

Agenda

Western Area Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, 12 February 2026

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: The Committee Room, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne ME10 3HT.

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Roger Clark, James Hunt, Chris Palmer, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen (Chair) and Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair).

Quorum = 3

Pages

Information about this meeting

Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website 11 February 2026.

Recording and Privacy Notice

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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.

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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 Committee Room are located on each side of the room leading 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 27 November 2026 (Minute Nos. 511 – 521) as correct records.

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. Police update

6. Strengthening Preparedness Together in Swale (pilot project to help communities prepare for emergencies such as flooding, severe weather and utility outages)

7. Local Government Reorganisation update (Government wants us to deliver your services differently) 5 - 6

8. Community Governance Review update (potential changes to arrangements for town and parish councils) 7 - 8

9. Public Forum

10. Matters arising from previous meetings
11. Swale Bus Partnership Forum
12. Local issues to be raised
13. Matters referred to Service Committee Chairs for consideration

9 - 14

Issued on Wednesday, 4 February 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**

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Local Government Reorganisation Update – Area Committees February 2026

Government is launching its public and stakeholder consultation on Thursday 5 February 2026 on proposed Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway. This includes all proposals submitted by Kent and Medway Councils in November 2026.

This consultation will inform which model Government then chooses to implement for Kent and Medway – the decision for which is expected by mid-July 2026.

All local authorities in Kent and Medway will support the promotion of this consultation to ensure that our local residents and stakeholders have a say in shaping the future of local government in our area.

Swale Borough Council will also be considering its own response to the consultation.

The consultation details can be found at <https://kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/>

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Area Committee Update – Community Governance Review – February 2026

The Community Governance Review first stage consultation has now closed. The member steering group will consider all consultation responses. First stage recommendations will be taken to full council on 1 April 2026, after which the second stage consultation will open in April 2026.

The website www.swale.gov.uk/cgr will be updated, including the link to second stage consultation when it is open. If you have any questions please contact cgr@swale.gov.uk.

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Matters Arising Report to Western Area Committee – February 2026

New actions/issues and progress with ongoing actions

No.	Item	Background	Actions/updates
1.	Bexon (Bredgar) Conservation Area Review.	Regular updates on the Bexon (Bredgar) Conservation Area Review have been given at Western Area Committee meetings.	A new Conservation Area for Bexon (Bredgar) is proposed to be designated. Public Consultation on the Bexon Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan prepared by Place Services, concluded on 10 December 2025, and is now scheduled to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 4 February 2026.
2.	Swale Local Heritage List	Regular updates on the Swale Local Heritage List have been given at Western Area Committee meetings.	The second round of the Local Heritage List 'invitation to nominate' closed on 31 October 2025. The Selection Panel met on Tuesday 13 January 2026 and has confirmed approximately 90 additional assets for inclusion on Swale's Local Heritage List. These are scheduled to be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee for ratification on 4 February 2026. The Panel also agreed that the next round of the Local Heritage List 'invitation to nominate' will take place in 2027.
3.	Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA)	Swale Borough Council currently does not have an ASCA. Since the adoption of the Heritage Strategy in 2020 and subsequent Action Plans wherein a number of Conservation Areas have been reviewed, it has been proposed that in order to better	Following an all members briefing in May 2024, it was agreed that a draft consultation document be prepared for approval by the Planning Committee, before undertaking public consultation.

		manage and maintain Swale's historic environment and heritage, targeted ASCA can prove beneficial for conservation areas with a commercial centre. Any designation needs to be based on public consultation and must follow specific legal steps, including consideration of the order by the Secretary of State.	The draft consultation document is currently progressing through the Council's approval process. It was presented to the PTPWG on 18 December 2025 and is scheduled for consideration by the Policy & Resources Committee on 4 February 2026. Subject to the Committee's approval, the public consultation is expected to take place in Spring 2026.
4.	Area Committees Review	Further to the Policy & Resources Committee agreeing the proposed recommendation that Western Area Committee meetings should take place in Swale House, Councillor Mike Baldock proposed that Western Area Committee meetings should take place in community venues in the Western Area. This was seconded by Councillor Monique Bonney and on being put to the vote was agreed.	As P&R had recommended a decision to Full Council, the matter was raised at Full Council and the 'vote' of the Area Committee brought to the attention of Council. At the Full Council meeting on 28 January 2026 it was agreed that Western Area Committee meetings should take place in community venues in the Western Area.
5.	Outcome of Area Committees Review	A review of Area Committees has taken place, councillors and officers were consulted for their views. The Member Working Group have reviewed the consultation responses, along with feedback from the sessions at Area Committee meetings. They agreed 14 recommendations went to the Policy & Resources Committee on 26 November 2025 and 13 January 2026 for consideration. On 28 January 2026 the recommendations went to Full Council for consideration.	Full Council agreed the following recommendations at their meeting on 28 January 2026, including the amendment to recommendation 4: 1) The name of Area Committees should be changed to "Councillors and Residents Forum". This will make the purpose of the meetings clearer. 2) As the December round of meetings are generally poorly attended, the frequency of

			the meetings to be reduced from 4 rounds a year to 3 rounds. 3) The summer round of meetings to provide a networking opportunity with refreshments, which will provide residents with the opportunity to interact with their ward councillor/s. 4) The Sittingbourne Area Committee meetings should be held in the Committee Room at Swale House. Swale House is easily accessible for those residents and provides a saving on room hire which could be used to fund the summer networking meetings. Western Area Committee meetings will take place at community venues in the Western area. 5) The venues for the Eastern and Sheppey Area Committee meetings should not move about as this has caused confusion in the past. Where possible the venue should remain the same for each Area Committee. 6) Ward councillors to be encouraged to lead on agenda items, this to be in agreement with the Chair in advance of the agenda being published.
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			7) Agenda items to be area specific, including items that are of interest to members of the public in their area. 8) The Public Forum item to be scheduled as early as possible on the agenda. 9) For certain items, members of the public and parish/town councils have the ability to vote/express/indicate a preference. It will be agreed by the Chair in advance which item/s this applies to and be made clear on the agenda. The potential outcomes of the vote will be explained to the public before a vote is taken. 10) Only ward councillors to vote to refer items to Service Committee Chairs. In this context, ward councillor means a Swale Borough Councillor who is a member of the relevant Councillor and Resident Forum. 11) The Matters Arising Report to incorporate a "You Said, We Did" section. 12) Communications to provide fuller explanation of items to be discussed and all ward councillors to take an active role in encouraging attendance. 13) To improve the sound quality for people attending remotely, an expansion
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			microphone to be purchased to use with the Owl Labs device at a cost of £249. 14) Chairs to meet before each round of meetings to review and forward plan. In particular this meeting will consider and agree future items that are suitable for the public vote/indication.
6.	Swale Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan Consultation (LCWIP) – comments raised	Members stated that comments were raised during the Highsted Park enquiry that should the plan be approved, the proposed walking and cycling routes would not be safe to use. Members also said that the Lower Road between Tonge and Teynham was a dangerous road for walking and cycling due to the high speed of some motorists driving along it. The Policy & Engagement Officer was asked to feed these comments back to the Active Travel Co-ordinator.	The Active Travel Co-ordinator advised that comments had been submitted via the public consultation about the speeds and safety of some of the more rural routes around Tonge/Lower Road etc. The feasibility designs of the routes have included what needs to be done to minimise these issues such as lower speed limits, as an example. Before any routes are taken to the stages of detailed design/implementation, further consultation is likely.
7.	Swale Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – update following consultation	Public consultation was carried out to gather local views on the proposals. Engaging with people who walk, wheel, or cycle in Swale, as well as those generally interested in the Borough's future infrastructure, helped ensure the LCWIP reflects community priorities. The cycling and walking routes, updated following stakeholder engagement, were consulted on for six weeks during September and October 2025. The public were able to participate through an online consultation webpage, which included details	The public suggested adjustments to route alignments and interventions to maximise benefits, as well as ideas for new measures. The online consultation received the following volume of engagement: • 264 active users engaged with the consultation webpage • 311 comments were received across all feedback methods • 34 consultees completed the questionnaire

		of the LCWIP, an interactive mapping tool with all proposed routes and an accompanying questionnaire. In-person consultation stands were also put up at a number of locations around Swale with details of the proposals and feedback forms. Written feedback was also received throughout the consultation period. Feedback was sought on the proposed routes and interventions.	• 21 pins were left on the interactive mapping tools. As a result of this feedback, some routes will have some changes or additions and more interventions will be added to the maps. The routes will also be prioritised based on Active Travel England criteria before the LCWIP is finalised ready for Council sign-off. It is expected that this will be in March 2026.
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