
Planning Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 21 May 2026 from 7.00 pm - 8.20 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Monique Bonney, Andy Booth (Chairman), Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Shelley Cheesman (Substitute for Councillor Karen Watson), Simon Clark (Vice-Chairman), Alastair Gould (Substitute for Councillor Terry Thompson), Angela Harrison (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding), James Hunt, Peter Marchington, Claire Martin, Paul Stephen and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Christian DeGrussa, Andrew Gambrill, Ian Harrison, Joanne Johnson and Philippa Richardson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Chris Palmer and Richard Palmer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (VIRTUALLY): Councillor Dolley Wooster.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Kieran Golding, Elliott Jayes, Julien Speed, Terry Thompson and Karen Watson.

40 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

41 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 5 February 2026 (Minute Nos. 713 – 720), the Extraordinary Meeting held on 10 March 2026 (Minute Nos. 792 – 794), the Extraordinary Meeting held on 26 March 2026 (Minute Nos. 851 – 855), the Meeting held on 2 April 2026 (Minute Nos. 872 – 879) and the Planning Working Group held on 23 April 2026 (Minute Nos. 891 - 892) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

42 **Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman referred to item 2.1 25/503466/FULL Land North of Solar Farm, Eastchurch and explained that in a professional capacity he was known by the agent for the application and also he was the Chairman of Eastchurch Turbine Fund Committee. He said these were neither pecuniary nor non-pecuniary interests, but had declared the information for transparency and clarity.

43 **Deferred Item 1 - 25/502451/FULL New Acres, Spade Lane Hartlip**

DEF ITEM 1 REFERENCE NO 25/502451/FULL
PROPOSAL Retention of existing 8 plot gypsy traveller site, each with 2 mobile homes and 2 touring caravans and associated day rooms, new access, driveway, hard standing, package treatment plants, boundary fencing and landscaping (previously granted at appeal reference APP/V3355/W/20/3254539) (retrospective).
SITE LOCATION New Acres, Spade Lane, Hartlip, Kent ME9 7TT
WARD Hartlip, Newington And Upchurch

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Hartlip	
APPLICANT Mr Frank Mongen	AGENT Perfect Pitch Planning Ltd

The Senior Planning Officer advised that there were no updates to the report.

Simon McKay, the Agent, spoke in support of the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to grant planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

Two visiting Ward Members spoke against the application.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments, and these included:

- There had been poor attendance by Members at the Planning Working Group meeting held on 23 April 2026;
- considered the site was well laid out;
- welcomed the inclusion of speed bumps on the spine road;
- needed to be aware that the Council had not met its five-year supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches;
- acknowledged that the applicant was keen to add more landscaping to the site;
- there had been value in visiting the site;
- more Gypsy and Traveller sites were needed in the Borough;
- it was important that the conditions attached to the application were enforced;
- the site appeared to be tidy and well kept;
- if this site was refused, other sites would need to be found; and
- clarification sought as to whether there was a difference between 'pitch' or 'plot'.

The Planning Manager confirmed that 'pitch' and 'plot' were the same.

The Chairman moved the following motion: That the site be visited by Swale Borough Council Enforcement Officers periodically (once a month) for a two year period to ensure compliance of the conditions set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Hayden Brawn.

In response, the Planning Manager advised that the suggested condition would not be enforceable. It was highlighted that, if a Planning Enforcement Officer was unable to attend a visit, this was out of the applicant's control, and that would put the applicant in breach of the conditions. In addition it was advised that Planning Investigations Officers responded to complaints when they were received, that other sites were not visited on a monthly basis and that, it was important to trust all applicants to comply with conditions, noting that they could be enforced if they were breached. The Head of Place explained that the adopted enforcement strategy acknowledged that the Council was not resourced to be pro-active, but was re-active and as such this made the proposal something that the council was not resourced to do.

The proposed motion did not go ahead and Members voted on the application and the conditions set out in the report.

Resolved: That application 25/502451/FULL be granted as per the recommendation in the report.

44 **2.1 - 25/503466/FULL Land North of Solar Farm, Eastchurch**

2.1 REFERENCE NO 25/503466/FULL
PROPOSAL Conversion of agricultural land (Sui Generis) into a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility (Sui Generis) including the erection/formation/installation of ancillary access arrangements, equipment, infrastructure, structures, and landscaping.
SITE LOCATION Land North of Solar Farm, Old Rides Farm, Leysdown Road, Eastchurch, Kent
WARD Sheppey East
PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Eastchurch
APPLICANT Old Rides Energy Storage Limited
AGENT Ridge & Partners LLP

Members were given five minutes to read the two tabled updates which had previously been emailed to Members and added to the website.

The Team Leader (Planning Applications) introduced the application as set out in the report.

Marcus Evans, on behalf of the Applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to grant planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Hayden Brawn.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments, and these included:

- Noted the fire safety concerns and reassured that the applicants were working with Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS);
- noted that there was a lot of green space and clarification sought on its use in the future;
- referring to paragraph 7.8.3 in the report, clarification sought on the site being outside of the Zone of Influence in terms of the Swale Ramsar site; the Special Protection Area and the Site of Special Scientific Interest, plus the requirement for a 6 km buffer;
- more information sought on the footpath issue as set out in the tabled paper, concerned there could be a conflict and the footpath needed to be protected;
- considered the application should be deferred until after the consultation (which ended on 3 July 2026);
- concerned with the fire risk, especially as Eastchurch was a rural community on an island;
- paragraph 5.5 of the report set out Kent County Council's (KCC) view on the application being considered ahead of the consultation;
- often the view of these types of development was that they were 'always blowing up', it was important to move on as technology was changing and installation was improving;
- concerned with the issue of light pollution;
- happy with the landscape plan and that the buildings were not dominating the landscape;
- considered the application needed to be decided now and the Public Right of Way (PROW) issue could be sorted out later; and

- also needed to remember that water was not used to extinguish an electrical fire.

The Team Leader clarified that the area of green spaces shown on the plans comprised bunding and planting to help screen the development, with areas also left undeveloped to help support the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain on the site. He further went on to clarify that with regards to the Zone of Influence referred to in the report, the most important consideration was whether or not the proposals, given their location, would give rise to any adverse impact on nearby habitat designations, with the 6 km Zone of Influence commonly referred to in the borough specifically relevant for new residential development, rather than proposals of the type being considered under this application. KCC Ecology had reviewed the application and had not objected to the proposals. In respect of the PROW, the Team Leader set out that at this moment in time, the claimed PROW route across the site had been made by KCC but was not yet confirmed, with KCC in the process of consulting on the Order, as set out in the tabled update. In terms of any conflict, the risk was primarily on the developer, whilst if the Order were confirmed, then the applicant would be able to apply to amend the proposals or seek a diversion at a later date. In respect of lighting, the Team Leader confirmed that there was no need for the site to be lit on a permanent basis, with condition (16) securing further details of lighting at the site.

Resolved: That application 25/503466/FULL be granted as per the recommendation in the report.

45 4.1 - Spirit of Sittingbourne Multi Storey Car Park, Sittingbourne

4.1 REFERENCE NO 26/500901/FULL
PROPOSAL Change of Use of the existing building from a multi-storey car park to a mixed use comprised of a multi-storey car park and a non-ancillary CCTV control room.
SITE LOCATION Spirit of Sittingbourne Multi Storey Car Park, Station Street, Sittingbourne, Kent. ME10 3LF
WARD Chalkwell
PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL N/A
APPLICANT Swale Borough Council AGENT Mr Suchindra Reddy - Airey Miller

The Planning Manager advised that there were no updates to the report.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to grant planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Hayden Brawn.

Referring to the front page of the application, a Member said the site location should be 'St Michael's Road', not 'Station Street'.

Resolved: That application 26/500901/FULL be granted as per the recommendation in the report.

46 Part 5 applications

Item 5.1 – Happy Days, Bell Farm Lane, Minister-on-Sea ME12 4JB

PINS Decision: APPEAL ALLOWED

Committee or Officer Decision : DELEGATED REFUSAL

A Member said that timeliness was really important on this application and this was why the Council lost the appeal. The Chairman said it was a disappointing result.

Item 5.2 – 58 Roseleigh Road, Sittingbourne, KENT ME10 1RR

PINS Decision: APPEAL DISMISSED

Committee or Officer Decision : DELEGATED REFUSAL

The Chairman welcomed the result.

Item 5.3 – Land North of Perry Leigh, Grove Road, Selling, Kent ME13 9RN

PINS Decision: APPEAL ALLOWED

Committee or Officer Decision : ENFORCEMENT NOTICE

A Member said the containers had been on the site for a long time and should have been dealt with earlier.

The Chairman said this was a disappointing result.

The Chairman referred to page 111 of the report and the paragraph starting ‘An assessment was undertaken.....’. He suggested this could be useful for Members to refer back to on future applications.

47 Adjournment of Meeting

The Meeting was adjourned from 7.36 pm until 7.41 pm.

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel