



Sheppey East Pride in Place Ten Year Vision and Plan

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Executive Summary: Sheppey East Ten-Year Vision and Pride in Place Plan

Introduction: The people of Sheppey East are already creating positive change through volunteer-led, grassroots action. The Government's ten-year, £20 million Pride in Place investment provides a rare opportunity to build on that momentum, address entrenched disadvantage and unlock lasting social and economic benefits.

This programme places local people at the heart of decisions about their future. The Sheppey East Neighbourhood Board—comprising residents, business representatives and community leaders—has listened to communities across the area and developed a plan that reflects what Sheppey East needs to thrive.

This document sets out our ten-year vision and Pride in Place Plan. It explains the current position, the outcomes the community wants to achieve and the priorities that will guide investment. It is a locally developed, evidence-led plan and will remain a live document, refined through continuing community involvement, project development and learning from delivery.

How it started: We took engagement activity to the people of Sheppey East, listened to their lived experiences and used what they told us to shape this plan.

The case for investment: The evidence shows that Sheppey East experiences severe and overlapping socio-economic disadvantage, compounded by weak social infrastructure and geographic isolation. Pride in Place funding is therefore both urgent and strategically well targeted.

- **Headline:** Under the national Index of Multiple Deprivation, areas within Sheppey East rank 322nd out of 33,755 neighbourhoods in England. This places it within the top 1% most deprived areas in the country.
- **Double disadvantage:** Sheppey East is a 'left-behind' area, combining severe economic deprivation with a critical lack of social infrastructure. This disproportionately limits opportunity and prosperity, particularly for young people—the future of the area.
- **Isolation and Infrastructure Barriers:** Being a rural, coastal pocket on the eastern edge of the Island of Sheppey, the area is geographically isolated. Much of the existing economic infrastructure caters to seasonal tourism, leaving full-time residents with highly limited year-round opportunities. Access to key services is difficult, presenting connectivity challenges. This adversely impacts a sense of belonging, community spirit and a feeling of being left behind.
- **Health and Disability:** The area consistently ranks among the most health-deprived areas nationally. Leysdown-on-Sea and Warden feature in the top 10%

most deprived in terms of health and Eastchurch within the top 20% most deprived nationally.

- **Crime:** Due to the strong statistical correlation between extreme deprivation and crime, parts of Sheppey East are recorded in the top 10% nationally for recorded crime risk.

The Real Conversation: Building a dialogue with the community started with tailoring the approach to their needs and capabilities, considering the constraints and removing barriers and reasons not to engage.

Simplicity and trust were essential in engaging a broadly sceptical community. Local people leading conversations within their own communities helped build legitimacy. Focused one-to-one discussions, wider listening events and accessible digital options were combined to maximise reach and depth.

- **The Scale:** Over X residents and businesses gave us their views. There were X at our listening circles and resident meetings – providing a richness of reflections that formed the foundation of the vision.
- **The Depth:** We held X separate events across the area to encourage participation and maximise reach. These included drop-in sessions, one-to-one conversations, school visits and engagement with local volunteers and residents.
- **The Real Conversation:** We made an intentional effort to reach marginalised and seldom-heard voices, including young and older people, those experiencing food insecurity and financial hardship, and often-hidden holiday park residents. The ‘real conversation’ moved beyond superficial soundbites to identify root causes through the authentic experiences of people facing entrenched poverty and other challenges.

The message was clear: deprivation and poverty are entrenched, but local resolve and ambition are strong. Pride in Place investment can convert that commitment into coordinated action—connecting people to services and opportunity, strengthening community infrastructure and creating benefits that endure beyond the funding period.

- **Isolated, left behind and forgotten:** People felt frustrated that the potential of the area and its people was not being realised due to acute transport and connectivity challenges.
- **Avoidable Illness:** Deprivation and poverty compounded by the limited access to key services was having a profound impact upon the health and wellness of the community.
- **Untapped Opportunity:** Ambitious, thoughtful young people were being let down rather than being lifted and provided with opportunity to play and grow and with clear pathways to broaden horizons and maximise potential.

- **The Shutter Effect:** The sense of abandonment due to the seasonal nature of the local economy and influx of visitors during the summer months. Full year residents and businesses need more to thrive and drive a lasting community spirit of opportunity and positivity.
- **Feeling and Being Safe:** The community felt the pervasive impact of anti-social behaviour and crime. Their ambition is to offer hope and something different by placing a greater emphasis on crime prevention and diverting people from a life of crime.

Our Vision: This vision emerged from the true life experiences and ambition of people that see something very different in their future in comparison to their current reality. Concisely put, it is **X**.

Strategic Priorities and Theory of Change: Five priorities emerged from what the residents and businesses told us:

1. **Transport and connectivity - access unlocks opportunity:** Reliable physical and digital connections reduce isolation and open routes to services, work and investment.
2. **Health and accessible support - local access enables wellbeing:** Bringing integrated support, social connection and inclusive spaces closer helps residents engage earlier and thrive.
3. **Young People - participation builds confidence and opportunity:** Year-round places, trusted relationships and a voice in decisions turn isolation into agency, skills and local pathways to success.
4. **Year-round community spirit – activity builds resilience:** Community-led spaces, enterprises and events stabilise the local economy and social fabric beyond the summer season.
5. **Community Safety - trust creates the conditions for progress:** Visible improvements, precise prevention and shared stewardship make places safer—and enable wider social and economic change.

This plan responds directly to the national Pride in Place objectives and aligns with local authority priorities. Its integrated approach links the community-led vision to five mutually reinforcing priorities, a clear theory of change and an initial pipeline of projects and interventions. This creates a disciplined basis for prioritisation, co-design, delivery and performance management.

Next steps: The governance arrangements required to deliver the ten-year vision are established and operational. This plan provides the community-led mandate against which investment decisions will be appraised. Proposals will be expected to demonstrate strategic fit, deliverability, value for money, measurable outcomes and sustained community benefit.

Over the coming months work will shift from understanding the deprivation story and gathering ideas to developing and designing detailed projects and interventions with the community remaining at the heart of the work:

- **Just Do Its:** We will take forward community agreed quick win interventions to generate momentum, deliver local improvements and build trust and legitimacy.
- **Co-Design Projects:** We will be led by the community as to how they would like to take forward the detailed co-design of projects to impact longer term structural changes.
- **Delivery Partners:** We will bring in the subject matter experts where needed – public services, local businesses and the voluntary sector to determine the best delivery models to effect change.
- **Service Users:** We will involve the people who will use the services to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet local needs and expectations.
- **Governance resilience:** We will strengthen the governance arrangements by establishing the necessary subgroups, working groups and engagement groups. This will enable the Neighbourhood Board to remain focused on strategic leadership and cohesion while distributing workload and embedding community co-design throughout the ten-year programme.
- **Public Engagement:** We will keep community dialogue open, accessible and ongoing as the programme moves from early ideas into delivery. Residents, businesses and community groups will remain central to the change process through regular opportunities to shape and review emerging proposals, share feedback, and help focus resources on the activity that will add the greatest local value. This continuing conversation will help us learn, adapt and build trust over time.

Introduction

This document sets out the strategic context, community-led vision and delivery framework for the Sheppey East Pride in Place programme. Backed by the Government's ten-year, £20 million funding commitment announced on 26th September 2025, it presents a targeted opportunity to tackle entrenched deprivation, strengthen local capacity and deliver lasting improvements in opportunity, wellbeing and civic pride.

Sheppey East is at a generational turning point. Under the leadership of the independent Sheppey East Neighbourhood Board, this plan moves decision-making away from a centralised, top-down model and places it with the residents, businesses and grassroots organisations that best understand the area's challenges, assets and potential.

Our vision is rooted in restoring community pride by addressing the structural barriers that have constrained Sheppey East. Over the next decade, the programme will improve

physical and digital connectivity, revitalise community assets, expand access to health and support services, invest in young people, strengthen community safety and create a more resilient year-round economy.

By combining evidence-led prioritisation with community leadership, the programme will balance visible early action with sustainable structural renewal. The result will be a credible pipeline of deliverable projects, supported by clear governance, measurable outcomes and a commitment to continuous learning, that can unlock Sheppey East's social and economic potential.

Section 1: The Ten-Year Vision

Sheppey East 10-year vision

Include vision in here

Real People Shaping the Vision : This is not a vision written for Sheppey East; it is crafted from the community's core frustrations and aspirations, drawn from wide-reaching conversations with local people with a vested interest in its future success.

With X listening events including over X individual engagements, a rich selection of reflections was provided and used to form the foundation of the vision.

It sets out hopes and ambitions of local people and is defined by addressing the mission head on to alter the trajectory of Sheppey East from a forgotten place suffering the effect of double disadvantage and acute deprivation to a year-round thriving place to live, work and enjoy.

"Sheppey East is a wonderful place with lots of history & beautiful nature to discover. I am fed up with the area being completely ignored with our public services decimated and residents being left to sort things out ourselves. Sheppey East needs help in getting the message out there about all the great things that it has to offer because right now that is not happening. The area needs to be made more accessible for residents giving them the opportunity to prosper."

Local Resident

The community was asked to share their ideas that would make a positive change and who would benefit. They were asked to confirm how they would like to see change delivered and what long-term impact they would like to see. The output from this engagement was drawn together to identify the words that received the most mentions. The overriding and emerging forward looking comments were used to shape the vision statement. This draft statement was played back to the community and refined to ensure complete alignment and a true representation of the thoughts and feelings of local people.

The vision provides a foundation to tackle head on the mission of addressing deprivation and improving the lives of the people that live and work in Sheppey East. It provides a clear community-led picture of the desired future; serving as an anchor for priority themes and a catalyst to build specific, measurable projects and interventions, through continuing the dialogue with the community.

The vision will be used as a guiding star from which to frame the next phase of engagement, and crucially, to act as a framework for future decision-making, ensuring investment is aligned with community aspirations.

Phase 2 of engagement activity will be used to test that the vision resonates with local people, makes sense in the local context and properly reflects their collective ambition and aspirations. Partners will be empowered to have a voice and to align effort and focus resources on what matters most to the people that we serve.

The vision will remain grounded in practical delivery and will connect every element of the Pride in Place Plan. It provides a consistent long-term ambition against which decisions can be tested, helping to shift the underlying drivers of deprivation through sustainable transformation over the next decade and beyond.

Section 2: Place and People

Place: Sheppey East is located on the eastern side of the Isle of Sheppey, off the north coast of Kent, bounded by the Thames Estuary and the North Sea to the north and east, and separated from the mainland by the Swale channel.

The area sits within the Swale Borough Council district and spans approximately 46 square kilometres, including villages and coastal areas such as Leysdown-on-Sea, Eastchurch and Warden. This accounts for roughly half of the entire Isle of Sheppey, which spans a total area of approximately 93 square kilometres.

The map below shows the geographical area outlined as set out by Government which is eligible to be included as part of the Sheppey East Pride in Place programme.



The name Sheppey stems from the Anglo-Saxon word 'Sceapig', meaning 'Sheep Island', reflecting the area's long-standing pastoral use for grazing large flocks across its open marshes.

In the ninth century, eastern Sheppey's isolated coastal location made it a frequent target for Viking raiders, who used the island as a winter base before launching spring campaigns along the Thames.

Eastchurch is historically celebrated as the birthplace of British Aviation. In 1909, the Aero Club of Great Britain established its flying grounds at Shellbeach/Leysdown and Eastchurch, drawing aviation pioneers and aircraft manufacturers.

The soft London Clay cliffs stretching past Warden Point have suffered from severe, ongoing coastal erosion for centuries. The collapsing cliffs constantly expose new

ground, making the beaches a popular destination for finding fossilised items and ancient plant remains.

From the mid-twentieth century onwards, Leysdown and Warden developed into major destinations for holiday parks, chalets and caravans, which remain central to the local visitor economy. The coastal resorts are known for their traditional British seaside character, including sandy beaches and amusement arcades, and experience a major seasonal increase in activity each summer.

The southern edge of East Sheppey transitions into a peaceful, isolated and expansive wetland famous for birdwatching, walking trails and sweeping estuary views.

Coastal communities across England often struggle, but Sheppey East faces a distinct disadvantage compared to the rest of the UK due to its unique 'double periphery' status being a remote end of an island that is itself on the edge of Kent. If you were to rank Sheppey East against the rest of the country, it does not look like a typical southeast England commuter zone. Instead, its economic, health and geographic profiles mirror the industrial parts of the Northwest such as Blackpool or coastal areas of Northeast Lincolnshire, facing similar challenges with long-term unemployment, health inequalities and structural isolation.

The economy of Sheppey East is distinct from the industrial, port-heavy west side of the island. It relies heavily on its unique geography, natural assets and its resilient people. The primary strengths driving the Sheppey East economy include a robust visitor and domestic tourism economy, drawing thousands of seasonal visitors to an abundance of caravan and holiday parks, traditional seaside and beachfronts.

The southern marshlands are home to a cluster of three distinct prison institutions. Together, these institutions form one of the single, stable and year-round employment options for the population of the island. Furthermore, these facilities support auxiliary local businesses, including logistics, maintenance service, and small community enterprise initiatives.

In contrast to the western urban centres of the Isle of Sheppey, East Sheppey features extensive open land. The fertile plains and marshlands support highly productive agricultural businesses and livestock grazing.

People: Sheppey East has a fiercely independent identity and deep-rooted sense of community. It is home to an estimated 8,023 residents and features a mature demographic with an average resident age of 44 years, slightly older than the national average. High level figures show a profound demographic anomaly, with a gender breakdown of 63% male to 37% female. However, this data is driven by the cluster of three institutional facilities which house approximately 2,800 individuals.

Sheppey East is a traditional family and retirement-oriented coastal community. Children aged 15 and under make up 13% of the population, while a growing proportion of the community consists of older adults.

85% of residents have lived in the area for three years or longer, and 92% of the population were born in the UK. This longevity indicates an embedded sense of belonging and generational attachment to the region. Furthermore, 90.8% of the population identifies as straight or heterosexual, and 44.5% of adults have never been married, indicating a high concentration of single-person households and unmarried cohabiting families.

The area faces underlying socio-economic and educational challenges. Students account for 11.57% of the population; however, educational attainment among the wider adult workforce is below national benchmarks, with 59% of residents holding five or more GCSEs (or equivalent), approximately 13 percentage points below the UK average.

Sheppey East is a tight-knit, multi-generational community that thrives on resident stability, neighbourly connection and shared pride in their island identity. Residents stay long-term in the area meaning that investment will yield long-term benefits in social cohesion.

Section 3: Community Engagement

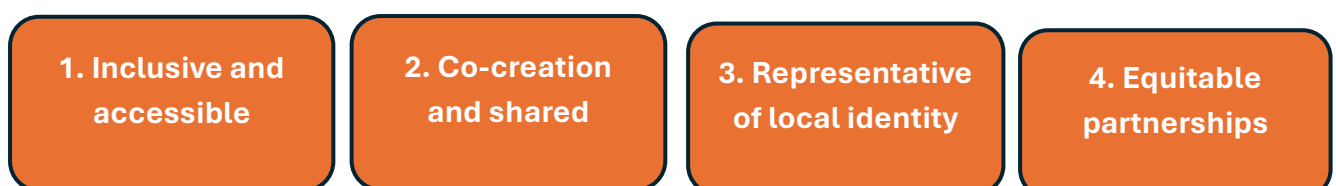
Stakeholder and engagement plans were designed to ensure an inclusive and holistic approach. The aim of the plans was to facilitate community and stakeholder engagement and inform the development of both the ten-year vision for Sheppey East and the Pride in Place Plan that outlines its delivery.

Building trust and legitimacy through meaningful dialogue that resonated with the community formed the bedrock of the community engagement framework. Engagement activities were specifically tailored to the needs and capabilities of the community, considering constraints and removing barriers.

Simplicity was key to capturing the imagination of a broadly sceptical community. Moving beyond what could be perceived as a ‘tick-box’ exercise to one of active listening was needed to give residents a genuine voice in shaping the physical, cultural and social fabric of their neighbourhood.

Core Pillars of the Engagement Strategy

The engagement strategy was anchored to four core pillars:



Inclusive and accessible: A range of formats was required to reach different demographic groups. To optimise reach and participation, the approach combined individual and small-scale in-person events with digital options. Barriers were reduced by taking engagement to venues and places where the community already gathered.

Co-creation and shared ownership: Recognising and building on existing strengths and community effort was a key component, coupled with an honest acknowledgement of previous shortcomings. Active listening enabled community members to work through frustrations and propose ideas and interventions based on lived experience. Feedback loops allowed understanding to be tested and refined.

Representative of Local Identity: Tailoring approaches and encouraging authentic story-telling was needed to ensure local resonance and foster emotional connection. Multigenerational views were encouraged to create opportunities for youth and elderly residents alike to inform the vision and priorities as well as understanding what engagement methods and events would build momentum and generate interest and community commitment.

Equitable partnerships: Existing trusted grassroots networks and local people were involved to place the community voice at the heart of the programme. Emphasis was placed on reaching marginalised groups and seldom-heard voices, exploring deep-seated issues and ensuring the strategy reflected the whole community.

Phase 1: Discovery - Tailored Proactive and Multichannel Outreach

(July to September 2026)

The discovery phase of community engagement began with planning in late June 2026 and delivery from July to the end of September 2026. A resident of the Isle of Sheppey was recruited to lead dialogue within their own community, using language that was relatable, engaging and accessible. The community engagement lead assessed levels of trust, capacity, capability and access to digital tools and technology so that each approach was realistic and appropriate.

The primary objective was to review the socio-economic evidence and meet people in places that felt familiar and accessible, listening with empathy to understand deep-rooted community frustrations, priorities and aspirations.

There was a focus on authentic connection by removing traditional barriers and taking the conversation directly into everyday community spaces. Accessibility, inclusion and tailoring conversations to local comfort were key factors in designing the approach to community engagement.

A blended approach using digital and in-person methods was deployed. The approach was informal and flexible, enabling place-based conversations tailored to community needs. People with access to digital tools and social media could share their views

online, while face-to-face opportunities were provided across the area for those who preferred or required them.

- **Online and digital:** Interactive online tools, a regular project mailing list and a newsletter were used to build community trust and legitimacy, raise awareness, and encourage interest and commitment.
- **Postcards:** The opportunity was provided to complete postcards setting out the biggest change people would like to see addressed in Sheppey East. This helped inform the priority theme setting for change.
- **Summer events:** A presence was established at well-attended local summer activities to take advantage of high footfall and reach residents and visitors in familiar settings. These included carnivals and the Leysdown in Bloom event.
- **Community Drop-ins:** Acknowledging that some sections of the community do not have access or the capability to use digital assets, in-person public sessions and personal one-to-one meetings were held in different locations across Sheppey East to maximise reach and understand localised nuances. These included a presence at the beach hut engagement events, local coffee shops, religious group meetings and retail outlets.
- **Local Governance:** Direct attendance to provide updates and seek feedback was offered at community and parish council meetings. These included local 'Hug in a Mug' community gatherings and family hub fun days as well as formal meetings.
- **Economy and Commerce:** Local business events and forums were attended to seek the views of local business owners and entrepreneurs from across the region and for different disciplines to be captured. This included attending the Sheppey Business Network community event and Island Forum education and employment summit.

Reaching individuals and groups who do not usually participate in civic activity was a priority. Targeted one-to-one conversations and tailored activities were used to engage marginalised groups and seldom-heard voices, including:

- **Young people:** Were reached through interactive, broad listening events held in local schools.
- **Older community members:** Were engaged by visiting everyday community services they already accessed. This included the Leysdown over 60s social club, bingo nights and short mat bowls activities.
- **Disabled and vulnerable people:** Engagement was supported through dedicated, safe-space listening groups.
- **People experiencing food insecurity and financial hardship:** Partnerships with charitable organisations supported focused individual conversations at food-related events.

- **Community members whose first language is not English:** Engagement was undertaken through existing outreach opportunities to build trust and gather views and opinions.
- **LGBTQIA+ community members:** Drop in sessions were held as part of existing community hub events.
- **Holiday parks, caravan sites and tourism operators and residents:** High touch, focused one-to-one meetings were held to understand specific challenges and opportunities.

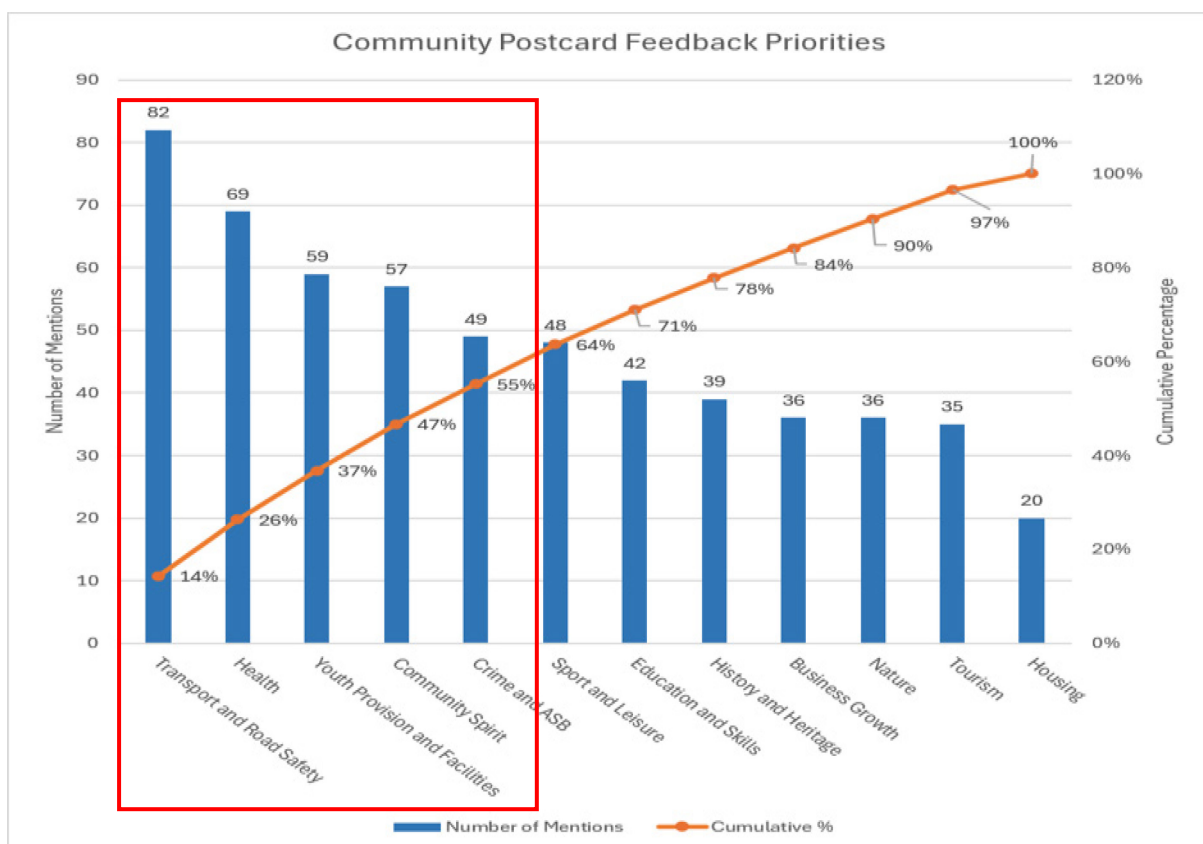
Inclusivity and extensive reach across Sheppey East were key success factors. Over **X** members of the public spent time sharing their views and ideas for change. The summary of types and levels of engagement methods deployed is as follows:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REACH	
Total recorded engagement: X	
X	X
1-2-1, drop in and other session attendees	Business Event Attendees
X	X
Community and parish council meeting attendees	Postcard, on-line survey respondents and mailing list sign-ups

A map of activity demonstrates the extent of the work undertaken to achieve depth and breadth of community engagement across the whole area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HEAT MAP ASH IS ARRANGING TO BE PLACED HERE

Residents and businesses were given the opportunity to submit postcards and outline the biggest change they would like to see in Sheppey East. 135 postcards were received containing 572 mentions of specific challenges. Most notably, five key themes accounted for 316 or 55% of the total mentions:



Output from the dialogue with residents and businesses was triangulated with deprivation and statistical data and resident postcard submissions to formulate a clear consensus as to the core problems to address:

- **Transport and connectivity** - access unlocks opportunity: Reliable physical and digital connections reduce isolation and open routes to services, work and investment.
- **Health and accessible support** - local access enables wellbeing: Bringing integrated support, social connection and inclusive spaces closer helps residents engage earlier and thrive.

- **Young People** - participation builds confidence and opportunity: Year-round places, trusted relationships and a voice in decisions turn isolation into agency, skills and local pathways to success.
- **Year-round Community Spirit** - activity builds resilience: Community-led spaces, enterprises and events stabilise the local economy and social fabric beyond the summer season.
- **Community Safety** - trust creates the conditions for progress: Visible improvements, precise prevention and shared stewardship make places safer—and enable wider social and economic change.

The loose and divergent approach undertaken to this point to broadly identify challenges and strategic themes for change shifted to a convergent, tight approach. Analysis, findings and early project and intervention ideas were drawn out from the gathered data and community perspective. The subsequent phases of community engagement are set out in Section 6.1 of this plan. This is to ensure that the local community and stakeholders continue to be engaged and consulted to deliver the vision over the next 10 years and beyond.

Section 4: What We Learnt

Taken together, the quantitative deprivation evidence and the lived experience gathered through community engagement make a compelling case for targeted public investment. The evidence shows that disadvantage in Sheppey East is structural, overlapping and persistent; without coordinated intervention, geographic isolation, weak infrastructure and limited access to opportunity will continue to reinforce one another.

Sheppey East occupies a distinct and peripheral position at the easternmost tip of the Isle of Sheppey. This coastal-rural area comprises the villages of Eastchurch, Warden and Leysdown-on-Sea.

This geographic placement creates a challenge of double isolation. Residents are separated from the Kent mainland by the marine environment and further isolated by the distance from the island's primary transport connections to the west of the Isle of Sheppey. This unique position makes Sheppey East a beautiful coastal destination but leaves the community cut-off from major economic hubs.

At the national level, Sheppey East ranks among the top 20% most deprived communities in England. This widespread hardship is driven by two critical national priorities where the area falls into the worst 10% nationwide - Education, Skills and Training and barriers to services.

This data highlights a community that is deeply isolated from everyday facilities and locked out of educational opportunities. This severe structural disadvantage is further

aggravated by acute local pressures, with the area ranking in the worst 20% nationally for health inequalities and crime, alongside a stagnant job market that sits in the worst 30% across the country.

The area faces a profound structural challenge. Its public infrastructure is scaled for approximately 8,023 permanent household residents¹, yet it must support a tourism destination containing over 7,000 caravans and chalets².

This substantial seasonal influx brings vital economic activity, but it also places considerable pressure on services and infrastructure in an area with no direct rail connection. Residents of Eastchurch, Warden and Leysdown therefore depend heavily on the road network and limited bus services.

Community feedback indicates that bus timetables do not meet residents' needs. Services cease in the late afternoon; some routes enable an outward journey but no practical return; and Sunday services operate only during the summer. These gaps deepen social and economic isolation, especially during the winter months.

Our young people have told us that they experience social isolation by not being able to access social and leisure facilities offered within the broader Swale region. Because the community relies entirely on limited seasonal bus routes, winter isolation restricts local access to basic healthcare and retail. Our elderly population has told us that this sense of isolation adversely impacts their health and wellbeing.

Investment is required to build resilient, year-round social and physical infrastructure that transforms a fragile visitor destination into a thriving, well-connected multi-generational community.

Crime rates in Sheppey East are noticeably higher than both the national and local authority averages for five categories, specifically criminal damage and arson, drugs, other crime, possession of weapons and violence and sexual offences when compared per 1,000 population. The net social trust metric is defined as the estimated proportion of people who say they generally trust others. Sheppey East has a social trust score of -6.8%, which is lower than the England average of -3%.³

Across education and employment measures, neighbourhoods within Sheppey East fall within the 10% to 20% most deprived in England. Participation in post-16 education is low: 31.6% of residents aged 16 to 64 hold a Level 3 qualification or above, compared with 50.8% nationally. In addition, 28.7% of residents have no formal qualifications, compared with 18.1% nationally and 22% across Swale.

¹ ONS Census (2021)

² BBC News Article 'The Isle of Sheppey: What lies ahead for the holiday haven?' (2012)

³ Data.police.uk sites (2025), Onward (2023). Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Source: ONS Census (2021) and DWP (2024).

Lower educational attainment is reflected in higher levels of benefit dependency. The Universal Credit claimant rate is 19.2% in Sheppey East, compared with 15.4% nationally and 17% across Swale. Leysdown and Warden Bay also have high concentrations of single-parent households and out-of-work benefit claimants.

The defined Sheppey East geography contains three civil parishes: Leysdown, encompassing the seaside resort of Leysdown-on-Sea and the remote Isle of Harty marshes; Warden, covering the coastal community of Warden and fossil-rich Warden Point; and Eastchurch, covering the historic village and the central prison cluster. The locations of the three areas within the Pride in Place boundary are shown in the maps below.



These areas can be aligned with Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Analysing the evidence base at neighbourhood level exposes the structural challenges within Sheppey East. This granular data helps pinpoint the most acute deprivation across the distinct parishes and directly supports the priorities highlighted by residents, community members and business leaders.

Leysdown-on-Sea and Warden

Leysdown-on-Sea and Warden represent an area of entrenched, acute disadvantage. This community faces deep-seated, compounded deprivation that area-wide metrics routinely mask. Its peripheral coastal location on the Isle of Sheppey exacerbates physical isolation, creating severe barriers to essential services and civic infrastructure.

Because it ranks within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally, investment directly meets the central government's core mandate to target areas with the poorest social and economic outcomes.

An assessment of deprivation data, supported by the lived experience of community members reveals the true scale of structural inequality. When looking across all England's 33,755 statistical neighbourhoods, Leysdown and Warden Bay ranks 896th, placing it firmly inside the top 3% most deprived neighbourhoods in England⁴.

⁴ English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release, updated 17 November 2025

3,381 residents across 1,534 households face deep, overlapping challenges⁵. Geographical isolation is a major challenge for the community. Residents face long travel times to reach essential services. These include hospitals, schools and retail outlets. Poor public transport routes cut off people who do not own cars.

The local economy relies heavily on a fragile seasonal tourism economy. This reliance leads to unstable winter incomes and high unemployment spikes out of season. Household wages remain well below the national average. A high percentage of working-age residents require financial support to meet basic living costs.

A lack of formal qualifications among adults limits local career progression. Young people also face substantial physical barriers to learning - there are no local post-16 colleges or technical training centres, requiring students to make long and costly journeys off the island to study.

The community experiences poor health outcomes. Life expectancy is lower than regional averages. Rates of long-term illness and physical disability are high. These health inequalities are made worse by the lack of access to everyday amenities and support services.

Community safety concerns are heightened during the quieter winter months, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour. Property damage and fly-tipping harm the physical environment and undermine morale and civic pride.

The data proves that Leysdown-on-Sea and Warden do not just suffer from a single issue. Instead, isolation, poor housing, and low incomes combine to trap the area in decline.

Eastchurch

Nationally ranked within the top 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, Eastchurch exhibits the same deep-seated structural vulnerabilities as its immediate neighbours, Leysdown-on-Sea and Warden.

Eastchurch is equally trapped by its location and faces the same levels of social inequality. Its position within the coastal landscape translates to compounded challenges, particularly around local employment opportunities, access to regional public transport, and physical isolation from primary healthcare and service hubs.

Dual-level Investment Approach

The uniform data across Eastchurch, Leysdown-on-Sea and Warden proves that hardship is not confined to isolated pockets. Instead, these communities form a distinct 'Eastern Sheppey Deprivation Corridor'. This points to the need for a unified, corridor-

⁵ ONS Census (2021)

wide investment strategy to lift the entire eastern end of the island out of systemic decline and create essential connectivity to make interventions sustainable.

The evidence supports combining this area-wide strategic approach with parish-specific regeneration to address the most acute pockets of deprivation and tackle systemic coastal poverty. This enables targeted local interventions while meeting the Government's objective of directing investment to places with the poorest social and economic outcomes.

A combined geographic regeneration framework will ensure that the distinct aspirations and civic identities of each parish are supported by robust area-wide infrastructure. This approach avoids fragmented investment, enables projects to reinforce one another and directs public funding towards an area of acute national need where coordinated action can achieve the greatest impact.

Section 5: Priorities for Change

This plan speaks directly to the challenges and opportunities identified through our community engagement activities and the available data. The investment provides the opportunity to deal with the ingrained issues and challenges faced by the communities of Sheppey East.

A structured design framework was used to create community-focused solutions. The discovery and define phases were used to explore the causes of deprivation and community frustrations. Insights and overarching priority themes and intervention ideas were established directly through actively listening to the community and by putting the views of local people at the heart of the design process.

To translate the community vision and priority themes into reality, our strategy follows a rigorous, evidence-based pathway to sustainable transformation. This pathway ensures that every intervention under an overarching theme demonstrates strategic fit, is rooted in local need, is deliverable and is continuously measured for lasting impact.

Pathway to sustainable transformation: To achieve meaningful transformation and bring overarching themes to life, our plan connects six core pillars in a continuous logical chain:

- **The need for change:** The baseline challenges and opportunities identified by our community;
- **Pathway:** The strategic direction chosen to address the need;

- **Delivery:** The initial practical projects and interventions that have been identified to either be taken forward in collaboration with the community and delivery partners or researched further to inform detailed design;
- **Outcomes:** The immediate, tangible results or shifts expected to flow from the successful delivery of projects and interventions;
- **Impact:** the long-term, systematic improvements expected to address the need for change; and
- **Measure:** The specific metrics and indicators that will be used to track progress and ensure accountability.

Detailed project development will take place during Phase 4 through structured co-design with communities and delivery partners. The interventions identified in this plan are therefore an initial pipeline rather than final commitments. Each proposal will be developed into a proportionate business case and assessed against strategic fit, community support, deliverability, affordability, value for money, risk, measurable impact, equality and long-term sustainability before funding is approved.

The emerging programme combines short-term revenue investment, capable of building participation and demonstrating early progress, with longer-term capital investment that creates durable community assets and infrastructure. This balanced portfolio will support visible early benefits while addressing the structural causes of deprivation.

- **Capital infrastructure:** Physical interventions that deliver visible improvement and lasting community assets; and
- **Revenue investments:** A strategic focus on ensuring capital investments are implemented, maintained, and driven by local people. Securing or upgrading a multi-use community hub asset to serve isolated pockets through local community grants, youth and seasonal engagement programmes and board administration and facilitation.

The outlined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and baselines are provisional. Once the specific projects are identified in Phase 4, KPIs will be reviewed and refined to ensure accurate measurement of success.

Overarching priority themes: By following the evidence, five integrated overarching priorities are proposed to maximise impact and community satisfaction:

1. Transport and connectivity: access unlocks opportunity

2. Health and accessible services: local access enables wellbeing

3. Young People: participation builds confidence and opportunity

4. Year-round community spirit: activity builds resilience

5. Community safety: trust creates the conditions for progress

The programme will deliver transformative change by simultaneously and precisely addressing each overarching theme.

Overarching Theme	Core Delivery Focus
Transport and connectivity	Reducing geographic isolation and upgrading everyday local journeys to make residents feel more connected both physically and digitally.
Health and accessible services	Tackling health inequalities by improving local access to integrated care, preventative initiatives and community support.
Young People	Creating leisure facilities, safe spaces, tailored mentorship, and skill-building opportunities that empower the next generation to thrive locally.
Year-round community spirit	Breaking seasonal patterns of isolation by embedding a year-round calendar of civic, cultural and community activity that keeps the area vibrant and economically viable throughout the year.
Community Safety	Creating secure, welcoming, and resilient public spaces where residents feel safe to live, work and socialise.

The priority themes do not operate in isolation; they are interconnected pillars of a single unified system. By mapping overarching themes directly to concrete delivery frameworks, a pathway to transformation has been constructed. This approach ensures that high-level community aspirations are systematically translated into operational, fully funded, and measurable local projects.

1. Transport and connectivity: access unlocks opportunity

Socio-economic Challenge: Sheppey East suffers from acute transport isolation and geographic peripheralisation. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Leysdown and Warden sits within the top 1% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, with Eastchurch in the top 2%.

A primary driver of this deprivation is a breakdown of local connectivity. The area is structurally reliant on a single spine road which experiences severe peak-time and seasonal congestion, severing residents from employment hubs, healthcare facilities and education in surrounding areas.

Public Transit Deficiencies

Community engagement data indicates that over 75% of residents rate bus provision as poor⁶. The ‘Sunday and evening void’ is a key failure with currently no return journeys on Sundays via existing routes, and weekday services cease before evening employment shift changes and educational dismissal times.

Bus schedules operate independently of rail arrivals and departures at Queenborough and Sheerness railway stations, adversely impacting commuter transit times.

Resident Opinion

Transport and connectivity featured heavily in all community engagement conversations. Acute isolation and the vulnerable road network were consistently cited together with infrequent bus services and no rail connections in the area. Non-drivers and vulnerable residents felt a particular sense of feeling stranded and isolated.

Residents and businesses told us that everyday journeys need to be more reliable. Viable alternatives are required when the road network is disrupted or when seasonal demand increases sharply.

When physical movement is limited, the community has highlighted the need for vital services to be brought closer through improved digital access; although a skills and confidence uplift would be required for some residents to address digital literacy and capability shortfalls.

The community placed transport and connectivity as their number one priority. The message was clear - reliable physical and digital connections reduce isolation and open routes to services, work and investment.

⁶ Official constituency survey conducted by Kevin McKenna, MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

Current Community Challenges and Frustrations

Challenge / Frustration	Illustrative Quote
Service Gaps: Lack of reliable, connected public transport routes.	‘Existing services need to improve. If young people want to travel to Sittingbourne for the cinema or bowling, someone has to take them and collect them.’
Stranded Demographics: Elderly and vulnerable residents and people who do not drive are frequently trapped at home.	‘Unless they have help, elderly people in the village feel isolated and alone’.
Strategic Vulnerability: At times of accidents or infrastructure failure, delays occur as alternative routes are not available.	‘If there is an accident on the Leysdown Road, you could be stuck there for hours’.
Unmade Roads and Tracks: Some service routes are unpaved, rough farm tracks, gravel paths, and muddy or sandy routes.	‘Sometimes, after bad weather, the alternative route to Warden is impassable—it is not really a road, more a dirt track.’
Digital Isolation: Access to technology and levels of digital literacy are limited.	‘Some people don’t have access to technology and if they did, they’re not confident in its use’.

Strategic Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Substantially reduce transport-related economic exclusion by ensuring reliable public transit links to major employment, education and recreational nodes.
- **Objective 2:** Restore civic pride and structural safety to the physical public realm by modernising waiting infrastructure.
- **Objective 3:** Build rural resilience by enhancing digital connection infrastructure and building capability and confidence in its use.

Key Performance Indicators and Baselines

To ensure rigorous accountability over the 10-year funding lifecycle, the Sheppey East Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will monitor progress considering the following initial success metrics:

KPI	Baseline (2026)	Target	Data Source
Timetable synchronisation: % of local bus arrivals at Queenborough and Sheerness stations timed within a 10-15 window prior to mainland train departures.	uncoordinated schedules	70% coordination on peak commuter routes by 2032	DfT Bus Open Data Services / Network Rail Timetables
Mobility and Service Frequency: Number of trips using enhanced shuttle bus services.	None	Sustained use of shuttle bus services to published timetable	Shuttle bus operator log
Public Realm and Shelter Satisfaction: % of surveyed residents rating transport waiting infrastructure as safe, well-lit and clean.	To be determined	60% satisfaction	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback
Digital Connectivity: Enhance digital connectivity capacity.	None	At least 1 digital pod in each community hub.	Physical inspection
Digital Literacy Confidence Enhancement: % of surveyed residents rating confidence levels in the use of digital assets as good or very good.	None	40% satisfaction	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback

Intervention Ideas

- **High-Impact Capital Intervention:** Initial funding will focus on visible, high-impact capital interventions to build immediate community confidence. This includes upgrading bus shelters with solar lighting, CCTV, and real-time electronic timetables.
- **Transport Sustainability:** Explore the opportunity to underwrite a demand responsive transport pilot to extend existing bus contracts.
- **Highway improvements:** Explore the possibility of pooling capital reserves with Kent County Council Highways to deliver targeted civil engineering works on artillery spine road bottlenecks.
- **Shuttle Bus Services:** Procurement activity will prioritise Kent-based subject matter experts. Community-led shuttle bus cooperatives or community transport operations will be given preference during the bidding process for off-peak pilots, ensuring public funds are retained within the local economy to generate social value.

Alignment with Pride In Place Strategic Objectives

PiPP Objective	Alignment Rationale
Creating Thriving Places	Unlocking Local Services: Physical isolation in Sheppey East currently restricts access to vital health, education and retail spaces. Synchronising bus schedules with rail times bridges the connectivity gap, transforming public services from a barrier into an accessible reliable asset.
Taking Back Control	Reclaiming roads and infrastructure: Upgrading bus infrastructure and delivering targeted highway improvements will reduce disruption, protect public assets and support more reliable public transport that better meets community needs. Connecting Communities: Introducing a shuttle bus service alongside demand-responsive transition pilots and improvements to digital connectivity, ensures no neighbourhood or resident is left isolated. Transport poverty will be dismantled, ensuring improved access to employment, education and leisure. Fostering Civic Pride: The proposed interventions bring communities closer together and give residents a meaningful voice in the local services that shape their lives. Investing in a safer and more connected environment, enables people to feel a profound sense of civic pride and feeling of being heard.

Building Stronger Communities	Reversing isolation: Inconsistent and, in places, absent public transport acts as a physical barrier to socialising, visiting family and participating in community life. Potentially underwriting routes and introducing community-led shuttle services would reconnect isolated residents and reinforce the health and accessible services priority through a joined-up approach. Creating shared, safe spaces: Upgrading bus shelters with lighting, CCTV and clean seating will transform neglected infrastructure into safer, more welcoming community assets and support the wider community safety priority.
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2. Health and accessible services: local access enables wellbeing

Data trends and the lived experience of residents provide compelling evidence of significant health inequalities in Sheppey East. Deep-rooted challenges persist, with parts of the area ranking within the 10% most deprived nationally for health deprivation and disability.

This data is strongly reinforced by feedback from the community that was received as part of the engagement process. Residents reported a profound sense of isolation caused by a lack of local mental health resources and significant public transport barriers that restrict travel to the mainland medical facilities.

The community placed health and accessible services as their number two priority with a strong message that bringing integrated support, social connection and inclusive spaces closer helps residents engage earlier and thrive. By directly connecting the identified structural challenges with grassroots sentiment, this 10-year plan establishes a preventative framework.

Current Community Challenges and Frustrations

Challenge / Frustration	Illustrative Quote
Ash to provide details for this table	

Strategic Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Establish hub-based integrated care.
- **Objective 2:** Combat isolation through local networks and facilities.
- **Objective 3:** Expand local wellbeing provision.
- **Objective 4:** Optimise safe and inclusive public spaces.

Key Performance Indicators and Baselines

The Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will monitor progress considering the following initial success metrics:

KPI	Baseline (2026)	Target	Data Source
Clinical Outcomes: Emergency hospital admission rates for preventative conditions.	Top 10% highest in Kent	Reduce by 10% by 2032 relative to the Swale borough average	Kent Public Health Observatory data
Social Isolation: % of residents reporting feelings of intense social isolation and loneliness.	To be determined	Reduce by 10% by 2032	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback
Footfall / Engagement: Number of residents actively engaging with a Buddy Café network annually.	New intervention	200+ participants per year by 2032	Café attendance monitoring logs
Physical Activity: % of residents achieving 150+ minutes of physical activity per week.	Below Swale average ~ 58% inactive or data deficient	Increase active participation by 10% by 2032	Sport England Active Lives Surveys (Ward/LSOA level data)
Public Realm Quality: % of residents stating they feel comfortable using local recreational areas.	New intervention	>60% positive resident perception	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback

Intervention Ideas

- **Social connection infrastructure:** Launch a local buddy café network to identify, engage and reduce isolation among vulnerable, lonely and older residents.
- **Preventative Health and Activity Provision:** Expand accessible sports, recreation, and mental / physical wellbeing programmes across the neighbourhood to promote healthy, active lifestyles.
- **Inclusive public realm enhancements:** Upgrade local parks and outdoor facilities to provide high-quality, fully accessible community spaces for all residents.

Alignment with Pride In Place Strategic Objectives

PiPP Objective	Alignment Rationale
Creating Thriving Places	Optimising Local Assets: Transform existing community spaces into multi-functional health and social hubs. Public realm upgrades: Reinvigorate public spaces through inclusive design, removing barriers created by poor-quality and inaccessible environments.
Taking Back Control	Consultation-Drive Action: Delivers projects requested by residents during community engagement, validating local voices and decision-making power. Supporting Independence: Provides the spaces and facilities to empower residents to be active and consider their health and wellbeing.
Building Stronger Communities	Targeting Loneliness: Establishes a dedicated, local social network to actively pull isolated, vulnerable, and elderly residents back into community life. Social Cohesion: Uses grassroots physical and recreational activities as a conduit to rebuild trust in public life.

3. Young People: participation builds confidence and opportunity

The region has historically suffered from high educational deprivation, causing generational issues with literacy, numeracy, and technical skills. Families are fearful that

their children will have to undertake long journeys off the island for schooling against a backdrop of insufficient transport connectivity.

Local engagement sessions with young people have repeatedly highlighted an absence of youth clubs, community spaces, and structured recreational assets where they can gather safely. The isolation challenges impact upon young people building a social life and access to weekend leisure.

With the area ranking in the bottom 1-2% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, local youth face a scarcity of modern, high-skilled career pathways and access to role models and mentors to help in unlocking potential.

The community placed young people as its third priority, highlighting the need to transform local youth infrastructure by linking physical health, activity and personal development in a single, self-sustaining community network. Residents told us that participation builds confidence and opportunity. Year-round places, trusted relationships and a voice in decisions can turn isolation into agency, skills and local pathways to success for the region's young people.

Current Community Challenges and Frustrations

	Illustrative Quote
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Strategic Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Rebuild social infrastructure and youth assets
- **Objective 2:** Expand access to role models and mentors
- **Objective 3:** Foster community activities, sport and wellbeing

Key Performance Indicators and Baselines

The Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will monitor progress considering the following initial success metrics:

KPI	Baseline	Target	Data Source
Asset / activity Delivery: Number of youth-dedicated spaces created, community facilities	0	3 spaces created, modernised or new activity	Project delivery outcome milestones

modernised or new activities generated.		generated by 2036	
Community Satisfaction: % of youth reporting finding activities and hubs 'good' or 'very good'.	To be determined	>60% positive young person's perception	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback
Mentor Recruitment: Number of active, vetted local mentors and business leaders recruited.	0	20+ active mentors by 2030	Mentorship programme database
Aspirational Outcomes: % of mentored youth reporting improved career confidence or school attendance.	0	>50% of those being mentored showing a positive shift	Post intervention survey and school attendance data via Kent County Council

Intervention Ideas

- **The Anchor Facility:** Establish safe, inclusive physical spaces that act as focal hubs for young people in Sheppey East and serve as administrative bases for wider community outreach.
- **Active Mobility and Skill-Building:** An active initiative combining cycling proficiency training and asset distribution to bridge the transport gap and provide independent mobility needed to access education, leisure, and employment.
- **Regenerative Social Infrastructure:** Co-designing and constructing a modern pump and skate track to enhance local recreational facilities, encourage physical activity and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- **The Aspirational Framework:** A structured network connecting vulnerable or disengaged young people with vetted local business leaders, tradespeople, and positive role models.

Alignment with Pride In Place Strategic Objectives

PiPP Objective	Alignment Rationale
Creating Thriving Places	Enhances Local Infrastructure: Reclaims or revitalises underutilised land, turning it into high-quality, vibrant and visible community assets. Reduces anti-social behaviour: Delivers diversionary assets that address the sense of boredom and help reduce youth-related crime.

	Strengthens Local Social Fabric: Bridges generational divides by connecting isolated young people with local businesses, tradespeople, and positive adult role models.
Taking Back Control	Combats Geographical Isolation: Equips young people with independent mobility and access to new and accessible recreational activities. Agency and Influence: Provides solutions to what young people told us they needed to improve their lives.
Building Stronger Communities	Improves Pride and Belong: Creates welcoming environments that foster a sense of local pride and ownership among marginalised young people. Reduces Health Disparities: Addresses severe physical and mental wellbeing deficits.

4. Year-round community spirit: activity builds resilience

Sheppey East is an area defined by its deep-rooted pride, resilience, and unique local character. However, sustaining this beyond the seasonal economy requires a dedicated, community-led focus. This priority theme places year-round community spirit at the heart of the 10-year vision, actively shifting resources toward permanent social infrastructure.

Frustration is apparent over empty, neglected assets and the general state of repair of some areas. There is a need to uplift and bring back to life areas of neglect. Spaces need to be transformed from run-down, part-year destinations of choice to full-year attractive places with a focus on creating experiences and shared footfall economic opportunities.

Guided by the feedback of local people, our objective is to upgrade physical assets and the environment across the eastern parishes by establishing spaces, events, and networks that function through every season. Activity builds resilience with community-led spaces, enterprises and events stabilising the local economy and social fabric beyond the summer months.

Current Community Challenges and Frustrations

Challenge / Frustration	Illustrative Quote
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Strategic Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Build stronger communities by mitigating seasonal isolation.
- **Objective 2:** Creating thriving places through all-weather local economies.
- **Objective 3:** Enabling residents to take back control through grassroots civic pride.

Key Performance Indicators and Baselines

The Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will monitor progress considering the following initial success metrics:

KPI	Baseline (2026)	Target	Data Source
Economic Resilience: Number of new micro-businesses set-up and active within 12 months	0	Successfully launch and sustain at least 5 micro-enterprise shops	Pride in Place Programme documentation
Digital Navigation: Number of downloads and users of a treasure hunt app	0	Achieve 1,000 unique users on the digital app annually by 2032	Apple store analytics
Connected Communities: Number of community events held during off-peak months	0	Deliver a minimum of 10 community-led events during off-peak seasons	Community engagement activity logs
Signage: Number of new or restored high-quality, weatherproof physical signs connecting the eastern parishes	0	Install and / or restore at least 20 signs across the area	Pride in Place Programme documentation
Off-Peak social Isolation: % of residents reporting feelings of intense social isolation and loneliness off-peak.	To be determined	Reduce by 10% by 2032	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback

Intervention Ideas

- **Vibrant spaces and economic resilience:** Provide micro-enterprise shops and food hubs. Low-cost, flexible spaces designed to lower the barrier to entry for local entrepreneurs and start-ups year-round.
- **Public Realm Aesthetic Upgrades:** Implement targeted visual improvements to brighten areas up with colour designed to lift civic pride.
- **Connected Communities and Digital Navigation:** Provide clear, physical signage across the area to highlight local heritage and signpost tourist opportunities. Offer a smart app featuring gamified local trails, making outdoor spaces interactive all year.
- **All-Weather Recreation and Inclusive Leisure:** Provide an accessible pitch-and-putt leisure facility designed for all ages and physical abilities, and upgrade weatherproof indoor community spaces capable of hosting sports, events and seasonal markets during the colder months.

Alignment with Pride In Place Strategic Objectives

PiPP Objective	Alignment Rationale
Creating Thriving Places	Economic and Aesthetic: Micro-enterprise shops, hubs and colour upgrades will boost footfall and enhance local business survival.
Taking Back Control	Connectivity and Tourism: Creating a visitor app, treasure hunt and improved signage restores pride in local heritage and improves navigation around the area.
Building Stronger Communities	Healthy and Inclusive: Introducing accessible pitch and putt and indoor recreation events will directly reduce winter isolation and build social pride and year-round economic opportunity.

5. Community safety: trust creates the conditions for progress

Parts of Sheppey East are recorded among the 10% most deprived nationally within the crime domain. Recorded crime in parts of Sheppey East significantly exceeds the national average, with some localised rates more than double typical figures per 1,000 residents. Violence and sexual offences, together with anti-social behaviour, account for a substantial proportion of recorded local police incidents.

Crime, seasonal visitor numbers and poor lighting affect residents' sense of personal safety and contribute to fears that restrict public life and economic activity. Communities cannot thrive without a shared sense of safety, peace of mind and mutual trust.

Community safety was identified as the fifth Pride in Place priority theme. Local people told us that visible improvements, precise prevention and shared stewardship make places safer - and enable wider social and economic change.

Current Community Challenges and Frustrations

Challenge / Frustration	Illustrative Quote
Ash to provide details for this table	

Strategic Objectives

- **Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour:** Create positive social interventions to build mutual trust and reduce levels of anti-social behaviour.
- **Design out crime:** Physically alter vandalised and vulnerable public realm to heighten a sense of safety and security all year round.
- **Precise, Multi-Agency Targeted Interventions:** Foster collaborative public sector working arrangements to engender evidence-led, targeted policing activity and create flexible, multi-agency safety infrastructure.

Key Performance Indicators and Baselines

The Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will monitor progress considering the following initial success metrics:

KPI	Baseline (2026)	Target	Data Source
Crime Reduction and Diversion: Reduce rates of criminal damage.	14.3 per 1,000 population	Reduce volume per 1,000 population to equal or better the broader Swale area (11.2)	Kent Police Crime Data

Feeling of Safety: Increase the number of residents that feel safe.	To be determined	>60% of residents reporting feeling safe	Annual Pride in Place Community Survey / feedback
Public Realm Upgrades: Improve public spaces to make physical improvements	0	Make at least 10 physical improvements to the public realm	Pride in Place Programme documentation

Intervention Ideas

- **Physical and Environmental Safety:** Alter and brighten up the physical environment to naturally deter crime, increase visibility and rebuild resident sense of feeling safe.
- **Precise Interventions:** Work in partnership with Kent Police to identify and target prominent nominals and high-crime location hotspots.
- **Multi-Agency Interventions:** Work in collaboration with partners to create flexible multi-agency safety infrastructure to ensure the right intervention by the right agency at the right time.

Alignment with Pride In Place Strategic Objectives

PiPP Objective	Alignment Rationale
Creating Thriving Places	Restoring pride in the public realm: Dark or vandalised spaces signal that an area is unmanaged. Making upgrades changes the visual character of local spaces, turning them back into spaces residents can be proud of and feel safe.
Taking Back Control	Precision Policing: Focusing on localised issues and concerns, driven by the evidence signals a taking back control of community safety for local people and provide reassurance and confidence.
Building Stronger Communities	Joint Working: Tackling root causes enables a systems approach to fixing complex community issues. Linking services enable the 'dots to be joined up' with the most appropriate agency leading the solution creating safer, stronger communities.

Section 6: Delivering the Vision Together

6.1 Community leadership and continuous improvement

Phase 1 of community engagement was simply the beginning of a continuous process. Over the next 10 years, the Sheppey East Pride in Place programme will be authentically driven by community leadership, active local participation, and a continuous commitment to learning and adaptation.

Through the Neighbourhood Board, residents and businesses will continue to be embedded at the centre of decision-making. Priorities will continually be tested. Proactive outreach methods will be deployed to continue to build trust with seldom-heard voices and marginalised groups, and progress will be transparently monitored and reported.

Building local capacity and evolving towards a sustainable, community-led delivery model will ensure that investments directly reflect the changing needs and long-term ambitions of the community.

To ensure that community dialogue remains continuous and actively shapes delivery, the engagement approach will move through four further phases over the coming months, building on the progress made during Phase 1:

Phase 2 – Building Momentum through Active Short-Term Delivery

(September 2026 – November 2026)

Whilst the full plan is being drafted for consideration, early funding will be deployed to build momentum, capture the imagination of the community and heighten their levels of interest. Engagement during this phase will be highly visible and action-orientated.

Quick win activities will take place aligned with half-term holiday community activities to raise the profile of the Pride in Place programme. This is with a view to enhance reach and local commitment to the next phase of activity that includes developing, refining, and co-creating projects and interventions.

Phase 3 – Develop and Refine

(November 2026 – April 2027)

The engagement approach will broaden out at this point seeking to build trust and decision-making power to engender long-term civic pride and community stewardship. Learning will be taken from the earlier phases to establish the most effective engagement methods that resonate with the local community and businesses. This will include building on the insights gathered and continuing the collaborative approach to refine all component parts of the plan.

A tailored approach is expected to continue in the form of drop-in sessions, meetings, community events and focused 1-2-1s to help the development of ideas. The vision will continue to be tested through feedback loop drop-in sessions with community members and workshops with Board members.

Analysis, findings and early project and intervention ideas will be shared both in person and digitally. Sub-groups to the Neighbourhood Board will be matured to broaden stakeholder reach further.

A public sector provider sub-group will be set-up to promote partnership working and offer constructive test and challenge to further define the priority themes and develop a systems approach to interventions. A sub-group of regional and local councillors will be formed to capture views and perspectives from all tiers of politicians regardless of political affiliation. Trade-offs will be drawn out to manage community expectations and move away from individual preferences to strategically aligned priorities that garner community consensus.

Phase 4 – Co-Design

(September 2026 – March 2027)

The objective of phase 4 engagement will be to galvanise community-led task and finish consultation and activity to define concrete interventions. Proposed projects will be mapped against each strategic objective, the vision and priority themes.

Clear guidelines will be set for this phase of work to ensure that proposed projects are deliverable within the required timeframes and comply with central government guidance. A key expectation is the early involvement of delivery organisations —public, private, and not-for-profit — to ensure those ultimately responsible for execution are engaged early together with service users.

Digital channels will remain active throughout this phase of activity to enable on-line consultation. A dedicated website will be made available for the community to share proposals on tackling identified challenges. Online communications will remain live through the newsletter to provide updates and promote participation.

Phase 5 – Deliver and monitor success

(April 2027 – Onwards)

Phase 5 is to be fully defined. It will begin as the programme starts delivery from April 2027 and will build on the evidence-base gathered in the earlier phases. The aim of this phase of activity is to ensure that the community and partner agencies work in partnership and feel a sense of ownership for successful delivery of projects and interventions.

The delivery approach will include continuous community feedback mechanisms, including the hosting of several public open drop-in sessions together with the opportunity for community contributions to be made online throughout this phase. Retaining alignment between investments with local needs will remain an imperative.

A defining feature of the engagement plan to date has been taking the conversation to the community and working in collaboration with several local organisations including:

- Sheppey Matters – an award-winning local charity delivering community-led projects to improve local lives
- Leysdown Community Hub – a free community support centre
- Seashells Children’s Centre – a children and family hub that provides support services and early education
- Sheppey Pulse Network – A grassroots, non-profit charity that aims to reduce local inequality
- Oasis Hub – A local community-based centre that aims to support those struggling with poverty and social isolation
- Think and Believe Community Interest Company – focussed on providing educational support activities
- Elmsley Nature Reserve – A non-profit Social Enterprise dedicated to managing conservation education
- Football Foundation – A local sports community programme
- Eastchurch Aviation Museum – A volunteer run historical heritage site
- Age UK Sheppey
- Citizens Advice

This collaborative approach will continue. The transition will begin from making use of the local authority’s digital assets to develop an independent marketing strategy and mechanisms to continue the community dialogue. This will include:

- Independent website, socials presence and online engagement portal
- A dedicated Pride in Place mailing list
- A Pride in Place newsletter
- Local media
- Board member Community Engagement Officer direct engagement with communities and the wider stakeholder network
- A marketing pack will be put together to share with local organisations and businesses to make the most of existing networks and enable key messages to be distributed via multiple channels.

Performance Framework

A strict, data-driven framework will be embedded across the full portfolio of projects. Each will be required to establish a clear set of baseline metrics prior to launch. Delivery partners and residents will co-design and agree core success factors, backed by clear measurable key performance indicators. This ensures that project performance is continuously and transparently monitored throughout the lifecycle of the programme with learning taken in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Transitioning to community-led delivery

While the Neighbourhood Board is firmly committed to a fully community-led delivery model as the goal, an intentional phased approach will be taken. Rather than imposing a top-down pre-prepared packaged framework, a formal transition strategy will be designed and co-created with the local community.

The Board has signalled its intention in this space by selecting a local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisation to lead on the provision of Secretariat services. To initiate the formal process, the Board will launch a comprehensive community asset-mapping exercise, alongside a targeted leadership capacity building programme if required. This will ensure local groups possess the skills, capabilities and governance structures required to confidently take ownership of the programme over the coming years and ensure successful delivery upon the 10-year vision.

It is intended for the transition activity to be undertaken during the first investment period. The initial transition roadmap includes:

Phase	Objective	Action
Phase 1 : Capacity and Asset Mapping	Identify existing community readiness and maturity.	Conduct a community-asset mapping exercise to identify leaders and active groups.
Phase 2 : Delivery Testing	Build confidence through low-risk, co-managed projects.	Delegate small budgets to local groups for 'quick win' projects. Provide light-touch administrative coaching. Provide compliance and reporting frameworks to assist.

Phase 3: Structural Co-Design	Determine the formal mechanism for long-term community control.	To formulate the best legal and financial structures.
Phase 4: Phased Handover	Gradual transfer of power and asset ownership.	Begin formal devolution of management, oversight and asset control.

6.2 Partnership working

The 10-year vision for Sheppey East requires long-term resilience that no single entity can sustain alone. A partnership framework explicitly sets out a commitment to share risk and collective ownership.

Systemic realignment

The Sheppey East partnership approach represents a practical system-wide realignment. Bringing public agencies, voluntary and community sector networks, businesses and the resident-led Board into a shared governance structure will reduce fragmented working. It will enable housing, health, policing, transport and regeneration activity to be coordinated around shared outcomes, improving the collective impact of investment on long-standing deprivation and disadvantage.

Double Devolution

The approach being taken actively operationalises the principle of ‘double devolution’. Power is not simply being received from central government to hold at the borough level; it, together with decision-making authority and delivery responsibility, is being actively delegated to the point of action at the grassroots level.

Structured Partnership Framework

A structured approach to partnership working is a key component to the success of the Sheppey East Pride in Place plan. Local partners are co-investors in the future of the neighbourhood, each bringing unique strategic and operational insight and strengths to the collective effort to improve the lives of local people.

By aligning voluntary organisations that sustain day-to-day community engagement, businesses that create local vitality and opportunity, and public agencies that deliver essential services, the programme can take a system-wide approach. This partnership will help identify co-funding and in-kind support, reduce duplication, manage dependencies and ensure that projects offer value for money, are sustainable and remain rooted in local priorities.

Partners will be connected through clear, practical governance mechanisms that bridge grassroots agility with statutory backing. Relationships with voluntary sector networks will continue to be forged through robust community engagement channels already outlined in this plan, ensuring local groups remain at the heart of ongoing dialogue.

Simultaneously, a formal public sector sub-group will be formed under the Neighbourhood Board with a focus on system alignment, unlocking the matching of public assets, and removing statutory barriers to speed up delivery. This group will provide an advisory space where public agencies can help refine and shape early-stage project ideas. It will create a direct mechanism for collaborative delivery and shared resources.

This mechanism will act as a vital vehicle for advancing the preventative public services agenda. Interventions that build community spirit, improve infrastructure, and revitalise community spaces directly alleviate long-term pressures on local health, social care, and policing resources. The sub-group will provide agencies with a direct mechanism to co-invest in early stage, preventative projects that yield long-term benefits for both community wellbeing and reduce demand on already over-stretched public agencies.

By linking our established community channels to a dedicated public sector subgroup, a secure pipeline is created where statutory power and grassroots capability meet to co-deliver lasting change with the Sheppey East community. This diverse ecosystem effectively de-risks the project pipeline, ensuring that if local dynamics or priorities shift over the next decade, the core delivery mechanism remains stable and fully functional.

6.3 Governance, accountability and decision-making

Governance Framework

An integrated, dual-level governance framework has been established that balances statutory rigour with grassroots democracy. At the strategic level, Swale Borough Council acts as the Accountable Body, providing financial and legal assurance while working with the Neighbourhood Board, its independent Chair and the local MP to support effective partnership governance.

At the operational level, it is proposed that resident-led Neighbourhood Board members work alongside specialised thematic subgroups to drive co-design and delivery of projects and interventions.

This framework is bounded by formalised two-way information flows to ensure strategic priorities and compliance requirements are cascaded to delivery teams, while operational insights, performance metrics and risks can be systematically escalated through defined governance and financial thresholds.

To ensure authentic local control, the Neighbourhood Board is formally designated as the decision-making authority for strategy, prioritisation and endorsement of project investments. The governance framework and Terms of Reference are designed so that the Accountable Body provides timely, proactive support and expert advice at strategic and operational levels. Residents retain control of the ten-year vision and plan, while Swale Borough Council provides the legal, procurement and financial guidance needed to meet public spending requirements. The Policy and Resources Committee will receive programme information for transparency and may offer reflections for the Board's consideration.

This structure ensures that the 10-year vision remains financially viable, operationally agile and authentically community-led.

Conduct

The undeniable golden thread running through every layer of the governance architecture is a total commitment to abide by the seven principles of public life. This is explicitly referenced in the published Neighbourhood Board Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and governance framework.

From the high-level strategic decision-making of the resident-led Neighbourhood Board to the operational recommendation and project appraisals of sub-groups and delivery leads, the core tenets of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership will guide non-negotiable conduct and standards.

Embedding this ethical framework at every level guarantee that the ten-year vision is delivered transparently, minimises conflicts of interest and ensures that every decision is focused on the public good.

Balanced community autonomy and statutory oversight

Swale Borough Council, as the accountable body, will manage the programme's financial administration until the Neighbourhood Board is appropriately resourced to assume that responsibility directly. This includes receiving, managing, monitoring and reporting programme funds; ensuring compliance with grant conditions; operating first-line assurance controls; and managing overall financial risk. The council will also submit formal monitoring and progress reports to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in accordance with published requirements.

To safeguard community independence and preserve the Neighbourhood Board's autonomy, the council has established a clear boundary around its oversight role. Programme and financial updates will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee for information and transparency rather than for separate approval. This enables elected members to review progress, offer strategic reflections and provide constructive feedback without diluting the Board's decision-making role.

To balance community autonomy with statutory requirements, senior council representation will be embedded at both strategic and operational levels. This will provide timely technical advice, compliance oversight and practical support, enabling effective delivery while respecting community control.

Control documentation and arrangements

Within the Terms of Reference for the Sheppey East Neighbourhood Board, it outlines how Board members will be transparent about managing conflicts of interest. When joining the Board, all members are required to complete an interest template declaring relevant interests. At the start of each meeting, the Chair will invite members to declare any conflicts of interest. Any member who has declared an interest will not take part in debate or vote on the matter. Interests will be published in minutes, and details will be added to the register of interests.

Financial Management

Robust financial controls will operate through an agreed two-part management system. First, an early-delivery funding process will enable urgent, proportionate ‘quick win’ revenue or capital requirements to be deployed safely to high-impact projects. Second, a formal budget-tolerance and escalation framework will establish clear financial boundaries and decision thresholds for delivery leads.

By defining when a budget variance requires escalation or senior approval, the framework will ensure that financial risks are identified early, managed transparently and controlled effectively at every governance tier.

Legal compliance

Swale Borough Council follows robust procurement procedures in compliance with public procurement rules. The council’s Monitoring Officer will oversee subsidy control compliance and obtain formal specialist advice where appropriate. Procurement requirements have been explicitly integrated within the Terms of Reference.

Evaluation and learning

Completed projects will be evaluated to assess outcomes, impacts and benefits. Project performance and lessons learned will inform future project planning and management in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Transparency and accountability

The Sheppey East Neighbourhood Board has approved the framework, Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, Register of Interests and control frameworks and

approaches. All documents have been published on the Swale Borough Council website. On the Sheppey East Pride in Place pages of the website information can be found on all Board members, including biographies. Alongside the information on the Board, all meeting agendas, minutes, action and decision logs are published. The Vision and 10-year Sheppey East Pride in Place Plan will be published once approved.

Appendices

(Available upon request)

Appendix	Name
Appendix 1	Vision, Priorities and Intervention Design Process
Appendix 2	Theory of Change Model
Appendix 3	Governance Framework
Appendix 4	Terms of Reference
Appendix 5	Code of Conduct
Appendix 6	Register of Interest
Appendix 7	Budget tolerance and escalation framework
Appendix 8	Early Funding Request Process
Appendix 9	Sheppey East Theory of Change
Appendix 10	Deprivation Decile Heat Grid: Sheppey East compared with Swale and England
Appendix 11	Index of Multiple Deprivation and Community Needs Index Summaries
Appendix 12	Stakeholder Plan