
Housing, Health and Communities Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 25 March 2026 from 7.00 pm - 10.10 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison (Vice-Chair), Peter Marchington, Ben J Martin, Tom Nundy, Richard Palmer (Substitute) (Substitute for Councillor Peter MacDonald), Hannah Perkin (Chair), Carrie Pollard, Karen Watson and Ashley Wise (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding).

APOLOGIES: Councillors Derek Carnell, Kieran Golding and Peter MacDonald.

840 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

841 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the:

- Meeting held on 20 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 615–629); and
- Extraordinary Meeting held on 25 February 2026 (Minute Nos. 630–634)

were approved as a correct record.

842 **Declarations of Interest**

No disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were declared.

843 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

844 **Chairs Briefing**

The Chair paid tribute to two young people who had recently died during a meningitis outbreak, extending the Committee's condolences to their families, friends, and the affected school and university communities. Condolences were also expressed following the death of a Kent Police officer in the line of duty.

The Chair updated Members on discussions with the Integrated Care Board regarding potential changes to GP provision at the Beachfields site, confirming that no decision had been made and that the Council would remain engaged to ensure appropriate healthcare provision, particularly for the Isle of Sheppey.

Updates were also provided on recent engagement with the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board, attendance at a Local Government Association event, and ongoing work with Rainbow Homes.

845 **Forward Decisions Plan**

The forward decision plan was noted.

846 **Empowering You in Swale Strategy Update**

The Committee received a progress update on delivery of the Empowering You in Swale

Community Development Strategy 2024–27.

Members welcomed progress in partnership working and cross-service collaboration, highlighted the importance of volunteering and the need to demystify DBS checks, and praised initiatives including Youth Democracy events, homelessness prevention activity, and health and wellbeing projects. Concerns were raised regarding future funding uncertainty.

Officers responded by outlining ongoing work with voluntary sector infrastructure partners, confirmed that DBS processes could be clarified with delivery organisations, and acknowledged funding pressures while highlighting efforts to maximise impact through partnership working and external funding opportunities.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

847 **Swale Good Causes Community Lottery Update**

The Committee considered an update on the operation of the Swale Community Lottery, including the balance of the Central Fund.

Members discussed the level of funds accumulated to date, administration costs associated with distribution, and potential options for allocation. Concerns were raised regarding proportionality of administration costs and the original intent of the Central Fund.

Officers clarified that the scheme was self-funding, outlined how the Central Fund differed from individual Good Cause pots, and confirmed the range of options available within the contractual arrangements. Comparator examples from other councils were also referenced during discussion.

Following debate, Councillor Ben Martin proposed an amendment which was seconded by Councillor Cavanaugh and agreed by the committee.

Resolved:

- 1. That the proposal to delay distribution of the Central Fund for a further year be rejected.**
- 2. That the balance of the Swale Community Lottery Central Fund be allocated to the Mayor's Charity, with distribution managed through the Mayor's Charity arrangements.**

848 **Housing Enforcement Policy**

The Committee considered the adoption of revised Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalties Policies aligned with the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and the ACEHO national enforcement model.

Members welcomed the strengthened enforcement powers and greater national consistency, and emphasised the importance of communication and publicity to deter non-compliance.

Officers responded by outlining the new statutory duties placed on the Council, the resourcing implications, and the intention to publicise enforcement action where appropriate as a deterrent. Clarification was also provided on how the policy would protect vulnerable tenants, including families with children.

Resolved:

- 1. That the revised Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy be adopted.**
- 2. That the revised Civil Penalties Policy be adopted.**

849 Temporary Accommodation Scrutiny Report

The Committee reviewed the Temporary Accommodation performance update. Members discussed reduced overall spend compared with the previous year, length of stay in temporary accommodation, barriers to move-on, and challenges securing Registered Provider involvement for affordable housing delivery. Officers responded by explaining national and regional pressures, limitations within the private rented and social housing sectors, and work underway to review allocations, improve move-on pathways, and engage further with Registered Providers and Homes England.

Resolved:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That Registered Providers be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss affordable housing delivery and pipeline issues.**

850 Cockleshell Walk Social Homes Project

The Committee received an update on the Cockleshell Walk project and considered future governance arrangements. Members welcomed progress and reflected on the long-term work undertaken to bring the project forward.

Resolved:

- 1. That the update be noted.**
- 2. That it be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that Swale Rainbow Homes Local Housing Company be dissolved.**
- 3. That a sub-committee of the Housing, Health and Communities Committee be established to oversee and scrutinise the project, with authority to establish time-limited task and finish groups as required.**

Chair

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