

County Councillor's Update Swanley & Hextable Division

Dean Truder | County Councillor for Swanley & Hextable | Reform UK

September 2026

HIGHWAYS UPDATE

Planned / programmed works affecting Swanley

Location	Type of work	Likely timing	Details
Wansbury Way, Swanley	Footway surface preservation	2026/27 programme	Footway maintenance works identified following inspection. Exact extent to be confirmed at design stage.
Swanley Central area (south of London Road, north of railway line)	Drainage investigation/improvement works	2026/27 programme	Drainage condition work linked to flood-risk assessment.
Manse Way, Swanley	Drainage improvement scheme	Forward works programme	Drainage improvements planned at the junction with London Road.

London Road – Wested Lane to Searles Court

Temporary Road Closure - B2173 London Road, Swanley - 30th September 2026 for 4 nights between 21.00hrs and 06.00hrs.

Openreach - Temporary Road Closure - Swanley Village Road, Swanley - 22nd September 2026 for 1 day between 09.30hrs and 14.30hrs

Roads likely to experience wider disruption

Because Swanley sits next to major strategic routes, residents may also experience delays from:

- **M25 Junction 3 (Swanley Interchange)**
- **A20 London Road corridor**
- **A224 / Swanley–Sevenoaks routes**
- Utility company works (gas, water, electricity and telecoms), which are often announced closer to the start date.

KCC advises residents that emergency works may not always appear in advance and directs residents to Kent County Council and live roadworks mapping services for the latest updates.

Lidl Roundabout Swanley

Please see the following email received from KCC Highways relating to this issue –

“I am pleased to confirm that the Section 278 agreement has now been finalised and confirmed.

We are now awaiting a full programme of works for the construction of the new roundabout; however, I can confirm that the new zebra crossing with minor drainage alterations is currently proposed to be installed between the 21st September to the 16th October 2026. The majority of the works will be completed with no impacts on normal traffic flows.

Some carriageway incursion 24/7 between 21st September – 16th October 26

Road closure between 13/10 - 16/10 working hours 2000 - 0500

Specialist signs advising location of closure required –

Junc Goldsel Road

Junc Nightingale Way

Junc Swanley Lane

B2173 Maidstone Road/Bartholomew Way roundabout

Birchwood Road – no parking cones on bend

Diversion signs need to be symbolised confirmation required for which symbol will be used).

Permission from National Highways is required to use Swanley Interchange as part of your diversion route.

EH (environmental.health@sevenoaks.gov.uk) must be notified of OOH works.

AWS and letter drops must be completed 14 days prior to works

commencing. Please send the letter drops to streetworkswest@kent.gov.uk a week before this is due to go out so we can review and make any amendments required and then share the final copy with the local Cllrs, Member, MP and Town Council.

To complete the resurfacing and electrical connection elements this will require a road closure which is currently planned to be in place between the hours of 20:00pm and 05:00am daily between the 13th and 16th October 2026. I have attached an overview of the location with how access will be managed for Beechenlea Lane. Once we have an advance warning letter for this phase of the works, we will share this with you all before it is sent to residents.

I have further been advised by KCC of a TRO that proposes parking enforcement by way of double yellow lines within the immediate vicinity of the new store that will adversely affect certain residents who do not have off-road parking who as such will no longer be able to legally park their vehicles outside their respective homes. Please see attached link –



London Road Swanley Plan.pdf

This has obviously been met with a certain amount of hostility by residents and I have encouraged all those wishing to comment/object to do so via the facility on the KCC website of which they have until the end of August to do. I have also published the link on social media and I have also written to the TRO department to register my own objections on behalf of all affected residents in the area as follows –

“I have been contacted by several residents who will no doubt be adversely affected by the proposed parking enforcement and I enclose the following for your consideration.

I write as the elected councillor representing Swanley & Hextable.

Residents' living close to the new Lidl store have recently been notified of certain proposed parking enforcement in the vicinity that will undoubtedly inconvenience and adversely affect those without off-road parking who currently legally park outside their house.

I fully support the concerns raised by residents regarding the proposed waiting restrictions and double yellow lines associated with the new development and proposed pedestrian crossing.

I fully recognise the importance of highway safety and ensuring that pedestrians have appropriate visibility when using a crossing. However, I do not believe that this should automatically result in the removal of established parking without proper consideration of the consequences for existing residents.

The residents affected by these proposals are not simply objecting to an inconvenience. For a number of households, there is **no realistic alternative parking available nearby**. Some residents rely on work vans containing valuable tools and equipment, while elderly residents and those with mobility or medical needs may find it particularly difficult to park several roads away from their homes.

I am particularly concerned that some of the proposed restrictions appear to extend alongside properties with **long-established driveways, dropped kerbs and established residential access**. These are existing homes and residents who have lived with their current arrangements for many years. They should not be expected to absorb a significant and permanent loss of parking unless KCC can clearly demonstrate that this is necessary.

I also believe that the existence of an **existing zebra crossing approximately 100 metres away** warrants further explanation. Before imposing additional restrictions, KCC should clearly demonstrate what specific safety issue the new crossing is intended to address and why that issue cannot be adequately dealt with by the existing crossing or through alternative measures.

If the proposed double yellow lines are being justified by a 43-metre visibility requirement associated with a 30mph road, then KCC should provide the underlying visibility assessment and clearly explain why the restrictions need to extend to their proposed length.

There should also be a proper examination of whether **less restrictive alternatives** could achieve the required highway-safety standards without unnecessarily removing established residential parking.

Residents have already experienced considerable disruption from the Lidl development, including prolonged highway works and repeated temporary traffic-light arrangements. It is understandable that they are now concerned that temporary disruption could be followed by a permanent loss of the limited parking available to them.

I therefore support the residents' formal objection and believe KCC should:

- provide the full technical justification for the proposed restrictions;
- publish the visibility and highway-safety assessment supporting the 43-metre requirement;
- explain the need for the additional pedestrian crossing given the existing crossing nearby;
- clearly identify the exact extent of the proposed double yellow lines;
- explain why restrictions are required alongside established residential driveways and dropped kerbs;
- demonstrate what alternative and less restrictive options have been considered;
- properly assess the impact on existing residents, particularly elderly residents and those with mobility or medical needs; and
- consider the availability, or lack thereof, of alternative parking before proceeding.

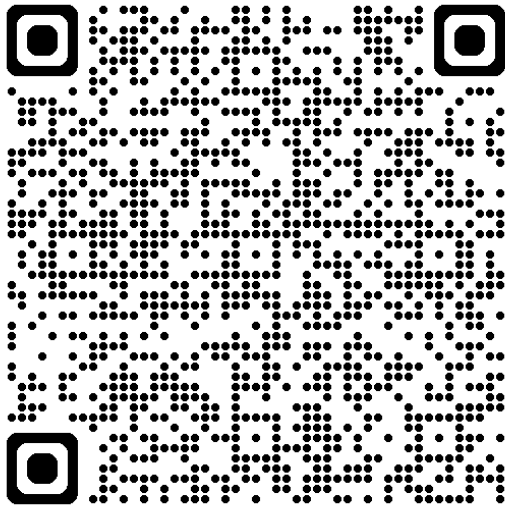
This is not an objection to pedestrian safety. It is an objection to what appears to be a potentially disproportionate loss of established residential parking without sufficient evidence that the full extent of the proposed restrictions is necessary.

I would therefore urge KCC to engage directly with the affected residents, review the proposed extent of the restrictions and seek a solution which protects pedestrian safety while avoiding unnecessary and disproportionate harm to existing households. Until that exercise has been properly undertaken, I do not believe the proposed restrictions should proceed in their current form”.

Regards,
Dean Truder

As previously discussed, we will have another meeting in September to provide a more detailed update with what has been completed from a utility point of view and what is proposed”.

Please see the attached QR code to access the August edition of the Kent Highways & Transport August edition for your information.



THE OLD OASIS SCHOOL, HEXTABLE

I have been informed by Estates at KCC that this site excluding the Howard Venue (now known as the Community Collective) is now being actively marketed.

I enclose for your attention the KCC Communications Strategy relating to this particular site with reference to the Avenue of Limes –

“KCC are now actively marketing the former Oasis school. This will generate publicity and raise questions from local residents, stakeholders and possibly the media. In preparation for this the below sets out our key messaging to be used, with guidance on the distribution of the message and an escalation policy. We have also included a reactive ‘if asked’ media statement which can be sent as replies to any media enquiries received.

Key points to mention/messaging:

- The former Oasis school in Hextable is shortly due to commence marketing for disposal (30th June 2026). The appointed agent is Knight Frank. KCC, the landowner, are seeking offers for the freehold interest.

- Oasis Hextable is surplus to the needs of KCC services and as required by Law (S123 of Local Government Act 1972) we are proceeding to dispose of the site.

- The site is no longer required for educational purposes. Before KCC brought the site to market we asked if any other KCC service required the site, they did not. The disposal was discussed at the KCC (All Party) Policy and Resources committee who endorsed the site for disposal. We have engaged with local stakeholders (Parish Council, Town Council, local residents) and they told us several concerns which we have duly considered and we have taken mitigating action to address them. These are primarily:

- o Local residents have told us of their concerns about the Avenue of Limes (AoL) – therefore we have set out conditions of sale that will protect the AoL for future generations. We will make it a legal requirement for the AoL to be protected through a restrictive covenant on title. We will also require that at the completion of any development by a successful purchaser that the AoL be transferred to a local community entity representative of the local community to be enjoyed and controlled by the local community.

- o **The Howard Venue will not be sold and is currently the subject of ongoing negotiations.** It is entirely excluded from the sale. KCC are offering a new lease to the charity at £0 rent for an initial term and have offered additional parking spaces to their existing lease agreement.

- o The issue of the former playing fields being built on is a matter for the planning process to decide. The former playing fields sit on private land owned by KCC. Although some residents have used the land they have done so with the permission of KCC, such permission can be removed at any time by KCC.

- o All residents and local groups have the opportunity to have their say in the future of the site through the planning process. Once KCC sell the site the new owner will make a planning application and there will be public consultation and engagement and a chance for the public to have their say. The local planning authority for the site is Sevenoaks District Council – all enquiries can be made to their offices.

- All monies from the sale of Oasis Hextable will go straight to KCC front line services helping the council provide for the people of Kent at a time of much needed funding.

- Vandalism at the old school is increasing with call outs costing KCC money that is diverted from front line services. There is also the danger of injury from trespassers who may end up suing the council. By selling the property we can protect the council against financial and legal liabilities and make substantial savings in management costs to the benefit of the Kent taxpayer.

The above messaging to be distributed and used in the following way:

- Briefing of the local member, deputy leader and local parish and town councils – encouraging them to distribute on their own social media or chosen distribution channels
- Publication on the 'Lets talk Kent' webpage which will automatically email respondents to the open space notice
- Briefing for the appointed marketing agent to field any enquiries
- Briefing to KCC PR/MRX to deal with any media enquiries that may come in as a result of the launch of marketing
- Briefing of KCC internal departments (Estates, Education, FM) who may receive direct approaches from the public
- Reply to specific email received from local objectors (see David Oyler)

The agreed escalation policy is:

- General enquiries to be dealt with at point of request
- Any complaints or escalations to be sent to David Oyler/Dan Parkes/Ellis Stephenson – collated and conveyed to Mark Cheverton and Rebecca Spore in a consolidated summarised report on a weekly basis
- Any correspondence directly for the attention of the leaders/deputy leaders office to be directed there, copying in Mark Cheverton/Rebecca Spore if not already included in the weekly escalation report

Reactive 'if asked' media statement to respond to enquiries about the former Hextable school site marketing:

A Kent County Council (KCC) spokesman said: "The Hextable secondary school was closed following a decision by the Department for Education. The site has not been used for educational purposes since 2016, and with the buildings now derelict, the site is now surplus to the council's requirements.

"Before progressing the sale, we have engaged with local parish and town councils and residents, to understand the concerns they raised particularly surrounding the future of both the Howard Venue and the Avenue of Limes. KCC is aware the Howard Venue operates from part of the site and is a well-used and valued facility by KCC and the local community.

"KCC can confirm the centre will continue to operate and will be retained by the council to be used by the local community and is not part of any sale. The Avenue of Limes is

an important feature on the site and as such special conditions will be placed on it to preserve it for future generations.

“KCC has a responsibility to ensure it receives the best value for council taxpayers when sites are deemed to be surplus to requirements and as such the site is now being marketed to invite proposals for the site. When the site is sold, any future decisions on the use or development of the building or land will fall to the local planning authority, not KCC.

“The sale of this site will enable the budget associated with holding a vacant site to be targeted into frontline services with any proceeds from the sale being reinvested to deliver KCC services such as new school provision or road maintenance.”

In response, I have replied with the following to Estates and plan to issue same to all local, social media sites –

As your local Swanley & Hextable councillor, I am aware the former Oasis school site is an issue that many residents care deeply about, and I appreciate that the commencement of marketing will raise questions and concerns.

Kent County Council has confirmed that the site is no longer required for education or any other council service and has therefore decided to market it for sale. As the landowner, KCC has a duty to secure best value for taxpayers when disposing of surplus assets.

Throughout this process, I have been keen to ensure that local concerns have been heard. In particular, I welcome the commitments that the Howard Venue will be retained by KCC and continue to serve the local community, and that legal protections will be put in place to safeguard the historic Avenue of Limes for future generations.

I also recognise that many residents have concerns about the future use of the remainder of the site, including the former playing fields. It is important to remember that marketing the site does not guarantee planning permission. Should a future owner bring forward development proposals, these will be considered through the normal planning process by Sevenoaks District Council (or the new Unitary). That process will include opportunities for residents, local organisations and stakeholders to comment on any planning application before a decision is made.

I encourage everyone with an interest in the future of the site to engage constructively when any planning proposals are brought forward. Community views will form an important part of that process.

I will continue to work with residents, KCC and Sevenoaks District Council to ensure that local concerns are properly represented and that any future proposals reflect the needs and character of Swanley & Hextable.

NB. I am aware that Swanley Town Council has now submitted a bid to purchase the school playing field at the old Oasis School.

THE SEVENOAKS LOCAL DRAFT PLAN

Land North of Maidstone Road, Swanley.

As you maybe already aware, the above development site has recently been recommended for outline planning approval by Sevenoaks District Council.

I oppose this decision because it permits a significant development before there is clear evidence that the supporting infrastructure is capable of accommodating it. An additional **277** homes will place further pressure on already congested roads, healthcare services, schools, water and sewerage networks, and other local facilities. While the permission includes conditions requiring future mitigation and infrastructure improvements, these do not remove the existing uncertainty or guarantee that the necessary capacity will be delivered before residents move in. Development should follow infrastructure, not precede it, and this decision fails to provide sufficient confidence that the cumulative impacts on Swanley and the surrounding area can be accommodated sustainably.

I have contacted Development Control at SDC to register both my dismay and comments against this decision and I enclose same for your records and information –

“I write as the KCC member representing Swanley & Hextable.

I am deeply disappointed by the decision to grant outline planning permission for the development of land north of Maidstone Road, Swanley.

This decision comes despite clear and reasoned objections from Swanley Town Council, Hextable Parish Council and Dartford Borough Council, all of which highlighted significant concerns about the suitability of this site and the impact the development is likely to have on existing communities.

Residents have consistently raised concerns about the cumulative effect of continued housing growth in and around Swanley. These concerns include increasing pressure on local roads, healthcare services, schools, drainage infrastructure and other essential public services, many of which are already operating under considerable strain. Whilst it could be argued that new homes are needed, development must be accompanied by the infrastructure required to support both existing and future residents.

It is particularly frustrating that local voices, including those of elected councils representing the communities most directly affected, have not ultimately prevailed. Local knowledge is invaluable in the planning process and should

carry significant weight when decisions are made that will shape our communities for generations.

Although outline planning permission has now been granted or recommended, this is not the end of the process. Many important details relating to the design, appearance, landscaping, access and other reserved matters will still require approval. I will continue to scrutinise those future applications carefully and work alongside fellow councillors, residents and local authorities to ensure that the development, if it proceeds, delivers the highest possible standards and that every opportunity is taken to mitigate its impact on neighbouring communities. This decision also reinforces the importance of ensuring that future planning policies are supported by robust evidence on infrastructure capacity. Housing growth cannot continue to outpace investment in transport, healthcare, education, utilities and community facilities. Sustainable development means providing homes alongside the infrastructure needed to support them. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to submit representations, attend meetings and engage constructively throughout the planning process. While the outcome is undoubtedly disappointing, your efforts have ensured that local concerns were heard and placed firmly on the public record. I remain committed to representing the interests of residents and holding developers and decision-makers to account as this proposal progresses through its remaining stages”.

Bearing in mind there exists a further six development sites proposing in excess of another 1,535 homes in the town not to mention Pedham, the rapid urbanisation of Swanley and surrounding areas would appear to be continuing unabated and I would be interested to hear whether STC has considered launching a possible Judicial Review in this matter.

Meanwhile, the Regulation 19 process has now begun on all the other proposed development sites in Swanley from SWAN 1 thru to SWAN 17.

The combined impact of these sites and in particular SWAN11–SWAN16 represents a significant expansion of Swanley and surrounding communities. The proposed developments would introduce thousands of additional vehicle movements onto an already constrained local highway network.

The Draft Local Plan must demonstrate that the cumulative impact of these allocations will not result in unacceptable or severe transport impacts.

I am sure you will agree that the most contentious sites are those where substantial development is proposed rather than perhaps the lesser sites where considerably fewer homes (1-10) are proposed in the latest Local Draft Plan.

I will be forwarding for your information a separate, detailed list of sites SWAN 11 to SWAN 16 listing all planning criteria individually and citing possible items in objection and contrary to current NPPF guidelines.

Proposed Development in Swanley Must Be Matched by Proven Infrastructure Improvements

Swanley residents understand the need for carefully planned housing growth, but development cannot continue at a pace that places unacceptable pressure on already stretched local infrastructure.

Before any further major housing allocations are approved, there must be clear, deliverable and funded evidence that the necessary improvements to roads, public transport, schools, healthcare, drainage and community facilities will be provided **before or alongside new residents moving in**.

Swanley's road network is already experiencing significant congestion, particularly around key routes including the town centre, London Road and junctions serving the A20 and M25. Local evidence has highlighted concerns that existing transport capacity has little resilience to absorb substantial additional traffic without major intervention.

It is not acceptable to approve thousands of additional homes based on promises of future mitigation that may never be delivered. Residents should not be expected to endure years of increased congestion, pressure on GP appointments, school places and public services while infrastructure struggles to catch up.

Any future development must demonstrate:

- a fully costed and funded transport strategy;
- improvements to congested junctions and local roads;
- realistic public transport enhancements;
- sufficient school and healthcare capacity;
- protection of existing communities and the environment.

Growth must be sustainable, not simply numbers on a housing spreadsheet. Swanley & Hextable deserves investment, infrastructure and regeneration that keeps pace with development — not development that overwhelms the town.

Until there is firm evidence that infrastructure improvements will be delivered, further large-scale development proposals should be resisted in my opinion.

KEY NEXT STEPS

- July 7th – SDC Cabinet meet to approve plans for formal public consultation.
- July 23rd – September 17th – Public Consultation period begins for Regulation 19 Draft Plan.
- 2027 – Expected public examination hearings with Planning Inspector(s).

CLEAN UP BRITAIN DAY

Saturday 4th July was Clean Up Britain Day and myself accompanied by three Hextable residents, Leo Hopkins, Terry Francis & Ray Winter toured both Hextable and Swanley and managed to fill 3 x black plastic bags in each location.

As the volunteer uptake was not great with only four of us in Hextable and zero in Swanley, Leo, Terry and Ray very kindly joined me in Swanley for a similar initiative where there was considerably more rubbish and I think we all lost a few pounds due to the extreme heat!

I would like to thank Leo, Terry and Ray along with Ryan Hayman at STC for supplying all paraphernalia on the day.

LGR

The Government has now confirmed that **Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells** will form a **single new West Kent Unitary Council**, replacing the current district/borough councils and taking on the responsibilities currently split with Kent County Council. The new authority is expected to go live in **April 2028**.

Main implications

1. One council instead of two

Residents will no longer deal separately with:

- Kent County Council (education, highways, adult and children's social care, libraries)
- Their district or borough council (planning, housing, waste, leisure, environmental health)

Instead, the **West Kent Council** will provide all these services.

2. Larger scale

The new authority will cover:

- Sevenoaks
- Tonbridge & Malling
- Maidstone
- Tunbridge Wells

This creates a council with a population broadly in line with the Government's preferred size for unitary authorities, allowing services to be managed across a larger area.)

3. Planning and housing

Planning policies are expected to become more strategic across West Kent, potentially allowing:

- better coordination of housing growth
- integrated transport and infrastructure planning
- more consistent planning decisions

Local planning committees will still determine many applications, but within a single authority rather than four separate councils.

4. Financial implications

The Government expects unitary councils to:

- reduce duplicated management and administration
- simplify decision-making
- achieve long-term efficiency savings

However, there will also be significant short-term transition costs associated with merging organisations, staff and IT systems.

5. Democratic representation

Current borough and district councils will be abolished. Residents will instead elect councillors to the new West Kent authority.

Some people support the change because it simplifies accountability, while others are concerned that councillors will represent larger areas and that decision-making may feel less local. (

6. Parish and town councils

Parish and town councils are **not affected** and will continue to operate as they do now.

What residents are likely to notice

For most people:

- bin collections should continue during the transition
- council tax bills will eventually come from the new authority
- one council will deal with everything from roads to planning and social care

- existing staff and services are expected to continue while integration takes place over the next two years.

Overall, the Government's intention is to replace the two-tier system with a **single West Kent Unitary council** covering Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells, with the aim of simplifying local government while maintaining a distinct West Kent identity.

The Leader of KCC, Linden Kemkaran has recently issued the following media release on the KCC website -

[announcement on our website.](#)

On August 3rd next there will be an LGR Q&A session for Members at Sessions House, Maidstone where members' can pose questions to each respective Cabinet Member and effectively scrutinise how the new authority will work for their own respective division and what affect, if any, it will have on residents.

Alas, I am away on annual leave then but I have forwarded the following questions that I assume most Swanley & Hextable residents would be interested in hearing answers to

—

- Firstly, how will the new West Kent Council ensure that communities like Swanley & Hextable (S & H) do not become the forgotten corner of a much larger authority?
- Will S & H receive its fair share of investment compared with larger towns in the Unitary?
- How will the Unitary tackle congestion on the A20, M25 junctions and surrounding arterial routes (without the proposed further development of the area)?
- Will existing long-standing road and transport issues receive greater attention?
- What commitments will there be to protecting community assets and other valued local facilities?
- How will rapid housing growth be matched with an already overburdened infrastructure such as GP surgeries, schools, transport and leisure facilities etc?
- Will the Unitary establish a local area committee or neighbourhood board specifically for S & H?
- How will S & H retain their identities within a council covering over half a million residents?

- Will local traditions and community priorities continue to receive recognition?
- Will the new council recognise S & H as a distinct area or will decisions be dominated by larger towns such as Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells?

It will be interesting to receive responses to the above questions but I suspect it is too early to realistically expect accurate answers and that we will have to wait until the process is further along the path.

However, I will be sure to share whatever responses I receive in my next report.

NB. As of today 2/9/26 I am still awaiting responses to the above questions from KCC.

1812 PARTY IN THE PARK

Finally, congratulations and thanks to all for this year's Swanley Park event.

Although the fireworks were not permitted, the general consensus was that the drone display was just as spectacular and given that it was organised at very short notice, special thanks and appreciation must go to the Mayor Michael Horwood and Ryan Hayman who looked mightily relieved when it was over!

I'm sure I speak for all who attended by saying a good time was had by all and that we all look forward to next year's event!

Fireworks or Drones? It's a tough one!

CONTACT DETAILS

You can always reach me at dean.truder@kent.gov.uk

I very much hope you find the above more in depth and comprehensive.

I will of course endeavour to attend all meetings where I shall be pleased to address any pertinent questions you may have.

Best Wishes,

Dean Truder