

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE ON WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2025 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Richard Lees – Vice-Chairman in the Chair
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO

ABSENT: There were none

48/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Vice – Chairman in the Chair explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

49/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dawn Johnston, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

50/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

51/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

52/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

53/25-26. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2025

Recommended: The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2025 were confirmed and signed.

54/25-26 The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation / Kent County Council/ Gravesham Borough Council for Members observations *(full details of these applications can be viewed via the Town Council, DBC, EDC GBC and the KCC websites).*

DA/25/00544/FUL	Conversion of garage into a habitable room. 6 Sara Crescent, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS	The Town Council objects to this application in its current form on the grounds that it contravenes Dartford Borough Council Planning Policy DP.7 in relation to the material harm to the public amenity from the loss of off-road parking. This would also increase pressure on street parking within an area that is already struggling with the volume of vehicles.
DA/25/00593/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension. 3 Stonely Crescent, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/00644/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension. 26 Gasson Road, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.

55/25-26. The following Granted Decision Notices have been submitted by Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation for Members information.

DA/24/00805/VCON	Raising of roof height to provide additional storey of accommodation plus rooms within new roof space, part three storey rear extension, and alterations to convert single dwelling into two semi-detached houses (variation of condition 2 of planning permission DA/21/01291/FUL in respect of external alterations to building as built). The Orchards, Mounts Road, Greenhithe.
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DA/25/0001/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear/side extension with wraparound to the side, two storey side extension and front porch. 19 Woodland Way, Greenhithe.
DA/25/00376/FUL	Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a double storey rear extension. 31 Bean Road, Greenhithe
DA/25/00405/FUL	Conversion of garage into habitable rooms and associated alteration to front elevation and reinstate railing on first floor balcony 16 Spring Vale, Greenhithe.
DA/23/01502/CDNA	Submission of details relating to foul water drainage pursuant to condition 12 of planning permission DA/19/01464/FUL for demolition of lock up garages and erection of a mix of 14 flats (10 x 2 bed and 4 x 1 bed) and 2 x 3 bed houses, including new access drive, off-street parking, bin & cycle storage and communal garden areas; New off street parking and additional parking spaces for the allotments to the North West of the site Former Block of 43 Lock-Up Garages Rear of Gilbert Close, Swanscombe.

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

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Graham Blew

From: Councillor Graham Taylor
Sent: 09 June 2025 01:20
To: Info; Graham Blew; Martin Harding; Ann Duke; Cllr Johnston; Peter Harris; Cllr Stephens; Cllr Pearce; Cllr Reach; Councillor Paul Parsons; Cllr Wickham; Cllr Lees; Emma BenMoussa; Lorna Cross; Lesley Howes
Subject: A proposal about buses
Attachments: Bus Services Jun25.pdf

Dear all

Please find attached my thoughts about bus services across the area and possible improvements we could suggest.

Regards

Graham Taylor

Sent from [Outlook for Android](#)

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Bus Services in Swanscombe, Greenhithe and Ebbsfleet

A Proposal for Improvements - Jun 2025

The current bus services in, or close to, the area with main daytime frequencies given are:

Arriva

480 Gravesend-Northfleet-Swanscombe High St-Knockhall-Bluewater-Stone-Dartford-Temple Hill.

Mon-Fri every 10 mins (schooldays), every 15 minutes (school holidays)

Sat every 30mins. Sun every 20mins.

483 Gravesend-Perry Street-Pepper Hill-Springhead Park-Ebbsfleet Green-Swanscombe St-Manor Road-Bluewater

Mon-Fri every 30mins, Sat every 30mins, Sun every hour

Fastrack

A/AZ Bluewater-Greenhithe Station-The Bridge-Amazon-Temple Hill-Dartford.

Mon-Fri, Sat & Sun every 15mins

E Gravesend-Northfleet Harbourside-Ebbsfleet Station-Castle Hill

Mon-Fri & Sat every 30mins, Sun every hour

F Ingress Park-Greenhithe Station-Bluewater

Mon-Fri, Sat & Sun every 12 mins. Through tickets onto B service available at fare cap price

GO Coach

GC1

Ebbsfleet Station-Ebbsfleet Green-Castle Hill-Swanscombe St Milton Road-Swanscombe High St-Knockhall-Greenhithe Station

Mon-Fri & Sat 7am to 10am & 5pm to 8pm every 30mins

Go2

Demand Responsive Transport covering the whole area booked via an app (fares not capped)

Mon-Fri & Sat 06:00 to 01:00, Sun 06:00 to 00:00

Other Routes available at Bluewater

Fastrack B Gravesend-Springhead Park Ebbsfleet Station-Bluewater-DVH-Princes Road-Dartford-Temple Hill.

Mon-Fri, Sat & Sun every 12 mins. Through tickets onto F service available at fare cap price.

Arriva 700 to Medway Towns. Mon-Fri & Sat every 20mins, Sun every 30 mins

TFL

96 to DVH, Dartford, Crayford, Bexleyheath & Woolwich.

Mon-Fri & Sat every 6 to 10 mins, Sun every 11-12 mins

492 to Stone, Dartford, Crayford & Sidcup. Mon-Fri, Sat & Sun every 30mins

428 to DVH, Dartford, Crayford & Erith. Mon-Fri & Sat every 15mins, Sun Every 30 mins

There are also other services to more rural locations.

Perceived inadequacies in the current services

All residents across the area cannot get a direct bus to Darent Valley Hospital.

Swanscombe residents have to catch either an Arriva 480 or 483 to Bluewater and then a Fastrack B or TfL 96/428 to DVH. This involves allowing extra time and cost 2 fare capped fares total £4 (or £3.75 via TfL).

For Knockhall residents it is the same but they only have access to the 480

Ingress Park residents have to catch a Fastrack F to Bluewater and then a Fastrack B or TfL 96/428 to DVH. They can get a through Ticket for £2.00 on the Fastrack F/B but have to pay an additional £1.75 for the TfL 96/428. Due to the transfer delays some residents say they are driving to Bluewater and only catching the bus up the Hill to avoid the parking hassle at DVH.

For Greenhithe Village residents it is the same except that they have the additional option of Catching a Fastrack A from Greenhithe station to Bluewater. However they will pay 2 fares as there are no through tickets from the Fastrack A to Fastrack B.

Castle Hill residents have to Catch a Fastrack E to Ebbsfleet International and then a Fastrack B. They pay 2 fares.

Ebbsfleet Green residents have to catch a 483 to Bluewater and change to a Fastrack B or TfL 96/428 again incurring 2 fares.

Using the Go2 service is possible for all residents but it is the most expensive option and because it is a shared service timings cannot be guaranteed.

Getting to Ebbsfleet International Station is equally problematical.

From Swanscombe the 2 options are a 480/483 to Bluewater then a Fastrack B, which makes it a very long roundabout route, or a 480/483 to the Ackers drive stop on Southfleet Road and then a Fastrack E.

From Knockhall it is the same as above but only the 480 is available and both routes are about equal.

From Ingress Park it is the F/B combination which does at least have a through fare.

From Greenhithe Village it is either a Fastrack F/B combination with a through fare or Fastrack A/B combination with no through fare.

In all the above Fastrack F/B scenarios residents have complained that the "advertised" dovetailed connections and Bluewater do not work out in practice and that they have to allow considerable extra time for their journeys. This is also a complaint from nurses working at DVH with one saying she has to allow an hour for the journey to ensure that she arrives on time for her shift.

Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet residents have very limited direct (or even indirect) bus access to Greenhithe station (except for the periodic GC1 and costly Go2) which given the (in)accessibility of Swanscombe station is a major equality issue.

The Go2 service is the only means of getting to Asda in Greenhithe from Swanscombe and even then it is not using the bus stops in the Sails but picking up and dropping off in Station Road. This often means stopping in the junction to The Sails which is not safe.

Although the reliability of the Arriva 483 is better than it has been in the past it is still far from ideal.

There are no bus stops in Stanhope Road, Swanscombe.

Given that the access to Swanscombe Station involving many stairs is problematical for many and that one of the reasons given for not prioritising fitting lifts is that Greenhithe Station does have lifts it is frustrating and inconsistent that there is no direct bus service from Swanscombe or Ebbsfleet to Greenhithe Station except for the peak hour GC1. Either Swanscombe station needs to be made more accessible or there needs to be a more comprehensive bus service to Greenhithe station.

Possible solutions to improve the service.

Whilst it is acknowledged that it is impossible to provide direct services from every point in the area to key locations some improvements can easily be made but it does mean challenging historic practices like the use of Fastways originally financed by KCC. This can be justified by special circumstances created by the delays in fixing Galley Hill. The proposals below are designed to fit broadly within current asset usage but provide services that are more attractive to those who do not currently use buses.

1. Divert 50% of the 480 services to operate via Ingress Park and Greenhithe station via the Fastway Tunnel. This route could also serve the redundant stop under the railway bridge (and a new one in the redundant bus lane opposite giving a good connection to the proposed new medical centre at Steele Avenue. The remaining 50% continue to operate via London Road and Knockhall as at present. See 5 below for a proposal that evens up the lengths of the 2 alternative routes which will help consistency of timing along the whole route.
2. Divert the 480 and 483 to operate via Ebbsfleet International instead of bypassing it (without even a close stop) as at present. In the short term to speed up journeys Swanscombe bound stops could be on the opposite side of the road to the current stops and an unmonitored bus gate put by car park D to allow 2 way access along International Way but see 6 below for a longer term plan.

Both these changes will extend journey times which may have an impact on the number of buses required to run the service but give a far more useful service which should encourage more people to use a bus rather than a car.

There is an alternative scenario which sends 50% of the 480's direct to DVH and then Bluewater/Stone and uses the freed up bus paths through Stanhope Road for a full length Fastrack F from Gravesend through Ingress Park to Bluewater, DVH and Temple Hill. However this solution causes far more problems with ensuring consistent timing intervals between successive services along the 2 ends of both the 480 and Fastrack B/F routes due to vastly different route lengths and traffic conditions on the 2 alternative middle sections from Ebbsfleet Station to Bluewater.

3. Extend the Fastrack F at both ends so that it runs from The Town Council Offices in the Grove, Swanscombe via the High Street, Ingress Park, Greenhithe Station, Bluewater and on to Darent Valley Hospital. Frequency could be reduced to every 20mins to alternate with the 480 as current practice shows that trying to integrate with Fastrack B does not work. This longer route that connects Swanscombe to both Greenhithe Station and DVH will be perceived as more useful and increase ridership compared to the current Fastrack F shuttle even though it is less frequent. Diagram of The Grove terminus Appendix B.
4. Allow through tickets from Greenhithe Station and St Clements Way on the Fastrack A onto Fastrack B. This will help some residents with connectivity issues with Fast Track B at Bluewater
5. Create a new bus stop in Craylands Lane just below the roundabout by Craylands School and possibly another lower down at Cresswell Road by the new flats (Diagram Appendix A). The Knockhall 480 services could then travel up Craylands Lane turning at the roundabout and use these 2 new stops to give better access to buses for some residents at that end of Swanscombe. It would also help to even up the journey times with the route via Ingress Park. These stops could also be used by the Fastrack F and GC1. If successful there is space to provide recessed bus stops in both locations when funding permits.

6. Reconfigure the bus stops at Ebbsfleet International so that they swap with the current unused Coach stops at the west end of the building (Diagram Appendix C). This would require some expenditure for realignment of kerbs to allow 2 bus stops in each aisle without the need for reversing instead of the current 3 interlaced bays. Combining this with a monitored bus gate in International Way by Car Park D allowing 2 way traffic will speed up journeys for all routes and improve timings in peak hours when congestion on the A2260 between Thames Way and the roundabout junction with the B259 is at its worst.
7. The bus stops in the Sails behind Asda need to be recommissioned and problems with the stores ANPR parking enforcement resolved if this is really the problem. If the issue is because the Go2 is classified as Demand Responsive Transport rather than a scheduled bus service it needs to be pointed out to Asda that its own employees are major users of the service so it has a health and safety obligation to them if nothing else. The Go2 service should then pick up and drop off there rather than Station Road. In addition if the GC1 left London Road in Knockhall via the Avenue and Eagles Road it could also call here on its way to Greenhithe Station. The extra time would be negligible but it would give some residents better access to Asda for part of the day.
8. Allow all buses to use the Fastway between DVH and Bluewater. This would reduce both journey times and CO2 emissions whilst also providing more reliable timings at peak times when the Bean Junction suffers from congestion. It is a practical step to reduce transport pollution that should not be sacrificed because of historical concepts and funding. The world has moved on and the public have higher expectations of public bodies.
9. Find a way of introducing a bus stop each way closer to Ebbsfleet Academy in Stanhope Road. The argument that buses stopping in the carriageway hinders traffic flow, although real, is countered by many historical bus stops along the route where this has been the case for many years. The 2 stops in London Road at the junctions with Knockhall Chase and the Avenue being a prime examples. Even newer is the current terminus of Fastrack F in Tiltman Avenue where if a bus arrives early and has to wait for departure it completely blocks the road due to the traffic island. A few more stops along the extended 480 route would make it more attractive to those who currently feel they are by-passed.

A similar argument can be made for a southbound bus stop in Swanscombe High Street to mirror the northbound one close to the junction with Stanhope Road. The GC1 could also do with a few more stops.

Councillor Graham Taylor

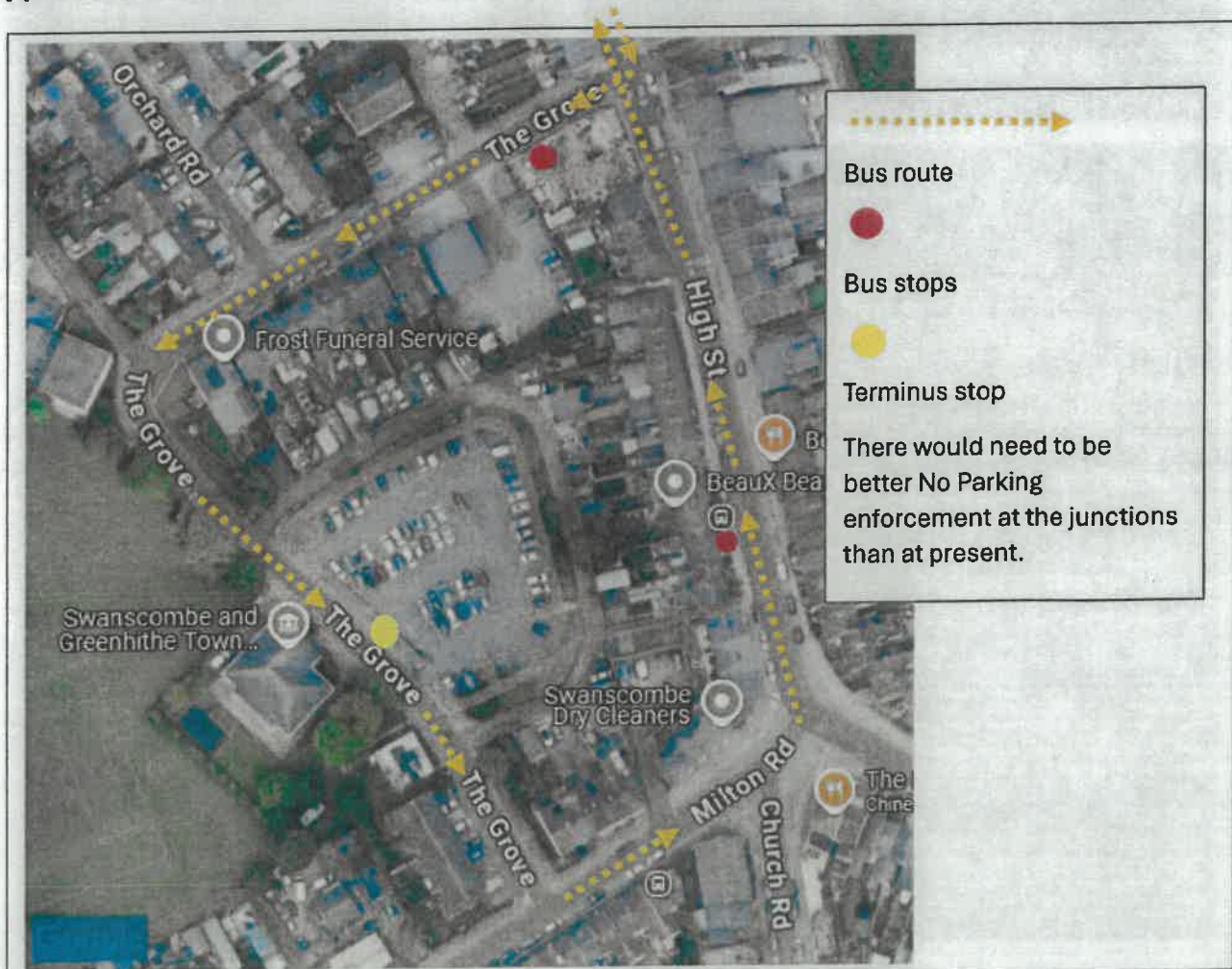
Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council

June 9th 2025

Appendix A – Craylands Lane



Appendix B – The Grove



Appendix C – Ebbsfleet International Station

