

Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters Arising – 16 February 2023

No.	Item	Background	Update on actions
1.	Youth provision in villages	<p>At the June 2021 meeting the lack of youth provision was raised as an issue. At the request of the Area Committee a project proposal was taken to the September 2022 meeting for VIBE youth workers to engage with young people. The proposal was agreed by Members and it was also agreed to run the project twice at a cost of £6,930 in total. The funding has been transferred to Brogdale CIC. An update on the progress of the project will be reported at the February 2023 meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Mike Baldock, the KCC Divisional Member for Swale West went through the list of Section 106 funding for Youth Services in the Western Area. Some discrepancies were noted and Councillor Baldock suggested it would be useful to monitor where the money was being spent. It was agreed that the Chair would write to KCC to find out what the Section 106 funding had been spent on for Application 16/501266/FULL Newington and report back to the Western Area Committee at the next meeting.</p>	<p>The Vibe update report – Appendix 1.</p> <p>KCC have been contacted – awaiting a response</p>
2.	Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Area Reviews.	<p>The Area Committee requested that quotes be obtained for Conservation Area Reviews for Bredgar and Hartlip. These were considered at the September 2022 meeting and it was agreed to allocate £8,400 for Peter Bell to carry out the CA reviews. The Graphics Officer would be producing the documents.</p> <p>The Conservation & Design Team have advised that the review work for the Bredgar & Hartlip Conservation Areas</p>	<p>The Heritage Consultant has agreed to undertake the work within the allocated budget, and the Conservation & Design Team shall be organising a site walkabout with the consultant and key stakeholders soon.</p> <p>The final document will be issued by the consultant by end</p>

		<p>would be commissioned in the New Year. The consultant would need to confirm if he has capacity.</p> <p>This way the allocated funds can be spent by May 2023, however, due to the resource crunch and a number of other projects (AP1) being higher priority, the Conservation & Design Team recommend that the officers present the review work to Planning and Transport working group/committee for adoption in the Autumn of 2023.</p> <p>Members requested that officers presented the review to the Western Area Committee in the Autumn of 2023, in addition to the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group.</p>	<p>of May 2023, to be followed by public consultation soon after, Dates for the follow-on steps to be confirmed.</p> <p>The Director of Resources advised that as the work is commissioned and ongoing, SBC is committed to pay for the works. Therefore, it can be paid for when the work is complete at the end of May 2023.</p>
3.	Walking and cycling project	<p>In March 2021 funding was allocated to a walking and cycling project in the Western area. The Active Travel Coordinator attended the June 2022 meeting and there was a discussion on potential routes.</p> <p>A virtual workshop took place on 18 October 2022 where the Active Travel Coordinator received input on potential routes from Area Committee Members and Parish Councils. The Active Travel Coordinator provided a written update on the project at the December 2022 meeting.</p>	<p>Please see latest update – Appendix 2</p>
4.	Bus services	<p>A resident of Bredgar raised an issue about reduced funding for bus services and how this impacted residents in villages. She said that there was no incentive for residents to use buses which would reduce the number of cars on the roads.</p> <p>Cllr Bonney commented that KCC did not take the opportunity to use the Kent Science Park Section 106 funding to make a subsidised bus service viable by providing a timetable that would have benefitted the residents in the villages.</p>	<p>See Appendix 3 for the response from KCC.</p>

		<p>The Chair of the Western Area Committee wrote to KCC about the effect the cuts to bus services would have on residents living in villages in the Western Area and request that the timetabling and routes of remaining services were reviewed as they were not viable. The attached response was received and circulated to Members.</p>	
5.	Refurbishment of King George V Toilet Refurbishment	<p>Cllr Sarah Stephen brought a proposal to the September 2022 meeting to consider the refurbishment of the King George V toilet. The Western AC agreed to allocate £5,054 to this project. They requested that an alternative hard-wearing wall covering as an alternative to white roc be used.</p> <p>The Buildings Manager advised that the project is planned to take place during the winter months when King George Park would be less busy. The contractor has been asked to investigate an alternative wall covering instead of white roc, as per the Area Committee comments.</p>	<p>The Buildings Manager confirmed the work is planned to take place January/February 2023 when the park is not busy. After consulting with Cllr Sarah Stephen, the contractor has been instructed to use 10cm x 20cm flat white tiles with a double band of pale grey tiles to break up the 'whiteness'.</p>
6.	Flooding in rural areas	<p>Councillor Mike Baldock raised the issue of flooding in rural areas. Due to changing weather patterns, drains were not able to cope and this was now a problem for some residents in the Western area. Members felt that this matter was beyond KCC and should be taken up with the Government as a proper funding package was needed to deal with the issue.</p>	<p>The Chair of the Environment Committee has requested this matter goes to Environment Committee to seek their endorsement for him to write to Central Government.</p>
7.	Reduction in Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the effect in the Western area.	<p>Councillor Richard Palmer spoke about the reduction in Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the effect in the Western area. The Chief Executive said that she had met with the Chief Inspector who acknowledged this was an issue in Kent.</p> <p>It was agreed the Chair will formally contact the SBC representatives on Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to</p>	<p>Councillor James Hall, one of the SBC representatives on the CSP raised this matter at their January 2023 meeting. He confirmed the PCSOs who cover the Western area are:</p>

		<p>request that they take up the matter of no PCSOs in the Western area with the CSP.</p>	<p>Kirsty Linge – Lower Halstow, Bobbing & Iwade, Newington, Hartlip & Upchurch (07772226114)</p> <p>David Ansbro – The Meads, Borden & Grove Park (07772226090)</p> <p>Councillor Hall advised that PCSOs are likely to reduce and there is no current plan for recruitment. In December 2022 15 new police officers started with a further cohort expected February 2023.</p>
8.	<p>Donation to foodbanks that provide a service to residents in the Western Area.</p>	<p>Members agreed to allocate £10,000 of the 2022/23 funding to The Swale Foodbank and The Bus Shelter Foodbank.</p> <p>Both foodbanks agreed to meet to meet the conditions set out below and £5,000.00 has been transferred to each of them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members would like the funding to benefit residents who live in the Western area rather than other parts of Swale. They hope this is possible as the foodbanks operate a voucher scheme so it should be possible to identify where people live. The Western area covers the following wards (Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow, Borden and Grove Park, Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch, The Meads, West Downs and Woodstock). 	<p>Swale Foodbank reported they have so far spent £1,542.87 of the funds allocated. They have helped 93 people across the whole of the Western area, the busiest location of those wards was Newington, Hartlip and Upchurch.</p> <p>The Bus Shelter Foodbank update is to follow.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of residents in the villages do not have cars and bus services have been either reduced or removed. Members asked if some of the funding be used to deliver food parcels either to residents houses in the Western area or to pick up points in the villages. 	
9.	Proposal to support residents having difficulties purchasing alternative heating products.	<p>Area Committee members considered a proposal to help homeowners in the Western area with reducing their energy costs. SBC provided a Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service, managed by the Swale charity Children and Families. One of the services provided by the Advisor was to give households advice on ways to reduce their use of energy and thereby reducing costs. As part of the service, energy efficient packs were given out which contained items like radiator reflectors, draft excluders, LED light bulbs and timers. The content of the packs were tailored to the needs of the household. Each pack costed approximately £50. The proposal was to allocate funds to the Fuel & Water Home Advisor Service via the charity Children and Families so the Advisor could provide energy efficient packs to households in the Western area.</p> <p>Western Area Committee agreed to allocate £4,523.13 to the Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service, via Children and Families, to provide homeowners with energy efficient packs to be given out after advice was given.</p>	<p>A progress report will be circulated to Area Committee Members in March 2023.</p> <p>A leaflet has been produced for Members to distribute to residents. It will also be circulated to Parish Councils so they can make residents aware.</p>
10.	Rose Hill & Meads Woodland Management & Work Plans.	In March 2021 the Area Committee allocated funding to develop management plans. These had now been completed by an external consultant and there were £2,158.00 of funding remaining. The plans indicated if the tasks should be carried out by a contractor or a volunteer group.	The Policy & Engagement Officer will arrange for the transfer of funds when the bank details for the Meads Woodland Friends Group are received.

		<p>Two Friends groups have been formed, Rose Hill Woodland Friends Group and The Meads Woodland Friends Group. It was agreed that a Borough Councillor would sit on each Friends Group and they should provide annual updates to the Western Area Committee.</p> <p>Funding has been transferred to the Rose Hill Woodland Friends Group. Awaiting bank details for the Meads Woodland Friends Group.</p>	
11.	Heritage issues	<p>Cabinet adopted a Heritage Strategy and Action Plan on 18 March 2020. The Action Plan contains a programme of Conservation Area (CA) reviews.</p> <p>The Area Committee agreed to fund CA reviews for the areas below which are outside of the planned programme of reviews in the Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rodmersham Church Street • Rodmersham Green • Milstead • Tunstall 	<p>The current position of the Conservation Area Reviews is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rodmersham Church Street • Rodmersham Green • Milstead • Tunstall <p>The adopted versions of the Conservation Area appraisal documents are now published on the Swale Borough Council website, adoption notifications to local residents and the parish councils have been sent out.</p>