



MILTON CREEK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
MAY 2010





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I. INTRODUCTION

Project overview

Milton Creek will be Swale's landmark environmental project, funded by nearly £2 million from the Thames Gateway Parklands scheme and £250,000 from Kent County Council. Milton Creek is arguably the heart of Sittingbourne's heritage, as it was the town's historic centre and a hub for its brickmaking, barge building and paper industries.

The Milton Creek Gateway Landscape Project functions as a framework for delivering a range of connected environmental projects throughout the Milton Creek area, building on the Green Cluster Study Recommendations

Cluster Study

The project will improve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity and accessibility within the wider Creekside corridor. Its initial stages involved researching the diverse heritage of the area, and the project seeks to foster a creative community response to local stories and histories.

The key aims of the project will be to:

- Complete the Milton Creek Country Park (formerly known as Church Marshes Country Park) forming the heart of the landscape
- Realign the Saxon Shore Way to run along the edge of the Creek, maximising the waterfront's value
- Enhance wildlife habitats in the Country Park and along the Creekside corridor
- Using the development as an exemplar of community involvement in regeneration and conservation
- Developing and improving the heritage and cultural offer at Milton Creek.

Our scope of work and approach

Barker Langham [BL] were commissioned by Swale Borough Council [SBC] to develop a Community Engagement Strategy for the Milton Creek project. The initial client brief was based around developing a programme of activities that could be delivered to engage the local community. This programme would help to achieve the benchmark targets for Parklands funding, which include the delivery of 100 learning opportunities and engagement of 250 volunteers before March 2011. Activities would be delivered over 2010-2011 using a budget allocated from the overall project funds. However, this approach has been revised in light of the fact that no community engagement funding is currently available from the project budget. The structure of this Strategy has therefore been modelled on a Heritage Lottery Fund Activity Plan – each section is based on a corresponding section of the HLF Activity Plan submission.

We have taken a long-term view of community engagement, rather than focus exclusively on activities delivered during Phase II construction. The programme of activities needs to be sustainable in order to build momentum towards the park's opening in 2012, and to continue to develop in the future.

Initially BL attended the art-focused team meeting, reviewed the available documentation, and attended an Inception Meeting. BL has remained in regular contact with the design team and appointed artist. The plan for community engagement at Milton Creek has a well-developed strategic context, drawn together through various local and regional strategies. A summary of strategic and policy objectives that dovetail with the aims of this strategy can be found in Appendix I. This phase of work culminated in an interim report issued at the end of September 2009.

Following this, BL have further developed the strategy through discussion with stakeholder consultation and focus groups. The focus of these discussions has been the key audiences, and developing a plan of engagement activities.

Further discussion and detailed development of the engagement activities outlined in this report took place at the community event on 27 February 2010. This was used as an opportunity to:

- Record interviews with members of the public, to collect their views and ideas about which activities and volunteering opportunities should be prioritised
- Distribute surveys to get feedback on the kinds of activities potential users would like to attend and be involved with.

As well as gauging public opinion and building up potential volunteer involvement, this is useful evidence for any future external funding application.

2. CURRENT AUDIENCES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There is currently very little audience data for the use or user profile of Milton Creek. The current audience for the Creek has been limited by the complex nature of this linear site. Public access is difficult, with industry continuing to dominate the Creekside itself.

As such, the principle stakeholders and users of the site have often been the businesses and landowners who occupy sites around the Creek.

The Milton Creek Gateway Landscape will extend and complete the Milton Creek Country Park. There has been an on-going project of landscape restoration, and Groundwork Kent and Medway as project managers carried out some consultation and engagement work. An annual community tree planting activity was undertaken and from this a database of contacts was established. Groundwork established a Friends of Church Marshes group, which met quarterly and a summer fete was held in 2007. Now that Groundwork's scope of work is finished, the role of the Friends group in organising community events will be supported and reaffirmed. This process has already been begun by SBC, and the group was recently renamed Friends of Milton Creek to reflect its new remit.

The Friends currently relies on a core of 8 members who regularly attend meetings. Lack of funding has been an issue in the past, but small events such as a recent nature walk have been well attended. The Friends of Milton Creek provides a good basis for wider community involvement with the whole Creek landscape. The group is the ideal nucleus for more proactive community involvement. With funding and support from SBC and stakeholders, the group could build its membership base, make links with partners, and develop and

deliver events. A wider Stakeholder Forum was established for Milton Creek, with the intention of building a wider membership base and remit than the Steering Group. The Forum has a mailing list of 64 contacts, and has met twice so far. It may continue to meet on an ad hoc basis about specific issues and questions. Whatever its future role as a forum, its membership has a range of expertise that will be an invaluable resource to support the programming work of the Friends group. The Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) and Dolphin Barge Museum (both members of the Stakeholder Forum) were the main visitor attractions in the Creek. It will be important to use their legacy as a basis for attracting new audiences to the gateway landscape.



3. POTENTIAL FOR AUDIENCES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community profile

An analysis of key demographic trends in Swale has been compiled from local and national government sources, and allows us to assess audience needs and prioritise the groups most in need of engagement. This data will be essential for an external funding bid, and has been included as Appendix 2.

Key points to take away from the demographic data is that, relative to the national averages, Swale has:

- A young population
- Low levels of educational attainment
- High levels of economic inactivity.

By delivering learning and volunteering activities, the engagement strategy will be able to serve a wider social agenda, helping fulfil the needs of the local community and further its ambitions.

- Learning opportunities should provide local people the opportunity to further their education both informally and formally. A portfolio of options could be provided to ensure take-up from schools and colleges – including a teacher's learning pack, education events and talks.
- In the current economic climate, volunteering opportunities will become an important way of helping young people improve their employability. Vocationally orientated training could be offered to volunteers as way of formally recognising their skills and improving their CVs– for example, a Green Gym programme could include the opportunity to gain horticulture / landscaping NVQs.

Audience types and current provision

In order to define the potential audiences for Milton Creek, we have divided them by interest group and analysed their current levels of development.

Arts

Swale currently lacks extensive provision of arts facilities in this respect. There is however a strong base of community-level arts activity across Swale. The achievements of Art at the Centre have been significant in attracting community involvement. An art exhibition and other events linking to the Time Team excavation of Queenborough Castle was created, and local reactions to this blend of contemporary art and local heritage were very positive.

Arts Council England's 'Audiences: Insight Data' for Sittingbourne shows lower than average proportions of the two groups that attend the arts most. However, it also reveals that there are substantial youth, family-focussed and affluent audiences.

During April 2009 a survey was conducted to find out how local residents would like to see culture developed in Sittingbourne. Asked what arts activities they would like to see, majority of survey respondents wanted more festivals (45%), followed by street arts performance (31%). This shows the audience potential for festivals and performance events at Milton Creek. When asked where the new cultural provision should be located, there was a low response for Milton Creek (12%). This is a finding with significant repercussions. It could be argued that this reflects a comparative lack of promotion of Milton Creek in comparison to the Town Centre regeneration plans. If SBC is committed to

developing Milton Creek as a cultural destination through Art at the Centre and other initiatives, substantial promotion will be needed through community engagement activities.

It could however be argued that this low response shows Milton Creek to be an inappropriate location for cultural development. Based on this interpretation, it may be better to focus instead on developing an audience base for Milton Creek's considerable heritage, environmental, and recreational assets.

Heritage

Milton Creek is fundamentally a cultural landscape, with a rich history of human activity from antiquity to its industrial heritage.

The SKLR and Dolphin Barge Museum were heritage attractions that linked to the Creek's industrial past, and this legacy should be continued through community events. The DBA/FEI Culture Study recommends that the head of the Creek be a venue for a new Heritage Centre, and a location for this building has been included within the Sittingbourne Masterplan. This engagement strategy will build towards this goal through community involvement in heritage interpretation.

Sittingbourne's heritage groups rely on the dedication and enthusiasm of a core of individuals, but attract significant support from the wider community. This is testament to the active interest of local people in their past. The Sittingbourne Heritage Museum continues to be funded largely by over 500 fee-paying members. The current displays of archaeological finds in The Forum shopping centre (run by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust) demonstrates the high level of public interest in the history of the local area.

4. DESCRIBE THE POTENTIAL AUDIENCES AND BARRIERS TO INVOLVING PEOPLE

Despite the audience potential in Swale, opportunities to engage with the local heritage have been held back by a lack of funding in recent years. Most support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has been concentrated in funding Chatham Historic Dockyard.

Consultation carried out for the North Kent Cultural Toolkit found that stakeholders want Local Authorities to show leadership in sourcing funding and resources for the heritage sector. The HLF have designated Swale as a Priority Area, which means that there is considerable scope for a funding bid to develop heritage provision and interpretation at Milton Creek. Peter Liversidge's proposals draw heavily on the heritage and past identity of the site. There is a great deal of potential to develop community heritage activities that both contribute to the implementation of Liversidge's proposals, and also use the art-based interpretation as starting points for learning about the history of the Creek.

As noted earlier, the structure of this report is based on the model of an HLF Activity Plan and could be worked into a funding application.

Environmental

Milton Creek contains a rich variety of important, largely wetland habitats, including salt marshes, reed beds and mudflats (Priority Habitats in the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan). The stretch of the Creek from the Swale to Sittingbourne Mill is a designated Local Wildlife Site, reflecting its role as a corridor of wetlands running into the Swale. The Creek drains directly to The Swale National Nature Reserve – mainly a grazing marsh with significant wintering populations of waterfowl, and a SPA and Ramsar site. The NNR has many rare plants, butterflies and moths. A variety of birds breed on the

reserve (including Garganey, Marsh Harrier, Avocet and Short-eared Owl) - the area is also a hunting ground for Barn Owl and Montagu's Harrier. Milton Creek is a gateway to this important landscape, and will be a major draw for audiences interested in nature, wildlife and the environment.

Activities at Milton Creek will have to strike a difficult balance between enabling local people to have better access to nature and wildlife while limiting their impact on local wildlife and ecology. The best means of informing visitors about their responsibilities is to develop learning opportunities on-site, delivered by experts (volunteer and professional).

Events and activities should be concentrated in the north of the Park. Access to the more environmentally sensitive areas on the east side of the Creek may be limited and linked to the educational programmes mentioned above.

Recreation and healthy lifestyles

The population of Sittingbourne has above average levels of smoking and obesity and has life expectancy levels that are below average. The 2007 Public Health Profile estimates that one in four adults in Swale are obese.

Milton Creek is an ideal location to promote sports, exercise and healthy lifestyles. Health walks can be run on site and there are opportunities to combine landscape-based volunteering with exercise - based on the precedent established by BTCV's Green Gym.

Schools and young people

This is a critical audience that needs to be prioritised. This will be achieved

through the maximisation of appropriate learning opportunities, both curriculum-linked and informal. In addition there should be adequate provision for NEETs, who are a frequently neglected and under-engaged group. Volunteering and vocationally orientated training will provide valuable experience to further their employability.

There is a huge amount of scope to build in curriculum links within activities that promote the Creek. These could be developed through a learning pack offered to local schools, which would include the following themes:

Archaeology

Interpreting the Roman burial ground would fit well for Primary schools in the study of Romans. This could also include talks by volunteers for outreach work in schools, talking about the site and the process of excavation.

Primary KS2 curriculum links:

Pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through a local history study.

- Aspects in the local area that have changed: education; population movement; houses and housing; religious practices; treatment of the poor and care of the sick; law and order; sport and leisure.
- Effects of national events or developments: prehistoric settlers; the building of a castle or the development of a town; the Civil War; the plague or a cholera epidemic; the settlement of people from different cultures in the area.

Art and Design

This has the most potential for involving schools in the interpretation of the landscape. Working with an artist is an opportunity for learners to become engaged with their local environment in creative ways.

Primary KS2 curriculum links

Pupils should be taught to:

- record from experience and imagination
- select and record from firsthand observation
- explore ideas for different purposes.

Pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through:

- exploring a range of starting points for practical work - for example, themselves, their experiences, images, stories, drama, music, natural and made objects and environments.

Secondary KS3 curriculum links

Pupils should be able to:

- develop ideas and intentions by working from first-hand observation, experience, inspiration, imagination and other sources
- investigate how to express and realise ideas using formal elements and the qualities of a range of media.

Local history

Investigating the heritage of the area is also an area where schools could become actively engaged. Collecting oral histories and testimonies of local residents is one area where learners could develop skills of interviewing, recording and editing which could be included within the interpretation design.

This also has the potential for peer-to-peer work where older learners could work collaboratively with younger ones. For example, secondary schools could work with their cluster primary schools on a collaborative project.

Primary KS2 curriculum links:

Pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through a local history study.

Secondary KS3 curriculum links:

Pupils should be taught to:

- explore the ways in which the past has helped shape identities, shared cultures, values and attitudes today
- investigate aspects of personal, family or local history and how they relate to a broader historical context.

Creativity

The creative curriculum for primary schools is an area where the Milton Creek landscape project could provide a real, relevant and compelling learning experience. This could include creative responses to the Creek that could be performed at festivals and other local events. These may also be included in the interpretation design working with a local musician, storyteller or artist. The creative curriculum is a carefully planned, thematic approach to teaching and learning designed to support learner's natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity. Direct experience is placed at the centre of the curriculum so that teachers draw out and develop learners' capacities in meaningful contexts. Knowledge, skills and understanding are expressed in a range of different media and ways, often making effective use of the creative arts. Schools work

with parents using resources from the school, locality and wider community to create a challenging, distinctive and exciting curriculum.

Sustainability

Schools could work with local environmental organisations and the local sustainability officer to consider issues of sustainability in their school, local and wider community. Projects could include monitoring the wildlife and plants of the local environment for the duration of the project and evaluate the impacts of environmental change. For environmental interaction and sustainable development, the connections between people, the park and the environment could make a popular local case study. This may include the impacts of the local population on the environment, housing and settlement, patterns of migration. There is also the opportunity for fieldwork and out-of-classroom learning, exploring environmental change. This work would also support the National Framework for Sustainable Schools (DCSF 2008) where every school takes an integrated approach to its improvement. It explores sustainable development through its teaching provision and learning (curriculum); in its values and ways of thinking (campus); and in its engagement of local people and partners (community). One particular area for schools to be awarded eco-schools status is the link to local well-being, where schools become models of citizenship within their local areas, enriching their educational mission with activities that improve the environment and quality of life of local people.

Primary KS2 curriculum links

Teaching should ensure that geographical enquiry and skills are used when developing knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes, and environmental change and sustainable development.

Secondary KS3 curriculum links

Environmental interaction and sustainable development would include:

- Understanding that the physical and human dimensions of the environment are interrelated and together influence environmental change.
- Exploring sustainable development and its impact on environmental interaction and climate change.

Audience priorities

The project has the potential to make a difference to many different parts of the local community, and also to bring people to the local area. Consultations have highlighted some key needs and aspirations within the local community. On this basis, the following audiences are identified as priorities for engagement:

Those in deprived areas

North Sittingbourne contains some of the most deprived areas in the South East, many of which are close to Milton Creek - including the Vicarage and Quinton estates in the Milton Regis ward, and the Murston and Kemsley wards. These communities share common problems associated with vandalism, graffiti and drug abuse, a high fear of crime amongst the elderly, poor school performance and an overall lack of primary care services and community facilities. Community groups like Swale CVS and Amicus Horizon are already prioritizing these areas, and this strategy would look to boost social inclusion by involving people from these areas.

Young people, and young people not in employment or training

Consultation participants consistently highlighted the importance of involving schoolchildren and young people. They remarked on the fact that it is often an older demographic who get involved with community activities, and achieving a cross-generational take-up will be essential to engage the broadest range of the local populace.

While schools and colleges were frequently mentioned, the NEETs (young people not in employment, education or training) are often a neglected audience. By maximizing volunteer involvement training opportunities within the strategy, it is hoped that these events could become an important first step back towards employment or further education.

Those suffering from, or at risk from poor health

Nearly a fifth of the population in Kent consider themselves to have a long-term or limiting illness. Swale has the highest levels of obesity in the county, and the second highest number of smokers.

Activities have been developed to offer structured opportunities to get those of all levels of fitness and mobility using Milton Creek to improve their health – by linking to established schemes like Natural England's Walking for Health and BTCV's Green Gym.

Unemployed people

Unemployment in Sittingbourne now stands at some 3%. While this is the lowest figure in ten years, there is still a lack of employment opportunities in Milton Regis, Murston and Kemsley wards that surround the Creek.

Creating volunteering and learning opportunities will be an effective way for unemployed people at Milton Creek to broaden their skill set, build their confidence and increase their employability in an increasingly competitive job market.

BME groups

Sittingbourne has relatively few residents from BME backgrounds compared to other areas. Consequently there is a danger that their needs could be ignored, particularly when Sittingbourne's population becomes more diverse as regeneration plans are implemented. Swale Arts Forum highlighted the relevance of the Romany / traveller community, since they formerly had a site in the Milton Creek area. Engaging them through community groups such as Diversity House, using events to allow them to tell their stories and building links to the wider community would be an important way of both linking to the past history of the site and creating community cohesion.

These audiences matter because:

- They can directly contribute to the ongoing enhancement of Milton Creek in a range of ways
- They are the future audiences for the site
- Some come from backgrounds where there is little access to greenspace, arts and heritage - offering opportunities to get involved is a key step in widening participation
- They are under-represented audiences for the arts, heritage, conservation and other activities – and as such are priorities for engagement
- They can develop skills that can help to enhance their careers and lives.

5. BARRIERS TO INVOLVING PEOPLE

Lack of communication

Respondents consulted so far have expressed some concern about the lack of information available on the project. While there have been public consultations and presentations, there was previously little information available on, for example, the SBC web site. This is no doubt due to the speed with which the project has to be delivered. More recently good communication links have been established between the project team and the Friends' chairperson / managing committee. This relationship could be formalised to include regular meetings to brief and update the Friends group about the project's progression, and the chairperson could raise any issues and questions on behalf of the Friend's group.

Internal communication within SBC is also critical. Many SBC staff not directly involved in the project delivery may be crucial to delivering community events e.g. Arts, Heritage, Community

Involvement and diversity

It is envisaged that these relevant SBC staff will take on some responsibility for helping commission, administer and deliver events in partnership with community groups, businesses and volunteers. Keeping them in the loop and apprised about project developments is essential.

Feelings of apathy and disempowerment

Another potential barrier is a feeling of apathy amongst the public, which has at its root a sense of community disempowerment. While SBC has been commended for its vision for future regeneration, some respondents have been pessimistic about the possibility of actual delivery. This is no doubt

compounded by the economic climate, which has cast doubt on the feasibility of the new town centre and housing plans. In addition, some respondents have felt that their views have not been taken into account in drawing up the plans.

The promotion of Milton Creek amongst the local community is therefore highly important, as funding has been secured and it represents a 'good news' story for the future of Sittingbourne. The creation of an organizational structure like a Friends group will empower the local community to organize and deliver events themselves, connecting them with the new landscape and creating a sense of ownership.



6. WHAT IS CURRENTLY ON OFFER TO THE PUBLIC

Up until now there have been considerable barriers to access, with Milton Creek having a peripheral role in the lives of local people. Milton Creek Country Park is the only truly accessible part of the Creek. The Friends of Church Marshes Country Park has been the main group running community events. In association with Groundwork, tree planting days and fêtes have been organised by the Friends group. However, their ability to deliver events and involve the community has been hampered by two main factors: the ongoing construction work on site, which has made planning events difficult; and the lack of structured support and access to funding.

The group has relied on a core of committed members, and have organised successful events despite the obstacles. A recent nature walk attracted good numbers despite bad weather. This shows the great potential for community involvement for the project, which can be realised with a clear vision and committed support for engagement.

SBC has begun the process to support and develop the potential of the Friends group. This ongoing work will enable the group to play a central role in delivering events.



7. HOW DO POTENTIAL AUDIENCES VALUE THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

The community engagement strategy for Milton Creek has been developed through consultation with key stakeholders. Barker Langham have held interviews and workshops with stakeholders about engagement activities. The following topics have been raised during discussion:

Outdoor cinema screening

The lack of cinema facilities in Sittingbourne has been highlighted in a recent survey of cultural provision in Swale. Given its potential to attract local audiences, SBC's arts team suggested an outdoor film screening at Milton Creek.

Education / events space

Many respondents expressed concern that there was no indoor events space in the plans for Milton Creek. Heritage groups emphasised the need for a replacement for the Dolphin Barge Museum. More generally, many consultees felt the viability of delivering programmed activities was jeopardised by the lack of an events space. Without it events would be concentrated in the summer months, dependent on good weather, and time-limited (with no access to refreshment and toilet facilities). It was suggested by KWT that a simple shelter using low cost sustainable materials could be constructed with little expense, possibly with volunteer help. It is clear that there is a pressing need for some kind of flexible space within the Park. One stopgap solution would be to build a more formal arrangement with Holy Trinity Hall, using their hall as a regular venue for events.

Friends Group

Stakeholders including RSPB and Kent Wildlife Trust have had experience of

working with Friends groups on other environmental sites and have found them to be a good means of involving local people – generating ideas for activities, and committing volunteer time to their implementation.

Consultees raised two related points regarding the organisational structure of the Friends group. Representatives of groups (including RSPB, KWT, SKLR) made the point that there needs to be clear differentiation between the interests of those involved in the Stakeholders Forum and the Friends group membership. Stakeholders and specialist organizations will be important but they suggested that they should be taking an advisory role, with the impetus and ideas coming from a committed community-based Friends group.

At the same time, others expressed doubt that the community members would provide the necessary commitment for such an approach – citing general feelings of apathy and disempowerment as barriers. On a more constructive note, many felt that the initial ideas and leadership for a Friends group would need to come from outside if it were to succeed. The Swale CVS have expressed their interest in being involved in this process. Community development workers from Swale CVS would be able to support and lead the Friends Group in its early stages, with the intention to inspire and empower members of the community to take on an organizational and leadership role themselves.

Milton Creek walks and education events

Consultees were highly positive about the capacity for these events to involve people, especially if they were delivered in an informal and fun way. Local heritage and environmental organizations (including Sittingbourne and Kemsley

Light Railway, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust) are very willing to help deliver these events. They would be able to provide the expert knowledge and training needed to deliver educational activities. The Dolphin Barge Museum suggested that they could lead boat-based tours along the Creek. This would have to be a small craft, as the Creek cannot be dredged for environmental reasons. Swale CVS have offered their help and would be an important partner in sourcing and coordinating volunteer guides and group leaders.

Monitoring wildlife

Kent Wildlife Trust has successfully run wildlife monitoring at nearby sites, and have found them to be a good way of engaging people with local wildlife and biodiversity. Kent Wildlife Trust and RSPB are both willing to be involved in helping coordinate these activities.

Ideas and activities for a Milton Creek festival

Respondents were very enthusiastic about the possibilities of an arts festival. Swale Arts Forum highlighted the lack of arts facilities and events in Sittingbourne compared to neighbouring areas. There is a clear need to develop opportunities for both artists and arts audiences, and a Milton Creek festival is one important way of achieving this.

Since 2007 Diversity House has been running 'Swale – A Celebration of Cultures', a showcase of art, music and performance across cultures in Sittingbourne. Their audience evaluation found that a majority of respondents felt that further festivals and events would help achieve a greater sense of community.

Photography project

Arts stakeholders emphasized the immediacy and accessibility of photography as a way of connecting all audiences both with art and the landscape of the Creek.

Community exhibition

Sittingbourne Library has offered the use of their foyer space as a possible venue for any displays.

Interpretation

Heritage groups were happy to contribute their knowledge to interpretive provision at Milton Creek. Swale Arts Forum is generally very optimistic about Art at the Centre's capacity to develop arts provision in Sittingbourne. Other respondents preferred more tangible, sculptural public art approaches to more conceptual, 'soft' landscape proposals. The majority were enthusiastic about Milton Creek becoming a venue for art, and stressed community involvement in artworks – particularly if this lead to tangible results. For example, Swale CVS suggested that young people could be involved in the design of works placed at the interpretation points along the Creek.

The local schools consulted were very interested in creative collaborations linked to current or future art interpretation, and are open to ideas and suggestions from an appointed artist. Fulston Manor School would like to involve their Sixth form vocational students, who have developed display boards before in Lynsted Cherry Orchard. Many of the schools have not used the local environment in any meaningful way before, and this would provide a sustainable way of working in partnership with the local community.

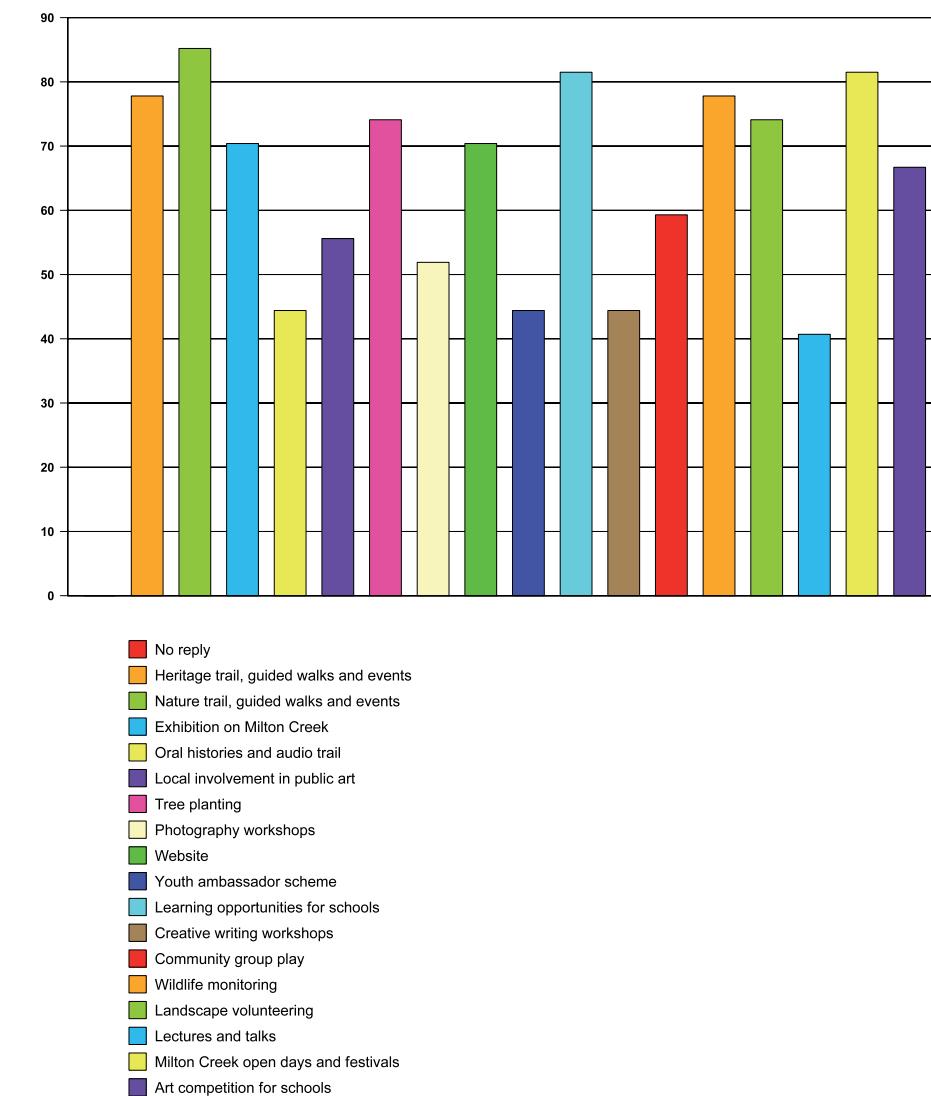
Community event – 27 February

There was strong support for a wide range of activities at the February consultation. Nature Trails, Learning Opportunities for Schools and Milton Creek Open Days and Festivals came out as the most popular potential activities. Of the least popular, Lectures and Talks, an Audio Trail, Youth Ambassador Schemes and Creative Writing Workshops received less than 50% support. A high level of respondents also suggested they would be interested in volunteering for such activities. On the day, other comments related to activities included:

- Barbeque
- Heritage events linked to SKLR
- Industrial and social history events
- A recycling roadshow
- Community involvement in art and landscape design
- Link up with NHS initiatives around walking to health

Summary of survey responses at Community Event, 27 February 2010

What kind of activities would you like to see developed?



8. BUILDING ON GOOD PRACTICE

The aims for Milton Creek are grounded in best practice approaches to improving community access and involvement, as outlined in the objectives for the Swale Green Grid, Green Cluster Studies and other strategic frameworks. Related work in the borough provides excellent foundation for future community involvement. For example, the Art at the Centre Phase II programme in Swale was praised in its evaluation for communicating the qualities and identity of the area and increasing the number of people involved in arts activities.

In developing the strategy for community engagement we have focused on developing effective approaches to the following areas:

- Engagement of target audiences through creative activities
- Use of partnerships to deliver audience development
- Training volunteers to reach audiences
- Learning and participation
- Interpretation.

We have looked at park and landscape comparators, particularly newly created parks with a community and arts focus. During consultations we asked participants to talk about the places they felt exemplified best practice in these areas, which we have detailed below.

Comparator - Mile End Park

Mile End Park is a new park has been created from land formerly used for housing and industrial buildings, and is separated by roads, railways and waterways. The Park is owned by a charitable trust with the Friends of Mile End Park representing the interests of park users. Dialogue with park users

through the Friends of Mile End Park is continuing, and a number of forums (including an Arts Forum) meet regularly. Key features include the Ecology Park with a new lake, wind turbine, and pavilion. The Lea River Trust uses the opportunities provided by the Ecology Park to offer a range of environmental educational activity for schools. Linked to the Ecology Park, the Arts Park includes a Pavilion for exhibitions and an "art mound" which has been used to showcase outdoor art.

Comparator - Gunpowder Park, Waltham Abbey

Gunpowder Park is a new outdoor space located within the Lee Valley Regional Park dedicated to arts and the environment. The park has a significant heritage in its former role as a Royal Ordnance site. The land was regenerated and transformed over 100 years after it closed. As well as providing essential green space to the new communities in the area, the site is host to a unique and innovative programme of arts based events and research. Site-specific installations and activities exploring the arts and the environment occur throughout the year and Gunpowder Park is becoming an important destination for everyone interested in open space and art. Schools and artists of national significance are now using the site for various projects.

9. OUR AIMS FOR INVOLVING PEOPLE IN THE PROJECT

Major development projects

An indoor education and events space has been identified as a priority development to attract an audience to the Creek. This would be a small venue offering a flexible space for volunteering, learning, local heritage interpretation and visitor services.

One possible venue for this is the heritage visitor centre included in the Sittingbourne Masterplan. This would be ideal if delivered in the near future – however, given the current economic situation this seems to be more of a long-term goal. Furthermore, feedback from focus groups emphasised that the ability to deliver on-site activities would be limited by the lack of a dedicated indoor space in the park. The proposed location for the heritage centre at the head of the Creek is at the very edge of the new linear park and some distance from the Milton Creek Country Park section.

We would therefore recommend considering building a low-cost dedicated education space. We have not included this proposal in the Action Plan, as this is beyond the remit of an engagement activity. However, if the design was kept simple (a timber pavilion for example) an education space could be a viable focus for a major bid under the HLF Heritage Grants programme.

Engagement projects

Some activities could feed into a wider communications strategy – for example, developing content for the Milton Creek website and newsletter. Others will be events that will take place on-site, bringing the community into contact with the landscape as it develops, and helping them to understand its historic, cultural and environmental significance. These would help develop

momentum, and build towards a major launch event – this could take the form of community-based arts festival. This initial event could become a regular annual festival. One emphasis for activities will be to link the art-based interpretation approach to the aims of Art at the Centre. This could further the aspirations for Milton Creek to become a major venue for arts activity and engagement. Some events could potentially be delivered in collaboration with commissioned artists, for example Peter Liversidge. The engagement activities are set out in an activity plan at the end of this report, but will focus on the following key areas. Local involvement in the future management of the site and the delivery of events will be developed through the Friends group, with continuing input from existing stakeholders in an advisory and supporting role.

Activities that communicate the project vision, and the cultural, historical and natural significance of the site through:

- Guided walks
- Talks to schools and other groups
- Community-based conservation work
- Formal and informal learning opportunities
- Developing content for website and newsletter
- Wider training opportunities.

Activities that engage audiences in the care, maintenance and promotion of Milton Creek through volunteering in the following areas:

- Conservation and landscape work
- Looking after web resources
- Leading guided walks
- Giving talks

- Helping with events
- Working with schools
- Other outreach.

Activities that give audiences a sense of connection with the site and an opportunity for creative expression:

- The creation of performances as a creative response to the site
- Researching and collaborating with artists in developing interpretation and public art
- Ensuring that people who cannot access the site have an alternative means of finding out about it through web media or outreach, and promoting this access via the right networks.

Working with partners to reach under-engaged audiences such as:

- Young people
- BME groups
- Unemployed people
- People from deprived areas
- Disability groups
- Older people
- Those affected by health issues.

10. HOW DOES THE PROJECT MEET AIMS FOR LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

The benchmark targets for Parklands funding include the delivery of 100 learning opportunities and engagement of 250 volunteers before March 2011. The engagement strategy will help deliver both these targets through the activities and events programme:

- School learning through a programme for KS1 and KS2
- Working with young people to develop their confidence and skills
- Advanced training for volunteers to deliver walks and talks.

Participation and volunteering

The delivery of the activities recommended by this strategy will engage many more people than present with the site. The essential role of volunteers in the Friends group and activities will see more people involved in the decision-making process about Milton Creek. It should be emphasized that building community involvement and a volunteer base are not one-off quick wins, and will require a sustained commitment on the part of Swale Borough Council.

The Friends of Milton Creek is a committed group that will form the nucleus for wider community involvement. An essential step has been the working relationship established between the SBC project team and the Friends group. Facilitating links with partner organizations would also assist the Friends of Milton Creek to effectively deliver activities.

Learning

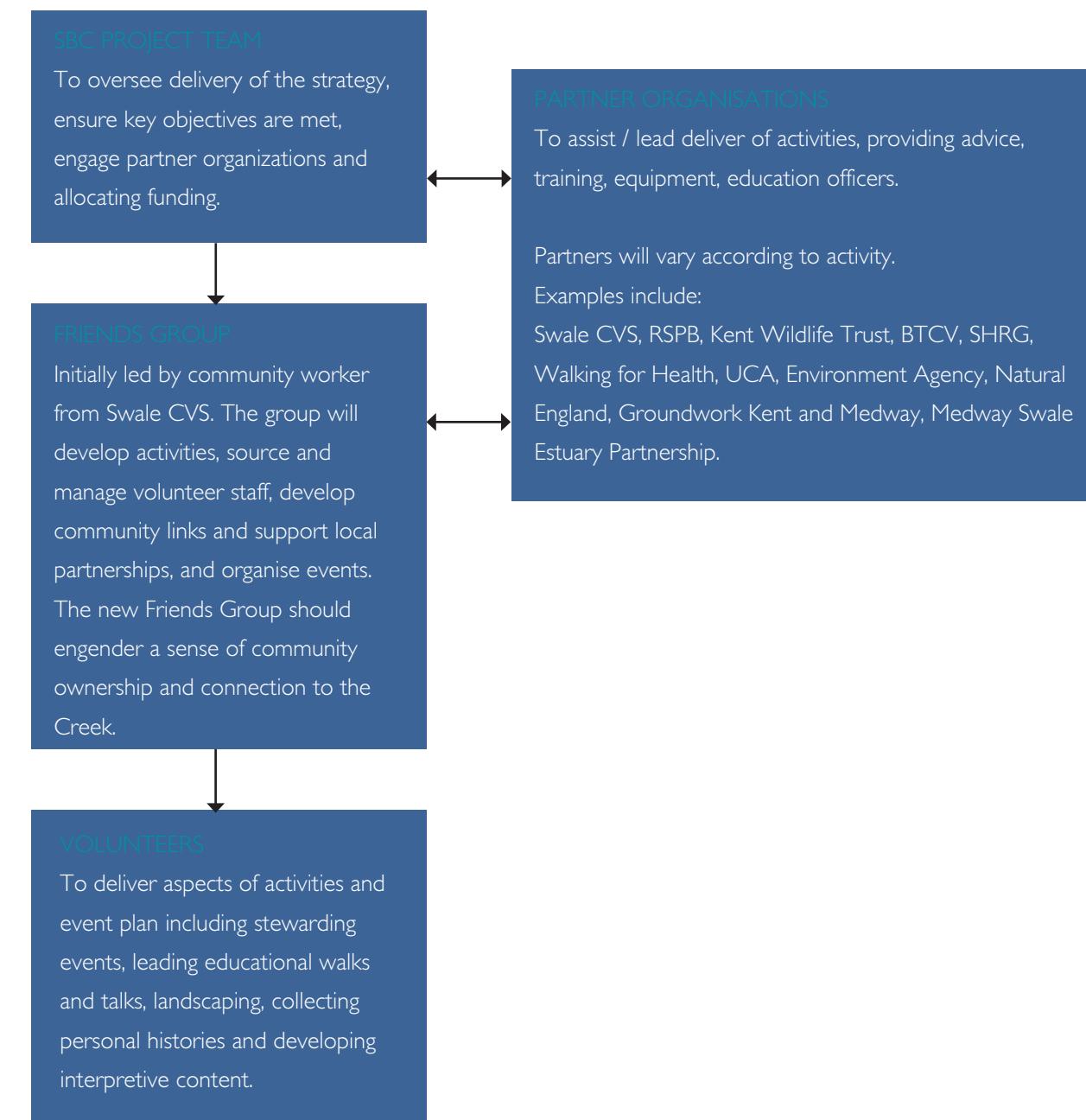
Planned activities have learning and participation at their heart, and are shown in detail in the Activity Plan. The site has great potential for learning – both through informal education and structured training and volunteering opportunities. In outline, the following learning opportunities are proposed:

- Learning resources provided on the web and/or in printed form
- Lifelong learning through education and training in conservation, arts and heritage

III. STRUCTURE CHART FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES IN THE PROJECT

This chart outlines the structure for delivery of the activities outlined in the report.

At the same time, our consultation found that respondents felt that more structured support from SBC would enable the current Friends group to increase their prominence and promote the new park. The proposed management structure would build on the working relationship established between SBC and the Friends group, and ensure that a Friends group benefits from a structured link with the project team.



12. MEASURING SUCCESS AND EVALUATION

We intend to involve more people overall while increasing our future audience's level of understanding and engagement. Evaluation targets are necessary preconditions for most external funders, and are therefore an essential part of any future funding application.

By incorporating formative and summative evaluation within the delivery of activities SBC can review how successful each activity was in delivering project aims. This can be achieved by recording a number of factors, including:

- Overall numbers of people
- Demographic information from users
- Audience take-up and awareness
- Numbers of activities delivered
- Feedback from users through surveys – evaluation of learning outcomes from teachers and event leaders, participant satisfaction questionnaires
- Regular consultation through volunteers and Friends group.

13. ENSURING LONG-TERM BENEFITS

A principle goal for Milton Creek has to be the delivery of the learning and volunteering targets as a requirement of HCA Parklands funding. However, there is no short cut to community engagement, and we have taken a long-term view in developing this strategy. External funding bodies frequently require evidence of a sustainable commitment to community involvement, and this has been a main focus of our approach.

There are many ways in which long-term benefits can be ensured, including:

- The activity plan takes a long-term approach up to launch and beyond
- On-going monitoring and evaluating that will provide feedback on approach
- Ensure SBC staff commitment beyond launch date as the project is a key community resource
- Many activities that can be delivered as part of the project will continue such as guided walks, talks etc.
- Volunteer numbers and users will be sustained by long-term information provision and continuing communications from SBC.

14. FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND SHARING LESSONS

Through effective delivery of this strategy SBC will gain:

- A partner network with specialist expertise drawn from the Stakeholder Forum and beyond
- A pool of volunteers drawn from the local community and new audiences
- Trained volunteers with an increased skill set
- A programme of activities reaching out to different sectors of the community, developing new audiences
- Increased community involvement and understanding of the project
- Working relationship with local groups
- Increased local, regional and national awareness through media (website, newsletters, events, schools and outreach)
- Greater community participation and social inclusion
- A raised profile with other groups, bodies and agencies
- Increased knowledge, with ability to advise and share best practice.

Engagement can be developed on an on-going basis through:

- Building on the foundations of the first activities delivered
- Sharing best practice and learning from partner organisations
- Continuing and developing work with schools, community groups and partners
- Developing our programme of activities to meet demand
- Maintaining and updating the Milton Creek website, regular newsletters and communication
- Supporting and expanding our volunteer base and their skill set.

Lessons learnt through the project can be shared by:

- Working with the Friends group and volunteer base in an inclusive and participatory way
- Linking with the work of other strategic initiatives – Art at the Centre, Artlands programme
- Reviewing the project regularly and gathering feedback information
- Providing articles for local newsletters, media and partner newsletters
- Keeping the website up to date with regular news and content updates
- Holding informal feedback meetings with local community
- Training the volunteer team to act as ambassadors for the project
- Appraising our volunteers and keeping them informed of project progress.

15. THE ACTIVITY PLAN TABLE

Please see the following tables (page 28 onwards), which cover in detail the plan of activities. This includes projected volunteer and learning opportunities and cost estimates for each activity. The activity plan has been divided into three tables, based on the timeframe of delivery:

- Short-term – activities that could be delivered during Phase II construction, helping meet HCA benchmarks
- Medium-term – activities that could be delivered during Phase III construction
- Long-term – activities that will take place after the project has been completed and opened to the public.

For the purposes of the Plan, the main principle used for estimating volunteer and learning opportunities has been – number of sessions/events p/a multiplied by number of volunteering/learning opportunities per session/event. For example, an activity that has 5 sessions with 10 volunteering places per session would have 50 volunteering opportunities. The two main exceptions to this principle are: structured programmes that will have the same participants attending all sessions; and learning opportunities generated through media-based activities, e.g. a learning pack or trail leaflet, where an estimate has been made about the projected audience take-up.

16. ACTIVITIES BUDGET

The design team initially discussed a sum of c. £30,000 from the project budget to deliver community engagement events and activities. However, there is no available funding for delivery from Year 3 project funds, apart from delivering a park opening event.

As such, it will be likely that SBC will need to source funding externally to deliver the strategy. We have developed the activity plan to meet priorities for funders. Many are suitable for Heritage Lottery Funding. Art-based activities could be funded through the forthcoming Artlands North Kent Programme if considered appropriate. Furthermore, the format of this report is designed to ensure that it could be used with modification for a funding application. The Heritage Lottery Fund operates two schemes that are relevant to Milton Creek: the Your Heritage programme for grants up to £50,000; and the Heritage Grants programme for grants for £50,000 and above.

The approach taken to an HLF application depends on the objectives that SBC hopes to achieve with this Strategy.

A priority will be delivering the volunteer and learning opportunities required by HCA Parklands funding. These opportunities need to be delivered before March 2011. SBC should establish whether there is adequate funding for a programme of activities during Phase II that can fulfil this requirement.

- If external funding is needed to deliver Phase II learning and volunteer opportunities, then a quick-win source of funding will be needed – in the case of the HLF, this would be under the Your Heritage programme.
- If however funding for these Phase II projects can be sourced internally or through HCA, then a more long-term, strategic approach to sourcing

external funding can be taken: activities delivered in 2011 onwards could be worked into a major application to the HLF either under the Your Heritage or Heritage Grants programmes.

HLF funding needed for Phase II - recommendations

If funding for engagement activities during Phase II cannot be sourced internally or from HCA, we emphasise the need to secure external funding for this as a matter of urgency,

- An application to the HLF Your Heritage programme to fund a selection of activities, to be delivered in 2010-2011 with a combined budget of up to £50,000. Your Heritage is a rolling programme with no deadline for applications, and decisions are made within 10 weeks of HLF receiving a complete application.

HLF funding needed for Phase III, park launch and beyond - recommendations

If an initial programme of activities can be funded internally, then we would recommend considering an HLF bid for post-2011 activities.

- An HLF application to fund long-term projects either through the Your Heritage or Heritage Grants programme. This could include activities planned in the immediate run-up to the park's opening in 2012 and into its working life. Heritage Grants bids are in two stages, both of which are competitive (the process is competitive in both rounds).

APPENDIX I – POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

'Ambitions for Swale' – Swale's Sustainable Community Strategy

2009 - 2026

Swale's Sustainable Communities Strategy aims "to transform Swale's economic, social and environmental prospects, so that it is one of the best places in Britain in which to live, work, learn and invest".

Community engagement activities will be able to contribute to the following specific objectives for Sittingbourne:

- ST1: Expand and enhance Sittingbourne town centre, within the context of the overall master plan, linking the town with Milton Creek and providing an enhanced range of public, commercial, cultural and voluntary services
- ST2: Increasing the choice of learning opportunities at all levels for young people and adult learners
- ST4: Investing in existing communities, especially in Murston, Milton Regis and Kemsley in northern Sittingbourne, to ensure that they benefit from the regeneration of the town centre and partners' focus on the strategic themes in this Community Strategy
- ST5: Maximising the town's natural and built environment, making links between the town, the Swale and the countryside, and developing its identity and cultural offer.

Art at the Centre Swale

Community engagement for Milton Creek will be aligned to the aims of Art at the Centre. The key principles informing and underpinning the work of Art at the Centre and this project at Milton Creek are to:

- To draw out and enhance the existing qualities, heritage and identity of the area
- To increase the number of people participating in the arts
- To stimulate involvement and engagement of the local communities in the regeneration process
- To support local artists' initiatives to facilitate their collective presence as a creative industry
- To influence the design of the public realm
- To develop an exemplary model of how art can become an integral part of the regeneration process.

A recent Arts Council application for the next stage of Art at the Centre has

been successful - this will fund three further art projects at Milton Creek. The events and activities recommended by this strategy therefore need to further these strategic aims, particularly in terms of increasing arts participation.

Artlands

A public art strategy for all the Parklands projects in Kent is being produced by UP Projects, entitled Artlands. This should form a common framework for commissioning art across the Parklands projects.

The Milton Creek Gateway Landscape delivery schedule is in advance of the other Parklands projects in Kent. The art-related aspects of this community engagement strategy must therefore link to the objectives and methodology of Artlands to ensure a joined-up approach across the Parklands projects. This will also ensure a smooth transition as Artlands is implemented, ensuring that community engagement activities complement and integrate with the Artlands ethos.

There are four aspects to the Artlands vision: framing North Kent's identity, high quality Programme of contemporary art in the public realm, creating connections, and encouraging innovation. The theme of 'Framing North Kent's Identity' is particularly relevant to this strategy. This thread will emphasise and respond to the unique qualities and characteristics of the area:

- Physical Landscape - marshes, creeks, downs, coastal paths, estuaries that will stimulate ecological/environmental themes
- Heritage - written and documented history, anecdotal memories, oral histories and folklore
- People - individuals, communities; commonalities and differences.

The art-based interpretation scheme draws on all of the above themes. In addition, the community engagement activities presented below will link well with the suggested theme and could intersect with commissioning further artworks under the Artlands scheme. Delivery of the community engagement strategy should therefore be carried out in close consultation with the Artlands team as they are appointed.

Cultural Framework and Toolkit for Thames Gateway North Kent

The Cultural Framework and Toolkit is a pilot for cultural planning in Growth

Areas such as the Thames Gateway. It has been developed as collaboration between the South East's cultural agencies, DCLG and DCMS. The Toolkit outlines the key priorities for cultural development in the Thames Gateway North Kent until 2016, identified and agreed by the Toolkit's stakeholders. In summary, the priorities are to:

- Build capacity within the existing cultural sector in the areas of leadership, skills, audience development, and income generation and funding
- Improve, refurbish and expand existing cultural facilities and activities to meet the demands of a growing and diversifying population, contemporary quality standards, and contemporary models for service delivery
- Ensure full access to relevant facilities and activities at new street / new neighbourhood level
- Ensure facilities and activities at local district / borough / sub-regional level meet modern expectations for attractive and vibrant cities and towns.

The delivery of community engagement activities for Milton Creek will further the aim to develop leadership through training and volunteering, skills through formal and informal learning opportunities, and develop audiences for arts and heritage.

The provision of an events area near the Holy Trinity Church will expand the facilities available for outdoor cultural provision, including festivals, performance, music and other activities. However, the development of some kind of flexible indoor space would further extend the possibilities at Milton Creek, allowing a wider spectrum of activities to take place regardless of weather and seasonal restrictions.

Developing Sittingbourne's Cultural Infrastructure – A Feasibility Study

DPA and FEI Consulting were commissioned to complete a study of how Sittingbourne could develop its cultural facilities. Based on a needs assessment the report recommended four new facilities:

- Town Centre Cinema
- Sittingbourne Milton Creek Heritage Centre
- Civic Square
- Sittingbourne Civic Hall Arts Centre

The Culture Study recommended that a new Heritage Centre be built at the head of Milton Creek (possibly on Lloyds Quay). The project is intended to bring together all the town's existing heritage organisations - Dolphin Barge Museum, Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) and the Sittingbourne Heritage Museum.

Sittingbourne Milton Creek Heritage Centre will aim to "showcase the town's industrial and social heritage and the ongoing regeneration of the Creek by acting as a visitor portal to the Milton Creek Gateway Landscape Project." The four options have been approved by Council Members, a demonstration of SBC's commitment to developing Sittingbourne's cultural infrastructure. In addition, the Heritage Centre is arguably the most achievable of the four options, with a relatively modest £700,000 capital cost and a projected income that would more than cover running costs. It should be noted that some respondents raised questions during Barker Langham's consultation for this strategy. The main criticism was its location – by being situated at the head of the Creek, it is some distance from the 'heart' of the park landscape centred on the extended Milton Creek Country Park. While comment on the Sittingbourne Masterplan is outside the remit of this study, this is a valid point with regard to delivery of on-site activities. The Sittingbourne Masterplan, and therefore the heritage centre, may take a number of years before it is fully implemented. There is therefore a case to be made for a small and comparatively inexpensive indoor education space in advance of the heritage centre's construction.

Sittingbourne Town Centre and Milton Creek Supplementary Planning Document (Consultation Draft, March 2009)

The SPD sets out the Masterplan for Milton Creek and the Town Centre as a whole. The 'Paper Trail' network of landscape and public spaces is relevant to the engagement strategy, a public space concept that draws upon the historic legacy of paper-making and the use of the creek. This network will run along the Creek, linking with the Milton Creek Country Park and out to Kemsley, enhancing the Saxon Shore Way as a leisure and recreation opportunity for all. At the southern end of the Milton Creek area the Paper Trail will continue into the town via the new bridge linking with the railway station and new station square. This network of public spaces could be utilised in the

development of engagement activities. For example, the community could be involved with developing public art along the Paper Trail and the trail network could be used as the basis for guided walks or venues for community events.

Swale Borough Local Plan 2008

The Local Plan includes an Area Action Plan for the land around Milton Creek. The area has been allocated for a mixed-use development to include new homes, retail and leisure developments. New infrastructure is being created to support this development, including the Milton Creek Gateway Landscape. Engagement activities have a role in helping deliver paragraph 5.88: "to enhance both the existing tourist attractions and to 'celebrate' the area's association with the creek and its barge and brick building heritage... through the design of the development, through public art and by the provision of additional tourist attractions."

Swale Green Grid Strategy

The Green Grid Strategy for Swale defines the wider vision for the network of green spaces in the borough, linking to the national agenda for Thames Gateway parklands, Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway, and the regeneration plans for Swale. The delivery of a community engagement strategy will help deliver wider strategic aims defined by the Swale Green Grid, including:

- Promoting health and well-being by encouraging active exercise and opportunities for contact with nature
- Enhancing recreation and amenity, with more opportunities for high-quality formal and informal recreation
- Encouraging active communities with a strong community spirit which will advocate ongoing investment in their local landscape
- Enhancing education, training and life-long learning, using the local landscape as a learning asset which provides a wealth of cultural, social historical and natural heritage
- Enhancing local cultural heritage by managing the cultural heritage resource and using it to help develop a sense of place and sense of identity.

APPENDIX 2 – POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

As at 2001 census, Swale had a population of 122,801. The borough has a growing population, with its population increasing by almost 17% from 1981-2006 (compared with an increase of just over 7% nationally). This trend is predicted to continue with an increase from 2004-2029 of just under 25%.

In accordance with national trends, the greatest increase will be among older residents. Sittingbourne has a relatively young population, particularly in the 0-15 age group. The borough is less diverse than the national average, and ethnic minorities make up less than 4% of the population in the 2001 census. Diversity is increasing as a result of migration and population growth.

Education

Levels of educational attainment among Swale's working age population are much lower than both the national and regional averages. In 2007, over 19% of working age people within the Borough had no qualifications, compared with less than 10% across the South East, and the proportion with qualifications at NVQ4 and above was a over a third lower than elsewhere in the region.

Economy

Economic inactivity and working age benefit claimants are higher than both the regional and national average. 69% of the working population are economically active whilst 6% are unemployed. Workplace earnings are comparatively low.

Economic growth has been held back by the borough's relatively low learning and skills performance. Employment in manufacturing shrank by 30% between 1997 and 2007, emphasising the need to diversify Swale's economic base. There was a 61% growth in tourism employment between 1997 and 2007, showing the importance of this sector.

Health and Deprivation

Some health indicators in Swale are among the worst in Kent: for instance, the proportion of adults who are obese is the highest of any district in Kent; the proportion who smoke is the second highest. Sittingbourne has above average levels of smoking and obesity and has life expectancy levels that are

below average. Based on the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Swale is the second most deprived district in Kent. 15 neighbourhoods in Swale fall into the 20% most deprived nationally. Figures relating to skills and training are poor: 32 neighbourhoods in Swale are in the 20% most skills deprived in England, the majority concentrated on Sheppey and in Sittingbourne.

North Sittingbourne contains some of the most deprived areas in the South East. Milton Regis and Kemsley contain areas in the 20% most deprived in England, and Murston has an area in the 10% most deprived.

APPENDIX 3 – CONSULTEE LIST

Colin Barnard,	Swale Arts Forum
Mary Blackwell,	Kent Wildlife Trust
Claire Connor,	Westlands School
Joyce Fuller,	Sittingbourne Society
Catherine Herbert,	Swale Borough Council
Alan Johnson,	RSPB
Christine Lock,	Diversity House
Puddy Majoyo,	Diversity House
Peter McDonald,	Sea Cadets
Nicole Mollett,	Art at the Centre Swale
Malcolm Moore,	Sittingbourne Society
Peter Morgan,	Sittingbourne Heritage Museum
Bob Newcombe,	Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway
Sioux Peto,	Swale Arts Forum
Anne Pilcher,	Sittingbourne Library
Chris Proctor,	Friends of Milton Creek
Keith Roberts,	Highsted Grammar School
Jenna Smith,	Fulston Manor School
James Walker,	Swale CVS
Julia Watling,	Swale CVS
Clive Reader,	Dolphin Barge Museum
Loreley Tansley,	Sea Cadets
Emma Wilcox,	Kent County Council

APPENDIX 4 – SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 5 – SHORT-TERM ACTIVITY PLAN

Strategic

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Engagement Forum Biannual meetings chaired by relevant members of SBC senior management team. An opportunity for SBC, key stakeholders, Friends group and project partners to discuss project progress and engagement activities.	All local residents	Enhancing communication between project team and local residents, creating sense of ownership	Friends group	0	0	2	2011 onwards	Sufficient community participation, successful delivery	2 meetings a year	Participant numbers, successful delivery
2 Friends Group Developing the current Friends group to engage people in decisions about caring for and promoting Milton Creek.	Membership based on the current Friends of Church Marshes Country park, with more formal support from SBC, links to Stakeholder Forum and other relevant partner organisations,	Building a basis for further community involvement, creating infrastructure to develop and deliver activities	Key stakeholders (identified for each activity)	0	50 ¹	1	2011 onwards	"Overall numbers of people, activities delivered"	A core community group that will develop and deliver activities	Overall numbers of people Numbers of activities delivered Feedback from users
3 Friends Volunteering days Volunteering days defined by the Friends group themselves - 3 full days p/a for landscape maintenance, clearing and other essential activities.	Friends group membership	Building volunteer commitment, enabling local people to contribute to upkeep of the park	Friends group	0	30 ²	0	All	Volunteer numbers, successful delivery	3 volunteering days per year	Volunteer numbers, successful delivery
4 Newsletter The Milton Creek newsletter produced by SBC should have a strong community input, particularly through the Friends group. Community activities could be promoted via the newsletter, and the results of activities (e.g. stories, artworks, oral histories, etc.) could be reproduced.	All local residents	Offers an outlet for community expression, a medium for publicising community events	Friends group	10	10	2 ³	2011 onwards	Sufficient community participation, successful delivery	Newsletter produced regularly (at least quarterly)	Volunteer numbers, successful delivery
5 Notification letters To be sent out a week in advance of any works that will cause disruption.	All local residents	Keeping residents informed about the project	Internal	0	0	2	2011 onwards	Successful delivery	Letters produced and distributed to surrounding community as necessary	Successful delivery
6 Residents meetings Quarterly meetings where Project team can provide updates of project progress, and local residents can comment and raise questions.	All local residents	Enhancing communication between project team and local residents, creating sense of ownership	Friends group	0	0	2	2011 onwards	Sufficient community participation, successful delivery	4 meetings a year	Participant numbers, successful delivery
7 Telephone Hotline Information hotline to go live when construction commences.	All local residents	Enabling local residents to voice their opinions and find out about the project	Internal	0	0	2	2011 onwards	Successful delivery	Dedicated hotline set-up	Successful delivery
8 Your Heritage grant application An Heritage Lottery Fund grant application to fund a number of selected activities.	All local residents	Providing a funding stream that can help deliver selected community events and activities.	Internal, external funding consultant	N/A	N/A	N/A	2011	Successful application	Funding for selected community activities	Successful delivery

¹ 5 meetings p/a with 10 attending per meeting

² 3 sessions p/a with 10 attending per meeting

³ SBC staff producing newsletter

Art-based interpretation links

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Audio-trail (Based on a currently unimplemented Peter Liversidge proposal) Create an audio-trail for Milton Creek - made up of music, oral histories and interviews, poetry, stories, music, ambient nature recordings The trail could be available on CD at cost price or as a downloadable MP3, to be listened to at home or on personal CD/MP3 player while walking through Milton Creek. Each track could be linked to Peter Liversidge's proposed beacon points installed along the Creek	Local older people's groups, care homes etc	Collecting people's memories and feelings about the site, providing an innovative way to interpret Milton Creek and interact with the landscape	Sittingbourne Museum, Sittingbourne Society, Sittingbourne Library, Swale Arts Forum	50	20	3	2011	Numbers of volunteers, Feedback from users	CDs produced MP3s made available for download on website	Overall numbers, feedback
2 Bird boxes (Based on a currently unimplemented Peter Liversidge proposal) School-children to work with an appointed artist to design their own bird boxes and install them on-site	All users - particularly school children, families arts audiences	Getting young people involved with nature conservation and arts activities	RSPB, SBC Arts team, local schools	45 ¹	0	1 ³	2011	Bird boxes produced, Feedback from users	20 birdboxes produced and installed onsite	Successful delivery, feedback
3 Creekside walkways (Currently awaiting detailed design from Peter Liversidge) Possibility of community-based development text/designs based on the Creek's history which is engraved into handrails or steel mesh	All local residents, park users	Creating a unique educational opportunity for local schools, building curriculum links (local history, creativity, art), allowing the community to participate in art	Schools	45 ¹	0	1	2011	Text and design produced, Feedback from users	Text and designs incorporated into walkways from users	Successful delivery, feedback
4 History of barges Researching the histories of the scuttled barges of MC, creating a map, informing the Peter Liversidge proposal for a relief map of sunken barges	Schools and colleges,	Allowing local people to discover their local area, creating a community contribution to the art-based interpretation	Sittingbourne Society, Sittingbourne Museum, Local Studies Library, schools and colleges	45 ¹	0	1	2011	3 barge histories produced, Feedback from participants	Community research incorporated into relief map from participants	Overall numbers, feedback
5 Memorial (Based on a currently unimplemented Peter Liversidge proposal) Using local history resources, schools would research some of the lives of local people who worked on the Creek and produce creative interpretations of their lives, this could then be developed into a Memorial installed at Milton Creek	All local residents, park users	Creating a unique educational opportunity for local schools, building curriculum links (local history, creativity, art), allowing the community to participate in art	Local Studies Library, Sittingbourne Society, local school teachers	45 ¹	32	1 ³	2011	Memorial produced, Feedback from participants	Memorial produced and installed	Successful delivery, feedback
6 Poplar trees Local community would create this artwork and plant the poplar trees - the event should be documented and publicised on the website, newsletter	All local residents, park users	Enabling the community to come together and participate in the creation of an art installation	Friends group, Swale CVS	0	20	5	2011	Numbers of participants, Feedback	Planting event	Overall numbers, feedback
7 Seating wall text Schoolchildren to work with Peter Liversidge and/or stonemason to produce text/designs to engrave on seating	All local residents, park users	Creating a unique educational opportunity for local schools, building curriculum links (local history, creativity, art), allowing the community to participate in art	Schools	45 ¹	0	2 ⁴	2011	Text and design produced, Feedback from users	Text and designs incorporated into seating wall from users	Successful delivery, feedback

¹ Based on 2 secondary classes participating, with an average class size of 22.3 (source: DSCF)² With support from local heritage groups³ Artist / designer⁴ Artist / stone mason

Volunteering

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Annual Milton Creek clean-up team Develop event for this, which could also include training opportunities.	Young people (esp. NEETs), conservation/ environmental audiences	Developing volunteer base, outdoor activity with exercise / health benefits, creating sense of ownership and connection with landscaping	SBC Cleansing Services (Anne Ryman), Friends group, BTCV, Groundwork Team Green, Medway Swale Estuary Partnership	30	30	4	Beginning 2011-2012 (depending on site access)	Event delivered, volunteer satisfaction	Annual event	Volunteer feedback
2 Volunteer educationalists/ambassadors Volunteer educationalists drawn from Friends group, Swale Youth Forum and local schools to advocate and give talks about the Creek- its natural and cultural heritage, its future, and how everyone can get involved.	Schools and colleges, young people, community groups	Development of knowledge about the park, communicating the project to young audiences, learning opportunities linked school curriculum, training young people to become ambassadors to the project	Friends group, Swale CVS, Swale Youth Forum, Amicus Horizon	90 ¹	4+	0	2011 onwards	Recruitment of 3 volunteers, school and group satisfaction	Talks and advocacy events	Feedback from schools and groups through consultation/questionnaire

¹ Based on 4 visits annually, to secondary school classes, with an average class size of 22.3 (source: DSCF)

Events

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Annual Milton Creek day Annual small community-based event with invited guest speaker, taking place prior to launch year to build community interest.	All potential users	Enhancing arts and culture provision in the town, bringing the community together, promoting the park, building momentum towards launch	Friends group	0	25	1	2011 onwards	Event attendance, attendee feedback	Annual open day	Visitor counts, feedback through survey
2 Talks Annual lecture on Milton Creek given by invited guest speaker, supported by programme of talks and workshops given by local groups.	Local residents	Opportunity to communicate the project, generate discussion, create momentum	Possible speakers: representatives of local interest groups - heritage, wildlife; members of the design team; appointed artists creating works for Milton Creek	30	3	1	2011 onwards	Event attendance, attendee feedback	1 guest lecture a year, plus regular talks by local groups over the year	Audience numbers, feedback
3 Tree planting Community tree planting event, social element and incentive - shared meal / drinks.	Local community,	Developing volunteer base, outdoor activity with exercise / health benefits, creating sense of ownership and connection with landscaping	Friends group, BTCV	20	20	20	2011, 2012	15 volunteers per event, volunteer feedback	Annual event until launch	Participant numbers, feedback

Interpretation

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Community exhibition Exploring Milton Creek's heritage and its future – could be displayed at local venues including Museum, library, Church Hall.	Local residents, library users, heritage enthusiasts	Promoting the project to a wider local audience, communicating the history and significance of the site, showcase future art installations (Peter Liversidge, future AATC/Artlands projects)	Sittingbourne Museum, Sittingbourne Society, Sittingbourne Library, base budget of £2000 p/a	200	5	0	2011	Exhibition produced, good user evaluation	Exhibition touring local venues	Visitor feedback through consultation/questionnaire
2 Creative writing about Milton Creek Working with a writer/writing group, local people would write poetry, short stories responding to the environment and history of Milton Creek. The products could then be displayed on the web, printed in the newsletter or collected into a book.	Web users, schools, youth groups,	Encouraging creativity among local community, learning about and participating in writing and performance, creating a piece that can be performed as part of festival	Friends group, Swale Arts Forum, Sheppey and Sittingbourne Writers, self produced anthology for £1,000	15	3	0	2011	Good level of community involvement, participant feedback	Book published and sold at Library, Museum etc.	Feedback from participants
3 Heritage education events Work with partners to run heritage walks and education events on site – Roman burial ground, Saxons, brick and paper production, barges. Programme could be piloted at the annual North Kent Walking Festival. Events to include mock archaeological digs to teach the public about excavation techniques.	Older people, children and families, heritage enthusiasts	Development of knowledge of the park, communicating value of heritage to local people, disseminating this to other audiences	Sittingbourne Society, Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway, Canterbury Archaeological Trust, £1500 for leader expenses.	45 ¹	6 ²	0	2011 onwards	3 walks delivered per year (spring, summer, autumn), attendee feedback	6 walks delivered per year	Audience take-up, feedback from attendees
4 Nature walks Walks programme led by volunteer guides and local groups. Volunteers developing skills through training by partners. Programme could be piloted at the annual North Kent Walking Festival.	All users, children and families, conservation/environmental	Development of knowledge of the creek, communicating value of environment to local people, disseminating this to other audiences	Friends group, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Medway Swale Estuary Partnership, Environment Agency, Natural England	45 ¹	6 ²	0	2011 onwards	3 walks delivered per year (spring, summer, autumn), attendee feedback	6 walks delivered per year	Audience take-up, feedback from attendees
5 Oral histories and testimonies Project to be led by an appointed oral historian with trained volunteer support to collect personal histories and testimonies - these could be used in the audio-trail and included in Peter Liversidge's art-based interpretation.	Older local residents, schools, all potential audiences	Encouraging intergenerational community work, recording the memories of older residents, training volunteers in oral history and interview techniques	Friends group, Oral History Society, Sittingbourne Society, Sittingbourne Library, Sittingbourne Museum, Swale CVS, schools and college, Youth groups	20	20	0	2011	15 interviews collected	Oral histories incorporated into audio-trail	Successful collection of interviews, volunteer feedback
6 Website content Creating content for a website as a project with local groups, linking with other activities e.g. oral histories and memories of the Creek, creative writing, art and photography about the Creek, wildlife and environmental interpretation.	Web users,	Distinctive community based interpretation, working with schools to develop artworks that are linked to the design of the garden	Friends group, local schools, all arts, heritage and environmental groups	20	10	0	2011 onwards	Good level of community involvement, participant feedback	Content from other activities to be displayed in an adapted form on website	Feedback from participants

¹ Based on 3 walks per year, with up to 15 participants per session² Based on 3 walks per year, with up to 2 volunteer walk leaders per session

Education

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Art competition Schools to submit children's art for a competition in the summer.	Schools	Connecting schools to the Creek, engaging young audiences in arts activity	Local schools, Friends group, Swale Arts Forum	98 ¹	0	0 ³	2011	Arwork submitted and displayed on web	Online exhibition	Schools feedback through survey
2 Community designs for interpretive signs Local community groups and schools to research content and create designs for future signage e.g. the visual culture of the wharves and industries in the area. This could be in partnership with an appointed artist/designer, and the products could be installed at the interpretation points along the Creek boardwalk.	All users, schools, youth groups	Allowing local people to discover their local area, creating a community contribution to the art-based interpretation	Sittingbourne Museum, Sittingbourne Library, Swale Arts Forum	40	40	1 ⁴	2011	Good levels of community involvement, signage produced	Community designs incorporated within signage	Participant feedback
3 Photography project Artist-led workshop on site, helping local people learn about creative potential of photography and Milton Creek, with photos displayed online.	All users, arts audiences	Encouraging creative responses to the Creek, engaging wider audiences in arts activity, offering a prize for best submissions	Nicole Mollett (AATC) could act as workshop leader, Friends group, Swale Arts Forum	20	0	1 ³	2011	Photographs submitted and displayed on web	Online photographic exhibition	Participant feedback
4 Schools learning materials / pack Produced in association with local groups (heritage, wildlife). Contains educational material for teachers exploring Milton Creek: its history from Romans and Saxons, through the medieval and early modern periods to paper and brick industries; and its environmental significance as a wildlife habitat. These topics would link to KS2 / KS3 curricula wherever possible - the Romans, local history, sustainability.	Local schools	Opportunity for young people to engage with Milton Creek and learn about their local area within curricula	Sittingbourne Museum, Sittingbourne Library, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust	243 ²	0	1	2011	Number of packs used, feedback	Pack produced and distributed to school	Number of packs used, feedback through teachers' questionnaires

¹ Based on 2 primary and 2 secondary classes participating - average primary class size 26.4, average secondary class size 22.3 (source: DSCF)

² Based on 5 primary and 5 secondary classes using materials - average primary class size 26.4, average secondary class size 22.3 (source: DSCF)

³ Workshop leader

⁴ Artist / designer

APPENDIX 6 – MEDIUM-TERM ACTIVITY PLAN

Volunteering

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
I Green Gym Promoting volunteering through monthly Green Gym in partnership with BTCV - the Friends group can set up their own Green Gym group with help from BTCV Officer, establishing links with local health services etc. to recruit volunteers.	All audiences wanting structured exercise, young people looking for work experience	Developing volunteer base, outdoor activity with exercise / health benefits, creating sense of ownership and connection with landscaping	BTCV Officer	60 ¹	60 ¹	1	From 2011 ²	At least 5 attendees per session, regular onsite sessions, volunteer satisfaction	Monthly Green Gym session onsite	Volunteer counts, volunteer satisfaction

¹ Based on 5 people attending monthly session

² Depending on site

Interpretation

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Nature trail leaflet Develop a specific trail leaflet based around the nature walks, highlighting and explaining relevant art-based interpretation along the route (e.g. Head and Mouth signage).	All users, children and families, conservation/environmental	Development of knowledge of the creek, communicating value of environment to local people, disseminating this to other audiences	Friends group, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust	30	0	0	2011	Leaflet take-up, feedback	Leaflet produced	Leaflet take-up, feedback
2 Heritage trail leaflet Develop a specific trail leaflet based around the heritage walks, highlighting and explaining relevant art-based interpretation along the route (e.g. Reedbed text signage, seating wall).	Older people, children and families, heritage enthusiasts	Development of knowledge of the park, communicating value of heritage to local people, disseminating this to other audiences	Sittingbourne Historical Research Group, Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway, Canterbury Archaeological Trust,	30	0	0	2011	Leaflet take-up, feedback	Leaflet produced	Leaflet take-up, feedback
3 Musical compositions inspired by Milton Creek Local composers / musicians to create a series of musical compositions with collaboration of local people. For example, the interpretation points along the Creek could be given as inspiration to a local composer / musician working with school or community group, and all finished pieces would be performed in situ at launch event.	Festival attendees, schools, families, arts audiences	Encouraging creativity among local community, learning about and participating in music and performance, creating a piece that can be performed as part of festival	Friends group, SBC Arts Officer / AATC team, Swale Arts Forum, Big Fish Band and Theatre Trust.	45 ¹	10	0	2011, performed again at launch in 2012	Good level of community involvement, audience feedback	2 pieces composed Performances at events	Audience feedback
4 Site-specific performance / play A promenade performance / event developed by a commissioned local writer working with a youth / other groups. Narrative based around landscape, further exploring its history and significance of Milton Creek.	Festival attendees, schools, families, arts audiences	Encouraging creativity among local community, learning about and participating in writing and performance, creating a piece that can be performed as part of festival	Friends group, Swale Arts Forum, Big Fish Band and Theatre Trust	45 ¹	10	0	2011, performed again at launch in 2012	Good level of community involvement, audience feedback	Play written Performances at events	Audience feedback

¹ Based on 2 secondary classes participating, with an average class size of 22.3 (source DCSF)

Education

Activity Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Schools activity day An activity fun day where teachers can bring classes to do craft and arts-based activities (possible link to Big Draw), walks and trails.	Local schools	Cross-curriculum links to creativity in learning, opportunity for schoolchildren to visits and engage with Milton Creek	Swale Arts Forum, Big Draw	98 ¹	0	5 ³	From 2011	Schools attendance, 1 event a year feedback	Numbers attending, participant feedback through consultation/questionnaire	
2 Local history schools day Event for schools, based at Church Hall with site visit. Activities would explore the history of the Creek - Romans and Saxons, brickmaking, barge building and paper mills.	Local schools	Opportunity for schoolchildren to visit and engage with Milton Creek and learn about their local history	Sittingbourne Museum	53 ²	0	2 ⁴	From 2011	Schools attendance, 2 events a year feedback	Numbers attending, participant feedback through consultation/questionnaire	
3 Environment schools day Event for schools, based at Church Hall with site visit. Activities would explore the environmental significance and biodiversity around Milton Creek, wildlife monitoring, sustainable features of the project.	Local schools	Opportunity for schoolchildren to visits and engage with Milton Creek and learn about nature and sustainability	Environment Agency, Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust, RSPB	53 ²	0	2 ⁴	From 2011	Schools attendance, 2 events a year feedback	Numbers attending, participant feedback through consultation/questionnaire	

¹ Based on 2 primary and 2 secondary classes participating - average primary class size 26.4, average secondary class size 22.3 (source: DCSF)

² 2 events p/a, based on approx 1 class per event, average promary class size 26.4 (source DCSF)

³ SBC staff and freelancers

⁴ 2 freelance event leaders

APPENDIX 7 – LONG-TERM ACTIVITY PLAN

Volunteering

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
I Wildlife monitoring Ongoing annual survey by volunteers in partnerships with environmental/wildlife groups contributing to an annual report.	All users, educational audiences and schools, environmental/conservation audiences	All users, educational audiences and schools, environmental/conservation audiences	Friends group, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre	20	20	1	2012	Levels of participation, volunteer satisfaction	Report findings made available online	Volunteer feedback through survey

Events

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Launch festival A free festival launching the park, with music, arts and performance, children's activities.	All potential users	Enhancing arts and culture provision in the town, bringing the community together, promoting the park	Friends group, SBC Arts Officer / AATC team, Swale Arts Forum, Big Fish Band and Theatre Trust	0	25	11	2012	Event attendance, attendee feedback	Launch event to mark park opening	Visitor counts, feedback through survey
2 Health walks Led by WfH volunteer trainer. Programme could be piloted at the annual North Kent Walking Festival, to benefit from its established partnership links (including PCTs) and contact potential volunteers.	All audiences wanting structured exercise, the elderly, those with health problems	Developing volunteer base, outdoor activity with exercise / health benefits, getting people onto the site	Walking for Health / East Kent Health Walks, Swale CVS, North Kent Walking Festival	0	6	40	Annually from 2012	Event attendance, participant feedback	Monthly walk	Participant numbers, feedback through survey
3 Farmer's market (Based on Peter Liversidge proposal) A local produce market.	Local residents	Giving local producers an outlet for products, promoting local distinctiveness, creating a sense of shared food culture	Swale Rural Forum	0	0	0	2012	Event attendance, participant feedback	Bimonthly event	Participant numbers, feedback
4 Craft event An event providing a showcase for local artists and craftspeople, giving them an opportunity to display and sell their work. Demonstrations of traditional crafts relating to the industries of the Creek - brick-firing, paper-making and barge-building.	Local residents	Giving local artists and craftspeople an outlet for products, promoting traditional crafts, demonstrating the industries of the Creek	Swale Arts Forum	0	0	0	2012	Event attendance, participant feedback	Annual/biannual event	Participant numbers, feedback
5 Green event An event showcasing the wildlife and natural heritage of the Creek, and sustainability in general. Nature walks, talks from NGOs/wildlife groups, demonstrations, music.	Local residents	Promoting the sustainability agenda, highlighting the environmental importance of the Creek	Swale Arts Forum, Environment Agency, Natural England, Medway Swale Estuary Partnership	0	0	0	2012	Event attendance, participant feedback	Annual/biannual event	Participant numbers, feedback

¹ Member of SBC staff

Education

Activity: Detailed Description	Audience	Benefits for People	Resources	Annual no of learning opportunities	Annual no of volunteers	Annual no of non-volunteers	Delivery years	Targets and measures of success	Outcomes	Methods of evaluation
1 Student placements Art students on educational placements/residencies with schools/colleges/youth groups, working with community to develop temporary pieces of public art that links to Peter Liversidge's interpretation and future Art at the Centre activities.	Colleges, universities, schools, arts audiences, park users	Learning, outdoor activity, better use of the park for education, engaging teachers through the partnership group	University of the Creative Arts-Rochester and Canterbury, Art at the Centre	45 ¹	4	0	2012	Feedback from leaders teachers and students	Artworks produced, exhibited online, in the Park, Library etc.	Feedback through consultation and survey
2 Outdoor cinema screening Short film competition involving local artists, local colleges/universities with film teaching, culminating in an outdoor screening.	Local residents, students, young people	Encouraging creative responses to the Creek, engaging wider audiences in arts activity, fulfilling a cultural need in Sittingbourne	Friends group, Swale Arts Forum, University of the Creative Arts	10	20	5	2012	Event delivered, audience feedback	Event delivered	Event delivered, audience feedback

¹ Based on 2 secondary classes participating, with an average class size of 22.3 (source DCSF)



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