

A Heritage Strategy for Swale

2020 – 2032

Public Consultation Draft

December 2019



Swale Borough-Wide Heritage Strategy 2020-2032

Public Consultation Draft
(December 2019)

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Foreword



Swale's heritage is a major asset, not just in terms of our cultural offer and our visitor economy, but also regarding the area's ability to attract investment and employment. Key factors in making an area attractive as a place to live, work, invest and visit include jobs, quality of environment and social and cultural infrastructure. Swale's heritage is essential to all of these.

Swale's historic buildings and areas deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits and support a wide range of economic activity. This includes accommodation for businesses, recreational facilities, community facilities and residential accommodation. Heritage-led regeneration can help to achieve significant economic and physical transformations in Swale, as this strategy demonstrates.

A well-maintained historic environment helps to create a sustainable environment, with a sense of place and positive image. This helps create a sense of civic pride in the places where we live, and the environment around us.

Heritage must form an integral part of Swale Borough's cultural, economic development, regeneration and tourism strategies if the area is to finally realise its potential. This document puts forward a positive strategy for Swale's heritage, to maximise the chances of it helping the Borough to meet that overall potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Baldock".

Councillor Mike Baldock,
Cabinet Member for Planning and Swale Borough Council Heritage Champion

Executive Summary

This strategy provides a framework for the designation, conservation, management and physical and economic regeneration of Swale's Historic Buildings and Areas, including designated historic parks and gardens. From analysis of evidence on Swale's heritage and some early engagement with local stakeholders, a high level vision and set of five associated priorities have been identified. These are:

VISION:

A vibrant and widely-known heritage which is valued for its own sake and for the long term benefits it provides to the people, economy and environment of the Borough of Swale

PRIORITIES:

1. To conserve, and where possible enhance Swale's heritage buildings, structures and areas as a cultural, economic, community and environmental asset to the area, in particular by positively managing the Council's own heritage assets, and by establishing a programme for the review and appraisal of Swale's conservation areas;
2. To make use of the borough's heritage to help achieve and promote sustainable and inclusive growth and regeneration, social and economic wellbeing, and civic pride, in particular by tackling Swale's significant issues of heritage at risk;
3. To recognise and promote the role of Swale's heritage in creating or enhancing local distinctiveness and a positive image for the area as a place to live, work and visit;
4. To ensure Swale's heritage forms an integral part of local strategies and initiatives to promote tourism and the visitor economy, including through the conservation and subsequent positive management of the Borough's internationally significant maritime and aviation heritage on the Isle of Sheppey;
5. Raising the historic environment up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale's heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

The five priorities will be considered and addressed through the following **Strategy Themes**:

A: Understanding and Designation (our heritage and its significance);

B: Positive Management (identifying issues, opportunities solutions); and

C: Capitalising and Championing (valuing our heritage).

The Action Plans deriving from this Heritage Strategy will show how the proposed actions are linked to the priorities and underlying strategy themes, and the highest priority in the early years of the strategy plan period will be tackling the significant issue of heritage at risk.

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1. Introduction: A Heritage Strategy for Swale

1.1: Why a heritage strategy?

A heritage strategy is needed to help the Borough Council, key stakeholders and other interested parties protect and manage the historic environment in Swale Borough in a sustainable way, and on an informed basis. This includes setting an appropriate overall vision for the heritage in our Borough, and setting out a vision and set of priorities that, as far as possible, align with the plans and aspirations of local communities such that this is a strategy that can be as inclusive and widely supported as possible.

There is no specific legal requirement for a local authority to publish a heritage strategy, but in the context of the planning system for England and Wales, which is essentially a plan-led system for the management of development, the key central government document which sets out the framework for local planning policy through local plans (the National Planning Policy Framework, Edition 2, 2018) sets out in paragraph 185, that *‘Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats...’*

This heritage strategy is therefore first and foremost a planning system based strategy designed to support and reinforce the core and development management policies set out in Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan (adopted July 2017). Critically however, it is also designed to function as a necessary evidence base for ongoing work on the replacement local plan, and furthermore, it links to wider corporate strategies in order to help deliver wider priorities of the Council.

The Swale Heritage Strategy builds on work completed as an evidence base for the current adopted local plan, namely the Swale Heritage Asset Review document (June 2015), produced by Urban Vision CIC on behalf of the Council. The Heritage Asset Review document is too large to include as an appendix to this Heritage Strategy document, but can be viewed via this link: <https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/LP-Examination-documents/Swale-Heritage-Asset-Review-June-2015.pdf>

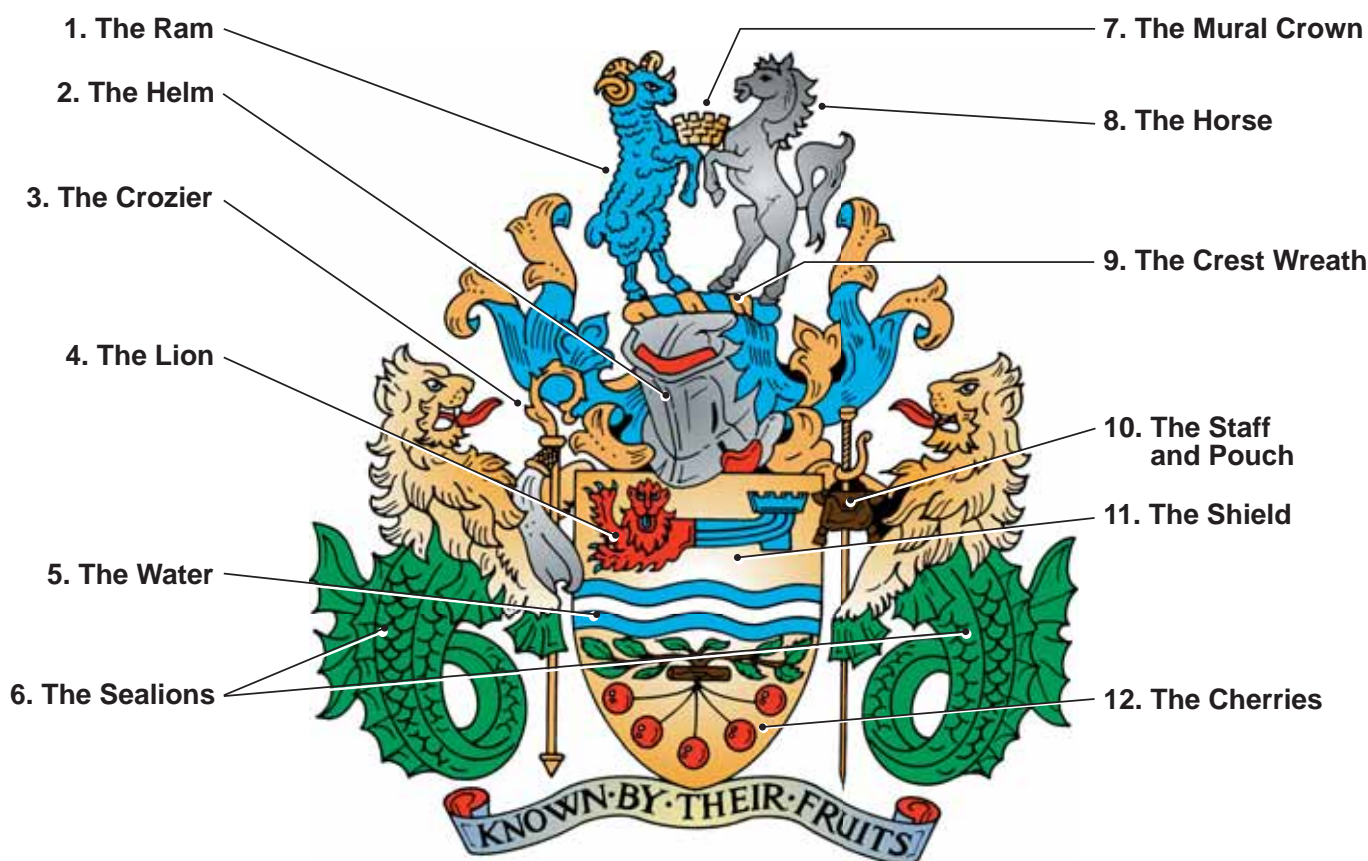


Image of the new Sheppey Crossing, with the Kings Ferry Transporter Bridge in the foreground: two pieces of key 20th and 21st century transport infrastructure linking the island and mainland parts of Swale Borough.

1.2: A unique strategy for our unique Borough

The Borough of Swale is unique in many ways, and as such, whilst there will be some heritage issues and opportunities in Swale also facing other local authority areas, a *copy and paste* exercise will not be truly effective. This is not just because of the range of heritage assets we have in the Borough (a number of which are of international significance), but also because of the rather special geography of the Borough, and the wide range of communities contained within. Many of these are represented by well-established and knowledgeable amenity societies and other groups which have a strong interest in understanding, protecting and maintaining the heritage which helps to define and characterize their local surroundings, and in many cases provide a sense of place and pride in their local area.

The Borough Council therefore wishes this to be a strategy which is as much for the residents and business in the Borough, as it is for the Council, and it is hoped that through the process of public consultation, a Heritage Strategy can be produced which all of those with a positive, publicly minded interest in the Borough can feel is partly shaped by them and can therefore be wholeheartedly supported.



Swale's Armorial Bearings

An explanation of the details of this Civic Crest can be found at www.swale.gov.uk/armorial-bearings-of-swale



Visitors at an archaeological site at Newington

1.3: Community involvement with heritage projects

The Council wants to engage with the local communities in developing, implementing and completing projects to ensure that the end product or outcomes are ones which are supported beyond just the Council itself and third party organisations such as Kent County Council and Historic England.

It will also look to enable community groups that wish to deliver heritage projects through staff support where possible, and/or through grants (including through its current scheme of heritage, culture and members grants).

1.4: Swale Local Plan and heritage

The Local Plan ‘Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan’, was adopted 26th July 2017, and includes the following vision.

‘It is 2031 and Swale is known by the fruits of its endeavors.

We have harnessed our assets – a strategic location, diverse communities and an outstanding natural environment – and are a sustainable, flourishing place in which to enjoy life and do business, with:

- Sittingbourne transformed into an attractive, competitive and prosperous town, with a thriving centre that residents across the Borough are proud to use;
- Sheerness and Queenborough as beacons of coastal rejuvenation leading the way to success for all communities on the Isle of Sheppey;
- Faversham, a thriving market town and heritage destination that has grown organically; and
- Successful rural communities across the downs, farmed plains and coast as places of innovation; nurturing enterprise, local produce and greater self-reliance’.

The plan includes 12 core objectives, most of which are relevant to heritage, with objective 4 specifically focused on heritage, and shown in bold text for clarity:

1. Adapt to climate change with innovation, reduced use of resources, managed risk to our communities and opportunities for biodiversity to thrive.
2. Use our coastal assets to support a strong economy and a sustainably managed environment.
3. Support economic success and improve community wellbeing with a network of maintained, protected and improved natural assets in town and country.
4. Conserve and enhance our historic and natural assets as the means to drive regeneration, tourism, and environmental quality and to reverse declines in their condition.
5. Strive for high quality design to bring a better quality of life, opportunities for healthy living and self-confidence to our communities.
6. Be flexible, provide choice and support sectors that can build on our strengths, diversify our economy, promote investment in skills, and develop our distinct opportunities in pursuit of greener and pioneering technologies.
7. Bring economic growth, regeneration and community development, especially to our most deprived communities.
8. Support our farming and food sectors so that they are at the forefront of increasing food security, reducing food miles and increasing local food consumption.
9. Provide the right housing to support demographic change and housing needs to regenerate and build stronger, greener communities.
10. Develop tourism and culture to support regeneration, employment growth, communities and environmental management.
11. Improve prosperity and environmental quality with efficient and sustainable transport networks.
12. Ensure timely delivery of the services and infrastructure to support strong communities.

In addition, there are four place-based objectives, again, all relevant to heritage:

1. Re-establish Sittingbourne as the principal town with investment in retail, leisure, culture and community services and further education, within new and improved green spaces and streets.
2. Reinforce Sheppey's uniqueness by ensuring change: supports Sheerness as its commercial and service focus; strengthens and integrates communities at Rushenden and Queenborough and Minster and Halfway; manages coastal and heritage assets; modernises leisure and tourism industries; and supports isolated communities.
3. Sustain Faversham's role and character as an historic market town serving residents, visitors and a wider area with a range of businesses and services that increase diversity and interest.
4. Address identified needs in our rural communities so that they are sustained in ways that also respect their scale and character.

The strategic aims and associated strategic policies of the Local Plan recognise the importance of heritage and Strategic Policy 1 (Policy ST1) states at section 12 that (the Borough Council will seek to) '*Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment, and integration of development with the importance, form and character of heritage assets (including historic landscapes)*'.

The core policies in the Local Plan are intended to build detail on the strategic aim policies and to ensure joined-up consideration across the themes covered, to matters of critical importance to the success of the Local Plan. They apply to all development proposals, and Core Policy 8 (Policy CP 8) deals specifically with ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’, making specific reference and commitment to the production of a borough-wide heritage strategy:

To support the Borough’s heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

- Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;
- Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale’s designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM30-DM34;
- Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;
- Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;
- Respond positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;
- Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and
- Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.

Policies for development management within the 2017 Local Plan have wide relevance for heritage. Policies specific to heritage protection include:

- Policy DM 32 Development involving listed buildings;
- Policy DM 33 Development affecting a conservation area;
- Policy DM 34 Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites;
- Policy DM 35 Historic parks and gardens; and
- Policy DM 36 Areas of high townscape value

1.5: Neighbourhood Plans and heritage

Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan

The Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan was made on 24th June 2017, following a successful referendum outcome. The 16 objectives of the plan include:

12. Protect and enhance the Creek’s rich and outstanding maritime, industrial and landscape heritage for educational and economic purposes.
13. Create living and working environments that respond to the Creek’s rich and outstanding maritime heritage, the demands for high-performing standards of sustainable development, whilst supporting existing businesses and their aspirations.

These objectives are addressed by a range of development management policies.



Part of Faversham Creek, adjacent to Standard Quay: one of the many character areas in the Faversham Conservation Area

Boughton & Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan

This neighbourhood plan is in the process of being finalized, and is anticipated to be taken to public consultation and a subsequent referendum in the near future. The emerging Swale Heritage Strategy has already supported the development of, and evidence base for this neighbourhood plan through the review and recent adoption (for development management purposes) of character appraisal & management strategies for the 3 conservation within these two adjoining parishes.

Other neighbourhood plans

A number of these are expected in the next few years, and it is anticipated that the actions arising from this Heritage Strategy will in many instances, support the development of these plans in directing new development in a sensitive and sustainable manner, which where possible will result in enhancement of the historic built and natural environment.

1.6: Other key complementary plans, strategies and frameworks

Swale Borough Corporate Plan

This is currently in development, but is anticipated to be published in May 2020.

Swale Visitor Economy Framework

Swale Borough Council recently prepared 'Swale - Your destinations of choice - A Visitor Economy Framework for Sittingbourne, Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey 2018 – 2023'. This includes six priorities:

1. Identity, marketing and promotion;
2. Infrastructure and connectivity;
3. Public realm improvements;
4. Sector support – Open for Business;
5. Developing the cultural offer; and
6. Market segmentation and information management.

Specific actions under these priorities include:

- To deliver improvements to the public realm in our town centres and strategic gateways to create a more visitor-friendly environment (car parks, lighting, street furniture, signing);
- To encourage and promote quality assessment to meet resident and visitor expectations of accommodation and visitor attractions;
- To develop a range of new and unique and distinctive experiences to include food and drink, sport and leisure, festivals and events, arts and culture, history and heritage and outdoor activities in coastal and rural destinations;
- To deliver enhancements to the Borough's physical environment that benefit residents and visitors ...

This heritage strategy can make a significant contribution to achieving the priorities and actions of the Visitor Economy Framework.

A Strategy and Service Charter for Planning Enforcement (Oct. 2017)

This sets out the Council's approach to tackling breaches of planning control and categorises them into the priority order of Major, Medium or Low. Heritage assets are given some consideration in the framing of these priorities e.g. Demolition of a listed building, breaches of an Article 4 Direction, and works that are irreversible or irreplaceable and constitute a serious breach are all placed within the Major Priority category.

1.7: What are our 'Big Issues'?

The big issues for the Borough of Swale as far as heritage is concerned can all be neatly filed under the principal headings of Heritage at Risk and Untapped Potential, although there are multiple strands of issues sitting under each of those, and there is also overlap of the issues between those two main headings.

The issue of heritage at risk is considered in more detail elsewhere in this heritage strategy (principally at Chapter 4, section 4.2), but in outline the principal concerns are considered to be as follows:

- An already significant number of conservation areas, listed buildings and other heritage assets in a poor and declining condition, such that the heritage significance of these special areas, buildings and structures is reduced, and in some cases may not be fully retrievable (heritage assets are finite resources and once they have been lost, or irreparably damaged, they cannot be replaced).
- An increasing number of problem owners which, or who display little interest in properly maintaining their property in an appropriately sensitive manner to help protect and conserve the special interest of the building(s)/structure(s) in question, and/or the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area. The owners in this respect range from individual people and small local companies to significant landowners and multinational companies.
- Limited Council resources, and in some cases, controls, to effectively tackle the inappropriate actions of such owners. As a general rule of thumb, there is no such thing as a problem building or structure – it is almost always the actions or inaction of owners or other parties with an interest in a building/structure (e.g. leaseholders and tenants) which result in problems developing for any particular building/structure.
- An unbalanced mechanism for working with property owners to help conserve heritage significance: Previously, the Council was able to offer conservation grants to help the owners of listed buildings maintain their properties in an appropriately sensitive way, this being appropriate given the premium that typically has to be paid for the types of

construction materials, construction detailing and level of skill/craftsmanship needed in this respect. Significant ongoing cuts to local government grants over a period of years has meant that the grant scheme has had to be abandoned, and as such, only positive advice can be offered by the Council in relation to repairs and alterations, and in certain cases intervention when it is clear that changes taking place are not appropriate. The previous ‘carrot and stick’ approach that was possible has thus given way to a largely ‘stick’ only approach which is unfortunate, as it is recognized that some listed building owners struggle to afford to be able to upkeep their homes, or other types of buildings in an appropriately sensitive manner.

- Exacerbating the above stated issue is the fact that the VAT system in this country in terms of rate reductions, is biased towards new works and alterations over repairs, which as well as making repair work more expensive than it need be, also arguably leads to a tendency for some owners to wait for elements of their buildings to fall apart and then having to replace them. In the process, the special interest of the building/structure can therefore often be diminished.
- An increasing problem of historic buildings being targeted for their construction materials (principally lead, but sometimes other types of material which can be sold on through the reclaimed materials market), and in the case of buildings which are not permanently occupied (typically churches and church halls), break-ins to steal the contents of these buildings. As well as the loss of sometimes very valuable artefacts, this can also result in damage to important historic fabric such as doors and/or windows used as the route into and out of the building by thieves.



Boat Store at Sheerness Port – Heritage at Risk Grade I listed building

The issue of untapped potential (in relation to the Boroughs heritage assets) is something that is touched on in the Council’s Swale Visitor Economy Framework but it is also very clear from a quick look at the wide range of heritage that the Borough has to offer, that much of it is little recognized by a wider audience, and partly as a result of this, it is undervalued and inadequately understood.

A key example of this is the group of listed buildings and structures at Sheerness Port, a number of which are graded at the higher grade I and II* level (i.e. a notch above the lower and more typical grade II listing status). The grade I listed Boat Store is considered to be of international heritage significance principally because of the pioneering form of its iron-framed construction which helped pave the way for the skyscraper buildings of the late 19th and early 20th Century, and yet even within the Borough itself, many people are unaware of its existence.

As part of its public commitment to protecting the Borough’s precious and irreplaceable heritage, the Council will therefore seek to work with a wide range of local and national groups in championing the special qualities of its wide ranging heritage assets from the most modest structure, such as the grade II listed boundary marker stone at Faversham Recreation Ground, to the special townscapes and landscapes of places such as the former Royal Naval Dockyard at Sheerness Port, the historic core of Faversham, Sittingbourne High Street, Syndale’s parkland landscape, and the Kent downland landscape around villages such as Thowley Forstal.



Artists illustration of repaired and re-purposed Sheerness Dockyard Church – Heritage at Risk Grade II listed building. Image provided courtesy of Hugh Broughton Architects with Martin Ashley Architects*

2. Our vision, priorities and strategy themes

2.1 The Council’s vision, objectives and priorities for the positive management of the Borough’s heritage have already in part been identified through some early engagement with local stakeholders in the development of the first draft version of the heritage strategy. However, given that the Council wishes this strategy to be one that is as much for the residents and business in the Borough, as it is for the Council itself, views on the overarching framework for the heritage strategy, as set out in draft form below, are actively sought from individuals, groups/societies, businesses and organisations which have a positive interest in this matter, be they local to Swale, or otherwise:

VISION: *A vibrant and widely-known heritage which is valued for its own sake and for the long term benefits it provides to the people, economy and environment of the Borough of Swale.*

2.2 PRIORITIES:

1. To conserve, and where possible enhance Swale’s heritage buildings, structures and areas as a cultural, economic, community and environmental asset to the area, in particular by positively managing the Council’s own heritage assets, and by establishing a programme for the review and appraisal of Swale’s conservation areas;
2. To make use of the borough’s heritage to help achieve and promote sustainable and inclusive growth and regeneration, social and economic wellbeing, and civic pride, in particular by tackling Swale’s significant issues of heritage at risk;
3. To recognise and promote the role of Swale’s heritage in creating or enhancing local distinctiveness and a positive image for the area as a place to live, work and visit;
4. To ensure Swale’s heritage forms an integral part of local strategies and initiatives to promote tourism and the visitor economy, including through the conservation and

subsequent positive management of the Borough's internationally significant maritime and aviation heritage on the Isle of Sheppey; and

5. Raising the historic environment up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale's heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

The five priorities will be considered and addressed through the following **strategy themes**:

- A. Understanding and Designation (our heritage and its significance);
- B. Positive Management (identifying issues, opportunities and solutions); and
- C. Capitalising and Championing (valuing our heritage)

The Action Plan delivery from this Heritage Strategy will show how the proposed actions are linked to the priorities and underlying strategy themes. The initial Action Plan for 2020 – 2023 is provided as **Appendix i**.



Partially rebuilt Belcote – part of a grade II listed building at the Council's Bell Road Cemetery

3. Heritage Strategy Theme A: Understanding & Designation

Our Heritage and its Significance

3.1 Heritage Strategy Priorities Aligning with Theme A

The Heritage Strategy Priorities which principally align with this main theme are:

Priority 1: To conserve, and where possible enhance Swale's heritage buildings, structures and areas as a cultural, economic, community and environmental asset to the area, in particular by positively managing the Council's own heritage assets, and by establishing a programme for the review and appraisal of Swale's conservation areas; and

Priority 5: Raising the historic environment up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale’s heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

3.2 What have we got (in a nutshell)?

The renowned Buildings of England series of books recognises that Kent has an exceptionally rich architectural heritage. The most recent national data available from Historic England indicates that Kent has over 17,800 entries in the national list of buildings of special architectural or historic importance. This is more than any other county in the South East, and comparable to the whole of London (over 18,800 listed building entries).

Swale is one of 13 local authority districts in Kent and contributes significantly to the high level of heritage interest that can be found in the county. At the time of writing, Swale contains over 1430 listed building, 50 conservation areas, 4 Historic Parks & Gardens and 22 Scheduled Monuments. Kent districts ranking comparison data on the extent of heritage assets which each district has is available to view via the Council’s 2015 Heritage Asset Review, see : <https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/LP-Examination-documents/Swale-Heritage-Asset-Review-June-2015.pdf>, although it should be noted that some of the data in this document may now be incorrect by small margins.

Listed Buildings

The distribution of Swale Borough’s listed buildings can be seen on Figure 1 overleaf. It can be seen from this that there is a wide distribution of listed buildings/structures across the Borough, but also that there are key areas with high concentrations of listed buildings, most notably within the historic core of Faversham, and around the historic slipway structures within Sheerness Port.



The former Adult Education Centre in Sittingbourne – one of Swale’s many listed buildings

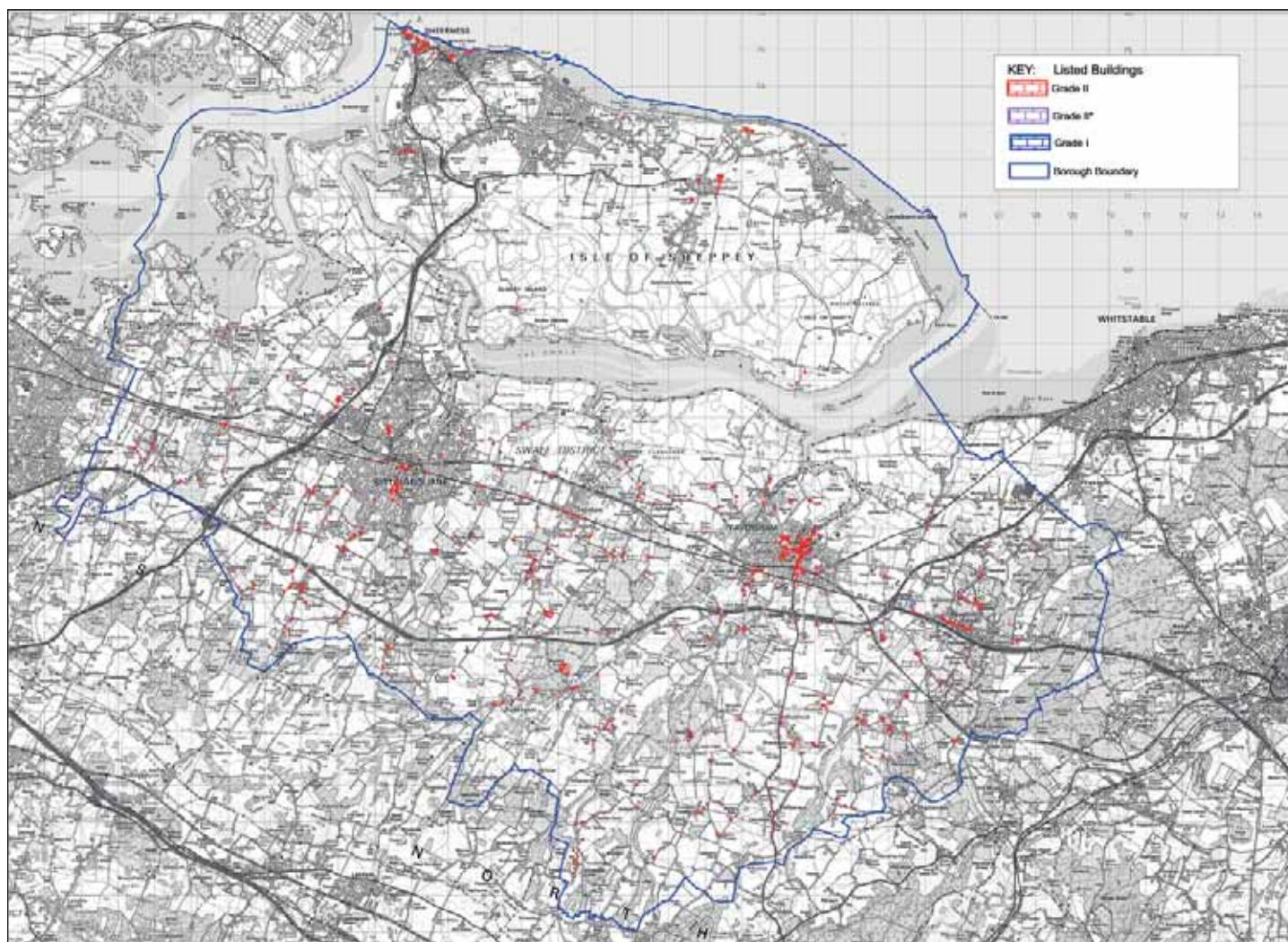


Fig 1: Map showing Swale's listed buildings

General information about the importance of, and the protection applicable to listed buildings is available from Historic England (see historicengland.org.uk/listings/what-is-designation/listedbuildings).

The term listed buildings can be a little misleading, as listing applies to structures which are clearly not buildings e.g. milestone markers.

Swale Borough has a wide variety of listed buildings/structures which vary significantly in size, overall form and age – the latter ranging from the 11th century through to the second half of the 20th century.

The entire range of listed buildings/structures in Swale Borough can be viewed via the Council's web page on listed buildings (see: www.swale.gov.uk/listed-buildings).

Conservation Areas

Swale's 50 conservation areas are similarly quite well distributed across the Borough area, although there are only 4 located on the Isle of Sheppey, and these are all concentrated in the northwestern quadrant of the island. Each of Swale's towns (Faversham, Queenborough, Sheerness and Sittingbourne) has at least 1 conservation area, the largest urban one being that of Faversham. The size and character of the conservation areas within Swale varies considerably, some overlap with other heritage designations (historic parks & gardens, and scheduled monuments), and many are to be found within the southern half of the Borough, contributing significantly to the special landscape quality of the North Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). They are listed below in Figure 2, in alphabetical order, and the maps (and appraisals, where these exist) for these areas can be viewed via the Council's website page for its conservation areas (see: www.swale.gov.uk/conservation-areas/). Figure 3 (on page 22) shows the location of Swale's 50 conservation areas.

Badlesmere	Lynsted - Bogle
Borden - Chestnut Street	Lynsted - The Street
Borden - The Street	Milstead
Borden - Harman's Corner	Milton Regis - High Street
Borden - Hearts Delight	Newington Church
Boughton - Boughton Church	Newington - High Street
Boughton - Boughton Street	Newington - Newington Manor
Boughton - South Street	Painter's Forstal
Bredgar	Queenborough
Cellar Hill and Greenstreet	Rodmersham Green
Doddington and Newnham	Selling
Eastling	Selling - Shepherd's Hill
Faversham - Faversham Town	Sheerness: Royal Naval Dockyard and Bluetown
Faversham - Ospringe	Sheerness: Marine Town
Faversham - Preston Next	Sheerness: Mile Town
Goodnestone	Sheldwich
Graveney - Graveney Church	Sittingbourne - High Street
Graveney - Graveney Bridge	Stalisfield Green
Hartlip	Staplestreet
Hernhill	Syndale
Hernhill - Dargate	Throwley Forstal
Hernhill - Fostall	Tonge
Kingsdown	Tunstall
Lewson Street	Upchurch
Lower Halstow	Whitehill

Fig 2: Table of Swale conservation areas

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/conservation-areas

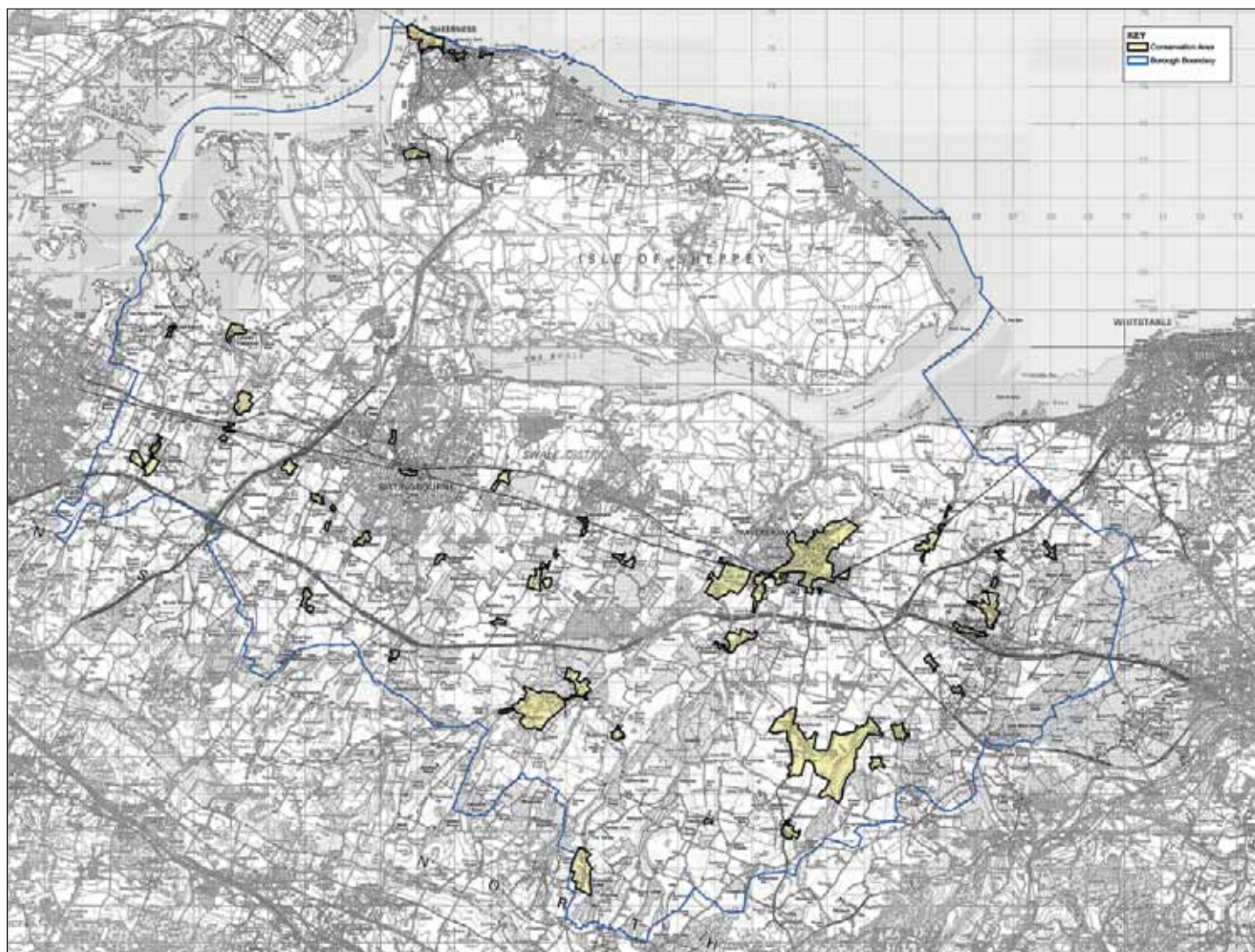


Fig 3: Map showing Swale’s conservation areas

Registered Parks and Gardens



Swale has four areas of designed landscape that are included in Historic England’s Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest. There are as set out in the table overleaf at Figure 4. (Figure 5 shows the location of Swale’s Registered Parks and Gardens), all of which are located in the eastern half of the borough.

Part of the striking topiary display at Mount Ephraim (grade II registered park & garden)

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

Belmont Park Grade II Registered 1986

Doddington Place Grade II Registered 1988

Lees Court Grade II Registered 1989

Mount Ephraim Grade II Registered 1988

Fig 4. Table of Swale's Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/registered-parks-and-gardens



Fig 5. Map showing Swale's Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

Scheduled Monuments

Swale is rich in archaeological interest with evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements in the area, as well as the military Roman road, Watling Street, connecting the earliest Roman coastal settlements with London.

The Borough contains 22 Scheduled Monuments which include a Romano-British mausoleum at Stone-by-Faversham, and a Romano-British villa and Roman-Celtic temple at Boxted. There are also important medieval sites including salterns, fortification, and ecclesiastical buildings.

At the time of writing, consideration is being given to the application for scheduling of a further archaeologically significant structure in the southeast of the borough, and this will be followed up as appropriate.

Swale's 22 Scheduled Monuments are listed alphabetically below by parish in **Figure 6**, whilst their location within the Borough is shown overleaf in **Figure 7**.

Parish	List Entry Title (summary)
Dunkirk	Dunkirk WWII Chain Home Radar Station
Eastchurch	Shurland House & remains
Faversham	The Maison Dieu
Faversham	St. Saviour's Abbey
Faversham	Oare Gunpowder Works
Faversham	Chart Gunpowder Mills
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (1 of 6)
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (2 of 6)
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (3 of 6)
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (4 of 6)
Iwade	WWII Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite (TS2) E. of Chetney Cottages
Leysdown	Medieval moated site at Sayes Court
Minster-on-Sea	Nunnery at Minster Abbey
Norton, Buckland & Stone	Romano-British mausoleum at Stone-by-Faversham
Queenborough	Queenborough Castle
Sheerness	Sheerness Defences
Sheerness	Queenborough Lines
Sittingbourne	Murston Old Church
Sittingbourne	'Castle Rough' medieval moated site
Upchurch	WWII Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite (TS3) at Wetham Green
Upchurch	Romano-British villa at Boxted
Upchurch	Romano-Celtic temple at Boxted

Fig. 6: Table of Swale's Scheduled Monuments

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/scheduled-monuments



Fig 7: Map showing Swale’s scheduled monuments



Streetscene view from Sittingbourne’s Area of High Townscape Value.

Areas of High Townscape Value

Outside the Swale’s existing designated conservation areas, parts of the Borough may become of sufficient architectural, historic and/or artistic interest in the future to warrant consideration for conservation area designation. Within the Borough’s towns, such areas may, in the meantime, be subject to development pressures and other change. A key example of this are the areas of Victorian and Edwardian housing, parks and cemeteries, trees and open spaces, south of Sittingbourne town centre, which mark an important period in the town’s post industrial expansion. Many of its street trees also represent a poignant reminder of the town’s marking of The Great War. These characteristics are recognized by its identification and formal local designation as an Area of High Townscape Value. A map showing the location of this local designation is shown overleaf in Figure 8.



Fig 8: Map showing area of high townscape value

Heritage not yet identified and other local designations

It is likely that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of archaeological interest will be discovered in the future, although it is difficult to predict the questions of what, when and where with any degree of precision.

Such future discoveries may however fall within the patterns of distribution of known heritage assets (e.g. the Roman road, Watling Street) or they may occur within the clusters and concentrations of existing heritage assets, such as the historic towns. Other kinds of heritage assets, as yet undiscovered, may be associated with a geographical distribution (e.g. along Swale's coastline) or within the extent of a particular activity, such as hop/fruit growing or brickmaking.

Given the significant degree of heritage interest already known about within the Borough and the limited resources available to help protect and positively manage this, the Council cannot currently actively seek out possible new heritage assets for recognition and potential formal designation. As an exception to this however, the Council will commit to developing a list of buildings and structures of local architectural, historic and/or artistic interest in partnership with the Borough's local amenity societies and any other interested parties. This however is not considered to be the highest priority for heritage in Swale, and as such, is not intended to feature in the first 3 year action plan.

The Council will also commit to positively considering suggestions for possible new conservation areas and areas of high townscape value, although priority will be given within the lifespan of this heritage strategy to ensuring the existing heritage we already know about is properly understood, protected and managed.

3.3 The story of our borough: Setting the scene

The borough is named after the narrow channel called The Swale. This separates the mainland of Kent from the Isle of Sheppey, and it occupies the central part of the borough.

The borough was formed in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, from the Borough of Faversham; the Borough of Queenborough-in-Sheppey (which covered the whole of the Isle of Sheppey), the Sittingbourne and Milton Urban District, and Swale Rural District.

The ancient trackway route of Watling Street, passes through the area, the modern A2 main road, largely overlies this route which was paved by the Romans. The ancient settlements that developed along the length of Watling Street, are now by-passed by the M2 Motorway, which was constructed in the early 1960s.

Apart from the northern coast of the Isle of Sheppey, and the town of Sittingbourne, it is a predominantly rural borough, containing a high proportion of the UK's apple, pear, cherry and plum orchards within an area of the county known as the North Kent Fruit Belt. The borough also contains many of Kent's remaining hop gardens.

Most of the southern half of the borough lies within the Kent Downs AONB, whilst Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey forms the southeastern most parts of the Thames Gateway growth area, set up in the early years of Tony Blair's Labour government.

3.4 Aviation and defence heritage

Given the location of Swale Borough in England's county closest to mainland Europe and with a stretch of coastline overlooking the sea approach to Great Britain's capital, London, it perhaps not surprising that the modern area of Swale Borough has played an important role in the defence of the realm for hundreds of years. It came to the fore in this respect during the 18th Century Napoleonic Era, when a naval dockyard and associated defence structures were constructed on the Isle of Sheppey at Sheerness. The Royal Naval Dockyard at Sheerness continued to develop in the 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century before its Royal Naval function ceased in 1963, and it began to transform into a commercial port.



Many of the buildings and structures built in and around the former Royal Naval Dockyard still exist and can still be seen today. Most are protected by scheduled monument, listed building and/or conservation area designation

Queenborough Lines (a scheduled monument).

The Defence of Swale Project (a collaboration between Kent County Council, community volunteers and defence experts) has been instrumental in identifying and cataloging 20th Century defence heritage, in order to provide an overview of Swale's defence heritage in the wider context of the strategic role that Kent historically played in the defence of the nation. Please visit The Defence of Swale Project website for more information:

www.khdarchaeology.org.uk/2014/06/the-defence-of-Swale-project.

Whilst the Swale defences were one of many anti-invasion defence systems built around the east coast of England, what makes the defences in Swale special is the detailed record of them that survives. The National Archives has a collection of around 40 detailed maps of World War I sites and structures prepared by the Royal Engineers, in many cases including photographs and construction details.



The defences were designed to prevent a landing in the first instance, and then to counter the advance of any invading enemy troops towards the strategically important naval dockyards at Chatham and Sheerness. Key sites include communication trenches, batteries and artillery positions, pill boxes, and observation posts.

Pill box set in wall of the Ship Inn, Ospringe (part of the grade II listed building). Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.



The Swale area played an important role in helping to defend Great Britain through the course of both world wars, and in respect of World War II, a series of chain home radar stations built across the east coast of England and Scotland played a vital role in giving the nation early warning of invading enemy aircraft. One such station is the one that can still be seen today at Dunkirk near the eastern edge of the borough. Dunkirk is one of only five radar station sites to have retained any of their original towers, and the tower at Dunkirk (now used as part of the emergency services communications network, and by mobile phone operators) is one of the best preserved in-situ examples in England. The tower in question played a particularly significant role during the Battle of Britain.

Dunkirk Radar Tower (a grade II listed building and scheduled monument).

Perhaps more surprising is the important role that the Swale area played in the early, pioneering development of aviation.



Royal Aero Club buildings at Eastchurch (some of the hangars still survive and are now grade II listed buildings).

The training aerodrome at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey, is one of just two sites in Britain where structures built in association with the early pioneers of powered flight have survived. In early 1909, brothers Hugh and Horace Short identified land between Leysdown and Shellness point on the Isle of Sheppey, as a suitable location for a flying base. Flying thereafter began at Eastchurch in July 1909, when C.R. Rolls used Standford Hill for tests of his glider, designed and built by the Short brothers at their nearby Leysdown works.

In 1910, encouraged by the owner of the site, Francis McClean, the brothers moved their operations to Eastchurch and built workshops, sheds for aeroplanes, and bungalows for the workforce. Rapid progress was made and Eastchurch became a fashionable centre for aviation pioneers.

Its military role began in 1910, when the Royal Aero Club began to give flying instruction to the Admiralty, and in 1912, Eastchurch was established as the Royal Flying Corps' Naval Wing HQ.

In addition to its key role in training naval pilots, the Eastchurch base responsible for the air defence of the naval dockyards at Chatham and Sheerness. By the end of World War I, the Eastchurch base covered a 600 acres area and had a diverse range of 29 hangars.

During World War II, the base was used to mount raids on German occupied ports, until a series of severe targeted raids put the airfield largely out of action. This however didn't prevent it from becoming an unofficial landing ground for battle-damaged USAAF aircraft during 1943-44. After 1950, the airfield returned to its original agricultural use, whilst the buildings were converted into an open prison, which still operates today and is known as HMP Standford Hill.

A group of 4 steel framed aircraft hangars at the prison site still survive today, and these were given listed building status in 2005. Other structures and buildings associated with aviation at this location still survive, whilst within the centre of Eastchurch village, a stone memorial to the aviation pioneers was unveiled in 1955, and is now also listed. The Eastchurch Aviation Museum plays an important role today in explaining and celebrating the important role of the Isle of Sheppey in the development of aviation.



Aviators Memorial at Eastchurch (a grade II listed building). Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

3.5 Industrial heritage

The Swale area has a long history of industrial activity stretching back hundreds of years. The Swale area today is still recognized today for its brickmaking, papermaking and brewing industries, although it now only has one brickmaking plant, one papermaking plant, and one major brewery left. Another historically important industry in the area was gunpowder manufacturing.

Brickmaking

The sole, surviving brickmaking plant in Swale, is located at Sittingbourne. This continues to produce the popular Smeed Dean yellow stock bricks which have been used throughout London and across much of the southeast region of England for over 150 years. Other brickmaking plants were scattered across the current mainland part of the borough area in areas with large and readily accessible pockets of London Clay earth. These were typically close to the coastline (e.g. Lower Halstow) or to the Roman road, Watling Street, and later, during the mid-Victorian era, to the Dover to Chatham railway line (e.g. Ospringe), to allow for quick transportation of the bricks to building sites across the region. The principal brickmaking areas were centred around Faversham and Sittingbourne.

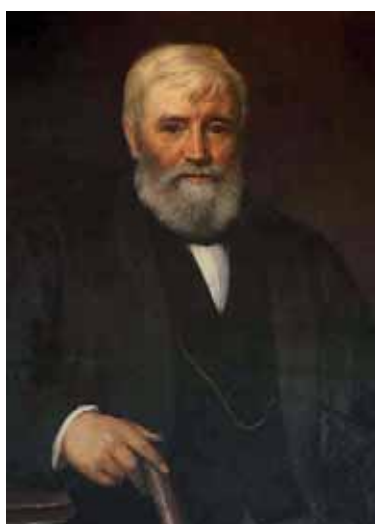
Faversham was for many years (in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) almost completely encircled by brickmaking plants, the last of which to cease operations, was the Cremer & Whiting plant at Ospringe which made both red and yellow stock bricks. The separate yellow and red stock brickmaking areas are in the process of being developed for housing, and once the scheme has been completed, you will be able to see the kiln chimney and clay wash plant retained and



maintained as heritage features of the former redbrick making plant.

Left: Brickmaking kiln chimney at Ospringe brickworks site.

Below left: George Smeed – oil painting in Swale Borough Council Chamber.



The brickmaking plant at Sittingbourne was named after its original owner, George Smeed and his son in law George Hambrook Dean, who joined the business in 1875. In 1877, the plant produced over 60 million bricks and was the largest brick manufacturer in Great Britain. When Smeed died in 1881, he operated the largest brickmaking works in the world. His obituary in the *Western Press* hailed him as “the making of Sittingbourne”. He left a personal estate of £160,000 and Dean succeeded him as head of the company. There are no remains of the early brickmaking plant left at the Sittingbourne plant today, as it was modernized in the 1920s. It is now owned by Wienerberger, but the many buildings in the borough built with bricks from the Sittingbourne, Faversham and other brickmaking plants in the Swale area stand as testament today to the hugely important role this industry once had.

Gunpowder manufacturing

Gunpowder works was historically another very significant industry in the Swale area with no less than 3 sites developed in and around Faversham. All 3 ceased manufacturing in 1934, but important surviving elements of the buildings and structures that supported this industry survive at all 3 locations. namely Home, Marsh and Oare.

The first gunpowder factories were small, near the town, and alongside the stream, between the London to Dover road (now the A2) and the head of the creek. By the early 18th Century, these had coalesced into a single plant, subsequently known as the Home Works, as it was the town's first.

At this time the British government was buying its supplies from the private sector, but the quality was often poor, and in 1759 it decided it needed its own plant. Rather than build a new one, it effectively nationalised the Home Works, upgrading all the machinery in the process. From this phase dates the Chart Gunpowder Mill, the oldest of its kind in the world. This was thankfully rescued from the demolition, and then restored by the Faversham Society in 1966. It is now open to the public.



The Proof House at Marsh Gunpowder Works awaiting repairs and restoration summer 2019 (a grade II listed building).

Nearby is Stonebridge Pond, today something of a picturesque beauty spot at the head of the Faversham Creek. Historically however, it served to power some of the works' watermills, slender remains of which survive. The pond still features a network of narrow-gauge canals along which powder was punted from process to process.

In the 1680s a second factory was started by Huguenot asylum-seekers alongside another stream about two kilometres west of the town. It had its own access to the sea via Oare Creek and so became known as the Oare Works,. It became a leading supplier to the British East India Company.

The third and last gunpowder factory to open was the Marsh Works, built by the British government 1 kilometre northwest of the town to augment output at its Home Works; it opened in 1787.

In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, the government leased its Faversham works back to the private sector - the Home Works in 1816 and the Marsh Works in 1834 - later selling them on in 1825 and 1854 respectively.

Explosives manufacture continued unabated at both sites under private ownership up to and beyond the Great War, but it should be noted that gunpowder from Faversham was not just used in warfare. It played a key part in the Industrial Revolution, e.g., by enabling routes to be blasted for canals and railways.

All three gunpowder factories shut in 1934. Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), the then owners, sensed that war might break out again with Germany, and realised that Faversham would then become vulnerable to air attack or possibly invasion. They took the decision to transfer production, together with key staff and machinery, to the more remote Ardeer in Ayrshire, Scotland.

The site of the Marsh Gunpowder works transformed into a sand & gravel quarry following the plants closure. Quarrying at the remaining operational part of the site only ceased in 2018 and this area is now beginning to be transformed into a new area of housing for Faversham, and one which will benefit from the Lakeland park area formed from previously worked areas. To the north of the planned area



Illustration of proposed heritage and cultural hub. Image provided courtesy of Anthony Swaine Architecture Ltd.

of new housing stands a cluster of buildings originally erected to form part of the gunpowder manufacturing process. All but two of these buildings (namely the Charge House and the Old Meals Room) are individually listed (along with the Gate House and Proof House) at the eastern entrance to the site. The Council is now working with the developer for the site (Anderson Group), their heritage and architectural advisers (Anthony Swaine Architecture Ltd) and other

parties to transform this group of buildings into a heritage hub, and a real asset to the development and wider area.

Papermaking

This industrial activity within the Swale area was concentrated in and around Sittingbourne. Paper manufacture started in Sittingbourne in 1708, when Peter Archer was first recorded as a paper-maker. Sittingbourne Paper Mill existed from circa 1769, but by 1820 had grown and was owned by Edward Smith. After newspaper editor turned publisher Edward Lloyd bought the factory in 1863, it burnt down later that same year!

Covering paper production from his London sites with longer shift production, Lloyd had the Sittingbourne paper mill rebuilt from 1863, but closer to the new railway to enable easier shipping of



Working locomotive on the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway.

product to his newspaper presses in Bow, east London. After purchasing the Daily Chronicle in 1876, Lloyd installed new machinery capable of producing 1,300 square feet (120 m²) of paper per minute, and handed over management of the site to his youngest son, Frederick. By 1882, the transfer of paper-making from London to Sittingbourne was complete, enabled by using esparto grass imported from Algeria and southern Spain via the creek port as a replacement for expensive cotton rag. The site then supplied all the newsprint to his presses in London.

The site's production capability was expanded by converting the mill to steam power, and, after the death of his father in 1889, eldest son Frank introduced a horse-drawn tramway to carry materials from a new wharf

at Milton Creek to the mill. As the mill expanded and silt built up in Milton Creek in the early 20th Century, the tramway was converted into a narrow gauge railway, to allow both ships and barges to offload pulp product at Ridham dock, for onward transport to the mill. On what is now known as the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, and open to the public as a heritage attraction with leisure rides along the part of the rail line, the first of three steam locomotives came into operation in 1906, all being 0-4-2 Brazil type tank engines, sourced from the Stoke-based locomotive manufacturers, Kerr Stuart & Co.

In 1910, United Newspapers was created to buy out Lloyd's newspapers, thenceforward separating it from the paper-making side which continued as Edward Lloyd Ltd. By 1912, the resultant investment made the Sittingbourne Paper Mill the largest producer of newsprint in the world, with 1200 employees using 17 machines to make over 2000 tonnes per week and supply the demands of Fleet Street.



The Kemsley Arms Public House (prior to its closure and deterioration – see baseline HAR register of Appendix II).

Following a shortage of pulp in the early 1920s, from 1924 Frank Lloyd developed a new mill at Kemsley, together with a model village for its employees - this became the present-day Kemsley village. After his death in 1936, the renamed Lloyd Group was taken over by Sir William Berry, who formed the Bowater-Lloyd Group,

After both plants were acquired by Finnish based paper company Metsa Serla in 1998, the decision was made to close the Sittingbourne Mill in October 2006, with the last reel being produced on 23 January 2007. The Sittingbourne Paper Mill was subsequently demolished in 2010 and its site redeveloped as a retail park and housing. Nothing now remains of the mill except for part of one of the mill chimneys, which has been retained as a feature at the entrance to the retail park. Happily, the later Kemsley Paper Mill still remains and continues to function to this day. In the 1920s, its 4 paper making machines were the largest in the world. These days, the mill has an annual production capacity of around 820,000 tonnes and is the second biggest recovered fibre-based paper operation in Europe. In 2008, DS Smith invested over £100m to purchase and rebuild Paper Mill No. 6 to make lightweight corrugated case material. Kemsley Mill also now produces Light Medium; the first recycled lightweight paper manufactured in the UK.



1920s mill buildings at Kemsley Paper Mill. Image provided courtesy of D. S. Smith Kemsley paper Mill.

The original paper mill buildings at the Kemsley site are still used today and their striking brickwork form (principally made up of the locally made Smeed Dean yellow stock bricks) is readily noticeable amongst the later 20th and 21st Century buildings primarily built using modern cladding materials.

Brewing

The final key industrial activity which has historically taken place in the Swale area, and continues to do so to this day, is brewing. This is centred in Faversham, which is undoubtedly the most significant site in Kent in terms of the number of surviving brewery structures, with the extensive former Rigden's site to the east of Court Street and the still-operational Shepherd Neame Brewery almost opposite on the west side. The Shepherd Neame Brewery was founded in 1698, although it is known that brewing has been carried out on the site since at least 1570 and possibly as early as 1520.

Although many of the buildings are modern, much of the 19th century structure remains. As date stones attest, the Shepherd Neame brewhouse was built in 1864, when the firm was known as Shepherd & Mares. The central clock tower was built during the 1890s. The Millennium Brewhouse, an extension of the 1864 brewhouse that opened in 2000, includes two stained glass windows with beer and brewing motifs by Keith and Judy Hill of Staplehurst in Kent. The ornate office building on Court Street displays hop motif decoration on its facade. Its northern section, including the doorway, was built in 1869; it was extended in 1900 by altering the building immediately to the south in matching style. The entire combined building is listed grade II. The brewery still interestingly retains some old equipment, including two traditional oak and gunmetal mash tuns dating from 1914 and 1916, which are still in regular use; two steam engines also survive in working order, but are no longer used in the brewing process.

Rigden's Brewery in Faversham was acquired by Fremlin's in 1948, later passed to Whitbread's, and eventually closed in 1990. The whole site is listed in nine sections, all grade II apart from the grade II* listed offices, a 16th century house. Remaining buildings include the former maltings (which was converted to a Tesco supermarket in 1996) and the brewhouse. The previous version of the Swale Borough Council Local Plan (from 2008) envisaged a mixed-use development of the entire Rigden's site with conversion of the buildings for new uses including housing and retail. Much of this has since taken place.

The Shepherd Neame brewery continues to play an important role in Faversham and the wider local economy. It is the largest employer in the town and its extensive pub arm employs a further significant number of people. The brewery used to own large tracts of land across Swale Borough used for hop growing but in recent years, has sold many of these off, and now largely buys in the raw materials it needs to make its own beers, and the beers it produces for some other major beer brands.

These days, the two brewery complexes still continue to form impressive architectural compositions in the heart of Faversham, and are very much key features of the town's extensive conservation



area – the largest urban conservation area in the Borough. Furthermore the activity and distinctive, largely pleasant smells created by the brewing process form a key part of this historic town's intrinsic character.

Shepherd Neame brewery complex – Image provided courtesy of Shepherd Neame.

3.6 Maritime and transport heritage

Maritime and transport heritage in Swale overlaps to some degree with industrial, and aviation and defence heritage in rather the same way that elements of Swale's industrial heritage links to its, agricultural, horticultural and rural heritage, notably in respect of its brewing industry.

Barge traffic and boatbuilding

Much of Swale's maritime heritage is linked to the area's proximity to London and the significant trade that moved along the Thames Estuary by boat. Historically, the distinctive Thames Barges were used to carry a wide range of goods along the river, most notably bricks and paper from the Swale area, but also coal from the coalmines along the east coast of Kent.

The formerly separate settlement of Milton Regis (now a suburb of Sittingbourne) developed at the head of the creek leading into Swale, and because of the extent of shipping trade it was able to engage in, it was larger and more important than Sittingbourne until the creek started silting up, the Dover to Chatham Railway line arrived, and the roles fortunes reversed.

Some of the quays and wharfs which serviced this river trade still survive today, along with some of the warehouse, office and maltings buildings that enabled their effective operation. Most of these buildings have now been converted into other uses, and the quays now mostly provide moorings for small numbers of leisure craft and a quiet spot for local anglers, but the former working character of some of these quays and wharfs can still be appreciated to some degree, perhaps most notably at Standard Quay and Iron Wharf in Faversham, where the quayside form remains little altered, and the grouping of quayside buildings (warehouses and the home of a nearby shipyard owner and possible former mayor of the town) have been retained, and have, or are in the process of being sensitively converted into new uses.

At the Milton Regis Creek (known as Milton Creek), an important heritage feature on the edge of the Milton Country Park (created and operated by the Council in the area of the Church Marshes – historically used for boatbuilding and gravel extraction for brickmaking) is the Dolphin Barge Museum. The sailing vessel being restored at this site is the Thames Sailing Barge, Raybel, originally made and launched at Milton Creek in 1920. Raybel Charters is working to return her to cargo delivery operation under sail; and to manage this barge as a newly revitalised heritage asset for community benefit.

Boatbuilding was historically an important industry in the Swale area for hundreds of years, not just at Milton Regis (where the principal focus was on barges), but also at Faversham, Queenborough and Sheerness. There is sadly little of substance now left of this once important local industry except for some limited restoration work on existing craft, including that referred to above.

Cinque Ports

It should not be forgotten that Faversham was historically a 'limb town' of Dover – one of the five Cinque Ports in Kent and Sussex. The Confederation of Cinque Ports is a historic series of coastal towns in Kent, Sussex and Essex. It was originally formed for military and trade purposes, but is now entirely ceremonial. The ports lie at the eastern end of the English Channel because this is, where the crossing to the continent is narrowest.

The origins of the Cinque Ports can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times, when certain southeastern ports were granted the local profits of justice in return for providing ships. By 1100, the term Cinque Ports had come into use; and in 1155 a Royal Charter established the ports to maintain ships ready for The Crown in case of need. The chief obligation laid upon the ports, as a corporate duty, was to provide 57 ships for 15 days' service to the king annually, each port fulfilling a proportion of the whole duty. In return the towns received the following privileges:

Exemption from tax and tolls; self-government; permission to levy tolls, punishment of those who shed blood or flee justice, punishment of minor offences, detention and execution of criminals both inside and outside the port's jurisdiction, and punishment of breaches of the peace; and possession of lost goods that remain unclaimed after a year, goods thrown overboard, and floating wreckage.

Faversham was added as a ‘limb port’ to Dover in the 15th Century, but by the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558 to 1603), the Cinque Ports had ceased to be of any real significance and were absorbed into the general administration of the Realm.

Around the coat of arms on the Faversham Common Seal is the Latin inscription *Regis ut arma rego libera portus ego*, meaning since I (Faversham) bear arms for the King without charge, I am a free port. This is a reference to the town’s corporate membership of the Confederation of Cinque Ports



The Faversham Common Seal

Bridges and ferries

The Isle of Sheppey is one of the parts of Swale Borough that helps to make it very distinct in geographical terms, and its name is derived from the Old English work *Sceapig*, meaning Sheep Island. Historically it was in fact three islands (Sheppey itself, Harty to the southeast, and Elmley to the southwest), but the water channels between the islands silted up many years ago to make one continuous island, named after the largest previously separate landmass. Sheppey was separated from mainland Kent until 1860 when the first of the island’s bridges (the Kingsferry Bridge) was built, taking both road and rail. This earliest (static form) bridge was replaced in 1906 with one having a rolling lift design, initially operated by hand, and later by electricity. This in turn was replaced in 1959 by the current Kingsferry Bridge with its distinctive



The 1959 Kingsferry bridge with transporter platform raised. (a non-designated heritage asset)

paired set of reinforced concrete towers, which unlike the second bridge, allows it to lift both the road and the railway line to allow clearance for shipping heading to/ from the commercial docks at Ridham (used for the transport of the area’s important brickmaking and papermaking industries).

The current Kingsferry Bridge only carries a single carriageway of road traffic in each direction, and so with the need for the island to

help cater for housing and employment growth towards the end of the 20th Century and into the 21st Century, the decision was made to build a second bridge crossing. The Sheppey Crossing (as it was named) is a four-lane road bridge carrying the dualled A249 road, providing the island with a fast road link to Sittingbourne and further south to the M2 Motorway and the county town of Maidstone.

The Kingsferry Bridge, otherwise known as the transporter bridge (because of the dual form of traffic it carries) is not listed, but is a good example of 20th Century heritage yet to be fully appreciated.

Prior to the arrival of the first bridge, four separate ferries connected the island to mainland Kent: (1) the King's Ferry to Iwade, (2) the Harty Ferry to Faversham, (3) the Elmley Ferry, and (4) a passenger ferry connecting the island to the Port Victoria railway terminus on Kent's Grain Peninsula. The most recently active of these was the Harty Ferry, although this ceased to operate at the start of the First World War. These were by nature small scale operations and physical reminders of these ferry services are limited. However, the ferryman's house at Harty (which evolved into an inn) still stands and this grade II listed building with its impressive views over the Swale is now a popular location for weddings and leisure craft sailors who make use of inn's jetty.

The other surviving reminder of the island's former ferry services is the pier toll house at Sheerness for the ferry service to Grain. The associated pier (with its octagonal form waiting room at the pier end) was demolished when the commercial port at Sheerness was extended out westwards into the River Medway, but the little toll house survives along with the iron railings and cobbled street surfacing at the entrance to the former ferry pier. This modest little building is not currently listed and may not be of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant future listing by Historic England, but is certainly of significant local heritage interest.



The Ferryman's Inn at Harty, Isle of Sheppey (a grade II listed building)

end) was demolished when the commercial port at Sheerness was extended out westwards into the River Medway, but the little toll house survives along with the iron railings and cobbled street surfacing at the entrance to the former ferry pier. This modest little building is not currently listed and may not be of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant future listing by Historic England, but is certainly of significant local heritage interest.

Roads and pilgrims

The road network in the Swale area is an important contributor to the overall degree of heritage interest that Swale has to offer. This is primarily derived from the fact that the route of an ancient trackway (first used by the Britons) cut across the heart of the area in a roughly east-west



Pier Toll House, Sheerness (a non-designated heritage asset)

alignment. Watling Street as it was known in the pre-Roman period linked the areas of modern Canterbury and St. Albans using a natural ford near Westminster. The Romans later paved the route, which then connected the Kentish ports of Dover and Richborough with London, St. Albans and Wroxeter. Much of this heritage interest relates to archaeological remains along the route of the Watling Street. Some of these remains cannot be seen, and it is anticipated that there are further remains still to be discovered, but this will be considered more fully at section 3.9

Watling Street is likely to have always been a busy route from the when it was first constructed, but in the medieval period, its degree of use, if it had ever in fact started to decline, increased again following the infamous murder of Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. The subsequent pilgrimage that developed in memory of Becket resulted in the increased development of inns along the Watling Street route (which passed through Canterbury on its way to Dover) and other developments including pilgrim hospitals.

The pilgrimage route from Southwark in London, to Canterbury was of course famously captured in the collection of stories known as *The Canterbury Tales*, written by the medieval poet and author, Geoffrey Chaucer, between 1387 and 1400, and published from the 15th Century onwards. At the tiny settlement of Tonge in Swale Borough is a small stream that feeds the mill pond just to the north of Watling Street. Following Thomas Becket's death in 1170, this stream became known as Becket's Stream and for many years, it was believed to have healing powers. As such a medieval hospital was developed alongside the stream, and it is understood that the stream become a popular stopping point for pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. The stream, mill pond and (some of) the mill buildings can still be seen, but the site of the former hospital has long since been cleared, and it is no longer clear exactly where it stood, so this requires some investigation. The stream, mill pond and surviving mill buildings (all of which are listed) are nevertheless recognized for their heritage value and together make up the Tonge Conservation Area. The Council plans to review this small conservation area early in 2020 as part of a series of events happening in 2020 to mark the passing of 850 years since the infamous murder of Thomas Becket. The intention is to provide some interpretation measures to help provide an understanding of the link between this area and Becket's shrine in Canterbury. The Council is also committed to exploring the ancient history of this site and the possibility of extending the area of the new country park at this location (on the eastern edge of the recently started Stones Farm housing development) to allow public access to the head of the stream.

Various historians and history information sources have suggested that the former Tonge Castle was the site at which the ancient King of the Britons – Vortegern (c. 425), made a pact with the Saxon leaders Hengist and Horsa to protect his kingdom against the Picts and the Scots, rewarding them for their services with a grant of land. Subsequently the Britons made war on the Saxon newcomers (first established in Kent) and four battles were fought, the last of which led to Vortigern's son Vortemir (the Saxon's leading opponent) being slain.

According to some specialist historians, there are a number of locations within the modern Swale Borough area which feature in the epic Old English Poem, *Beowulf*, notably Tonge and parts of the Isle of Sheppey.

There were historically inns at all the settlements in the Swale area along the route of Watling Street, and many of these still exist today, although typically in a much enlarged and altered form. Many of these had stables and coach houses to cater for the horse drawn coaches that plied the route, although little in the way of this service infrastructure survives today, with most having been either demolished, or converted into additional accommodation space.



*The Red Lion Inn, Sittingbourne
(a grade II listed building)*

Many of the inns still survive and function as either inns or public houses, and the finest surviving example is without doubt the Red Lion Inn at the High Street in Sittingbourne. This listed building, located right in the middle of the Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area, was the principal hotel of Sittingbourne until it was superseded by the (since demolished) Rose Inn. The current inn at the site now only operates from the east side of the carriage arch which leads you through to a rear courtyard, and a long low timber framed building that may previously have functioned as a stable range. It is known that there has been an inn at this site for over 600 years. In 1415, King Henry V was known to have been entertained here on his return from the Battle of Agincourt. Other famous customers include Cardinal Wolsey, King Henry VII, King Henry VIII and Emperor Charles V (ruler of both the Spanish Empire from 1516, and the Holy Roman Empire from 1519).

Finally, no overview of the Swale area's marine and transport related heritage would be complete without consideration of the significant role that railways have played in the transformation of the area from the mid Victorian period.

Railways and growth of the area

The development of railways in Great Britain first started in the 1830s, with all the majority of lines that were built by the different railway companies having a major terminus station in London. The Swale area was connected to the capital by The London, Chatham and Dover Railway, which began life as the East Kent Railway, and operated from 1859 until 1923, when it united with other companies in south east England, to form the Southern Railway. The Kent Past website has suggested that the coming of the railways turned fields into towns, whilst the absence of a railway connection to existing towns led to them remaining small and viewed as villages compared to many of the places which developed rapidly from the second half of the 19th Century well into the latter reaches of the 20th Century. It is certainly the case that the arrival of the railway in the Swale area at the dawn of the 1860s profoundly affected the manner in which the area evolved and certain settlements grew at the expense of others.

The London, Chatham and Dover Railway initially provided the Swale area with five stations, which from west to east were: (1) Newington, (2) Sittingbourne, (3) Teynham, (4) Faversham, and (5) Selling. A branch link between Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey (with further stations being added at Queenborough and Sheerness) was added in 1860, with the construction of the Kingsferry Bridge, which allowed a rail line to be carried over The Swale. The branch line between Sittingbourne and Sheerness was operated for a while by the nominally independent Sittingbourne and Sheerness Railway before being fully absorbed the London, Chatham and Dover Railway in 1876. The smaller stations of Kemsley and Swale were later added to this branch line in the 1920s, largely to serve the Kemsley Garden Village, built to provide dedicated



Queenborough Railway Station (a non-designated heritage asset).

homes for the second paper mill at Sittingbourne (in Kemsley), as referenced in Section 3.5.

In 1876, Queenborough became a junction station with the opening of a short spur to Queenborough Pier to serve steam ship services. A second line was added on 1 August 1901 with the opening of the Sheppey Light Railway, an 8.75 miles (14.08 kilometres) line across the Isle of Sheppey to Leysdown. There was no direct connection with the Sheerness Line and trains for Leysdown departed from the outer face of a newly constructed island platform at Queenborough. An iron footbridge was erected at the southern end of

the platforms to facilitate passengers changing between main line and branch services. Services on the Sheppey Light Railway ceased from 4 December 1950. There does not appear to be any trace of the infrastructure for the former Sheppey Light Railway, nor the pier serving the steam ship service at Queenborough left, although this needs further investigation.

Of the stations within the mainland part of Swale, the station at Faversham is by some way the most impressive in architectural terms, and this has been recognized by its designation as a listed building. Faversham Station, like Sittingbourne, also serves as a junction station with the line through the town splitting east of the station to head northeast (leading on to Sandwich



Tiled underpass feature at Faversham Station (a grade II heritage at risk building).

and Ramsgate) and southeast (leading beyond Swale's easternmost station of Selling), on towards Dover. The Council has recently supported the Faversham Society and the local MP in putting pressure on the rail service operator to initiate some overdue repair and restoration works. Further improvements are still needed, and the Council will continue to work with partners to push for these, as appropriate.

The railway infrastructure at Faversham has changed significantly over the years, and this has resulted in two further listed railway buildings (referred to as the engine shed and carriage shed) effectively becoming separated from the remaining sidings at Faversham Station, and falling into disuse and decay. This heritage at risk scenario, and other heritage at risk scenarios for different types of buildings/structures is considered in section 4.2 of this heritage strategy.

It can be seen that both Sittingbourne and Faversham (both of which were already home to significant industries) grew exponentially throughout the late



The engine shed at Faversham (a grade II heritage at risk building)

Victorian period, through the Edwardian period and up to the beginning of the Second World War. The areas of Victorian and Edwardian housing that now partially surround the historic core of each town contribute substantially to their character, and this is recognized by Area of High Townscape Value and Conservation Area designation respectively.

The arrival of the railway resulted in the rapid expansion of Sittingbourne at the expense of Milton Regis, with the latter eventually becoming subsumed into the urban expansion of Sittingbourne as a northern suburb.



The modern replacement station and adjacent Victorian housing at Newington.

The villages of Newington and Teynham also expanded rapidly at the expense of coastal settlements including Upchurch, Lower Halstow and Conyer. The largely ribbon forms of Victorian housing stretching away from Newington and Teynham stations both form part of conservation areas at these two large villages today.

3.7 Agricultural, horticultural and rural heritage

Co-existing alongside some of the Swale area's early industries has been the long tradition in the area of fruit and hop growing. This is a strong tradition that continues to this day, although some of the areas historically used for fruit or hop growing have since been given over to the growing of vegetable or cereal crops, or developed for housing or employment use.

The north Kent Fruit Belt forms a distinctive landscape character within Swale Borough and it straddles the old Watling Street route through large parts of the borough.

Many of the traditional farm buildings associated with fruit or hop growing have been demolished following modernization of the fruit growing processes in the 20th Century, but enough still remain to help us understand how the early fruit and hop farms operated, and how important this type of activity has been in the Swale area for hundreds of years.



Provender Oast near Lewson Street – one of many converted oast houses in Swale (this one a non-designated heritage asset).

The most easily recognizable buildings in this respect are the oast houses (aka hop kilns) with their typical distinctive conical or pyramidal shaped roofs, topped by a movable cowl. These buildings were designed for the kilning (drying) of hops as part of the brewing process, but with the mechanization of the hop-picking process, many oasts fell into disuse. Of those surviving subsequent demolition, many were converted into dwellings, with most of these conversions managing to retain some of the original building's character. In the Swale area, there are many examples of converted oast houses, a significant number of which are listed.

Still functioning oast houses in Swale are now very rare, and consideration might need to be given to preserving and maintaining one in functional form to help retain a local understanding and appreciation of this key part of the area's agricultural heritage.

Apples, cherries, pears and plums are the principal fruit crops grown in the Swale area and the heritage of this, and that of fruit growing more widely in Great Britain is celebrated by the



Brogdale farmhouse and fruit collections

National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm, just south of Faversham. This site is important not only because of the story it tells about fruit growing in Kent and across Great Britain as a whole but also because it consists of a traditional grouping of Kentish farm buildings dating from the 18th Century, including the grade II listed Brogdale Farmhouse – a good example of a Kentish farmhouse in the fruit growing belt, from that period.



Marshland landscape at Emley National Nature Reserve, Isle of Sheppey.

The landscape character to the northern edge of the Swale area's mainland, and on the Isle of Sheppey is mostly dominated by low-lying marshland, and so where not drained and used as arable land, it is mostly left in its natural form and provides a significant wildlife habitat, particularly for birds and small mammals, including bats. The grazing of sheep and cattle in these low-lying marshy areas is common too, and as noted in 3.6, it was the prevalence of sheep grazing which gave the Isle of Sheppey its name.

To the south of the fruit belt area and south of the M2 Motorway the landscape form of the Swale area changes from a mostly gentle undulating topography to a more visually dramatic downland landscape. This is the northern edge of the range of low hills known as the Kent Downs, and its very special landscape character is recognized and protected by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation that has been in place since 1969. Almost of the land area in Swale Borough south of the M2 Motorway forms part of the Kent Downs AONB, and the distinctive landscape form of the downs has given rise to a string of villages and hamlets in the Swale area that have a different feel to the settlements within, and north of the fruit belt.

Many of Swale's downland villages and hamlets have conservation areas which contain listed buildings, and typically many of those listed buildings consist of farmhouses or farm buildings, as is the case at Throwley Forstal, where the listed South Forstal Farmhouse and its barns form an intrinsic part of the village scene which forms the conservation area there.

The Kent Downs AONB (as with all other AONB's in England and Wales) has its own special organisation to help protect and promote the special qualities of the area and help ensure that the local authorities and others responsible for development in the AONB's manage this in a sensitive way. The Kent Downs AONB Unit has produced a range of guidance to help manage the area appropriately, and notable amongst this is the Kent Farmsteads Guidance, which was produced in 2014 in collaboration with Historic England (then English Heritage), Kent County Council and the High Weald AONB Unit.



South Forstal farm – a key feature of Throwley Forstal (the Farmhouse and barn are both grade II listed buildings)

Traditional farmsteads and their buildings make a significant contribution to local character and distinctiveness in the Swale area, and beyond, through variations in their scale, layout, buildings and materials. In Swale, this can be readily appreciated by viewing some of the traditional Kentish farmsteads in the Swale area both within the downland and fruit belt areas of the borough. The aforementioned guidance helps to enable a greater appreciation and understanding of the different types of farmsteads, and the types and forms of building which contribute to their distinctive characters

3.8 Town centres and traditional high streets, local centres, villages and hamlets



Queenborough Harbour

The historical reasons for the development of Faversham and Sittingbourne have already been discussed at 3.5 and 3.6. This also references how the once important and separate settlement of Milton Regis became subsumed by Sittingbourne. Swale Borough's other major town of Sheerness developed around the Royal Naval Dockyard and in part as a Victorian and Edwardian seaside resort, complete with the traditional leisure pier. The smaller town of Queenborough developed largely around its fishing, boatbuilding and wool-trading activities, and the harbour that supported these

activities is still very much the principal feature of the town.

The town centres of each of the four Swale Borough Towns are all quite different in layout, scale and the variety/form of buildings and associated spaces to be found. However, a common



Preston Street, Faversham

feature to be found in all four towns is the traditional High Street, lined with the principal grouping of shops, public houses, inns, and in some cases municipal buildings. Faversham is the odd one out here in that its de-facto High Street is not named actually named High Street, but instead is called Preston Street.

All of Swale's main town centres (which doesn't include Queenborough) are busy, largely vibrant areas with a wide range of buildings, shops and other services. They all contain high quality townscape and as such are all protected by conservation area status. Furthermore, many of the buildings in each town

centre are of significant architectural or historic interest, and as such are listed. There is a particularly high concentration of listed buildings in the town centre area of Faversham.

Queenborough's town centre is not defined as a main town centre is the adopted 2017 Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031) as it lacks a sufficient range of shops and other services to achieve this. In any event, the adopted Local Plan appropriately sets out a hierarchy of main town centres and local centres to help ensure that all residents have easy access to a local centre for day-to-day needs, and that the island and the eastern and western half of the mainland each has a main town centre where a wider range of services can be found (see Policies DM1 and DM2). The main town centres are Faversham, Sheerness and Sittingbourne, with the latter being defined as the principal town of the borough because it has the largest population, it is the home of the Council and its role should be to function as the centre that can meet the needs of the borough as a whole.

The local centres are defined as being Queenborough & Rushenden, Halfway, Minster, Milton Regis, Boughton, Eastchurch, Iwade, Leysdown, Newington and Teynham. Of these, only Queenborough, Milton Regis, Boughton, Newington and Teynham have a conservation area (Newington in fact has 3), but that is not to say that these other local centres lack heritage or any real character. As an example, Minster Abbey is a grade I listed building and scheduled monument and forms a key focal point and local landmark for this settlement, perched high on a hill overlooking the streets and houses below, and the Thames Estuary beyond, to the north. Immediately below and south of the abbey, there is a small collection of buildings that between them create some attractive townscape, and help to provide a positive setting for the medieval abbey. Similarly at Eastchurch and Iwade, there is a grouping of attractive buildings and/or structures (some of which are listed) around the listed parish churches which form a strong focal point and local landmark in each case.



Minster Abbey overlooking buildings on the High Street

Away from the main towns and the above stated local centres, Swale Borough has multiple smaller villages, and many hamlets, with each parish in the borough typically containing a small village and a number of associated hamlets. Many of these smaller villages and their associated hamlets are of some heritage interest and this is recognized through conservation area status. As an example of this, within the parish of Borden (immediately southwest of Sittingbourne), the village of Borden itself has a quite extensive conservation area, whilst its associated hamlets of Chestnut Street, Harman's Corner and Hearts Delight each have their own smaller conservation area. These conservation villages and hamlets can be found in all parts of the borough, but as referenced in 3.7, there is a higher concentration of them in the downland landscape part of the borough, south of the M2 Motorway, where the bulk of the area is also designated as an AONB.



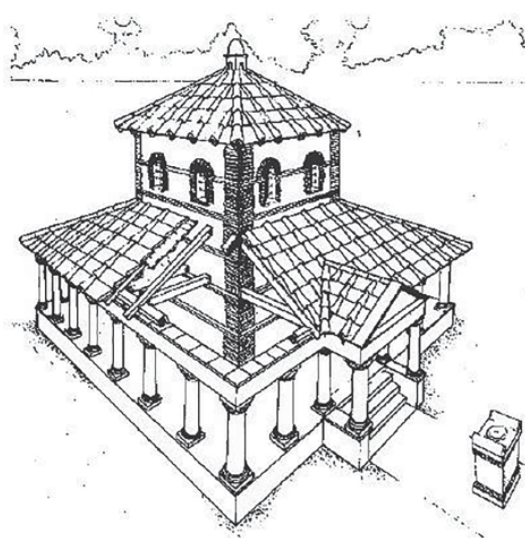
Boughton Parish Church with its attractive rolling landscape setting.

It is very much the case that the special landscape quality of this area contributes to the setting and associated character of many of these downland area conservation areas, and that in turn the notably special groupings of buildings and spaces (recognized through conservation area status) contribute positively to the overall landscape character and associated quality. However, this is not to say that the rural conservation areas outside the AONB do not benefit from a setting of strong landscape character, and in turn contribute to it, and it can be seen that this same mutual benefit applies in many cases, a good example of this being the Boughton Church Conservation Area.

3.9 Archaeological/hidden heritage

The Historic Environment Record for Kent identifies over 6000 sites in Swale that have archaeological significance. There is currently no summary or more general review of the Swale Historic Environment Record dataset and this is something that the Council is committed to exploring the possibility of with the Kent County Council Historic Environment Team, as a potential future action arising from this heritage strategy.

The types of sites to be found within the Swale area vary quite considerably, but for example include sites where medieval coins have been found, and where the remains of Roman temples and other buildings have been found, most recently and notably at Newington on the site north of the High Street, where Persimmon Homes is currently building some new homes for the village on an allocated housing site (see below).



Remains (in-situ) of a Romano-Celtic Temple and its 3D reconstruction. Persimmon Homes site off Newington High Street. Image provided courtesy of SWAT Archaeology.

The Defence of Swale project (referred to in 3.4) identified a lot of structures associated with the two world wars (such as pill boxes) and as well as being recorded in the project literature, they



First World War Gun Emplacement at Sheerness – located within moated (scheduled) Sheerness Defences structure. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

have also been added to the dataset for Swale on the Kent Historic Environment Record.

It is anticipated that significantly more heritage will be uncovered in years to come. In 2003, Kent County Council and Historic England carried out the Kent Historic Towns Survey, and this has been invaluable in serving to predict the areas where such future discoveries are most likely to happen. The resultant mapping has been provided in the form of Urban Archaeological Zones, of which four types were

identified. Although the four different types will not necessarily be present in all the towns, the four different zones are:

- Zone 1: Areas of known national importance;
- Zone 2: Areas of known archaeological potential where clarification of the nature of this potential is required;
- Zone 3: Areas where archaeological potential is thought to be lower; and
- Zone 4: Areas in which archaeological remains have been completely removed.

The zone maps are used by the archaeologists in the Kent Historic Environment Team to decide what form of action is needed in relation to formal or informal development proposals in those areas, which might for example just be the recommendation of an archaeological watching brief condition in relation to a small domestic extension in a zone 2 area, or the recommendation that a Lidar survey be commissioned by the owner of land on which a speculative major development scheme is being mooted in a zone 1 or 2 area.

These zone maps are closely reflected in the Map 5.7.1 in the adopted Local Plan, which supports Core Policy 8 (Policy CP8) on Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The adopted Local Plan main heritage assets indicative location map (Map 5.7.1) is reproduced below as Figure 9, and the zone maps for the historic settlements of Faversham, Milton Regis, Queenborough, Sheerness and Sittingbourne are shown on the following pages (Figures 10 – 14).

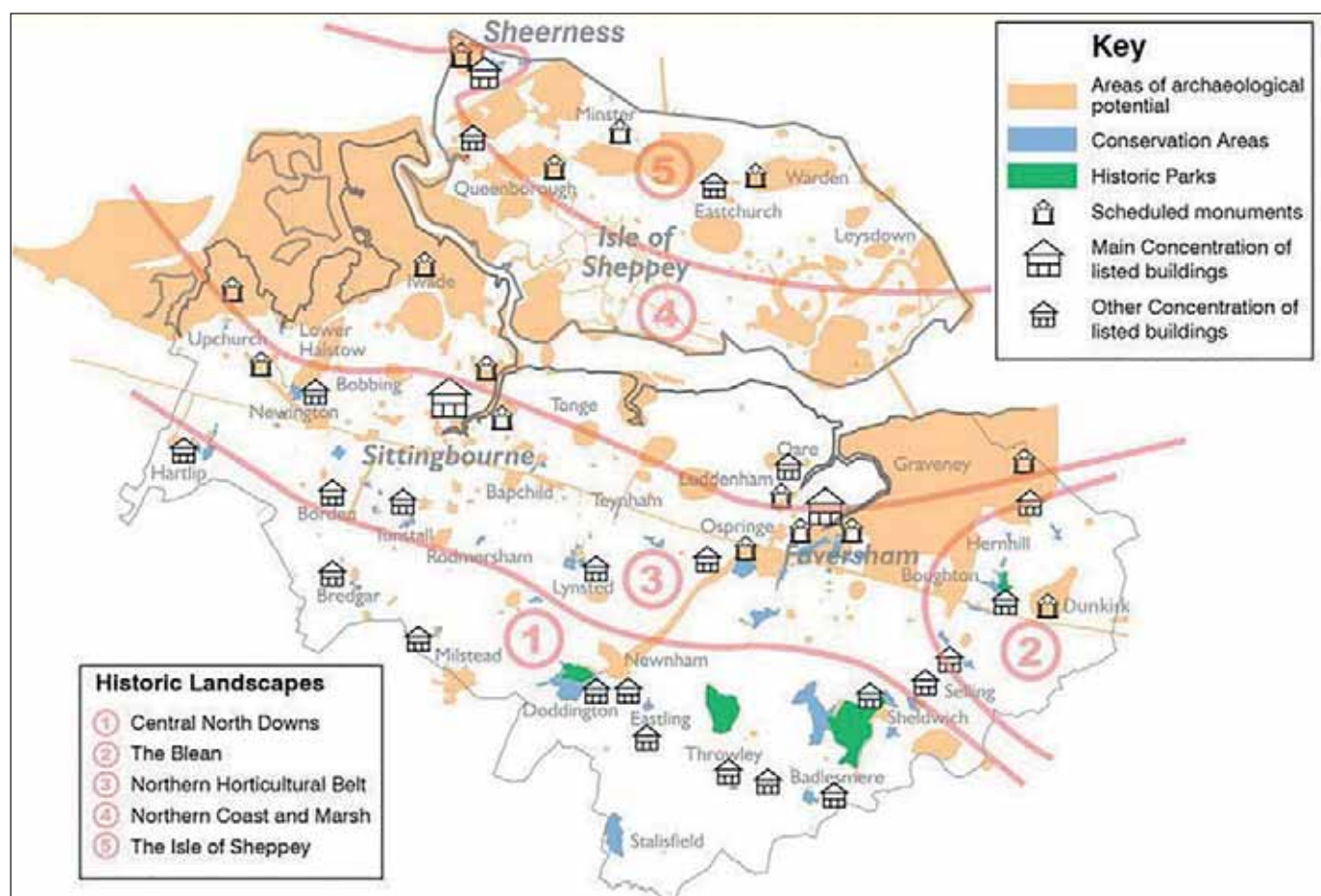


Figure 9: Map 5.7.1 from the Swale Borough Local Plan, showing the indicative location of main heritage assets in Swale

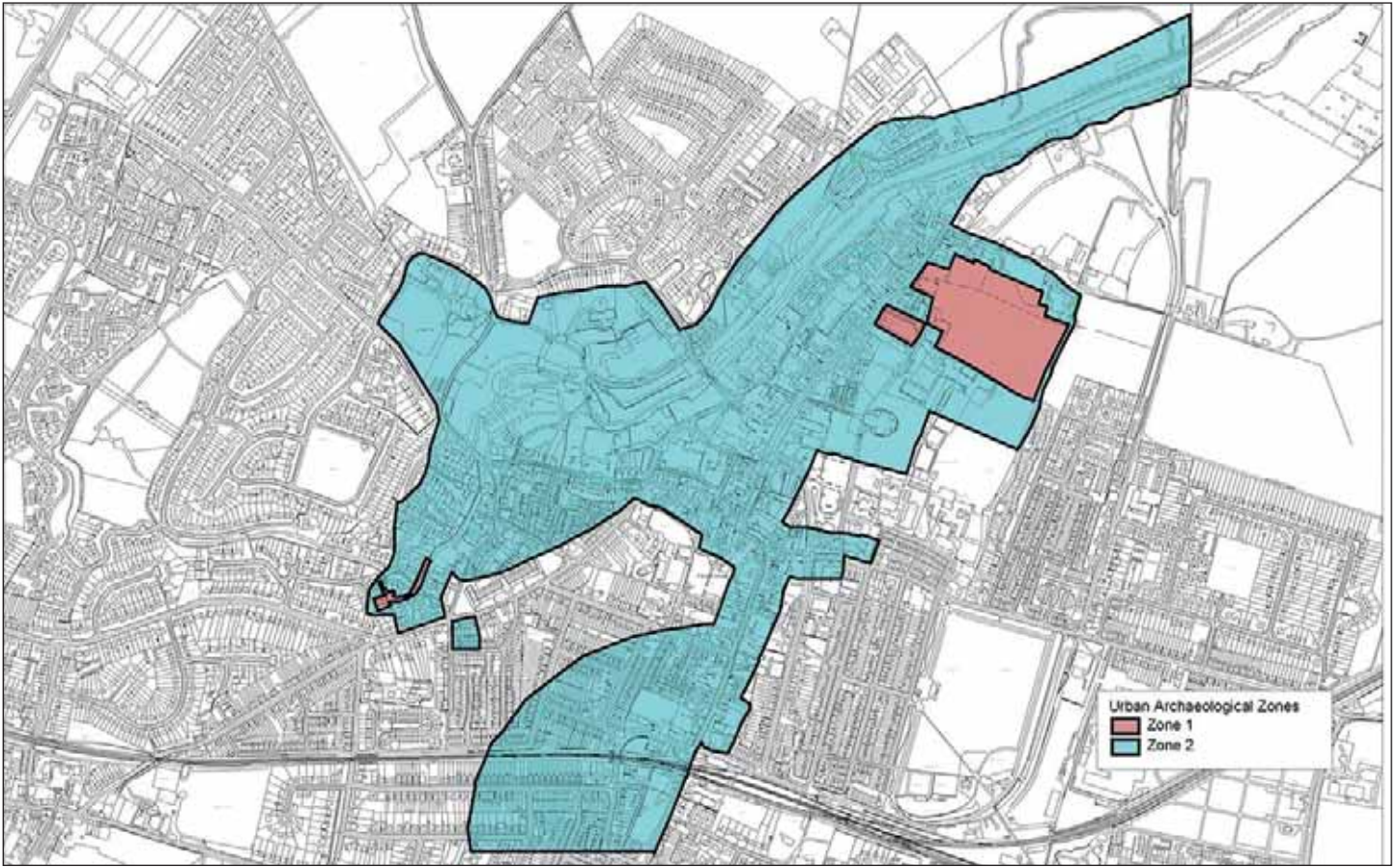


Fig. 10: Faversham Urban Archaeological Zone map

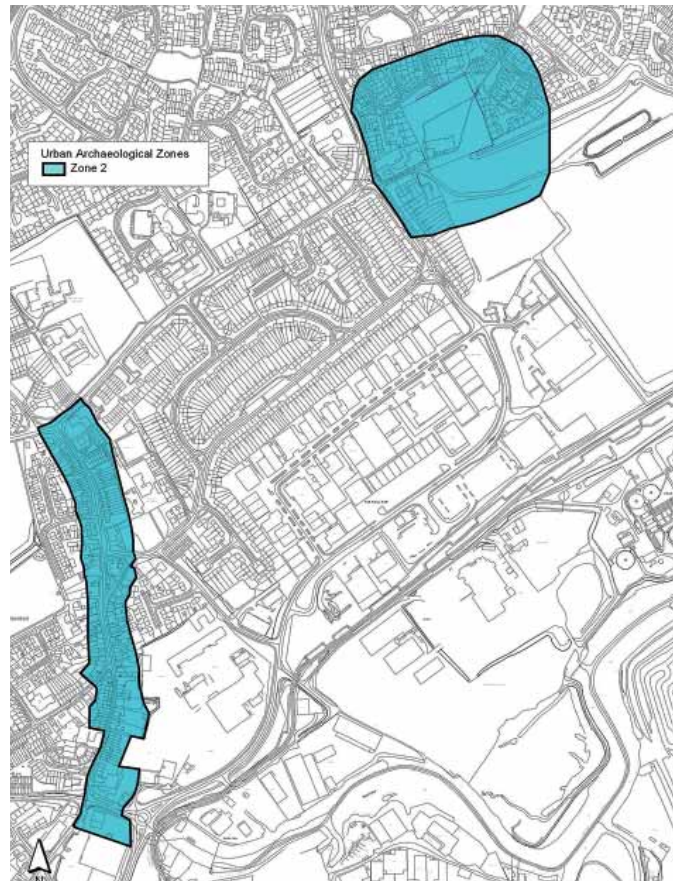


Fig. 11: Milton Regis Urban Archaeological Zone map

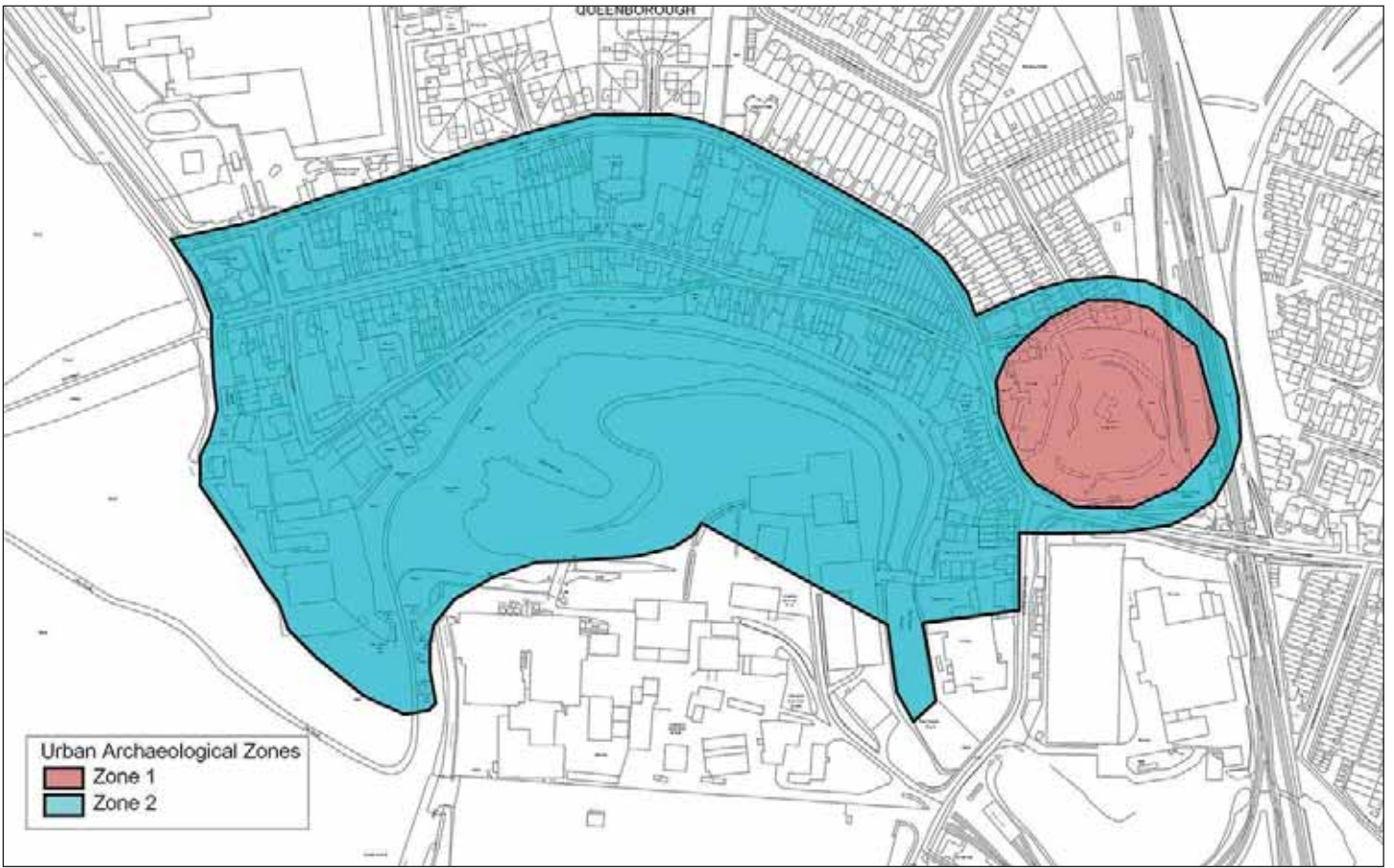


Fig. 12: Queenborough Urban Archaeological Zone map

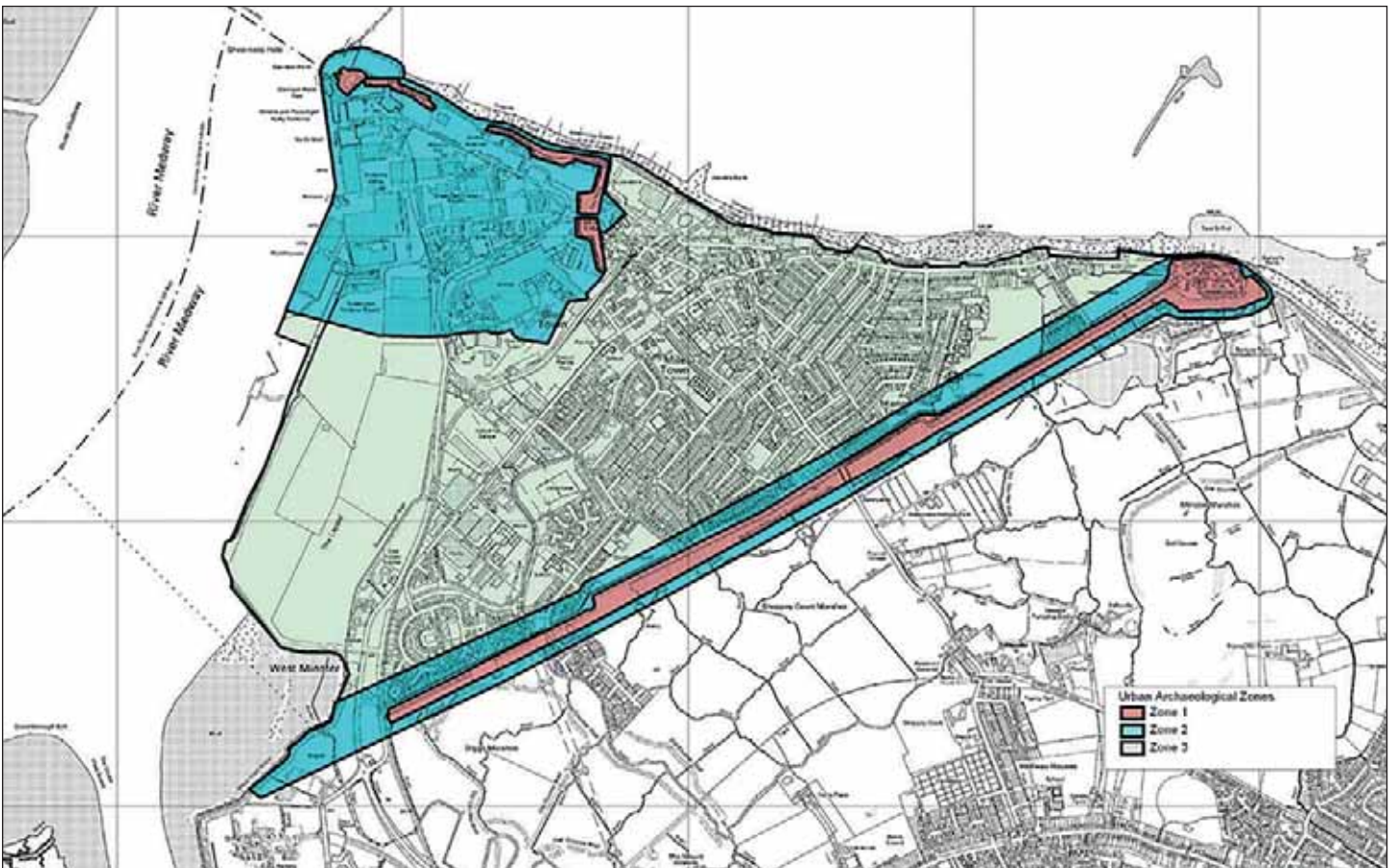


Fig. 13: Sheerness Urban Archaeological Zone map



Fig. 14: Sittingbourne Urban Archaeological Zone map

3.10 Museums, collections & archives (digital/traditional)



Faversham's Fleur de Lis Museum.

The museums, collections & archives in Swale Borough make a valuable contribution to the overall heritage offer that the borough has to offer, and a number of the museums and/or associated heritage related attractions contribute positively to local tourist and visitor economy.

The group of museums, collections & archives and heritage related attractions are represented by the collective organisation called Historic Swale. This replaced an earlier affiliation called the Swale Museums Group. The Council supported the original affiliation and was instrumental in helping to set up the Historic Swale organisation. This is effectively an umbrella charity, which as its website clearly states (see: <https://historicswale.org.uk>) supports its member attractions and organisations in the 3 areas which make up Swale district (Faversham, Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne) to collectively showcase the diverse and fascinating heritage which the borough offers.

At the time of writing, the members of Historic Swale are those that are set out in the table overleaf, as Figure 15.

Faversham	Isle of Sheppey	Sittingbourne
Chart Gunpowder Mills	Blue Town Heritage Centre and Criterion Music Hall	Milton Regis Court Hall
Faversham Heritage Hub	Eastchurch Aviation Museum	Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway
Fleur De Lis Heritage Centre	Minster Abbey Gatehouse Museum	Sittingbourne Heritage Museum
Kent Police Museum (not yet open)	Queenborough Guildhall Museum	The Heritage Hub – Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne HRGS
The Faversham Society	Rose St Cottage of Curiosities	Raybel Charters (New)
The Maison Dieu		Dolphin Barge Museum (not yet open)

Fig. 15: Table of Historic Swale group members

for more details visit <https://historicswale.org.uk/>

It is anticipated that further heritage-related sites/organisations will become members of Historic Swale, and whilst the Council is no longer directly involved with Historic Swale, it is nevertheless committed to continuing to support this important umbrella organisation and its individual members as far as its resources allow. This may include the provision of grants to support the development projects of member groups which the Council consider to be of particular public benefit.

Increasing awareness of the group and its members activities is clearly important, and the Council is committed to doing this through its own website and any other appropriate means that may arise.

The Council is very aware that centres such as the Sheerness Blue Town Heritage Centre, and organisations such as the Faversham Society and Sittingbourne Society contain a wealth of useful local heritage knowledge, and in some cases, expertise. Previously the Council has tended to carry out heritage related project work with only limited liaison with parties, but as a firm principle of this heritage strategy (see section 1.3 of this strategy document), the Council is committed to working, where possible, in a more collaborative manner, and this for example might result in the production



Murston Old Church – a Scheduled Monument with the project to repair and re-use the church supported by the Council.

of Conservation Area Review and Character Appraisal and Management Plans being jointly produced, with the appropriate acknowledgment given to all project partners. In other cases, the Council will be willing to support heritage related work or projects led by others, and as part of its commitment to producing a series of action plans on work in which the Council will act independently or as the lead partner in a partnership approach, the Council will include on such action plans, summary details of heritage-related projects in Swale being led by other organisations, in order to increase awareness of, and to help promote them.

4. Heritage Strategy Theme B: Positive Management:

Identifying Issues, Opportunities and Solutions

4.1 Heritage Strategy Priorities Aligning with Theme B

The Heritage Strategy Priority which principally aligns with this main theme is:

Priority 5: To push the historic environment up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale's heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

4.2 Our heritage at risk

At the time of writing, Swale Borough has the unenviable record of having the largest number of recorded heritage assets of all the Kent local authorities on the national Heritage at Risk Register updated annually by Historic England on a regional basis, with input from all the English local authorities. Historically, some local authorities have been reluctant to add items to the register including their area, as they have felt this reflected poorly on their management of their historic environment. To some degree, this is indeed still the case but hiding the true scale of the problem is not helpful for a number of reasons, and it is not a course of action that this Council has, or would choose to take.

A problem that Swale Borough Council does share with many other local authorities however, is establishing a clear and accurate picture of the true extent of heritage at risk. This in part has been due in recent years to a lack of resource at the Council to consistently monitor the situation, but there are also other factors at play here, including owners of buildings/structures known or believed to be at risk failing to liaise and/or otherwise adequately cooperate with the Council's efforts to establish the situation, and in some cases, local neighbours and/or business not reporting what they may believe to be serious breaches of planning control and/or the early signs of neglect.

The Council may not always be able to act as quickly as it, or concerned parties would like in scenarios where it discovers, or is made aware of breaches of planning control or clear evidence of neglect which has, or could threaten the heritage significance of a heritage asset. However, if the Council is at least aware of the issue, and can properly record it in a clear and systematic way, then the problem will not be overlooked and the Council can seek to intervene as soon as staff and/or other necessary resources permits.

The Council is unable to commit to the regular surveying of all its listed buildings because of the sheer number of them (over 1430 at the time of writing this heritage strategy). However it is now committed to more systematically monitoring its conservation areas, historic parks & gardens and scheduled monuments, and will do so on an annual basis from 2020 onwards.

The Council will need an additional resource to put in place this consistent and ongoing heritage monitoring system without impacting on its existing heritage-focused work, including assessing the possible impacts on heritage of new development proposals, which is effectively a full time role for one Council officer. As such, the Council is committed to exploring the possibility of creating a dedicated Heritage at Risk Officer with the possible support of other interested parties, including Historic England, Kent County Council, the borough's town and parish councils, and local amenity groups and organisations, in particular those which are member organisations of Historic Swale. An additional resource of this nature will also be needed if the Council is to have the ability to give priority to positive intervention in relation to the heritage at risk data identified through its planned monitoring of Swale's historic environment.

Another important commitment from the Council in this respect is that of the early review of its current Planning Enforcement Strategy (last updated in 2017). Whilst the current version of this strategy appropriately prioritises the early investigation (and where appropriate, action) of breaches of planning control relating to listed buildings, it is silent on the subject of the matter of the neglect of heritage assets (deliberate or otherwise) which can threaten heritage significance to an even great degree in some instances.

The review and potential redrafting of the Planning Enforcement Strategy to properly consider the matter of heritage at risk through neglect would be subject to public consultation and the Council would welcome input on this from all interested parties.



89-91 High Street, Milton Regis (a grade II listed building). Unauthorised window replacement work is being tackled by the Council

Planning Enforcement Action is undertaken by the Council's Planning Enforcement Team, and so the Council will commit to carrying out an internal review to ensure it has the staffing resources it needs to properly support this additional area of work. As with the Council's Heritage Team, it is recognised that the Planning Enforcement Team needs to be more than a Cinderella service if it is to function effectively, and with the confidence and support of the wider community.

The Council will commit to compiling an up-to-date heritage at risk register to act as a baseline from the adoption of this heritage strategy. This will help the Council and other interested parties to establish a clearer picture of the nature and extent of the problem. This will then determine how much additional resource the Council should look to bring on board to tackle the problem, and what the priorities should be for initial intervention.

A copy of the Swale Heritage at Risk Register (which includes non-designated heritage assets as well as designated heritage assets such as conservation areas and listed buildings) is attached as Appendix iii to this heritage strategy. It is believed however that this may not present the true extent and/or nature of heritage at risk in Swale Borough so feedback on this would be welcomed so that a true picture of the extent of the problem can be in place from the outset of this heritage strategy.



Radfield House, Teynham – at risk grade II listed building, disused and neglected by its large business owner.

The Council is already aware of certain individual, or groups of buildings that are likely to need prioritization from a heritage at risk perspective, and this would include some of the listed buildings within the Sheerness Port operational area, notably the grade I listed boat store, a building of international importance, named by the Victorian Society as being one of the country's top ten most at risk.

Where possible, the Council will work closely with key partners, including Historic England and current or prospective owners to ensure that the issues that have led to a heritage at risk status being recorded or threatened, are dealt with as effectively and expeditiously as possible.

The Council will commit to making the Swale Heritage at Risk Register freely available to view on its website from 2020 onwards, as well as continuing to provide local feedback to Historic England to inform the regionally formatted National Heritage at Risk Register.

The Council has had some successes in tackling heritage at risk. Most notable of these in recent years was the action it took to secure the future of the grade II* listed Dockyard Church in Sheerness from 2012. In this instance, the Council was obliged to utilize its compulsory purchase powers in partnership with a Preservation Trust to wrest ownership and control of the building from an irresponsible and neglectful owner. The Council will use this very significant power of last resort again if needed, but in order to protect its financial position and the community that relies on it for a wide range of public services, it will look to use the underwriting systems now offered by Historic England. In other situations, third parties have helpfully stepped in to take on the ownership of heritage at risk buildings and structures, and have invested heavily in them (under the guidance and/or control of the Council) to save them from likely eventual collapse or demolition, and to bring them back into use. A good recent example of this in recent years is the acquisition and investment made by former media industry workers Paul Townson and Mark Breadon, in respect of Fraognall Farmhouse (a grade II listed building), at Lower Road in Teynham.

- The Heritage at Risk data shows that the number of conservation areas at risk in Swale has risen from 0 to 8 since 2012. Thus, whilst some progress is being made for buildings and places of worship, conservation areas present a growing problem. This is not necessarily indicative of rapid deterioration, but that longer-term problems are being recognised. The nature of the problem is not just about condition and maintenance, but also of harmful alterations. This raises issues around enforcement, but also around designations, including Article 4 Directions. The issues around designation and subsequent management are discussed in more detail later in this strategy (see section 4.4). An area approach is therefore required to address some of the heritage at risk issues in Swale, in addition to targeted work on individual buildings and structures, or small groups of these. This is reflected in the series of proposed actions for the first action plan of this heritage strategy.
- Finally, in relation to the nationwide issue of heritage crime, it should be noted that the Council is a member of the Kent Heritage Watch group, which sits under the umbrella of the national Heritage Watch scheme. The Council's staff, across different teams, work with the Kent Police and property owners to try and reduce the scope for heritage related crime to occur, and where such crime has occurred, to manage the impact of this as sensitively and effectively as possible, including actions to deter the possibility of further theft and/or damage. The Council is also a member of the Alliance to Reduce Heritage Crime (ARCH) and will work with Historic England and other alliance partners to reduce the scope for heritage crime where possible, and where it has occurred, to assist the Kent Police in the prosecution of identified offenders.

4.3 Our local distinctiveness: design and development management

The historic environment in Swale is a significant contributor to local distinctiveness and has, and will continue to play a role in positive place making for the foreseeable future. It performs this role not only by being protected, conserved and positively managed as an important element of our cultural heritage, but also in some instances by providing a strong focal point and contextual reference for the form and design of new development.

A good recent example of this is the approved housing development scheme approved in relation to the grade II listed Sheppey Court at Halfway, on the Isle of Sheppey. Here, it is

proposed that the former grand home of the historically important developer (Sir Edward Banks: 1770-1835) is shorn of its ugly institutional extensions from the 1960s, restored and brought back into use as six generously proportioned private flats, and providing the focal point and architectural inspiration for a further 33 homes, within a heavily treed setting set against the open marshland landscape, north and west of the local centre of Halfway.



Artists impression by Clague Architects of Sheppey Court housing scheme, Halfway.

The Council does not believe there is a need for a Swale Design Guide. It is considered that such a document would overlap significantly with existing guidance and provide only limited additional benefit. Instead, the Council considers that in relation to the borough's historic

environment, up-to-date assessments of each individual or area-based heritage asset should be in place to help inform the character and form of new development and ensure that they display a distinctive character to complement their context. That is why a priority for this heritage strategy moving forward is to put in place a programme for the review and appraisal of all the borough's conservation areas.

For the foreseeable future, there will likely continue to be pressure placed on the Council from major house builders and other significant developers to utilise standard designs and/or corporate templates/preferences in putting forward major development schemes, and in some less visually sensitive locations this approach may be acceptable to some degree. However, the Council will seek to ensure through the development management process that all new development displays a sufficient level of design quality and distinctiveness, in accordance with national planning policy guidance, and that where proposed new development has the potential to materially affect the historic environment, that more attention is paid to this objective. Where appropriate, the Council will use the mechanisms of development briefs and/or design codes to ensure that development proposals display an appropriate level of contextual sensitivity and associated design quality.

The following list identifies areas where particular care is required to consider the impact of development on heritage assets and their setting:

Conservation Areas: Conservation areas need to be considered on an area-by-area basis. Many conservation areas can accommodate high levels of change. Change created the character of many areas, for example the town centres.

Listed Buildings: Like conservation areas, listed buildings need to be considered on an individual basis, with some being able to take considerable change, whilst others are more sensitive to change. This must be based on an assessment of the special architectural or historic interest of the building and consideration of its setting.

Scheduled Monuments: Development would not normally be appropriate within the boundary of, or directly adjacent Scheduled Monuments, which are protected under non-planning legislation, and administered at the national level by Historic England. Limited development may be possible, where it relates to the revealing, conservation and/or interpretation of the monument in question, but this would need to be discussed and agreed with Historic England, which is the determining authority for scheduled monument consent applications (applications

for planning permission directly or indirectly affecting scheduled monuments are determined by the local planning authority).

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: Protection of historic parks and gardens is often provided by conservation area or listed building status. Inclusion on the register is a material consideration in planning decisions. Generally, new buildings should not be allowed in landscaped areas, albeit there is sometimes a need for new operational buildings or other development to support diversification. However, a very high standard of architectural design and careful siting are necessary, so as not to compromise the open landscape character.

Nationally Significant Maritime and Aviation Heritage: This includes Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, and conservation area, so would be treated as above. However, there is also undesignated heritage. Particular care is required to avoid harm to undesignated heritage, where possible, as collectively this adds to the national heritage significance of the area. This is recognised in Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Archaeological areas: The Urban Archaeological Zones and Historic Environment Record previously mentioned should be considered and may have implications for planning conditions (for example on archaeological investigation and recording).

4.4 Heritage assets: appraisal & positive management

Detailed appraisal of heritage assets (of all different types) provides the best platform for positive management, as this helps to identify the elements that make the area, building or structure worthy of designation in the first instance, as well as clarifying parts of the area or building/structure that contribute little to the level of interest, and as such could be deemed less sensitive to change, providing that change is positive.

Conservation Areas and Article 4 Directions

The Council is responsible for the matter of designating, reviewing and positively managing conservation areas, although the positive management aspect is something that is difficult to achieve without the support of third parties, including property owners and Kent County Council as the Highway Authority. To be suitable for designation, an area must be an *'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*.

Swale Borough currently has 50 conservation areas, and the majority of these have either no appraisal, or dated and inadequate appraisals to function effectively for the task of positive management – a role that also includes ensuring through the development management process, that any new development that takes place within a conservation area, or within its setting does not cause harm, and where possible, has an enhancing effect.

Priority 1 of this heritage strategy is to put in place a programme for the systematic review of all the borough's conservation areas. The Council does not have the resources available to undertake this work all at once. It will need to be carried out over a period of years, and the Council will seek to work with the borough's town and parish councils and local amenity groups/societies to undertake this important review and appraisal work.

It will be seen in the first three year action plan of this heritage strategy that almost all the actions relate to conservation area appraisal work. This is because 8 of Swale's conservation areas are considered to be at risk (suffering from harmful change) and/or their special character is threatened to some degree by significant new development. It can be seen that the conservation areas proposed to be reviewed in the first (3 year) action plan, all fall within one of these two categories, with the main focus being on seeking to fully identify, understand and address heritage at risk issues through this process.



The parish Church of Eastchurch, at the heart of the village.

As indicated earlier in this heritage strategy, the Council cannot currently search out possible new conservation areas when the 50 it already has are not being monitored and positively managed as they ought, so effectively getting the ‘house in order’ is considered to be the higher priority. However, the Council will consider and carry out some initial basic research in relation to suggestions from the community about possible future designations. Feedback to date has suggested the possibility of new conservation areas at Eastchurch and Kemsley, and the Council will consider these for possible designation as soon as resources allow.

Returning to the issue of addressing conservation areas at risk, it is very much the case that whilst conservation area designation alone provides broad protection, it still allows a level of potentially harmful alteration through the system of permitted development rights (i.e. work that can be carried out without the need for planning permission) allowed under the planning system. In this light, it was therefore perhaps unsurprising that Historic England’s historic environment survey of 2018 identified a wide problem of incremental harm

arising from alterations, including neon signs, uPVC doors and windows, loss of traditional frontages and other changes. Town centres in particular were highlighted as suffering from unsympathetic alterations.

To address this issue, Article 4 Directions (which can be used to limit permitted development rights and require planning permission to be gained) would need to be prepared for the conservation areas where harm is occurring. These vary for different conservation areas, according to the specific character, but changes observed include the replacement or alteration of traditional doors, windows and shopfronts. As part of its approach to tackling the issues adversely affecting some of the borough’s conservation areas, the Council will also investigate the possibility of using an additional planning control called an Area of Special Advertisement Control. This would provide the Council with greater level of control over shop signs and associated advertising, as the poor quality of many shop signs and the amount of signage and associated advertising allowed under the planning regulations (without the need for advertisement consent) is already an issue in some areas of the borough, and is anticipated to spread to other areas without some positive management.

Listed Buildings

These are designated by Historic England, and the decision to designate is typically taken in the light of planned thematic surveys looking at areas of topical interest, such as public buildings.

Past listing reviews in Swale have expanded the number of listed buildings, recognising later period and industrial heritage. This includes some key defence, maritime and aviation buildings and structures. However, it is now apparent that aviation and defence heritage is under-represented and in some cases, possibly undervalued on the statutory lists.

The Borough Council will work closely with Historic England and Kent County Council to ensure that buildings of high heritage value that are not currently on the national list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest are considered. In particular this will include:

- War structures;
- 20th century buildings;
- Aviation buildings and structures;
- Maritime buildings and structures.

Suggestions raised through the 2018 stakeholder survey carried out in relation to this heritage strategy include:

- Aviation history at Eastchurch and Garrison (surviving hangars already listed)
- buildings at the Dockyard in Sheerness (some already listed);
- The Harps Inn, outstanding art deco building;
- Minster Old School, original school building;
- Kingsferry Bridge due to its unusual form landmark function; and
- Buildings and structures at Swan Quay in Faversham.

Assuming sufficient evidence to support this can be compiled (by working in partnership with Kent County Council, Eastchurch Aviation Museum and other local community organisations) the Council will make a formal request to Historic England that it undertakes a listing review in respect of aviation and defence structures in Swale at the earliest opportunity.

Management of listed buildings is the responsibility of the owner but the Council is able to offer free advice on repairs and maintenance, as well as a fee paying pre-application service in relation to proposals for alterations, extensions and new development (e.g. outbuildings, such as garages). The Listed Property Owners Club (which is based in Swale, but operates nationally) is another good source of advice for the owners of listed properties and the Council would encourage all listed property owners to consider joining this very worthwhile club (see: <https://www.lpoc.co.uk>).

Regular and appropriate maintenance is key to the good stewardship of listed and other historically or architecturally important building, in particular those that are of traditional timber framed or masonry (brick and/or stone) construction. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) which promotes and helps to regulate best practice in the historic environment field produces a guide called A Stitch in Time which property owners may find helpful in working out an appropriate maintenance regime (see: <https://www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch/Stitch%20in%20Time.pdf>).

For larger and/or more significant listed buildings the production of a conservation management plan can be a worthwhile investment. Amongst other things, this can help to identify key areas of repairs that need to be undertaken, a regime for necessary ongoing maintenance (to limit the need for future repair) and planned improvements which could be undertaken to enhance the amenity of the building, without compromising its heritage significance. Note that such improvements might necessitate listed building consent and/or planning permission so any such element of a conservation management plan would need to be discussed with the Council's Heritage Team.

Registered Historic Parks & Gardens

Swale has four sites identified on the national Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. These are:

- Lees Court Park, near Sheldwich;
- Doddington Place;
- Mount Ephraim, near Broughton under Blean; and
- Belmont Park.

Inclusion on the register is a material planning consideration, but offers little other protection, unless accompanied by a statutory designation. Swale's historic parks and gardens are fortunately protected to some degree by a combination of conservation area designations and listed building designations. Where they do not already exist, the Council will encourage the owners of these properties to develop Conservation Management Plans, as these can also equally be applied to special landscapes.

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are administered nationally, including procedures for gaining consents to undertake works to monuments. Scheduling brings with it, the highest level of protection under the British planning system.



The scheduled Romano-British Stone Chapel off the old Watling Street route, near Faversham.

Swale has 22 Scheduled Monuments. These include a Romano-British mausoleum at Stone-by- Faversham, a Romano-British villa and a Romano-Celtic temple at Boxted, important medieval sites, the Oare Gunpowder Works, Chart Gunpowder Mills, and military and civil defence structures.

As with listed buildings, the management of scheduled monuments on a day-to-day basis is the responsibility of the owner.

Other Archaeology

Two kinds of archaeological zones/areas have been identified by Kent County Council. These are:

Urban Archaeological Zones: These relate to medieval town layouts and archaeology. They guide response to development proposals through the planning process. The zones were identified some time ago and Kent County Council does intend to update them (see Figures 10 - 14 at 3.9). This will include expansion to include industrial sites.

Areas of archaeological potential: These are areas where notification of planning application is necessary. It is proposed to rename them as archaeological notification areas. The boundaries are proposed to be reviewed. The Historic Environment Record recognises other non-designated archeology. This is dispersed across the Borough, and inclusion on the Historic Environment Record is a material consideration in making decision in relation to development proposals.

Swale Borough Council will liaise with Kent County Council over the ongoing process of reviewing defence heritage, including the expansion of 'Urban Archaeological Zones' and review of 'Areas of Archaeological Potential' to ensure that the aviation and defence heritage of the Isle of Sheppey is fully recognised. This will build on the work already carried out by Kent County Council's Heritage Team for the Defence of Swale project.

Furthermore, if the evidence supports it, the Council in liaison with Kent County Council and local community organisations will approach Historic England to discuss the potential for a book on Swale's aviation and defence heritage. This could help to underpin wider statutory protections, as well as helping to make this aspect of Swale's historic environment more widely known and appreciated.

At 4.2 in relation to the borough's heritage at risk, it has been recognised that an area approach will typically be needed to address the problems resulting in harm to heritage assets, and it is anticipated that the management plans of individual conservation areas will be key in this respect.

However, whether tackling issues of this nature on an area or site specific basis, the issue of viability does need to be given some consideration. In this respect, it is recognised that the poor condition of some heritage assets is a factor of marginal economic viability in some parts of the borough.

This is at the time of writing principally a problem affecting Sheerness, Queenborough & Rushenden, and Sittingbourne, although degradation of the built environment is a serious problem with smaller centres too. This can include poor quality alterations, poor maintenance and vacancy/disuse. A primary example of this is the situation to be found in Newington, where market failure is apparent in the number of closed business, vacant properties and poor maintenance. Factors contributing to such failure appear to include highway congestion, associated poor air quality and a degraded built environment.



Degradation buildings in Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area

The Council will commit to tackling issues of poor quality alterations and deterioration in a systematic way wherever possible (e.g. seeking to tackle all the issues on one High Street at a time systematically – in some cases as part of a management plan action) as in so doing, early successful interventions may eliminate the need to tackle all the identified buildings in such an area. The Council will utilise all the powers at its disposal to help improve condition and vitality to areas compromised and struggling with negative change, but it must be recognised that some factors (notably air quality and viability) are only likely to be tackled effectively with more strategic level intervention at government or regional level.

4.5 Identifying, protecting and managing locally important heritage

Swale does not at present have a local list. That is, a list of local buildings or structures that are not statutory listed by Historic England, but are nevertheless of architectural or historic interest against a local context.

Buildings or structures on a local list are not automatically protected against demolition, unlike

listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas. However, Article 4 Directions can be used to put in place protection from demolition, and also from insensitive change that could arise through the use of permitted development rights.

Inclusion on a local list is nevertheless a material planning consideration where works (requiring planning permission) are proposed to the building or structure itself, or development is proposed on adjacent land that would affect its character and significance. This is reflected in the text of the adopted Local Plan (see page 294, paragraph 7.8.7), which explicitly recognises that some non-listed buildings may be of some heritage value.

With the recent government announcement on this matter at the time of writing, the Council will commit to developing a list of buildings and structures of local architectural, historic and/or artistic interest in partnership with the borough's local amenity societies and any other interested parties, although as indicated in section 3.2, this is not considered to be the highest priority for heritage in Swale, and as such, is not intended to feature in the first 3 year action plan. It is anticipated that in the intervening period, government and/or Historic England guidance may well be provided advising how any buildings added to a Local List can most effectively be protected from demolition or unsympathetic alteration and/or extension. At present there is a clear gap in thinking in this area, and as things stand, the possible use of Article 4 Directions offers the only realistic option in this respect. However, Article 4 Directions outside a Conservation Area currently require approval by the Secretary of State, and it is unclear whether such support would be forthcoming.

A specific local list policy could be included in the next version of the Swale Local Plan to give stronger protection to the conservation of local list buildings/structures, but such a policy would only effectively come into play in relation to works or development that require planning permission.

With or without the application of any additional control to provide some degree of protection to local list buildings/structures, the support of owners will be critically important in developing a local list. Helping owners to understand the value of local listing beyond their own immediate interests



will be key here as without the majority of owners effectively buying-in to this initiative, the project may not get off the ground, or its long-term value will likely be quite limited.

Consultation would need to take place with the owners of buildings/structures proposed to be added to a Swale Local List, and in the event of such a list coming into force, the Council is aware that it might need to give consideration to providing a guide for the owners of such buildings/structures to assist them with advice on the matter of maintenance, repairs and alterations, etc.

Possible candidate building for future Local List – Sittingbourne's New Century Cinema, in the High Street Conservation Area.

There is no set mechanism for the development of a local list, so the Council would look to investigate the types of models used elsewhere and therefore seek to apply an approach that fits best for Swale. This would, as indicated above, be in partnership with the borough's local amenity societies and any other interested parties.

5. Heritage Strategy Theme C: Capitalising and Championing

Valuing our Heritage

5.1 Heritage Strategy Priorities Aligning with Theme C

The Heritage Strategy Priorities which align with this main theme are:

Priority 3: To recognise and promote the role of Swale's heritage in creating or enhancing local distinctiveness and a positive image for the area as a place to live, work and visit; and

Priority 4: To ensure Swale's heritage forms an integral part of local strategies and initiatives to promote tourism and the visitor economy, including through the conservation and subsequent positive management of the Borough's internationally significant maritime and aviation heritage on the Isle of Sheppey.

5.2 Economic, cultural and other benefits

The economic value of heritage has been recognised at national and local level, including within the Swale Local Plan. Whilst the emphasis with heritage to date has largely been on how it can be used to increase tourism and visitors, the heritage evidence base for the Local Plan and early engagement with stakeholders in 2018 in relation to the development of this heritage strategy has identified a wider set of benefits. These include:

Utility Value: Most of Swale's historic buildings are in productive use. They are part of the infrastructure of the local economy and community. Such uses include housing, offices, transport infrastructure, pubs, shops, community facilities and a range of other uses.

Business and Enterprise: Older areas, especially in more peripheral locations like Blue Town in Sheerness, provide affordable and flexible accommodation, essential for supporting new micro and small businesses, social enterprises, creative industries, innovation and knowledge-based employment. The Dockyard Church project in Sheerness is focused on supporting young people and developing business and enterprise skills, helping to raise aspirations.

Attracting Investment and Economic Development: There is a direct relationship between the quality of built environment and economic development potential. It is no coincidence that Faversham has the highest concentration of historic buildings in the area and also the most viable commercial and residential economic markets in the borough. A well maintained historic environment helps to project a positive image, create investor confidence, attract high value jobs and improve competitiveness. Swale's historic buildings and places are an asset in terms of delivering sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Town Centre Competitiveness: Historic town centres like Faversham attract shoppers and visitors. Historic buildings and areas often accommodate independent retailers and other businesses, and this is apparent in all of Swale's towns. This helps to support choice and diversity, avoiding the creation of tedious 'clone towns'.

Heritage and Culture-Led Regeneration: Heritage and culture can help to deliver dramatic physical and economic transformations and regeneration. Swale has much unrealised potential, for example in the nationally and internationally significant heritage on the Isle of Sheppey.

Heritage can also attract involvement by third sector organisations, for example through asset transfer, which is useful for achieving growth in areas where there are issues with development viability. The initiatives set out in Chapter 7 of this strategy consist of, or are led by community organisations. The transformational potential of some of these initiatives to Swale’s economy should not be underestimated.

Rural Regeneration: Historic buildings and places have helped to accommodate new uses, facilitate economic diversification and form a basis for new, small industries, tourism and the visitor economy in Swale’s rural areas and small settlements. In particular, this can be seen in Swale’s farmsteads, barns and registered historic parks and gardens.

Tourism: Swale’s heritage already supports a visitor economy, with a range of heritage visitor and nature attractions. There is considerable potential for further growth in the visitor economy. Some of the projects referred to in this heritage strategy have the potential to build on this and put Swale on the map as a destination with national and possibly even wider appeal.

Workforce development and Local Trade: Repairing and restoring historic and traditional buildings places a greater emphasis on skilled, typically local labour and less emphasis on the use of physical resources, which is more significant in new-build development. Repair and restoration work within the historic built environment can therefore generate higher levels of pay and investment in the local economy.

Creating and/or improving Civic Pride: An area’s heritage can give its local residents and businesses a sense of place and a pride in their surroundings. This can particularly be the case where heritage assets feature as local landmarks, or as places that have historically provided work or another important focus for previous generations of people.

Health benefits: There is increasing recognition of the health benefits that active involvement with heritage assets can bring to people, and whilst more research needs to be carried out in



The grade II listed Naval Terrace and Dockyard Church, Sheerness.*

this area, it is already known from anecdotal evidence that regular visits to larger heritage assets such as Historic Parks and Gardens or getting involved as a volunteer on a project to repair, restore or enhance a heritage asset can be hugely rewarding and bring with it a sense of wellbeing. Such interaction with heritage assets can help to maintain or improve both mental and physical health

Achieving Sustainable Development:

The conservation and refurbishment of historic buildings and areas is an intrinsically sustainable form of development, avoiding the use and waste of scarce resources associated with demolition and redevelopment, and helping to achieve sustainable growth. Swale’s historic places and towns are in many ways, ideal for a low-carbon economy in terms of movement and activity patterns, usually having urban design characteristics based on the needs of pedestrians, with rear of pavement active frontages, permeable layouts, a fine grain of mixed uses, a concentration of community facilities and high densities through the use of terraced forms and party wall construction.

5.3 Raising awareness and building a positive legacy

Swale's heritage offer as a whole is a strong one and this should not be forgotten in the promotion of individual areas or attractions. Joined up thinking is needed to capitalize of the benefits that Swale's heritage can bring to the borough as a whole.

The borough's heritage offer includes existing well known assets, such as the historic market town of Faversham and Minster Abbey, as well as the new projects described in this strategy. It is clear that the development of local heritage assets and their interpretation represents a major opportunity. In particular, Swale's medieval, aviation, maritime, defence and other histories all offer significant scope to further culturally enrich the borough and boost its local economy in a number of ways. Likewise, the current and historical roles of the town centres can help to create a distinctive identity and basis for promotion, working closely with Visit Kent Swale Tourism, Faversham and Sheerness Town Councils, plus other local organisations and web sites.

As the local offer improves and expands, wider promotion will be needed by the public sector (the Council and others), including promotional materials, signage and development of digital and social media.

However, the creation of visitor attractions is being led in many instances by community-led organisations. Faversham is currently the main base for tourist information and this is largely community led. Successful coordinated initiatives by the community and public sectors should help to create confidence in the private sector to create new facilities (or improve existing ones) including hotels, restaurants and bars.

The Council will support the proportionate promotion of Swale's heritage attractions, working closely with Visit Kent Swale Tourism, the borough's town councils and other local organisations and web sites.

The Council's Heritage Team and Heritage Champion are committed to raising awareness of the historic environment in Swale Borough up the agenda, both within the Council itself and in wider circles, and will gladly work in partnership with other parties in order to do so. The production of this heritage strategy is a positive first step in this regard, but it is accepted that there is much more that could be done. Further steps to be taken need to be carefully considered, but could for example include some heritage training for Swale Borough councillors and for the members of the town and parish councils in Swale.



The TS Hazard building, Faversham.

Finally, the Council itself is a significant owner of heritage assets (including two grade II* listed buildings: T.S. Hazard in Faversham, and Court Hall in Milton Regis). As such, as well as working to ensure that other owners play their part in maintaining and where possible enhancing the borough's heritage offer, the Council will as far as its resources allow, seek to set a good example in terms of its stewardship of historic buildings and structures.

6. Resourcing the Heritage Strategy

6.1: Swale Borough Council's Functions, Role and Resources

Swale Borough Council as the local planning authority has a range of statutory functions for heritage. These include:

- Undertaking local designations, such as conservation areas and Article 4 Directions;
- Consulting statutory heritage bodies;
- Preparation of the Local Plan for Swale, including heritage policies;
- Statutory duties in relation to the process for neighbourhood plans;
- Planning enforcement, including to address unauthorised development and action to secure the preservation of heritage at risk;
- Providing a development management service to deal with planning applications;
- Supporting neighbourhood planning and ensuring that qualifying bodies have a good level of understanding of the economic potential of heritage; and
- Compulsory Purchase Powers, for example to address buildings at risk.

Non-statutory functions could include:

- Creating and maintaining a publicly accessible heritage at risk register;
- Ensuring that heritage consideration is embedded into all local regeneration, economic development, investment and tourism strategies;
- Ensuring that there is a progressive policy and approach to asset transfer, so that community organisations have the opportunity to acquire or lease heritage assets or to work in partnership with the Council to deliver projects involving heritage assets;
- Providing support and/or training to third sector organisations, for example in signposting funding opportunities, project development, advising on funding applications, help with business planning, etc;
- Promoting awareness to heritage-focused and non-heritage-focused bodies of the economic potential of heritage;
- Undertaking training and capacity building with Council officers and elected members to ensure good awareness of the economic and social potential of heritage, not just to tourism, but in supporting enterprise, innovation, civic pride and well-being;
- Ensuring Council owned heritage assets are well managed, well-maintained and in productive use;
- Highlighting the area's distinctive heritage in tourist and visitor marketing and materials; and
- Compiling a list of locally valued buildings/structures of architectural, historic and/or artistic interest, in partnership with local amenity societies.

Many of these roles could also apply to other public sector bodies, especially those that own heritage assets, such as Kent County Council.

The 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in 2018. As well as strengthening the requirement for development sustainability, it appropriately continues to recognize the value of heritage assets from sites and buildings of local importance right up to those of national and international importance, and furthermore, continues to set out clear guidance for how they should be treated in planning terms. It is acknowledged by the

local community and the Council that every effort should be made to ensure that any new development proposals are not only as sustainable as possible, but are also designed in a manner sympathetic to enabling the protection and management of the borough's rich built and natural heritage. A more proactive approach is also needed where possible, to ensure that Swale's heritage assets can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of both current and future residents.



Member training

The Borough Council has dedicated, albeit modest existing in-house staffing resources available to support and where appropriate, initiate this important work. It was however recognized in the development of this strategy that further resource will be needed to support the significant challenges that lie ahead and to this end, the Council is therefore publicly committed to supporting the first 3 year action plan of this 12 year heritage strategy with an injection of £250,000, to help provide additional heritage specialist capacity and in some cases, limited physical works. The additional

investment in this respect will be focused on the heritage assets in the Borough that are most at risk through change, neglect and/or development pressure. Furthermore, the Borough Council will, wherever possible, work with other agencies, developers and stakeholders to maximize the scope and benefits of this investment and the associated work to be undertaken. In particular, the Council will seek out and where feasible, apply for any match-funding opportunities and capacity building grants that exist.

6.2: External resources (national and local)

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Owners and Occupiers

Most heritage assets are privately owned or occupied and used by private sector organisations or by individuals, couples and families. Whilst the heritage status is a factor for some, the prime motivation for many in taking on heritage assets is their utility value and/or investment value. Close working and engagement with building owners will therefore be essential to delivering the aims of this strategy.

Development

The development of Swale's historic buildings, towns and areas is undertaken by a range of private building owners, businesses and/or developers. The future of Swale's heritage is therefore dependent to a large extent on private investment decisions. The private sector is often the means to delivering heritage aims, but can also harm heritage if there is not a good level of awareness of the value of heritage and robust quality assurance provided through the planning system.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR (excluding Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council – already referenced)

Historic England

As the independent adviser to central government on the protection, management and promotion of the historic environment, and the organisation that is now effectively responsible for the designation of key heritage assets including listed buildings and scheduled monuments, Historic England plays a vital role in helping to frame the manner in which all local authorities should seek to manage the historic environment within their respective areas. It provides a significant degree of guidance and research literature to assist local authorities and other parties (including the general public and property owners) and it also provides input to local authorities on development proposals and other matters affecting the most important heritage assets. Historic England also run a variety of training grant schemes which local authorities and other bodies/groups can tap into to assist with the positive management of the historic environment. The range of grant schemes that Historic England offers varies over time, but the latest information in this respect can be viewed by visiting the Historic England website (see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/grants/>).

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund, (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund), distributes a share of National Lottery funding, supporting a wide range of heritage projects across the United Kingdom. Since it was set up in 1994, under the National Lottery Act, it has awarded over £7.1 billion to more than 40,000 projects, large and small, helping people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect their heritage.

Town and Parish Councils

Faversham, Queenborough and Sheerness have town councils. There are also numerous parish councils across Swale. Town and parish councils have tax raising powers and can lead on initiatives to in their areas to create better services and facilities. Town and parish councils also have statutory planning powers as the qualifying bodies for preparing neighbourhood plans.

THE COMMUNITY (AKA THIRD) SECTOR

Community Organisations in Swale

The Community or Third sector includes voluntary, not-for-profit, social enterprise and other community-led bodies. This includes heritage-focused bodies, like local societies and building preservation trusts, as mentioned in this document. However, there is also potential in Swale for new community land trusts or community development trusts, which could use heritage assets as a basis for their projects.

Community organisations operate independently, but can also work as part of wider partnerships with public and/or private sector bodies.

Swale is fortunate in having a range of very active, entrepreneurial and ambitious community bodies.

Some of the key regeneration projects and a range of educational initiatives in Swale are led by community organisations. Many heritage sites are similarly managed by community organisations.

The recently formed 'Historic Swale' body clearly has the potential to become a key player in the area, depending on its scope of activity.

Heritage Activities by Community Organisations

Community-led organisations are tackling heritage asset issues and opportunities in various ways:

- developing regeneration projects;
- developing solutions where heritage-assets are not viable for the private sector;
- gaining access to funding, some of which is not be available to private-sector;
- providing local and specialist knowledge and expertise, including on business, tourism and archaeology;
- providing a platform for local volunteering;
- running education initiatives;
- contributing to or leading research on the area's heritage; and
- managing key heritage sites.

6.3: Partnerships (working together)

Partnerships are likely to be required for more complex heritage projects, for example the potential creation of a heritage quarter within the operational part of Sheerness Port, which would have less restricted access.

Partnership working already takes place, for example, in relation to the Dockyard Church in Sheerness, where the Council and Historic England have, and continue to support the Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust in its important work to breathe new life and energy back into this severely fire-damaged grade II* listed building.

Third sector involvement in projects can be an effective way of addressing viability challenges, especially in taking on buildings and structures requiring considerable capital investment. Third sector bodies can access funding for some kinds of capital works not available to local authorities or the private sector.

At the same time, working with developers can sometimes bring valuable development experience and infrastructure to a project.

Complex projects like the regeneration and associated conservation of the historically important dock area at Sheerness Port would likely necessitate a public/private/community sector partnership to be delivered.

Part of the role of the Council in recent years has been to provide support in developing local partnerships, and this will be a role that will continue into the future and is anticipated to become more important.

7. Conclusions and way forward

The focus of this heritage strategy is on having in place a strong framework for, and displaying a solid commitment to the appropriate designation, conservation and positive management of the borough's heritage, and capitalizing on the physical and economic regeneration this can bring. However, part of realising the potential of the area's heritage is in raising awareness, including through interpretation and education. Such actions support the visitor economy, but are also an important benefit for the local community, including for school age children.

Early stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering in relation to the development of this heritage strategy has highlighted a range of initiatives already taking place, these being mostly community and volunteer led. Areas for future new work or increased emphasis were also highlighted, including Swale's:

- Medieval and Roman heritage;
- Industrial heritage, including boat building, gunpowder production, paper-making, brickmaking, and fruit growing;
- Maritime, aviation and defence heritage.

Examples of existing community-led facilities that address understanding, interpretation and education are:

Blue Town Heritage Centre: Heritage centre with unusual displays. Various shows and films hosted at the Criterion Theatre, which is part of the heritage centre. The centre includes activities for the elderly and local schools.

Eastchurch Aviation Museum: Small museum with planned expansion that works with schools and offenders from the adjacent open prison and provides volunteering opportunities

Faversham Society: Annual lecture series plus volunteering opportunities at a range of site, and in a range of roles. Runs the Fleur de Lis Heritage centre, which includes a museum, gallery space, book shop and tourist information.

Faversham Town Council: FTC has now taken over from Swale BC in running the local engagement forum, which can cover a whole range of topics, including heritage management. It also runs faversham.org, which provides tourism and heritage information.

Historical Research Group Sittingbourne: Operates the Sittingbourne Heritage Hub. Annual lecture series, plus volunteering opportunities. They also provide resources (e.g. fact sheets) for schools.

Kent Police Museum, Faversham: This has yet to open, but will be located in the old Victorian Police Station and is anticipated to open soon. The website advises that they will run a learning programme, and will also provide volunteering opportunities.

Milton Regis Court Hall Museum: Exhibition and volunteering opportunities.

Minster Gatehouse Museum: Recently upgraded exhibition space plus annual lecture series and volunteering opportunities (museum run by volunteers from the Sheppey Local History Society).

As well as supporting and deriving from the heritage related policies and objectives in the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan and helping to ensure that the next version of the Local Plan has every chance of being found sound when that next plan reaches Local Plan Inquiry stage, this heritage strategy has very much been developed to display the Council's commitment to supporting existing local groups and initiatives that seek to promote, protect and/or enhance the historic environment in Swale Borough and in particular improve understanding. It is anticipated that the set of actions proposed in this heritage strategy's first action plan will complement the

work of many of the aforementioned heritage focused local groups and initiatives and will go some way to ensuring that the historic environment in Swale receives the recognition, protection and positive management it deserves, given the benefits it brings to Swale Borough.



Minster Abbey Gatehouse Museum

In taking forward this 12 year Swale Heritage Strategy, the Council will seek to ensure that partnership working is utilized wherever possible, but in particular, where this would aid in the development of grant funding bids to support project work. Furthermore, wherever possible, ways will be sought to help maximize the capacity and ability of third parties (including the local community and interest groups) to help deliver projects.

A necessary first step in this light is seeking constructive feedback from the community on whether the proposed actions set out in the first action plan (see Appendix I) are those that match the priorities and concerns of the local community as a whole, and gaining feedback on how best the Council can work with the local community (including local organisations) to help deliver heritage-related projects. The feedback received in this respect will be used to inform actions moving forward, and how these should be prioritised.

8. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

8.1 Heritage Strategy Action Plans (Triennial rolling plans over the lifetime of the strategy)

Without a planned set of actions and a clear commitment and resource to implement such actions, this heritage strategy, although setting out an arguably laudable high level vision and set of associated objectives and priorities would nevertheless amount in practice, to little more than words. Particularly in this day and age, the need for positive action is understood, and as such, to help translate this heritage strategy into reality, a set of three-year action plans will be produced and implemented over the 12 year life span of the strategy, between 2020 and 2032.

The first triennial action plan is attached as Appendix I to this strategy. It is not however set in stone and the Council is including it as part of the public consultation on this strategy to establish whether the proposed actions set out in this first action plan are those that match the priorities and concerns of the local community as a whole.

It is intended that subsequent action plans 2, 3 and 4, will be produced in the final year of the preceding action plan and consultation will take place to again ensure that those actions being put forward are ones which are supported by the local community as a whole.

8.2 Monitoring Framework & Strategy Review

To ensure that the Council and its project partners (where applicable) learn valuable lessons in the types of actions/interventions and initiatives which are successful, or not as the case may sometimes be, the Council will produce a monitoring report at the end of each three-year action plan period. These monitoring reports will necessarily be kept concise and will be made available to view as a link on the Council's Heritage Strategy web page.

It is planned that the monitoring report will be produced by the Council's Heritage Team, although contributions from partner organisation (where applicable) will be sought, and whilst these reports will not be subject to public consultation, any constructive comments received by the Council in relation to a heritage strategy action will be given careful consideration and may be used to help shape the content of the report.

It is planned that the monitoring reports would be produced in advance of consultation on the next action plan, as it is believed that having such information available may help to establish the next set of actions on a more informed basis. However, due to resourcing levels and workload levels for the Council's Heritage Team, this may not always be possible.

Finally, the life of this heritage strategy is necessarily finite. It is proposed to have a life of 12 years (spanning between 2020 and 2032) and that it will be fully reviewed and updated during the implementation of the final three-year action plan (Action Plan 4). However, it is accepted that fundamental shifts in different areas (e.g. government policy, local policy and resources) may effectively force the Council to fully review this heritage sooner than planned. Minor changes to external factors will unlikely need to result in the strategy itself being amended, but may well result in changes to the series of action plans.

Appendices

Appendix I

Heritage Strategy Action Plan 1 (2020 – 2023)

To view visit: www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-strategy or view separate document.

Appendix II

Swale Heritage at Risk Baseline (2019) Register

To view visit: www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-at-risk or view separate document.

Contacting Swale Borough Council

The Customer Service Centre deals with all enquiries across the Council; it should be your first stop when contacting us.

Call 01795 417850.

Copies of this strategy are available on the council website: www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-strategy