

Corporate Plan update on actions – March 2025

RAG rating definitions:

Action on hold, significantly behind schedule with a risk of non-delivery or not started, or does not have funding.
Action changed and/or timeline revised, but on track for delivery. Further or additional funding may be needed which could cause some delay in delivery.
Action on track or completed.

Priority 1: Community - To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience.

Priority number	Corporate Plan actions	Actions update	RAG rating
1.1	Provide the evidence base for the Local Plan to ensure our built and outdoor sport and health facilities meet the demands of the current and future populations.	Built Facilities Strategy has been commissioned, developed and approved by the Community and Leisure Committee and Sport England. It is now being used by planners to justify developer contributions. The Playing Pitch Strategy is in final drafting stages and awaiting sign off from national governing bodies of sport and Sport England.	Complete
1.2	Review the Leisure centre service in order to deliver a range of options for residents to improve their health and wellbeing.	Leisure specialist consultants appointed. Cross party Member working group has met regularly. Community and Leisure Committee approved in January 2025 to outsource the contract for 10+5 years. Tender being prepared.	On track
1.3	Inspect and maintain the playgrounds across the borough and seek external contributions to enhance them wherever possible.	Playground development programme approved by Community and Leisure committee. 2024/25 and 2025/26 playground improvements currently out to tender.	On track

		A review of all 78 playgrounds will be undertaken in 2025 to inform future savings.	
1.4	Complete the Parking Policy review and implement the principles to ensure traffic flow across the borough.	Project completed. Policy approved by Members and uploaded to website. Principles being used for ongoing decisions. Civil Enforcement Contract and Cashless Parking option contract approved for extension.	Complete
1.5	Work in partnership with the local towns and parishes and voluntary sector on our community assets – e.g. playgrounds, sports pitches and pavilions, community halls.	Corporate process for asset transfers has been reviewed. Disposal and Asset Transfer strategies approved by committee. Expression of interest form created for town and parishes to complete and updated them via Parish Liaison Forum. Have been working with interested community groups such as New Road Football Club around future asset transfers. Committed funding from developer contributions to a project to install a new artificial playing pitch in Faversham supporting local school and community sports club.	On track
1.6	To support local groups and organisations in Swale through the delivery of the member grants programme and review the funding mechanism of a community lottery scheme.	Members grant scheme operated and closes at end of February. Community lottery application and licence applied for, website developed, and good causes information session arranged. Currently awaiting operating licence approval before final launch.	On track

1.7	Enable and empower the existing voluntary and community sector in Swale to develop, strengthen, grow, and improve sustainability for the future.	Extensive work undertaken with the Swale Voluntary Alliance and programme of work delivered, outcome report has been provided. Currently considering next steps to make the work sustainable in the future.	On track
1.8	To consult with our residents on ways of devolving power and giving communities a greater say in what happens in their locale potentially through the establishment of new Parish, Town and Community Councils if there is community support to do it.	Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024, developments around Local Government Reorganisation are being monitored as well as the need for all areas to have representation under any new unitary structure.	On hold pending further information
1.9	To ensure active and effective engagement mechanisms are in place so that all residents and communities have the opportunity to engage with the Council.	The Communications Strategy 2024-2027 was developed with members and adopted at Policy & Resources Committee on 16 October 2024. This document sets out the priorities and mechanisms for communicating and engaging with residents. Area Committees continue to take place 4 times a year and are proven to be an important engagement mechanism.	On track
1.10	To support the voluntary and community sector to co-ordinate an effective response to the cost-of-living crisis, including effective distribution of the Household Support Fund.	Cost of Living partnership group continues to meet and deliver a co-ordinated response for residents. The Household Support Fund has delivered direct support through VCSE organisations.	On track
1.11	To work as part of the Community Safety Partnership to delivery priorities to address domestic abuse, crime, and disorder, ASB and support vulnerable people.	The Community Safety Partnership has delivered against the priorities set out in the 2024/25 CSP plan. The strategic assessment has been prepared to review priorities for next year's plan. Delivery of a range of initiatives and use of the PCC grant have been achieved.	Complete

1.12	To deliver the Safer Streets Programme in Sittingbourne and Sheerness town centres.	The Safer Streets programme has been delivered with successful outcomes in Sittingbourne and Sheerness Town Centres. This has included a wide range of initiatives including increased CCTV, Street Marshalls, Youth Provision, By-stander training and environmental works.	Complete
1.13	To deliver an effective public space CCTV service and town centre radio scheme, and to grow wider service delivery by the control centre.	The control centre continues to operate a high-quality service and has seen expansion through external contract with other councils. The town centre radio scheme continues to operate.	On track
1.14	To engage with schools to inform young people about democracy and the work of the council.	Project options provided to local schools but limited to no engagement. Toolkits sent to all secondary schools for national democracy week in November.	Not progressed

Priority 2: Economy - Working with our businesses and community organisations to work towards a sustainable economy which delivers for local people

Priority number	Corporate Plan actions	Actions update	RAG rating
2.1	Use the Levelling-Up Fund as a catalyst for further regeneration on the Isle of Sheppey.	<p>The three Sheerness Revival projects continue to schedule and budget. All planning permissions have been received and all construction contracts awarded. February 2025 saw the groundbreaking event at Sheppey College, with similar events due at Masters House and Beachfields in mid-late Spring.</p> <p>Economy and Property Committee agreed in January 2025 not to dispose of the Old Library in Trinity Road, pending an exploration of external investment opportunities.</p>	On track
2.2	Use the Sittingbourne Supplementary Planning Document as a model framework to support town centre regeneration.	<p>Outside of the Levelling Up Fund, town centre regeneration has been delivered principally via UKSPF in 2024/25. This has seen a restoration and interpretation project delivered at Periwinkle Mill, a town centre wayfinding initiative in Faversham and investment in Trinity Gardens, Sheerness.</p> <p>The UKSPF Town Action Grants scheme awarded over 30 separate grants to businesses and organisations in Faversham, Sittingbourne, Milton Regis, Sheerness and Queenborough.</p>	On track

2.3	Implement the Property Asset Strategy to support best use of our assets and look to increase our income.	<p>Following a period of public consultation, Economy and Property Committee approved the refreshed Disposals and Community Assets Transfer Policies in January 2025. These support the Property Asset Strategy, approved by Committee the previous year.</p> <p>The internal Property Review Group has been established to aid implementation of the Property Asset Strategy.</p>	On track
2.4	Deliver economic development through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) (currently programmed to March 2025).	<p>Both programmes are on track to achieve full spend by 31 March 2025, and we are pleased to have been given a further allocation of £554,150 (UKSPF) for 2025/26.</p> <p>Sample highlights of the current programme have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in the town centre radio scheme in Sheerness, Faversham, Sittingbourne and Leysdown • Grant schemes for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ town centre actions ➤ carbon reduction ➤ community infrastructure (with a focus on digital access, community buildings and active travel) ➤ rural businesses (with a particular focus on the visitor economy) • Support for a Visit Swale photo / video bank • Town centre capital investment – Faversham wayfinding scheme, Periwinkle Mill and improvements to Trinity Gardens, Sheerness 	On track

2.5	Develop an Economic Development Strategy, building on the successes of the Economic Improvement Plan.	<p>Work on the Economic Development Strategy has been paused pending an understanding of the role of national and regional government in delivering economic development, and in particular the future funding landscape (eg the introduction of central government funded schemes / devolved funding / the future of regional economic partnerships such as KMEP).</p> <p>The UKSPF and REPF funding guidance / indicators have provided suitable frameworks for interim investment.</p>	On hold
2.6	Progress a Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.	<p>There has been significant work undertaken in 2024/25 to develop Swale's next Local Plan.</p> <p>This has included an 'Exceptional Circumstances' research piece to help understand the robustness and suitability of the government-imposed housing target for the borough.</p> <p>Other work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the adoption by Full Council of the Local Development Scheme; • the progression of Vision, Objectives and Growth Options proposals (recommended by Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council, but subsequently deferred to allow further evidence to be gathered); • Approval by Full Council of the starting point for the Local Plan housing target 	On track

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval by Full Council of the draft employment site allocations for consultation • Approval by Policy and Resources Committee of the updated Statement of Community Involvement for consultation <p>Other supportive work has included the adoption of the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan, the adoption of the Enforcement Strategy, agreeing the approvals process for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the approval of the Local Heritage List.</p>	
2.7	Support skills development through advocacy and partnership working.	<p>The delivery of the Sheppey College extension using Levelling Up Fund investment continues to schedule and budget. This will provide junior, further and adult education across a range of subject areas.</p> <p>We have awarded £250,000 UKSPF investment to a consortium of EKC Group, Job Centre Plus and local VCS organisations focusing on support programmes for individuals to access employment.</p> <p>We have used UKSPF to support those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) and to provide adult learning space (for EKC Group) in Swale House.</p> <p>Separately, we have responded to the KCC Education Commissioning Plan 2025-2029 and supported EKC Group's Strategic Plan consultation event.</p>	On track

<p>2.8</p>	<p>Develop the borough's second Heritage Action Plan that reflects in-house and partnership capacity, to support and promote our outstanding assets.</p>	<p>Swale's first Local Heritage List was approved by Policy and Resources Committee in November 2024, detailing over 150 heritage assets.</p> <p>Conservation Area reviews have been completed in 2024-25 for Sheerness Marine Town, Sheerness Mile Town, Milton Regis, Faversham Preston Next and Faversham Town.</p> <p>An updated Cellar Hill and Greenstreet Conservation Area Appraisal was considered by Policy and Resources Committee in November 2024 and approved pending consultation on potential boundary additions.</p> <p>Scoping work has been undertaken on the introduction of an Area of Special Advertisement Control.</p> <p>Work is underway to designate a new Conservation Area for Bexon (Bredgar) and to review the Conservation Areas of Graveney Church, Graveney Bridge and Goodnestone.</p> <p>Work to agree priorities for second Heritage Action Plan will commence later in the Corporate Plan period, once the first plan is substantially complete.</p>	<p>On track</p>
<p>2.9</p>	<p>Support modal shift and partnership-based solutions to key issues countering sustainability and congestion.</p>	<p>We continue to advocate for modal shift investment and prioritisation for rail freight, including in consultation responses to KCC's Local Transport Plan and in submissions to KMFP's call for pipeline</p>	<p>On track</p>

		<p>projects for investment. This involves regular liaison with relevant partners.</p> <p>We continue to work with Network Rail to promote investment opportunities for rail freight and for opportunities to combat congestion in central Sittingbourne</p>	
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Priority 3: Environment - To provide a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable and enjoyable environment, and to prepare our borough for the challenges ahead

Priority number	Corporate Plan actions	Actions update	RAG rating
3.1	Refresh the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and continue to be a leader in our work towards net zero.	Carbon footprint of the Council has been re-calculated. Steady progress being made against our emissions. New Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan has been drafted and goes for approval at committee in March 2025.	On-track
3.2	Look at the feasibility of solar and renewable energy solutions for our estate, including council car parks.	Initial feasibility project for Council buildings undertaken. This led to approval being granted to tender for solar panel installation. Currently out to tender and installation will proceed mid-2025.	On-track
3.3	Create an air quality policy that formalises what we can do to improve air quality for the benefit of our residents.	The Air Quality policy is now complete with updates made in 2024. Changes will be included in the Regulation 18 local plan consultation reflecting the recent updates to NPPF.	On-track
3.4	Form partnerships with key stakeholders to ensure we champion active travel opportunities.	New Active Travel Coordinator appointed. Key workstreams include collating the various plans into one Swale Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Public consultation to follow. The Plan requires a range of key stakeholders to work together to deliver new routes. Planning process encourages new active travel opportunities through the design and application process of new developments.	On-track

3.5	Review the grounds maintenance service to ensure we maximise biodiversity gains, particularly with grass cutting, whilst continuing to provide places for residents to enjoy their leisure time.	Review was delayed whilst other options were looked at. Continue to look at reducing grass cutting regimes. A number of sites have had their management plan adapted to allow for greater biodiversity. Our country parks continue to develop and improve.	On track
3.6	Ensure key policy documents such as the Local Plan and Open Spaces Strategy lever in improvements in the quantity and quality of open space to meet the needs of a growing population.	<p>The existing Open Spaces and Play Strategy is used by planners to lever in developer contributions for existing open spaces or generating new ones.</p> <p>The strategy is being reviewed which includes a full reanalysis of the supply and demand for open spaces. The new strategy will be used to provide evidence for the new local plan period.</p>	Delayed
3.7	Work with our partners and contractor to successfully deliver the new waste collection contract and undertake initiatives to deliver improved recycling participation.	<p>New service roll-out throughout 2024/25. Following serious disruption, various adjustments to rounds and additional rounds added in. 3 - 4 re-routes to ensure service is as effective and efficient as possible. IT systems and uploads updated regularly.</p> <p>Review of litter bins ongoing through 2024/25. QR code project to be rolled out and further review of street cleansing required.</p>	On track
3.8	Promote the circular economy by raising awareness of how the materials residents put in their bins can be used for the benefit of the environment.	Communications/education campaigns have not been possible during the disruption period. Plans for projects underway to be delivered in 2025. Particular focus to be on contamination as the	Delayed

		<p>Borough is losing lots of recycling tonnages through misuse.</p> <p>Residents to be informed of the government legislation changes and what this means for collections.</p>	
3.9	Build on the benefits of an improved street cleansing service and work with residents to ensure they can take pride in their local community.	<p>Additional crew mobilised for 6-month period to undertake major deep cleanses in worst affected areas.</p> <p>Improvements still needed for day-to-day street cleansing service and we are working with the contractor to mobilise these.</p>	On track
3.10	Make best use of our resources alongside other enforcement agencies to investigate the most disruptive environmental crimes across the borough, in order to deliver the best environmental outcomes for residents.	The Environmental Enforcement Team has investigated a large range of issues around the Borough. Enforcement is always proportionate and the most serious have led to successful prosecutions.	On track
3.11	Lobby for the best possible standards in marine and coastal environments, protecting our habitats and reducing the impacts of pollution.	Regular engagement with Southern Water and the Environment Agency. We pay close attention to monitoring of sea pollution and continue to push for improvements. Water quality has enabled the Council to apply for Blue Flags and Quality Seaside awards.	On track

Priority 4: Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing

Priority number	Corporate Plan actions	Actions update	RAG rating	
4.1	Work with Breaking Barriers Innovation playbook programme, to develop a long-term programme to tackle health inequalities on the Isle of Sheppey.	Intervention designed for Sheppey work readiness pilot programme, delayed roll out due to changes with secondary school system on the Island. Further funding required to deliver further work. Currently linking into the Kent Marmot Coastal Programme to establish if pilot can be funded.	Delayed	
4.2	Actively play our role in the Health and Care Partnership to address health inequalities in the borough.	SBC has continued and active engagement in the Swale Health and Care Partnership and working on a range of initiative and delivery strands.	On track	
4.3	Ensure we address health inequalities in all our policies ensuring a blueprint for a healthy borough.	Health implications are considered as part of the decision-making process of all policies.	On track	
4.4	Deliver the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 -2027, to meet and build on our statutory obligations to tackle homelessness and improve the standards of homes.	Good progress has been made against the delivery priorities of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-27. Annual report is provided to Housing and Health Committee.	On track	
4.5	Purchase accommodation to use as temporary accommodation to enable us to control costs and provide improved quality and more local provision.	Temporary Accommodation purchase programme Phase 1 is near completion. Evaluation being prepared for Housing and Health Committee.	On track	
4.6	Prepare for the introduction of the Renters Reform Bill 2023 and ensure we implement the requirements when it receives royal ascent.	The Renters Reform Bill has been re-drafted as The Renters Rights Bill, it is currently at the House of Lords stage. The team are preparing an implementation stage and indication that we will receive new burdens funding.	On track	

4.7	Work in partnership to maximise the number and range of affordable homes in the borough.	Work continues with registered providers to engage them in providing land led and S.106 schemes in Swale. Despite excellent delivery over the past few years, there are challenges to viability and capacity and despite a strong s.106 pipeline RPs are not able to make the schemes work.	Ongoing
4.8	Ensure we meet our safeguarding obligations to keep children and vulnerable adults safe.	Safeguarding processes well established in the Council. External audit assurance has taken place with both the adult and children's boards.	Complete
4.9	Achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation, demonstrating our commitment to identifying abuse, preventing it and provide help to those affected.	Work has been completed for the application for the DAHA process, currently waiting for assessment process to be completed.	On track

Priority 5 - Running the Council - Working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way

Priority	Theme	Corporate Plan actions	Actions update	RAG rating
5.1	Finance	Maintain fiscally sound and stable position.	Balanced budget proposed to full council for 18 February 2025. However continued reliance on reserves is not sustainable and a robust savings plan needs to be agreed to ensure the council can continue to avoid a s114 notice.	At risk
		Maximising opportunities for external funding and income streams.	Teams are working to maximise grant opportunities and fees and charges set to maximise our income streams.	Ongoing
		Work towards maximising the rates of income on all commercial council properties.	The property team are reviewing where possible and issuing leases to maximise the council's position.	Ongoing
		Maximising opportunities for external grant funding to deliver the Council's corporate objectives.	Grant funding is sought to deliver council schemes and maximised to support services where the criteria allows.	Ongoing
		Managing finances and having a sound culture of performance management robustly to ensure Value for Money.	Internal and external audit opinions have reported that we continue to deliver a sound culture of financial and performance management have a strong governance position and are delivering value for money services.	Ongoing

		Ensuring value for money is embedded in culture, service quality and social values.	Internal and external audit opinions have reported that we continue to deliver a sound culture of financial and performance management have a strong governance position and are delivering value for money services.	Ongoing
		Investing in projects which deliver financial returns and/or contribute to our wider objectives around Net Zero.	Projects are assessed on their financial viability, member decisions and where possible we aim to contribute to the council's net zero objective.	Ongoing
5.2	Resources/ staff	Seek to make best use of assets and staff resources.	Ongoing process of review and assessment of staff and assets required to deliver our services. Workforce strategy approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 5 February 2025.	Ongoing
5.3	Partnership working	Effective partnership working. Reviewing contract and partnership arrangements to ensure the most appropriate and efficient means of delivering services to our diverse communities and customers.	Service contracts and delivery methods under constant review when procurement dictates or changes arise to allow a seek alternative approaches to efficient service arrangements.	Ongoing
5.4	Customer Services	Reviewing our customer service options to enable better outcomes for customers.	Customer Access Strategy being developed. Initial data analysis and some stakeholder workshops undertaken.	On track
5.5	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Ensuring inclusivity and equality for all residents. Actively promoting fairness, equality and diversity.	The Corporate Equality Strategy 2024-2028 was developed with Members and adopted at Policy & Resources Committee in July 2024. The equality objectives progress will be reported to Committee in 2026.	Ongoing

5.6	Communication with residents	Improving communication with residents via all channels.	The Communications Strategy 2024-2027 was developed with members and adopted at Policy & Resources Committee on 16 October 2024. This document sets out the priorities and mechanisms for communicating and engaging with residents	Complete
5.7	Services/ performance management	Provide services that meet the needs of residents. A sound culture of performance management.	Regular performance monitoring is reported to members with a review of indicators completed in line with the adoption of the new Corporate Plan.	Ongoing
5.8	Staff values, development and well-being	Create a culture that empowers and fosters an ambitious and motivated workforce. Welcoming fair and appropriate challenge. Instilling the values of integrity, dignity, respect and pride. Embedding well-being policy. Supporting and training for effective workforce development. Work collaboratively to alleviate difficulties with recruitment and retention.	Wellbeing events and information are shared regularly with staff across the council. There is also a wellbeing week delivered annually promoting a number of health initiatives to improve staff wellbeing. Values workshops ran at the Swale Managers Forum in December 2023 and at the All-Staff Event in June 2024. Draft values developed and shared at All Staff Webinar in September 2024. Now on hold while Member/Officer Relations work is completed, and then the Values project will be picked up with Members to develop a shared set of Values. Training plan is organised and delivered annually based on skill requirements from the organisation and development needs from staff.	Ongoing

			Managers and HR work together on recruitment and this can include advice from external recruitment agencies to address hard to fill roles.	
5.9	Members training, values and codes of conduct	<p>Appropriate training and support to be provided to our councillors.</p> <p>Welcoming fair and appropriate challenge.</p> <p>Instilling the values of integrity, dignity, respect and pride.</p> <p>Working together to ensure that staff and elected members codes of conduct are met and adhered to.</p>	<p>The member training programme for the civic year 2025/26 is due to be finalised by the Member Development Working Group at their next meeting scheduled for March 2025.</p> <p>Work on joint values and behaviours for Swale members and officers are on hold while member/officer relations work is completed, and then the Values project will be picked up with Members to develop a shared set of Values.</p> <p>The member/officer protocol has now been adopted by Council and following a process of minor amendment has been communicated to all members and staff.</p>	Ongoing
5.10	Governance	<p>Ensuring core governance around corporate and financial planning, workforce planning, managing assets and sound and ethical procurement.</p> <p>Maintaining effective governance that allows sound decision making.</p>	Robust policies and procedures in place to support our financial management, procurement and governance position – evidenced by sound internal and external audit opinions.	Ongoing