

Western Area Committee meeting: Progress on Matters Arising – September 2024

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
1.	Land assets in the Western area.	<p>It was requested at the Area Committee meeting on 8 June 2023 that a list of land in the Western Area be obtained so that Members could consider transferring land assets to Parish Councils.</p> <p>The land asset maps were presented at the February 2024 meeting.</p> <p>A Member spoke about the unregistered land in Bapchild which had a long history of being used as a tip. She said there were potential underground toxic gases which needed to be properly vented. Bapchild Parish Council had no interest in taking on the land and it was the responsibility of SBC to maintain the land. The Strategic Programme & Assets Manager said he would take the matter away to get further advice.</p>	<p>The Strategic Programme & Assets Manager advised the mapping layer showing the Council's land ownership in the Borough is now published on the Councils website as part of a consultation on the Council's disposal and Community Asset Transfer policies.</p> <p>Enquiries made in respect of the land at Bapchild have indicated that the land was previously a small chalk hole that received some domestic refuse and other builders' waste. A "spike bar" landfill gas survey was carried out in 1992. No methane was being generated, but slightly raised levels of carbon dioxide were noted (this is common in agricultural soils). The assessment was that the most probable explanations for these levels are that either the waste material on the site is reaching the end of the decaying process, or that carbon dioxide is being generated by the action of acidic rain water on chalk sub strata. The latter explanation was considered the more probable.</p> <p>The land is currently unregistered but is maintained by Swale Borough Council.</p>

2.	Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Area Reviews.	<p>The Conservation & Design Team advised that the Planning and Resources Committee agreed to re-designate and adopt Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Areas at their meeting on 18 October 2023.</p> <p>A new Conservation Area for Bexon is being programmed to be undertaken during summer of 2024.</p>	<p>The Conservation & Design Team advised updated documents for both Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Areas have now been published on the Swale Borough Council website.</p> <p>Consultant's brief for preparing Conservation Area Review for Bexon is being prepared, and will be sent out for tender by September 2024.</p>
4.	Heritage issues	<p>Local Heritage List - A selection panel date is to be confirmed to finalise the received nominations to be registered on Swale Borough Council (SBC) Local Heritage List register.</p> <p>The next steps will be to organise map plots of all the finalised assets on the SBC GIS system and publish a detailed schedule of the final Local Heritage List on the SBC website.</p>	<p>The Conservation & Design Team advised the officer is looking at organising the selection panel for the Local Heritage List in September/October 2024, dates will be confirmed by 16th September 2024.</p>
5.	Littering and fly-tipping	<p>A Member raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large amount of rubbish at the sides of roads. What can be done to get it cleared?; and • SBC needed to be more proactive about fly-tipping in the Borough. 	<p>A verbal response will be given at the meeting.</p>
6.	Parking	<p>A Member raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motorists parking on double yellow lines was an increasing problem in Newington and there did not seem to be any enforcement; and • there were anti-social behaviour issues connected with parking. 	<p>The Chair of the Community & Leisure Committee will provide a verbal update at the meeting.</p>

7.	Planning Service phone calls	A question was asked about the Planning Service trial period reducing times to receive phone calls. The Chief Executive responded that the trial had been successful as planning issues being dealt with more quickly. The Planning Improvement Board were happy for the arrangement to continue. The Chief Executive would, however, raise the concerns about call times at the next Planning Improvement Board meeting.	The Chief Executive has advised that the changed times to receive phone calls would continue indefinitely.
8.	Planning Portal	A parish councillor said that he had experienced problems with accessing the online Planning Portal, it was agreed to take this issue back to officers to investigate.	A problem with public access was reported in February 2024 which was subsequently resolved. If further problems are experienced, please report them.
9.	Housing Support Fund	A Parish Councillor suggested that cavity wall insulation could be added to the list of critical services delivered to the most vulnerable. A Member responded that there was already a Government scheme in place to provide this service but signposting to the scheme could be provided.	The Policy & Engagement Officer has fed this back to the lead officer.
10.	Swale Traffic Forum	Members asked if the representative had to be a Borough Councillor or if it could be a parish councillor instead. The Chief Executive agreed to seek advice and feedback to the Area Committee after the meeting so that a representative could be nominated at the next meeting.	The Swale Traffic Forum Terms of Reference stipulate it has to be a County or Borough Councillor representing the Area Committees.