
Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Tuesday, 17 March 2026 from 7.00 pm - 9.26 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Derek Carnell (Substitute for Councillor Sarah Stephen), Shelley Cheesman, Alex Eyre, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Tom Nundy (Substitute for Councillor Paul Stephen), Ashley Shiel, Terry Thompson and Dolley Wooster (Chair).

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Councillor James Hunt.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Michelle Anderson, Alister Andrews, Martyn Cassell, Mike Knowles, Kellie MacKenzie, Daniel Pease and Michelle Sampson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mike Whiting.

APOLOGIES: Councillors James Hunt, Claire Martin, Charlie Miller, Pete Neal, Paul Stephen and Sarah Stephen.

811 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

812 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 645 – 656) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

813 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Elliott Jayes declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 10 (Swale Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)) as he was a volunteer on the Sheppey Light Railway Greenway (SLRG) Group.

Councillor Peter MacDonald declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 9 (Coastal Communities Engagement Planning Update) as he was a member of the Sheppey Coastal Protection Group.

Councillor Mike Whiting, a visiting Member, declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 10 (LCWIP) as he was a Trustee of the SLRG Group.

814 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

815 **Chairs Briefing**

The Chair provided an update on work she had undertaken since the last meeting.

- She had chaired the Barton's Point Working Group which had been well attended and considered a variety of issues including those generated from the impact of

the ecological report that had previously been shared with Members. She said it was important to protect the potential green flag park and its unique habitat and place within the Isle of Sheppey community. The recommendations from the Working Group would look at: the offering onsite; work with stakeholders who were already onsite; and events in the future as well as key elements such as the environment including the water. A report would come back to the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee (ES&CC) and the Economy and Property Committee to give Members the opportunity to take work forward in the interests of residents and wildlife. Members of the Working Group had expressed strong wishes that the annual meeting with stakeholders continued on site supporting engagement with the Council showing a regular leadership role in providing a positive future for the area as the landowners.

- She had visited Stones Farm Country Park to support tree planting. This had been well attended and provided an opportunity to hear from the Council's Park Ranger about all the good work, and listen to how outdoor opportunities had benefitted young people who started with volunteering. The Council needed to look past budget concerns on how to make investment in the community really work for everyone. She thanked the Ranger for his hard work.
- The Chair reported that as part of the Great British Spring Cleans, the Council had organised litter picks in various parts of the borough. She had attended a litter pick at Garrison Point, Sheerness and was looking to attend another one at Barton's Point. All were welcome and she advised that Members could arrange such events in their wards by speaking to officers.
- The Chair attended a presentation from the Crown Estates organised by the Coastal Erosion Special Interest Group and attended another one of their meetings with a range of topics being discussed including work around emergency planning and water safety which helped councils work together to find common goals and ways of collaborating on national issues like coastal erosion.
- She drew attention to the response from the Secretary of State representative on public conveniences which was attached to the agenda.

816 **Forward Decisions Plan**

Resolved:

- (1) That the Forward Decisions Plan be noted.***

817 **Street Naming and Numbering Policy refresh**

The GIS Manager introduced the report as set out in the agenda papers.

The Chair invited Members to ask questions and make comments and these included:

- Referred to paragraph 13.1 on page 24 of the report, and said the words "...relevant Lead Member", should be replaced with ".....relevant committee";
- referred to paragraph 5.5 on page 18 of the report, and said that consultation with the Local Ward Councillor on proposed street and road names was in the

previous policy but currently there was no consultation with local ward Councillors;

- referred to paragraph 5.7 of the report and asked that 'portfolio holder' be replaced with 'relevant Chair';
- referred to paragraph 5.17 and asked whether the final fee had been included in the Council's fees and charges?;
- referred to paragraph 5.15 and that 'organization' be replaced with the correct spelling 'organisation';
- referred to paragraph 10 and asked that SGN; UK Power Networks; and South East Water be added to the list;
- would the policy be reviewed annually?;
- referred to a typographical error in the first sentence of paragraph 9.3 on page 23 of the report that '..remand..' should say '..renamed..'; and
- needed to ensure the policy had a nice glossy front page prior to publishing on the website.

The GIS Manager apologised that Members had not previously been consulted on proposed street and road names and would ensure that happened moving forward. He confirmed that the final fee for the service was included within the Council's fees and charges 2026-27 and they were often reviewed and kept in-line with other local authority fees. He outlined the process for new development street naming which included the developer suggesting three names which would be reviewed by officers and they should then be forwarded to the relevant Ward Councillor for comment.

The Chair asked that she be included in emails forwarded to Ward Councillors so she could follow the process and ensure the relevant communication was taking place. The GIS Officer agreed to this request.

The GIS Officer agreed to update the document as requested by Members. He advised that the Policy would only be brought back to the Committee if there were any major changes proposed. The Head of Environment and Leisure advised that reviewing the policy annually was a standard clause within the Council's policy template and was for officers rather than Committee to check whether any new government legislation had been implemented that would require a change to the policy.

In response to points raised by the Chair, the GIS Officer reported that he attended the GIS Kent Forum where officers from other local authorities ensured all fees and charges and policies were in-line, and he was confident that if they needed to share the policy with other local authorities it would not be an issue. He agreed to include any relevant links to the online version of the policy.

A Member referred to paragraph 4.3 on page 16 of the report 'To shorten the road naming process it is recommended that the developer consults with the local community, Parish/Town Council and local councillors for suggested names for new roads prior to submission', and said the process appeared to be repeated under paragraph 5.5 on page 18 of the report "It is the policy of the Council to consult with the appropriate Local Ward Councillor and Parish or Town Council on proposed street and road names.' In response, the Head of Environment and Leisure explained that it was necessary to include paragraph 5.5 as back-up in case the developer did not follow the process as requested.

In response to a question about how the Council would measure whether the improvements to the policy had worked the GIS Manager explained that for any complaints received, officers would be able to refer to the policy and this would free-up officer time.

Resolved:

- (1) *That the amended Steet Naming and Numbering Policy as minuted be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.***

818 Coastal Communities Engagement Planning Update

The Seafront & Engineering Manager introduced the report as set out in the agenda papers.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Seafront & Engineering Manager clarified that there had been no proactive engagement from the Council with local communities at risk of coastal erosion, but the Council offered support if there were enquiries. The Head of Environment and Leisure added that currently the Council was providing the passive approach as set out in paragraph 2.10 on page 28 of the report. The Seafront & Engineering Manager advised that although the Council was a Local Coastal Erosion Risk Authority, it was not obliged to undertake active engagement with local communities. However, the report was to explain what levels of engagement were possible.

The Chair invited comments and questions from Members, and these included:

- Considered the Environment Agency (EA) needed to change their policy with regard to coastal erosion;
- the Conservative Group view was to not apply the 'active' engagement approach as residents would know the risks of coastal erosion when purchasing properties and concerns that the Council would be spending money on something they did not have to provide;
- how many properties were at risk of coastal erosion within the next five years?;
- some residents could have purchased their property fifty years ago so would not have been aware of coastal erosion at that time;
- residents should feel safe where they lived and have access to the best advice about how coastal erosion might impact their property;
- some of those affected might be renting their property;
- how long was the boundary from Graveney to Seasalter in terms of holiday lets affected by coastal erosion?;
- there was a danger we engaged but then could not do anything to change the outcome;
- the Council needed to ensure that residents were aware of the risks and some midway engagement would be best, but with the option to use the £60,000 for future years if the situation got worse on a risk assessment basis;
- could the issue be considered at the Councillors and Residents Fora?;
- had any notices referred to in paragraph six under 'Legal, Statutory and Procurement' on page 30 of the report been issued?;
- could the money be used when certain 'trigger points' came into effect rather than in one hit;

- could information about any properties at risk be included with their council tax; and
- there was a coastal erosion risk to new dwellings at Warden Bay.

The Head of Environment & Leisure clarified that the committee had at a previous meeting agreed not to continue to try to change the EA policy on coastal erosion and agreed that officers investigated engagement options.

The Seafront & Engineering Manager advised that the level of coastal erosion was difficult to predict, however the engagement plan was initially focused on the Eastchurch area, the Shoreline Management Plan information and the SMP Explorer did not draw a distinctive line around property boundaries but would provide a risk erosion area. He estimated that for the Eastchurch area within the next five years there could be either no properties lost, or five properties lost. He was aware that two Hazard Awareness Notices had been served so far.

In response to a query about whether it was 12 or 1 months, the Head of Environment & Leisure confirmed that the Engagement Officer post would be on an 18 month contract if that option was agreed and the £80,000 included all employment costs, not just the salary. There was not the resource currently for the issue to be discussed at the Councillor and Residents Forum. The onus was on householders to ensure they carried out due diligence when purchasing a property.

The Head of Environment & Leisure confirmed that Recommendation (2) was not relevant as the budget for 2026-27 had already been agreed but dependent on the option chosen by Members the budget did not need to be spent.

Councillor Ashley Shiel proposed recommendation (1) and that the 'midway' engagement approach be undertaken. This was seconded by Councillor Derek Carnell.

Following discussion around the remaining £60,000 funding being ring-fenced, Councillor Shiel moved the following motion: That the Policy and Resources Committee be requested to consider reserving the remaining £60,000 for engagement with the local community on coastal erosion. This was seconded by Councillor Carnell.

Resolved:

- (1) That the principles of the Community Engagement Plan be agreed and the midway engagement approach be undertaken.***
- (2) That the Policy and Resources Committee be requested to consider reserving the remaining £60,000 for engagement with the local community on coastal erosion.***

819 Swale Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

The Active Travel Officer introduced the report as set out in the agenda papers.

The Chair invited Members to make comments and ask questions, and these included:

- Considered the response to the consultation was poor and urged Members to ensure they made their residents aware of such consultations;
- referred to the Sheppey CWR route 7 Sheerness to Leysdown and asked which

- land segments had secured landowner agreements?;
- how many of the route sections did not meet the criteria of the cycle infrastructure design? As this was required in order to secure funding from Active Travel England;
- the document should be included within the Council's Local Plan;
- route CWR2 Cromwell Road to Marine Parade, Sheerness highlighted the need for a pedestrian crossing at that point;
- had amendments proposed by Parish Councils been included in the LCWIP?;
- needed to ensure that schools were prioritised to ensure they had safe walking and cycling routes;
- at the SLRG route at Minster it suggested removing the railings along Scrapsgate Road. Hoped that suitable infrastructure would be installed to prevent motorbikes accessing the route;
- a Member Briefing on the process of Section 106 developer contributions and how Members could have an input was needed;
- the route CWR4 Halfway to Sheerness should be a 'quick win', as it linked to the Halfway and West Minster cycle route;
- referred to route CWR5 and route CWR8 and considered it would make a nice circular route;
- referred to route CWR7 and considered the route to Southsea Avenue which was not the best route as it was an unmade road; and
- should require developers to provide a substantial financial contribution to the scheme.

In response, the Active Travel Officer said that the response to the consultation was really positive. It had attracted higher levels of support than other similar documents across the county. SLRG route 7 was very long and would be expensive to put in, therefore it needed to be delivered section by section. Some funding from Active Travel England had been secured to look at phases. She reported that feasibility studies on each of the routes had been undertaken, and there were many levels of design. More detailed design had already been undertaken on some routes such as The Broadway, Minster and Grove Park, Sittingbourne. It was possible that some areas might not be possible.

A visiting Member who was a trustee of SLRG explained that most of route 7 would need to be on private land to ensure it was not on the main road. He said that discussions were ongoing with Swale Borough Council (SBC) and developers that owned land on some of the route. He thanked the Active Travel Officer for all her hard work on the plan and considered that the response to the consultation was encouraging.

The Active Travel Officer confirmed that she was liaising with planning policy officers about the inclusion of the LCWIP in the Council's Local Plan. The Head of Environment & Leisure advised that once adopted the LCWIP would become part of the evidence base for the Local Plan alongside other documents like open space strategy, sports facilities strategy etc.

The Active Travel Officer confirmed that Minster Parish Council had responded, she could prepare a 'You said, we did' document for Members.

In response to a question from a Member about Section 106 funding, the Head of Environment & Leisure said that currently the Council did not have an Infrastructure

Delivery Plan (IDP) which made it harder to request developer contributions. An IDP would be produced once the Council's Local Plan had been agreed. The Active Travel Officer explained that once a route was at the detailed design level, Active Travel England guidelines required that stakeholder engagement be undertaken as part of the consultation process, and it was at that point Members could have input into developer contributions.

Councillor Jayes proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Nundy.

Resolved:

- (1) That the amended LDWIP be adopted and published on the Council's website.***

Post-Meeting Note

The 'You said, we did' document referred to above has been published on the Council's website and can be viewed here:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Active%20Travel/LCWIP%20consultation%20feedback%20changes%20AA.pdf>

820 Kent Joint Waste Management Strategy 2026 - 2031

The Environment Services Manager introduced the report as set out in the agenda papers. This had been a collaborative process with other Kent Boroughs and KCC and all were taking similar reports to their committees. Comments from the committee included:

- Following Local Government Reform (LGR) would all waste and recycling be managed within the new LGR zone?;
- LGR would allow the Council to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and ensure it was fit for purpose; and
- important that the Council would be able to challenge any threats to proposals to close local tips.

In response, the Environment Services Manager said that with regard to the LGR, waste and recycling was open for discussion and whether a material recycling plant was needed within the area Swale was designated to. It might be possible to share the resources over a wider area and everything was 'on the table' in terms of infrastructure. The Head of Environment & Leisure stated that a unitary council would have powers to collect and dispose of waste which would very likely bring benefits and economies of scale.

Councillor Jayes proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Nundy.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 – 2031 be endorsed.***

821 Update on Litter Enforcement Service Review Task and Finish Group

The Environmental Enforcement Manager introduced the report as set out in the agenda papers.

The Chair invited Members to make comments and ask questions, and these included:

- Thanked the Task and Finish Group for their work and said there was a lot of work to do to combat the large amount of litter and dog fouling in the borough and the Council needed to educate residents and encourage them to take their litter and dog waste home if there were no bins available;
- officers needed to ensure that with regard to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) there would be sufficient boots on the ground to adequately cover resource for the borough and not overly target areas where the contractor would just be able to show a good financial return which had happened previously;
- would the contractors be asked to include 'social value' within the contract?;
- the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) maps needed to be made clearer;
- did wardens offer any moral advice on issuing a FPN for littering?;
- did not support the use of heat maps as whilst they proved the contractor had been in the area it did not prove they had undertaken any work;
- how would the committee monitor the contract, would it be officer delegation or would the committee receive a progress report?;
- the Council's Environmental Enforcement Policy was due for review in December 2026 so needed to be included on the Forward Decisions Plan; and
- could the Council impose higher fixed charge penalties for flytipping?

In response, the Environmental Enforcement Manager said that the specification for the service would be completely different from the previous contract with fixed operators and a mobile support unit which could also be deployed to rural areas. Social values would be a key criteria of any Council contract moving forward. The Head of Environment & Leisure added that the Task and Finish Group had made it clear that whilst a contractor was needed to focus on the high footfall areas, as that generated the income to pay for the service, the specification would require a fixed number of hours outside of the high footfall areas.

The Head of Environment & Leisure explained that the contractor would be asked to focus on the core activities and then once officers were 'comfortable' with that operation, additional activities such as PSPOs could be added.

The Environmental Enforcement Manager said that whilst she could not comment on the specifics of the contract, officers were having discussions around education and engagement with all ages and whether there was anything other local authorities provided in that regard that could be included in the specification. The Environment Services Manager referred to the Council's Environmental Enforcement Policy that included information about issuing FPN's to young people, and that any enforcement carried out needed to be in-line with that policy.

The Head of Environment & Leisure advised that it had been made clear as part of the pre-engagement, the level of detail the Council expected to be reported back for monitoring purposes. He understood that the heat maps were only representative of the locations they had been to, but officers could also have a heat map of where they

had been and where action had been taken, which was also the same for the parking service.

The Environment Services Manager reported the Council had fixed penalty notices amounts which Members had set under the fees and charges, and it was two tier for fly-tipping, with the upper tier set at the maximum amount. If it was considered the fixed penalty notice was not appropriate, offenders could be taken to court. The Environment Services Manager further reported that via the Kent Resource Partnership, officers had sought to engage the Magistrates Association about the implications of fly-tipping, and requested they reviewed the penalties and sentencing guidance that they currently used. Also, he was aware that the government were looking at additional tools to assist local council's with more severe penalties for fly-tipping.

Councillor Jayes proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by the Councillor Nundy.

Resolved:

- (1) That the update report be noted, and that officers finalise the specification and proceed to tender, in consultation with the Member Task and Finish Group.***

822 Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting was adjourned from 8.45 pm until 8.55 pm.

Chair

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