

Area Committees - Corporate Plan update

At the June 2023 round of Area Committee meetings, all those in attendance were asked to consider what were the priority issues for their Wards. These were to help inform the new Corporate Plan. Please see Appendix 1 for list of priorities suggested.

The Service Committee Chairs and their Vice-Chairs met on 11 July 2023 for a facilitated workshop, and on 3 August 2023 for a meeting with officers, to discuss their vision and ambition for the Borough and to consider what the priorities for the Council should be for the period 2023-2027.

Members agreed the following five proposed priorities and would like to hear Area Committees' comments before progressing further with work on the Corporate Plan:

Proposed Corporate Plan Priorities

Community:

To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our Borough; or
Supporting and enabling our communities.

Economy:

Support a thriving economy; or
Support the economy that helps businesses in a sustainable way; or
Working with our businesses and charitable organisations to improve the economy.

Environment:

To prepare our Borough for the challenges ahead; or
to provide a cleaner healthier more enjoyable environment.

Health & Housing:

Everyone to have access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing

Running the Council:

To engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in an open and efficient way, working within our resources.

The table below shows how the Corporate Plan proposed priorities take into account the themes put forward by Area Committees.

Proposed Corporate Plan priority	Ambition	Themes arising from Area Committees:
Community	To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our Borough; or Supporting and enabling our communities.	Crime and Community issues
Economy	Support a thriving economy; or Support the economy that helps businesses in a sustainable way; or Working with our businesses and charitable organisations to improve the economy.	Employment, skills, tourism and Leisure
Environment	To prepare our Borough for the challenges ahead; or to provide a cleaner healthier more enjoyable environment.	Waste and environment issues including the cleaner/greener agenda
Health & Housing	Everyone to have access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing	Health provision in Swale Access to housing
Running the Council	To engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in an open and efficient way, working within our resources.	Transport, roads, education, planning and utilities

Breakdown of Area Committee priorities by area and questions asked - lists all priorities put forward by each Area Committee.

Sheppey:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Fly tipping including industrial waste;
- littering, more bins were needed (recycling and dog waste);
- use of CCTV and tackling anti-social behaviour especially in Queenborough and Thistle Hill, Minster;
- youth issues, addressing anti-social behaviour;
- the Planning application process, ensuring there was an opportunity for residents to respond;
- the cleaner and greener agenda; and
- refuse collection.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Education, Health and Care Plans for children with special educational needs;
- GP/health coverage across the Isle of Sheppey, in particular Leysdown;
- street-lighting;
- roads and transport links across the Isle of Sheppey;
- increased Police presence;
- employment;
- leisure;
- road safety including lack of routes for emergency services when roads are blocked by accidents;
- highway maintenance (potholes, drains);
- bus services, lack of services affected employment opportunities;
- cycle paths (new and improved existing);
- traffic calming/road humps;
- schools – lack of choice; and
- air quality affecting health – farmers burning plastics.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Improved links from Lower Road to East Sheppey;
- improved transport links across the Isle of Sheppey;
- improved healthcare; and
- railings along Warden and Leysdown roads to protect pedestrians.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Transport;
- bus companies needed to improve services;
- youth/education;
- community maintenance (CCTV, lighting and roads);
- planning application process;
- healthcare, lack of services;
- environment;
- road safety; and
- providing an emergency access route to the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey.

Western:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Transferring land assets to parish councils;
- promote rural tourism;
- fly-tipping, and litter;
- anti-social behaviour;
- parking/idling outside schools;
- planning – including input on the design of housing developments;
- grounds maintenance;
- landscaping SBC properties in the Western area;
- protection of conservation areas;
- social housing;
- air quality; and
- housing levels.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- bus services – better provision to tackle isolation and loneliness;
- good schools in local areas, school places;
- speeding on roads;
- NHS, doctors, hospitals;
- maintenance companies on new developments;
- roads – potholes;
- pavements;
- water companies dealing with leaks;
- provision of high-speed Wi-Fi;
- local roads being used as ‘rat-runs’;
- youth services;
- lack of household waste collection centres;
- home to school transport;
- mis-use of quad-bikes;
- housing levels; and
- fly-tipping.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Better air quality and environment;
- keep/protect green spaces;
- training and jobs – rural apprenticeships;
- education;
- health services;
- road safety and maintenance;
- Wi-Fi
- bus services;
- putting infrastructure in before building houses; and
- anti-social behaviour.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Buses;
- school placements;
- protection of countryside and wildlife;
- school parking/idling;
- highways – roads and pavements;
- health services;
- infrastructure to go in before building homes;
- fly-tipping, litter; and
- maintenance companies in new developments.

Eastern:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Planning;
- bins;
- litter;
- fly-tipping;
- graffiti;
- housing overcrowding;
- air quality;
- enforcement; and
- affordability of housing (social housing, social rent targets and self-build).

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Anti-social behaviour;
- pot-holes;
- fly-tipping;
- air quality;
- flooding;

- public transport;
- climate change;
- loss of biodiversity;
- electric vehicle charging; and
- pushing back on the poor waiting lists for special educational needs provision.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Better planning enforcement;
- improved public transport;
- youth provision;
- bring housing back into use;
- partnership working;
- air quality;
- water and sewage; and
- lobby government/passing things back up that were competing with our objectives.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Biodiversity gains through reduced mowing;
- recycling hub and centre for re-useable goods;
- better cross agency communication on travel and public transport to try to improve transport across the area;
- air quality;
- develop a problem solving approach to electric vehicle charging to be shared across our area;
- local discussions and input into Section 106 spending and finding a way for this to happen without the challenge of pre-determination;
- look into the possibility of area committees being able to crowd fund;
- look at how area committees could apply for external funding; and
- the Council to collate sources of external funding and disseminate to parish/town councils.

Sittingbourne:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Safety – use of closed circuit television (CCTV);
- speed limits – 20 mph;
- grass cutting;
- anti-social behaviour;
- parking;
- graffiti;
- vandalism;
- bins;
- parks and open spaces;

- homelessness;
- housing;
- fly tipping/litter;
- planting green spaces and grass cutting;
- parking particularly outside schools; and
- lack of toilets in Milton Recreation Ground.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Noise;
- pot holes;
- bus services;
- crime;
- school and school transport;
- GPs and health services;
- public transport;
- lack of bus service in Milton;
- leisure services;
- overgrown trees (bottom and top); and
- illegal use of e-scooters.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Community Police, more police patrols;
- Swale road cleaning;
- heritage;
- improved situation for the homeless;
- empty shops, look to see if they could be used as a community asset;
- anti-social behaviour – use of CCTV;
- police community engagement; and
- more to do in Sittingbourne.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Increased CCTV;
- bins;
- pollution;
- anti-social behaviour including vandalism and policing, working with young people – constructive activities;
- tourism, leisure, hospitality and heritage offer – link together and provide information on attractions;
- bring rural element into the town, Milton Regis Country Park was an asset to the town;
- housing;
- employment;
- holistic approach to uniting the community (leisure, health, mental health services);
- condition and maintenance of roads;

- green spaces – improve and maintain;
- parking particularly outside schools;
- road safety;
- fly tipping; and
- improved transport to get around Swale.