

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	Wednesday 25 th March 2026
Report Title	Empowering You in Swale Strategy – Delivery 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. To note the contents of the report.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Empowering You in Swale Strategy – Community Development Strategy 2024-27 was developed to outline support to the community in line with Swales Corporate Strategy. The report provides an update on the progress of delivery.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 The Empowering You in Swale Strategy was adopted at Full Council on Wednesday 2nd April 2025.
- 2.2 The strategy encompasses for priority areas:
- Priority 1:** Creating skilled, educated and working communities
- Priority 2:** Growing healthy communities
- Priority 3:** Empowering stronger, more sustainable communities
- Priority 4:** Developing strong partnerships that deliver for our communities
- 2.3 Work across the council has contributed to the four priority areas, and **Appendix I** details a list of projects from across departments that have contributed to the delivery of the strategy. **NOTE** this is not a finite list, there will be additional projects that are contributing but not listed.
- 2.4 The strategy has enabled strengthening of cross departmental working, continued growth of external partnerships and development of new opportunities.
- 2.5 There has been continued collaborative work which aims to tackle deprivation and inequality within the borough. This work includes welfare and benefit uptake campaigns, the continued work through the Cost of Living Group, implementation

of schemes such as the Healthy Homes project to tackle damp & mould and Household Support Fund (soon to be Crisis and Resilience Fund).

- 2.6 In relation to health, we have enabled wider work in partnership with the Health & Care Partnership, Public Health and ICB to engage with programmes such as Marmot Coastal Communities and Widening Access Demonstrator (WAD) both of which are recognised nationally. Kent has now been launched as the UK's first Coastal Marmot Region which includes Swale, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Ashford and Folkestone & Hythe. This work actively improves health equity through eight key principles, including giving children the best start in life, creating fair employment, and building sustainable communities.
- 2.7 Following the successful allocation of funding from Sport England to deliver Swale Place Partnership Programme, we have been working closely with Active Kent and Medway whilst they set up the programme and develop the first years Test and Learn projects. This exciting project is in the early stages of development but is a positive collaboration with partners to increase participation in sport and physical activity.
- 2.8 We have delivered a number engagement events with the community which include Baton of Hope for suicide awareness, Youth Democracy to engage young people with the council and several other wider programmes such as the One Swale Roadshows and Smoke Free Spaces.
- 2.9 Wider teams have delivered projects including the Cycle Recycle project and Leisure teams are working to enhance the health & wellbeing requirements as part of the leisure contract specification.
- 2.10 Housing and Community have been working together to develop new projects, with the aim of reducing duplication and enabling a wider access to services through the voluntary sector and improved awareness and coordination.
- 2.11 The skills & employment agenda has been developing through the work of the new Strategic Skills & Employment Group as well as linking externally to a variety of County strategies to ensure Swale representation.
- 2.12 Through the development of new funding opportunities such as the Sport England Place Partnership and Pride in Place, teams will support innovation and community engagement to ensure a joined up and informed approach.
- 2.13 Barriers being experienced include lack of resources, continued change in funding landscape and increased pressures for the voluntary sector, which means that although work continues, we must be aware of these limitations in planning for delivery.

3 Recommendations

3.1 To **note** the contents of the report.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 The option of doing nothing has been discounted, as the continued implementation of this strategy is critical to ensuring services are delivered effectively, addressing inequality and enhancing access for all residents.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Consulted with internal departments to gather information that informs the delivery of activities that support progress of the strategy. Continued development of external consultation throughout delivery of projects to ensure appropriate input where required.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Empowering You in Swale links to the four key objectives of the Corporate Plan through the delivery activities being proposed within the strategy.
Financial, Resource and Property	Delivery of the work associated to the Empowering You in Swale Strategy will be committed to from the existing delivery resources of the Community & Partnerships Team and wider team input, no additional funding for projects outside of this area of work has been agreed.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities and links to the delivery plan for the Community Safety Executive.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities through community development, and this includes tackling fuel and water poverty in the borough.
Health and Wellbeing	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities through community development, and this includes tackling health inequalities in the borough.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The Empowering You in Swale Strategy outlines collaborative projects that aim to improve the lives of communities through community development, and we ensure that all partners we work with comply with safeguarding policies and we are delivering according to our own policies.

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	None identified at this stage

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Empowering You Delivery Plan

8 Background Papers

[Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 2 April 2025, 7.00 pm](#)