the Adventure Golf activity and, a shortlist of the suggested names was shared with members and internal officers for consideration. Sheerness Shipwreck Adventure Golf was chosen as the most suitable.
- Since then, the opening event has taken place for the Adventure Golf and gave members, students and stakeholders alike, the opportunity to experience the course first hand before its official opening on 23rd July.
- Officers are currently working on a programme 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 Highstreet and independent business owners to showcase the Sheerness Revival project and highlight its potential to contribute positively to the local economy
- Overall, we have increased social media activity across a variety of platforms with improved engagement from residents.
- We are also embracing the opportunity to utilise Sheppey FM radio as an additional platform in promoting the projects to further broaden our engagement reach and messaging across the island.

Sheppey Area Committee 22nd July 2025 - Bartons Point Update

Following Members' ambitions to explore opportunities to improve the offering at Barton's Point Coastal Park, the Council sought Expressions of Interest (EOI) 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 leisure offer.

The EOI process generated considerable interest and having reviewed the submissions and undertaken commercial negotiations 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 bio-diversity 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.

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 secure a planning permission for more intensive use. These surveys were completed in April 2025, with the final report to follow.

Survey Findings

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

Under UK planning law, developments impacting ecologically sensitive areas must comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasizes 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).

The surveys indicate that the proposed inflatable waterpark would increase site usage, potentially disrupting the fragile ecosystem. Key legislative and regulatory considerations include:

- **Environment Act 2021:** Mandates BNG, requiring developers to enhance biodiversity through measurable improvements.
- **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.

Bakewell's Recommendations

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.

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. 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.

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 but it has to be considered about how to deliver this.

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 2025 season to allow for the next decisions to be made.

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 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 in 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.

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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.	

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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.	
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.	EW / DB
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.	

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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.		

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Sheppey Area Committee meeting: July 2025 – Matters arising

No.	Item	Background	Actions/updates
1.	Household Support Fund	It was agreed that the reports that go to the Cost-of-Living Group, come to Sheppey Area Committee.	The next report will come to the September 2025 Sheppey Area Committee meeting.
2.	Heritage issues	<p>Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA)</p> <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 come to the September 2025 Sheppey Area Committee meeting.
3.	Sheerness- Marine Town & Mile Town Conservation Area Review	Regular updates on Marine Town & Mile Town Conservation Area Review have come to Sheppey Area Committee meetings.	The next update on conservation area reviews will come to the September 2025 Sheppey Area Committee meeting.

4.	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 come to the September 2025 Sheppey Area Committee meeting.
5.	Community Governance Review	Members agreed it was important that the Isle of Sheppey maintained its voice in any new unitary structure and the most effective way to do this was through parish and town councils. As not all of the Isle of Sheppey was parished, it was proposed that the Chair of the Sheppey Area Committee write to the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee requesting that consideration be given to carrying out a Community Governance Review (CGR) on the Isle of Sheppey.	The Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee has been made aware of this request.
6.	Lack of enforcement at 10-month occupancy caravan parks	The issue of was raised. It was proposed that lack of enforcement at 10-month occupancy caravan parks due to the lengthy enforcement process, be referred to the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee to see what action could be taken.	The Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee has been made aware of this request.
7.	CCTV and street lighting coverage	Further to a person going missing and lack of CCTV camera coverage and lack of lighting making it difficult to see what direction the person took, the meeting was advised that SBC were reviewing the need for CCTV/additional lighting in those areas, but at this stage did not have any identified budget that could be used for permanent solutions. In the first instance SBC were looking to see if they could evidence the need for CCTV and if so, if there were suitable columns that could be	CCTV is to be deployed in the Shingle Bank Car Park. Other locations will be kept under review, with Kent Police, and temporary CCTV would be considered in the first instance, should evidence of need be provided by the Police.

		used and also look to deploy temporary mobile CCTV cameras. Officers would look into more permanent CCTV if the evidence of need was there and would explore lighting options and possible funding solutions for that. This was something that could also be fed into the Seafront Parking Consultation which was in progress.	
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