
Economy and Property Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 29 January 2026 from 7.00 pm - 7.20 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Monique Bonney (Chair), Derek Carnell (Substitute for Councillor Sarah Stephen), Shelley Cheesman, Simon Clark, Alex Eyre, Angela Harrison (Substitute for Councillor Hayden Brawn), Mark Last (Substitute for Councillor Ann Cavanagh), Peter MacDonald (Substitute for Councillor Richard Palmer), Peter Marchington, Kieran Mishchuk, Lee-Anne Moore, Carrie Pollard, Terry Thompson, Mark Tucker and Ashley Wise (Vice-Chair).

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Councillor Hayden Brawn.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Joanne Johnson, Kieren Mansfield and Philippa Richardson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Ashley Shiel and Mike Whiting.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Richard Palmer and Sarah Stephen.

674 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

675 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 October 2025 (Minute Nos. 383 – 392) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

676 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

677 **Matters Arising**

The Chair explained that the representative from Homes England had been seriously delayed in traffic and was unable to attend the meeting, and so item 8 (Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration, update presentation - Homes England) and item 9 (Queenborough and Rushenden (Housing Infrastructure Fund) – update) would be withdrawn from the agenda. Members discussed the option of having an extraordinary meeting and it was agreed that, subject to availability, one would be held before the next meeting on 19 March 2026 to consider both these items only.

The Chair also said that item 12 (Creating a Growth Board for Sheppey - referred item from Sheppey Area Committee) would also be withdrawn. She explained that the underlying proposal which underpinned the item had been withdrawn, and so the item could also be withdrawn.

678 **Chairs Briefing**

The Chair noted that she had hoped tonight's Committee would have a full report from the Barton's Point Member Working Group, as established by the Environmental

Services and Climate Change Committee. Regrettably, the Member Working Group had only met for the first time in recent days, so this report would come in March 2026.

679 **Forward Decisions Plan**

The Head of Place said there would be an additional item for the 19 March 2026 meeting. This would be 'Swale House security – contract award'.

Resolved:

(1) That the Forward Decisions Plan be noted.

680 **Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration, update presentation - Homes England**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

681 **Queenborough and Rushenden (Housing Infrastructure Fund) - update**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

682 **Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park - Assignment of Lease**

The Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager introduced the report which set out why officers recommended that negotiating an assignment would be in line with the Council's Property Asset Strategy, particularly in reducing ongoing financial liabilities while supporting community stewardship of a heritage asset.

The Chair proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Terry Thompson.

Resolved:

(1) That delegation be given to the Head of Place to negotiate and agree terms of the assignment of the leasehold interest in Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park (as shown on the plans at Appendix I to the report) to Faversham Town Council, subject to obtaining the consent of the superior landlord (Brett Gravel Limited).

(2) That delegation be given for the enactment of this assignment to the Head of Place, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services.

683 **Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings Policy**

The Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager introduced the report which presented an updated draft of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Lettings Policy, with comments in response to the 8-week consultation.

The Chair invited Members to make comments and points raised included:

- Considered that Swale House should be excluded from the lettings policy;
- referring to paragraph 2.11 with the option of Swale House being included, there were a lot of conditions that would need to be met, and there was no proven appetite for more tenants;

- the Council was not in a financial position to take on any liabilities, officer time etc., so suggested the exclusion of Swale House remained; and
- clarification sought on how the discount would apply, specifically in relation to the service charge.

In response, the Strategic Programmes and Assets Manager said the rent would usually be £20 per square foot, which was split between £10 a square foot as rental, and £10 for the contribution to services such as utilities, which could not be separately metered due to the nature of the building. The figure was also inclusive of business rates.

The Chair proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Angela Harrison.

Resolved:

(1) That the draft Voluntary and Community Sector Lettings Policy (as at Appendix I of the report) be adopted, without the inclusion of Swale House.

684 Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no need to exclude the press and public as the exempt item was withdrawn from the agenda.

685 Creating a Growth Board for Sheppey - referred item from Sheppey Area Committee

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

Chair

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