

Agenda

Housing, Health and Communities Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 20 January 2026

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell, Ann Cavanagh, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison (Vice-Chair), Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Ben J Martin, Pete Neal, Tom Nundy, Hannah Perkin (Chair), Carrie Pollard and Karen Watson.

Quorum = 5

Pages

Recording and Privacy Notice

Swale Borough Council is committed to protecting the security of your personal information. As data controller we process data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

This meeting may be recorded. The recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy and may be published on the Council's website. By entering the chamber and by speaking at a meeting, whether in person or online, you are consenting to being recorded and to the recording being published.

When joining a meeting online, your username will be visible to others in attendance. In joining the meeting you are consenting to us processing your username. You may use a pseudonym as your username but the use of an inappropriate name may lead to removal from the meeting.

If you have any questions about how we look after your personal information or your rights under the legislation, please email dataprotectionofficer@swale.gov.uk.

1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Visitors and members of the public who are unfamiliar with the building and procedures are advised that:

- (a) The fire alarm is a continuous loud ringing. In the event that a fire drill is planned during the meeting, the Chair will advise of this.
- (b) Exit routes from the chamber are located on each side of the room, one directly to a fire escape, the other to the stairs opposite the lifts.

- (c) In the event of the alarm sounding, leave the building via the nearest safe exit and gather at the assembly point on the far side of the car park. Do not leave the assembly point or re-enter the building until advised to do so. Do not use the lifts.
 - (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.
- 2. Apologies for Absence
 - 3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 28 October 2025 (Minute Nos. 404 – 419) as a correct record.
 - 4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPIs) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.
 - 5. Matters Arising

Update from the Chair on any matters from the previous meeting or upcoming agenda items relating to this committee.
 - 6. Chairs Briefing
 - 7. Questions for the Police and Crime Panel

Items for Noting

- 8. Forward Decisions Plan 5 - 6

Items for Decision by the Committee

- 9. Play Area Review 7 - 48
- 10. English Indices of Deprivation 2025 49 - 64

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 11. | Household Support Fund (Round 7) and Tackling Poverty Update | 65 - 76 |
| 12. | Sport England Place Partnership Programme | 77 - 84 |
| 13. | Swale Community Safety Partnership Priority Setting | 85 - 96 |
| 14. | Exclusion of the Press and Public | |

To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following item: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3.

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------|
| 15. | Play Area Review - Appendix II | 97 - 98 |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------|

Issued on Monday, 12 January 2026

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact democraticservices@swale.gov.uk. To find out more about the work of this meeting, please visit www.swale.gov.uk.

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing, Health and Community Committee Forward Decisions Plan – January 2026

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt	Lead Officer and report author
Permissive Environments Policy Statement	25 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Domestic Abuse Policy Refresh	25 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
CCTV Report	25 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Temporary Accommodation Scrutiny Report	25 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Charlotte Hudson Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Rainbow Homes Governance	25 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Charlotte Hudson Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Empowering You in Swale Strategy Update	25 March 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Swale Good Causes Community Lottery Update	25 March 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Temporary Accommodation Scrutiny Report	25 March 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Charlotte Hudson Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Leisure Centre Contract Award	September 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jay Jenkins Head of Service: Martyn Cassell
Housing Enforcement Policy	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: San Nyunt

			Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Beachfields Phase 2	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Martyn Cassell
			Head of Service: Martyn Cassell
Play Strategy	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Jay Jenkins
			Head of Service: Martyn Cassell

Housing, Health and Communities Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	20 January 2026
Report Title	Play Area Review
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Robert Lucas – Greenspace Technical Officer
Classification	Open/Restricted Appendix
Recommendations	1. To note the outcome of the play area review. 2. To remove 2 play facilities at: 1. Elm Grove, Sittingbourne 2. Lionfield, Faversham 3. To engage with relevant the relevant Town or Parish Council or other appropriate local organisation to offer and seek to transfer the following 14 play areas: 1. Batteries Close Play Area, Lynsted and Kingsdown 2. Colonels Lane (Horselees Road) Play Area, Boughton-Under-Blean 3. Stangate Drive Play Area, Iwade 4. Woodpecker Drive (Village Park) Play Area Iwade 5. Recreation Ground Play Area, Iwade 6. Colson Drive (Alefe Way) Play Area, Iwade 7. Mansfield Drive Play Area, Iwade 8. Homefield Drive Play Area, Upchurch 9. Rooks View Play Area, Bobbing 10. Randle Way Play Area, Bapchild 11. Anne Boleyn Play Area, Eastchurch 12. Village Hall Play Area, Warden Bay 13. The Spinney Play Area, Leysdown 14. Leysdown Coastal Park Play Area, Leysdown Should any, or all, of the Town or Parish Councils decline the opportunity for transfer play areas 1,2,3,5,7,9,10 and 11 could be considered for closure based on the strategy below.

	4. On completion of the above, review the list of remaining 15 potential removals to see what might be possible and engage with Ward Cllrs and the community. 5. To ask officers to pursue funding options to upgrade the recommended play areas which would then allow removal of further sites as detailed in tables at 3.10.
--	---

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 A report to the Housing, Health and Communities Committee on 3 July 2025 identified the need for a play area review before a new Play Strategy could be developed and in association, consider potential savings as part of the Council's medium term financial planning.
- 1.2 This report and accompanying appendices set out the detailed work undertaken to review the play area provision in the borough and formulation of the recommendations, with some being considered for improvement, closure or transfer of the asset. This is very much an initial look and will require further engagement with committee.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 The Open Space and Play Area Strategies are being developed by the Council to provide a sound body of evidence for supporting open space policies within the Local Plan. They also identify key opportunities and plan for delivery of improvements to existing open space and provide clear standards for provision in terms of quality and quantity. Furthermore, they will make policy decisions on the type of play provision and intended audiences.
- 2.2 Play areas cover equipped provision for children and teenagers and includes skate parks and multi-use games areas. They are normally associated with other amenity space and provide immense value by supporting children's physical health through activity, developing critical social and emotional skills like cooperation and resilience and promote well-being and creativity. They also act as vital community hubs, strengthening social connections for both children and families.
- 2.3 To develop the Play Strategy, review current facilities and consider potential savings through the reduction in sites as part of the medium-term financial planning, Members agreed the criteria for review at the meeting of the Housing, Health and Communities Committee on the 3 July 2025.
- 2.4 In determining how to review the service provision, Members agreed the work should take account of:
- The Council's RAG rating which takes into consideration age, identified defects, maintenance costs, health & safety, play value and proximity to others.

- National benchmarking data/standards (Fields in Trust).
 - Population density, health, crime and social deprivation analysis.
- 2.5 To capture the information and visualise the findings, consultants Knight, Kavenagh & Page (KKP) have extended their current work on the Open Spaces and Play Strategies to assist with producing the full review report and findings as provided in Appendix I.
- 2.6 The review report:
- Combines accessibility analysis and quality/value scores of each site with the Councils own RAG assessment.
 - Using the above data, identifies sites that could be considered surplus to requirements, but with recommendations on the potential upgrade of certain sites to justify potential removal of others.
 - Presents a scoring matrix, based on a series of Indices of Multiple Deprivation to demonstrate potential impact.
 - Identifies sites with their calculated score against the criteria to provide rational to consider removal. Outcomes are presented as three analysis areas, Faversham Sheppey and Sittingbourne.
- 2.7 A total of 149 play locations have been identified in Swale and these are owned by several different authorities and organisations, the Council has responsibility for 110 of these locations, Parish Councils, housing associations and housing management companies are responsible for the balance. While taking account of all public provision, any decisions can only be implemented to Council owned facilities.

Analysis area	Number
Faversham	38
Sheppey	54
Sittingbourne	57
Swale	149

- 2.8 National Quantity Standards
- Fields in Trust (FIT) guidance suggests a quantity standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population for designated playing space per authority.
- The draft 2025 Swale Open Space Strategy calculates that the current standard across the Authority is currently 0.06 hectares per 1,000 population, as calculated below.

Analysis area	Number	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Faversham	38	2.07	0.05
Sheppey	54	3.12	0.07
Sittingbourne	57	2.98	0.06
Swale	149	8.17	0.06

This is significantly below the FIT standard. However, it is often recognised that children and young people can and do use the space surrounding the defined designated area for play. This is especially the case for amenity greenspace surrounding a play area. This is illustrated in Table below, and demonstrates that, when accounting for amenity green space, all three analysis areas meet the suggested FIT standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population.

Analysis area	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Faversham	10.61	0.32
Sheppey	15.71	0.37
Sittingbourne	23.19	0.38
Swale	49.51	0.36

- 2.9 Consultants KKP used a 3-stage assessment methodology to identify play areas appropriate for consideration. These stages were:
- Undertake an initial mapping exercising utilising the Fields in Trust (FIT) guidance identifying sites within catchment of others.
 - Identify sites using the quality scoring matrix to demonstrate the potential impact of removal. Sites are ranked according to various social and health factors.
 - Identify sites recommended for removing, upgrading or improvement or those that could be considered for asset transfer.
- 2.10 Summary of outcomes and proposals for each of the analysis areas is identified in the tables below. These include the recommendations taken from the KKP analysis.

Faversham Analysis Area Proposals

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
145.1/ 145.2	KGV The Mount Faversham play area/basketball court	Upgrade/improve quality	It is recommended that this site be upgraded to a NEAP and the quality improved from average to good. There is space to the west of the current site to increase the offer.	If this play site is expanded, it would absorb the loss of surrounding play sites through a larger catchment area. The quality of the site needs to be improved to offset the potential loss of certain sites.
118.1	Hazebrouck Road play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	Should site 145.1 be upgraded to a NEAP, the increased catchment from the upgrade would cover the loss of these sites.
169	Lower Road Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
159.1	Lionfield basketball court ¹	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
313.1	Sumpter Way play areas	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
104	Finch Close Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 97.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus to demand.
120	Hilton Close Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
360.1	Windermere play areas	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
97.1	Faversham Recreation Ground play areas	Improve quality	Site 97.1 rates average. For sites 104, 120, 360.1 to be removed, it is recommended to upgrade 97.1 to good. This includes improving the quality of equipment and surfaces.	Improving the quality of site 97.1 with better equipment will mitigate the closure of sites 104, 120 and 360.1.
22.1	Batteries Close play area	Management transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Teynham Parish Council.	These sites are currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a Parish Council.
62	Horselees Road Play Area	Management transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Boughton-under-Blean Parish Council.	Whilst this could potentially create financial savings for SBC, it would also provide the Parish Council the opportunity to precept for improvements they may be better placed to undertake.

¹ Current play equipment removed with only the basketball court remaining.

Sittingbourne Analysis Area Proposals

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
293.1	Sittingbourne Recreation Ground play area	Upgrade /improve quality	Play site needs to be upgraded to a NEAP and the quality of the existing play equipment to be upgraded to good. It is currently rated as average.	Site is currently a LEAP. If this was expanded, it would make several surrounding sites, such as Manor Grove (although this has recently been upgraded), Anselm Close and Chilton Avenue play areas surplus to requirement. The site currently has a RAG rating of average. It is recommended that this is upgraded to good.
290.1	Stangate Drive play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Iwade Parish Council.	This site is currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a local Parish Council. Whilst this could potentially create financial savings for SBC, it would also provide the Parish Council the opportunity to precept for improvements they may be better placed to undertake.
346.1	Iwade Village Park play area	Transfer		
274.1	Red Admiral Crescent (Iwade Recreation Ground) play area	Transfer		
6	Alefe Way play area	Transfer		
175.1	Mansfield Drive Play Areas	Transfer		
141.1	Kemsley Recreation Ground	Improve quality	Improve the quality of the site from average to good. This will be through upgrading the quality of equipment and surfaces.	Site rated average through the Council's RAG rating. If surrounding sites are to be removed, it is recommended this is upgraded.
189.1	Milton Creek Country Park	Improve quality	Improve the quality of the site from average to good. This will be through upgrading the quality of equipment and surfaces.	Site rated average through the Council's RAG rating. If surrounding sites are to be removed, it is recommended this is upgraded to good.
77.1	Diligent Drive play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 141 .1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
89.1	Eleanor Drive Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 141 .1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
251.1	Recreation Way play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 290.1, 175.1 and 346.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
269.1	Samuel Drive play areas	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 290.1, 175.1 and 346.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
235.1	Premier Way play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 290.1, 175.1 and 346.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
173.1	Manor Grove play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 293.1 (if it is upgraded to a NEAP) covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
13.1	Anselm Close play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 293.1 (if it is upgraded to a NEAP) covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
58.1	Chilton Avenue play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 293.1 (if it is upgraded to a NEAP) covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
124.1	Homefield Drive play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Upchurch Parish Council	This site is currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a local Parish Council. Whilst this could potentially create financial savings for SBC, it would also provide the Parish Council the opportunity to precept for improvements they may be better placed to undertake.
262.1	Rook View play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Bobbing Parish Council.	
247.1	Randle Way play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Bapchild Parish Council	

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
90	Elm Grove	Remove	Site is currently closed due to quality issues. It is recommended that this is removed permanently.	The catchment from site 255.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.

Sheppey Analysis Area Proposals

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
347.1	Vincent Gardens play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 103.2 and 27.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus to demand, although it should be noted this play area has recently benefited from an upgrade including new play units.
27.1	Beachfields Park	Improve quality	Improve the quality of the site, based on current RAG rating.	Key site in the resort of Sheerness which supports day trippers and local residents. Site needs to be upgraded based on the current RAG rating.
11.1	Anne Boleyn Close play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Eastchurch Parish Council	This site is currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a local Parish Council. Whilst this could potentially create financial savings for SBC, it would also provide the Parish Council the opportunity to precept for improvements they may be better placed to undertake.
157	Village Hall Play Area/Linear Park outdoor gym/Linear Park zip wire	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Warden Bay Parish Council	
333.1	The Spinney play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Leysdown Parish Council	
154	Leysdown Coastal Park Play/MUGA/Fitness gym/	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Leysdown Parish Council	

- 2.11 The review proposes to:
- Seek transfer of 14 play areas.
 - Upgrade 6 play areas to facilitate the removal of 17 of the play areas below.
 - Remove 17 play areas.
- 2.12 Transfer:
- The Council can seek to transfer the 14 suggested play areas to Parish Councils, with some already having expressed interest in some of the facilities. Clearly negotiation will be required, and transfer cannot be guaranteed. Once we have a consensus from the Parish Councils, we can re-evaluate those play areas not transferred against the KKP evaluation model to identify additional play areas for closure.
- 2.13 Upgrade:
- There is currently Section 106 funding allocated within the Play Improvement Programme to improve and upgrade the Sumpter Way and Lower Road play areas which KKP have identified for closure, however due to the descriptions within the Section 106 agreement these funds could be used to upgrade the play facilities at King George V Playing Field (The Mount) in Faversham. There is no allocated funding for the other 5 sites (Faversham Recreation Ground, Sittingbourne Recreation Ground, Kemsley Recreation Ground, Milton Creek Country Park and Beachfields) identified for upgrading. As a result, it is estimated that a further £575,000 of capital investment would be required to bring these up to the additional standards needed to facilitate other removals.
- 2.14 Remove
- If funds are not available to improve and upgrade sites to facilitate some of the proposed removals, this leaves potentially 11 removal sites. There are 3 proposed sites (Recreation Way, Samuel Drive and Premier Way, Kemsley) that are by the criteria within the catchment of other play areas in Iwade and surplus. However practically they are separated by a major road (A249) and it is unfeasible to expect the community would be served by the retained play areas. It has also been estimated that £69,500 would be required to remove these 11 play facilities for which there is currently no allocated funding. Two sites at Elm Grove, Sittingbourne which has not operated for years and the remaining limited equipment at Lionfield, Faversham could be removed with little impact either to the community or financially.
- 2.15 Generally the review shows that the borough is well provisioned with play facilities with few gaps. There are some sites surplus to need, but decisions to reduce the number of facilities are reliant and outweighed upon either significant capital investment to improve remaining facilities or budget to remove and reinstate.
- 2.16 Should recommended transfers and removals be undertaken, reduced inspection requirements would ensure that current resources would be able better able to

achieve weekly inspection targets, plausibly be deployed to undertake more maintenance tasks and reduce revenue expenditure.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To note the outcome of the play area review.
- 3.2 To remove 2 play facilities at:
 - 1. Elm Grove, Sittingbourne
 - 2. Lionfield, Faversham
- 3.3 To offer and seek to transfer 14 play areas to Town or Parish Councils or other appropriate local organisations:

- 1. Batteries Close Play Area, Lynsted and Kingsdown
- 2. Colonels Lane (Horselees Road) Play Area, Boughton-Under-Blean
- 3. Stangate Drive Play Area, Iwade
- 4. Woodpecker Drive (Village Park) Play Area Iwade
- 5. Recreation Ground Play Area, Iwade
- 6. Colson Drive (Alefe Way) Play Area, Iwade
- 7. Mansfield Drive Play Area, Iwade
- 8. Homefield Drive Play Area, Upchurch
- 9. Rooks View Play Area, Bobbing
- 10. Randle Way Play Area, Bapchild
- 11. Anne Boleyn Play Area, Eastchurch
- 12. Village Hall Play Area, Warden Bay
- 13. The Spinney Play Area, Leysdown
- 14. Leysdown Coastal Park Play Area, Leysdown

Should any, or all, of the Town or Parish Councils decline the opportunity for transfer play areas 1,2,3,5,7,9,10 and 11 could be considered for closure based on the strategy below.

- 3.4 On completion of the above, review the list of remaining 15 potential removals to see what might be possible and engage with Ward Cllrs and the community.
- 3.5 To ask officers to pursue funding options to upgrade the recommended play areas which would then allow removal of further sites as detailed in tables at 3.10.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To fully implement the proposals as identified in the review could limit access to facilities for some of the community as shown by the example in Kemsley. It would also require significant additional funds to improve existing facilities to meet the required standard and to remove and reinstate any proposed removed facilities. Budget is not currently available.

- 4.2 Proceed with more closures that would take us below the national guidelines as it is not a statutory function. Removal of 25% of play areas, totalling 20 would save around £44,000.00 per annum, although an estimated one-off capital requirement of £5,500.00 per play area closed would be required to remove the equipment and return the site to the environment. Removal of 50% of play areas totalling 40 would save around £88,000.00 per annum (plus the option to reduce staffing allowing an additional saving of around £19,300.00 per annum), although an estimated one-off capital requirement of £5,500.00 per play area closed would be required to remove the equipment and return the site to the environment.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 There has been no formal consultation yet with the Parish or Town Councils in regards to the transfer of identified sites, but several Parish Councils have already expressed interest in taking responsibility for some of the Council owned play facilities on the list and if the recommendations are agreed, further work will take place to complete transfers.
- 5.2 There was previous consultation with Ward Members on the 2 play areas identified for removal and officers will liaise with Ward Members on the play areas shown in 3.10 that could be removed if others are upgraded and for those that are proposed for transfer.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Community: To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience. Environment: To provide a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable, and enjoyable environment and to prepare our borough for the challenges ahead.
Financial, Resource and Property	This review will ensure that the Council is providing appropriate, cost-effective services, making best use of its resources and property. By reviewing and contributing to the new strategy, the authority will stand a better chance of being successful with external grants and developer contributions to assist delivery of the service. If the recommendations are agreed, with a reduced number of play areas it is estimated revenue expenditure will reduce by an indicative £68,323.25 (£30,747.50 via play area transfer and £37,575.75 via play area removals as per appendix 2) and

	Inspection Officers will be better able to meet the inspection targets. It is estimated that £575,000 of capital investment, outside the already mentioned Section 106 funds, would be required to bring remaining sites up to suitable standards to meet the criteria for removing others. It is estimated that £69,500 will be required to physically remove and reinstate the play areas that are on the longer list of 15 for possible removal.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The review and strategy will underpin key sections of the Local Plan relating to Play. This is a required element of the Local Plan process, providing a robust evidence base for decisions. It will therefore assist in the Planning Inspectorate process. By providing a robust strategy that is compliant with National Planning Policy Framework, the Council will be better placed to defend any challenges which may be presented by developers and or to secure further funds for our existing sites. Transferring the play areas to Town or Parish Councils with the necessary agreements would require Legal input. A timescale for completing any asset transfers ahead of 31st March 2026 is unviable. As such, the Council will need to manage the play areas until the transfers are completed.
Crime and Disorder	The provision and good management of a broad range of play areas and facilities for young people can make a positive contribution to managing issues of crime and disorder by providing diversionary activities and encouraging community cohesion. Inevitably however these public sites do suffer from vandalism, and it is therefore vital that we consider suitable equipment and continue with our existing good inspection regime.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The review and strategy will guide and influence the future provision, location and management of valuable open space facilities and promote sensitive quality management. This will ensure facilities are within reasonable sustainable distances for the community. It also has a role through association to adjacent open spaces in supporting sustainable urban drainage and carbon reduction through the provision of grassland and planting.
Health and Wellbeing	By providing and supporting a broad range of appropriate quality play areas and facilities across Swale, there will be greater opportunities for supporting children's physical health through activity, developing critical social and emotional skills to promote well-being and creativity.

	Play areas also act as vital community hubs, strengthening social connections for both children and families.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	This review and its recommendations will ensure the Council will be better able to maintain and inspect its own facilities to agreed standards, the Council will ensure their facilities are safe and fit for purpose. Without review and a strategy that is compliant, the Borough will be at risk of not having the Local Plan agreed, missing funding opportunities, losing challenges to planning applications by developers, and not providing high quality facilities for its residents.
Equality and Diversity	To try to ensure fair, targeted provision to the whole community the review analysis uses a matrix score with data sets that include population density, indices of multiple deprivation, crime and obesity levels. Issues of equal opportunity are addressed through applications for any changes to existing or new developments, ensuring that all open space and such facilities are compliant and fit for purpose for all users including those with additional requirements.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.
Local Government Reorganisation	In reviewing the play area provision in Swale and how it is delivered there is the option to encourage Parish Council's to transfer and take responsibility for play areas in their communities which in turn would keep decisions about improvements at a local level. This report highlights 14 play areas that could provide this opportunity.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Play Site Review – Knight, Kavanagh and Page Ltd
- Exempt Appendix 2: Play Area Savings figures

8 Background Papers

- [Housing Health and Communities 3 July 2025 – Play Strategy Update](#)



KNIGHT, KAVANAGH & PAGE

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

NOVEMBER 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowle Road, Bury BL9 0UF
T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@knp.co.uk www.knp.co.uk



Cert Num: 6543-QMS-001

Quality assurance	Name	Date
Report origination	Paul Barrett	September 2025
Quality control	Chris Macfarlane	September 2025
Client comments	SBC	October 2025
Final approval	Page 22	

CONTENTS

PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....1

PART 2: CURRENT PLAY OFFER.....3

PART 3: PLAY ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY9

PART 4: FAVERSHAM ANALYSIS AREA12

PART 5: SITTINGBOURNE ANALYSIS AREA15

PART 6: SHEPPEY ANALYSIS AREA19

Appendix A: Site scoring criteria22

Appendix B : RAG rating score23

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This report is a review of play sites produced by Knight Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP) on behalf of Swale Borough Council (SBC).

Following the 2024 Open Space Assessment, the Local Authority has been tasked with investigating the possibility of making financial savings from its play budget - with a particular focus on reducing its play inspection and maintenance costs. Consequently, SBC want to explore the potential of closing certain play sites which are deemed surplus to requirements to make these savings.

To date, SBC has undertaken a quality assessment of all sites managed by the Authority focusing on the risk and technical aspect of sites (referred to as a RAG assessment). Criteria for the RAG assessment is presented in Appendix B. Sites have also been assessed through the Open Space Study (with a quality and value score).

Based on analysis, this report provides options for which sites could be removed to support SBC with its aim of reducing its maintenance budget. To achieve this, the report:

- ◆ Combines KKP's accessibility analysis and quality/value scores of each site, with the Council's own RAG assessment of all play sites.
- ◆ Using the above data, identifies sites which could be considered surplus to requirements. In addition, recommendations are provided on the potential upgrade of certain sites to justify the potential removal of others. For example, this could be enhancing a play site from a LEAP to a NEAP.
- ◆ Presents a scoring matrix, based on a series of data sets, including population density, Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), crime and obesity levels, and calculates a score for all identified 'at risk' sites to demonstrate the potential impact of losing a certain site.
- ◆ Identifies such sites with their calculated score against the criteria to provide a rationale for SBC to consider if a site could be removed.

The work is presented on an analysis area basis to reflect the different areas of the Borough. This report consists of the following sections:

- ◆ Part 2: Current play provision in Swale
- ◆ Part 3: Methodology
- ◆ Part 4: Faversham Review
- ◆ Part 5: Sittingbourne Review
- ◆ Part 6: Sheppey Review

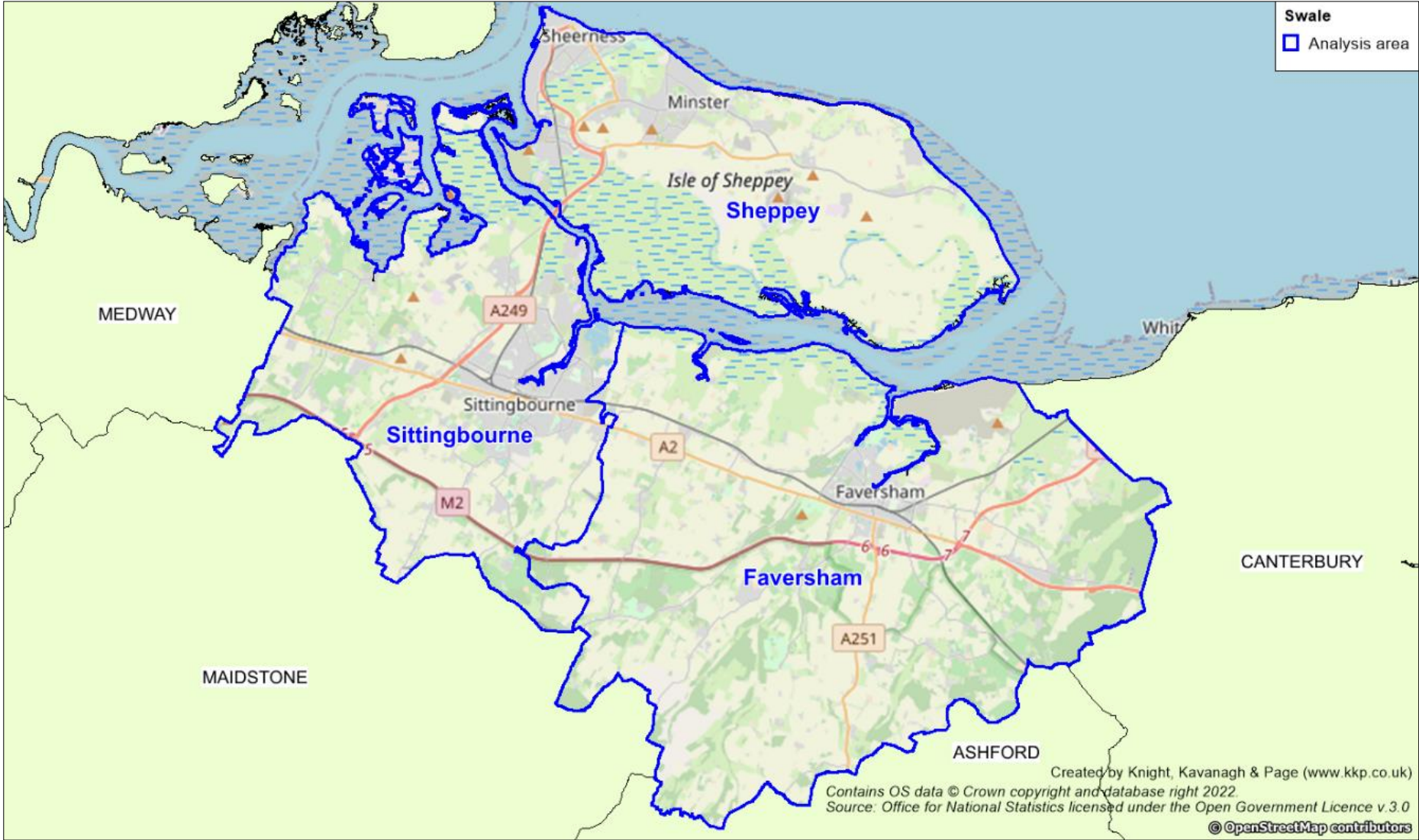
To view the existing play provision and the recommended options, interactive maps¹ have been produced (accessed via a link). Two maps are provided through the link. The first illustrates current provision (titled: **Swale Current Play**) with Scenario 1 map (titled: **Swale Scenario 1 Play**) demonstrating the recommendations. The maps allow certain data layers to be switched on and off to show, for example, how populated or the IMD of an area surrounding a play site. It is hoped this will better inform SBC when making a decision about which sites to remove. Both sets of maps are only radial catchments, (as identified through FIT) and do not acknowledge walk times etc.

Link to the maps. [Swale Play Maps - Knight, Kavanagh & Page](#)

¹ software used for this is a mixture of QGIS and Leaflet

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Figure 1.1: Swale Borough with the three analysis areas



PART 2: CURRENT PLAY OFFER

Provision for children and young people includes areas designated primarily for play and social interaction such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.

Play sites for children are deemed to be areas consisting of formal equipped facilities. This is usually perceived to be for children under 12 years of age. Provision for young people can include equipped sites that provide more robust equipment catering to older age ranges incorporating facilities such as skate parks, BMX, basketball courts, youth shelters and MUGAs.

2.1 Current provision

A total of 149 play locations are identified in Swale. For ease, sites have been split into three analysis areas. The areas of Sheppey (54) and Sittingbourne (57) have the greater number of play sites.

Table 2.1: Current provision for children and young people in Swale

Analysis area	Number
Faversham	38
Sheppey	54
Sittingbourne	57
Swale	149

2.2 Quantity Standards

Fields in Trust (FIT) guidance suggests a quantity standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population for designated playing space per authority.

The 2025 Swale Open Space Strategy calculates that the current standard across the Authority is currently 0.06 hectares per 1,000 population, as calculated below. This is significantly below the FIT standard. However, it is often recognised that children and young people can and do use the space surrounding the defined designated area for play. This is especially the case for amenity greenspace surrounding a play area. This is illustrated in Table 2.3, and demonstrates that, when accounting for amenity green space, all three analysis areas meet the suggested FIT standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population.

Table 2.2: Current provision for children and young people in Swale

Analysis area	Number	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Faversham	38	2.07	0.05
Sheppey	54	3.12	0.07
Sittingbourne	57	2.98	0.06
Swale	149	8.17	0.06

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 2.3: Current provision for children and young people (including surrounding amenity land) in Swale

Analysis area	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Faversham	10.61	0.32
Sheppey	15.71	0.37
Sittingbourne	23.19	0.38
Swale	49.51	0.36

2.3 Quality of all provision

Below presents a full list of all the play sites across the Authority, along with its analysis area it. The Open Space Assessment undertook a quality and value assessment of each site, and a RAG rating is given to all local authority managed sites. A RAG assessment has not been undertaken for other sites managed by parish councils or a management company/housing trust.

Table 2.2: RAG, quality and value score for all play sites

KKP ref	KKP Name	Analysis area	Rag rating	Quality	Value
1.1	Abbey Rise play area	Sheppey	Good	38.5%	25.5%
4.1	Agate Court play areas	Sittingbourne	Good	39.9%	21.8%
6	Colson Drive Play Area	Sittingbourne	Good	52.9%	12.7%
9.1	Amethyst Drive play area	Sittingbourne	Good	58.1%	25.5%
11.1	Anne Boleyn Close play area	Sheppey	Good	58.4%	29.1%
13.1	Anselm Close play area	Sittingbourne	Average	36.1%	12.7%
17.1	Balas Drive play area	Sittingbourne	Good	60.5%	29.1%
20.1	Bartons Point play areas	Sheppey	Average	53.3%	52.7%
22.1	Batteries Close play area	Faversham	Average	48.8%	29.1%
27.1	Beachfields Park play area 1	Sheppey	Average	61.2%	47.3%
27.2	Beachfields Park play area 2	Sheppey	Average	53.3%	30.9%
27.3	Beachfields Park court	Sheppey	Average	53.3%	30.9%
27.4	Beachfields Park splash pool	Sheppey	Average	57.0%	47.3%
27.5	Beachfields Park skate park	Sheppey	Average	62.5%	43.6%
43.1	Brook Road play area	Faversham	Poor	25.1%	12.7%
45.1	Buckthorne Road play area	Sheppey	Average	65.3%	60.0%
48.1	Bysing Wood Road Play Area	Sheppey	Average	40.6%	21.8%
239.1	Castle Site play area	Sheppey	Average	54.0%	20.0%
242.1	Chilham Close Play Area	Sheppey	Good	34.4%	25.5%
58.1	Chilton Avenue play area	Sittingbourne	Average	44.7%	12.7%
62	Colonels Lane Play Area	Faversham	Average	34.7%	25.5%
75.1	Dicksons Field play areas	Sheppey	Poor	60.5%	38.2%
77.1	Diligent Drive play area	Sittingbourne	Good	47.4%	16.4%
55	Eagles Close Fitness Zone	Sittingbourne	Average	41.6%	29.1%

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

KKP ref	KKP Name	Analysis area	Rag rating	Quality	Value
89.1	Eleanor Drive Play Area	Sittingbourne	Good	54.6%	29.1%
84.1	Eveas Drive play area	Sittingbourne	Average	47.8%	20.0%
97.1	Faversham Recreation Ground play areas	Faversham	Average	79.7%	90.9%
100	Faversham Swimming Pool Play Area	Faversham	Good	68.4%	78.2%
103.1	Festival Field play area	Sheppey	Good	50.9%	38.2%
103.2	Festival Playing Field basketball	Sheppey	Good	45.0%	30.9%
104	Finch Close Play Area	Faversham	Good	60.8%	21.8%
200.1	Great East Hall play area	Sittingbourne	Good	64.6%	50.9%
326.1	The Grove play area	Sittingbourne	Average	67.0%	34.5%
326.2	The Grove Park (South) basketball	Sittingbourne	Average	37.1%	43.6%
118.1	Hazebrouck Road play areas	Faversham	Average	49.8%	29.1%
120	Hilton Close Play Area	Faversham	Average	68.4%	47.3%
124.1	Homefield Drive play area	Sittingbourne	Average	62.9%	38.2%
128.1	Hugh Price Close play area	Sittingbourne	Average	57.0%	43.6%
274.1	Iwade Recreation Ground Play Area	Sittingbourne	Good	64.6%	43.6%
316.1	Johnson Road play area	Sittingbourne	Average	47.8%	25.5%
141.1	Kemsley Recreation Ground play area	Sittingbourne	Average	57.5%	38.2%
141.2	Kemsley Recreational Ground MUGA	Sittingbourne	Average	44.7%	38.2%
141.3	Kemsley Recreational Ground skate park	Sittingbourne	Average	47.8%	29.1%
145.1	KGV The Mount Faversham play area	Faversham	Average	57.6%	30.9%
145.2	King Georges Playing Field basketball	Faversham	Average	40.5%	25.5%
146.1	KGV Queenborough play area	Sheppey	Average	33.3%	29.1%
146.2	KGV Queenborough basketball	Sheppey	Average	25.8%	29.1%
147.1	KGV Sittingbourne play area	Sittingbourne	Average	67.0%	25.5%
154.1	Leysdown Coastal Park Play Area	Sheppey	Average	62.5%	63.6%
154.2	Leysdown Coastal Park fitness equipment	Sheppey	Average		
154.3	Leysdown Coastal Park zip wire	Sheppey	Average		
154.4	Leysdown Coastal Park half MUGA	Sheppey	Average		
166.1	Lovell Road Play Area 1	Sheppey	Average	61.9%	41.8%
166.2	Lovell Road play area 2	Sheppey	Average		
169	Lower Road Play Area	Faversham	Average	60.5%	41.8%
173.1	Manor Grove play area	Sittingbourne	Good	46.0%	47.3%

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

KKP ref	KKP Name	Analysis area	Rag rating	Quality	Value
175.1	Mansfield Drive Play Areas	Sittingbourne	Good	52.9%	21.8%
178.1	Maylam Gardens play area	Sittingbourne	Good	27.8%	40.0%
184.1	Millfield play area	Faversham	Good	51.4%	43.6%
189.1	Milton Creek Country Park play area	Sittingbourne	Average	72.2%	47.3%
191.1	Milton Recreation Ground play area 1	Sittingbourne	Average	71.1%	41.8%
191.2	Milton Recreation Ground play area 2	Sittingbourne	Average		
198.1	Minster Leas Beach gym	Sheppey	Good	69.5%	60.0%
204.1	New Road play areas	Sheppey	Good	31.4%	12.7%
157.1	New Village Hall Play Area	Sheppey	Average	67.6%	72.4%
211	Noreen Avenue play area	Sheppey	Average	41.6%	21.8%
162.1	Nunnery Close play area	Sheppey	Good	54.0%	21.8%
241.1	Nursery Close Play Area	Sheppey	Good	54.6%	25.5%
233.1	Power Station Road play area	Sittingbourne	Good	59.1%	29.1%
235.1	Premier Way play area	Sittingbourne	Average	50.9%	47.3%
240.1	Queensway Play Area	Sheppey	Average	37.5%	38.2%
247.1	Randle Way play area	Sittingbourne	Average	70.8%	41.8%
251.1	Recreation Way play area	Sittingbourne	Average	45.0%	29.1%
255.1	Rectory Park play area	Sittingbourne	Average	58.8%	52.7%
255.2	Rectory Park basketball	Sittingbourne	Average	38.8%	38.2%
256.1	Reedland Crescent play area	Faversham	Average	50.2%	38.2%
256.2	Reedland Crescent basketball	Faversham	Average		
256.3	Reedland Crescent outdoor gym	Faversham	Average	39.9%	43.6%
262.1	Rook View play area	Sittingbourne	Good	40.0%	12.7%
264.1	Rose Walk play areas	Sittingbourne	Average	62.5%	50.9%
264.2	Rose Walk MUGA	Sittingbourne	Average	53.3%	47.3%
267.1	Rushenden Hill play areas	Sheppey	Poor	42.3%	29.1%
267.2	Rushenden Hill MUGA	Sheppey	Poor	36.8%	29.1%
267.3	Rushenden Hill half MUGA	Sheppey	Poor	28.5%	29.1%
267.4	Rushenden Hill outdoor gym	Sheppey	Poor	34.7%	29.1%
269.1	Samuel Drive play areas	Sittingbourne	Average	32.3%	29.1%
351.1	Second Avenue play area	Sheppey	Average	53.6%	50.9%
293.1	Sittingbourne Recreation Ground play area	Sittingbourne	Average	50.9%	47.3%
290.1	Stangate Drive play area	Sittingbourne	Good	67.6%	60.0%
307.1	Stanley Avenue Bike Facility	Sheppey	Average	27.8%	21.8%
307.2	Stanley Avenue half MUGA	Sheppey	Average	27.1%	21.8%
307.3	Stanley Avenue youth shelter	Sheppey	Average		
313.1	Sumpter Way play areas	Faversham	Average	39.5%	29.1%
313.2	Sumpter Way basketball	Faversham	Average	33.7%	21.8%

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

KKP ref	KKP Name	Analysis area	Rag rating	Quality	Value
323.1	The Glen play areas	Sheppey	Good	60.5%	43.5%
333.1	The Spinney play area	Sheppey	Good	70.1%	54.4%
338	Thistle Hill Play Area	Sheppey	Average	74.2%	63.3%
337.1	Thistle Hill Community Woodland Fitness Equipment ²	Sheppey	Good	58.5%	34.5%
347.1	Vincent Gardens play area	Sheppey	Good	38.5%	47.3%
357.1	West Faversham Community Centre Play Area	Faversham	Average	30.9%	21.8%
357.2	West Faversham Community Centre basketball court	Faversham	Average	30.2%	21.8%
354.1	Whiteways skate park	Sheppey	Average	62.5%	60.0%
354.2	Whiteways MUGA	Sheppey	Average		
354.3	Whiteways Road	Sheppey	Average		
164.1	Windermere Play Area basketball court	Faversham	Good	33.0%	21.8%
360.1	Windermere play areas	Faversham	Good	63.9%	37.2%
346.1	Iwade Village Park play area	Sittingbourne	Good	67.6%	43.6%
33.1	The Playstool Borden play area	Sittingbourne		66.7%	72.2%
34.1	Bull Lane play area	Faversham		66.0%	38.2%
34.2	Boughton play area	Faversham		58.4%	38.2%
34.3	Boughton basketball	Faversham		50.5%	47.3%
38.1	Bredgar Recreation Ground play area	Sittingbourne		49.1%	60.0%
42.1	Briton Court Play Area	Sheppey		31.3%	12.7%
42.2	Briton Court outdoor gym	Sheppey		34.4%	25.5%
52.1	Cavell Way play area	Sittingbourne		57.0%	29.1%
52.2	Cavell Way skate park	Sittingbourne		54.3%	12.7%
54	Ceres Court Ball Park	Sittingbourne		56.7%	38.2%
56.1	Chapel Meadow basketball	Sittingbourne		47.5%	23.4%
59	Clover Close play area	Sheppey		61.9%	38.2%
365	Conqueror Court Play Area ³	Sittingbourne			
73.1	Dennis Wilcocks Close play area	Sittingbourne		63.6%	56.4%
80.1	Doddington Rec Ground play	Faversham		38.8%	38.2%
80.2	Doddington Rec Ground outdoor gym	Faversham		25.8%	21.8%
90	Elm Grove Play Area	Sittingbourne		Closed	
115.1	Hartlip Recreation Ground play area	Sittingbourne		54.4%	38.2%
150.1	Lapwing Close play area	Sheppey		64.9%	47.3%
150.2	Lapwing Close basketball	Sheppey			

² Site offers fitness equipment only and is exempt from removal.

³ Not included in OSA

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

KKP ref	KKP Name	Analysis area	Rag rating	Quality	Value
152	Leige Close play area	Sittingbourne		64.6%	29.1%
155	Liege Close	Sittingbourne		62.9%	50.9%
157.2	Linear Park outdoor gym	Sheppey	Average	67.4%	72.7%
157.3	Linear Park zip wire	Sheppey	Average		
159.1	Lionfield basketball court	Faversham	Poor		
167	Lower Halstow Memorial Hall play area	Sittingbourne		35.7%	60.0%
209.1	Nore Close play area	Sheppey		67.4%	29.1%
209.2	Nore Close basketball	Sheppey			
222.1	Oare Recreation Ground play area	Faversham		41.2%	30.9%
222.2	Oare Recreation Ground basketball	Faversham			
227.1	Newington Recreation Ground Play Area	Sittingbourne		62.9%	50.9%
227.2	Newington Recreation Ground Play Area MUGA	Sittingbourne			
230.1	Painters Forstal play area	Faversham		36.1%	25.5%
230.2	Painters Forstal basketball	Faversham		26.8%	25.5%
234	Play area adjacent to the Crown Pub, Upchurch ⁴	Sittingbourne			
366	Redgrove Avenue Play Area ⁵	Sittingbourne			
278.1	Selling Millennium Playground 1	Faversham		46.4%	29.1%
318.1	Teynham Village Hall Play Area	Faversham		50.5%	65.5%
318.2	Teynham Village Hall MUGA	Faversham		46.4%	56.4%
321.1	Hernhill Playing Field play area	Faversham		78.8%	54.4%
330.1	The Paddock Play Area	Sittingbourne		52.2%	33.0%
361.1	Woods Edge play area	Sittingbourne		64.9%	38.2%
367	Winter Gem Lane play area	Faversham		68.4%	36.4%
368	Tettenhall Way play area	Faversham		53.3%	32.7%
369	Rapson End play area	Sittingbourne		52.6%	18.2%
370	Watling Drive play area	Sittingbourne		64.6%	50.9%
371	Belgrave road play area	Sheppey		65.3%	41.8%

⁴ Private facility

⁵ Not included in OSA

PART 3: PLAY ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

3.1: Introduction

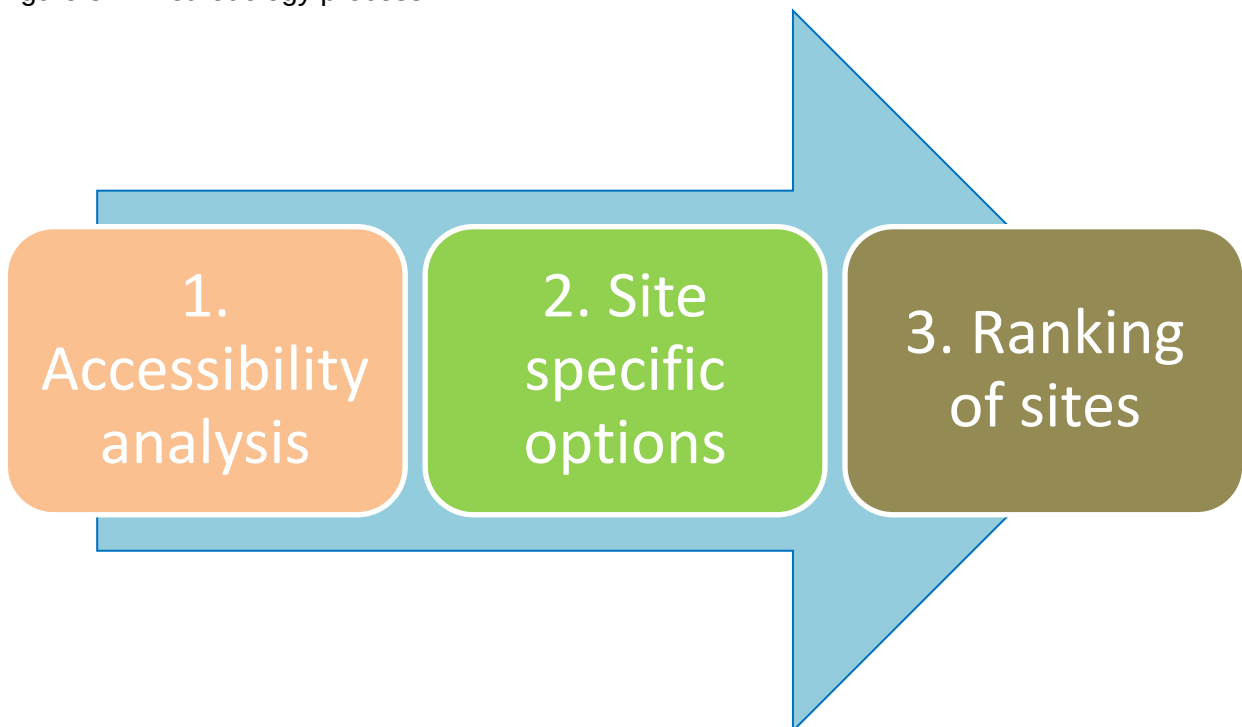
To identify which sites could potentially be removed, a three-stage approach is undertaken. Initially, a mapping exercise utilising the Fields in Trust (FIT) accessibility guidance helps identify which sites are in areas well served by play provision. For instance, if a smaller play site falls within the catchment(s) of another/larger play site.

Following this, the identified sites are then assessed through a scoring matrix to demonstrate the potential impact their removal could have. To do this, sites are ranked according to various social and health factors, including population density, indices of multiple deprivation levels and health data.

On this basis, the identified sites are given a recommendation as to whether to remove, upgrade or to improve. In addition, and where applicable, some sites are recommended to be considered for asset transfer. This is typically in areas where parish councils may be able to be responsible for site management.

It will be the decision of SBC as to whether these recommendations are actioned in order to reduce SBCs maintenance budget for play.

Figure 3.1: Methodology process



3.2: Accessibility guidelines

The size of a play area and equipment available is classified into four different sub types These sub types are illustrated below in table 3.1. Each sub type has a specific catchment utilising the FIT guidance.

This catchment gap analysis is one of the key tools when identifying which sites could be removed from the play offer, as larger sites, such as NEAPs can cover wider catchments, resulting in smaller sites, which fall in the larger sites catchment, becoming surplus to requirement. Below lists the subtype of a play area and the associated catchment distance.

Table 3.1: All play sites in Swale

Sub-type	Explanation	Catchment
Local Area of Play (LAP)	Usually small areas designed for very young children. Equipment is normally age group specific to reduce unintended users.	100m
Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)	Designed for children who are beginning to play independently; often catering for different play types and experiences.	400m
Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)	Cater mainly for older more independent children but potentially with opportunities for younger children or siblings; providing a wider range of play experiences. Such sites may contain space to play larger group games and seating/shelter.	1000m
Informal play	Facilities specifically designed for informal recreation such as pump tracks, parkour, social areas, ball courts, MUGAs or skateboard areas (referred to as casual provision in this study)	700m

3.3 Site options

Following the accessibility analysis, as mentioned above, a range of recommendations affecting certain sites are presented. The four options presented are:

Remove - If a small site falls in the catchment of a larger play area (LEAP or NEAP), it could be considered surplus to requirements regardless of quality.

For example, a LAP which is in the catchment of a NEAP will be identified for removal. This report, however, also considers other factors for sites considered 'at risk' such as the impact the loss of a site could have. These are detailed in Section 3.4.

Upgrade classification - certain sites may have a recommendation to expand the play offer on site, e.g., upgrade a LEAP to a NEAP, which will increase the distance catchment for that site. If a sites catchment is expanded, widening its appeal to users, it could help mitigate the removal of the site which falls within that new catchment.

Improve quality - all SBC sites receive a quality RAG rating. If a site has been rated poor or average, and there is a requirement to improve this rating, this is highlighted. This is particularly important for larger sites (i.e., a NEAP) rated average or poor, but which has potentially sites at risk of being removed in its catchment area.

Management transfer - certain sites, particularly in rural areas regardless of the RAG rating cannot be removed, as there is no other provision in the area. However, there may be an option to explore transferring the management of a site to another organisation, such as a Parish or Town Council.

3.4 Scoring of each site

As mentioned above, sites initially identified from catchment mapping which are potentially surplus, are then further assessed through a series of criteria to calculate the possible impact if removed. The criteria are as follows;

- ◆ Levels of IMD - is a relative measure of deprivation.
- ◆ Population density – measures how many people are living in an area.
- ◆ Obesity levels - levels of children year 6 (10-11 year olds) who are obese.
- ◆ Health deprivation - measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health
- ◆ Crime deprivation - measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level
- ◆ Excess weight - either overweight or obese (based on children in year 6)

All criteria are broken down into 10 percent range, and given a number based on the rank. IMD and population density data is taken from Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) data from the ONS, while the Year 6 obesity data is taken from Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) from the National Childhood Measurement Program (NCMP).

Table A1 (Appendix A) illustrates how a site is scored based on the above criteria. For example, a site in an area of high population density, deprivation, health deprivation, crime deprivation and had significant levels of obesity and excess weight would have an overall high score.

In addition, each site's RAG score along with the site's classification is also provided.

PART 4: FAVERSHAM ANALYSIS AREA

Introduction

There are currently 38 play sites in the analysis area of Faversham, with the majority located in the town of Faversham. Of the 38, 21 are maintained by the Local Authority. Of the Local Authority managed sites, the majority (15) receive an average RAG rating, with two sites rating poor; Brook Road play area and Lionfield play area.

Current provision in Faversham is shown here: [Swale Current Play](#)

As illustrated above, there are ten sites in the rural catchment, of which only two are managed by SBC. Both sites receive a RAG rating as 'average'. As these sites serve their respective local area, and there is no catchment overlap from other play areas, it is deemed that these are retained with the recommendation to explore for the management of the sites to be transferred to the respective parish council. The two sites are Batteries Close play area (22.1) and Horselees Road Play Area (62).

The town of Faversham currently has 23 play areas across 18 sites. When reviewing accessibility, there are certain smaller sites in both the southeast and west which are potentially surplus to requirements, as they are also covered by play catchments from larger sites. Following the recommendations presented, the south of the town will be served by the potential upgrade of site 145 (KGV The Mount), and the current existing provision will support the north.

Table 4.1 provides a summary to the sites for consideration and sets out the options for play into the four groupings. The interactive map illustrates the potential impact of the removal of certain sites [Swale Scenario 1 Play](#).

These potential sites 'at risk' are listed below and scored against the six criteria. The two lowest scoring sites are Finch Close Play Area and Hilton Close Play Area, both with scores of 33%. The highest scoring sites are Lionfield play area and Sumpter Way play area. Although both do not score highly for population density, they are in high areas of higher deprivation (IMD and health).

The site which scores the highest in terms of population density is Lower Road Play Area, however, this site does not score well for deprivation. It must be noted that Lionfield play area was removed and only currently consists of a basketball end.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 4.1: Site analysis for Faversham analysis area

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
145.1/ 145.2	KGV The Mount Faversham play area/basketball court	Upgrade/improve quality	It is recommended that this site be upgraded to a NEAP and the quality improved from average to good. There is space to the west of the current site to increase the offer.	If this play site is expanded, it would absorb the loss of surrounding play sites through a larger catchment area. The quality of the site needs to be improved to offset the potential loss of certain sites.
118.1	Hazebrouck Road play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	Should site 145.1 be upgraded to a NEAP, the increased catchment from the upgrade would cover the loss of these sites.
169	Lower Road Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
159.1	Lionfield basketball court ⁶	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
313.1	Sumpter Way play areas	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
104	Finch Close Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 97.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus to demand.
120	Hilton Close Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
360.1	Windermere play areas	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	
97.1	Faversham Recreation Ground play areas	Improve quality	Site 97.1 rates average. For sites 104, 120, 360.1 to be removed, it is recommended to upgrade 97.1 to good. This includes improving the quality of equipment and surfaces.	Improving the quality of site 97.1 with better equipment will mitigate the closure of sites 104, 120 and 360.1.
22.1	Batteries Close play area	Management transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Teynham Parish Council.	These sites are currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a Parish Council. This would create financial savings for SBC, subject to the respective Parish Council agreement.
62	Horselees Road Play Area	Management transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Boughton-under-Blean Parish Council.	

⁶ Current play equipment removed with only the basketball court remaining.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 4.2: Faversham Play area scoring index

Site ID	Site name	Current classification	IMD	Health Deprivation	Crime Deprivation	Pop density score	Yr 6 Obesity	Yr 6 Excess Weight	RAG rating	Overall Score	% score
118.1	Hazebrouck Road play area	LAP	2	3	3	8	2	3	Average	21	35%
169	Lower Road Play Area	LAP	3	4	4	10	2	3	Average	26	43%
159.1	Lionfield basketball court	Casual Play	9	8	9	6	2	3	Poor	37	62%
313.1	Sumpter Way play areas	Casual Play	9	8	9	6	2	3	Average	37	62%
104	Finch Close Play Area	LAP	3	3	4	4	2	4	Good	20	33%
120	Hilton Close Play Area	LEAP	3	3	4	4	2	4	Average	20	33%
360.1	Windermere play areas	LAP	6	5	8	9	2	4	Good	34	57%

PART 5: SITTINGBOURNE ANALYSIS AREA

Introduction

There are currently 57 play sites in the analysis area of Sittingbourne, with the majority located in the town of Sittingbourne. Of the 57, 32 are maintained by the Local Authority with 19 sites receiving an average RAG rating and 12 rating as good. Site 90 (Elm Grove) is currently closed and does not receive a rating.

Current provision in Sittingbourne is shown here: [Swale Current Play](#)

Of the 32 SBC managed sites, three are located in rural areas (away from the town of Sittingbourne) and five are located in the settlement of Iwade. All sites in Iwade rate good with the other rural sites rating average. For the sites in Iwade, the recommendation is to explore for the management of the sites to be transferred to the Iwade Parish Council.

For the three rural sites, these sites are not covered by any larger site and support local communities, it is therefore suggested that these are retained with the recommendation to explore for the management of the sites to be transferred to the respective parish council. In total, the seven specific sites are as follows:

- ◆ Homefield Drive play area (ID 124.1)
- ◆ Rooks View play area (ID 262.1)
- ◆ Randle Way play area (ID 241.1)
- ◆ Stangate Drive play area (ID 290.1)
- ◆ Iwade Village Park play area (ID 346)
- ◆ Red Admiral Crescent play area (ID 274.1)
- ◆ Alefe Way play area (ID 6)
- ◆ Mansfield Drive Play Areas (ID 175.1)

Of the SBC sites managed in the town of Sittingbourne, the key focus areas are around Kemsley Recreational Ground and Sittingbourne Recreation Ground, as these are seen as strategic sites.

The proposal is to enhance the quality of both sites from average to good, and to upgrade Sittingbourne Recreation Ground play area to a NEAP from its current status as a LEAP. Following this, both sites provide an opportunity to remove play areas which fall within the respective catchments. It will also ensure there is a key play area to the north and south of the railway line.

Table 5.1 provides a summary to the sites for consideration and sets out the options for play into the four groupings.

[Swale Scenario 1 Play](#) demonstrates the potential impact of site removal for this analysis area.

Of the sites identified 'at risk', the highest scoring sites are Anselm Close play area and Chilton Avenue play area. Both score highly for deprivation and population density. The sites with the lowest scores are Premier Way play area and Samuel Drive play areas. Both sites rate lower for obesity levels and population density.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 5.1: Site analysis for Sittingbourne analysis area

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
293.1	Sittingbourne Recreation Ground play area	Upgrade /improve quality	Play site needs to be upgraded to a NEAP and the quality of the existing play equipment to be upgraded to good. It is currently rated as average.	Site is currently a LEAP. If this was expanded, it would make several surrounding sites surplus to requirement. The site currently has a RAG rating of average. It is recommended that this is upgraded to good.
290.1	Stangate Drive play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Iwade Parish Council.	This site is currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a local Parish Council. This would create financial savings for SBC, subject to the respective Parish Council agreement.
346.1	Iwade Village Park play area	Transfer		
274.1	Red Admiral Crescent (Recreation Ground) play area	Transfer		
6	Alefe Way play area	Transfer		
175.1	Mansfield Drive Play Areas	Transfer		
141.1	Kemsley Recreational Ground	Improve quality	Improve the quality of the site from average to good. This will be through upgrading the quality of equipment and surfaces.	Site rated average through the Council's RAG rating. If surrounding sites are to be removed, it is recommended this is upgraded.
189.1	Milton Creek Country Park	Improve quality	Improve the quality of the site from average to good. This will be through upgrading the quality of equipment and surfaces.	Site rated average through the Council's RAG rating. If surrounding sites are to be removed, it is recommended this is upgraded to good.
77.1	Diligent Drive play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 141 .1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
89.1	Eleanor Drive Play Area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 141 .1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
251.1	Recreation Way play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 290.1, 175.1 and 346.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
269.1	Samuel Drive play areas	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 290.1, 175.1 and 346.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
235.1	Premier Way play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 290.1, 175.1 and 346.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
173.1	Manor Grove play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 293.1 (if it is upgraded to a NEAP) covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
13.1	Anselm Close play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 293.1 (if it is upgraded to a NEAP) covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
58.1	Chilton Avenue play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from site 293.1 (if it is upgraded to a NEAP) covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.
124.1	Homefield Drive play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Upchurch Parish Council	This site is currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a local Parish Council. This would create financial savings for SBC, subject to the respective Parish Council agreement.
262.1	Rook View play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Bobbing Parish Council.	
247.1	Randle Way play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Bapchild Parish Council	
90	Elm Grove	Remove	Site is currently closed due to quality issues. It is recommended that this is removed permanently.	The catchment from site 255.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 5.2: Sittingbourne Play area scoring index

Site ID	Site name	Current classification	IMD	Health Deprivation	Crime Deprivation	Pop density score	Yr 6 Obesity	Yr 6 Excess Weight	RAG rating	Overall Score	% score
77.1	Diligent Drive play area	LAP	8	8	8	10	2	4	Good	40	66%
89.1	Eleanor Drive Play Area	LEAP	6	6	7	5	2	4	Good	30	50%
251.1	Recreation Way play area	LEAP	6	7	5	4	2	4	Average	28	46%
269.1	Samuel Drive play areas	LEAP	6	7	5	4	2	4	Average	28	46%
235.1	Premier Way play area	LEAP	6	7	5	4	2	4	Average	28	46%
173.1	Manor Grove play area	LEAP	8	8	6	10	2	4	Good	38	63%
13.1	Anselm Close play area	LAP	8	7	9	10	3	5	Average	42	70%
58.1	Chilton Avenue play area	LEAP	8	7	9	8	3	5	Average	40	70%

PART 6: SHEPPEY ANALYSIS AREA

Introduction

The majority of play sites in the Sheppey Analysis Area are located to the west, in and around the town of Sheerness, Queenborough and Minster-on-Sea. There is limited provision in the east at Leysdown-on-Sea and also the village of Eastchurch. There are 54 sites in the analysis area, of which 44 are managed by SBC. The majority of sites rate average (23) as part of the RAG rating, with 14 rating good. Four sites rate poor, these are all located at Rushenden Hill play areas in Queenborough. Site 337.1 (Thistle Hill Community Woodland Fitness equipment) is a dedicated fitness area, and not a play site, therefore it is exempt from the analysis.

Current provision of play in Sheppey is illustrated here: [Swale Current Play](#)

Of the sites located in the east which are managed by SBC, all could look to be transferred to the respective parish councils of Eastchurch and Leysdown-on-Sea. In the west, there is only one site which falls in the catchment of other sites. This is Vincent Gardens play area.

Vincent Gardens play area falls in the catchment of one NEAP (Beachfields Park). It must be noted that the quality of Beachfields Park will need to be improved to justify the loss of the highlighted site as this is rated as average. This is particularly important as Beachfields Park is seen as a destination site on the coast for residents and visitors. The changes are illustrated in the interactive map: [Swale Scenario 1 Play](#).

Of the site identified 'at risk' Vincent Gardens play area rates highly for IMD, health and crime deprivation but low for obesity.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 6.1: Site analysis for Sheppey analysis area

Id	Site name	Option	Description	Rational
347.1	Vincent Gardens play area	Remove	Option for site to be removed.	The catchment from sites 103.2 and 27.1 covers this site, resulting in it being surplus to demand.
27.1	Beachfields Park	Improve quality	Improve the quality of the site, based on current RAG rating.	Key site in the resort of Sheerness which supports day trippers and local residents. Site need to be upgraded based on the current RAG rating.
11.1	Anne Boleyn Close play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Eastchurch Parish Council	This site is currently managed by SBC. It is recommended that the management of these sites be offered to another organisation, such as a local Parish Council. This would create financial savings for SBC, subject to the respective Parish Council agreement.
157	Village Hall Play Area/Linear Park outdoor gym/Linear Park zip wire	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Warden Bay Parish Council	
333.1	The Spinney play area	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Leysdown Parish Council	
154	Leysdown Coastal Park Play/MUGA/Fitness gym/	Transfer	Seek to transfer the management of this site to another organisation. Possible option could be Leysdown Parish Council	

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLAY SITE REVIEW

Table 6.2: Sheppey Play area scoring index

Site ID	Site name	Current classification	IMD	Health Deprivation	Crime Deprivation	Pop density score	Yr 6 Obesity	Yr 6 Excess Weight	RAG rating	Overall Score	% score
347.1	Vincent Gardens play area	LEAP	10	9	10	6	2	4	Good	42	70%

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

APPENDIX A: SITE SCORING CRITERIA

Table A1: Site scoring matrix

IMD		Pop density		Obesity		Health deprivation		Crime deprivation		Excess weight	
Band	Score	Band (people)	Score	Band	Score	Band	Score	Band	Score	Band	Score
Most deprived - 10.0	10	16600-45500	10	90.1% - 100.0%	10	Most deprived - 10.0	10	Most deprived - 10.0	10	90.1% - 100.0%	10
20.0	9	12800-16600	9	80.1% - 90.0%	9	20.0	9	20.0	9	80.1% - 90.0%	9
30.0	8	10000-12800	8	70.1% - 80.0%	8	30.0	8	30.0	8	70.1% - 80.0%	8
40.0	7	7400-10000	7	60.1% - 70.0%	7	40.0	7	40.0	7	60.1% - 70.0%	7
50.0	6	5700-7400	6	50.1% - 60.0%	6	50.0	6	50.0	6	50.1% - 60.0%	6
60.0	5	3200-5700	5	40.1% - 50.0%	5	60.0	5	60.0	5	40.1% - 50.0%	5
70.0	4	2100-3200	4	30.1% - 40.0%	4	70.0	4	70.0	4	30.1% - 40.0%	4
80.0	3	800-2100	3	20.1% - 30.0%	3	80.0	3	80.0	3	20.1% - 30.0%	3
90.0	2	500-800	2	10.1% - 20.0%	2	90.0	2	90.0	2	10.1% - 20.0%	2
Least deprived - 100.0	1	100-500	1	0.0% - 10.0%	1	Least deprived - 100.0	1	Least deprived - 100.0	1	0.0% - 10.0%	1

APPENDIX B : RAG RATING SCORE

To attain a RAG assessment the criteria scoring is below. The numbering relates to the following:

Good- 1 point
Average- 2 points
Poor- 3 points.

Age of Playground and/or Date of Last Refurbishment:

0 – 10 years	1 point
11 – 20 years	2 points
21 years +	3 points

Play Area Type:

Destination	1 point
Neighbourhood	2 points
Doorstep	3 points

Play Area Availability (per Geographical Ward)

3+ per ward	1 point
2 – 3 per ward	2 points
1 per ward	3 points

Identified Defects

No identified defects	1 point
Category B identified defects	2 points
Category A identified defects	3 points

Maintenance Costs

Little or no maintenance costs	1 point
Anticipated maintenance costs	2 points
Significant maintenance costs	3 points

Risk Assessment

Low hazard/risk	1 point
Medium hazard/risk	2 points
High hazard/risk	3 points

Service Requests, Complaints, Anti-Social Behaviour

None	1 point
Infrequent	2 points
Frequent	3 points

Visual Assessment

No refurbishment required	1 point
Little refurbishment required	2 points
Significant refurbishment	3 points

RAG Rating

8 – 12 points – Green Rating – Low priority on Play Area Development Programme

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAY SITE REVIEW

13 – 17 points – Amber Rating – Medium priority on Play Area Development Programme

18 – 24 points – Red Rating – High priority on Play Area Development Programme

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing, Health and Communities Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	20 January 2026
Report Title	English Indices of Deprivation 2025
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed
Head of Service	Larissa Reed
Lead Officer	Philip Sutcliffe
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The committee notes the publication of the English Indices of Deprivation 2025 (IoD2025) and the analysis of Swale's relative position. 2. The Committee supports the adoption of the IoD2025 data as the evidence base for targeting future interventions, specifically supporting the Corporate Plan priority of tackling deprivation and inequality. 3. Members support officers use of the domain-specific data to strengthen advocacy with strategic partners, including the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Kent County Council (KCC), to secure needs-based resource allocation.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents an analysis of the English Indices of Deprivation 2025 (IoD2025), which were [published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#) (MHCLG) on 30 October 2025.
- 1.2 As the successor to the 2019 indices, the IoD2025 constitutes the official measure of relative deprivation in England and serves as the definitive statistical framework for understanding the spatial distribution of poverty and need within the Borough of Swale.
- 1.3 This report aims to inform the Housing, Health and Communities Committee of the updated statistical landscape, highlighting changes in the borough's relative standing since 2019.
- 1.4 The report also seeks to establish this data as the evidence base for the Council's strategic decision-making, particularly in relation to the allocation of scarce resources and the targeting of anti-poverty initiatives.
- 1.5 The data shows a complex picture for Swale, characterised as a "tale of two boroughs." The data indicates a divergence in the borough's summary measures:

- Rank of average score: Swale has seen a relative improvement on this measure, moving from the 56th (out of 317) most deprived local authority in 2019 to the 62nd (out of 296) in 2025. This suggests that when viewed as an aggregate average, the intensity of deprivation across the whole borough has lessened slightly relative to other areas in England.
 - Rank of Average Rank: Conversely, and critically for service planning, Swale's position on the 'Rank of Average Rank' has worsened, deteriorating from 69th in 2019 to 59th in 2025. This indicates that deprivation is becoming more widespread across the borough's neighbourhoods, moving Swale firmly into the most deprived 20% of districts nationally on this key metric.
- 1.6 The analysis identifies a triple threat of income, employment, and health deprivation concentrated in the urban wards of Sheerness, Murston, and Milton Regis, where specific Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) consistently rank in the bottom 10% of the country.
- 1.7 AT the same time, the 2025 methodology (which introduces new metrics for digital connectivity and transport) has highlighted severe hidden deprivation in rural wards such as Boughton & Courtenay and East Downs. These rank among the most deprived in England for 'Barriers to Housing and Services' despite their relative affluence in income terms.
- 1.8 This report details these findings across all seven domains of deprivation and explores the implications for the Corporate Plan and external funding.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 The English Indices of Deprivation are not merely a statistical exercise. They are produced approximately every four to five years, and allow for the identification of small pockets of deprivation that are otherwise masked by ward-level or borough-wide averages. For a borough like Swale, which shows extreme polarisation between its most affluent and most deprived communities, the granularity provided by the IoD is essential for service delivery.
- 2.2 The IoD supports our strategic objectives by:
- Targeting services - enabling the move away from universal provision towards data-led, targeted interventions at the LSOA level (neighbourhoods of approximately 1,500 residents).
 - Securing funding - serving as the primary eligibility criterion for major funding streams such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Levelling Up, and their successors.
 - Informing formulas - feeding directly into national funding formulas used by the Department for Education (DfE) and public health bodies.

- Advocacy - providing an objective, government-endorsed evidence base to lobby partners such as the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for fair resource allocation.

Methodology and changes in 2025

- 2.3 The IoD2025 is based on the 2021 Census geography, using Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Swale is made up of 90 LSOAs.
- 2.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a weighted aggregate of seven distinct domains, each measuring a specific aspect of deprivation. It is important to understand that the IoD measures relative deprivation, not absolute change. An area's rank may worsen even if its absolute circumstances improve, simply because other areas in England have improved at a faster rate.
- 2.5 In addition to the overall IMD and its seven domain-specific indices, there are [two further supplementary indices](#): the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI).
- 2.6 The composition of the IMD is weighted to prioritise economic and health outcomes, which collectively account for over 50% of the total score. This weighting structure significantly influences Swale's overall ranking due to the specific nature of deprivation on the Isle of Sheppey and areas in Sittingbourne areas.

Table 1: Composition of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025

Domain	Weighting	Description of indicators
Income Deprivation	22.5%	Measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income. This includes claimants of Universal Credit (out of work or low earnings), Income Support, and Pension Credit.
Employment Deprivation	22.5%	Measures the involuntary exclusion of the working-age population from the labour market. Key data sources include claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and Universal Credit conditionality groups linked to work search.
Education, Skills & Training	13.5%	Split into two sub-domains: Children/Young People (attainment at KS2/KS4, absence, HE entry) and Adult Skills (proportion of adults with no/low qualifications, English language proficiency).
Health Deprivation & Disability	13.5%	Measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Indicators include Years of Potential Life Lost (YLL), comparative illness ratios, and acute morbidity.

Crime	9.3%	Measures the risk of personal and material victimisation. It aggregates recorded crime rates for violence, burglary, theft, criminal damage, and public order offences.
Barriers to Housing & Services	9.3%	Key Change for 2025: Measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. It now includes a 'connectivity score' for transport and, crucially, average broadband speeds to measure digital exclusion.
Living Environment	9.3%	Measures the quality of the local environment. Indoors measures housing quality (lack of central heating, poor condition). Outdoors measures air quality and road traffic accidents.

Key methodology updates

2.7 The 2025 release was not a simple update of the 2019 data. The methodology underwent a fundamental review to capture the impacts of significant societal shifts, including the full rollout of Universal Credit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis. Key updates include:

- The Income and Employment domains now fully integrate Universal Credit data, providing a more accurate picture of households in employment but with earnings low enough to qualify for state support. This is particularly relevant for Swale, where low-wage employment is a known structural issue.
- For the first time, average broadband speed is included in the 'Barriers to Housing and Services' domain. This acknowledges that in 2025, digital exclusion is a primary barrier to economic opportunity, education, and access to services.
- A [supplementary rural report](#) and new transport connectivity tools have been used to better capture the nuance of rural deprivation, moving beyond simple straight line distance measures to more sophisticated travel-time modelling.

Swale's profile – a tale of two boroughs

2.8 The analysis of the IoD2025 data confirms that Swale remains a borough of extreme contrasts. The [government's own research report](#) highlights this phenomenon, explicitly using Swale as a case study to explain how borough-wide averages can mask deep concentrations of deprivation (see 3.3.24-3.3.27 in the linked PDF).

2.9 The presence of affluent areas such as Woodstock and West Downs (ranked in the least deprived 10% nationally) statistically offsets the intense deprivation

found in Sheerness and Murston (ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally) when calculating average scores.

2.10 Understanding the difference between the two primary summary measures is critical for interpreting the borough's trajectory.

- Rank of Average Score:
 - 2019 rank: 56th out of 317
 - 2025 rank: 62nd out of 296
 - Swale has seen a relative improvement on this measure. The 'Average Score' is population-weighted and can be heavily influenced by extreme values. This improvement suggests that while severe deprivation exists, the magnitude of the deprivation score in the very worst LSOAs may have stabilised relative to other authorities, or that the affluent areas have become relatively more affluent, pulling the average "up" (towards less deprived).
- Rank of Average Rank
 - 2019 Rank: 69th out of 317.
 - 2025 Rank: 59th out of 296.
 - Swale has deteriorated significantly on this measure. The 'Average Rank' calculates the mean ranking of all 90 LSOAs in the borough. A worsening here indicates that a larger proportion of Swale's neighbourhoods are sliding down the national rankings. It suggests that deprivation is becoming less isolated and more pervasive across the borough. This metric places Swale firmly in the most deprived 20% of local authorities in England.

2.11 Swale's deprivation profile is characterised by high intensity:

- Most deprived 10% (decile 1) - 14.4% of Swale's LSOAs (13 out of 90) fall into the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England. This is the second-highest proportion in Kent, exceeded only by Thanet (18.6%). By contrast, affluent West Kent districts such as Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells have 0% of their LSOAs in this most deprived decile.
- Local concentration rank - Swale ranks 40th nationally for 'local concentration', a measure of how intense deprivation is in the borough's hotspots. This places Swale in the most deprived 14% of districts for intensity of poverty

2.12 The aggregate score, while useful for high-level comparisons, does not provide the diagnostic detail required for targeted service delivery. The following analysis breaks down the borough's performance across the specific domains.

Income and Employment

- 2.13 Income and employment deprivation are the primary drivers of Swale's overall ranking, carrying a combined weight of 45%. The correlation between these two domains in Swale is extremely high, indicating that low income in the borough is driven largely by worklessness and exclusion from the labour market, rather than solely by low wages in the resident population (though in-work poverty remains a factor captured by the new UC data).
- 2.14 The data reveals a core of LSOAs that are in the most deprived 10% (decile 1) for both income and employment. These areas represent the deepest pockets of economic disadvantage:
- Sheerness: Swale 001A, 001B, 001C, 002A, 002B, 002C
 - Milton Regis: Swale 010B
 - Murston: Swale 010C
 - Priory: Swale 015D
- 2.15 Analysis of the data (summarised in Appendix I) shows the severity of the situation in Sheerness. For example, LSOA 'Swale 001A' ranks as the 95th most deprived neighbourhood in England for income out of 32,844 areas. This level of deprivation is comparable to the most challenging inner-city wards in the north of England, highlighting the acute nature of coastal deprivation on the Island.
- 2.16 Nationally, Swale ranks 120th for income and 116th for employment. While these ranks are lower than the overall IMD rank (59th), the concentration in specific wards drags the borough-wide performance down. This strongly suggests that any strategy interventions must be geographically targeted. Broad job creation schemes may not reach residents in these specific LSOAs without tailored employability support to address the complex barriers to work found in these neighbourhoods.

Health deprivation

- 2.17 The 2025 data confirms a disturbing correlation, referred to as the triple threat: the convergence of high income deprivation, high employment deprivation, and high health deprivation in the same geographic locations.
- 2.18 Six of the LSOAs identified above as economic hotspots are also in the most deprived 10% nationally for health deprivation. These are:
- Sheerness: Swale 001A, 002B, 002C
 - Milton Regis: Swale 010B
 - Murston: Swale 010C
 - Sheppey East: Swale 006A
- 2.19 The health domain measures indicators such as years of potential life lost, comparative illness, and mood/anxiety disorders. The alignment of these poor health outcomes with economic disadvantage provides a strong evidence base. It

suggests that the health inequalities in Swale are structurally linked to economic circumstances.

- 2.20 This data is important for the council's engagement with the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB). It supports the argument that health funding should not just be allocated by population headcounts but reflect those specific LSOAs where the health deprivation is highest.

Education, skills and training

- 2.21 The education domain shows a slightly wider footprint of deprivation than the income/employment domains. This suggests a skills challenge that extends beyond the core poverty hotspots:
- all 13 LSOAs in the bottom decile for income/employment are also in the bottom decile for education
 - deprivation in this domain extends to areas that are slightly better off economically, such as parts of Queenborough & Halfway (005B, 005C), St Ann's (014C), and Homewood (012A)
 - The concentration of education deprivation on the Isle of Sheppey is particularly acute. Almost every LSOA in Sheerness, Sheppey East, and Queenborough ranks in the lowest deciles. This reinforces the need for a specific focus on the Island's educational ecosystem, from early years through to adult retraining.

Barriers to housing and services

- 2.22 A significant finding from the 2025 update is the extent of deprivation in the Barriers to Housing and Services domain. This domain has been heavily impacted by the inclusion of broadband speed data and improved transport modelling.
- 2.23 While urban wards like Sheerness and Murston dominate the economic deprivation tables, the barriers domain reveals a different geography of need. Some of the most deprived LSOAs in England for this domain are found in Swale's rural and semi-rural wards:
- Boughton & Courtenay: all four LSOAs are in decile 1
 - East Downs: both LSOAs are in decile 1.
 - Teynham & Lynsted: all three LSOAs are in decile 1.
 - Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch: three out of four LSOAs are in decile 1.
- 2.24 This challenges the narrative that deprivation is solely an urban or industrial issue in Swale. Residents in these areas, while being potentially more affluent than other areas of the borough, are service-poor. They face extreme challenges in accessing GPs, shops, and schools via public transport, and are now statistically confirmed as suffering from digital exclusion due to poor broadband speeds.

Crime

2.25 The crime domain reveals two distinct types of high-crime areas in Swale:

- Deprivation-linked crime: in areas like Sheerness (001A, 001B) and Murston (010C), high crime rates coexist with high income and employment deprivation. Here, crime is likely a symptom of wider socio-economic stress
- Crime-led deprivation: there are specific clusters where crime is the primary driver of deprivation scores, appearing in areas that are otherwise relatively stable economically. Notable examples include Roman (010E, 011D) and Homewood (012A). In Roman (010E), the area is in decile 1 for crime but Decile 3 for income. This suggests specific localised issues (potentially anti-social behaviour or specific criminal activity) that require a policing and community safety response rather than an economic intervention.

Living Environment

2.26 This domain separates the quality of housing and the external environment from the economic status of the residents. It identifies LSOAs with poor indoor housing conditions (lack of central heating, poor repair) and poor outdoor environments (air quality):

- The worst-performing areas include Boughton & Courtenay (017A), East Downs (016A), and Sheerness (001A).
- The presence of rural wards in this category highlights the issue of older, energy-inefficient housing stock in our rural areas.

Ward-level analysis

2.27 The IoD2025 data allows for a granular analysis of the seven domain of deprivation for each of Swale's 90 LSOA's. These are summarised in Appendix I and can also be explored, including maps and downloadable data, from the [Governments deprivation in England website](#).

3 Recommendations

3.1 The committee notes the publication of the English Indices of Deprivation 2025 (IoD2025) and the analysis of Swale's relative position.

3.2 The Committee supports the adoption of the IoD2025 data as the evidence base for targeting future interventions, specifically supporting the Corporate Plan priority of tackling deprivation and inequality.

3.3 Members support officers use of the domain-specific data to strengthen advocacy with strategic partners, including the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Kent County Council (KCC), to secure needs-based resource allocation.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 Do nothing/retain 2019 data baseline.

- 4.1.1 The committee could choose to note the report but continue using the 2019 Indices of Deprivation for current operational planning.
- 4.1.2 This option is strongly recommended against. The 2019 data is six years old and predates the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the full rollout of Universal Credit. Furthermore, it does not include the new digital connectivity metrics. Relying on outdated data would result in the misallocation of resources (e.g., failing to recognise the new depth of rural deprivation) and would significantly weaken the council's position when bidding for competitive external funding, where the use of the latest national statistics is a mandatory requirement.

4.2 Report only the average score improvement.

- 4.2.1 The council could choose to focus its external communications solely on the improvement in the 'Rank of Average Score' (from 56th to 62nd) to present a positive narrative of borough-wide improvement.
- 4.2.2 While statistically accurate, this approach would be strategically damaging. It would mask the worsening rank of Average Rank (69th to 59th) and the high local concentration of deprivation. Ignoring these negative trends would undermine our case for support from central government and partners.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 As this report deals with the analysis of a national statistical release, public consultation on the figures themselves is not applicable. However, the data acts as a trigger for consultation on the strategies it informs.
- 5.2 The initial analysis was presented to the Senior Management Team in November to make sure directors and heads of service were aware of the implications for their respective directorates.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The report aligns directly with the Corporate Plan 2023-2027, particularly objectives related to tackling inequality. The worsening 'Rank of Average Rank' serves as a critical Key Performance Indicator (KPI) baseline.

	Future success in delivering the Corporate Plan could be partly measured by the council's ability to reverse this trend in the next IoD2025 release.
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no direct financial implications from noting this report. However, there are indirect financial implications. The IoD2025 is a key metric used for the allocation of government grants (e.g., Household Support Fund, UKSPF). Accurate application of this data ensures the council maximises its income potential.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The council has a general duty of Best Value to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. Basing decisions on the most up-to-date and robust statistical evidence (IoD2025) supports this duty and reduces the risk of legal challenge (e.g., Judicial Review) against decisions regarding resource allocation or service reduction. There are no immediate procurement implications, though the data could inform social value requirements in future contracts.
Crime and Disorder	The identification of specific crime-led" deprivation pockets (e.g., Roman, Homewood) provides an evidence base for the Community Safety Partnership.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The 'Living Environment' domain highlights areas with poor housing energy efficiency. This data allows targeting of programmes such as HUG2 to the areas with the highest carbon footprint and fuel poverty, directly supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration.
Health and Wellbeing	The data shows severe health inequalities linked to economic status. The data supports the council in holding the Integrated Care System to account for the delivery of health equity in Swale.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The IoD2025 includes the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI). High IDACI scores in Sheerness and Murston indicate areas where children are growing up in poverty, which is a known risk factor for safeguarding issues.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Using outdated data for funding bids leads to failure to secure resources. These risks are mitigated by adopting the recommendations of this report.
Equality and Diversity	The IoD2025 helps the council discharge the Public Sector Equality Duty. Deprivation often correlates with protected characteristics (e.g., disability in the health domain; age in IDAOPI).

	By targeting resources at the most deprived areas, the council is likely to be positively impacting groups with protected characteristics.
Privacy and Data Protection	The IoD2025 uses aggregate, anonymised statistics published by the ONS and MHCLG. No personal data is processed in the production of this report, so there are no GDPR implications. The data is Open Government Licence compliant.
Local Government Reorganisation	Any future discussion regarding devolution or reorganisation in Kent would rely on this data to determine the needs-based funding formula for a new authority. Swale's high deprivation ranking relative to other Kent districts would be a material consideration in any financial settlement.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Domain deciles by ward

8 Background Papers

None

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix I - Domain deciles by ward

LSOA name (2021)	Ward	Deciles - where 1 is most deprived 10% of LSOAs							
		Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health Deprivation and Disability	Crime	Barriers to Housing and Services	Living Environment
Swale 015A	Abbey	5	5	5	4	6	3	7	5
Swale 015B	Abbey	4	4	3	2	3	3	6	9
Swale 015C	Abbey	6	6	6	9	7	3	9	2
Swale 007G	Bobbing, Iwade & Lower Halstow	7	8	8	7	8	6	2	10
Swale 007H	Bobbing, Iwade & Lower Halstow	6	6	6	6	7	5	2	10
Swale 008E	Bobbing, Iwade & Lower Halstow	6	8	7	3	7	8	2	8
Swale 009A	Borden and Grove Park	7	8	7	5	7	7	2	6
Swale 009I	Borden and Grove Park	2	3	2	2	4	1	7	6
Swale 012C	Borden and Grove Park	7	6	7	4	5	6	7	6
Swale 017A	Boughton & Courtenay	5	7	8	6	9	6	1	1
Swale 017B	Boughton & Courtenay	5	7	7	6	7	6	1	2
Swale 017C	Boughton & Courtenay	4	4	4	3	6	4	1	7
Swale 017D	Boughton & Courtenay	6	8	8	7	9	4	1	4
Swale 009B	Chalkwell	4	5	5	4	5	1	7	5
Swale 012B	Chalkwell	5	5	5	4	5	3	7	4
Swale 016A	East Downs	4	6	6	5	7	7	1	1
Swale 016B	East Downs	4	6	6	5	5	6	1	2

Swale 008A	Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch	4	5	5	3	6	4	1	7
Swale 008B	Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch	4	6	6	4	5	4	1	6
Swale 008C	Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch	6	6	6	6	7	6	2	4
Swale 008D	Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch	6	7	6	6	7	8	1	9
Swale 010A	Homewood	3	4	3	3	4	2	6	3
Swale 012A	Homewood	3	3	3	1	3	5	7	5
Swale 012E	Homewood	10	10	10	7	8	10	8	9
Swale 013A	Homewood	6	7	5	6	6	3	9	3
Swale 007B	Kemsley	7	7	8	5	7	6	4	9
Swale 007D	Kemsley	6	6	6	4	5	8	3	10
Swale 007I	Kemsley	5	5	6	4	4	6	2	9
Swale 007J	Kemsley	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	10
Swale 007C	Milton Regis	5	5	4	4	5	4	3	8
Swale 007F	Milton Regis	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	10
Swale 009E	Milton Regis	5	6	4	4	5	3	8	5
Swale 010B	Milton Regis	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	8
Swale 003A	Minster Cliffs	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	8
Swale 003B	Minster Cliffs	5	6	5	4	5	3	2	8
Swale 003C	Minster Cliffs	5	8	5	3	4	6	2	10
Swale 003D	Minster Cliffs	6	8	5	3	6	8	3	10
Swale 006C	Minster Cliffs	3	5	4	2	4	3	1	6
Swale 010C	Murston	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	6
Swale 011A	Murston	4	4	4	3	5	3	2	9
Swale 011B	Murston	7	7	6	4	7	4	7	7
Swale 011C	Murston	4	4	4	2	5	5	3	9
Swale 014A	Priory	8	7	7	6	6	6	8	9
Swale 015D	Priory	1	1	1	1	2	2	6	9
Swale 004A	Queenborough & Halfway	4	5	4	3	5	6	3	6
Swale 004B	Queenborough & Halfway	5	6	6	3	7	4	3	8
Swale 005A	Queenborough & Halfway	5	6	4	3	5	6	3	9

Swale 005B	Queenborough & Halfway	2	3	2	1	3	2	2	4
Swale 005C	Queenborough & Halfway	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	9
Swale 010D	Roman	3	3	3	2	4	2	6	2
Swale 010E	Roman	2	3	3	2	3	1	5	5
Swale 011D	Roman	2	3	2	1	2	1	5	9
Swale 011E	Roman	4	4	4	3	4	3	5	9
Swale 001A	Sheerness	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Swale 001B	Sheerness	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
Swale 001C	Sheerness	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	2
Swale 001D	Sheerness	1	2	2	1	2	1	4	2
Swale 002A	Sheerness	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1
Swale 002B	Sheerness	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	8
Swale 002C	Sheerness	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	10
Swale 002D	Sheerness	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	9
Swale 004D	Sheppey Central	6	7	5	3	5	6	3	9
Swale 004E	Sheppey Central	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	10
Swale 004F	Sheppey Central	4	4	4	2	5	6	2	8
Swale 004H	Sheppey Central	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	10
Swale 004I	Sheppey Central	5	6	6	4	5	4	2	10
Swale 005D	Sheppey Central	4	6	4	2	4	3	2	8
Swale 006A	Sheppey East	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	4
Swale 006B	Sheppey East	2	3	2	1	3	3	1	8
Swale 006E	Sheppey East	2	6	7	1	2	2	1	4
Swale 006F	Sheppey East	3	5	4	1	3	3	1	9
Swale 014B	St Ann's	8	9	8	8	7	7	8	4
Swale 014C	St Ann's	2	2	2	1	3	3	4	10
Swale 014D	St Ann's	9	8	8	6	8	8	7	9
Swale 015E	St Ann's	6	7	6	7	8	4	9	1
Swale 016C	Teynham & Lynsted	4	6	5	3	7	4	1	1
Swale 016D	Teynham & Lynsted	3	4	3	3	5	4	1	8

Swale 016E	Teynham & Lynsted	5	6	6	3	7	5	1	5
Swale 009F	The Meads	7	7	8	6	7	3	4	6
Swale 009G	The Meads	4	4	5	2	3	3	3	9
Swale 009H	The Meads	6	5	5	5	8	4	4	8
Swale 014E	Watling	8	7	7	8	8	5	9	6
Swale 014F	Watling	2	3	2	1	3	2	4	9
Swale 015F	Watling	8	8	7	8	8	7	7	7
Swale 013C	West Downs	5	8	8	7	8	7	1	1
Swale 013D	West Downs	7	6	8	5	7	5	4	9
Swale 012D	Woodstock	6	6	4	4	7	6	8	8
Swale 013E	Woodstock	10	10	10	9	9	10	6	8
Swale 013F	Woodstock	9	9	7	7	6	8	7	10
Swale 013G	Woodstock	7	6	5	6	5	5	8	9

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	20 th January 2026
Report Title	Household Support Fund (Round 7) and Tackling Poverty Update
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Sarah-Jane Radley, Community & Partnerships Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The committee is asked to note the contents of the report. 2. To discuss the recommendation for two Anti-Poverty Champions - internal and external.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide an update on the delivery of Household Support Fund (Round 7) and the work of the Community & Partnerships Team on tackling poverty in the borough.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 Household Support Fund has provided vital Government funding to deliver critical services to the residents of Swale who are impacted by the current Cost of Living and energy prices. Over the seven rounds (Oct 2021 – Mar 2026), we have developed support packages by working with local voluntary, community, and enterprise sector organisations (VCSE) and have delivered support through a network of frontline delivery.

2.2 Funding Allocations

Household Support Fund is a Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) provision which is funded to Kent County Council and then we receive local allocations dependant on a variety of measures including poverty levels.

- Round 1 (6th October 2021-31st March 2022) – £244,416.22
- Round 2 (1st April 2022-30th September 2022) – £558,940.00 (In-house voucher scheme delivered & pensioner payments)
- Round 3 (1st October 2022-31st March 2023) – £279,923.87
- Round 4 (1st April 2023-31st March 2024) – £505,445.00
- Round 5 (1st April 2024-30th September 2024) £252,722.45
- Round 6 (1st September 2025 – 31st March 2025) £252,722.45
- Round 7 (1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026) £445,415.81

2.3 Current funding position

The current round of funding will end on 31st March 2026. Government has announced this will be the final extension to Household Support Fund in its current iteration and it will become a new fund as of 1st April 2026. The new fund will be called the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). We do not currently have the full guidance for the new fund, any detail as to the value of the allocation, or indeed if we will receive the fund locally as we have previously for HSF.

2.4 Delivery model and funding allocation

The current delivery model provides funding to Swales voluntary, community and enterprise sector to deliver a number of emergency support packages and advice services. The Community & Partnerships Team manage the grant delivery and monitoring and evaluation, as well as supporting internal departments such as Housing to access the fund.

Organisation	Service offer
Age UK (Faversham & Sittingbourne)	• Hot meals & food shopping • Information & Advice Service for pensioners
Age UK (Sheppey)	• Hot meals & food shopping
Children & Families	• Emergency food parcels
Children & Families	• £100 Mastercard (Billed fuel support)
Citizens Advice Swale	• Fuel advice (and other advice services) • Information & Advice Service for pensioners
Diversity House	• Emergency food parcels (Multicultural)
Fuel & Water Advice Service (Children & Families)	• Fuel and energy advice (inc. fuel vouchers)
Swale Foodbank	• Emergency food parcels
West Faversham Community Association	• Hot meals (children) • Emergency food parcels

Food: Currently the majority of funding is allocated to services that deliver emergency food support to residents, through parcels, hot meals and shopping. These are vital food support services that ensure families receive the food they need to be able to eat.

Fuel: In addition to food, we provide a service whereby residents can access £100 in the form of a digital card that can be used to contribute towards their energy bills and help them to reduce fuel debt or receive a pre-payment fuel voucher so that they can heat their homes.

Advice: Other areas of support include advice services; these play a vital role to ensure that residents have access to the right information and advice to ensure they can resolve issues and better their circumstances.

Other: Additionally, we work closely with our internal housing teams to provide support to residents who are in exceptional circumstances and require emergency funds such as payments for rent arrears to help them advance into permanent living conditions, vouchers or essentials such as sleeping bags and hats/scarves for homeless.

Prevention: We are working closely with local VCSE organisations to deliver preventative support such as advice services and linking up providers to provide a person-centred approach to service delivery.

Additional Prevention Projects

As part of the winter (September 2025-February 2026) funding delivery we included a community chest funding scheme which enabled organisations to bid for individual pots of £2500. The criterion for delivery is in line with prevention within the HSF Round 7 Guidance. We had a variety of fantastic projects come forward of which we have funded 11 projects under the scheme. These are as follows:

Organisation	Project	Value
Autism Apprentice	Coffee and support sessions to help families access Disability Living Allowance	£1,560
Citizen Advice Swale	Monthly workshops designed to enhance participants' financial capability through the development of numerical skills and essential digital literacy	£2,021.16
Diversity House	Community based skills programme	£2,500
EKC Secondary School	Delivery of 45 food parcels to families engaging with EKCSS and Children and Families	£1,000
Faversham Umbrella	Warm Space and Free Soup initiative during the winter months (November 2025 – February 2026).	£2,500
Friendly Faces of Kent	Face to face energy saving talks and advice - Teynham, Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey	£1,972
Mid Kent Mind	Support sessions to adults living in areas of deprivation across Swale who are experiencing low levels of wellbeing and are impacted by COL	£2,497.44
Oasis Youth and Community Hub	The Community Junction project - Queenborough & Rushenden	£2,500
SATEDA	To provide emergency resilience packs to high risk children and adults fleeing domestic abuse.	£1,000
Streetlight UK	Outreach project, supporting women involved in prostitution and all forms of sexual violence and exploitation, including those trafficked into prostitution.	£2,500
Swale Foodbank	Support worker to provide emergency crisis parcels for vulnerable families across Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey during Christmas period	£2,500

Please see **Appendix I** for Household Support Fund data – to date.

2.5 Cost of Living

The Cost of Living Partnership Group (CoL) was established in 2022 as a collaborative response to the emerging Cost of Living Crisis post Covid. The group consists of a partnership made up of SBC officers, statutory organisations such as DWP and voluntary and community sector organisations. The group is chaired by a voluntary sector organisation, and this has proved to be vital in the make up and attendance of the group as we have an average of 35 plus attendees at most meetings.

The group has agreed on four main priorities:

Priority 1: Engagement, communications and networking

Priority 2: Collaborate on projects that relate to skills, employment and educational opportunities

Priority 3: Deliver prevention activities that include utilising available mechanisms to deliver benefit uptake projects, financial resilience and income maximisation

Priority 4: Health and wellbeing

In 2025 the meetings have covered subject areas including a workshop around mental health, development of the HSF services, developing core priorities, and increasing prevention as an area of work. The group has delivered a number of projects which have been as a direct result of the group discussions, these include the setup of the One Swale Roadshows, the delivery of funding and grant opportunities, increased collaboration by VCSE organisations on local delivery, promotional events and activities, mapping of local services and collective emergency response to emerging local issues.

The group is vital to localised collaboration and conversation which enables a stronger more resilient response to tackling poverty within the borough and is well established in its presence as a platform for making change within the borough.

In addition to the external meetings, we also deliver an internal officer Cost of Living meetings, these are attended by a cross section of departments including, Housing, Customer Services, Revenues & Benefits, Climate Change and others. The meetings cover updates relating to the items noted within this paper and present an opportunity for service areas to work collaboratively on projects and develop ideas.

2.6 Benefit uptake and campaigns

We have delivered a number of targeted campaigns through use of the Lower Income Family Tracker (LIFT) platform. The platform enables us to draw down localised data sets from SBC benefit claimants who are living in the borough and claiming Council Tax support/Housing Benefit. The benefit of the platform is that it enables us to categorise household information into a variety of groups, including fuel, water and food poverty, unclaimed benefits and financial resilience.

Attendance Allowance Campaign, July 2024 to March 2025

Achieved over £4million in lifetime Attendance Allowance awards for claimants and partners in Swale.

- Total claiming: 96
- Higher rate: 19
- Lower rate: 77
- Monthly claim: £51,029
- Annual claim: £404,970
- Lifetime claim: £4,178,458

Pension Credit Take-up Campaign, March 2025 to October 2025

Total number of new claimants	26
Take up percentage	9%
Average age of new claimants (years)	71
Total annual amount awarded	£ 85,493.80
Average life expectancy (years)	80
Total annual amount awarded x difference between average age of new claimant and life expectancy in Swale (i.e. Lifetime Award)	£ 759,142.07
Total number of households contacted	277

In addition, we have delivered a variety of campaigns promoting targeted support offers for local services to ensure that households who are eligible for support know how to access it. We do this using basic postcard style cards that are directly mailed to the household with high level information about the support available. For example, over the winter period we have promoted access to advice services such as Age UK and Citizen Advice Swale.

2.7 One Swale Roadshows

The roadshows are multi-agency drop-in sessions that take place around the borough, rotating between, Sheerness, Leysdown, Sittingbourne & Faversham.

The sessions are a useful way of bringing a variety of services into the community to give residents access to face-to-face support and advice. Through this work, not only have residents been able to access services such as fuel advice, debt and benefit advice, children's services, clothes and food, the organisations themselves have used the opportunity to network and form relationships in the borough to enable a more cohesive approach to service delivery.

The roadshows have become a recognisable branding that residents trust and have been joined up with other activity days such as Seashells half term fun day to ensure maximum impact.

Date	Location	Number of partners in attendance	Number of resident interactions

January 2025	Leysdown	12	4
February 2025	Sittingbourne	20	80
March 2025	Faversham (FCNG event)	18	101
March 2025	Sheerness	15	82
April 2025	Sittingbourne	14	22
May 2025	Leysdown	13	22
June 2025	Faversham	15	41
July 2025	Sheerness	17	62
August 2025	Leysdown (Family Hub Event)	10	105
September 2025	Faversham	11	39
October 2025	Sheerness (Seashells Event)	18	143
November 2025	Sittingbourne	15	80

The One Swale Roadshows are delivered in partnership with Swale CVS and Faversham Community Networking Group and are funded by Household Support Fund.

2.8 Skills & Employment

We are working with a variety of partners to deliver skills & employment projects within the borough that are related to tackling inequalities. We have recently set up a strategic Skills & Employment Group which is chaired by Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, with the aim of targeting some of the key issues being experienced within the borough, including high levels of NEET's. We are also working with existing programs such as the Marmot Coastal program linked to KCC Public Health and the Widening Access Demonstrator (WAD) which is being led by Medway & Swale Health & Care Partnership, to promote access and develop bids to bring future projects and funding into the locality.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IoMD)

- 2.9 Underpinning the work delivered within this subject area is the evidence base provided by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IoMD) Data (link in background papers), to ensure that we are targeting services to the most deprived residents as well as incorporating the data within strategies and funding bids to support future work and opportunities. The current Empowering You in Swale Strategy sits across four priorities that link to the IoMD Data and is intrinsically linked to poverty.

Anti-Poverty Champion

- 2.10 The Chair asked us to explore the option for representatives to become Anti-Poverty Champions for the Council. The Champion's role is to utilise existing networks and service delivery programmes to promote tackling and reducing poverty within the borough. We felt that as the promotion of this work sits within the existing delivery of the Community & Partnerships Team and the joint work of the Cost of Living Group that representation could be made from these two areas. The role would be resourced from current operational delivery and therefore no

additional project delivery outside of existing agreed service planning may be expected from Officers.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The committee is asked to **note** the contents of the report.
- 3.2 To agree the Chairs recommendation for two Anti-Poverty Champions - internal and external.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 We have rejected the option to do nothing, due to the high levels of need within the borough, as indicted in the most recent Indices of Multiple Deprivation data that state Swale is in the most deprived 20% of all districts in England.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Within the variety of workstreams, we utilise mechanisms such as the Cost of Living groups, localised networking groups, partner feedback and resident feedback to shape service delivery. A review of the current round of Swales Household Support Fund will be carried out when it closes to feed into the development of the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The variety of work streams within this paper link to a number of Corporate Plan priorities: • Community: supports community resilience and improves welfare of residents • Health & Housing: Tackles health inequalities within the borough and improves residents' health and wellbeing. • Economy: Improving opportunities for residents to access skills & employment. • Running the Council: Working in partnership with a variety of agencies to improve sustainability and resilience. • Environment: Tackling fuel poverty and supporting residents to become more energy efficient.
Financial, Resource and Property	Household Support Fund delivered by Community & Partnerships Team under operational business with an administrative draw down through The Fund. Core delivery of The Fund - Third Party Organisations; grant funded.

	HSF Allocation Round 7 (1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026) £445,415.81 Risk: we do not currently know the allocation for CRF post March 2026. Cost of Living, and other related activities are delivered within operational business. Delivery of the Anti Poverty Champion to sit within the current operational delivery. Risk: additional projects would need to be resourced accordingly. Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) – data platform utilised for targeted welfare projects; £18,000 total cost 2024/25. HSF £9000 and £9000 match funded by KCC for 2024/25. No current funding identified for 2026/27.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	This work aims to reduce crime and disorder by engaging local communities in a variety of projects and links to the Community Safety Plan due to the correlation between crime and disorder and poverty.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	This work aims to provide residents access local services that can support the sharing of information and resources such as energy vouchers to reduce fuel poverty and support residents to be come more energy efficient within their homes.
Health and Wellbeing	This work aims to tackle high levels of health inequalities within the borough and increase life expectancy.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	This work is closely linked to the safeguarding of residents including vulnerable children and adults. Partners will have relevant policies and procedures.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage

Local Government Reorganisation	The Crisis and Resilience Fund will continue into the formation of the new organisation; however, we hope services will be delivered locally until such time as the new authority is formed.
---------------------------------	--

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- **Appendix I:** Household Support Fund Data

8 Background Papers

Indices of Multiple Deprivation: [English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release - GOV.UK](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix I: Household Support Fund – DATA TOTAL

Household Support Fund									
Total Value of Awards Split by Category									
Round 1									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
06/10/21-31/03/22	443	155	N/A	258	0	0	N/A	856	683
Round 2									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
01/04/22-30/09/22	1753	3982	N/A	0	0	0	N/A	5735	1773
Round 3									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
01/10/22-30/03/23	6380	2313	N/A	33	0	4	N/A	8730	5861
Round 4									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
01/04/2023-31/03/2024	20937	1761	N/A	730	615	6	N/A	24049	22818
Round 5									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
01/04/2024-30/09/2024	9584	811	50	957	400	48	N/A	11850	11151
Round 6									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
01/10/2024-31/03/2025	10454	969	2465	70	642	139	N/A	14739	10295
Round 7									
Time Period	Food Support (Vouchers, Food Parcels, Food Shopping, Hot Meals)	Energy and Water (fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy/water ie, warm packs, hygro meters)	Wider Essentials linked to energy and water	Wider Essentials	Advice Services	Housing Costs	Community infrastructure/ support	Total Volume	Total Households
01/04/2025-31/03/2026	3118	2722	N/A	0	428	7	2848	9123	4648
Totals	52669	12713	2515	2048	2085	204	2848	75082	57229

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	20 th January 2026
Report Title	Sport England Place Partnership Programme
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Sarah–Jane Radley, Community & Partnerships Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To note the update provided on Swale being accepted as a Place Partnership by Sport England. 2. To agree that the Chair of the Housing, Health & Communities Committee and the Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods to sit on the Board of the Swale Place Partnership with delegated authority to contribute towards the delivery of the project. 3. To delegate authority to the Head of Environment and Leisure to use a relevant procurement framework to appoint consultants for the feasibility work for Sheerness Pool.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out information regarding the Sport England Place Partnership Programme, and what this means for Swale given the announcement that it has been successful in becoming a Place Partnership.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 Active Kent and Medway (AKM) is one of 43 Active Partnerships in England. The principal founders are Sport England and Kent County Council (KCC) via a Public Health Grant, whose strategies and priority outcomes set out the direction of its work and activity.
- 2.2 AKM's vision is 'more people, more active, more often' with a mission to 'change and improve lives through sport and physical activity'. In order to achieve this, AKM aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity with a focus on encouraging the least active of Kent and Medway's 1.9 million residents to become more active. This is achieved through the promotion of the associated personal and public health benefits and targeting resources where data demonstrates need is greatest, especially at those from under-represented groups including women, older people, people living with a disability or long-term

health condition, ethnically diverse communities and people from lower socio-economic groups.

- 2.3 AKM engages with partners and networks across the county including those in health, adult social care, community safety, housing, and transport as well as governing bodies of sport, clubs, school sports networks, charities, leisure providers and local authorities, to provide opportunities for everyone to get involved in sport and physical activity for enjoyment as well as wider health and social outcomes.
- 2.4 In November 2023, Sport England announced it would be investing £250 million of lottery and exchequer funding into place-based work. This investment is focused on areas identified as having high levels of inactivity, social need, and health inequalities. The approach is part of a broader strategy to address disparities in physical activity levels and promote healthier lifestyles among communities.
- 2.5 The £250 million investment aims to support local communities by creating opportunities for physical activity and sport. £190 million has been ringfenced for work in 80 places across England identified as having the highest need. Each selected area is in the top 10% of the country for inactivity and deprivation, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions. This funding will be distributed through the Place Partnerships Programme.
- 2.6 Sport England's approach is place-based, meaning it focuses on the needs and assets of each individual community. By partnering with the local organisations, leaders, and Active Partnerships like Active Kent & Medway, the programme aims to address the barriers of physical activity and create tailored solutions. This includes leveraging local resources such as parks, community centres, and sports clubs to foster active lifestyles, as well as working with communities themselves to create sustainable solutions.
- 2.7 The Place Partnership Programme aims to offer significant benefit across a wide range of policy areas from health and education to community safety and employment. Engaging a wide range of partners at a local level will be critical to its success and this is a current area of focus for Active Kent & Medway as it builds local place partnerships.
- 2.8 AKM have successfully secured initial investment for four places in Kent, these include Thanet in its entirety, Gravesham (the wards of Westcourt and North Northfleet), Medway and Swale.
- 2.9 As highlighted on Moving Communities, the top three most deprived wards in Swale are Sheppey East, Sheerness and Murston. The Place Needs Classification identifies Isle of Sheppey (Sheerness East/West, Queenborough, Minster North), Sittingbourne Central and Milton Regis in the top 20%. Moving Communities also shows that areas of St Annes/Priory Wards in Faversham are

within the top 25%. The development award stage will determine whether a geographical or thematic approach will be taken long term.

- 2.10 Initial 'development award' for the first 12 months of work has been secured through Active Kent & Medway.
- 2.11 The initial development awards are a pre-cursor to a full award and designed to facilitate the setting up of local place partnership boards and some early test and learn projects in each place in order to find out where further money could be invested.
- 2.12 Including the development award, indicatively there will be up to £1.6 million of investment available to each place between now and March 2028. There will also be an opportunity to bid for capital funding and there is up to £80 million available across the 80 planned place partnerships.
- 2.13 Swale has been granted a development award of £378,207 between 2025 – 2028 to develop test and learn activities that aim to explore behavioural change to increase activity in the most deprived areas of the borough (see 2.9). Details of this programme will emerge once the Board has been set up.
- 2.14 Agreeing to be a Place Partnership Programme means that capital money from Sport England can be accessed. Swale Borough Council has been awarded £40,000 for some initial feasibility work on the future of Sheerness Pool. Having secured the full refurbishment of the Healthy Living Centre (HLC) in Sheerness (the dry-side leisure centre, GP surgery and home for Sheppey Matters), the focus now shifts to the swimming pool, as this has been identified in the Built Facility Strategy as the next priority for investment that Sport England have supported.
- 2.15 Options to be looked at would be a refurbishment of the current building or a replacement pool attached to the HLC. Feasibility would look at planning considerations, the size of swimming pool required and what other facilities would encourage more physical activity from residents.
- 2.16 The feasibility will require input from leisure specialists, architects and costs consultants in order to develop a business case that would put Swale in a better place to bid for the available capital funding. The intention is to procure this via one of the available leisure frameworks.
- 2.17 The feasibility work will put the council in a better position to bid for further funding to contribute to any improvement works to the pool. Further work will be required to secure the funding for the full cost of the delivery of works to Sheerness Pool.
- 2.18 AKM have recruited a Swale Place Program Manager who will oversee the setup of the Place Partnership Board and implement the localised governance

structure. They will also develop a place theory of change to define shared purpose and clarify and agree clear inputs, outputs and outcomes.

- 2.19 In addition to the Place Program Manager there will be a part time Project Officer to provide administrative duties who will also be employed by AKM and two full time Community Connector roles, employed and deployed within place. Further work is required to define this element.
- 2.20 Appendix I shows the overarching plan for the development of the project.
- 2.21 As a place leader, it is important that the council plays a key role in the Place Partnership, working collaboratively with other local organisations and stakeholders to develop a local vision and delivery plan for the funding. It is felt that the Chair of the Housing, Health & Communities Committee and the Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods can act as that conduit. It is anticipated that the Community & Partnerships Manager will also be working at an operational level to support the Place Partnership Manager and Community Connector roles where appropriate.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To note the update provided on Swale being accepted as a Place Partnership by Sport England.
- 3.2 To agree that the Chair of the Housing, Health & Communities Committee and the Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods to sit on the Board of the Swale Place Partnership with delegated authority to contribute towards the delivery of the project.
- 3.3 To delegate authority to the Head of Environment and Leisure to use a relevant procurement framework to appoint consultants for the feasibility work for Sheerness Pool.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 It is not recommended to do nothing, as this will result in a lack of input from SBC for the development and future delivery of the project which could potentially reduce opportunity and impact for Swale residents and services.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation on the development and future delivery of the project will be imbedded into the work of the Place Programme Board and any related delivery groups that are established through the work of the project. Consultation with local residents, businesses, organisations, and services will be a key delivery driver of the Community Connector roles, who will be rooted in the community.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This project aligns to several corporate priorities including: • Community – Supports local groups and organisations to strengthen and grow • Health & Housing – Improving wellbeing and increasing participation in physical activity • Economy – supporting skills and employment in the borough
Financial, Resource and Property	Member and Officer representation to the Place Partnership Board and representation for local delivery groups as required – operational business, no additional resources required. Swale Development Award total allocation: £378,207.00 £296,028.00 available 2025-2027. £82,179.00 available 2027-28. Capital feasibility - £40,000.00 SBC currently makes a funding contribution to Active Kent and Medway of £3000.00 annually.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	This project aims to reduce crime and disorder by engaging local communities in a variety of projects.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	This project aims to improve health and wellbeing by engaging local communities in a variety of projects.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	Place Partnership Board expected to undertake required EQIA and relevant responsibilities as part of the funding arrangements.

Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage
Local Government Reorganisation	Place Partnership Board will oversee the project throughout its lifespan - SBC Officer representation should remain post LGR.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Swale Plan on a page

8 Background Papers

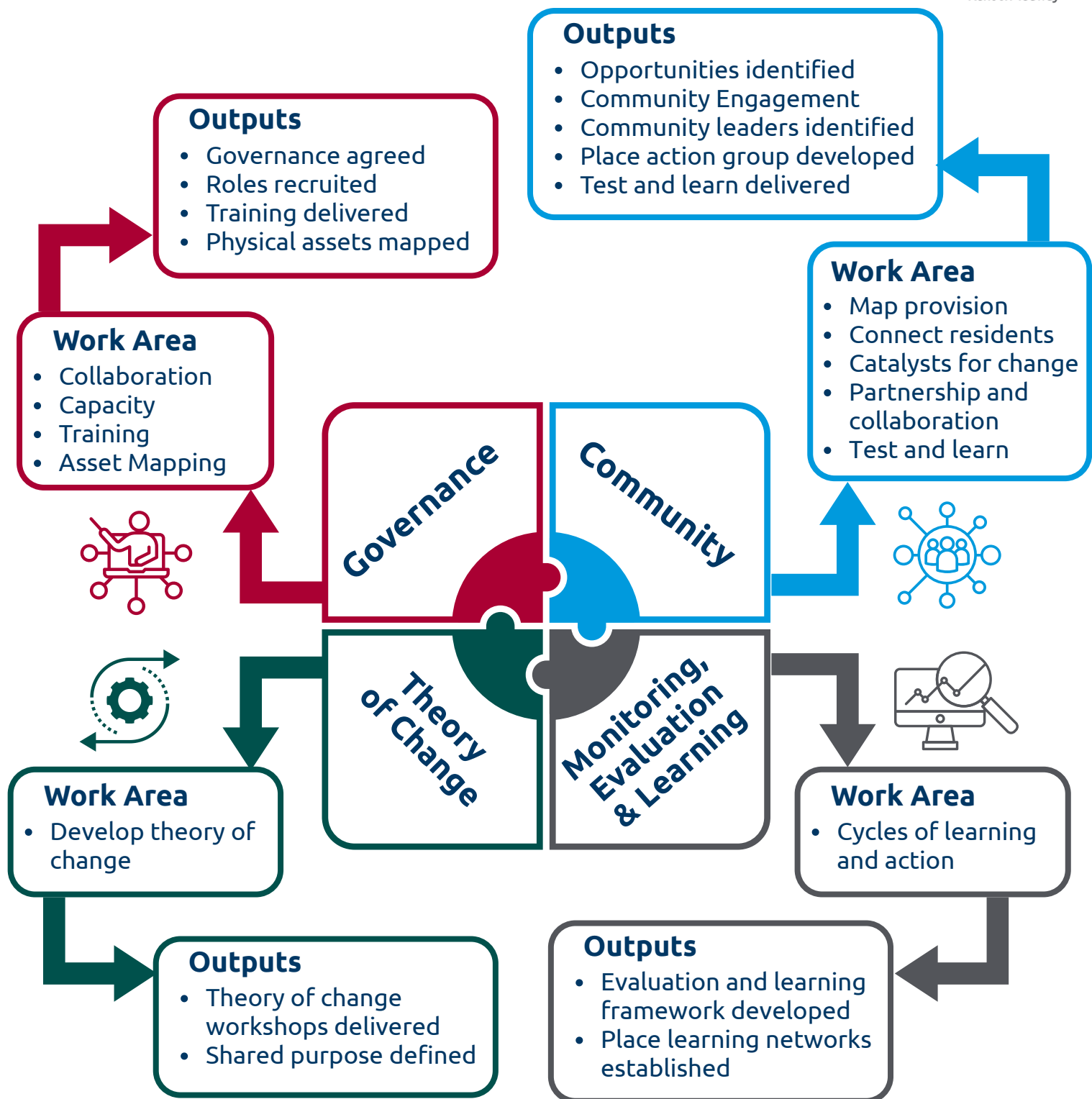
Active Kent website [Place Partnerships in Kent - ActiveKent](#)

Sport England:

Place Partnerships [Our work in places | Sport England](#)

Place Universal Offer [Our work in places | Sport England](#)

Moving Communities Data: [Moving Communities | Sport England](#)



Next Steps



Recruit programme lead officer



Finalise connector hosting



Desk-based insight gathering



Agree asset mapping process



Theory of change development



Initiate test and learn



Agree System Leadership



Wider stakeholder engagement

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing, Health and Communities Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	20 January 2026
Report Title	Swale Community Safety Priority Setting Consultation
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Steph Curtis, Strategic Policy and Communities Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That the Housing, Health and Communities Committee provide feedback to Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to inform its priority setting process for 2026/27.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Swale community safety strategic assessment process and asks the Committee to provide feedback on the current CSP performance as well as any emerging issues it feels the CSP may need to focus on.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 The Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP), of which Swale Borough Council is a statutory partner, is required to complete a strategic assessment annually. Also, section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires local authorities to have a crime and disorder committee with power to scrutinise the decisions and actions of the CSP in their area.
- 2.2 The purpose of the strategic assessment is to provide an understanding of community safety problems within the borough, in order to inform and help determine partnership priorities for the following year. It includes a performance assessment against the current priorities; discussion around emerging issues; and consideration of wider threats and opportunities that may impact upon the work of the CSP.
- 2.3 The strategic assessment, along with information from partners will be considered by the Swale CSP Executive Group at their meeting in late January 2026 once the assessment is completed. This group will agree the Community Safety Priorities for 2025/26 and the Community Safety Plan will be revised based upon this. The overall priorities have not changed for a number of years, but the specific focus within these has been amended.

- 2.4 Part of the process of compiling the strategic assessment is to review previous performance of the CSP. Part of this is a data exercise, with data being supplied to the CSP for this purpose throughout December. Additionally partner agencies are asked to submit their own views on the current performance of the partnership and any emerging community-based issues they feel the CSP should now prioritise.
- 2.5 Due to the Scrutiny function of this Committee, the CSP would welcome views on the Committee feel the Partnership is currently performing against its current priorities and any emerging issues Committee members feel they should be tackling.
- 2.6 Appendix 1 provides an overview of work of the CSP during 2025/26 and some key statistics as of September 25, which was presented to the Swale Community Safety Partnership Executive Group at their meeting in October 25. The Community Safety Plan and current priorities are published online at <https://swale.gov.uk/your-council/strategies-and-policies/community-safety-plan>.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Housing, Health and Communities Committee provide feedback to Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to inform its priority setting process for 2026/27.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To not provide any feedback to the Swale Community Safety Partnership: This isn't recommended as members of the Committee have a good understanding of issues facing the local community which may not fully be known by other agencies and are required to undertake a Scrutiny function through the Police and Justice Act.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation on the community safety priorities will take place with the CSP at their meeting in February 2025, with opportunities for partner agency participation in the strategic assessment process to take place prior to this.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The community safety strategic assessment supports the Communities priority.

Financial, Resource and Property	There are no additional finance, resource or property implications in completing the community safety strategic assessment. Resource is in place within the Community Safety Unit to create the document and assist the Community Safety Partnership in its priority setting process and refresh of the Community Safety Plan.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave agencies a duty to work together to tackle crime and disorder. Responsible authorities, which include district/borough councils, must work together to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area. The Police and Justice Act 2006 updated the Crime and Disorder Act 98, expanding the number of responsible authorities and placing a duty on them to share evidence based data and carry out frequent strategic assessments. Section 19 of this Act also requires local authorities to have a crime and disorder committee with power to scrutinise the decisions and actions of the CSP in their area.
Crime and Disorder	The contribution to the Swale community safety strategic assessment by the Communities and Leisure Committee will assist in ensuring that the priorities considered by the CSP are as reflective as possible of those crime and disorder issues faced by our communities.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Environmental ASB/crime is recognised within the current ASB priority for the CSP and partnership working to tackle this has remained an area of focus for the last number of years.
Health and Wellbeing	The existing community safety priorities contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community by ensuring there is a partnership response in place to many issues that may affect this agenda specifically around domestic abuse and supporting vulnerable people.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The existing Swale community safety priorities are closely linked to the safeguarding agenda. Swale BCs safeguarding policy and domestic abuse policy sit alongside the community safety plan and associated action.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No specific implications on risk management or health/safety have been identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	No specific implications on groups with protected characteristics have been identified.
Privacy and Data Protection	The Swale community safety strategic assessment is a partnership document, but its completion is led by Swale BC on behalf of the

	CSP. Data is shared with the CSU staff completing this through the Information Sharing Agreement from partner agencies. Some data shared has restrictions placed upon it (particularly from the Police) and this limits how widely the final assessment can be shared
Local Government Reorganisation	The community safety plan is refreshed annually and at this stage, would not be implicated by LGR. When new unitary councils come into being, the community safety plan could be refreshed to reflect the new geographical area.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Swale Community Safety Partnership Strategic Leads report October 25

8 Background Papers

Swale Community Safety Plan 2025/26 - <https://swale.gov.uk/your-council/strategies-and-policies/community-safety-plan>

TO: Community Safety Partnership Executive

DATE: Friday 17th October 2025

SUBJECT: Quarter 2 - Strategic Leads Update Report

1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of the key action and performance updates for discussion in the 2025/26 Swale Community Safety Plan.

Priority 1	Domestic Abuse		
Lead	SATEDA – Carey Philpott		
Performance Stats	Previous Rolling Year (September 2023-end August 2024)	Current Rolling Year (September 2024-end August 2025)	Change
No. of Domestic Abuse incidents across the Borough of Swale (Kent Police).	4635	4683	+48 incidents +1%
Actions	Status	Update	
1.1 Promotion of services available to both professionals and the community	In progress	DA professionals event scheduled for 16 days of action. Ongoing information sharing from KCC.	
1.2 Enhanced training focusing on specialist areas such as suicide awareness, dual allegations, alongside ensuring all partners have access to basic domestic abuse awareness training	In progress	Information on Prevent training shared VRU Resources: Support for Youth Safety and Wellbeing	
1.3 Support delivery of County Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan	In progress	DA Forum meet regularly. There are no further updates on the renewal of the KCC commission. There is likely to be a further/reviewed consultation as considerable time has passed since the original one was completed.	
1.4 Delivery of key actions to tackle VAWG	In progress	HR cards arranged to be distributed in November. Kent Police are hosting VAWG events but not always linking in to specialist services	
1.5 SATEDA Prevent Pilot	In progress	Due to change of direction from the home	

Project		office this has been paused. The trial period identified several perpetrators who met the study threshold, these were referred on to the relevant team but no further action taken.	
Key Issues/Emerging Trends			
News: The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) confirmed that, from 15 September 2025, whenever a non-molestation order is made in any family court in England and Wales, details of that order will be automatically notified to the police. There is an automated process for the courts to pass information about the non-molestation orders to ACRO Criminal Record Office. ACRO staff will update the Police National Computer (PNC). Forces are then automatically notified so further analysis can take place locally and additional safeguarding measures can be implemented where necessary. This can include, for example, conducting checks against information they already hold on their systems, identifying high risk cases and considering whether any action is appropriate, such as safety plans for victims. There is sector wide concern over the increasing anti-immigration narrative that cites immigration as widely inked to VAWG. Sector specialists wrote to the KCC leader to highlight their concerns. The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy has was due to be released by the government in September. This is still to happen. Single sex ruling – the sector are working to understand the implications for their delivery.			
DA Sub Group – Key Updates			
Nothing of note to discuss			
Cross Cutting Themes (Comments/Impact on priority/specific actions undertaken)			
Reducing Reoffending Funding Risk Communication Young people			
Nothing of note to discuss			
Priority 2	Crime and Serious Violence		
Lead	Kent Police – Vanessa Foster		
Performance Stats	Previous Rolling Year (September	Current Rolling Year (September	Change

	2023-end August 2024)	2024-end August 2025)	
Violence Against the Person (VATP)	6155	6324	+169 incidents +2.7%
Burglary (Business and Community)	154	156	+2 incidents +1.3%
Criminal Damage	1593	1583	-10 incidents -0.6%
Shoplifting	1412	1405	-7 incidents -0.5%
Actions	Status	Update	
2.1 Work with Kent-wide partners to continue response to Serious Violence	In progress	Grip hotspots have been granted further funding until April and regularly have officers in the dedicated zones where violence is anticipated. There have been two incidents of note in Sittingbourne over the summer involving knives. Both have been arrested and remanded. Our new Town Centre team are aware of those that are likely to be involved in harm and utilising stop search powers more often to negate any further knife incidents. Working with rough sleepers team to ensure the safety of those sleeping in public areas. Joint working with The Quays and identifying issues likely to come from here and monitoring certain individuals.	
2.2 Continue to monitor and respond to localised crime trends and support response as needed	In progress	Crime had a noticeable increase when the traveller encampments were at Milton in the summer. This was a reoccurring theme. Open spaces have now secured the park with fencing which should negate further incidents and next summer should naturally see a reduction in the ASB, thefts and violence that stemmed from the influx of people. Nuisance vehicles in Faversham have been repeatedly brought to Kent polices attention. This has been an ongoing work stream. Vehicles have been identified and joint working with housing meant 11 CPWS have been issued and tickets for driving offences. Working with SBC and the land over to secure bollards to negate the vehicles utilising the field has led to a reduction in calls.	

Key Issues/Emerging Trends

Our VAWG strategy continues to be a priority and we ensure all neighbourhood officers have an event a month in their local wards, this takes the form of Walk and Talk events as well as beat officers attending regular community events and surgeries within their beat and ensuring that VAWG literature is provided and a safe space for people who may wish to report. This is monitored through the CSU Inspector for Swale. We are committed to arresting offenders for violence against women and girls at the earliest opportunity. Our local policing team is relentless in looking for Swale outstanding domestic abuse suspects ensuring the safety of the victim is at the forefront. Arrests of Domestic Abuse Suspects are also identified and tasked via our tasking system, to ensure prompt attendance to locate and arrest.

District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting – Key Updates

Nothing of note to discuss

Cross Cutting Themes (Comments/Impact on priority/specific actions undertaken)

Reducing Reoffending
Funding Risk
Communication
Young People

Nothing of note to discuss

Priority 3	ASB		
Lead	Southern Housing – Alanna Gallacher		
Performance Stats	Previous Rolling Year (September 2023-end August 2024)	Current Rolling Year (September 2024-end August 2025)	Change
ASB Incidents reported to Kent Police	2769	3140	+371 incidents +13.4%
Actions	Status	Update	
3.1 Continue joint response to tackle ASB through the Community Safety Unit	In progress	Southern Housing remains committed to tackling anti-social behaviour through a strong and proactive partnership with Kent Police and the Community Safety Unit. In June, we took part in Swale Police's Community Safety Day, which was well received by the community, our residents and partners. We've also visited the Kent Police control room to strengthen our	

		understanding and collaboration. Our ASB Officers maintain regular contact with all of Kent Police's CSU teams, and each officer has an assigned Area of Influence, providing Kent Police with a clear single point of contact for ASB matters. These efforts are part of our ongoing work to rebuild and enhance the relationship between Southern Housing and Kent Police, ensuring a more coordinated and effective response to community safety.
3.2 Explore funding opportunities for street marshals	Complete	Funding secured through Swale Crime Reduction Grant from PCC which enabled x2 street marshals to cover Sheerness and Sittingbourne TCs for 5 weeks over the Summer holidays – w/c 28/07-25/08. There was one marshal per town covering x3 6 hour shifts each week. Marshals worked closely with Police/Swale CCTV.
3.3 Delivery of dedicated operations and campaigns, tackling location based problems as required	In progress	We remain ready to support Kent Police with dedicated operations and campaigns whenever needed, particularly in response to location-based issues. Our partnership has grown stronger through increased joint working with the Child-Centred Policing Team, ensuring a more holistic approach to community safety.
Key Issues/Emerging Trends		
Discussed above		
Weekly Tasking and Coordination Group – Key Updates		
Weekly group continues to meet with good representation from partners to discuss current ASB incidents, emerging issues and multi-agency action.		
Cross Cutting Themes (Comments/Impact on priority/specific actions undertaken)		
Reducing Reoffending Communication Funding Risk Young People		
Nothing of note to discuss		

Priority 4	Supporting Vulnerable People		
Lead	SBC – Steph Curtis		
Performance Stats	Previous Rolling Year (September 2023-end August 2024)	Current Rolling Year (September 2024-end August 2025)	Change
Vulnerable/repeatedly targeted callers (Kent Police)	Data no longer provided		
No. referrals to Swale Vulnerability Panel	30	42	+12 referrals
Actions	Status	Update	
4.1 Continuation of complex needs pilot	In progress	Complex needs project continues to be delivered and is funded until March 26 currently.	
4.2 Prevent Training and Awareness	In progress	Prevent training has been organised specifically for Swale partners, with ongoing access to wider training through KCMSP website. Considering whether community tension specific inputs may be of use.	
4.3 Continuation of Cost of Living work through the Community and Partnerships Team, ensuring linkage with to impacts on Community Safety and young people	In progress	Cost of living work continues with good engagement with the VCSE.	
4.4 Explore options around potential implementation of Making Every Adult Matter Project in Swale	Not yet started	Awaiting an update from health partners.	
4.5 Engagement with Medway and Swale Health and Care Partnership Projects	In progress	Ongoing – good relationships and project delivery with Swale HCP. Need to consider any changes to joint working following their restructure. Jointly delivered Baton of Hope Swale event and delivering secondary school roadshows for young people currently.	
4.6 Support the reintroduction of Street Pastors in Sittingbourne	In progress	Ongoing – Street Pastors have increased their numbers and are looking to increase patrols to fortnightly. Performance report is shared after each session.	
4.7 Review of suicide/self harm data in Swale	In progress	Awaiting report to be finalised to share	
4.8 Launch of Loneliness Project in Swale	In progress	Project has begun although there have been resourcing difficulties.	
Key Issues/Emerging Trends			

There has been an increase in community tensions across the borough, as has been seen nationally, specifically linked to concerns around immigration. There have been a number of protests and counter protests within the Faversham area, with concerns principally focused around the UASC centre. SBC are undertaking work with staff to review the reporting of CT related concerns and will be providing a briefing note for staff of concerns to look out for. Also linking in with KCC/MHCLG for any suggestions of wider community based work.

Vulnerability Panel – Key Updates

Good attendance continues with a good level of referrals. Have identified that limited to referrals received from Kent Police so will work with local teams to determine if awareness raising of the panel needs to take place.

Cross Cutting Themes (Comments/Impact on priority/specific actions undertaken)

Reducing Reoffending
Communication
Funding Risk
Young People

Young people – the youth impact group had continue to run following being set-up last year as a result of cuts in funding to youth services in particular. Despite a review of attendees to this group, it has not been action focused and it has been difficult to demonstrate its impact. The group has been set-up to monitor the impact of this funding loss and although there has been ASB through the summer it is not believed to have been as significant as the year before – albeit this may have been due to police presence and activity. A next meeting of this group is not currently scheduled and it is requested that the executive group determine next steps for this work if any.

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank