

## Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters arising – 1 June 2021

Item	Background	Progress on actions
Heritage issues	<p>Cabinet adopted a Heritage Strategy and Action Plan on 18 March 2020. The Action Plan contains a programme of CA reviews. It has been suggested by the Cabinet Member that the Area Committee may want to fund CA reviews for areas which are outside of the planned programme of reviews in the Action Plan.</p> <p>In December 2020, the Western Area Committee agreed that £6,270 be allocated to a firm of consultants to undertake Conservation Area reviews in Rodmersham, Milstead and Tunstall in line with a quote submitted to members.</p> <p>The Conservation &amp; Design Manager carried out an assessment to ascertain whether there is any scope for a conservation area at Iwade.</p>	<p>Update provided by the Conservation &amp; Design Manager:</p> <p>In relation to the Rodmersham Green, Milstead and Tunstall CA review work, I am pleased to be able to report that our appointed consultant, Emma Rouse (of Wyvern Heritage) has now been able to return to work after making a recovery from a serious health issue. We are however approximately 2 months where we expected to be with this work, and so particularly given the process for adoption in relation to CA review work, or new CA's, with the need for input from the area committee and the Local Plan Panel before moving on to the Cabinet for a formal decision, it would now appear to be the case that the earliest we can feasibly look to get these series of 3 CA's with their character appraisal &amp; management strategies (and any necessary boundary changes in place) adopted will be early December following reporting of the CA review work to the Cabinet meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>The proposed timetable will now be as follows for taking this CA review work forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial drafts of all 3 review documents to be received by officers end of May</li> <li>2. Feedback to consultant on these from officers, cabinet and ward member by end of June</li> </ol>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Commencement of public consultation on all 3 review documents for 6-week period on Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> July</li> <li>4. Consideration of the consultation draft version of the review documents at the Western Area Committee meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> August as part of the public consultation process</li> <li>5. Completion of public consultation on the documents on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> September</li> <li>6. Officer report on public consultation and any recommendation on any changes to the review documents as a result, to be reported to the Local Plan Panel on the 7<sup>th</sup> October.</li> <li>7. Officer report to Cabinet recommending adoption of the CACA documents (and any revised boundaries) amended as appropriate in relation to the consultation exercise (including the area committee's feedback), and the advice stemming from the Local Plan Panel, at the Cabinet meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> October.</li> </ol> <p>Iwade Conservation Area - The Council's Conservation &amp; Design Manager has carried out an initial site visit/walkabout of Iwade and is in the process of compiling a report which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Area Committee in September. As part of this assessment work, it was noted that the two groups of terraced cottages forming part of the immediate setting to the grade I listed parish church have been subject to a series of incremental and collectively insensitive alterations which are harmful to the setting of the highly heritage significant church (and to a</p>

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		<p>lesser degree the adjacent grade II listed Iwade Barn), and as such serious consideration is being given to serving an Article 4 Direction on the terraced cottages in question to ensure that any further harm in this respect can be eliminated. It is considered that this work could be undertaken for such a small number of almost identical properties relatively quickly and independently of any further assessment work which may be required around the question of possible conservation area designation, so officers are looking to carry out this independent Article 4 work within the next 2-3 months subject to confirmation of the necessary authority, either from the Head of Planning Services or the Planning Committee.</p>
<p>Conservation issues, including ponds</p>	<p>SBC only has details of the ponds which it manages directly. There is a strategic and heritage, conservation and tourism need for information, including ownership, condition and management of the ponds in the area.</p> <p>Both the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group and Kent Fire and rescue have confirmed they are happy to work with Swale Borough Council to pull this information together for Swale.</p>	<p>Update provided by the Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services:</p> <p>This will be considered as part of the wider environmental work and prioritisation of work programme. No work is currently underway on ponds.</p>
<p>Walking and cycling routes around the villages</p>	<p>One of the documents that is being developed alongside the Local Plan review is a Transport Strategy.</p>	<p>Cllr Sarah Stephen to give a verbal update.</p>

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	<p>At the March meeting following a proposal to fund a Walking and Cycling Routes Project, the Western Area Committee agreed an allocation of £13,000 to fund this project.</p>	
Friends Groups	<p>At the March meeting, a presentation was given on Friends Groups. Officers agreed to research how to set up Friends Groups.</p>	<p>Information on how to set up Friends Groups provided by the Area Committees Coordinator:</p> <p>To become a formal Friends Group you will need to consider a number of things:</p> <p>Setting up a committee: The committee helps to run the group. There are certain roles such as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer that will need to be decided and if is the Chair who usually leads the group and acts as the public voice.</p> <p>Choosing a constitution: This sets out exactly how your group will be managed, your aims and objectives and how meetings will be run.</p> <p>AGMs (annual general meetings): Groups will need to hold an AGM in the first instance to adopt its constitution and elect committee members. AGMs should be held each year after as a way of re-electing committee members, and to present an annual report and reporting of accounts to other members of the group.</p> <p>Setting up a bank account: Once your Group is formally established it should set up a bank account so that membership subs and other funds raised can be managed appropriately. The account should be in the name of the</p>

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		<p>group and will need at least two people (usually committee members) to act as signatories each time a transaction is made.</p> <p>Insurance and Health &amp; Safety: Every time a public activity - such as a community clear-up, tree planting or fun day - is organised, public liability insurance is needed to cover accidents on a public site.</p> <p>Risk assessments are also required for each activity organised by Friends to identify potential risks associated with the activity and put in place any measures to reduce the risks or implement help if needed.</p>
Phoenix House	Meetings had taken place reviewing the background and context to current situation relating to Phoenix House in Sittingbourne and looking at options moving forward with regard to future provision and how that might be provided.	<p>Update provided by the Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services:</p> <p>We have commissioned a survey to understand the immediate needs of voluntary organisations in terms of hiring space and office base in the Sittingbourne area. We are also carrying out another survey to identify space available in other community assets in the area, where we maybe able to match organisations. We are awaiting the final results of the survey which we can share with the Area Committee once received. We have already managed to match some organisations with those with space. We will continue to look at the long-term requirements of community space in Sittingbourne.</p>
Brown tourism signs	At the March meeting following a recommendation by Bobbing Parish Council	Progress on the three brown signs is as follows:

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	<p>to install brown signs within the parish £1,200 was allocated for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Henge, Sonora Field;</li> <li>• Bobbing Church – a Grade 1 Listed Building; and</li> <li>• The Grove – Rose Hill House area</li> </ul>	<p>The Henge, Sonora Field, the application is currently awaiting verification with Visit Kent and Kent Highways.</p> <p>Bobbing Church, there is some work to be carried out by the Church in terms of it being a destination but once that is complete the application process can commence.</p> <p>The Grove, some work on needs to take place on putting together a tourism business case. Once that is complete the application process can commence.</p>
Woodland Management Plan at The Meads and Rose Hill	At the March meeting £2,758.79 was allocated for a woodland management plan at The Meads Community Woodland and Rose Hill Wood.	Earlier Management Plan drafts for Rose Hill and Meads woodlands have been identified and forwarded, along with a price for external support to review the drafts, update and complete. If agreed it is anticipated this work could be completed by October.
Run down state of the Western Area	<p>A Member raised concerns about the current general rundown state of the area and highlighted footpaths, litter in hedgerows and road signs as particular issues.</p> <p>Most of the issues raised were the responsibility of KCC and there are well-established processes to report issues on their website. There are also member grants to fund new street nameplates. Village cleans can be arranged for specific areas.</p> <p>The Chairman suggested the issue of litter on the A249 roundabout was the</p>	<p>The Chair raised this issue at Informal Cabinet on 26 April. The Waste Working Group are looking at what can be done as part of their work on the new contract.</p> <p>The Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure advised that Swale Borough Council are responsible for the cleansing of the majority of roads. Our contractor operates on a zoned basis under the contract which basically means areas with higher footfall receive more cleanses than others. It is fair to say that the resources have been stretched throughout the pandemic through staff shielding, sickness and the need to prioritise domestic waste collections. CPRE have recently published a study showing the increase in litter across the country and the need to</p>

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	<p>responsibility of Highways England and these issues should be referred to Cabinet.</p>	<p>reprofile resources as we all visit new areas following habits formed in lockdown. We continue to work with the contractor and some big improvements have been seen over recent months. We have just started to resurrect the 'Deep cleans' programme which targets roads that have parked vehicles where cleaners cannot access so if Cllrs have roads needing particular attention please feed them into <a href="mailto:cleansing@swale.gov.uk">cleansing@swale.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Highways England are responsible for major strategic routes so this includes the motorways and in the Western area the A249. Officers met with Highways England regarding the eastern end of the Borough in May and have another meeting planned in a few weeks to cover the A249/Western end issues which the Cabinet Member for Environment will attend.</p>